

RACIALIZING JEWISH DIFFERENCE: WILHELM BOUSSET,
THE HISTORY OF RELIGION(S) AND THE
DISCOURSE OF CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ChW *Die Christliche Welt*

DS *Deutschen Schriften*

HG *Hauptproblem der Gnosis*

HS *Himmelreise der Seele*

RGS *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*

RJNT *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*

ThR *Theologische Rundschau*

WIR *What is Religion*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	iv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Setting the Stage	1
Situating the Problem.....	4
Situating the ‘History of Religion’ School	11
Situating Bousset	23
Situating My Study	30
Outline of Study	36
II. RACE, RELIGION, AND THE GERMAN (JEWISH) QUESTION.....	41
German Protestant Religiosity, <i>Bildung</i> , and the Jewish Question	42
Teleological Twins: Development and Degeneration.....	51
Development and Teleology	51
Difference/development/degeneration	58
Racializing the Public Sphere	62
<i>Völkisch</i> Ideology and the Emergence of Anti-Semitism	67
The <i>Fin de Siècle</i> and the Quest for Meaning.....	71
Conclusion	75
III. RACIALIZING RELIGION.....	76
The Modern Worldview.....	77
Bousset’s History of Religion.....	84
<i>Judentum</i> as Other.....	94
Organic Religion and Jewish Difference	104
Bousset’s Germanic Christianity	108
Conclusion	111

IV. READING BOUSSET THROUGH THE JEWISH QUESTION.....	113
Syncretism and <i>Judentum</i>	115
<i>Judentum</i> and Ambiguity	120
<i>Judentum</i> as Always Other	123
Bousset as Border Patrol.....	128
Exclusivity and Particularity	130
Syncretism and Chaos.....	133
The <i>Innenseite</i> of <i>Judentum</i>	137
Bousset’s Jewish Problem.....	145
Conclusion	146
 V. DISCIPLINING <i>JUDENTUM</i>	 149
Periodization of <i>Spätjudentum</i>	150
Bousset as Authoritative Voice.....	154
Controlling Scholarship	161
Authoritative Voice Over and Against Jewish Scholars.....	164
Problematizing <i>Spätjudentum</i> /Colonial Construction.....	174
Conclusion	178
 VI. CONCLUSION.....	 181
 AFTERWORD: LOOKING FORWARD	 188
Appropriating the ‘History of Religion’ Mantle.....	188
Significance for the Academic Study of Religion	196
Conclusion	203
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 204

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Setting the Stage

This dissertation seeks to connect the scholarly construction of race and religion to the scholarly construction of Judaism and Jewishness (*Judentum*) by analyzing the work of nineteenth-century German Protestant biblical scholar Wilhelm Bousset, in particular his construction of *Spätjudentum* ('late' Judaism).¹ I bring together multiple strands of scholarship that have considered: the relationship of Western colonialism and comparative religion to the emergence of the academic study of religion; the interrelationship among German *völkisch* identity, anti-semitic discourse, and Jewish Emancipation; and the tradition of anti-Jewish representations within biblical scholarship.

My study rests on two questions that, at first glance, may appear to be unrelated. The first is grounded in biblical studies: why do anti-Jewish representations within scholarship on Christian origins persist, despite recent efforts both to acknowledge and eliminate elements in traditional Christian theology through which Christian uniqueness and superiority were constructed over and against a superseded and subordinated Judaism? The second emerges out of the discipline of religious studies, that is, the academic study of religion: if the category of 'religion' is, at its core, a product of the

¹ Translated as 'late Judaism,' the '*spät*' in *Spätjudentum* has a more negative connotation than 'late' in English; it conveys the sense that what it qualifies has been passed by, as obsolete. On *Judentum*, see n.6 below.

Western colonial project in which non-Western/non-European² peoples are racialized as ‘other,’ and if the Christian universalism implicit within that project has been constructed over and against Jewish particularity, how does Judaism function within the history of the study of religion?

While I outline my argument more fully in the next section, here I suggest a shared trope within the Western intellectual tradition that structured the development of both disciplinary discourses and that has motivated my question to each discipline: the operative binary of spirit/matter³ that both assumes and produces hierarchical difference, in which the ‘spirit’ (mind, rationality, universality) side of the dichotomy is always deemed superior to the ‘materiality’ side (nature, the body, particularity).⁴ While this binary is framed in different ways, it is always oppositional in its construction of a privileged identity. One such hierarchical opposition, Christian/Jewish, assumes a theological framework of spirit/flesh or grace/law. In a second, European/ non-European, the binary both assumes and constructs racial difference by attributing human intelligence and rationality exclusively to the white (male) European, while depicting the non-white/non-European in terms of materiality, nature, sensuality—qualities that are marked as gendered in general and specifically as female/woman. However, there is a third

² Throughout the dissertation, ‘West/non-West’ will be used interchangeably with ‘European/non-European.’

³ I will use both ‘spirit/matter’ and ‘spirit/materiality’ in denoting this binary.

⁴ My study is deeply indebted to the theoretical analysis of the spirit/matter binary in the recent work of Tim Murphy, *The Politics of Spirit: Phenomenology, Genealogy, Religion* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2010); Murphy has examined how the spirit/matter binary functions within the overlapping discourses of the phenomenology of religion and history of religion. He traces the genealogy of the phenomenology of religion in order to show how such notion reflects and reproduces this fundamental binary within Western thought, in which spirit/rationality/*Geist* is always opposed to and hierarchically superior to that which is nature/materiality. However, he has not fully considered how *Judentum* functioned within that genealogy.

formulation of the spirit/materiality binary that is intimately connected to the construction of both Jewish difference and racial difference: the racialized German/Jew binary that was produced by the discourse of anti-semitism at the end of the nineteenth century.

Another common element in both disciplines was a historicism that attempted to reconstruct the origin/essence of religion and its development through the particular historical formations in which religion, considered a modality of human existence, has manifested itself throughout human history. In particular, within biblical scholarship, historical-critical scholarship was confronted with the question of how to situate Judaism (*Judentum*) historically in relation to the emergence and subsequent development of Christianity.

To answer the questions I posed above (and thus to preview the argument of the remainder of this chapter), I argue the following:

1) That while *Religionswissenschaft* is grounded in the colonial construction that framed the West (Christianity) as the universal human subject in opposition to the ‘rest,’ e.g., those non-European peoples who represent particularity and materiality, the simple binary of West/non-West occludes the heterogeneity and oppositional hierarchies within the West itself, namely that of Christian/Jew;

2) That the opposition Christian/Jew, an opposition that privileges Christianity and essentializes Jewish ‘difference,’ is structurally embedded within the conceptualization of religion insofar as the spirit/materiality binary remains operative; the result is that abandoning or eliminating overt anti-Jewish representations such as *Spätjudentum* is not sufficient to undo the underlying opposition of Christian/Jew.

Situating the Problem

In the past few decades, biblical scholarship has increasingly recognized and attempted to eliminate long-standing anti-Jewish elements within Christian theology and biblical studies.⁵ Traditional Christian theology demonstrated Christianity's superiority and uniqueness by framing Judaism/*Judentum* negatively, by employing the binary of spirit/matter to construct Jewish difference. The binary might be expressed in slightly different formulations—spirit/body; grace/law; universalism/particularity—but the 'Jewish' side of the binary was always 'other' than, and subordinate to, what defined Christianity.

Part of the recent effort in biblical scholarship has involved the elimination of the term that had functioned as the normative designation within biblical scholarship for Judaism of the Second Temple period (3rd century BCE-1st century CE): *Spätjudentum*. This term was used through most of the twentieth century as a means of disrupting any continuity between Jesus and the Jewish tradition at the turn of the era.⁶ In its articulation

⁵ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: the theological roots of anti-semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974); E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); Charlotte Klein, *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999); Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism and the Scholars: Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); James E. McNutt, "Adolf Schlatter and the Jews," *German Studies Review* 26:2 (May 2003): 353-370; John Kloppenborg, et al., eds., *Apocalypticism, Anti-Semitism and the Historical Jesus* (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2005); Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006); Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semmler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008).

⁶ In order to understand how *Spätjudentum* functioned, it is necessary to be familiar with how the language of *Judentum* itself functioned within the German context. *Judentum*

of the spirit/matter binary, *Spätjudentum* represented the degeneration into materiality and legalism of what were considered to be the spirit-filled elements of the religion of Israel reflected in the Psalms and prophetic writings. In this way, an opposition was constructed between the internalized, spiritual elements in religion and the claimed materiality and externality of ritual and practice.

The role of *Spätjudentum* in biblical scholarship and the investigation of Christian origins is grounded in the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* that emerged in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, primarily in continental Europe. Various translated as the ‘science of religion,’ ‘comparative religion,’ and ‘history of religions,’⁷ this discipline was grounded in a notion of ‘religion’ as a universal *sui generis* human phenomenon, the development of which could be traced through investigation of the different historical manifestations of religion in different cultures and peoples across time. And as one such historical manifestation of religion, Christianity, too, had a history that scholars could both describe and explain.

Since *Judentum* is also considered to be a religious tradition, that is, as one historical, particular manifestation of the general category of ‘religion,’ then any investigation of the history of Christianity needed to articulate how *Judentum* fit within the larger history of religion itself. Christianity, however, while nominally only one particular historical form of religion, i.e., one religion among the many religions, has implicitly retained in academic biblical scholarship the function it had in apologetic and

was polyvalent, connoting, depending upon the context of its use and the interpretation of the reader, Judaism as a religion; Jewry or the Jewish people taken together as an ethnic/racial group; and ‘Jewishness’ as an inchoate, but very real, interiorized quality.⁷ In contemporary scholarship, the most common term is ‘academic study of religion,’ though the language of ‘history of religions’ persists due to the influence of the Chicago History of Religions school associated with Mircea Eliade.

ecclesial theology in preserving its assumed superiority. *Spätjudentum*, then, reflected a certain periodization of *Judentum* against which the entire historical narrative of Christianity as the realization of the overall telos of ‘religion’ could be worked out.

As the discussion above indicates, my two questions (and the claims I articulate) are directed at the intersection of biblical scholarship and *Religionswissenschaft*. My study situates this conjunction of biblical studies and the emerging field of *Religionswissenschaft* in the ‘history of religion’ school (*Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*) within biblical scholarship at the turn of the twentieth century. I contextualize that relationship within three historical trajectories: 1) the development of German anti-semitic discourse at the turn of the twentieth century; 2) the emerging academic discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*; and 3) the tradition of Christian supersessionism.

Religionswissenschaft (and its grounding in Western/Christian theological categories and the Western colonial enterprise) drew upon scientific theory that produced and facilitated the racializing of the already perceived ‘otherness’ of non-Western peoples. Anti-semitic discourse, also drawing on racial theory, essentialized the otherness of *Judentum* in terms of race. These two trajectories converge when *Judentum* becomes the object of scholarly (*wissenschaftlich*) study rather than being simply deemed the theological ‘other’ of Christianity.

My study focuses on German Protestant biblical scholar Wilhelm Bousset because he best represents the intersection between biblical scholarship and the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* at the turn of the twentieth century. Bousset became the key figure in the formation of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* in biblical studies out of which emerged the contemporary disciplinary discourse of Christian origins. Bousset played a

significant role in deploying the term *Spätjudentum* as the normative designation of *Judentum*. Since *Spätjudentum* represented the ‘end’ of development for the Jewish tradition, the characteristics of *Spätjudentum* could be mapped onto *Judentum* as it continued to persist through the following centuries. Bousset’s language in his writing regularly slipped between the terms *Spätjudentum* and *Judentum* in a way that reinforced the notion of a degenerated, static *Judentum* across all historical periods beyond the period of New Testament.⁸

Bousset creates a space in which *Judentum* can be essentialized in racial terms in two ways: 1) through an evolutionary notion of the history of religion; and 2) through his phenomenological notion of religion. First, *Judentum* has the potential to become racialized through the twinned discourses of development and degeneration that are embedded within the evolutionary framework of the history of religion appropriated from the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*. Within this evolutionary framework, *Spätjudentum* (and therefore *Judentum* as a whole) is marked as ‘other’ in order to demonstrate, and thereby confirm, Christian superiority.

The phenomenological notion of religion as an interiorized religiosity that drives Bousset’s work reflects the primary binary of spirit (*Geist*)/materiality that is used to construct and maintain hierarchical difference. Bousset uses the language of syncretism (mixture) and chaos to represent the alien and transgressive quality of *Spätjudentum*. The language of syncretism and chaos that plays such a critical role in Bousset’s construction

⁸ My usage will attempt to reflect how the terms are used in the various writings that I analyze in later chapters. Since Bousset interchanges *Judentum* and *Spätjudentum* repeatedly, I may interchange the two terms as well; when he does use *Spätjudentum* specifically, my discussion will reflect that usage. I will use ‘Judaism’ to denote how the Jewish tradition is identified in contemporary scholarship.

of *Spätjudentum* is also employed in the discourses of both anti-semitism and colonialism. Given Bousset's claims to scholarly authority as *Wissenschaftler*, his construction of *Spätjudentum* through language shared with anti-semitic discourse also legitimates that discourse.

Bousset situated *Spätjudentum/Judentum* within an over-arching framework of the history of religion, the apex of development of which was Christianity. Bousset's work illustrates the way in which biblical scholarship was implicated in the extension of the traditional Christian theological binary of Christian/Jewish into a binary that becomes racialized as an explicitly German/Jewish opposition at the turn of the twentieth century by privileging German Protestantism as exemplary of Christianity. His work opens up a space in which the traditional Christian/Jewish opposition can be read as a German/Jewish opposition by explicitly placing Germanic Christianity as the culminating and highest form of Christianity itself within the history of religion.

Bousset's comparative enterprise, once contextualized within the currents of German *völkisch* ideology, colonialism and imperialism, and the discourse of anti-semitism, represents, like *Religionswissenschaft* itself, orientalism in scholarship, in which the object of study, *Spätjudentum* (and *Judentum*) was itself produced in the course of that scholarly process. In his case, however, 'the Jews' were rendered as the internal, rather than external, colonial other. As with *Religionswissenschaft*, the operative binary of spirit/matter frames the differentiation and hierarchical relation of Christianity over and against *Judentum*. Bousset solves the problem of *Judentum* for his narrative of the history of religion by bracketing *Judentum* out of the conceptual field of religion completely. Thus, the conceptualization of *Judentum* as always already something other

than religion is structurally embedded within the various frameworks in which ‘religion’ is articulated, whether labeled as ‘history of religion,’ ‘history of religions,’ or phenomenology of religion.

By conjoining the ‘history of religion’ and the construction of *Spätjudentum*, Bousset’s work has implications for contemporary scholarship in both biblical studies and the academic study of religion. Given the primacy of German scholarship in general within the larger academic community and beyond at the time, Bousset’s scholarship was considered authoritative even beyond his specific German theological audience. More importantly, the conscious avoidance of problematic terminology such as *Spätjudentum* or ‘late Judaism’ within contemporary biblical scholarship on Christian origins does not address the structural anti-Judaism that is embedded in the conceptualization of religion.⁹ This lack of recognition of the ideological work being done through the language of ‘religion’ and ‘history of religion’ is reflected particularly in the appropriation by a group of contemporary scholars in the field of Christian origins of the language of ‘history of

⁹ As William E. Arnal, “A Parting of the Ways? *Scholarly* Identities and a Peculiar Species of Ancient Mediterranean Religion,” in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews and Christians and Others, Essays in Honour of Stephen G. Wilson*, edited by Zeba A. Crook and Philip A. Harland (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 253-75 at 269-70, has noted, the phenomenological notion of ‘religion’ is implicit within contemporary biblical scholarship on Christian origins as well: “But I also suspect that some of this reluctance to engage in explicit theorizing results from New Testament scholars *already* having an *implicit* theory of religion, one which they derive from a particular reading of the New Testament itself and then apply to their analysis of the historical context of the New Testament writings, generating a vicious, but self-affirming, argumentative circle....In the case of most New Testament scholarship, the implicit theory of religion at work is individualistic, and emphasizes conversion and personal transformation.” Arnal has pursued the question of the ideological implications within historical Jesus scholarship in *The Symbolic Jesus: Historical Scholarship, Judaism and the Construction of Contemporary Identity* (London and Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2005).

religions' as a way of situating their work as methodological and non-confessional, that is, as objective scholarship rather than theologically grounded.

While the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* largely abandoned the evolutionary framework of religion, the phenomenological notion of religion grounding Bousset's scholarship persists in the disciplinary discourse of the contemporary academic study of religion.¹⁰ While contemporary scholars of the study of religion have noted the role of Christian triumphalism in the colonial and imperial project of the West and the 'Western construction of religion,'¹¹ these scholars have not addressed how Judaism and 'the Jews' have functioned in the disciplinary discourse of *Religionswissenschaft*. The use of the phrase 'Judeo-Christian' as a self-evident and unitary concept is one instance of this failure.¹² The presumption of a unitary Judeo-Christian tradition that is rendered as 'the West' privileges Christianity, while submerging the heterogeneity within the West itself, that is, the Christian/Jew binary.

In the sections that follow, I first situate both Bousset and the 'history of religion' school within the context of *fin de siècle* Germany in general and within the context of German Protestant theology in particular; I then situate my study in relation to previous scholarship in order to show how this project moves the scholarly discussion forward.

¹⁰ See Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: the discourse on sui generis religion and the politics of nostalgia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹¹ I borrow the phrase from Daniel Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge and Ideology*, translated by William Sayers (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

¹² See the Afterword, in which I consider how contemporary scholars, in particular Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the 'Mystic East'* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); and Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism was preserved in the language of pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), have employed that terminology.

Situating the ‘History of Religion’ School

The ‘history of religion’ school within German Protestant biblical studies emerged at the end of the nineteenth century at a time when Christian, particularly Protestant, theology faced significant challenges. New discoveries within the natural sciences—biology, geology, chemistry, etc.—undermined the truth-claims of the biblical account of creation as well as the credibility and viability of the supernatural elements of traditional Christian theology.

Traditional theological claims of authority were also threatened by the historical-critical study of the Bible, which had originated under Semler, Lessing, and many other scholars, and which was continued forcefully by D. F. Strauss, F.C. Baur, and the Tübingen school of biblical criticism in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹³ This historical-critical trajectory itself reflected the intellectual currents of historicism that

¹³ For a general discussion, see Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 271ff.; Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W.M.L. deWette, Jakob Burkhardt, and the Theological Origins of Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-34. Although Strauss did not initiate the application of biblical criticism to the New Testament, his *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), originally published in 1835, set forth a firestorm within biblical studies that continued throughout the nineteenth century. For discussion of the impact of Strauss, see Marilyn Chapin Massey, *The Life of Christ Unmasked: the meaning of The Life of Jesus in German politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); and Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: a study in eighteenth and nineteenth century hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). See Strauss’s later more extreme rejection of Christianity as a whole in: *The Old Faith and the New* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1997), originally published in German, 1872, in which Strauss quite publicly advocates Darwinism. For a general discussion of this development within Protestant theology, see Frederick Gregory, “The Impact of Darwinism on Protestant Theology in Nineteenth Century Germany,” in *God and nature: historical essays on the encounter between Christianity and science*, edited by Ronald L. Numbers and David C. Lindberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982): 369-90; see also the general discussion in Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*.

intensified in the nineteenth century through which the Bible itself was seen as a historical product that could be subjected to the same type of analytical inquiry as other fields of knowledge.

Moreover, the increasing prestige and popularity of the newly emerging disciplines of the natural sciences diminished the role and authority of German Protestant theology and biblical studies within the larger public sphere.¹⁴ Theology, once the queen of the academic world, found its realm greatly reduced, with both the number of theology faculty and theology students decreasing almost in half between the early 1830s and the beginning of the 1880s.¹⁵ Although enrollment and faculty recovered somewhat by the 1890s, theology never regained its primacy, having to compete with the increased popularity of the philosophy faculty¹⁶ and interest in the natural sciences.¹⁷

In what was becoming the modern academic marketplace, theology had to justify its existence within the university, a process notable for the “degree to which theologians sought to legitimize their roles in society, not by appeal to church authorities or the sapiential creedal-traditions of Christianity, but from the political community of the nation-state and the academic community of science.”¹⁸ The insistence on *Wissenschaft*, that is, critical and methodologically driven inquiry that provided analysis and explanation, rather than description, as the mark of its own academic scholarship enabled Protestant theology to respond to the demands of the academic world and to demonstrate

¹⁴ Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany, 1840-1920* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), especially 9ff.

¹⁵ Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 281-85.

¹⁶ The philosophy faculty encompassed what we today term the ‘arts and sciences’ as a whole and, within the structure of the medieval university, was subordinate to the higher faculties of theology, medicine, and law.

¹⁷ Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 285.

¹⁸ Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 14.

the relevance of Christianity to the educated bourgeoisie (*Gebildete*) in the face of its increasing indifference to institutionalized Christianity.

The scholars within the ‘history of religion’ school represented a trajectory within Liberal Protestantism (*Kulturprotestantismus*) that itself constituted a particular theological response to what has been called the war between science and religion in the wake of Darwin. Like their contemporaries, the liberal historical theologians, such as Albert Ritschl and his chief disciple Adolf von Harnack,¹⁹ the ‘history of religion’ school attempted to find a way in which faith-claims could still be articulated, while rejecting supernatural elements of traditional theology, such as immaculate conception, resurrection, and miracles. As with liberal Protestantism as a whole, the ‘history of religion’ school attempted to distance itself from the apologetics of traditional Christian theology by claiming the status of a scholarly (*wissenschaftlich*) discipline.

Initially centered in the University of Göttingen, the ‘history of religion’ school emerged in the 1890s when a group of young scholars, following the lead of Albert Eichhorn and Hermann Gunkel, critiqued the Ritschlian school for its narrow focus on canonical texts that maintained a strict line of continuity between the Old Testament²⁰ and the New Testament. Beginning with Gunkel, these scholars, including Wilhelm

¹⁹ See W.G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: A History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, second edition, translated by A. McLean Gilmour and Howard Kee (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1973), especially 162-67, for a summary of the Ritschlian school of liberal theology. Harnack’s work includes *What is Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), originally published in 1899-1900, and *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity Within the First Three Centuries* (New York: Harper, 1962), originally published in 1908.

²⁰ Although the label ‘Old Testament’ is often deemed to be supersessionist in current scholarship, it is the terminology used within biblical scholarship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Wrede, Frederick Rahlfs, Ernst Troeltsch, and Johannes Weiss, as well as Bousset,²¹ challenged this focus by locating Christian origins more specifically within the larger historical, social, and religious context of the Hellenistic world of the intertestamental period, representing roughly the period from the second or third century BCE through the first century CE. In this respect, these scholars were appropriating the methods of

²¹ The following discussion relies upon Gerd Lüdemann, “Die ‘Religionsgeschichtliche Schule’ und die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft,” in *Die ‘Religionsgeschichtliche Schule’: Facetten eines theologischen Umbruchs*, edited by Gerd Lüdemann (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 9-32; Gerd Lüdemann, “Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule” in *Theologie in Göttingen*, edited by Bernd von Moeller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 325-61; Gerd Lüdemann and Martin Schröder, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen: Eine Dokumentation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987); Anthonie Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset: Leben und Werk: Eine theologiegeschichtlichen Versuch* (Amsterdam: Van Bottenberg, 1973). For a summary that situates the ‘history of religion’ school within the overall history of biblical scholarship see Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*. For an early discussion of the ‘history of religion’ school, see Hugo Gressmann, *Albert Eichhorn und die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914). Gressman’s essay has been translated by Jeffrey F. Cayzer and appears as part of the introductory materials in the English translation of Albert Eichhorn, *The Lord’s Supper in the New Testament* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 5-61. See the fundamental work of Wilhelm Wrede, “The Task and Method of New Testament Theology,” in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1973), edited and translated by Robert Morgan, 68-116. Weiss drops out of this circle; others associated with the ‘history of religion’ school are Hermann Gunkel and Rudolph Otto; see Werner Klatt, *Hermann Gunkel: Zu seiner Theologie der Religionsgeschichte und zur Entstehung der formgeschichtlichen Methode* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), for extended discussion of Gunkel and his role in establishing the history of religion as a discipline within theology. Rudolf Bultmann is generally considered as part of the ‘third’ generation, although he later shifts toward his existentially grounded theology; see Dieter Lührmann, “Rudolf Bultmann and the History of Religions School,” in *Text and Logos: The Humanistic Interpretation of the New Testament*, edited by Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 3-14. This original ‘school’ must be differentiated from what has become widely known as the History of Religions (as the English translation of ‘*Allgemeine Religionswissenschaft*’) school associated with the work of Mircea Eliade and Joseph Kitagawa at the University of Chicago beginning in the 1950s and 1960s. However, the relationship between the ‘history of religion’ school within biblical studies and the larger disciplinary framework of the history of religion(s) will be explored in later chapters.

historical investigation that had earlier been used to construct the history of the religion of ancient Israel in place of apologetically driven Old Testament theology.

The ‘history of religion’ school was not a school of thought in the same sense as the Ritschlian school or the earlier Tübingen school, since this group of scholars did not follow the lead of any particular scholar and often critiqued the scholarship of other members of the school.²² However, their work shared certain basic elements: privileging ‘religion’ over theology; a historical lens; and scholarly (*wissenschaftlich*) method.²³

These scholars use religion as a term of art to differentiate their work from dogmatic theology, which was considered to be subject to ecclesial interests.²⁴ As Wrede explained, his goal was to separate theology, which had traditionally been grounded in

²² For example, Bousset’s *Jesus Predigt im Gegensatz zum Judentum: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892) was published as a critique and rejection of Johannes Weiss’s representation of Jesus as fully within the apocalyptic worldview found in his *Die Predigt Jesu im Reiche Gottes*, second edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), originally published in 1892.

²³ Gerd Lüdemann, “Die ‘Religionsgeschichtliche Schule’ und die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft,” 9-13. Another shared facet is an emphasis on the social/cultic, that is, communal aspect of religious traditions, which flows out of the shift away from what was considered to be the intellectualist and elitist aspect of doctrinal theology. For Bousset, that focus is most clearly illustrated in *Kyrios Christos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921), his massive study of the development of Christology in the early church.

²⁴ For a discussion of how the ‘history of religion’ school conceptualized religion in terms of piety/experience rather than theology, see Mark D. Chapman, *Ernst Troeltsch and Liberal Theology: Religion and Cultural Synthesis in Wilhelmine Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially 13-44. Although Chapman does draw on secondary literature such as Lüdemann, he focuses on Troeltsch’s writings in showing the differentiation from Ritschl and also the influence of Lagarde. Chapman notes the Hegelian resonances within Bousset at 34. See Gressman, “Albert Eichhorn and the History of Religion School,” for his discussion of how the focus on piety over dogma requires attention to the psychology of religion: “The basic principle must be first to understand the psychology of a religion against its own developmental background. It will be psychology that always has the last word in the study of the development of the human mind and spirit and, as a consequence, in the realm of the history of religion” (53).

the canonical scriptures, from the history of early Christian religion, a goal that required the exploration of the other religious traditions at the time of Jesus and their influences on the origin of Christianity.²⁵

Such a desire to separate ‘religion’ from theology was certainly not original and can be traced back to Friedrich Schleiermacher at the turn of the nineteenth century.²⁶ ‘Religion’ represented a way by which these scholars could authorize and legitimate their own reconstructions of what is now referred to as ‘Christian origins’ over against the church leaders, who continued to locate it within the framework mandated by traditional church dogma. In addition, religion was understood as lived experience ‘on the ground,’ as distinguished from theology, which functioned as the province of intellectualism and elitism, constrained by denominational concerns.

A key element within the ‘history of religion’ school was quite obviously, ‘history,’ understood within the intellectual currents of the historicism that marked the nineteenth century as a whole. Nineteenth-century historicism was grounded on the concept of a progressive development, which can be traced to both Hegel and later, Darwin.²⁷ As the historian Ranke put it, the goal of the historian was to determine history

²⁵ Wrede, “The Task and Method of New Testament Theology,” in *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, 68-116.

²⁶ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), originally published in 1799; idem, *The Christian Faith* (New York: HarperRow, 1963), originally published 1821-2, second revised edition, 1830. Grounded in his German Pietist background, Schleiermacher is known for his claim that religion consisted of a feeling of absolute dependence. See Andrew Dole, *Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), for a more extensive discussion of the legacy of Schleiermacher.

²⁷ Tim Murphy, “The Concept ‘*Entwicklung*’ in German *Religionswissenschaft*: Before and After Darwin,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 11:1 (January 1999): 8-23; Tim Murphy, “*Wesen* and *Erscheinung* in the history of the study of religion: a post-

‘as it actually was.’ The historian’s task, then, was to ascertain the laws of development through which the narrative of human history could be articulated.

As Hugo Gressman, a later representative of the ‘history of religion’ school, noted, many biblical scholars and church historians outside of the ‘history of religion’ school were ‘doing’ history. What was distinctive about the ‘history of religion’ school was how these scholars conceptualized their work in terms of the unitary concept of *the* ‘history of religion,’ subject to the same laws as all historical processes: “...however, all historical research is based upon the axiom of development. To deny evolution is to give up any hope of scientific knowledge.”²⁸ For these scholars, it is the history of ‘religion’ in the singular, not ‘religions’ in the plural, which is the object of study. Religion was conceptualized phenomenologically as a first-order experience, rather than the second-order reflection that theology represented. ‘Religion,’ then, is the core human experience, the kernel of which is expressed through the epiphenomena of the various historical forms (husks) of religious traditions.

In this way, the formation of the ‘history of religion’ school within German biblical scholarship can be seen as participating in the new discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* that was gaining increasing credibility within the European academic community and that was located within the philosophy faculties rather than the

structuralist perspective,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 6:2 (1994): 119-46. See Murphy’s full development of this argument in *The Politics of Spirit*.

²⁸ Gressmann, “Albert Eichhorn and the History of Religion School,” 46. The difference was the focus on the entire religious environment of antiquity, as compared to Harnack, whose work focused on the Greco-Roman expansion era; the other key difference was the question of method: “What is distinctive is not *the fact* that they practice the history of religion but *how* they practice it” (34).

theology faculties.²⁹ The framework of this new discipline was that of ‘science’ understood in the sense of *Wissenschaft* and was marked by the use of method, with comparison, imported from the discipline of philology, privileged as the method of choice.

Religionswissenschaft focused on narratives of the origins and development of both religion and the various religions that were the historical and particular manifestations of ‘religion,’ drawing on work in the new disciplines of ethnology and anthropology.³⁰ These fields attempted to explain the physical and cultural differences of the various non-Western peoples ‘discovered’ through Western travelers, missionary efforts, and colonial enterprises; as such, these efforts were bound up with the project of

²⁹ Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: a history* (London: Duckworth, 1971); Hans G. Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in a Modern Age*, translated by Barbara Harshav (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). Max Müller is usually credited as the founder of the new discipline, variously named the science of religion or in Anglo-American tradition, comparative religion. Müller’s work was grounded in comparative philology, the study of languages, which scholars argued corresponded to the differences between those peoples who spoke such languages. Müller’s work led him to a comparative study of mythology, from which he developed his theory of the origin of religion. Hermann Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neues Testament*, third edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), originally published in 1903, maintained that *Religionsgeschichte* was necessarily an ‘inner theological movement’ and not merely an offshoot of *allgemeine Religionswissenschaft*. Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: history and meaning in religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 13, specifically references Bousset’s *Das Wesen der Religion* in his bibliographic essay outlining scholarship in comparative religion over the past half-century.

³⁰ Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*; Theodore Ziolkowski, *Clio the Romantic Muse: Historicizing the Faculties in Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004). The following discussion draws upon Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in a Modern Age*; and Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*.

Western imperialism and thus reflected and reproduced the ideological assumption of Western superiority.³¹

Scholars within *Religionswissenschaft* usually focused on non-European religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and ‘primitive’ religions.³² However, Christianity not only supplied the conceptual categories, including that of ‘religion’ itself, through which other traditions were described, but was either implicitly or explicitly

³¹ Nancy L. Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982); Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); Paul Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics: between national unification and Nazism 1870-1945* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). The connections between the origin and essence of religion and the emerging disciplines of psychology, anthropology, and sociology were explored extensively throughout the pages of the *Theologische Rundschau*, the theological journal co-founded by Bousset in 1897, reflecting familiarity with the key figures in those emerging disciplines, such as Wilhelm Wundt, James Frazer, Andrew Lang, William Robertson Smith, E.B. Tylor, and Emile Durkheim. Bousset himself contributed a review essay concerning the ‘science of religion’ in *ThR* 2 (1899): 67-78, in which he referenced literature reviews of evolutionary thought (*Evolutionsgedanken*) in relation to the study of religion and noted the new German journal devoted to the new science of religion, the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*. See contributions by Eduard Mayer, “Zum Stand der Frage nach dem Wesen der Religion,” *ThR* 13 (1910): 1-15, 45-63 and “Zur Frage von Ursprung der Religion,” *ThR* 16 (1913): 1-22, 33-48.

³² In Germany, Christianity and biblical Judaism were studied within the theological faculties generally (Wellhausen had to move to the philosophy faculty since he would not make the required affirmation of faith). *Religionswissenschaft* was located in the philosophy faculties, generally studied by specialists in the area of philology and what was termed ‘oriental studies.’ See Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (New York and Washington, DC: Cambridge University Press and German Historical Institute, 2009), for a detailed study of German oriental studies in the nineteenth century. Jewish scholars pushed for the inclusion of Jewish Studies, but were unsuccessful. The inclusion of *Religionswissenschaft* within the theological curriculum within Germany was an issue that generated controversy, with Adolf von Harnack, “Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten und die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte” (1901), arguing successfully, at least until 1910, against the creation of such faculty position on the grounds that such a move would foster only dilettantism.

acknowledged as the highest form of religion; the evolutionary framework of religion within the work of C. P. Tiele, one of the key scholars in the field, is an example.³³

Just as with *Religionswissenschaft* overall, the mantra of the scholars who became known as the ‘history of religion’ school was for *Wissenschaft* to ground their scholarship. As Karen King notes, the ‘history of religion’ school “expressly promoted their scholarship as a science, *Religionswissenschaft*, which would free the study of Christianity from dogmatic limits by making it the subject of scientific-historical investigation. The investigation of religion moved from the field of theology, connected with the institutional structures of church, to the field of science and the institutional structures of the secular university.”³⁴ Such a move enabled these scholars to draw on the authority, not merely of the ideal of *Wissenschaft* as scholarly inquiry, but of the natural

³³ C.P. Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion* (New York: Scribner, 1897-99). See Jonathan Z. Smith’s discussion of the development of the taxonomy of ‘world’ religions in “Religion, Religions, Religious” in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, edited by Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269-82, which is reprinted in Smith’s *Relating Religion* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004). See also Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*. For further discussion of the emergence and institutionalization of *Religionswissenschaft*, see Kurt Rudolph, *Geschichte und Probleme der Religionswissenschaft* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1992); Joachim Wach, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, edited by Joseph M. Kitigawa and Gregory D. Alles (New York: Macmillan, 1988); Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitigawa, eds., *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1959). Despite the international academic reputation of German scholarship in the late nineteenth century, the key sites for the institutionalization of *Religionswissenschaft* existed outside of Germany. Other countries shaped the formation of the discipline by establishing faculty positions for such scholarship for such foundational scholars as Tiele and de la Saussaye. Louis Henry Jordan, in his bibliographic compilation of scholarship in the field of comparative religion, *Comparative Religion: A Survey of its Recent Literature, Volume I (1900-1909)*, second edition, revised and augmented (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1925), originally published in 1910, noted (9): “in so far as Comparative Religion is concerned, the position occupied by German scholarship to-day leaves very much to be desired.”

³⁴ Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 73.

sciences, which represented the highest epistemological authority that had vanquished the revelatory authority of Christian orthodoxy.

For the scholars in the ‘history of religion’ school, particularly Bousset, situating the origins of the Christian tradition was necessary in order to generate a complete narrative of the history of the Christian religion. Since ‘history’ was understood conceptually in terms of both the continuity and purposefulness (teleology) of development, a complete historical narrative of Christianity needed not only to describe, but also explain, its origin, as well as the coherence of its subsequent development. By the end of the nineteenth century, numerous discoveries of textual sources and material culture dating to what was designated by Christian scholars as the intertestamental period (third century BCE-first century CE) had provided new sources of information concerning the larger religious environment of the Hellenistic world out of which the Christian movement emerged. A key issue became the relationship of *Judentum* within this intertestamental period both to the literature of the Old Testament and, more significantly, to the emergence of Christianity. For the scholars associated with the ‘history of religion’ school, the description, analysis, and construction of *Judentum* became a primary concern and through *wissenschaftlich* methods they constituted *Judentum* as an object of study. By describing his periodization of *Judentum* as “an unexplored territory,”³⁵ Bousset encapsulated this objectification of *Judentum*.

Although the ‘history of religion’ school attempted to distinguish their work from that of dogmatic theology, these scholars were still operating within the context of

³⁵ Wilhelm Bousset, “*Religion und Theologie*,” in *Religionsgeschichtliche Studien*, edited by Antonie Verheule (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 29-43 at 41: “*unerforschete Land*.” Originally given as a lecture on 1919, Bousset’s language here parallels the language of colonialism of this period, a connection that will be examined in Chapter Five.

traditional Christian theological anti-Judaism, which affected how continuity and discontinuity between Jesus and his Jewish context were represented. Earlier in the nineteenth century, beginning with the historical-critical work of the biblical scholar W.M.L. DeWette³⁶ and then subsequently more fully developed by Julius Wellhausen, a sharp distinction was drawn between the Israelite religion of the Old Testament, viewed positively as the origin of the true spiritual values of the Gospel, and Judaism, depicted as a system weighted down with the burden of legalism and a transcendent, distant God. Within that negative characterization, the Jews were depicted as a people whose covenant with God had been replaced or superseded by grace, i.e., the coming of Jesus, who represented the true continuity with the prophetic elements of Israelite religion.³⁷

At the same time that the ‘history of religion’ school attempted to claim its place within the academic world, it also attempted to connect to the larger public sphere beyond academia through participation in the process of *Volksebildung* (education/formation of the people). One vehicle for the dissemination of scholarship was the series of *Religionsvolksbücher* (books for the people), a publication series intended to make discussions within biblical studies and the study of religion in general accessible to the educated class (*Gebildete*),³⁸ a demographic that included many who had become

³⁶ See Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*, for an extensive discussion of DeWette’s role in historical-critical biblical scholarship. Also see James Pasto, “W.M.L. DeWette and the Invention of Post-Exilic Judaism: Political Historiography and Christian Allegory in Nineteenth-Century German Biblical Scholarship,” 33-52 in *Jews, Antiquity, and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, edited by Dale B. Martin, et al. (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2003).

³⁷ The biblical scholar Ferdinand Weber (1836-79) is usually identified as the scholar responsible for the notion of a transcendent and inaccessible God in post-exilic Judaism. See Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism and the Scholars: Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts*.

³⁸ Nittert Janssen, *Theologie fürs Volk: Der Einfluss der Religionsgeschichtlichen Schule auf die Popularisierung der theologischen Forschung vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*

alienated from the traditional (and supernaturally grounded) dogmatics of the Protestant church.³⁹ These volumes were designed to be relatively short, inexpensive, and unburdened with academic citations, reflecting the format of various series of popular science literature that had achieved great success.⁴⁰ The *Religionsvolksbücher* series also capitalized on public interest in the study of religion overall, especially the success of popular writings such as Adolf Harnack's *What is Christianity?*⁴¹

Situating Bousset

Beginning his studies at Erlangen, Bousset moved to Göttingen beginning in 1886/87, where he served as a leader of the student fraternity, *Germania*, and was

(Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999); see also Lüdemann, ed., *Die 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule.'*

³⁹ Janssen, *Theologie fürs Volk*, 157.

⁴⁰ Janssen, *Theologie fürs Volk*, 154. Janssen, 153, also situates these popular writings on religion in relation to the work of well-known scientists such as Ernst Haeckel, whose *The Riddle of the Universe*, published in 1899, represented the continuation of his works directed at general audiences that were immensely successful. See also Andreas Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert: Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit 1848-1914*, second edition (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002). This process of popularization is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

⁴¹ Adolf Harnack, *What is Christianity?* Originally published in German as *Das Wesen des Christentums*, his work represented a series of lectures that were published with enormous success. Harnack's work is considered to be the epitome of Ritschlian liberal theology, which stripped all things supernatural from the Gospels and generally located the preached Kingdom of God as an ethic that reflected the state of liberal Protestantism (*Kulturprotestantismus*) in late nineteenth-century Germany. These efforts can also be seen as capitalizing on the *Babel-Bibel* controversy at the turn of the twentieth century, which was grounded in the popular work, *Babel und Bibel*, published by F. Delitsch in 1899, in which he claimed that there was no original or unique content in the Old Testament; rather, all of the ideas and themes of the Old Testament had been appropriated from earlier Babylonian traditions, an argument that created an uproar in Germany, in which Kaiser Wilhelm II participated publicly.

involved with the German student association (*Verein deutsche Studenten*).⁴² While many of the other scholars associated with the ‘history of religion’ school left Göttingen to take up positions at other universities, Bousset remained there following the completion of his studies as instructor (*Privatdozent*) and assistant professor (*Extraordinarius*) until finally being called to the University of Giessen in 1915 as full professor (*Ordinarius*), where he taught until his death in 1920.

Despite his critique of the institutional church establishment, which had blocked his attempt to obtain a full professorship over the years, Bousset continued to participate in the activities of the regional Synod; he was active within the Hannover *Predigerverein*, an association of lay leaders and clergy, presenting public lectures that paralleled the themes of his publications. As a follower of Frederick Naumann, Bousset participated in the public sphere beyond the church and academy, writing about the ‘social question’ (*soziale Frage*), that is, the social and economic problems associated with urbanization and industrialization.⁴³

⁴² Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, 9ff., 18ff. In 1911, Bousset wrote a history of the Göttingen chapter of the *Burschenschaft Germania*. See the remembrance following Bousset’s death by Hermann Schuster, “*Wilhelm Bousset und die Wiederentwicklung der germanische Vergangenheit*,” 74-98, in *Von Eintritt in den Schwarzbund bis zum 50. Stifterngesfest* (Bremen, 1950).

⁴³ Naumann, as a Protestant minister, was unsuccessful in his efforts to combine Christian practice and awareness of modern social and political issues; originally part of Stoecker’s Christian Social movement, Naumann distanced himself from Stoecker after Stoecker adopted an explicit anti-semitic platform and then left his own ministerial position to engage more directly in politics. Attempting to mediate between the conservatives and the Social Democrats, Naumann formed the National Social Association (not to be confused with the National Socialism of Hitler), which existed only for a few years and was then folded into the Liberal Party. Naumann was extremely influential in relation to Bousset’s engagement in the public sphere. See the description of Bousset’s public engagement in Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, 21-50; and Hans-Joachim Dahms, “*Politischer und religiöser Liberalismus: Bemerkungen zu ihrem Verhältnis im*

Bousset's first academic work, *Jesu Predigt im Gegensatz zum Judentum*, appeared in 1892. While Bousset subsequently published many specialized academic works on Hellenistic religions, including Gnosticism and Persian traditions,⁴⁴ his major works that continue to be cited in contemporary scholarship are *Kyrios Christos*, an extensive treatment of the history of Christology within the first few centuries of the common era,⁴⁵ and *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*.⁴⁶ Particularly important were his contributions to the German theological journal *Theologische Rundschau*, which Bousset founded in 1897 and co-edited until 1917. Covering a wide range of material from biblical studies and church history to social literature and practical theological questions, the explicit purpose of this theological journal was to reach not just scholars, but, more importantly, ministers who were unable

wilhelminischen Kaiserreich am Beispiel der 'Religionsgeschichtlichen Schule,' 225-42, in Die 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule': Facetten eines theologischen Umbruchs.

⁴⁴ Wilhelm Bousset, *Hauptproblem des Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907); Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Himmelreise der Seele* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965), originally published 1901; *Der Antichrist in der Überlieferung des Judentums, des Neuen Testaments und der alten Kirche: ein Beitrag zur Auslegung der Apocalypse* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895); *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896); *Die jüdische Apokalypik, ihre religionsgeschichtliche Herkunft und ihre Bedeutung für das Neue Testament* (Berlin: Reuther and Reichard, 1903). Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, provides a complete bibliography of Bousset's scholarship, including his contributions to a variety of journals.

⁴⁵ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921); the continuing influence of this work is indicated by the fact that it was ultimately translated into English in 1970 as *Kyrios Christos* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), with an introduction by Rudolf Bultmann.

⁴⁶ Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Reuther and Reichard, 1903). A second edition appeared in 1906 and a third edition, edited with slight revisions by Hugo Gressmann after Bousset's death, was published in 1926 under the slightly different title: *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1926). A fourth edition based upon Gressmann's edition appeared in 1966 as part of a Bible study series.

to keep up with advances in scholarly literature as well as educated laypersons who had become alienated from traditional church dogma and ecclesiastical structures.⁴⁷

While Bousset's academic contributions continue to be referenced in contemporary scholarship, his popular writing had much wider distribution at the time. Bousset wrote for popular journals throughout his career, including *Die Christliche Welt*⁴⁸ and *Die Hilfe*.⁴⁹ His non-academic writings, such as *Das Wesen der Religion*, *Jesus*, and *Unser Gottesglaube*,⁵⁰ were directed at a non-academic, though educated, audience and were part of the series of *Religionsvolksbücher* (religious books for the people), discussed in the previous section.

Influential scholars at Göttingen while Bousset was there included Bernard Duhm and Paul Lagarde. While Duhm and Lagarde represented an earlier generation of scholars, they were both influential in advocating the shift from dogmatic theology to what would become the *religionsgeschichtlich* method of scholarship.⁵¹ Lagarde, a noted

⁴⁷ Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, 32-33.

⁴⁸ *Die Christliche Welt* was founded in 1887 by Martin Rade and others; it was directed at pastors, religion teachers, and the educated public (*die Gebildeten*) and was the lodestar of Protestant liberal theology and the Ritschl school for decades.

⁴⁹ *Die Hilfe* was a magazine founded by Friedrich Naumann in 1897 and was directed at a general audience.

⁵⁰ Bousset, *Das Wesen der Religion: dargestellte an ihre Geschichte* (Halle: Gebauer-Schwetschke, 1904), translated as *What is Religion?* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907); *Jesus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1904), translated as *Jesus* (New York: Putnam's, 1906); *Unser Gottesglaube* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1908), translated as *The Faith of a Modern Protestant* (New York: Scribner's, 1909).

⁵¹ See Alf Özen, "Die Göttinger Wurzeln der 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule,'" 23-64 in *Die 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule': Facetten eines theologischen Umbruchs*; Hans-Joachim Dahms, "Die geistigen Väter an der Universität Göttingen," 25-40 in *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen: Eine Dokumentation*. Duhm's work centered on the Old Testament, particularly the prophets. He was called to the University of Basel in 1888. Bousset cites Duhm, *Das Geheimnis in der Religion* (Freiburg and Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1896), in the notes to *Das Wesen der Religion*.

Orientalist, has been called the ‘prophet’ of German *völkisch* ideology as a result of a series of essays later collected and published as the *Deutsche Schriften* in 1878,⁵² in which he critiqued German liberalism. Advocating a purely Germanic Christianity that would overcome confessional divisions, his writing also contained sharp anti-Jewish language.⁵³ While some historiography seems reluctant to examine the influence of Lagarde on Bousset,⁵⁴ Bousset does draw on Lagarde explicitly in his first book, *Jesu Predigt*.⁵⁵

Bousset’s work reflects the influence of both Thomas Carlyle and Jakob Fries, both of whom influenced Lagarde himself.⁵⁶ Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish writer who was wildly popular throughout Germany, conceptualized ‘religion’ as an interior human

Duhm’s use of *Ahnung*, a philosophical concept derived from Jakob Fries, discussed below, reflects a phenomenological understanding of religion.

⁵² Paul Lagarde, *Deutschen Schriften* (München-Berlin: J.S. Lehmanns Verlag, 1940). Lagarde was at Göttingen from 1869 until his death in 1891.

⁵³ The classic discussions of Lagarde are George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964); and Fritz R. Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: a Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1961). See Ulrich Sieg, *Deutschlands Prophet: Paul de Lagarde und die Ursprünge der modernen Antisemitismus* (Munich: Carl Hansen Verlag, 2007), for a biography of Lagarde. Lagarde’s influence at Göttingen is considered in many of the essays in *Theologie im Göttingen*, edited by Bernd Moeller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

⁵⁴ Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, 298ff., discusses the possible influences of Duhm and Lagarde on Bousset, cautioning that he could not document a personal relationship with Lagarde. Of course, scholarly influence does not require a personal relationship between scholars.

⁵⁵ Bousset, *Jesus Predigt*, 75 [DS, 164]; 78 [DS, 274]; 41 [DS, 292]. According to Janssen, *Theologie fürs Volk*, 70 n18, Bousset (and Troeltsch) were part of a student reading group that engaged the writings of Lagarde, Thomas Carlyle and others. Paul Wernle, also associated with the ‘school,’ identified Bousset and the *Burschenschaft Germania* as important in facilitating his own familiarity with Lagarde’s writings. See Dahms, “Die geistigen Väter an der Universität Göttingen,” 39 n14.

⁵⁶ Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, 371ff., addresses the question of Carlyle’s influence on Bousset. Klaus Berger, *Exegese und Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986), traces the intellectual influences of Fries, Carlyle, and Lagarde on Bousset.

capacity. Articulating a strict dichotomy between such interiorized human capacity and what was only external, Carlyle's key metaphor was that of clothing as the husk that covered the inner essence of the individual.⁵⁷ Carlyle's other contribution was his development of the notion of the great personality or hero who functions as the moving force within human history, a notion that becomes important in the resurgence of *völkisch* ideology at the end of the nineteenth century. Carlyle's influence is particularly evident in Bousset's first book, *Jesu Predigt*. While his epigraph for that work came from Carlyle,⁵⁸ Bousset also used Carlyle's metaphor of clothing/husk several times in that work as he formulated a strict opposition between what was 'innere' and living and what was 'äussere,' that is, what is external and a mere shell.⁵⁹

Rudolf Otto, who had engaged questions relating to the philosophy of religion and the connection of religion and science, had introduced Bousset to the work of Jakob Fries, a German philosopher of the early nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Fries articulated religion as 'Ahnung,' a way of apprehending truth other than reason or belief. While, as Verheule

⁵⁷ For discussion of Carlyle and his significance, especially in terms of the comparative study of religion, see Ruth ApRoberts, *The Ancient Dialectic: Thomas Carlyle and Comparative Religion* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1988).

⁵⁸ The epigraph is a quote from Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*: "Highest of all Symbols are those wherein the Artist or Poet has risen into prophet, and all men can recognize a present God and worship the same. If thou ask to what height man has carried it in this manner look on our divinest symbol, on Jesus of Nazareth and his Life. Higher has the human thought not yet reached. This is Christianity and Christendom; a Symbol of quite perennial, infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into and anew made manifest."

⁵⁹ Bousset, *Jesu Predigt*, 74-75, 125. Bousset contributed a lengthy essay on Carlyle to *Die Christliche Welt*, ChW 11 (1897).

⁶⁰ Bousset wrote the introduction to the new edition of Fries's autobiographical novel *Julius und Evagoras*. Fries, writing during the first decades of the nineteenth century, had been involved in the German student fraternities that were influential in the emergence of German national consciousness and related anti-Jewish polemic, a process that will be considered more closely in Chapter Two.

notes, this notion of religion was already present in Bousset's work before his explicit turn to neo-Friesianism, Bousset's engagement with Fries provided him with a solid philosophical foundation for his understanding of religion.⁶¹

Bousset's work also draws upon the work of Julius Wellhausen, Hermann Gunkel, and Emil Schürer. As noted above, Wellhausen's work on the Old Testament was influential in articulating a sharp division between the religion of ancient Israel and post-exilic Judaism.⁶² The influence of Gunkel's popular *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Creation and Chaos) can be seen in Bousset's quest for parallels in other religious traditions, particularly the 'oriental' traditions coming out of Persia and Babylonia; Gunkel had traced parallels to the 'religion' of the Old Testament within Babylonian texts.⁶³ Schürer had published what was titled in a later edition as *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (*The History of the Jewish People at the time of Jesus*), which quickly became a standard work.⁶⁴ In particular, Bousset saw his own work relating to *Spätjudentum* as filling a gap in Schürer's scholarship, since he believed that Schürer gave insufficient attention to the 'religion' of Judaism.

⁶¹ Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, 368ff. Otto's description of religion and the numinous in his 1917 *The Idea of the Holy* reflects a Friesian notion of religion.

⁶² Wellhausen himself was not a member of the 'history of religion' school; his work was critiqued as not sufficiently historical, since it remained tied to the textual sources. In turn, Wellhausen critiqued the *religionsgeschichtlich* approach. See above for discussion of Wellhausen's use and expansion of the earlier biblical scholar De Wette.

⁶³ Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über GEN 1 und ApJon 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895); see Klatt, *Hermann Gunkel*, for a biographical treatment of Gunkel.

⁶⁴ Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891). Schürer's multi-volume work was edited and revised by Geza Vermes and others from 1973-87 and is still a major reference work in contemporary scholarship.

Within the circle of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, Bousset has had the most significant influence on the subfield of biblical studies now known as ‘Christian origins.’ While Gunkel had been vocal in describing the goal of the *religionsgeschichtlich* approach and did devote some scholarly attention to the New Testament, he was best known for his contributions to the historical background of the Old Testament. Wilhelm Wrede, as noted above, articulated early on the rationale for studying the history of early Christian religion as opposed to theology; although his focus was the New Testament, his death at an early age cut short his scholarly contributions. Ernst Troeltsch, while certainly remembered as the systematic theologian of the ‘school,’ did not impact the course of biblical studies itself in the way that Bousset did. Since a key question within Christian theology had always been (and continues to be) how to articulate and explain the relationship between the early Christian movement and the Jewish matrix of Jesus, Bousset’s focus on that specific question meant that his work would continue to be of interest for later scholars.

Situating My Study

My study considers how Bousset’s construction of both *Spätjudentum* and religion functioned rhetorically in the context of late nineteenth-century Germany by reading his work against both the ‘Jewish Question’ and the discourses of development and degeneration that grounded racial theory.

Certainly, I am not tilling new ground in identifying the anti-Jewish representations within Bousset’s work. Bousset’s role in perpetuating negative characterizations of Judaism has been highlighted by E.P. Sanders, who, as part of his

groundbreaking work in establishing the importance of Second Temple Judaism for the interpretation of the early Christian movement, offered a savage critique of Bousset's work.⁶⁵ Sanders's critique, resting in large part on the early work of G.F. Moore⁶⁶ and Felix Perles who contemporaneously denounced the many negative and inaccurate representations of Judaism within Bousset's study of *Spätjudentum*,⁶⁷ has been instrumental in identifying Bousset's significance for the reproduction of anti-Jewish tropes within subsequent biblical scholarship, particularly that of Rudolf Bultmann, who can be rightly deemed the 'father' of twentieth-century New Testament studies. Thus, even though the 'history of religion' school itself fell by the wayside in the wake of the emergence of form criticism and the dialectical theology of Karl Barth beginning in the 1920s, Bousset's work remains significant for biblical studies.

The resurgence of interest in the 'history of religion' school, including the formation of an archive that also publishes works on the scholars within the 'history of religion' school, is reflected in the notes to the previous section, upon which much of the discussion in this section is drawn. Although these essays and primary source documents

⁶⁵ E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*; idem, *Jesus and Judaism*.

⁶⁶ George Foot Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *Harvard Theological Review* 14:3 (July 1921): 197-254. Moore argued that Bousset's work was inaccurate since Bousset relied on the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical sources rather than the rabbinical sources reflected in the Mishna and Talmud, which Moore argued better represented 'official' Judaism. Moore also showed how Bousset's work reflected both the misreading and misuse of rabbinical sources that Moore traces back to Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judentum* (1700), which had become a resource not only for biblical scholars who had no first-hand knowledge of rabbinical sources, but also for anti-Jewish polemic.

⁶⁷ Felix Perles, *Bousset's Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Wolf Peiser Verlag, 1903). Perles's critique generated a response from Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit und Schriftgelehrtentum: Antwort auf Herrn Perles' Kritik meiner 'Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter'* (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther und Reichard, 1903). This scholarly engagement will be considered more fully in Chapter Five.

provide background on the political and ecclesial issues relating to the ‘history of religion’ school in general and to Bousset, in particular, this material does not consider how Bousset’s depiction of *Spätjudentum* was ideologically embedded within the German cultural context.

Following Sanders’s paradigm-shifting work, recent scholarship has increasingly situated German Protestant biblical scholarship within its nineteenth- and twentieth-century social, political, and cultural matrix in order to identify the ideological dimensions of the representation of Judaism. The work of Susannah Heschel has been influential in tracing how Christian anti-Judaism becomes embedded within the dominant German Protestant scholarly discourse of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In articulating the hegemonic function of that scholarship, Heschel has drawn on post-colonial theory in depicting how Jewish scholarship (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) functioned as the “revolt of the colonized.”⁶⁸

Heschel’s work is extended in the work of Christian Wiese, who has analyzed in considerable depth the response of Jewish scholars within the *Wissenschaft des*

⁶⁸ Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*; idem, *The Aryan Jesus*. Robert Ericksen, *Theologians Under Hitler* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985); idem, “Assessing the Heritage: German Protestant Theologians, Nazis, and the ‘Jewish Question,’ ” in *Betrayal: The German Churches Under the Third Reich*, edited by Robert P. Ericksen and Susannah Heschel (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), has analyzed the reproduction of anti-semitic ideology within the work of German biblical scholars Paul Althaus, Emmanuel Hirsch, and Gerhard Kittel during the period of National Socialism. Other significant scholarship on the ideology of historical Jesus work includes: Alan Davies, “The Aryan Christ: A Motif in Christian Anti-Semitism,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12:4 (Fall 1975): 569-79; Marshall D. Johnson, “Power politics and New Testament Scholarship in the National Socialist Period,” *Journal for Ecumenical Studies* 23:1 (Winter 1986): 1-24; Stephen R. Haynes, “Who Needs Enemies? Jews and Judaism in Anti-Nazi Religious Discourse,” *Church History* 71:2 (June 2002): 341-67; and Peter M. Head, “The Nazi Quest for an Aryan Jesus,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 2:1 (2004): 55-89.

Judentums (science of Judaism or Jewish Studies) to representations of Judaism in German biblical studies, including the work of Bousset.⁶⁹ Like Heschel, Wiese draws on the insights of post-colonial theory in interrogating the existence (or impossibility) of a symmetrical German/Jewish scholarly dialogue at the turn of the twentieth century. Todd Penner⁷⁰ also draws on Heschel in describing how the theological interests driving biblical scholarship in the nineteenth century were implicated in the political and cultural responses to the question of Jewish Emancipation. None of these studies, however, examines sufficiently how the category of religion itself functions in enabling the potential racialization of Jewishness.

Denise Kimber Buell has highlighted the connection between the construction of race and the category of religion itself, noting how this racialization is embedded within scholarship: “This racially linked notion of what religion is helps to explain why anti-Judaism persists in the face of reconstructions of Christian origins that are quite explicit about seeking to avoid this implication.”⁷¹ While Buell is on the right track, her

⁶⁹ Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, translated by Barbara Harshav and Christian Wiese (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005).

⁷⁰ Todd Penner, “*Die Judenfrage* and the Construction of Ancient Judaism: Toward a Foregrounding of the Backgrounds Approach to Early Christianity,” in *Scripture and Traditions: essays on early Judaism and Christianity in honor of Carl R. Holladay*, edited by Patrick Gray and Gail R. O'Day (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 429-55.

⁷¹ Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 28: “these metaphors lurk in the foundations of most academic frameworks for defining and studying history, science, anthropology, and religion...[and] may appear in disguise, as assertions of the totality of history, as evolutionary discourse, and as typologies of religion.” For a discussion of the relationship of biblical claims and the development of race theory, see Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). In his chapter on ‘The Aryan moment,’ Kidd traces the entanglement of race and religion in the later nineteenth century in relation to biblical scholarship, noting how this entanglement grounds work of scholars

discussion of how race functions in relation to Christian identity does not adequately theorize the notion of religion itself, that is, how Christianity comes to stand for religion as a mode of apprehending the world. My study extends existing scholarship, since my discursive analysis of Bousset's writing allows me to show how the potential for racialization described in general terms by Buell is embedded within the work of a specific scholar. I do this by analyzing how the construction of the category of *Spätjudentum* is implicated within both Bousset's evolutionary framework of the 'history of religion' and the phenomenological notion of religion that grounds his work.⁷²

Shawn Kelley, on the other hand, has drawn the connection between the phenomenological notion of religion within Bultmann's existential theology and the racialization he finds embedded within the Christian tradition by using the notion of 'authentic existence.' Kelley traces this notion to Heidegger: "The circle is closed: Heidegger created the category of authenticity with the help of secularized antiJewish stereotypes, culled from biblical scholars, philosophy and traditional theology. Bultmann, then, in taking up Heideggerian existentialism, appropriates these secularized antiJewish categories and applies them to Judaism itself. Jews are inauthentic and inauthenticity is Jewification."⁷³ My analysis suggests that Bousset's phenomenological notion of religion

working in the 'science' of religion. As his title suggests, Kidd focuses on how these trajectories were disseminated within the Anglo-American world.

⁷² While Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*, has recently published an exhaustive analysis of what he terms the 'theological roots of anti-semitism,' his discussion does not go beyond the level of description. While he does identify degeneration as one descriptor that was often applied to Judaism, he does not consider how the racialized evolutionary framework of the nineteenth century is embedded within Bousset's work, or that of any of the other scholars for that matter.

⁷³ Shawn Kelley, *Racializing Jesus: Race, Ideology and the Formation of Modern Biblical Scholarship* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 145. Kelley also recognizes how the opposition of Western/Oriental appears in Bultmann, attributing that

is an even earlier example of the kind of the potential for the racialization of religion that Kelley has identified in Bultmann's work.⁷⁴

My study uses Karen King's analysis of the ideological function of 'syncretism' to examine Bousset's construction of *Spätjudentum*. Using Bousset as a key example, King has identified and critiqued the ideological grounding of the 'history of religion' school in relation to the essentialization of Gnosticism.⁷⁵ She argues that the construction of Gnosticism rested on tropes of syncretism that served to construct and maintain boundaries between what are assumed to be discrete entities.⁷⁶ Although King has recognized how metaphors of organicity rested on prevailing views of biologically determined race theory, my analysis shows more specifically how Bousset's language of syncretism resonated not only with racial theory in general, but, more significantly, with the racialized German/Jewish binary produced in and through anti-semitic discourse.

King's analysis draws on the work of Jonathan Z. Smith, who focused on the notion of 'difference' in relation to the comparative analysis of religious traditions and

again to Heidegger. For discussion of the influence of Bousset and the 'history of religion' school on Bultmann, see Klaus Berger, *Exegese und Philosophie*, 126; Dieter Lührmann, "Rudolf Bultmann and the History of Religion School," in *Text and Logos: The Hermeneutic Interpretation of the New Testament*, 3-14; Karlheinz Müller, *Das Judentum in der religionsgeschichtlichen Arbeit am Neuen Testament* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1983), 45ff.; Karsten Lehmkuhler, *Kultus und Theologie: Dogmatik und Exegese in der religionsgeschichtlichen Schule* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 227ff.; W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, 35ff.; Robert Morgan, "Introduction," in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of Wilhelm Wrede and Adolf Schlatter*, 12-67.

⁷⁴ As Kelley, *Racializing Jesus*, 141, notes, "When this narrative [i.e., the existential framework] is applied to the origins of Christianity, it will be all too easy to equate inauthenticity with Judaism and to equate authenticity with a purified form of western Christianity...."

⁷⁵ Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* Her treatment of the 'history of religion' school is at 71-109.

⁷⁶ King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 11-13.

communities. He highlights the ways in which scholars produce reified categories of analysis, which, when placed within a hierarchical (thus evaluative) framework, are naturalized, that is, presented as self-evident, rather than as fully implicated within the process and production of scholarship itself.⁷⁷ I analyze how Bousset's scholarship functions in the process of disciplinary formation, through which scholarship itself shapes the object of study, which is then viewed as something that is simply a given, that is, as an object that is really 'out there.'

Outline of Study

In order to explicate how Bousset's scholarship functions, my study is necessarily interdisciplinary, reading across German intellectual history; the history of biblical scholarship; the emergence of the natural sciences, Darwinism, and anthropology; the history of anti-semitism; and the beginnings of *Religionswissenschaft* and the academic study of religion. By locating Bousset within the intersecting threads of racial theory, Western colonialism and imperialism, and Protestant theology, I demonstrate how Bousset simultaneously constructs *Spätjudentum* and 'religion' and, in doing so, naturalizes Jewish difference in a way that legitimates the racialization of Jewishness at that historical moment.

While this chapter has situated Bousset and the 'history of religion' school quite broadly within nineteenth-century Protestant thought and the emerging discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*, Chapter Two extends that contextualization. I explore the interpenetration of the discourses of German national consciousness, racial theory and

⁷⁷ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion*; Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

anti-semitism by identifying key tropes, such as essence/kernel, development/teleology, degeneration, and syncretism, which circulated within both scientific and cultural discourses. I highlight how these tropes functioned in the racialization of non-Western peoples within a teleology that assumed and legitimated European superiority and how such racialization was performed in the public sphere. I consider how the construction of German identity was fashioned in relation to the Jewish Question, through which the possible emancipation and assimilation of *Judentum* into the German *Volk* was problematized. I then examine the ways in which Protestant religiosity becomes identified with notions of ‘Germanness’ in order to establish the particular context in which the anti-semitic discourse that took root by the end of the nineteenth century articulates the operative binary of spirit/materiality as a racialized German/Jew dichotomy.

In the next three chapters, I explicate Bousset’s construction of *Spätjudentum/Judentum* as the internal German colonial other using three different lenses. Chapter Three considers the dialectic between the construction of *Spätjudentum* and the history of religion by focusing on Bousset’s deployment of the evolutionary framework of ‘religion’ produced within *Religionswissenschaft*. I show how *Judentum* can potentially be racialized within this evolutionary framework by mapping all of the markers of the ‘otherness’ of non-Western peoples onto *Judentum*. I conclude by showing how he tweaks his evolutionary framework by situating Germanic Christianity as the apex of religion, that is, the apex of human development, opening up a space in which the Christian/Jewish binary can be read as a racialized German/Jew binary.

In Chapter Four, I consider the dialectic between the construction of *Spätjudentum* and the history of religion by framing how Bousset constructs the periodized *Spätjudentum*. I demonstrate how he uses the tropes of syncretism and chaos, also deployed in anti-semitic discourse, to frame *Judentum* as an alien essence, without true interiority, whose heterogeneity represents a persistent threat to the order rendered natural by virtue of the spirit/matter binary. To illustrate how Bousset's work would resonate in the German public sphere at the turn of the twentieth century, I read Bousset against the cultural context of the Jewish Question, using the work of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who, in his immensely popular *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*,⁷⁸ characterized *Judentum* as a racially bastardized people marked by a materialist essence that remained unchanged over time. I conclude the chapter by describing how Bousset has thereby constructed *Spätjudentum/Judentum* not only as an object of scholarly study, but also as a continuing problem within the study of the history of religions.

While those two chapters examine how Bousset maps markers of difference onto *Judentum*, in Chapter Five I take up the orientalism of his scholarship, that is, how he is actively producing this disciplinary discourse via his construction and control of the category of *Spätjudentum* and how that is imbricated within his notion of the history of religion. I examine the way in which Bousset participated in the normalization of the terminology of *Spätjudentum* through both his editorial role and his own writing. I show how the notion of syncretism functions in constructing *Spätjudentum* as an object of study that he both defines and controls through his critique of the work of other scholars,

⁷⁸ Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), originally published in German in 1899.

both Jewish and non-Jewish. I conclude the chapter by tying Bousset's articulation of the function of scholarly activity explicitly to the discourse of Western colonialism.

Chapter Six summarizes the argument developed in the preceding chapters, emphasizing the multiple ways in which these intersecting discourses of Protestant theology, German nationalism and anti-semitism, and Western colonialism articulate the implicit spirit/materiality binary: Christian/Jew; European/non-European; and German/Jew. While these binaries cannot be mapped congruently onto each other, my study demonstrates how Bousset's construction of *Judentum*, ultimately grounded in a phenomenological notion of religion that privileges Christianity, has participated in all of these formulations, and, in doing so, has helped to legitimate those binaries.

In an Afterword I identify the implications of Bousset's work for both biblical scholarship and the contemporary study of religion. Considering the appropriation of Bousset and the history of religion(s) approach in recent scholarship on Christian origins,⁷⁹ I suggest that that appropriation is problematic in two ways. First, I argue that these scholars do not sufficiently interrogate the ideological grounding of the

⁷⁹ Jarl Fossum, "The new *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*: The Quest for a Jewish Christology," in *SBL Seminar Papers* 30 (1991), 638-46; Larry W. Hurtado, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?: Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005); idem, *Lord Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003); idem, *One God, One Lord*, second edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clarke, 1998); Heikki Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology: a story and a programme*, revised edition (London: SCM Press, 2000); Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E.S. North, eds., *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2004); Alan F. Segal, "Paul's Religious Experience in the Eyes of Jewish Scholars," in *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity*, edited by David B. Capes, et al (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007); idem, *Rebecca's Children* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1986).

phenomenological notion of religion implicated within the language of ‘history of religion.’ Second, I suggest that using biological or organic language to frame the continuity/discontinuity between Judaism and early Christianity runs the risk of reproducing a racialized notion of both religion and *Judentum*. I conclude by identifying avenues for further research on how Judaism has functioned within the ‘Western construction of religion.’

CHAPTER II

RACE, RELIGION, AND THE (GERMAN) JEWISH QUESTION

The previous chapter situated Bousset and his ‘history of religion’ approach broadly within the context of German Protestant thought and the emerging discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* in order to introduce the key notions of ‘history’ and ‘religion.’ In this chapter, I contextualize Bousset within the German social and cultural milieu at the beginning of the twentieth century, more specifically within the multiple intersecting and entangled discourses of German *völkisch* ideology, anti-semitism, Protestant religiosity, and scientific racial theory. Through all of these discourses, key oppositions such as essence/manifestation, kernel/husk, interiority/exteriority, and notions such as development, teleology, degeneration, and syncretism circulated. Certainly, these concepts cannot be neatly mapped onto each other within the multiple discourses I consider. However, these interlocking notions reflect the multiple ways in which the primary spirit/matter binary functions within these various discourses—Christian/Jewish; West/non-West; German/Jew—and thus describes the cultural space in which Bousset was writing.

This contextualization provides the foundation for showing how Bousset’s construction of religion and of *Spätjudentum* would resonate in the ideologically charged atmosphere of the *fin de siècle*. In a public sphere in which German identity was articulated in opposition to *Judentum*, and Western (European) superiority over non-

European peoples was confirmed via racial theory, *Judentum* could be framed as a racialized other in addition to its traditional status as Christianity's theological other.

I begin by examining how the liberal Protestant tradition was imbricated in the emergence of German national consciousness over the course of the nineteenth century, noting in particular the connection between Protestant religiosity and the German ideal of *Bildung*. I then trace the emergence of the scientific disciplines of biology and anthropology in order to show: a) how those disciplines and the popularization of all things *Wissenschaft* produced and legitimated the racialized discourses of development and degeneration that permeated the public sphere by the turn of the twentieth century; and b) how this racialization functioned in relation to the representation of the essence (*Wesen*) or spirit (*Geist*) of Jewishness via the discourse of anti-semitism. The final section of this chapter frames the cultural crisis of the *fin de siècle* and how liberal Protestant scholarship, including Bousset, navigated the space that emerged between the traditional Jewish/Christian binary and a racialized Jewish/German binary.

German Protestant Religiosity, *Bildung*, and the Jewish Question

This section examines the emergence and consolidation of German national consciousness in relation to German Protestantism and the 'Jewish Question' in order to show how the notion of religiosity that grounded Bousset's framework of the history of religion was already implicated in constructing the German/Jewish binary. This discussion highlights how notions of interiority and teleology come together with broader concerns about degeneration and regeneration.

What became termed the ‘Jewish question’ in the late Enlightenment centered on the necessity for, and possibility of, the regeneration and cultural assimilation of the Jews as a prerequisite for the granting of political and legal rights as part of the consolidation of the multiplicity of German sovereignties—kingdoms, principalities, free cities, etc.—into a modern nation-state.¹ However, as Paul Rose has noted, the ‘Jewish question’ was also the ‘German question.’² While certainly a political question, the issue of Jewish Emancipation was inextricably entangled with the search for what was constitutive of German national identity at the advent of modernity and thus involved the larger cultural space of the public sphere. German national identity is perhaps more accurately described through the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century as German cultural identity, since ‘Germany’ as a political state did not exist until unification in 1871. That public space was overwhelmingly Protestant throughout the nineteenth century and increasingly became a space in which German national and cultural identity was displayed and performed, in particular within the educated middle-class, the *Bildungsbürgertum*.

German cultural identity, or the notion of Germanness, was grounded in the ideal of *Bildung*, which integrates key notions of interiority and teleology. Often rendered as ‘self-cultivation,’ *Bildung*, conceptualized as a dynamic process of self-formation by which one was recognized as one of the educated (*Gebildete*), became constitutive of the idea/identity of ‘Germanness’ itself.³ The participation in, and achievement of, *Bildung*

¹ See Jonathan M. Hess, *Germans, Jews, and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

² Paul Lawrence Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany: From Kant to Wagner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 41.

³ The classic discussion of *Bildung* is found in W.H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: ‘Bildung’ From Humboldt to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). See also Reinhart Kosellek, editor, *Bildungsbürgertum im 19.*

provided the symbolic capital that allowed the *Bildungsbürgertum* to recognize itself as that element of society situated between the aristocracy and the people/masses (i.e. artisans, peasantry, nascent industrial working class) and constituted a prerequisite for the attainment of *Bürgerlichkeit*, middle-class respectability.⁴ *Bürgerlichkeit* first constituted the marker of the space of *Bildungsbürgertum* and then became the criterion, the achievement of which was necessary for inclusion in the *Bildungsbürgertum*. Respectability in this sense meant something much more than good manners; rather, it required a level of moral comportment deemed necessary for social cohesion.⁵

Such self-cultivation was marked not merely by the acquisition of a level of education, but involved the development of what were considered to be innate human

Jahrhundert, Teil II (Stuttgart: Klett–Cotta, 1990), especially Koselleck’s Introduction, 11-46.

⁴ Limitations of space preclude the extensive discussion that would be necessary to consider adequately the role of sexuality and gender within nineteenth-century social and cultural norms and in the colonial enterprise overall. For analysis of the connection between gender, sexuality, and reproduction and the individual body and the social body, see George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), for his discussion of the connection between the development of German national identity, gender, and social order. More recently, Christian Geulen, *Wahlverwandte: Rassendiskurs und Nationalismus im späten 19. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2004), has emphasized how race and sexuality were constitutive of German national identity. Suzanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), traces the relationship of race and sexuality to German cultural engagement with the discoveries of the New World. However, see the essays in Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, eds., *The German Invention of Race* (Albany: State University of New York, 2006), which connect the conceptualization of race to German intellectual thought, particularly Kant. See Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert, eds., *Gendering Modern German History: Rewriting Historiography* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), for extensive bibliographies of recent work on gender in different areas of research within German studies.

⁵ George L. Mosse, “Jewish Emancipation: Between *Bildung* and Respectability,” in *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, edited by Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985), 1-16, at 4.

qualities.⁶ The cultivation and formation of the ‘innere’ individual (*Persönlichkeit*) was important because an individual’s outward appearance/habits/behavior would reflect his/her inner qualities. *Bildung* as process was conceptualized in organic and teleological terms: “The concept of *Bildung* captures the ongoing process of formation and transformation with God’s world, and it becomes a moral imperative for humans to keep pace with this change.”⁷

As Jarausch notes, *Bildung* produced “a popular identification of cultivation with a secularized Protestantism that characterized the entire *Bildungsbürgertum*.”⁸ This identification arose out of the shift in the Protestant theological semantic field from ‘doctrine’ to ‘piety’ (*Frömmigkeit*), an inward religiosity that Lucian Hölscher has termed a “religious self-stylization.”⁹

⁶ Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 78, discusses how, for Herder: “It is in fact only through the process of *Bildung* that we become fully human....”

⁷ Kontje, *German Orientalisms*, 72.

⁸ Konrad H. Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 85. For an extensive review essay covering a number of publications pertaining to the *Bildungsbürgertum*, see Jonathan Sperber, “*Bürger, Bürgertum, Bürgerlichkeit, Bürgerliche Gesellschaft: Studies of the German (Upper) Middle Class and Its Sociocultural World*,” *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 271-97. See also Uffa Jensen, “Into the Spiral of Problematic Perceptions: Modern Anti-Semitism and *gebildetes Bürgertum* in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *German History* 25:3 (2007): 348-71; idem, *Gebildete Doppelgänger: Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), especially 25: “*Bildung* und Religiosität verschmolzen zu einer weltlichen Frömmigkeit, die weder im eigentlichen Sinne als religiös noch als säkular zu bezeichnen wäre.” See also Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), especially 19-25.

⁹ Lucian Hölscher, “The Religious Divide: Piety in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” 33-47, in *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914*, edited by Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), at 35ff.

Beginning with the writings of Herder, the conceptual framework of *Bildung* began to be explicated in broader terms as the dynamic formation of different peoples or ethnic groups (*Volk*), each with its own distinctive *Kultur*.¹⁰ The usual translation of the term ‘*Volk*’ as ‘a people’ does not capture the deeper connotations of ‘*Volk*’ as a people in the sense of an organic whole, rather than merely the aggregation of individuals.¹¹ The *Bildung* of the individual was rooted in the organic conception of the *Volk* and *Volksbildung*.

The dynamic process of *Bildung* became viewed as the means for the regeneration of the German people (*Volksbildung*) following the German defeat in the Napoleonic war in 1806. Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation* outlined his prescription for the *Bildung* of the German *Volk* by focusing on *Wissenschaft* as the means by which knowledge, and thus individual character, would be cultivated through a thoroughly restructured program of education.¹² Such regeneration would be salvific for the German people, described by Fichte as “an original people, *the* people, simply Germans.”¹³

¹⁰ J. G. Herder, *Ideen zu Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1914), originally published in 1784.

¹¹ George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 4ff.; Uwe Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich: Sprache-Rasse-Religion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), especially 93ff.; Peter Walkenhorst, *Nation-Volk-Rasse: radikaler Nationalismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1890-1914* (Berlin: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 86ff.; Horst Zillesen, ed., *Volk, Nation, Vaterland: Der deutsche Protestantismus und der Nationalismus* (Gütersloh: Verlaghaus G. Mohn, 1970), especially the Introduction, 19-28.

¹² Johann Fichte, *Addresses to a German Nation* (London and Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1940), originally published in 1808 as *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1940).

¹³ Fichte, *Addresses to a German Nation*, 126; *Reden*, 121: “alle diese sind ursprüngliche Menschen, sie sind, wenn sie als ein Volk betrachtet werden, ein Urvolk, das Volk schlechtweg, Deutsche.”

The sense of German *völkisch* identity intensified following the wars of liberation against the French occupation in 1813-15 and was bound up with Protestant religiosity. Ernst Moritz Arndt, an ardent early nationalist, articulated this: “Germany is the land of Protestantism...Protestantism seems to be purely Germanic...it effortlessly attracts all things Germanic to it.”¹⁴ Speaking of the German Romantics in the early nineteenth century, such as Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Achim von Arnim as well as Arndt, George S. Williamson notes: “For these writers, Protestantism defined the national community just as surely as the national community defined Protestantism.”¹⁵ According to this ‘logic,’ anything outside of Protestantism was necessarily excluded.

As Williamson points out, while the Romantics rejected institutionalized Christianity, they were not anti-religious; rather, they sought a specifically German religiosity that would serve as a unifying force in the absence of political unification. In articulating a type of religiousness that was rooted in German identity, Protestant piety was re-formulated or ‘translated’ in terms of German cultural values grounded in the poetry, music and folkways rooted in the German soil and then ritualized as national mythology.¹⁶

The public sphere of the *Bildungsbürgertum* became a site of contestation where German identity as a people (*Volk*) was constructed over and against everything non-

¹⁴ Ernst Moritz Arndt, “Über alte Zeit und neue Zeit,” in E.M. Arndt, *Blick aus der Zeit* (Germanien, 1814), 142, cited in Wolfgang Altgeld, “Religion, Denomination and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” in *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany*, 52.

¹⁵ George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 98. Not all Romantics continued to embrace Protestantism; for example, Friedrich Schlegel converted to Catholicism, relocating to predominantly Catholic Austria.

¹⁶ Williamson, *Longing for Myth*, 72-120; 295ff.

German. The construction of German national consciousness within the *Bildungsbürgertum* was inseparable from the question of Jewish Emancipation that emerged in the late eighteenth century. The public debate centered on the need for ‘civic improvement’ (*bürgerliche Verbesserung*) of the Jews. The question of whether and how Jews could function within the public realm of civil society was framed in terms of the necessary moral regeneration of a people characterized as both morally and physically degenerate.¹⁷ A key issue in this debate was whether this ‘degeneration’ was an innate quality of Jews or whether it could be attributed to the effects of long-standing legal restrictions on Jews. The vast majority of Jews were prohibited from owning land, living in cities, and engaging in most trades and crafts. These restrictions limited economic opportunities mainly to itinerant peddling or money lending, both of which were characterized as morally questionable.

Although the question of emancipation went to the issue of whether and how Jews would function in civil society, the more precise question was *where* the Jews could be assimilated. Since the Jews were precluded both by birth and by economic restrictions from being peasants, artisans, or members of the aristocracy, the only social class to which they could aspire was *Bürgertum*, which required the pursuit of the ideal of *Bildung* that was constitutive of true ‘Germanness.’ The Jews, who were neither Protestant nor able to claim connection to the descendants of the Germanic tribes (*Urvolk*) that were the imagined bearers of German *Kultur* and who yet aspired to ‘Germanness,’ became the necessary internal ‘other’ in articulating German identity.

¹⁷ Jacob Katz, *Emancipation and Assimilation: Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Westmead, England: Gregg International Publishers, 1972), 22-34.

Part of the polemic against Jewish Emancipation claimed that the Jews constituted a ‘state within a state,’¹⁸ drawing upon the traditional stereotypical representation of the Jews as an exclusivist and particularist group that would always serve Jewish interests above those of the nation-state. Fichte had argued that the Jews represented “...a powerful, hostilely disposed nation founded on the hatred of mankind” which could never change, unless “one night we chop off all their heads and replace them with new ones.”¹⁹ Although Fichte’s later *Addresses to the German Nation* did not mention Jews explicitly, his demand for a German people “without admixture of, corruption by, or any alien element” would certainly resonate within the anti-Jewish elements of nascent German nationalism.²⁰

While Herder earlier had described the Jews as an “Asiatic alien element,”²¹ the philosopher Jakob Fries later explicitly framed the Jews as a ‘threat’ in an essay entitled, “The Endangering of German Welfare and Character by the Jews.”²² As a ‘state within a

¹⁸ Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction, Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 58, traces this phrase back to Fichte in the late eighteenth century. See Katz, *Emancipation and Assimilation*, 47-76, where he traces the history of usage of what were equivalent phrases: ‘state within a state’ and ‘nation within a nation.’ The phrase was first used in the early eighteenth century by Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (Letter #107), to refer to the French salons that were led by women.

¹⁹ Fichte, “Beitrag zur Berichtigung der Urteile des Publicums über die Franzoesische Revolution,” [1793] cited in *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), edited by Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, 309-10.

²⁰ Fichte, *Addresses*, 135-6; *Reden*, 129: “ohne Einmischung und Verderbung durch irgendein Fremdes, und in das Ganze dieser Gesetzgebung nicht Gehöriges.”

²¹ Herder, “Bekehrung der Juden,” [1802] in *Sämtliche Werke*, 24:62-3, quoted in Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism*, 103.

²² Jakob Fries, “Über die Gefährdung des Wohlstandes und Charakters der Deutschen durch die Juden,” [1816] cited in *The Jew in the Modern World*, 310-11. As noted in Chapter One, Fries influenced the emergence of the university *Bursenschaften* (fraternities) that played a significant role in the ‘Germanization’ of student and university culture. Fries became a close friend of the biblical scholar W.M.L. De Wette.

state,' the Jews could, therefore, never be true 'Germans' and thus represented a continuing threat to the growing sense of German nationalism and *völkisch* identity.

This section has considered how the construction of German identity was increasingly formulated in opposition to what was deemed the essence of *Judentum*. Since German identity was bound up with Protestant religiosity, the notion of religious interiority becomes tied to the essence of Germanness. Thus, German Protestantism was already participating in the specific formulation of a German/Jewish binary that was, however, not yet the racialized German/Jewish binary articulated within anti-semitic discourse at the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, this construction of Germanness brought to the foreground notions of interiority, degeneration, and regeneration, terms that would be reformulated and racialized by the end of the nineteenth century:

The contested concept of 'regeneration' that propelled the debates over civic improvement was not just an invention of political discourse. It fed directly into—and on—controversies raging in Enlightenment anthropology over the permanence of racial 'degeneration,' an issue that gained prominence both through the scientific works of Kant, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) and lesser known eighteenth-century anthropologists writing on the novel concept of 'race'.... In this sense, the controversy over Jewish emancipation contributed to the emergent discourse on race central to precolonial Germany's colonial imaginary, marking one of the first explicitly political discussions of a category that would become so crucial in the late nineteenth century.²³

The next section considers how these key notions of development and degeneration become fully embedded within scientific racial theory, which by the end of the nineteenth century explained all human difference as biologically determined.

²³ Hess, *German, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*, 15-16.

Teleological Twins: Development and Degeneration

As noted in Chapter One, liberal Protestants had to navigate the demands of Enlightenment science and rationality that contradicted the traditional supernatural claims of Christianity. The dilemma for liberal theologians who rejected supernatural/divine accounts of creation and embraced the rationality of *Wissenschaft* was how to fashion a worldview that retained some sense of purpose that would support the Christian teleological narrative of salvation history.²⁴ The discourse of ‘development’ provided the necessary framework for the articulation of both continuity and purpose within such narrative. I first outline how teleology was embedded within ‘development’ in relation to both the formation of organic life-forms (the individual organism) and human history (ethnic groups/‘races,’ nations). In the second subsection, I consider how degeneration, as development’s ‘other,’ became an explanatory trope for natural and human history and was fundamental for the construction and representation of the Jewish ‘other.’

(a) Development and Teleology

Despite the increasing positivist trajectory of the physical sciences elsewhere, in Germany the emerging disciplines of biology and its sub-fields, comparative morphology and embryology, remained grounded in an organicist conceptualization of development and teleology.²⁵ What Frederick Gregory has described as scientific materialism, most

²⁴ Frederick Gregory, *Nature Lost? Natural Science and the German Theological Tradition* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 3-23.

²⁵ Timothy Lenoir, *The Strategy of Life: Teleology and Mechanics in Nineteenth Century Biology* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982), ix. The term ‘biology’ was first used by Treviranus in 1802, while Goethe coined the neologism, ‘*Morphologie*.’ See also Timothy Lenoir, “Morphotypes and the historical-genetic method in Romantic biology,” in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, edited by Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine (New York and

closely associated in Germany with scientists such as Büchner, Vogt, and Moleschott, denied the existence of any non-material element (the supernatural, the soul, or notion of transcendence), claiming that all physiological processes could be explained in accordance with the causal laws governing the natural world, i.e., the laws of causality from physics.²⁶ However, as Gregory notes, even scientific materialists did not subscribe to a mechanistic worldview based on randomness: “None of them assumed that the world and development of life was the result of pure chance. What they opposed was a teleology resulting from external agency.”²⁷

Teleology had been a key element in the early nineteenth-century German Romantic period, when the *Naturphilosophes*, such as Goethe, sought to determine the essence of an organism so as to trace the unity and continuity of its growth from its origin to full actualization. As Timothy Lenoir has argued, a strong intellectual current within German science had attempted to find a unifying framework “...uniting the principles of both teleology and mechanics” that would explain causality in organic development.²⁸ The concept of *Bildungstrieb* (formative drive) developed by Blumenbach (drawing on Kant) represented the “organic structuring principle” (*Lebenskraft*) that was not reducible to

Cambridge: Columbia University Press, 1990); for a discussion of scientific materialism, see Frederick Gregory, *Scientific Materialism in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1977). See also Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: science and philosophy in the age of Goethe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

²⁶ Gregory, *Scientific Materialism*, especially 164ff.; idem, *Nature Lost?* For a descriptive overview of the history of the natural sciences in the nineteenth century, see Richard G. Olson, *Science and Scientism in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008). For a discussion of the relationship of the institutional location of the scientific materialists and social/political concerns, see Keith M. Anderton, “The Limits of Science: a social, political, and moral agenda for epistemology in nineteenth century Germany” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1993).

²⁷ Gregory, *Scientific Materialism*, 186-7.

²⁸ Lenoir, *The Strategy of Life*, 2-3, 12.

physical or chemical properties and that was distinguished from the earlier vitalism that had posited the existence of a special ‘force’ within organic life to explain the process of development.²⁹

The theory underlying *Bildungstrieb* conceptualized development as a process and potentiality already contained within the origin of the kernel (*Keim*) of the organism. Thus, the notions of origin, essence, and development in the organic realm were bound together. Since the *Keim* “contains the unity of organization within itself,”³⁰ it represented a teleological framework in which purposefulness, coherence, and directionality are embedded without any transcendental or supernatural source. The emerging fields of comparative anatomy, embryology, and morphology investigated the stages of development representing the actualization of this potential, as well as the causes for disruption of ‘normal’ development.

The teleology of the organic development of individuals provided a means for articulating the development of groups—species, races, etc.— in terms of progressive and more complex development. The notion of evolution, or development, of species over time was well established in scientific circles even before Darwin. These earlier theories of development asserted, implicitly if not explicitly, a progressive development of species from the simple/primitive to the more complex, as well as the threat of reversal and decline.³¹ Darwin’s theory of natural selection provided a mechanism that explained organic change over time: environmental adaptation of the natural variations within types

²⁹ Lenoir, *The Strategy of Life*, 15ff.

³⁰ Lenoir, “Morphotypes and the historical-genetic method in Romantic biology,” 124.

³¹ Peter J. Bowler, *Darwinism* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 18ff.; idem, *Evolution: The History of An Idea* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1984), especially 60ff.

of organisms could produce organic forms that then over long periods of time became sufficiently differentiated to be categorized as a new species.³²

As Alfred Kelly notes, the popularizers of Darwin helped to transform Darwin's non-teleological theory into an all-encompassing worldview grounded in determinism and materialism.³³ The famous Darwinist trope, 'struggle for existence,' soon became conceived of in ideological terms far beyond Darwin's actual language as an all-out war of all against all—not just in terms of individuals or species within a natural environment, but more significantly in terms of nations, races, and peoples.³⁴ Although Darwin's theory of natural selection appeared to posit a random, non-purposeful universe, the ideology of Darwinism interpreted Darwin in a way that allowed the notion of

³² Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1979), originally published in 1859; idem, *The Descent of Man* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), originally published in 1879. Darwin's theory was predicated on the idea that species were not fixed; rather, the label of 'species' was a scientific category that had no pre-existing content, so that species represented constructed categories. Species, beginning with Buffon and Linnaeus in the eighteenth century, had been differentiated and classified in terms of the single criterion of reproduction, since it was thought that species could not interbreed or at least could not produce fertile offspring.

³³ Alfred Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 18ff.

³⁴ For discussion of the significance of the intensification of the German translation of this phrase, see Peter J. Bowler, "Social Metaphors in Evolutionary Biology, 1870-1930: The Wider Dimension of Social Darwinism," in *Biology as Society, Society as Biology*, edited by Sabine Maason, Everett Mendelsohn, and Peter Weingart (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 107-26; Peter Weingart, "'Struggle for Existence': Selection and Retention of a Metaphor," in *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors*, 127-51; Eve-Marie Engels, "Charles Darwin in der deutschen Zeitschriftenliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts—Ein Forschungsbericht," in *Evolutionsbiologie von Darwin bis heute*, edited by Rainer Brömer, Uwe Hossfeld, and Nicolas A. Rupke (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 2000), 19-57, especially 48ff.

progressive, purposive development.³⁵ Darwinism became more firmly entrenched in Germany than other countries, with Ernst Haeckel, a zoologist at the University of Jena, as the key advocate who introduced Darwin to the German public and firmly embraced what he took as Darwin's explicit rejection of any theological understanding of the natural world.³⁶ Outside of Germany, early disseminators of Darwin included T.H. Huxley and Herbert Spencer, with Spencer being credited with theorizing so-called Social Darwinism and formulating the expression "survival of the fittest."³⁷

Haeckel connected the twin trajectories of development—that of the individual and that of species — through his biogenetic principle, in which he claimed that

³⁵ Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin*, 30, notes that the German translation of natural selection as "*natürliche Zuchtwahl*" (natural breeding choice/selection) has a clear teleological connotation.

³⁶ Haeckel produced both scholarly and popular works, with *The History of Creation* (1868) as one of his early works (9 editions by 1900), and *The Riddle of the Universe* (1899) as one of the most influential books at the turn of the twentieth century, with 300,000 volumes sold by the beginning of WWI; see Andreas Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert: Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit 1848-1914* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002, second edition), for a discussion of Haeckel's role in promoting Darwinian theories. For a biography of Haeckel, see Mario DiGregorio, *From Here to Eternity: Ernst Haeckel and Scientific Faith* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005); and most recently, Robert J. Richards, *The Tragic Sense of Life: Ernst Haeckel and the struggle over evolutionary thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Kelly, *The Descent of Darwinism*, 100ff., identifies other persons influential in the popularization of Darwin, such as Carl Vogt, Ludwig Büchner, Friedrich Ratzel, and especially Wilhelm Bölsche, who Kelly argues was more influential than even Haeckel, though his role has not been properly acknowledged in scholarship.

³⁷ For discussion of Spencer's role in the public reception of Darwin's theory, see Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 247ff., and 331; Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); Bowler, *Darwinism*, 48-51; and idem, "Social Metaphors in Evolutionary Biology, 1870-1930: The Wider Dimension of Social Darwinism," 107-26.

‘ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.’³⁸ By that, he meant that the process of embryonic development, that is, the development of the individual organism, recapitulated serially the adult developmental forms from the lower species to the higher ones over time.³⁹ In this way, Haeckel’s biogenetic principle served to establish a necessary connection between the individual’s development and that of the species overall, resulting in a unified and holistic understanding of human development and the natural world.⁴⁰

The hierarchical framework of the theory of recapitulation was then transposed into the social and cultural realm as an explanatory vehicle for social, racial, and cultural difference, through which European superiority was naturalized. When human history is conceptualized in terms of progressive stages, and the European (i.e., white male) is assumed as the telos of development, then everyone else (non-European and/or female) is deemed to represent earlier, more primitive stages of development. Haeckel’s recapitulation theory, thus, served as a bridge between developmental biology and nineteenth-century conceptions of race and gender.

By the end of the nineteenth century, racial theory provided the explanation for all progress and decline within human history: “how questions as different as those of

³⁸ Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*. For discussion of how Haeckel drew on his mentors, see Ruth G. Rinard, “The Problem of the Organic Individual: Ernst Haeckel and the Development of the Biogenetic Law,” *Journal for the History of Biology* 14:2 (1981): 249-75.

³⁹ See Daniel Gasman, *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism: Social Darwinism in Ernst Haeckel and the German Monist League* (New York: American Elsevier Inc., 1971); and Mario Di Gregorio, *From Here to Eternity*, for an extensive discussion of Haeckel’s scientific theories.

⁴⁰ See Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, for an extended discussion of the history of the theory of recapitulation and its later repudiation within the scientific community; and idem, *The Mismeasure of Man*, revised and expanded edition (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 142-51.

hygiene, aesthetics, comparative linguistics, Jewish emancipation, and the status of science and philosophy shaped and were shaped by the emerging discourses of race.”⁴¹ The ‘idea of race’ as developed by Kant, Blumenbach, Herder, and other German thinkers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had outlined a history of the human subject that was anthropologically, rather than theologically, grounded. In attempting to account for the existence of human difference, both physical and cultural, within the human species as a whole, what John Zammito has described as philosophical anthropology produced various classifications of human groups (races) based upon the comparison of physical characteristics, such as hair and skin color, that had been ‘observed’ through the course of European colonialism, travel, and missionary activities beginning in the early modern period.⁴²

Whether based upon cultural or aesthetic criteria, classificatory schemes were necessarily hierarchical and thus evaluative, and privileged what Blumenbach had termed the ‘Caucasian’ race.⁴³ Gender was fully imbricated within the conceptualization of race and was explicitly grounded in the encounter, whether actual or imagined, with ‘primitive’ peoples. Since what was Western and male was taken as normative in terms of the evolutionary framework, women, wherever located, were lower on the evolutionary scale and situated on the same level as what was marked as primitive. As Suzanne Zantop notes, Germany actively participated in such colonial engagements even before the acquisition of colonies beginning in the 1880s, since the New World served as

⁴¹ Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, “Introduction,” in *The German Invention of Race*, 2.

⁴² John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 229ff. See Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lott, eds., *The Idea of Race* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000), viiff.

⁴³ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 66.

“an imaginary testing ground for the development of constructs that assigned the white European/German male a position of power and authority over all kinds of feminized others, be they wives/children/servants, colonized women/natives/colonized territory, or the ‘effeminate’ aristocracy.”⁴⁴

Grounding the notion of racial types was an essentialist understanding of the “persistence and stability of racial elements.”⁴⁵ Racial typology became increasingly objectified by the application of scientific empirical methods of measurement and quantification of visually observable characteristics, such as hair or skin color, as well as criteria established by the scientific ‘expert,’ such as skull size and shape or jaw angles.⁴⁶

(b) Difference/ development and degeneration

If development of an organism—whether plant, animal, or human—involved the unfolding of the ‘unity of organization’ already contained within it, then scientists needed to explain what happened when that natural process failed to continue, leaving the organism ‘stuck’ at an early stage of development that Darwin termed ‘arrest of development.’ Such disruption of the ‘unity’ of the ‘essence’ or *Keim* of the organism was perceived as both abnormal and unnatural; degeneration became the key concept in

⁴⁴ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 43.

⁴⁵ Nancy L. Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982), 93.

⁴⁶ See the collected essays in George W. Stocking, Jr., ed., *Bones, Bodies, Behavior: Essays in Biological Anthropology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), especially Robert Proctor, “From *Anthropologie* to *Rassenkunde* in the German Anthropological Tradition,” 138-79. According to Proctor, 141, German anthropology, emerging out of field of medicine, was overwhelmingly physicalist; he notes that 70 % of German anthropological journal material relied on body measurements.

explaining any deviation from what was assumed as the norm.⁴⁷ The notion of degeneration was overdetermined and encompassed a multitude of ‘sins’: “various conceptions of atavism, regression, relapse, transgression and decline within a European context so often identified as the quintessential age of evolution, progress, optimism, reform or improvement.”⁴⁸ Degeneration, like development, was understood teleologically; it “...provided a framework and a focus for knowledge about immanent natural processes in social and cultural and historical as well as biological contexts, and a locus of belief about transcendent forces affecting the pace and direction of change....”⁴⁹

The concern for degeneration in relation to human development was first expressed in terms of the individual. The nineteenth century marked an increase in interest in the abnormal, from freaks and ‘monsters’⁵⁰ through B.A. Morel’s work in the 1850s on cretinism to Caesar Lombroso in the 1880s, who tied atavism, i.e., arrested development at an earlier stage of the process, to inherent criminality.⁵¹ Originally conceptualized in terms of the moral character of the individual, degeneration was then mapped onto the physical body and expressed in medicalized language of disease and health. The language of health applied to that which was marked as ‘normal’ – that which upheld the bourgeois social order and was therefore normative. Conversely, the language

⁴⁷ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), 34.

⁴⁸ Daniel Pick, *The Faces of Degeneration: a European Disorder 1848-1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2.

⁴⁹ J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman, “Introduction,” *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), xii.

⁵⁰ See Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 62.

⁵¹ Pick, *The Faces of Degeneration*, especially 48ff. and 109ff.

of disease was used to mark and contain the abnormal as pathological.⁵² Since “the distinction between normality and abnormality was basic to modern respectability,”⁵³ health was a *bürgerlich* norm and would especially resonate with the *Bildungsbürgertum*.⁵⁴ Later in the century, the concern for degeneration, especially in Germany, shifted to concern for the health of the larger social body, a concern that was inseparable from questions of sexuality and control of reproduction. Degeneration thus became a transgenerational problem for the body politic in terms of population demographics, especially the preservation of the German *Volk*.

The development and degeneration of (and conflict between) the races functioned by the end of the nineteenth century within racial ideology to explain both progress and decline in human history. While the German anthropologist Blumenbach did use the term ‘degeneration’ in the late eighteenth century to explain how the non-European peoples ‘devolved’ following the monogenesis of a single human species, degeneration had not been framed in terms of either biology or teleology. In *On the Inequality of Races*, initially published in 1853, Gobineau connected degeneration to both biology and teleology when he identified racial degeneration as the determinant of all human history and the inequality of peoples. He associated race and decline, claiming that the degeneration of a race or people meant “that the people has no longer the intrinsic value

⁵² Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 24.

⁵³ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 16.

⁵⁴ Klaus Hödl, *Die Pathologisierung des jüdischen Körpers* (Wien: Picus Verlag, 1997), 66-70.

as it had before, because it no longer has the same blood in its veins, continuous adulterations having gradually affected the quality of the blood.”⁵⁵

Racial mixing raised the specter of a threat to the essentialized and hierarchized order that racial ideology produced. As Daniel Pick explains, the discourse of degeneration represented an “attempt to construct an ordered language for the containment of disorder.”⁵⁶ Racial mixing represented the transgression of the firm boundaries necessary to “preserve the inner coherence” of the organic unity of the whole, whether framed as a people or a race.⁵⁷ In Gobineau’s words, “the horror excited by the possibility of infinite intermixture” produces “racial anarchy.”⁵⁸

By the end of the nineteenth century, degeneration became a powerful trope beyond the realm of the natural sciences themselves and was reflected through the cultural criticism that emerged in response to the social anxieties generated by the demands of modernity.⁵⁹ The conceptual framework of development and degeneration

⁵⁵ Artur Count de Gobineau, *On the Inequality of Races* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), originally published in French, 1853-5, 24. He did not identify Jews as constituting a separate race but considered them part of the white race. His thought did not become influential in Germany until the early 1880s when it became popular in the Wagner circle in Bayreuth; it was translated into German in the early 1890s by Ludwig Schemann, who subsequently founded the Gobineau Society in Germany. The standard biography of Gobineau is Michael Biddiss, *Father of Racist Ideology: The Social and Political Thought of Count Gobineau* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970). Paul Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics between national unification and Nazism 1870-1945* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), offers extended treatment of the institutionalization, medicalization, and politicization of racial theory in Germany at the turn of the century.

⁵⁶ Pick, *The Face of Degeneration*, 138.

⁵⁷ Ann Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 107.

⁵⁸ Gobineau, *The Inequality of Races*, 208.

⁵⁹ Examples include Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), originally published in 1892, in which he diagnosed degeneration as the root of all social and cultural ills, from aesthetics to the “diseased nerves” of modernity. Standard

reproduced the strict opposition between order and chaos. Chaos represented a blurring of defined categories that constituted transgression against what had been constructed as firm boundaries, producing a heterogeneity that violated the ordered structure of both the natural and social world. As such, chaos undermined the notion of purposefulness and directionality over the course of human history.

In the next section, I consider how the authoritative discourse of science was disseminated through the wider public sphere in order to identify the mutual imbrication of the discourses of race, gender, and science within *Bildungsbürgertum* such that “Science became the repository of Germany’s liberal culture.”⁶⁰

Racializing the Public Sphere

The discourse of the natural sciences is perceived as authoritative on two grounds: first, because it makes truth-claims that appear to be grounded in an objective reality assumed as the natural order of the world;⁶¹ and second, because it claims

historiography includes Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*; and Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*. See Mosse’s discussion of Nordau in George L. Mosse, “Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 27:4 (October 1992): 565-81. For a more recent discussion of the cultural and intellectual currents at the turn of the century, see Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890-1914* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2000); and Suzanne L. Marchand and David F. Lindenfeld, eds., *Germany at the Fin de Siècle: Culture, Politics, and Ideas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), particularly the Introduction and the essays of Ann Taylor Allen, “Patriarchy and Its Discontents: The Debate on the Origins of the Family in the German-Speaking World 1860-1930,” 81-101, and Kevin Repp, “*Sexualkrise und Rasse*: Feminist Eugenicians at the *Fin de Siècle*,” 102-26.

⁶⁰ Andreas Killen, *Berlin Electropolis: Shock, Nerves, and German Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 32.

⁶¹ Nancy L. Stepan, “Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science,” *Isis* 77:2 (June 1986): 261-77; idem, *The Idea of Race in Science*.

knowledge of, and access to, this ‘objective reality’ by virtue of what are ascribed as value-free methods of empirical observation, measurement, and quantification.⁶²

However, the idealization of the scientific method and of the claimed objectivity and neutrality of science obscures the reality that scientific discourse is also culturally and historically situated and “... not the inevitable results of a nature merely ‘discovered’ and described...”⁶³ Since scientific practices are themselves social products, scientific discourse is not confined to the institutionalized sites of scientific work, such as universities, laboratories, etc., but is diffused and performed throughout the larger public realm.⁶⁴

In Germany, the popularization of natural scientific knowledge led to its incorporation into the self-understanding of the *Bildungsbürgertum* and became part of the process of *Bildung*. The scientists themselves were an important element in the

⁶² See generally: Weingart, “‘Struggle for Existence’: Selection and Retention of a Metaphor,” and Bowler, “Social Metaphors in Evolutionary Biology, 1870-1930,” in *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors*; Stepan, “Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science”; idem, *The Idea of Race in Science*.

⁶³ Nancy L. Stepan and Sander L. Gilman, “Appropriating the Idioms of Science: The Rejection of Scientific Racism,” in *The ‘Racial Economy’ of Science: Toward a Democratic Future*, edited by Sandra Harding (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 174.

⁶⁴ This process is not unidirectional; as Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior*, has noted, those engaged in research within the natural sciences also appropriated metaphors from the political and social sphere. For a wide-ranging discussion of the social construction of scientific disciplines and practices, see Timothy Lenoir, *Instituting Science: The Cultural Production of Scientific Disciplines* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), who emphasizes that ‘science’ is not produced in a vacuum. See Roger Cooter and Stephen Pumfrey, “Separate Spheres and Public Places: Reflections on the History of Science Popularization and Science in Popular Culture,” *History of Science* 32 (September 1994): 237-67, for a critique of a top→down model of dissemination from scientists to the broader and less educated public. Andreas W. Daum, “Varieties of Popular Science and the Transformation of Public Knowledge: Some Historical Reflections,” *Isis* 100 (2009): 319-32, provides a valuable bibliography of recent work looking at the mutual imbrication of ‘science’ and culture, across a range of countries and centuries.

popularization of the natural sciences. The scientific materialists had played a key role in popularizing science in the 1840s and 1850s by ‘translating’ scientific theories into accessible language.⁶⁵ While Haeckel’s *The Riddle of the Universe* would be a publishing sensation at the turn of the twentieth century, his writing for a non-academic audience dates back to 1868.

Further, as Andrew Zimmerman explains, “this democratization of the sources and locations of scientific knowledge was bolstered by the growth of a middle-class public sphere, separate from the state.”⁶⁶ The rise in literacy that increased the size of the reading public, along with the emergence of a variety of associations and reading groups, rendered scientific *Bildung* more accessible to larger numbers of people.⁶⁷ Publications, such as Alexander von Humboldt’s *Kosmos*⁶⁸ and the popular journal *Die Natur* among many others, provided access to scientific knowledge that explained the natural world without relying on theological or biblical authority. Even journals not specifically devoted to science included informational pieces dealing with popular scientific issues, with *Die Gartenlaube*, the mass-market periodical that served as the barometer of the middlebrow reading public, playing a key role in disseminating scientific knowledge.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Gregory, *Scientific Materialism*, 6-10. For example, Büchner’s *Kraft und Stoff* (Force and Matter) was published in 1855, and had gone through 19 editions by 1898.

⁶⁶ Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, 4.

⁶⁷ Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin*, 5; Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert*, 3ff.

⁶⁸ Published between 1845 and 1862, *Kosmos* was Humboldt’s multi-volume work reflecting his decades of engagement with the natural sciences, including his scientific journeys to Latin America. See Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert*.

⁶⁹ See Kirsten Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation: Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), for her discussion of the significance of this journal within the public sphere, particularly in constructing national identity. See Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert*, for an extensive presentation of the

Interest in science extended beyond reading to include more active forms of public participation. The latter part of the nineteenth century marked a period when public interest in indigenous peoples increased as a result of ever-growing European colonial activities in the non-western world. Beginning in the 1880s, Germany finally entered the global colonial enterprise; these activities increased the opportunities for public engagement with the ‘other.’ Exhibitions of ‘primitives’ (*Naturvölker*) from Africa and elsewhere drew large crowds.⁷⁰ Such exhibitions presented the *Naturvölker* in a way that identified racial differences with what was ‘primitive,’ confirming their ‘lower’ stage of development, while reaffirming the cultural superiority of the *Bildungsbürgertum* audience.⁷¹ Artifacts (not merely material culture, but bones as well) from non-European

types of magazines and journals that appeared in the nineteenth century. According to Daum, *Die Gartenlaube*, a magazine with an estimated 5 million readers, is a prime example of how natural science became embedded within the cultural milieu of Germany. Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin*, 15ff., also notes the significance of publications like *Die Gartenlaube*, the importance of increased literacy by the end of the nineteenth century, as well as the importance of the way in which scientists such as Haeckel and Bölsche were able to adjust the style and content of their writing for a mass audience. For a discussion of how the popularization of science related to the perception of the modern age, see Angela Schwartz, *Der Schlüssel zur modernen Welt: Wissenschaftspopularisierung in Grossbritannien und Deutschland im Übergang zur Moderne* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1999).

⁷⁰ Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, emphasizes the interplay of colonialism and science in the cultural production of knowledge; see H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, “Introduction,” 1-30, in *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), for an overview of these types of public exhibitions and ‘performances.’ Penny and Bunzl also note (23): “how religion channeled and shaped the legitimating power of science with regard to colonial hierarchies, colonial ambition, and the concept of race.” See also H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), for more detailed descriptions of the objectification of the ‘products’ of ethnographic and colonial expeditions.

⁷¹ Sara Friedrichsmeyer, et al., eds., “Introduction,” in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 1-32, especially 19ff.; Nina Berman, *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne: zum Bild*

cultures acquired through archeological expeditions and colonial administration were collected and housed in museums in a way that represented and reinforced visually the naturalized difference of other peoples.⁷² The public spaces in which the fruits of anthropological and ethnological activities were on display represented a “sphere in which bourgeois interests and values, especially those of self-cultivation and national improvement, could be expressed.”⁷³ In this way, the *Bildungsbürgertum* were fully implicated in the colonial production of the racialized ‘other.’

Such racialized national consciousness was directed not only over and against Germany’s new colonial subjects in Africa and Asia, but also against Germany’s internal colonial subjects, the Jews. An example of this internal imperialism is Rudolf Virchow’s famous 1870s school study that surveyed the physical traits of schoolchildren all over Germany. By tabulating and publicizing the results of Jewish students separately, it provided, as Zimmerman argues, a “way to experience these notions of race.”⁷⁴ In the following decades, the Jews became, like other ‘exotic’, i.e., non-German peoples, the subject of anthropological research that rested on the ‘value-free’ methods of science to determine the ‘essence’ (*Wesen*) of the Jews.⁷⁵

des Orients in der deutschsprachigen Kultur um 1900 (Stuttgart: M&P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1997), especially 11-40.

⁷² See Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, especially 172-86; and Sierra A. Bruckner, “Spectacles of (Human) Nature: Commercial Ethnography between Leisure, Learning, and *Schaulust*,” in *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in an Age of Empire*, 127-55.

⁷³ Bruckner, “Spectacles of (Human) Nature: Commercial Ethnography between Leisure, Learning, and *Schaulust*,” 128.

⁷⁴ Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, 140.

⁷⁵ Annegret Kiefer, *Das Problem einer ‘jüdischen Rasse’: Eine Diskussion zwischen Wissenschaft und Ideologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), 18: “Anthropologie entdeckte die Juden” (‘Anthropology discovered the Jews’).

In the next section, I situate racial theory in relation to the representation of Jewishness, since as Cheyette and Marcus explain, “the Jewish other is both at the heart of western metropolitan culture and is also that which is excluded in order for ascendant racial and sexual identities to be formed and maintained.”⁷⁶

***Völkisch* Ideology and the Emergence of Anti-Semitism**

Scientific racial theory and its language of organicity (that is, as teleologically grounded) resonated in Germany because it connected to the organic understanding of the German *Volk* that was coeval with the *völkisch* strand of German nationalism. During the nineteenth century, the organic concept of the *Volk* first encountered in the writings of Herder and Fichte became increasingly viewed in redemptive terms in response to the alienation felt by many as a result of the industrialization and urbanization associated with the modern age. *Völkisch* ideology sought the purity and regeneration of the German *Volk*, or *Volkskörper* (body of the *Volk*). Although *völkisch* ideology is not identical to anti-semitism, the idealized notion of Germanness within *völkisch* ideology facilitated the semantic shift from theological anti-Judaism to the discourse of anti-semitism,⁷⁷ which was authorized by, and legitimated through, scientific racial theory.

⁷⁶ Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus, “Introduction,” in *Modernity, Culture and the ‘Jew,’* edited by Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3.

⁷⁷ The historiography of ‘anti-semitism’ demonstrates the multiplicity of ways in which scholars have characterized different strands of anti-semitism: racial anti-semitism, Christian anti-semitism, anti-Christian anti-semitism, redemptive anti-semitism, political anti-semitism, among others. For my purposes, it is not necessary (and in fact, impossible) to attempt either to define anti-semitism or to determine how any particular expression falls within any of these categories, since I am concerned with how Bousset’s representation of *Judentum* would resonate in a public sphere in which both *völkisch* thought and anti-semitic discourse overlapped.

Although political emancipation of the Jews—the assumed resolution of the ‘Jewish Question’—accompanied the creation of the German Reich in 1871, widely disseminated charges of Jewish responsibility for the economic collapse in the 1870s helped to precipitate intense anti-Jewish sentiments and rekindled the debate over Jewish political and civil status.⁷⁸ In addition, the negative perception of Jewish influence and participation in the German public sphere was intensified by the large and rapid influx of East European Jews (*Ostjuden*) into Germany as a result of pogroms breaking out in Poland and Russia.⁷⁹

By the end of the 1870s, and through the writings of Wilhelm Marr, Eugen Dühring, and many others, a new mode of discourse emerged with the term ‘anti-semitism’ (*Antisemitismus*).⁸⁰ The discourse of anti-semitism involved more than a reaction to what seemed to many to be disproportionate Jewish activity and influence in key areas of the public realm. Since many of these key figures in the emergence of anti-semitic discourse had distanced themselves from Christianity, the term ‘anti-semitism’ represented a way of articulating Jew-hatred (*Judenhass*) that was no longer grounded theologically, but scientifically. The substitution of ‘Semitism’ for Judaism appropriated the ‘scientific’ authority of a term that had been generated within the *wissenschaftlich*

⁷⁸ Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 248ff. The rise of anti-semitism produced a petition in 1880, signed by over 200,000 people, which sought to revoke the political emancipation of the Jews. Although this petition was not successful, this period marked the rise of political anti-semitism; for a full discussion of this process, see Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, revised edition (London: Peter Halban, 1988), 64ff.

⁷⁹ See Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); and Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*.

⁸⁰ See generally Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*; and Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, especially 87ff.; Katz (265) quotes Dühring: “Jews were a unique human species with marked physical and moral characteristics.”

discipline of comparative philology, in which Semitic languages and their speakers had been sharply differentiated as less ‘organic’ than their Aryan counterparts and thus incapable of cultural creativity.⁸¹ The neologism ‘anti-semitism,’ Volkov explains, represented “a rather vague opposition to ‘Semitism,’ that is, to everything related to the existence of some obscure semitic race....and created a larger semantic space as a vessel for a variety of desired contexts. It had a scientific aura and could be placed on a par with such terms as ‘liberalism’ or ‘conservatism,’ thus entering respectable linguistic company....”⁸²

A key trope of anti-semitic discourse was that of *Verjudung*, or Judaization, which connoted an intangible, ever-present threat to the notion of Germanness and the *Volk*: “[a] more subtle, deeper danger...a condition in which the ‘Jewish spirit’ had somehow permeated society and its institutions, one in which Jewish *Geist* had seeped through the spiritual pores of the nation to penetrate and undermine the German psyche itself.”⁸³ The *Verjudung* of the *Volk* threatened the German soul (*Volksseele*), in which the true German

⁸¹ Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1992), especially 51ff.

⁸² Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 82.

⁸³ Steven E. Aschheim, “The Jew Within: The Myth of ‘Judaization’ in Germany,” in *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, 212-13. The standard historiography of anti-semitism identified in previous notes considers the use and implications of ‘Jewish essence.’ See also the essays of Uriel Tal, “Theologische Debatte um das ‘Wesen’ des Judentums,” 599-632, and Reinhard Rürup, “Emanzipation und Krise zur Geschichte der ‘Judenfrage’ in Deutschland vor 1890,” 1-56, in *Juden im wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890-1914*, ed. by Werner E. Mosse, et al. (Tübingen: J.C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1974). Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, translated by Christian Wiese and Barbara Harshav (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), examines at length the responses of Jewish scholars to the representations of ‘Jewish essence’ within the writing of a range of biblical scholars, including Bousset and Adolf von Harnack.

essence was formed and protected.⁸⁴ Unable to escape their innate ‘Jewishness,’ Jews could never be true Germans regardless of conversion or their attempted conformity to the German ideal of *Bildung*. Thus, there was no German cultural space for Jews to occupy or even enter. The discourse of anti-semitism declared that Jewish assimilation had not only failed, but represented a logical and physical impossibility. Jews, more particularly the Jewish essence or spirit, were characterized as something alien (*fremd*). However, it was not simply Jewish difference that was articulated or opposed in anti-semitic discourse. The Jewish ‘essence’ was represented as a *Fremdkörper* (foreign body);⁸⁵ as such, anti-semitic discourse framed the presence of *Judentum* in Germany not only as an intrusion into the organic wholeness of the German *Volk* (*Volkskörper*), but also as an ongoing threat to the integrity of the *Volk*.

Universities played a key role in the articulation and legitimation of this transformed German/Jewish binary. The appropriation and dissemination of anti-Jewish tropes by academics in the larger public sphere, such as the German historian Treitschke, whose expression, ‘the Jews are our misfortune’ achieved the status of a truism,⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany 1840-1920* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 126. The notion of the *Volksseele* played a significant role in the writings of *völkisch* ‘prophet’ Julius Langbehn, whose widely popular 1892 *Rembrandt als Erzieher* biologized the *Volksseele*. See Steven Aschheim, “The Jew Within”; and Wolfgang Tilgner, “Volk, Nation und Vaterland im Protestantischen Denken zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus (1870–1933),” 135-71, in *Volk-Nation-Vaterland: Der deutsche Protestantismus und Nationalismus*, for discussion of Langbehn.

⁸⁵ Walkenhorst, *Nation-Volk-Rasse*, 282, notes that although the marking of Jews as ‘alien’ intensified by the end of the late nineteenth century, the language of *fremd* and *Fremdkörper* can be traced back to the early nineteenth century in such German iconic thinkers as Fichte, Herder, and Hegel.

⁸⁶ Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 250. Treitschke also used the writings of first-century historian Tacitus to show the long-standing recognition of the Jewish ‘threat.’ For recent discussion of Treitschke’s phrase and the resulting *Antisemitismusstreit*, see Uffa

marked a shift toward a ‘respectable’ form of anti-semitism that rendered such language less extreme because of the academic veneer of plausibility and objectivity: “the special role of academic intellectuals in politics derived from their ability to deploy the prestige of science in support of their ideological pronouncements.”⁸⁷ The resurgent German nationalism reflected in Treitschke’s expression was not limited to the professoriate but was even more evident in the student associations and fraternities, which, much like their predecessors in the early nineteenth century, served as the locus for anti-Jewish activities and rhetoric.⁸⁸

The *Fin de Siècle* and the Quest for Meaning

By the end of the nineteenth century when Bousset was writing, the cumulative dislocation catalyzed by the process of modernization, including urbanization, industrialization, and bureaucratization, produced a widespread sense of a crisis of values in Germany. Whether or not this *Zeitgeist* can be characterized as the ‘cultural pessimism’ articulated by Fritz Stern in his classic *The Politics of Cultural Despair* or the

Jenssen, *Gebildete Doppelgänger: Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im 19. Jahrhundert*; and Marcel Stoetzler, *The State, the Nation, and the Jews: Liberalism and the Antisemitism Dispute in Bismark’s Germany* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

⁸⁷ Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany*, 9.

⁸⁸ Jaraus, *Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany*, 234ff.; 250ff.; 274ff. See Norbert Kampe, *Studenten und ‘Judenfrage’ in Deutschen Kaiserreich: Die Entstehung einer akademischen Trägerschicht des Antisemitismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), for a detailed account of the activities of these student associations. See Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, 9-15, for Bousset’s significant participation in student associations.

more apocalyptic ‘dusk of nations’ as expressed by Max Nordau,⁸⁹ the *fin de siècle* was marked by a “neoromantic longing for wholeness in the face of social fragmentation.”⁹⁰

The *fin de siècle* “longing for wholeness” was not necessarily a negative response to modernization; rather, much of this was directed toward what Kevin Repp has termed “alternative modernities,”⁹¹ such as the life reform movements, Haeckel’s monism, the Ethical Culture Society, and theosophy and anthroposophy, through which ‘meaning’ could be derived outside of the constraints of traditional Christian institutional structures. Significant elements within the *völkisch* movements tied the search for meaning to the hopes of a regenerated German *Volk*, either through an authentically Germanic Christianity or a specifically German form of religiosity that rejected Christianity altogether.

The ideal of Germanic values, however, was not confined to a populist element. Enthusiasm for the expansion of German colonial interests and the translation of that globalized presence into imperialistic and militaristic aims crossed the borders of social class and political party.⁹² While the ascendant racial ideology had situated the Western/European male at the pinnacle of human development and world history, in

⁸⁹ Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, 6.

⁹⁰ Suzanne L. Marchand and David F. Lindenfeld, “Introduction,” in *Germany at the Fin de Siècle*, 5. See also George S. Williamson, “A Religious *Sonderweg*: Reflections on the Sacred and the Secular in the Historiography of Modern Germany,” *Church History* 75:1 (March 2006): 139-56; and Harrington, *Reenchanted Science*, especially 10-32. Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (New York and Washington, DC: Cambridge University Press and German Historical Institute, 2009), 252ff., especially 291, specifically connects the ‘history of religion’ school to this ‘crisis of values.’

⁹¹ Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives*, especially 19ff.; 266ff.

⁹² See especially Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League* (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984).

Germany, the teleological sense of Germany's 'chosenness' meant that the Germanic peoples were destined to be at the top of the hierarchical order.⁹³

Just as Protestantism had become identified with nascent German nationalism in the early nineteenth century, liberal Protestantism participated in the articulation of German identity in the face of the demands of modernity by framing both 'religion' and Christianity through the key tropes of spirit (*Geist*) and essence (*Wesen*).

An example of how the association between German national consciousness and Christianity was so deeply embedded within liberal Protestantism by the end of the nineteenth century is the series of essays on Germanic Christianity contributed by Protestant biblical scholar Artur Bonus in 1899 for *Die Christliche Welt*, the publication which, as already noted, reflected the thought-world of liberal Protestantism.⁹⁴ The fusion

⁹³ See Hartmut Lehmann, " 'God our Old Ally': The Chosen People Theme in Late Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century-German Nationalism," in *Many are Chosen: Divine Election & Western Nationalism*, edited by William R. Hutchinson and Hartmut Lehmann (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 85-107; and Arlie J. Hoover, *The Gospel of Nationalism: German Patriotic Preaching from Napoleon to Versailles* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1986). According to Lehmann, although this theme resonated more strongly with the Pietists in the first half of the nineteenth century, following unification and the increasing battles over the social question and socialism this theme of chosenness and German exceptionalism resonated as well with the more 'liberal' elements within Protestantism, the *Bildungsbürgertum*. For the explicit connections between German exceptionalism and themes of redemption and regeneration, see Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*. See also Rose, *Revolutionary Anti-Semitism in Germany*.

⁹⁴ *ChW* (1899) 13:57, 81, 101, 125, 147, 171, 195, 219: "Germanisierung des Christentums." The series installments included titles such as "vom deutschen Gott," "Individualisierung und Nationalisierung," and "Der neue Geist Urgermanen." In 1911, Bonus published a short book on the same topic. See Gangolf Hübinger, *Kulturprotestantismus und Politik: zum Verhältnis von Liberalismus und Protestantismus im wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1994), 249, for discussion of Bonus's role. The *Theologische Rundschau*, the journal edited by Bousset, contained, *ThR* 1(1898): 40-46, under the heading 'Soziale Literatur,' a review essay of the book *Von Stöcker zu Naumann* in which the reviewer discussed the "*Germanisierung des Christentums*" and the future of religion, equating the 'religious' question and the

of *völkisch* and nationalist sentiments with Protestant theology is similarly reflected through the popular expression ‘*Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Gott*’ (one people, one Reich, one God).⁹⁵ This expression can be traced back to the late 1890s and became wildly popular during WWI, especially as an inscription on military belt buckles.⁹⁶

Harnack’s famous *Das Wesen des Christentums* (translated as *What is Christianity*), based on his university lecture series, attributed the success of Christianity (i.e., the Reformation and liberal Protestantism) to the ‘Germanic spirit.’⁹⁷ As Tal has noted, the debate over *Wesen* (being/essence) was not descriptive, but was inherently evaluative, and thus normative.⁹⁸ This search for essence/core—whether it is religion, Christianity, or Germanness—represented a type of boundary-marking, by which the ‘essence’ could then be protected from intrusion or encroachment.

‘*germanische Frage.*’ Martin Rade, in a short piece in *ChW* (1900) 14:92, comments on the increasing use of the baptismal formula “I baptize you in the name of Germany.” See also Wolfgang E. Heinrichs, *Das Judenbild im Protestantismus des deutschen Kaiserreiches: Ein Beitrag zur Mentalitätsgeschichte des deutschen Bürgertums in der Krise der Moderne* (Köln: Rheinland-Verlag, 2000), for a discussion of the representation of Jews within leading church publications, both liberal and conservative, in which Jews were framed as the root of all evils.

⁹⁵ Thomas Nipperdey, *Religion im Umbruch: Deutschland 1870-1918* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1988), 96. Nipperdey notes R. Seeburg’s role as theologian in this process: “Volkstheologie mit germanischen und biologischen Tendenzen entwickelt.”

⁹⁶ Nipperdey, *Religion im Umbruch*, 98.

⁹⁷ Adolf von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 168: “...hat die deutsche Nation an Luther wie eine Erschliessung ihrer eigenen Seele empfunden.”

⁹⁸ Uriel Tal, “Theologische Debatte,” in *Juden im wilhelminischen Deutschland*, 606ff. See Andrew C. Dole, *Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), who describes how ‘essence’ is framed in Schleiermacher’s writing as normative and later extended by Harnack and Troeltsch.

Conclusion

This chapter has situated the larger social and cultural matrix of late nineteenth-century Germany in order to consider how German Protestant theology was entangled within the threads of German *völkisch* discourse, German nationalism, and the discourses of development and degeneration in both scientific and popular circles. Considering the notion of *Bildung* allowed me to show how German national identity was imbricated with the interiorized religiosity within Protestantism and was necessarily implicated within the Jewish question. Tracing how the notion of development and its twinned discourse of degeneration emerged and grounded racial ideology as well as intellectual and cultural thought at the end of the nineteenth century provided a way to show how the universal/particular binary was racialized. The discourse of anti-semitism reflects the convergence of both of these trajectories in a way that racialized Jewishness.

In the next two chapters, I use Bousset's work to demonstrate how his construction of *Judentum/Spätjudentum* functioned in a way that enables the racialization of both *Judentum* and religion itself. In Chapter Four, I will examine how Bousset's representation of *Spätjudentum* is grounded in the tropes of syncretism and chaos, which also were utilized in the racialized discourse of anti-semitism. However, in the next chapter, I consider how the racialization grounding Bousset's teleological explication of the history of religion makes possible a shift from the Jewish/Christian binary of Christian theology to an essentialized/naturalized Jewish/German binary.

CHAPTER III

RACIALIZING RELIGION

The preceding chapter examined the social and cultural context of late nineteenth-century Germany in order to situate Bousset more particularly in relation to the entanglement of German national consciousness, Protestant religiosity, and racial theory. I considered how Protestant religiosity was conceptualized and how that became identified with popular understandings of German identity. I showed how the thematic of development emerged within the discourses of both the natural sciences and the human sciences and how scientifically determined conceptions of race were related to the twinned discourses of development and degeneration. Further, I demonstrated how such framework was embedded within both academic scholarship and the popular discourse in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century.

In this chapter, I focus on the dialectic between the construction of *Spätjudentum* and the history of religion. I look at how Bousset, drawing upon the emerging discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*, articulated a unitary history of religion within a racialized evolutionary framework. I use his writings directed at a general non-academic audience because these writings most clearly frame his notion of religion and his narrative of the history of religion. In particular, I show how Bousset articulates an interiorized notion of religion that reflects the spirit/matter binary that structures Western intellectual thought by framing ‘religion’ as the constitutive element of human development. He identifies

human consciousness with religious consciousness, setting up an opposition between what is universal/spirit and what is particular/material.

I then show how Bousset, by marking *Judentum* as the material ‘other’ in contrast to the ‘spirit’ side of the binary represented by Christianity, creates a space in which *Judentum* can be racialized within this evolutionary framework. I conclude by showing how he tweaks his evolutionary framework by situating Germanic Christianity as the apex of the telos of religion, that is, the apex of human development, and suggest that this move facilitates a reconfiguration of the Christian/Jewish opposition grounding traditional theology into a German/Jewish binary.

The Modern Worldview

Bousset’s engagement with the scientific worldview was nuanced by the ongoing public debate that critiqued the materialism and determinism associated with the ideology of Darwinism¹ and the ‘crisis of values’ precipitated by the challenges of modernity.² Like his colleagues in the mainstream of liberal Protestantism, Bousset navigated the ‘war’ between theology and science generated by Darwin’s theory of evolution by separating the realms of the natural sciences and religion: the natural sciences explained the causality of the natural world while religion grounded existential meaning.

¹ See Chapter Two for consideration of the ideology of Darwinism, particularly the role of Ernst Haeckel as Darwin’s popularizer in Germany.

² The public climate at the *fin de siècle* is discussed in Chapter Two.

Bousset recognizes the primacy of what he describes as the modern worldview³ in which science explains ‘nature’ through the conceptual framework of causation.⁴ He makes it clear that Christianity in the modern age must recognize that science explains the realities of the natural world: “We may, in theory, persuade ourselves that the order of Nature is only apparent, and that every moment a breach of that law of nature is possible, but we do not act in accordance with that belief. We arrange our life on the basis of that law....We live with the full conviction that we stand on the basis of secure, reliable reality.”⁵

Recognizing the primacy of the truth-claims of the natural sciences with regard to the natural world, Bousset rejects any supernatural elements within traditional Christian theology. Like other liberal Protestants, Bousset insists that doctrines and dogmas of the church that are grounded in supernatural explanations, such as miracles and the resurrection, can no longer be accommodated within the faith of a modern believer:

And yet we moderns can no longer hold fast to this belief in miracles. Here again it is not merely that it contradicts our whole mode of thought, but it is in direct contradiction to our changed belief in God. We have learnt to believe in a God who is a God of order, and not of chaos, in a God who has woven the weft of this world so skillfully and securely that it never needs correction, in a God who in the great orderly march onwards through the apparently pitiless struggle for existence [*Kampf ums Dasein*] is leading the generations of living beings to a higher stage.⁶

³ Bousset uses a variety of expressions in framing this perspective: “moderne Weltanschauung” (*Das Wesen*, 257); and “uns Kinder eines modernen Zeitalter” (*Unser Gottesglaube*, 43) are a few examples.

⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 280ff.; *Das Wesen*, 254ff.

⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 284; *Das Wesen*, 254.

⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 285; *Das Wesen*, 255. See Chapter Two for how this translation intensified the connotation of the phrase.

However, for Bousset, science can never answer the essential questions of human meaning since human existence goes beyond the observable natural world.⁷ He argues: “...even supposing we had completed this work [i.e., scientific mastery of nature], supposing we possessed all knowledge and knew all the laws of nature, we should still be confronted by a great and impenetrable problem, the problem of life itself, the problem of the concrete and individual actuality of this world—that this world is such as it is.”⁸

Bousset’s concerns were certainly not unique to him but reflect the ongoing concerns within liberal Protestantism, noted in Chapter One, in navigating the causality

⁷ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 8-9, 13. Bousset’s existential turn reflects the influence of Schleiermacher. The centenary celebration of Schleiermacher’s *On Religion: Speeches to the Cultured Despisers* occurred at the turn of the twentieth century. Otto edited a new edition of Schleiermacher and wrote the introduction. See Andrew C. Dole, *Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), however, who contests the traditional way in which Schleiermacher’s concept of religion has been characterized solely as personal/experiential. This also indicates the turn Bousset makes explicitly a few years later in adopting, under the influence of Otto, the Neo-Kantianism of Jakob Fries. See Antonie F. Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset: Leben und Werk: Eine theologieggeschichtlichen Versuch* (Amsterdam: Van Bottenberg, 1973), for a discussion of Bousset’s turn to neo-Friesianism, especially 295ff. This close connection between Bousset and Otto has been noted previously; see Kurt Rudolph, *Geschichte und Probleme der Religionswissenschaft* (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1992), 126ff.; Gerd Lüdemann, “Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule,” in *Theologie in Göttingen*, edited by Bernd von Moeller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 325-361, at 359; and more recently, Mark D. Chapman, *Ernst Troeltsch and Liberal Theology: Religion and Cultural Synthesis in Wilhelmine Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 122-35, for a lengthy discussion of the relationship of Otto, Bousset, and Fries. Rudolf Otto was the member of the ‘history of religion’ school most engaged with questions of the relationship of science and the philosophy of religion. His extensive multi-part essay, “*Darwinismus von Heute und Theologie*,” *ThR* 5 (1902): 483 and *ThR* 6 (1903): 183, 229, later published separately as *Goethe und Darwin: Darwinismus und Religion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909), considered the relation of Darwinism and theology, concluding that the teleology of human development was not reducible to the mechanism of natural selection. Otto discussed the same topic in *ChW* 18: 49 (1904), “*Naturwissenschaft und Theologie*.” For an explication of the intellectual influences on Bousset, see Klaus Berger, *Exegese und Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986).

⁸ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 8.

posited by scientific theory in relation to the assertion of faith-claims.⁹ His work reflects quite keenly the ambivalence that scholars have identified as part of the *fin de siècle* response to modernity and which grounded renewed concerns for the regeneration of the German *Volk*, as outlined in Chapter Two. Bousset argues modern progress results in “a tremendous feeling of our own insignificance, powerlessness, and dwarf-like nature.”¹⁰

This theme is central to his perspective:

With all our great capacity we remain throughout our life chained and confined to our little planet. We are all drifting along in frail skiffs, and everywhere we are surrounded by dizzy abysses. Whether, armed with a telescope, we gaze at the infinitely great and perceive one

⁹ Journals associated with liberal Protestantism, such as *Die Christliche Welt*, edited by Martin Rade, and the *Theologische Rundschau*, co-edited by Bousset, reflect the tension and delicate negotiation between the modern scientific worldview and the desire to retain some form of Christian faith-claims. The range of books reviewed in the very first issue of the *Theologische Rundschau* (1898) indicates the extent to which liberal Protestantism engaged questions concerning the implications of natural science for Christianity: *Die Naturwissenschaft in ihrem Schuldverhältnis zum Christentum: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Skizze; Die Weltanschauung eines modernen Christen; Über des Pessimismus und seine Wurzeln; Der Darwinismus und seine Stellung in der Entwicklung der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis; Christentum und Entwicklungsdanke; Naturstudium und Christentum; Christentum und moderne Weltanschauung*, *ThR* 1 (1898): 75, 345, 380. Journal articles continued to discuss the implications of the natural sciences for contemporary life, using titles such as “Naturwissenschaft und Weltanschauung,” *ThR* 10 (1907): 323, and “Die heutigen Anschauungen vom Wesen der Materie und ihre Bedeutung für die Weltanschauungsfrage,” *ThR* 12 (1909): 119, 163. The challenge posed by Haeckel’s popularization of Darwin, especially in *The Riddle of the Universe*, is reflected in the intensity of the response to Haeckel. *The Riddle of the Universe* was reviewed in the *Theologische Rundschau* and sharply critiqued as materialistic: *ThR* 3: (1900) 317-25. The response within the pages of *Die Christliche Welt*, a journal with a much larger readership targeting laypersons and ministers, was even more extensive. *ChW* 13 (1899) contained an open letter from biblical scholar F. Loofs harshly critiquing Haeckel’s grasp of church history (1067), and a short piece by Adolf Harnack critiquing Haeckel’s knowledge of biblical matters (1157). In 1900, *ChW* had multiple items relating to Haeckel (14:70, 93, 152, 165, 188, 280-82), including an essay by Ernst Troeltsch (171-79) who described Haeckel as promoting a mechanistic worldview and labeled him an enemy of theologians and dualists: “als dem Feinde der Theologen und Dualisten...” (179).

¹⁰ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 5.

starry world revolving round another, or with a microscope we study the infinitely little; whether we lift our eyes to the Milky Way, or cast them down towards the smallest pebbles of the universe, at the molecules and atoms, we are for ever possessed of this dizzy feeling of the abysses which surround our life.¹¹

For Bousset, ‘religion’ answers the ‘why’ of existence, a question that is independent of the causality of the natural world: “it is here, on the boundary line between the known and the unknown, that religion originates.”¹² In this way, ‘religion’ provides a basis for the continued viability of faith-claims within the modern world.

Bousset, like the other members of the ‘history of religion’ school, understood ‘religion’ phenomenologically as piety (*Frömmigkeit*): an inwardly grounded relationship with the God-head, as ‘Father.’¹³ As the discussion in Chapter One indicated, religion is viewed as personal, interiorized first-order experience in contrast to theology, which represents a second-order reflection on religion. For Bousset, religion is an essential, innate, and irreducible aspect of the human personality: “... in religion we are dealing with a powerful primary manifestation of human personality, derived from nothing, not to be reduced to one of the categories belonging to man’s mental life, such as thinking, feeling, willing, but a phenomenon standing by itself.”¹⁴

¹¹ Bousset, *WIR*, 21; *Das Wesen*, 19-20. Bousset, *Jesus*, 72, retrojects this existential angst to Jesus’s time, claiming that the masses “felt themselves lost in a world that had become vast, hostile, and cold.”

¹² Bousset, *WIR*, 18; *Das Wesen*, 17.

¹³ Bousset, *WIR*, 23; *Das Wesen*, 22.

¹⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 11; *Das Wesen*, 10-11: “dass wir es in der Religion mit einer zentralen, primären Funktion des menschlichen Personenlebens zu tun haben, die wir zunächst nicht ableiten, auch nicht auf eine der Kategorien des menschlichen Geisteslebens: Denken, Fühlen, Wollen zurückführen können, sondern in sich selbst zu verstehen haben.” At the end of his introduction (28), Bousset emphasizes the phenomenological nature of religion: “We propose to wander through the wide world of religious life; we do this with a sense of reverence, convinced that we are dealing with the most powerful fact in man’s

The piety that counts as genuine religion reflects the *bürgerlich* religiosity that grounded German liberal Protestantism. His use of the phrases “personal energy of the human being” and “our spiritual and higher nature” corresponds to the notion of *Persönlichkeit* that grounded the German ideal of *Bildung*. In this way, Bousset connects the marker of both true ‘Germanness’ and the foundation of the social order to the nature of religion itself.

What is ‘religious’ and what is human are bound up together, so that the history of ‘religion,’ then, becomes an exercise in marking the teleology of human development, both in terms of the individual and of civilization itself: “Far indeed from showing us an evolution from a higher to lower civilization, or the arbitrary play of forces, history (in spite of many periods of stagnation and retrogression) shows us very clearly great and stable progress, a slowly developed but firm aspiration after higher ideas and a more intense life in which religion participates.”¹⁵

Bousset explicitly situates Christianity, or its true kernel, the Gospel, that is, Jesus himself, as the culmination of this process of human development: “In comprehending God as the Creator, the Doer, the preserver, as the Father of our spiritual

mental life. Those who reject decisively this statement of belief, who believe that the religious life of man is merely fantasy created by man’s urgent impulse, and an illusion, will have no desire to go farther with me on my journey. . . . But those who have had some experience of the religious life, who feel within themselves at least a questioning and a seeking after this side of life, will accompany me on my way;” *Das Wesen*, 25-6. Bousset’s privileging of religious experience anticipates Rudolf Otto’s famous cautionary note in *The Idea of the Holy*, published in 1917—that only a reader who had experienced religious feeling should keep reading.

¹⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 8.

and higher nature, the Gospel at the same time carries the personal energy of the human being to its highest development.”¹⁶

Bousset explicitly frames ‘religion’ within the colonial context at the turn of the twentieth century, reinforcing the racialization that grounds his outline of the stages of the history of religion. The progress within the development of religion (and thus within human consciousness) is identified with the West in sharp opposition to everyone else; he notes “the progressive, Western peoples, the conquering nations of the earth,” and “this great work of our civilized nations, in which the laws of the natural struggle for existence and question of power and capacity play such an important role.”¹⁷

Bousset, by framing religion as an irreducible *sui generis* phenomenon, is attempting to create a space for religion that is not only totally separate from what he takes to be the mechanistic causality and materialism of the natural world, but that is also fully differentiated from the intellectual enterprise of theology. However, the evolutionary framework through which he relates the development of religion is both grounded and legitimated by the natural sciences. The next section analyzes how Bousset thus enables the racialization of religion by constructing *Judentum* as the necessary ‘other’ in tracing the development of religion itself.

¹⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 226; *Das Wesen*, 203: “Indem das Evangelium Gott so erfasst, als den Schöpfer, Träger und Erhalter, als den Vater unseres geistigen höhern Seins, bringt es zugleich die persönliche Lebensenergie zur höchsten Entfaltung.” While the translator translates *Entfaltung* as ‘development,’ *Entfaltung* might be better translated as ‘unfolding.’ However, here *Entfaltung* carries the same connotation as *Entwicklung*, in terms of the initial ‘kernel’ becoming fully expressed or realized, i.e., an unfolding of something that was there from the beginning.

¹⁷ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 35, 54.

Bousset's History of Religion

Bousset's framework of the 'history of religion' (*Relionsgeschichte*) reflects the emphasis on teleology, development, and organicity embedded within the worldview of the German public sphere in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Although Bousset rejects the supernatural elements within the Christian tradition as inconsistent with the laws of nature grounding his 'secure reality,' he does not reject the notion of teleology within either the natural world or human history. Rather, he requires teleology or directionality, since teleology preserves the sense of purposefulness seemingly lacking in the materialist and mechanistic world he associates with Darwinian theory. Bousset sees both continuity and coherence within the 'growth' of religion: "It is no question of, this religion is true, *that* is false; everywhere we perceive growth, evolution, imperfection striving toward perfection."¹⁸ Bousset's organically grounded teleology assumes both a 'kernel' (the organic figuration of essence) that develops and continuity through the stages of development, since the kernel already contains within it everything necessary for its full expression.

While Bousset's narrative of the history of religion draws on the emerging discipline of *Relionswissenschaft*,¹⁹ his specific contribution to *Relionswissenschaft* is the use of *Judentum* as the negative background against which the true essence of religion

¹⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 9; *Das Wesen*, 8: "Überall ist kein Entweder–Oder: wahre oder falsche Religion, überall ist Werden, Entwicklung, zur Vollkommenheit strebende Unvollkommenheit."

¹⁹ In *Das Wesen*, Bousset provides abbreviated notes and suggested bibliography for his lay audience. He cites what are now recognized as the 'classics' of *Relionswissenschaft*, including de la Saussaye, C.P. Tiele, Orelli, and D'Aviella. By contrast, Bousset lists only himself (*Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*) and Emil Schürer (*Die Geschichte des jüdischen Volks*) as sources for his discussion of *Spätjudentum*. Neither the notes nor the suggested bibliography were included in the English translation.

itself is revealed. Given that development as process assumes both continuity and coherence between stages of development, the problem with which Bousset has to wrestle is the question of continuity between *Spätjudentum* and Christianity. Since, in Bousset's organically grounded teleology, the essence/kernel of 'religion' contains within it everything necessary for its full expression, Bousset has to explain away any apparent continuity between *Spätjudentum* and Christianity.

Bousset accomplishes this disruption by deploying the methodology grounding 'true' *Wissenschaft*: comparison. For Bousset, a complete understanding of the true essence of religion requires a comparison of the historical forms through which its kernel has been expressed over time: "If we want to separate, with clear perception, the essential from the non-essential, and discover with certainty, in the changing forms of temporary expressions, the eternal, everlasting basis, we cannot do better than to apply ourselves to the comparative study of religion."²⁰ By laying claim to the comparative method, Bousset frames his scholarship as grounded in objective reality, implicitly in contrast to theological endeavors that are apologetic, parochial, and therefore subjective. However, as J.Z. Smith has argued, despite its claims to be value-free, any comparative work that

²⁰ Bousset, *WIR*, 10; *Das Wesen*, 9: "Wenn wir hier Wesentliches vom Unwesentlichen in klarer Erkenntnis sondern, in den wechselnden Formen zeitlicher Ausgestaltungen den ewigen bleibenden Grund mit Sicherheit erkennen wollen, so gibt es kein besseres und vorzüglicheres Mittel als die vergleichende Religionsgeschichte." Bousset's first academic work, *Jesus Predigt im Gegensatz zum Judentum: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), explicitly adopts comparison (*Vergleich*) as his methodology by which he sharply contrasts the message of Jesus and *Judentum*.

produces a hierarchical ordering of categories, such as Bousset's scholarship, is necessarily evaluative.²¹

Bousset's classification of the historical forms of 'religion' becomes hierarchical, and thus normative, through its underlying teleology of progress and completion. As he explains, "we turn with complete confidence to the whole wonderful history of religion. In studying this history we must group together phenomena, and arrange them in their right order; we must seize the essential and the permanent in the phenomena as they pass before our eyes, recognize the laws of evolution, and connect the past with the present and the future."²²

Bousset arranges the historical forms of religion "in their right order" according to their development from the primitive (fear of gods) to the spiritual, in which redemption is the central idea.²³ In doing so, he proceeds teleologically from primitive forms of religion, tribal religions, national/exclusivist religions and finally to universal religions that are not bound to particular peoples or nations.²⁴ The full development of 'religion,' that is, the realization of 'perfection,' is the Gospel, i.e., the personality of Jesus himself, who reflects the highest form of religious consciousness.

Bousset's comparisons are grounded in a fundamental dichotomy that he draws between the spiritualizing and materialistic elements within the historical forms of

²¹ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 46-53.

²² Bousset, *WIR*, 10; *Das Wesen*, 9: "Mit der Frage nach dem Wesen der Religion wenden wir uns also vertrauensvoll an die ganze grosse Geschichte der Religion überhaupt. Es gilt, in dieser Geschichte zu lesen, die Erscheinungen zu gruppieren und neben-und hintereinander zu ordnen, in der Flucht der Erscheinungen das Wesentliche und Bleibende zu greifen, die Gesetze der Entwicklung zu erkennen, von der Vergangenheit endlich auf Gegenwart und Zukunft zu schliessen."

²³ Bousset, *WIR*, 26; *Das Wesen*, 24.

²⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 23ff.

‘religion.’ The material elements are those that are marked as primitive and oriental, that is, the markers by which racialized thought constructed the ‘other.’ He frames the history of religion as the ongoing tension and conflict between the spiritualizing (universalizing) elements and the material elements within these historical forms of ‘religion;’ in this schema, the upward progress within the history of religion is always endangered by the possibility of such lower/material elements re-emerging. For Bousset, *Judentum* then comes to exemplify the material elements that have threatened, and which continue to threaten, the spiritualization of ‘true’ religion.

Bousset draws on various anthropological theories of the origin of religion, such as animism, ancestor-worship, and fetishism, to depict the initial stages of religion. A “chaotic mixture of superstition and egoism” marks these earliest forms as primitive.²⁵ Bousset uses what racial theory had demarcated as the ‘lower’ races in the contemporary world as evidence for the earliest forms of religion.²⁶ Since savages (*die Wilden*) have no concept of causation (the key principle underlying rationality, thus modernity and science), they lack any sense of the past or ability to conceptualize the future, and thus remain outside of history.²⁷ Since development of the essence of religion parallels (or is identical with) the upward progress of civilization, exclusion from ‘history’ constitutes a dead-end of development. Primitive stages of religion are the epitome of the material

²⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 54.

²⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 30ff. Included within his category of ‘present-day savages’ are “Malay-Polynesians, the American Indians, half the Mongolian race (particularly the Mongolians of Siberia), and the Negro race.”

²⁷ Bousset, *WIR*, 30-41. “Thus there is no history, no past, no carefully collected experience. The life of such beings is as a ship driven about on the boundless ocean, a boat without a rudder. It is like wandering about with a dim light in profound darkness...” (30).

elements of 'religion.' The 'primitives' are driven by "purely material needs of the ego"²⁸ while their practices are marked by irrationality: "religious mania, ecstasy, frenzy."²⁹

For Bousset, as organized communal life appears, an intermediate stage of religion between the 'unorganized' savages and national religions emerges.³⁰ The tribal stage marks a step forward in the development of religion, since common belief in a god/gods arises: "The solitary savage regards the higher powers with dull astonishment and shy fear. How can he possibly think that these powers are for him? In the tribal life the religious capacity of the human mind develops. The tribe finds in the common belief in higher powers the basis of its life."³¹ Here Bousset explicitly connects the development of religion with both human psychological development and the advancement of civilization.

The distinguishing mark of tribal religion is what Bousset calls the 'blood-relationship.' The bond within the tribe is formed by blood-sharing and blood sacrifice, while justice is blood revenge.³² As Bousset says, "this community of life rests on community of blood."³³ The blood relationship between the tribe and their god/s is thus a 'natural'³⁴ relationship, which then must be renewed and/or restored through the material means of blood sacrifices and the sharing of the sacrificial meal.

The emergence of national religions marks the beginning of 'history,' that is, upward progress. Specific nations or peoples arise from the combination of tribes and

²⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 41.

²⁹ Bousset, *WIR*, 46.

³⁰ Bousset, *WIR*, 55. In this discussion, he draws on William Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), orig. published 1889.

³¹ Bousset, *WIR*, 59.

³² Bousset, *WIR*, 56-7.

³³ Bousset, *WIR*, 57.

³⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 62.

represent the advancement of civilization, with the beginnings of economic, social, and political institutions replacing the blood-relationship that was the basis of tribal life. Tied to a particular people or ethnic group, national religions are connected to a particular god/gods and remain exclusivist, resistant to the universalizing process of what, for Bousset, is the full realization of the essence of religion.

The examples of national religions that Bousset compares are the Babylonian (Semitic form) and the Greek (Indo-Germanic). The Babylonian religion is depicted in terms that recall the elements of primitive religions: it is a “chaotic world of magic and witchcraft” with “superstitious beliefs.”³⁵ On the other hand, the Indo-Germanic example, the Greek religion, is described in completely positive language as reflecting the highest aesthetic: “without flaw or blemish, magnificent types—strong perfect manhood, noblest womanhood and maidenhood.”³⁶

Although national religions did represent progress in terms of the moral requirements of communal life, they remain “hidden in ceremonial observances, entirely entangled and enchained in the rites of worship.”³⁷ According to Bousset, the national religions become religions of temple worship in which the image of the deity plays a central role.³⁸ This new form of worship necessarily leads to the production of a priestly class, charged with maintaining the temple and performing ritual sacrifice. Despite the progression in religious life, the praxis within national religions is marked as involving

³⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 100.

³⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 81.

³⁷ Bousset, *WIR*, 112.

³⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 80: “The stage reached by religions may be estimated according to the form taken by the image of the Godhead.”

those elements that represent materiality and that are external, rather than being focused on the interiority of human religiosity.

For Bousset, national religions function as a conservative force, supporting the ruling authorities: “Religion begins to lack the progressive, critical, and revolutionary elements; its powers are restricted, it becomes only too quickly a conservative power, fixed in its usages, the best support of the ruling authorities in the life of the people and the states, a tremendous force which threatens to divide the nations absolutely and profoundly one from the other.”³⁹

Since Bousset frames the routinization and institutionalization of religion as a constraint on its full expression, he insists that the necessary progress within religion can only come from within the creative life of an individual. Thus, the key historical stage in the progress of religion emerges with the prophetic age, including not only the prophets of Israel, but also Zarathustra, Socrates, Plato, and Buddha⁴⁰: “It is a remarkable coincidence. It seems as if the tree of the religious life of mankind had sent forth new shoots at the same time in different places.”⁴¹ The ‘prophets’ represent something new that disrupts the connection between a people/nation and its religion; they “announce a religion of spirit and truth.”⁴² For Bousset, this stage is critical since it represents “its

³⁹ Bousset, *WIR*, 108.

⁴⁰ Bousset, *WIR*, 109; Here Bousset draws on the ‘great man’ theory of history in which the great personality serves as the driving force in human history. The significance of Carlyle is considered in Chapter One; see particularly Anthonie F. Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset: Leben und Werk*; and Klaus Berger, *Exegese und Philosophie*, for extensive treatment of this connection.

⁴¹ Bousset, *WIR*, 113.

⁴² Bousset, *WIR*, 122.

[religion's] deliverance from all outward things and disturbances, the breaking of bonds of custom, tradition, worship and ceremony."⁴³

The religions of the prophets represent the interiorization of religious consciousness that constitutes, for Bousset, progression in the development of religion itself: "The revelation vouchsafed to the prophets which they announced was an absolute, decisive conviction concerning the meaning and nature of life, its deepest foundations, its highest aims. It is a very compact whole...it is no longer a variegated medley of custom, usage, popular traditions, ceremonial and ritualistic demands, ecstatic observances, moral dicta."⁴⁴ Bousset's formulation reflects his existential quest for meaning; here, the prophets are depicted as having completely plumbed the depths of the meaning of life. The spiritualization and interiorization produced within prophetic religions overcome the limitations imposed by material practices: "Religion shatters the fetters of the nations."⁴⁵

However, the subsequent forms of these national religions contaminate and obscure the great vision of the prophetic age and interrupt the upward progress of 'religion.' Bousset disrupts any perceived continuity between the prophets of Israel, who represented the interiorization and spiritualization of religion, and what he designates as *Spätjudentum*, by splitting the development of 'religion' into two separate and distinct trajectories: religions of the law, to which he assigns Judaism, Islam and Zoroastrianism, all of which he links to 'retrogression,' and religions of redemption, beginning with

⁴³ Bousset, *WIR*, 122.

⁴⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 118.

⁴⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 131.

Platonism and Buddhism, and culminating in Christianity (that is, the Gospel of Jesus) as the complete actualization of the essence of religion as piety.⁴⁶

Bousset's separate and opposing strands of religious development—religions of the law and religions of redemption—represent an attempt to preserve the spiritual core of religion from the threat posed by the materiality of lower forms of religion. Bousset pejoratively characterizes the religions of the law as transition forms that are “hybrid and contradictory,” since they represent arrested development.⁴⁷ The religions of the law thus represent branches of the tree of human history that are dead-ends, having no potential for further growth.⁴⁸ As an ‘arrest of development,’ these hybrid forms are degenerate forms of religion. The language of ‘hybrid’ suggests that these historical forms are not pure; rather they represent a mixture of religious stages and therefore could not be part of the unfolding of the true essence or *Keim* of religion. The German is even stronger in that what is translated as ‘hybrid’ is actually “*Zwittergebilde*,” which connotes a hermaphroditic, or sexually confused form, that is, a form that is unnatural.⁴⁹ These forms lack continuity with the prophetic spiritualized piety that Bousset valorizes; more significantly, however, their confused nature actually represents an unnaturalness that remains a threat to the integrity of the essence of religion itself.

Only the religions of redemption reflect the instantiation of the true spiritual nature of religion. Within that category, Bousset simply proclaims Christianity as the

⁴⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 211.

⁴⁷ Bousset, *WIR*, 137; *Das Wesen*, 123: “So entstehen nun im religiösen Leben der Menschen Übergangsformen, Zwittergebilde von widersprechenden Formen, die das, was sie sind, immer nur halb sind: Religionen, die eine entschieden universale Tendenz zeigen und doch wieder an die Nation gekettet bleiben....”

⁴⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 113: “the tree of man’s religious life.” *Das Wesen*, 102: “der Baum des religiösen Lebens der Menschheit.”

⁴⁹ Grimm’s *Deutsche Wörterbuch* (on-line).

most perfect of the religions of redemption, since Christianity does not negate ‘this world’ as do his other examples, Buddhism and Platonism: “First of all it must be said that the question of the future of Christianity is the question of the future of religion. For what we have learned in the course of our wanderings through the history of religion is precisely this fact, that the Christian religion is absolutely superior to all other religions, and that Christianity represents the highest point which religious development has reached.”⁵⁰ The true spirit of Christianity, however, is contained not in the historically contingent forms of Christianity, but rather in the personality of Jesus since he represents the ultimate in religious consciousness.

Since Bousset is using a framework of progressive development, he has to address the question of whether ‘religion’ can develop beyond Christianity. The future of religion is identified with the future of Christianity.⁵¹ As Bousset says, “But—if there is to be only one religion—it is Christianity which must be the religion of the progressive nations of the earth.”⁵² He carefully parses out how Christianity itself has had to change in relation to the progress in human knowledge and civilization, given the scientific basis of modern knowledge of nature, and more particularly in light of the Reformation: “because since the Reformation the whole structure of human life has entirely altered, and history and experience teach us that when that happens religion assumes other forms.”⁵³

Bousset claims that the development of ‘religion’ itself needs to continue to be linked to the historicity of Christianity, insisting that the efforts to create a new form of religion out of the elements of Buddhism that had captured public attention throughout

⁵⁰ Bousset, *WIR*, 265.

⁵¹ Bousset, *WIR*, 275ff.

⁵² Bousset, *WIR*, 269.

⁵³ Bousset, *WIR*, 271.

the nineteenth century were doomed to fail.⁵⁴ Bousset presents what amounts to liberal Protestant religiosity, that is, the religious sensibility that rejects miracles, the divinity of Jesus, and other traditional elements of orthodox Christian theology, as the ultimate form of the Gospel, and thus of ‘religion’ itself. Like the evolutionary frameworks produced within the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*, Bousset ties the superiority of Christianity to the ‘progressive nations’, that is, the West as at the forefront of all human progress.

Judentum as Other

Judentum functions as the necessary foil in Bousset’s construction/spiritualization of the essence of religion, since it functions as the negative space for the materiality and primitivity of the ‘lower’ forms of religion that are always opposed to the spiritualization of religiosity. By using examples from *Judentum*, Bousset produces an a-historical and timeless *Judentum* within his racialized framework of the ‘history of religion.’ *Spätjudentum* becomes the repository of those elements that threaten the full realization of the telos of religion itself.

In his discussion of the stage of tribal religions, Bousset’s primary examples are the Semitic tribes, in which he includes both modern forms, such as Bedouin Arabs, as well as tribal forms within ancient Israel. The example of Moses in the book of Exodus demonstrates how Bousset’s juxtaposition of practices from different time periods allows (requires) his reader to draw negative connotations and to associate the origins of *Judentum* with primitive practices such as sacrifice.⁵⁵ From Moses’s ‘blood of the

⁵⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 269-70.

⁵⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 55: “The best examples of such a tribal religion are afforded to us by the Semitic tribes of Upper Asia. In dealing with this subject we must take into consideration

covenant' ritual, Bousset moves to "Mexican religion" at the time of the sixteenth-century Spanish conquest, which he describes as marked by "elaborate rites of this kind, in which human sacrifice and cannibalism form an integral part." Mentioning the abhorrence of the Spanish to these practices, Bousset segues to Catholic practice in general: "The truth, however, seems to be that the same religious impulse, that longing for an intimate and, if possible, a bodily union with the Godhead, which is displayed at this stage in so naked a fashion, is seen later in a purer form in the Catholic idea of the Sacrament, which enjoys a very widespread belief." He returns to human sacrifice again a few pages later when, in one paragraph, he begins by referring to Jahwe and the ark of the covenant, moves to a general reference to 'Semitic tribes' that is followed by a reference to child sacrifice and prostitution, which he notes continued through the time the Prophet Jeremiah, then jumps to North African practices in the second century CE, while concluding with the ancient law of Hammurabi. Without any sense of irony, he begins the next paragraph: "We have already wandered a good distance."⁵⁶

By using the Babylonian religion, rather than the Israelite religion, as his example of a Semitic national religion, Bousset is able to frame the religion of Israel almost exclusively in terms of the age of the prophets. While Bousset excludes almost the entire pre-prophetic period of ancient Israel, he does highlight what he sees as the limited morality of that age: "What a frightful morality is that of ancient Israel in many ways!

the traces of that old tribal life which we find in the New Testament, with the many scattered references to old Jewish civilization." It is not clear what connections to Semitic tribal practices he finds in the New Testament; this example illustrates his conflation of widely varied temporal periods.

⁵⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 66-7. The elements that he depicts negatively are associated with the Catholic tradition. See Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, for how anti-Catholic polemic and anti-Jewish polemic are mapped onto each other.

Israel compelled by God's command to extirpate and slaughter a whole conquered people in the most horrible manner!...With what delight are all the tricks of cunning and deceit by which Jacob harmed his people described in the Old Testament!"⁵⁷

For Bousset, *Judentum*, at best a branch of stunted growth in the history of religion⁵⁸ since it is grounded in the materialist elements that remain opposed to the prophetic 'religion of spirit and truth,' serves as the exemplar of the degeneration of religion. The tropes of degeneration appear in multiple forms. Bousset explicitly frames the Jews as responsible for the decline from the heights of prophetic religion, and, indeed, as responsible for killing the prophetic spirit itself: "For whenever their preaching was successful, whenever their spirit touched the spirit of the people it was, one might say, no longer their spirit. All was again petrified into formulae, and so much dust and corruption hung around the glorious revelation that it was scarcely to be recognized. This was the greatest tragedy of their life and work."⁵⁹

According to Bousset, the destruction of the first Temple "destroyed the Jewish nation," which was then "thrown back upon itself."⁶⁰ The decline is framed as a reversion from the hope of universalism represented by the prophets to the particularism and exclusivism of the Jewish 'nation':

When, however, after the Exile, an independent little nation rose in Jerusalem the peculiar universality preached by the prophets was lost. Israel itself remained

⁵⁷ Bousset, *WIR*, 106-7. Bousset's examples confuse the categories he has used. The sacrificial action of Moses was described as an example of 'tribal' religion, while his discussion of the still limited morality of national religions utilizes a predecessor of Moses, the patriarch Jacob. Note the emphasis on both the deceitfulness of Jacob as well as the destruction of the Canaanites.

⁵⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 113.

⁵⁹ Bousset, *WIR*, 134-5.

⁶⁰ Bousset, *WIR*, 145.

inalienably monotheistic; but the Jews comforted themselves with the idea that the one Almighty God had chosen this one nation only, and was only directing the whole world for the sake of and for the benefit of this one nation—an inconceivable contradiction, of course. The idea that was quite natural in a national religion, that God belongs to His nation, and the nation to its God, becomes now naked egoism and mere narrow-mindedness. In this way, Jewish sectarianism arose.⁶¹

Bousset frames *Judentum*'s retrogression into a religion of law after the prophetic age as "a relapse from spiritual heights to material conditions."⁶² Bousset highlights the concern for the material body and material practices by claiming that the practice of circumcision constituted the core ("Substanz") of *Judentum*.⁶³ This association with materialism is emphasized by the way in which Bousset characterizes such a religion of observance: "The tendency towards external forms, the dependence on the senses, the incapability of a pure comprehension of any great and spiritual ideas is clearly shown. The idea of judgment is everywhere a terribly material one, generally resolving itself into an entirely mechanical estimation of good and bad works....Religion becomes a business, a haggling and bargaining with God."⁶⁴ Here, Bousset equates the body (senses) with the

⁶¹ Bousset, *WIR*, 141-2. What is translated as 'sectarianism' would be better translated literally as particularism ("So entsteht der jüdische Partikularismus," *Das Wesen*, 128), as that more closely recalls the universal/particular opposition within Western thought. While the exclusivism that marks the stage of national religion is described as natural and understandable, the reversion to particularism is negatively characterized as egoistic and narrow-minded.

⁶² Bousset, *WIR*, 208.

⁶³ Bousset, *WIR*, 154; *Das Wesen*, 139.

⁶⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 170-1; *Das Wesen*, 154: "Überall zeigt sich wieder die Tendenz auf Äusserlichkeit, das Hängenbleiben am Sinnlichen, die Unfähigkeit zur reinen Erfassung grosser geistiger Gedanken. Eine erschreckende Äusserlichkeit zeigt sich überall in der Auffassung des Gerichtes. Es handelt sich in ihm meistens um ein ganz mechanisches Abwägen guter und böser Werke....Das Frömmigkeit wird ein Handeln, Feilschen und Rechnen mit Gott." Although Bousset initially frames this excerpt in relation to all religions of the law, it remains tied to *Judentum* explicitly, since he immediately

material and mechanical, all of which are opposed to the spiritual teleological arc of the development of ‘religion.’

Again, Bousset explicitly frames the dependence on what he considers ‘material’ elements in terms of ‘the Jews’ as a whole:

The majority wandered light-heartedly on the edge of the abyss. It was a period of apparent splendour and happiness, of a high standard of civilization. Luxury and vice reigned; the crowd kept their joyous festivals with the maddest of jollities. The rich oppressed the poor, the poor grumbled under the oppression of the rich.It was all as it ever had been. The superior and more lofty patriots may have gazed earnestly into the future. But the people all lived in unshaken natural confidence in Jehovah; He could not desert His people, for then He would be denying Himself.⁶⁵

Bousset is associating *Spätjudentum* with the evils of the material world: luxury, vice, and oppression, while suggesting that that condition has not, and cannot, change.

Bousset frames the dangers of degeneration not just in terms of material and external practices, but in terms of the Jewish people/nation as a whole. In his popular book, *Jesus*, he describes the Jews as a “broken and low-fallen people”⁶⁶ and “a ruined and hopeless people.”⁶⁷ Bousset emphasizes their identification with pathology and

continues with a reference to the Pharisees. Also note that the translator has translated ‘*Frömmigkeit*,’ which has the more particular connotation of interior piety, as ‘religion,’ suggesting that Bousset has been successful in his identification of ‘religion’ and interiorized experience.

⁶⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 128; *Das Wesen*, 116: “Die Masse wandelte leichtsinnig am Rand des Abgrundes. Es war eine Zeit äussern Glanzes und Glückes, hochstehender Kultur. Üppigkeit und Laster herrschen, die Menge feiert frohe Feste voll von rauschender Fröhlichkeit. Die Reichen bedrücken die Armen, der Arme murt unter dem Druck der Reichen. ...Es ist alles, wie es immer war.—Die bessern, die höherstehenden Patrioten mögen ernst in die Zukunft geschaut haben. Aber alle leben des unerschütterten natürlichen Vertrauens auf Jahwe: er kann sein Volk nicht verlassen, er müsste denn sich selber aufgeben.”

⁶⁶ Bousset, *Jesus*, 101.

⁶⁷ Bousset, *Jesus*, 151.

disease, which function as markers of degeneration, when he characterizes the Jews as subject to “fluctuating moods”⁶⁸ and “over-stressed nerves,”⁶⁹ which reflect their “*Angst*”⁷⁰ and “weakness and aimlessness.”⁷¹

Given the spiritual/material dichotomy with which Bousset operates, the possibility of degeneration into lower forms of religion constitutes an ongoing threat that endangers the natural teleology of religion, that is, the organic development of the kernel of genuine religion.⁷² *Judentum* is excluded from the organic unity reflected in the development of the ‘living religions’ because of the constraints of materiality; however, despite such exclusion, it represents a continuing threat because of the possibility of these materialist elements ‘infecting’ religion and thwarting its otherwise upward trajectory.⁷³

Bousset’s key witness to this threat is the materialist elements that were introduced into the Christian movement by the apostle Paul. Bousset critiques Paul’s introduction of the divinity of Jesus and sacramental practice as the introduction of “new elements” that are “characteristic of religious decadence and of religious syncretism....”⁷⁴ and which represent a regression to the external forms and material practices of earlier stages of religion. Thus, both the supernatural and ritualized elements of the Christian

⁶⁸ Bousset, *Jesus*, 100.

⁶⁹ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 33-4.

⁷⁰ Bousset, *RJNT*, 351

⁷¹ Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 168.

⁷² See Chapter Two for discussion of the significance of the tropes of development and degeneration, especially: Daniel Pick, *The Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman, eds., *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

⁷³ Since the Gospel as the core of Christianity is already assumed to be the full realization of genuine religion, the threat of regression also applies implicitly to Christianity.

⁷⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 247. See Chapter Four for a full discussion of how Bousset identifies syncretism with chaos and characterizes it as unnatural.

tradition are framed negatively and with reference to the materiality associated with *Judentum*. While Bousset acknowledges Paul's role in disconnecting the Gospel message from Jesus's Jewish context, he implies that it is the innate Jewishness of Paul that is largely responsible for the introduction of material elements into the early church, as he notes that the "fetters had eaten deep into the soul of Paul."⁷⁵

While degeneration is a key trope in Bousset's depiction of *Spätjudentum*, he goes further by identifying *Judentum* with many of those elements that the reigning racial ideology deployed to mark non-Western peoples as 'other:' as oriental, primitive, and sexualized. He marks *Judentum* as oriental rather than Western by framing *Judentum* as Semitic in contrast to what is privileged as Indo-Germanic. Following Max Müller, Bousset's distinction between Indo-Germanic forms and Semitic forms of tribal religions⁷⁶ highlights the non-Western ('oriental') derivation of *Judentum* and capitalizes on the scientific aura of legitimacy of the terminology of 'Semitic' derived from the academic discipline of comparative philology.⁷⁷ By proclaiming the Greek religion the highest of all national religions, Bousset presents a hierarchy in which the Semitic national religions remain subordinate to the Indo-Germanic religions.⁷⁸

He marks *Judentum* as primitive by emphasizing superstition and fanaticism, all of which are implicitly contrasted with the norm of Western rationality. Just as racial theory depicted primitive peoples as representing the earlier, i.e., childhood, period of human development, so Bousset signals the primitive nature of *Spätjudentum* through

⁷⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 223; *Das Wesen*, 201: "Paulus hat sich an den Fesseln wundgerieben, ehe er sie sprengte." See also *RJNT*, 43.

⁷⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 65.

⁷⁷ See the discussion of the neologism of anti-semitism in Chapter Two.

⁷⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 98-100.

multiple references to childishness. The primitive has a “child-like mind” and “childish credulity.”⁷⁹ *Spätjudentum* is particularly characterized as having a “childish belief.”⁸⁰ In outlining the ministry of Jesus, Bousset references the “childishness and naiveté of the population,” describing them as a “mob of children” and “little ones.”⁸¹

The association with the primitive is reinforced through Bousset’s emphasis on the materiality of Jewish practices, which are described as grounded in the body, thereby conjoining markers of primitivity, materiality, and sexuality. Bousset juxtaposes the “lost fallen souls” of the Jews and “prostitute or adulterous life.”⁸² In describing the essence of redemption as perfected in Christianity, Bousset articulates this as a “release from material and ritualistic impurity,” giving as his example an Israelite woman following childbirth.⁸³ Redemption is further described as the “redemption of our lower, sensual being and its release from sensual fetters.”⁸⁴ By juxtaposing human sacrifice and sexual honor,⁸⁵ Bousset associates sexuality and primitivity.

By describing *Judentum* as a degenerated, stunted branch of the tree of history of religion, Bousset creates a timeless *Judentum* that, following the emergence of

⁷⁹ Bousset, *WIR*, 19, 46.

⁸⁰ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 25.

⁸¹ Bousset, *Jesus*, 49; 56; 65: “...the ‘little ones’ of whom he often speaks, the uneducated and the humble... Woe unto him who should give cause of stumbling to one of these simple children, who were incapable of help or counsel of their own.” See 97: “strange, fantastic, childish.”

⁸² Bousset, *Jesus*, 161.

⁸³ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 89.

⁸⁴ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 94-5. See Bousset, *WIR*, 26: “[to be] free from the sordid daily limitations, the narrow habitations and boundaries of human life, the sensual bondage of which is better, nobler self is conscious.”

⁸⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 6: “egoism of the rudest type, and a joy in sacrifice which, in the form of the sacrifice of men, children, and sexual honor, shows itself under its most terrible aspect.” See *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 88: “...carried to the extent of sacrificing the bodily life, the child, and sexual honor.”

Christianity, “only had a history of stagnation.”⁸⁶ Noting the “terrible law of the struggle for existence,”⁸⁷ Bousset implicitly frames *Judentum* as an inevitable casualty of a natural order that is ultimately grounded in the divine order: “The whole history of the religious life of mankind stands to us as the great handiwork of God, a ceaseless aspiration and constant intercourse of God with man, of man with his Maker, in accordance with the stage to which he has attained.”⁸⁸

Bousset’s explicit language reinforces the ‘death’ of *Judentum*.⁸⁹ In his discussion of the Babylonian and Assyrian conquest of Israel and Judah, Bousset speaks of the “terrible storm cloud” that was approaching, against which the Israelites were “powerless” leading to their “inevitable downfall.”⁹⁰ This depiction is paralleled in *RJNT*, where the language of conquest is overwhelming—destruction, catastrophe, suppression.⁹¹ Through multiple references to Israel’s God killing his own people, Bousset’s language suggests that this destruction is part of the divine order.⁹²

⁸⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 239; *Das Wesen*, 214: “Das Judentum hat seit dem neutestamentlichen Zeitalter zur eine Geschichte der Erstarrung gehabt....”

⁸⁷ Bousset, *WIR*, 294. See also *WIR*, 285: “the apparently pitiless struggle for existence...;” and *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 84: “...with this great work of our civilized nations, in which the laws of the natural struggle for existence and questions of power and capacity play such an important part.”

⁸⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 9.

⁸⁹ For a discussion of the ‘death of Judaism’ in earlier German thought, see Amy Newman, “The Death of Judaism in German Protestant Thought from Luther to Hegel,” *JAAR* 61:3 (1993): 455-87. While Schleiermacher also used Luther’s expression ‘withered plant,’ his own phrase is ‘undecayed mummy.’

⁹⁰ Bousset, *WIR*, 129.

⁹¹ Bousset, *RJNT*, 1: *Vernichtung, Katastrophe, Niederschlagung*. Again, Bousset’s analysis is paradoxical; elsewhere he notes that the conquest was really not the end of Judaism, since the destruction of the Temple produced the beginnings of synagogal practice, which he characterizes largely in a positive manner as a victory of the laity over the elite who create and control the institutionalization of dogma and practice.

⁹² Bousset, *WIR*, 129-34.

Bousset reinforces his bracketing of *Judentum* from the realm of history by making no mention of any form of Jewish tradition during the eighteen centuries after the period of the New Testament and the Temple destruction in 70 CE. However, for Bousset, *Judentum* never really ‘dies,’ since the materiality it represents always remains submerged, ready to reassert itself, and thus a potential danger to the spiritualizing religiosity of German Protestantism; as Bousset describes it, *Judentum* represents the “last sounds of an old song that is dying away.”⁹³ Although Bousset’s language throughout his narrative of the history of religion is seemingly a hymn in praise of humanity’s constant progress, contemporary Jews caught in the 2000-year history of stagnation would not (and, according to his logic, could not), as Jews, be part of that upward triumph.

While Bousset’s construction of *Spätjudentum/Judentum* disrupts its apparent continuity with early Christianity, his depiction of *Judentum* within an evolutionary framework of religion also echoes racial ideology, even though he only rarely uses the explicit terminology of race (*Rasse*).⁹⁴ By mapping all of the elements that racial theory

⁹³ Bousset, *WIR*, 219.

⁹⁴ Bousset does use the terminology of race (*Rasse*) in relation to *Judentum* at several points, strengthening the otherwise implicit racialized framework of the ‘history of religion,’ *Das Wesen*, 28ff, 55, 61, 130. In referencing conversion to Judaism, he uses the term “*vollblut Juden*” (144). While Bousset did not discuss skull shapes or other physical characteristics as did Chamberlain and many other explicitly anti-semitic writers, he did, however, in *RJNT*, which is the subject of the next chapter, call upon ‘*Anthropologie*’ and ‘*Psychologie*’ to support his claims relating to the essence of *Judentum*, entitling a chapter ‘*Die Anthropologie des Judentum.*’ By referencing *Anthropologie*, Bousset is drawing on the objectivization, empiricism, and quantification associated with anthropology. In doing so, he relied upon the ‘scientific’ legitimation represented by both anthropology and psychology as academic disciplines, which were also used to legitimate racial theory.

marks as ‘other’ (Oriental, material, sexualized, primitive) onto *Judentum*, Bousset, is, in effect, participating in the Western colonial enterprise, and provides a space in which *Judentum* can be read as a racial, rather than theological, other.

Organic Religion and Jewish Difference

In this section, I examine how Bousset deploys organic tropes as key elements in his construction of the category of religion. Organic metaphors reinforce the ‘naturalness’ of the teleology in which he situates religion as an irreducible human phenomenon.

While Bousset’s appropriation of the scientific method of comparison marks his discussion of the development of religion as a product of *Wissenschaft*, that is, objective and analytical scholarship, Bousset goes further by drawing an analogy between the type of comparative work he is doing and the type of comparative work that was grounded in organic life-forms, i.e., the modern fields of biology and comparative anatomy. Bousset’s analogy to comparative anatomy illustrates his conceptual framework: just as comparative anatomy is used to arrange and group natural forms of life, religious forms must similarly be arranged and grouped.⁹⁵

Bousset reinforces this analogy when he uses the terminology of genus and species, the language of scientific classification, to explicate the relationship between the phenomenon of religion and the historical expressions of religion. According to Bousset’s logic, if ‘religion’ is the genus, then the historical forms of religion constitute the species. Christianity is not only a sub-category of ‘religion,’ but is the most highly developed sub-category as “...simply the most complete species of the genus...For from

⁹⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 9-10.

a comparative study of the genus we learn to understand thoroughly and completely the most perfect of its species, just as comparative anatomy reveals to us very clearly the highly developed organism of man.”⁹⁶

Using an analogy from the natural sciences allows Bousset to imply the naturalness of his categories of the historical forms of religion, while obscuring the reality that these are constructed categories that are hierarchical and necessarily normative. Just as natural scientists are seen as engaging in empirical investigations of the natural world, i.e., what ‘really’ exists, Bousset presents himself as the *Wissenschaftler* who is collecting empirical evidence by observing and then classifying the historical, external forms through which the kernel of religion is expressed.

Bousset further naturalizes Jewish difference by grounding the telos of religion in an organic understanding of the Gospel, that is in Jesus himself, using organic metaphors. According to Bousset, Jesus himself, like the prophets in an earlier age, represents a new creative force that is necessary to continue and fully complete the realization of the interiority of true religion, i.e., piety. Even greater than the prophets though, Jesus is the ultimate in pure spiritual consciousness, which is demonstrated through his relationality with ‘God the Father.’

Bousset’s organic language renders Jesus as the natural and inevitable culmination of human development, that is, of authentic human existence: “[Bousset’s] critical reversion (vis-à-vis the Christological tradition) to the ‘simple Gospel of Jesus,’ i.e. the interpretation of the Christian religion in the sense of a normative theology of Jesus, relied on the retrospective projection of the modern understanding of personality

⁹⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 9-10.

onto the figure of Jesus, who—as a religious genius—was raised to the normative standard of the history of religion.”⁹⁷

According to Bousset, Jesus represents the very holistic organicity of religion, since for Jesus: “religion is a whole, a unity, not a series of definitions depending on the letter of the law.”⁹⁸ Jesus and the Gospel represent the kernel, or core, of true religion that develops in human history. Bousset represents Jesus as the organic, moving force within the history of religion: “only a new seed was sown which awaits development, the first impetus which demands further independent and creative force.”⁹⁹ The development of Jesus is framed in terms of this organic teleology: “Jesus ripened and matured,”¹⁰⁰ so that by the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus was in the “prime of manhood.”¹⁰¹

Jesus’ message is explicitly framed in the language of biology: “with the idea of the Kingdom of God the universalism of the Gospel is already present in embryo (*im Kern und Keim*).”¹⁰² The Gospel represents true and perfect freedom; as pure individualism, it is “a quiet germinating and growing within.”¹⁰³ Jesus “does not reduce human life to the level of the life of Nature. He elevates the natural, in the form of parables, to the height of the spiritual.”¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, translated by Christian Wiese and Barbara Harshav (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), 176-7.

⁹⁸ Bousset, *WIR*, 222.

⁹⁹ Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant* 83; *Unser Gottesglaube*, 44: “ein neuer Keim.”

¹⁰⁰ Bousset, *Jesus*, 9.

¹⁰¹ Bousset, *Jesus*, 5; German, 3: “wie er, herangewachsen in Alter von etwa dreissig Jahren...”

¹⁰² Bousset, *Jesus*, 94; German: “...im Kern und Keim ist mit der Reichsgottespredigt der Universalismus des Evangeliums gegeben.”

¹⁰³ Bousset, *WIR*, 223.

¹⁰⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 226.

Organic language is the key element that allows Bousset to disrupt any perceived continuity between Jesus the Jew and Jesus as the telos of religion itself. Bousset insulates Jesus from the threat represented by *Judentum*'s inherent deficiency by separating Jesus' religion from his 'nation.' *Judentum* is cast as the outer, external form, that is, the husk that either disappears or is discarded as a 'natural' result of the process of development. The race/ethnicity/nation of Jesus (that is, Jesus's Jewishness) represents what is external, material, and historically contingent, which ultimately can be discarded since the essence of Jesus is his "inward religion."¹⁰⁵

For Bousset, biological language of organicity performs significant ideological work. Bousset was not, of course, the first biblical scholar to use the organic/inorganic opposition in the representation of Judaism. He took over this biologized discourse from earlier influential scholars, such as Ernest Renan, William Robertson Smith, and Julius Wellhausen.¹⁰⁶ Renan had painted a portrait of Jesus within a Galilee that was a veritable paradise in contrast to the stark coldness of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁷ Robertson Smith described Semitic religion as a "congenital defect" incapable of natural development,¹⁰⁸ while

¹⁰⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 218ff.

¹⁰⁶ See Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W.M.L. de Wette, Jakob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and James Pasto, "Islam's 'Strange Secret Sharer': Orientalism, Judaism, and the Jewish Question," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40:3 (July, 1998): 437-74.

¹⁰⁷ Ernest Renan, *Life of Jesus* (New York: Modern Library, 1927), orig. published 1863. See Susannah Heschel's treatment of Renan in *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁸ William Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1889), 419.

Julius Wellhausen had depicted Second Temple Judaism as “ossified” and “degenerated.”¹⁰⁹

However, by the time Bousset wrote at the turn of the twentieth century, the implications of the naturalization produced by these organic tropes had become much more powerful by resonating with the racialization embedded within the intellectual and cultural environment. By using the language of development and degeneration to describe an a-historical *Judentum*, Bousset’s writing would resonate even more forcefully with German *völkisch* ideology that was grounded in notions of the holistic organic unity of the *Volk*. Thus, Bousset’s teleology of the history of religion goes beyond traditional theological anti-Judaism.

Bousset’s Germanic Christianity

Bousset not only privileges Christianity as the perfection of the genus ‘religion,’ he explicitly connects the teleology of religion (and the personality of Jesus as the ultimate in religious/human consciousness) to German national identity. He draws on *völkisch* tropes, such as ‘*die Führer*,’ and German cultural heroes that were instantly recognizable. Bousset comes full circle with his teleology of religious development, implicitly privileging a Germanic Christianity that represents the full realization of the essence of religion itself.

An integral aspect of *völkisch* ideology was the concept of the great personality/leader who would serve and preserve the *Volk*— the call for the emergence of

¹⁰⁹ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1885), 497.

a new German leader (*Führer*), who would enable the regeneration of the German *Volk*.¹¹⁰ At the very end of *What is Religion*, Bousset explicitly frames Jesus as that great personality for all time, naming him as “Jesus the Leader” and Jesus “the Captain.”¹¹¹ In doing so, he transforms Jesus into the leader of the German *Volk*, who will protect the organic unity of the *Volk*.

The connection to the Germanic spirit within history is also reflected in the way Bousset frames Jesus in relation to the other heroes of German history. Like Jesus, Luther released the essence of the Gospel from the external constraints of dogma and the materiality of observance. Luther becomes the prophet of the modern era, since Luther “revealed religion as religion, [and] freed it from all its Roman [i.e., Catholic] deformities.”¹¹²

Bousset places within this pantheon not only Luther, but also Goethe, who he describes as like a god “enthroned on the heights, like Zeus,” whose “personality impresses us as that of a life animated by the spirit within, and acting in accordance with universal self-evolved laws of development.”¹¹³ Goethe here serves as the exemplar of

¹¹⁰ See generally George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964) and Fritz R. Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1961). Uwe Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich: Sprache-Rasse-Religion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), 18-20, 45, 136, provides an analysis of several visual representations of Bismark as ‘savior’ (*Retter*) of Germany.

¹¹¹ Bousset, *WIR*, 294. See Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 117, using “*Führer*” and “*religiöser Übermensch*.” Mark D. Chapman, in *Ernst Troeltsch and Liberal Theology: Religion and Cultural Synthesis in Wilhelmine Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 38-41, does draw attention to the trope of the great personality in Bousset and the connection Bousset makes to the figure of Jesus, but does not examine this trope in the context of German *völkisch* ideology or anti-Jewish tropes.

¹¹² Bousset, *WIR*, 262.

¹¹³ Bousset, *WIR*, 274-5.

Bildung, which Bousset links to “universal laws.” While Goethe’s inclusion represents the ideal of *Bildung* in terms of character and spirit, Bousset goes further by including more recent German heroic figures, such as Bismark, who, as the architect of German unification in 1871, serves as the icon of German national identity, representing the

picture of a life in accordance with universal laws—
the picture of heroic, energetic, infinitely capable manhood.
Standing firmly on the earth in which his roots are cast,
dealing only with what is, Bismark, in a hard struggle
for existence, raised his humiliated nation to an
undreamt-of position of power and authority. As if
possessed of a magic wand, he awakened the idealistic
German dreamer. And on all sides there re-echoed—
in Germany as well—the cry of the duty of self-preservation
and self-assertion, of the struggle for world-domination;
on all sides a new desire to live, new aspirations, new
organizations, the struggle for existence, class conflicts.¹¹⁴

Bousset reinforces this through his representation in which Bismark’s ‘*Männlichkeit*’ is clearly tied to German imperialism: “raised his humiliated nation to an undreamt-of position of power and authority.’ Bismark is also cast as the *völkisch* figure who is “standing firmly on the earth in which his roots are cast.”

By mapping German *völkisch* tropes onto the teleology grounding both science and religion, Bousset enables the extension, or more precisely, the particularization of the traditional Jewish/Christian dichotomy of Christian theology into a Jewish/German dichotomy that is made both possible and necessary by science and history. Bousset explicitly connects this purification of true religion to the “scientific consciousness” of the German academic tradition and the ideal of *Wissenschaft* (science).¹¹⁵ He draws on the authority of the German intellectual tradition through repeated references to both

¹¹⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 274-5.

¹¹⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 260.

Kant and Goethe. In this way, he is drawing not only on German cultural icons, but their *wissenschaftlich* authority.¹¹⁶

Since the use of the terminology of development and degeneration implicitly resonated with the characterization of Jews and Jewishness within German *völkisch* ideology and anti-semitic discourse, Bousset's work both contributed to and legitimated that discourse.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how Bousset, appropriating the discourse and method of science, legitimates his framework of the history of religion. By appealing to the 'modern' scientific worldview, Bousset distanced himself from the supernatural elements of the Christian tradition that had been challenged by both the natural sciences and biblical criticism. Bousset situates himself in relation to other emerging academic disciplines, such as anthropology, ethnology, and psychology, especially in relation to the emerging discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* (citing William Robertson Smith, C.P. Tiele, Chantepie de la Saussaye, Max Müller and others). Drawing on both the methodology and tropes of science allows Bousset to frame his scholarship, and in

¹¹⁶ See generally, Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine, eds., *Romanticism and the Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), as well as the discussion in Chapter Two.

¹¹⁷ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*; Geoffrey Field, *Evangelist of Race: the Germanic vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflexions on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 23 (1978), 25-46; Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), originally published 1899; Ernst Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1992), originally published 1900.

particular his construction of Jewish difference, as objectively based and fully authorized by science. He uses a series of organic metaphors that would resonate with the emergence of biology and the more specialized field of embryology, both of which were grounded in the notion of development. While the explicitly evolutionary history of religion was abandoned within *Religionswissenschaft*, the phenomenological notion of religion and its primary binary of spirit/matter remained.

In the next chapter, I examine more specifically how Bousset constructs *Spätjudentum* in relation to the emergence of Christianity by considering how he maps the *völkisch* tropes of syncretism and chaos onto *Spätjudentum* and in doing so, reflects and reproduces the racialization of Jewishness within anti-Semitic discourse.

CHAPTER IV

READING BOUSSET THROUGH THE JEWISH QUESTION

The previous chapter used the lens of the evolutionary framework of the history of religion to illustrate how Bousset situated *Judentum* outside the full development of the telos of religion. He did this by attributing the markers of ‘otherness’ generally applied to non-Western peoples to *Judentum*. In doing so, Bousset provided an opening through which *Judentum* could be characterized as racialized in contrast to Christianity, which, as unmarked, represented the true universality that is the telos of religion.

In this chapter, I consider Bousset’s construction of *Spätjudentum* in relation to his narrative of Christian origins. I focus on his academic writings in order to see how his phenomenological notion of religion functions when his evolutionary framework is not explicitly in view. I consider how *Judentum* can be essentialized in racial terms through the tropes of syncretism and chaos. Although Bousset does not explicitly articulate a Germanic Christianity as the telos of religion as he does in his narrative of the history of religion, he has supplemented/extended the Jewish/Christian binary with the more specific Jewish/German binary via the tropes of syncretism and chaos shared by anti-semitic discourse.

Bousset identifies *Spätjudentum* with syncretism¹ in two ways: 1) through his characterization of how *Spätjudentum* was constituted by the infusion of disparate

¹ The importance of these tropes for Bousset is indicated by the way he uses recognition of the syncretism of *Judentum* as his measuring stick in critiquing the work of other scholars, a matter that will be considered in more depth in the next chapter.

‘foreign’ elements from the wider social and cultural environment; and 2) through his characterization of *Spätjudentum* as a cross between a ‘nation’ and ‘religion.’²

Through his deployment of the central tropes of anti-semitic discourse—syncretism (mixing) and chaos, both of which signal degeneration, unnaturalness, and disorder—Bousset depicts *Judentum* in antiquity as a heterogeneity, that is, an aggregate of disparate elements that is incapable of ever achieving any organic holistic unity. Bousset frames this heterogeneity in terms of the interiority of *Judentum*, a move that marks a shift from theological anti-Judaism to a naturalization of ‘Jewishness,’ which can then be read as racialized. Bousset legitimates his own depiction of the ‘otherness’ of *Judentum* by drawing on what he describes as negative reaction to *Judentum* in the ancient world.

I then read Bousset’s representation of *Spätjudentum* in antiquity against the responses to the Jewish question at the turn of the twentieth century. I use, in particular, the writing of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the ‘prophet’ of German *völkisch* and anti-semitic discourse, in order to demonstrate how Bousset’s analysis reflects and, because of its *wissenschaftlich* status, legitimates the racialized construction of ‘Jewishness’ within anti-semitic discourse at the turn of the twentieth century.

² Here, Bousset’s construction of *Spätjudentum* is grounded in his basic question: whether *Spätjudentum* is a ‘genuine development’ of (i.e., in continuity with) the kernel of OT prophetic religion. This is a more specific question than the broad narrative of the history of ‘religion’ discussed in the previous chapter. While his generative question in terms of development implies ‘stages,’ his more focused analysis of Christian origins treats ‘nation’ and ‘religion’ as categories rather than stages. As the previous chapter demonstrated, *Spätjudentum/Judentum* was classified as a ‘religion of law’ because of its hybrid nature; however, religions of law really aren’t a ‘stage’ in the teleological development of ‘religion,’ since they represent a retrogression, rather than the progression represented by what he termed the religions of redemption.

Syncretism and *Judentum*

In creating his narrative of the history of early Christianity, Bousset is faced with what he takes as the ‘problem’ of *Spätjudentum*. Given his understanding of the inherent telos of religion, Bousset must answer the question of whether or not *Spätjudentum* represented a ‘genuine’ intrinsic development of the religion of the prophets— what he considered to be the highest stage of religion within the Old Testament religion.³ While he frames this as a question at the beginning of *RJNT*, in an earlier essay his answer is a resounding ‘no,’ simply asserting that *Spätjudentum* was not a genuine development of the prophetic religion of the Old Testament.⁴ Since he has already identified both the core of prophetic religion and the core of the Gospel (Jesus) as piety, that is, the interiority of conviction/religiosity, he needs to identify the core/kernel/*Keim* of *Spätjudentum*, in order to be able to distinguish it from what came before and after. He engages in the process of boundary construction through his attempt to locate the “inner kernel of this religion” (“*innere Kern dieser Religion*”) and the “inner life of the religion of *Spätjudentum*” (“*innere Leben der Religion des Spätjudentums*”).⁵

Bousset preserves the sharp dichotomy he draws between the religion of ancient Israel and *Spätjudentum* through the notion of syncretism and the related trope of chaos. As Rosalind Shaw and Charles Stewart have demonstrated, ‘syncretism’ serves as a

³ Bousset, *RJNT*, 449: “...als eine genuine Entwicklung aus der Religion der Propheten und Psalmen heraus zu begreifen seien, oder ob hier nicht ein mannigfaches Einströmen fremder Religionselemente mit in Anschlag zu bringen sei.” This question frames both Bousset’s introduction (5) and conclusion. His question assumes, but does not require, his evolutionary framework of the history of religion.

⁴ Bousset, *ThR* 2 (1899): 11: “Es ist nicht auf dem geraden Wege der Entwicklung aus der alttestamentlichen Religion entstanden, bei seiner allmählichen Entstehung sind fremde Mächte von Einfluss gewesen.”

⁵ Bousset, *RJNT*, 4-5.

discourse that grounds ideological contestations: “ ‘Syncretism’ is a contentious term, often taken to imply ‘inauthenticity’ or ‘contamination,’ the infiltration of a supposedly ‘pure’ tradition by symbols and meanings seen as belonging to other, incompatible traditions.”⁶ This pejorative use came to the fore in the late nineteenth-century enterprise of comparative religion: “ ‘Syncretism’ thus became an ‘othering’ term applied to historically distant as well as geographically distant societies, in line with Tylorean evolutionist thinking.”⁷

Syncretism, for Bousset, represents the introduction of ‘strange’ religious elements and signals transgression against firm boundaries. What is syncretic is represented as: alien, fragmented, discontinuous, chaotic, and unnatural. In contrast, what is genuine is represented as: organic, holistic, creative, and natural. Bousset’s comparative method throughout his scholarship becomes an exercise in determining where and how syncretism (“*des antiken Synkretismus*”) exists.⁸

For Bousset, the entire Hellenistic period was an age of syncretism. In an early work, *Die Himmelreise der Seele*, Bousset traces the genre of heavenly journeys to a mixing/blending/amalgamation (“*Verschmelzung*”) of Persian and Babylonian representations.⁹ Similarly, Bousset describes Mandeans (thought to be remnants of a John the Baptist community) as a mixed or bastard form (“*Mischbildung*”)¹⁰ and

⁶ Rosalind Shaw and Charles Stewart, “Introduction,” *Syncretism/Antisyncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London and New York, 1994), 1. Shaw and Stewart describe the etymology of the term and trace its usage through the early modern period, when the ‘syncretistic controversies’ arose out of the contentious issue concerning reconciliation of the varieties of Protestant denominations.

⁷ Rosalind Shaw and Charles Stewart, “Introduction,” *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 4-5.

⁸ Bousset, *HG*, 21.

⁹ Bousset, *HS*, 54: “ganze Geschichte des hellenistischen Synkretismus verlohnt.”

¹⁰ Bousset, *HS*, 38.

Hellenistic religions as syncretic forms (“*synkretischen Bildungen*”), that is, as a mix (“*Gemisch*”) of Greek and oriental ideas.¹¹ Bousset negatively characterizes the “fantastic representations” (*phantastischen Vorstellungen*)¹² he finds in Gnosticism as a blend of Persian, Babylonian, and Greek ideas.¹³

Bousset depicts *Spätjudentum* as necessarily a product of accretions from ‘oriental’ religions onto the religion of Israel represented in the prophets. Given Bousset’s representation of the Hellenistic period as abounding with syncretism, *Judentum* simply could not resist the force of alien or foreign traditions:

However much *Judentum* would like to shut itself off, through every pore of its existence, still strange elements, such as Greek language and knowledge, Babylonian heavenly myths, Babylonian (Egyptian) magic and much else, in a myriad of ways, forced their way into every pore of *Judentum*. *Judentum* lived and breathed in an atmosphere full of what was alien.¹⁴

Bousset identifies apocalypticism and messianic expectations as among those ‘alien’ elements that have found their way into the very core of *Spätjudentum*. He already assumes the centrality of those particular elements to the Jewish tradition by privileging the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings as reflecting the actual thought of the

¹¹ Bousset, *HS*, 72.

¹² Bousset, *HG*, 21.

¹³ Bousset, *HG*; see Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), for a discussion of Bousset’s influence within scholarship on Gnosticism.

¹⁴ Bousset, *RJNT*, 450-1: “Das Judentum mochte sich abschliessen, wie es wollte, — durch alle Poren seines Daseins drang dennoch fremdes Wesen; griechische Sprache, griechisches Wissen und Denken, babylonische Himmelskunde, babylonische (ägyptische) Magie und vieles andre drängte sich herein. In tausendfachen Kanälen strömt das Fremde hinzu, mit der Atmosphäre, in der es lebt, athmet das Judentum es ein.”

Jewish *Volk*, rather than the rabbinical writings that he took as representing the intellectualism of the elite religious leaders.¹⁵

The ideas that are at the core of this apocalyptic worldview are irrevocably alien to what Bousset assumes as the essence of the Israelite prophetic tradition and reflect the confused and ambiguous nature of *Judentum*:

There are, at first, certainly extreme bizarre and grotesque forms that are wild and impure fantasies in which such alien influence becomes evident. The notion of the world to come, above all, does not succeed in clarifying the fanatic future hopes of the Israelite religion, which are limited to what is national and particularistic. The religion of *Judentum* becomes through them a contradictory product.¹⁶

Bousset uses similar language in depicting the messianic thought of the time: “If we turn now to a representation of the messianic expectations of the future, we come up against a motley number of tangled fantasies of incomparable and contradictory variety.”¹⁷

The language Bousset deploys in characterizing these alien elements intensifies the heterogeneity that he has identified as the core of *Judentum*. *Judentum* has devolved, that is, sunk to the lowest, i.e., earliest and most primitive, stages of religion and is thus

¹⁵ Bousset’s choice of sources reflects the move toward religious expression ‘on the ground,’ as opposed to the intellectual enterprise of theology. His choice of sources was vigorously critiqued by Jewish scholars such as Felix Perles, whose critique was, in turn, critiqued by Bousset; this exchange will be considered in more detail in Chapter Five.

¹⁶ Bousset, *RJNT*, 493: “Es sind zunächst freilich höchst bizarre, groteske Formen, in denen jener fremde Einfluss zur Erscheinung kommt, wilde, ungeklärte Phantasien. Es gelingt vor allem dem Jenseitsgedanken nicht, die fanatisch nationalen, partikularistisch beschränkten Zukunftsgedanken der israelitischen Religion zu klären. Die Religion des Judentums wird gerade durch ihn zu einem widerspruchsvollen Gebilde.”

¹⁷ Bousset, *RJNT*, 198: “Wenn wir uns nun der Darstellung der messianischen Zukunftserwartungen des Judentums zuwenden, so stehen wir beim ersten Blick vor einer bunten Fülle verworrener Phantasieen von unausgeglichener, widerspruchsvoller Mannigfaltigkeit.”

filled with the elements from those stages:¹⁸ supernatural entities, such as angels, spirits, demons; practices such as magic; and ecstatic behavior, etc.¹⁹ His negative representation is reflected in his descriptors: wild/primitive, grotesque, bizarre, fantastic. These descriptors go beyond being simply ‘different.’ Rather, these terms intensify the pejorative depiction of *Judentum* and suggest that the heterogeneity that marks *Judentum* is deep and fundamental.

The syncretism described by Bousset creates a *Judentum* marked by “confusion and fermenting chaos.”²⁰ These alien elements explain the disordered nature of *Judentum*.²¹ Given the mixture of foreign elements at the core/*Keim* of *Judentum*, *Judentum* can never overcome its intrinsic heterogeneity and, for Bousset, can never achieve an organic, unified whole. This heterogeneity of *Judentum* disrupts any continuity with the kernel of true religion represented in the religion of the prophets.

¹⁸ Bousset, *RJNT*, 452: “In jähem Sturz sinkt eine übergeistig gewordene Frömmigkeit wieder zurück auf die niederste Stufe uralten Glaubens. Der Glaube an kleine und kleinste Geister, an Dämonen, die überall ihr Wesen treiben, an die Macht der Gespenster, an Zauberei und die Macht des Namens, die wilden Formen der Ekstase, der Glaube an magisch wirkende materielle Mittel, das alles wird wieder in erneuter Kraft lebendig.” His language here evokes the process of degeneration discussed in Chapter Three: Jewish piety has sunk (*sinkt, Sturz*) to the lowest stage (*niederste Stufe*), with the elements he identifies as those from primitive beliefs (*uralten Glauben*).

¹⁹ Bousset, *RJNT*, 323.

²⁰ Bousset, *ThR* 4 (1901): 93: “das wirre Durcheinander, das gährende Chaos der zeitgenössischen jüdischen Religion....” See *RJNT*, 54: “scheint auf der ersten Blick ein gährendes Chaos zu sein.”

²¹ Bousset, *RJNT*, 450: “Eine weitere Beobachtung die darauf führt, fremden Einfluss in der Entwicklung der Gedankenwelt des Judentums anzunehmen, ist ihre Uneinheitlichkeit und Verworrenheit....Und ein Grundzug derselben ist die Disharmonie.” English: “a further observation that leads to assuming strange influence on the development of the thought-world of *Judentum* is its incoherence and disorder...and a reason for that is disharmony.”

Judentum and Ambiguity

Bousset further describes the essence of *Judentum* as confused and chaotic because it is neither fully a ‘nation’ nor fully a ‘religion.’ Such confusion signals a heterogeneity that blurs what should be clear and distinct boundaries between categories.²² What Bousset describes as the two poles of *Judentum*—expansion and exclusivity—are used to demonstrate the essential ambiguity and paradox of *Judentum*. The dichotomy that Bousset marks as the paradox of *Judentum* reflects an overarching dualism, with religion/expansion/universality on one side and nation/exclusivity/particularism on the other. Expansion represented the push beyond the limits of ‘nation,’ while exclusivity represented the way in which the Jews saw themselves and were seen by others as a people or nation separated from other peoples.

Bousset initially depicts this expansion in positive terms as an attempt at becoming a universal religion, thus being part of the ‘natural’ development of religion. For Bousset, Diaspora *Judentum* breaks the bonds of national life and the bonds of exclusivity before the Maccabean period of the second century BCE: “In spite of its particularistic aloofness, the Jewish religion was swept along by the universal, spiritual currents, and, indeed, the advance here was especially vital and clear.”²³ Bousset paints a picture of *Spätjudentum* straining to escape its particularistic and national constraints, which it begins to accomplish through the Diaspora: “...from the second century B.C.

²² See the note above that compares the approaches in this chapter and the previous chapter in terms of the key questions Bousset seeks to answer.

²³ Bousset, *WIR*, 216; *Das Wesen*, 194-5: “Trotz aller seiner partikularistischen Abgeschlossenheit wird auch das Judentum von den allgemeinen geistigen Strömungen mit ergriffen, ja die Entwicklung ist hier überaus lebhaft und deutlich.”

(perhaps even from the third) it experienced an enormous expansion. Judaism overflowed its boundaries....[t]his Judaism now began a world propaganda, with great results.”²⁴

In using the language of mission and propaganda, Bousset is emphasizing how *Judentum* functions as a missionary religion in terms of seeking converts.²⁵ For Bousset, missionizing implies the process of universalization that is part of the telos of religion.

However, despite his initial seemingly positive description of *Judentum*, Bousset portrays that boundary crossing as ultimately unsuccessful:

Here, also, the narrowness of these tendencies is clearly seen. Although Judaism now spread all over the world, and began to carry on a world-propaganda, the religion still remained chained to the Jewish nation. It freed itself gradually from the national worship, only to become all the more entangled in ceremony and legal casuistry. The idea of a personal judgment is evolved, but the national hope, with its passionate fanaticism, prevails.²⁶

For Bousset, the ‘national’ hopes of *Judentum* overpower any movement toward the universalization that marks true piety. The constraints of national, i.e., *völkisch*, particularity, were just too strong. What he describes variously as ‘national spirit’ and

²⁴ Bousset, *WIR*, 142; *Das Wesen*, 128-9: “Die jüdische Religion hat dann freilich noch eine Erweiterung erfahren. Seit dem zweiten (vielleicht schon seit dem dritten) vorchristlichen Jahrhundert erlebt sie eine ungeheuere Expansion. Das Judentum überflutet seine Grenzen....Und diese Judentum beginnt eine Weltpropaganda zu betreiben—mit starkem Erfolg.”

²⁵ The language of ‘propaganda’ also suggests a missionizing effort. However, while ‘propaganda’ was derived from early modern Catholic institutionalization of efforts at propagating (propaganda) the faith, by the nineteenth century propaganda had a politicized connotation in terms of communication that was manipulative and designed to shape public opinion.

²⁶ Bousset, *WIR*, 217; *Das Wesen*, 195: “Deutlich zeigt sich auch hier die Gebundenheit dieser Tendenzen. Das in der weiten Welt zerstreute Judentum beginnt eine Weltmission zu treiben, doch bleibt die Religion gefesselt an das Volk. Sie löst sich allmählich vom nationalen Kult, um nur umsomehr in die Zeremonie und eine juristische Kasuistik zu versinken.” Note that the translator has translated ‘Weltmission’ as ‘world-propaganda’ rather than as the expected ‘world-mission.’

‘national pretensions,’²⁷ i.e., the pull of exclusivity and particularism, leaves *Judentum* at a stage of arrested development. *Judentum* is, in effect, stuck half-way between a national religion and a universal religion.²⁸ This confusion of categories, for Bousset, reflects the essential heterogeneity of *Judentum*: “*Judentum* is a religion of contrasts. Since the development under discussion stopped halfway, the tendency [i.e., toward universalism] did not come to fruition.”²⁹

After wrestling with the question of whether *Judentum* is a people/nation or a religious community, Bousset finds that this ambiguity is, in fact, the core of *Judentum*: “And, if we ask whether this vast totality that extends over the inhabited world seems more like a religious or as a political whole, we find no uniform answer. Thus, the Jewish Diaspora is a cross between nation and religious community.”³⁰ Bousset’s phrasing here is grounded in the necessary maintenance of a strict separation and differentiation between the categories of political nation and a religious community. By characterizing *Judentum* as a ‘cross’ (“*Mittelding*”) between these two categories, Bousset provides an even stronger marker of the confused essence of *Judentum*. The translation of *Mittelding* as ‘cross’ does not adequately capture the connotation of *Mittelding* as something that is

²⁷ Bousset, *RJNT*, 194: “So war die jüdische Synagoge in Palästina wie in der Diaspora tief durchdringen von nationalem Geist und nationalen Prätensionen.”

²⁸ Bousset, *RJNT*, 4: “Auf der anderen Seite ist nicht zu verkennen, dass diese Umbildung der jüdischen Religion auf halbem Wege stehen geblieben ist.”

²⁹ Bousset, *RJNT*, 185: “Das Judentum ist eine Religion der Gegensätze. Die in ihm vorliegende Entwicklung bleibt auf halbem Wege stehen, die Tendenz kommt nicht voll zur Erscheinung.”

³⁰ Bousset, *RJNT*, 189: “Und wenn wir fragen, ob sich diese grosse, über die bewohnte Welt sich erstreckende Gesamtheit mehr als eine religiöse oder als eine politische Einheit fühlte, finden wir keine einheitliche Antwort. Auch die jüdische Diaspora ist ein *Mittelding* zwischen Nation und Religionsgemeinde.” Here Bousset’s use of “political unity” (“*politische Einheit*”) and explicitly “*Nation*” suggests more than the unity of a people/*Volk*.

neither one thing, nor the other; Bousset's use of *Mittelding* thus indicates that *Judentum* is nothing in and of itself.³¹ Within a worldview grounded in an ordered system of classification, a *Mittelding* such as *Judentum* was irretrievably 'other.'

Bousset depicts this inner confusion and ambiguity in multiple ways. He characterizes this paradox as reflecting the two-facedness of Jewish particularity: a "doppeltes Gesicht."³² That characterization suggests that *Judentum* is neither one thing nor the other, and, moreover, that this ambiguity is obvious to others. His description of *Judentum* as an "unheimliches Rätsel"³³ (uncanny riddle) also draws on what he characterizes as the inherent ambiguity of *Judentum*. By suggesting that *Judentum* represents a basic confusion of categories, Bousset implies that *Judentum* itself is something disordered and unnatural, and therefore, 'other.'

***Judentum* as Always Other**

Bousset legitimates his characterization of *Judentum* by claiming that the ancient world recognized this otherness of *Judentum*. He frames *Judentum* as a problem in antiquity because of its particularity and exclusivity. To do this, Bousset outlines what he takes as a uniform negative response to Jews in the ancient world. For Bousset, Jewish particularity and exclusivity, that is, its innate national hope/idea/pretensions, mark

³¹ See Chapter Three for discussion of the language of *Zwittergebilde* that he uses to describe religions of the law in general.

³² Bousset, *RJNT*, 4. The expression of 'two-faced' was also used to convey what was claimed to be the deceitful nature of Jews. This characterization is reflected in Bousset's engagement with Jewish scholar Felix Perles, which is examined in Chapter Five.

³³ Bousset, *RJNT*, 76. Bousset, *ThR* 2 (1899), 78: "auf das rätselhafte Gebilde des Judentum."

Judentum within the ancient world and generates hostility toward *Judentum*.³⁴ According to Bousset, everything about the Jews triggered antagonism in the ancient world: “Their wealth, their dominance and unscrupulousness in business that the Jew as an oriental is endowed with, their capacity to take advantage of circumstances in order to obtain the patronage of the mighty and influential, and the increasing power of the Jewish people all provoked the hate and passion of the populace/rabble.”³⁵

However, Bousset goes further by explicitly drawing on the terminology of anti-semitism in his characterization of how the Jews were perceived in the ancient world: “at least since the beginning of the first century B.C. *Judentum* becomes a problem for the outside world, which aroused anti-semitism. One begins to perceive *Judentum* as an alien body within the Greco-Roman world. This people, or better, this religious community in its rigidity and separateness becomes an uncanny riddle.”³⁶ The retrojection of the

³⁴ Bousset, *RJNT*, 55: “Keine ist so eine thatsächliche Macht und ein Problem für die Völker geworden wie die jüdische Kirche.” Bousset’s use of ‘church’ in this section is designed to show the separation from the ‘national,’ i.e., political, elements of what he understands to be a lower form of religious development. In the second edition, he shifted his language away from ‘church.’ See Verheule, *Wilhelm Bousset*, for discussion of the changes within the second edition, particularly in relation to Perles’s critique. These changes do not affect the substance of my discussion.

³⁵ Bousset, *RJNT*, 76: “Sein Reichtum, die Ueberlegenheit und Skrupellosigkeit im Handel, die der Jude als Orientale mitbrachte, seine Fähigkeit, die Gunst der Umstände zu benutzen, die Gönnerschaft der Grossen und Einflussreichen zu erweben, die anschwellende Volkskraft des Judentums erregte den Hass und die wilde Leidenschaft des Pöbels.” Note how all of these negative qualities are associated with the ‘*Jude*’ as specifically ‘oriental.’

³⁶ Bousset, *RJNT*, 76: “Mindestens seit Beginn des ersten vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts wird das Judentum ein Problem für die Aussenwelt, der Antisemitismus erwacht. Man beginnt das Judentum als einen Fremdkörper innerhalb der römisch-griechischen Welt zu empfinden. Dieses Volk, oder besser diese Religionsgemeinde in ihrer Starrheit und Abgeschlossenheit wird ein unheimliches Rätsel.” In addition to the examples I highlight from *WIR* and *RJNT*, Bousset includes a discussion of Ulrich Wilcken, *Zum alexandrinischen Antisemitismus* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1909), in his essay on

contemporary discourse of anti-semitism onto the world of antiquity allows his readers to identify the ancient world with the early twentieth century, with the implication being drawn that *Judentum* has constituted a problem across all time. In this section of his discussion, Bousset also references allegations of ritual murder (“*Vorwurf des Ritualmordes*”) that seemingly go back to antiquity. Given the number of ritual murder accusations in the late nineteenth century, Bousset’s language would recall those contemporary alleged incidents.

Bousset not only portrays *Judentum* negatively, but he also accepts as appropriate the intensity of the reaction within the ancient world to *Judentum*. By framing this response as actual conflict through such language as ‘made war upon *Judentum*’ and ‘attacked,’ Bousset is depicting *Judentum* as a people/nation that is seen as a threat within the ancient world.

Although Bousset tries to differentiate between hostility toward *Judentum* as a nation and *Judentum* as a religion, his distinction fails: “At that time, whoever converted fully to *Judentum* changed not only his religion but his nation. He was no longer a Greek or a Roman, but became a Jew. Hence the hatred with which the populace, as well as the highly educated, the leaders in literature, made war upon Judaism as early as the first century B.C. It was not the religion that was attacked, but the race, the nation.”³⁷ This differentiation, however, is undermined by Bousset’s own insistence that *Judentum* is and

Spätjudentum in *ThR* 13 (1910): 381-400; in his essay on *Spätjudentum* in *ThR* 10 (1907): 291, Bousset juxtaposes “*antisemitische Gegenströmungen*” and “*Fremdkörper*.”

³⁷ Bousset, *WIR*, 144; *Das Wesen*, 130: “Wer damals zum Judentum vollständig übertrat, wechselte nicht nur die Religion, sondern die Nation. Er hörte auf, Grieche und Römer zu sein, er ward Jude. Daher auch der Hass, mit dem der Pöbel sowohl wie die Hochgebildeten, die Führer in der Literatur, schon seit dem ersten vorchristlichen Jahrhundert das Judentum befehdeten. Man bekämpfte nicht die Religion, sondern die Rasse, das Volk.”

remains a contradiction precisely because of the ambiguity as to whether it should be classified as a 'religion' or as a nation/people.

Bousset makes it clear that this hostility was not limited to the masses; rather, he makes specific reference to the educated, claiming that the Jews "provoked the bitter opposition and scorn of the educated."³⁸ By including the educated, i.e., the elites, Bousset is claiming even more legitimation for the problematic status of *Judentum*; that is, while the masses might be presumed to be hostile to any group outside of their own, the educated, who 'know' about such things, are similarly antagonistic.³⁹

Bousset emphasizes this point by drawing on ancient writers, such as Tacitus, to support his characterization: "the secular writers agree in their judgment that *Judentum* is not only an established religious community, but is an alien people."⁴⁰ In doing so, he is following the example of the foremost late nineteenth-century German historian Treitschke, who had legitimated his representation of Jews ('the Jews are our misfortune') by calling on the opinion of Tacitus and other writers in antiquity to show the unchanging and essentialized 'Jewishness' that he claimed was recognized by everyone.⁴¹

³⁸ Bousset, *RJNT*, 76: "erregten den erbitterten Widerstand und den Spott der Gebildeten."

³⁹ In the next section, I note that Bousset distanced himself from radical and overt anti-semitism; there the implication was that educated persons would not participate in such public speech/actions. Here, however, he valorizes the antagonistic reaction of the educated writers.

⁴⁰ Bousset, *RJNT*, 190: "Dem entspricht die Beurteilung der profanen Schriftsteller. Sie haben das Judentum ständig nicht nur als eine Religionsgemeinde, sondern als ein fremdes Volk beurteilt."

⁴¹ The appropriation of ancient writers who described hostility to *Judentum* was not new to the late nineteenth century, but had been utilized beginning in the early modern period.

Much of Bousset's negative characterization of *Spätjudentum* is contained in his discussion of ancient perceptions of the Jews, again suggesting that those perceptions continue to be accurate and, thus, completely natural. By relying on ancient writers, Bousset implies that his own characterization of *Judentum* in antiquity is not only correct, but is fully authorized by the then-contemporary descriptions. In addition, and more important, he has, as did many overtly anti-semitic writers, squarely put the responsibility for such antagonism onto the Jews themselves in a way that absolves those making anti-semitic representations of responsibility for such claims.

In this section, I have analyzed the various ways in which Bousset has represented the heterogeneity of *Judentum* negatively. Bousset first describes the heterogeneity of *Judentum* as a result of the influx of foreign elements that *Judentum* could not resist. He uses the dichotomy of religion/nation to illustrate what he sees as the intrinsic ambiguity of *Judentum* as neither one thing nor the other. This otherness that Bousset ascribes to *Judentum* goes to its very interiority, so that *Judentum* is represented as an alien entity, a *Fremdkörper*. More significant, Bousset claims that this interior alienness was in fact recognized in antiquity as the explanation for why *Judentum* was deemed alien by the other peoples of the ancient world.

In the next section, I consider how Bousset's representation of this 'inner kernel' of *Judentum* would resonate within his cultural context, and in particular, with the construction and representation of 'Jewishness' within anti-semitic discourse.

Bousset as Border Patrol

The language of boundaries and transgression became increasingly important during the late nineteenth century in marking what was German from what was not German and served as a way to identify the threat posed by Jews and Jewishness to the organic integrity of the German *Volk*.⁴² Bousset's construction of *Spätjudentum* reads as an exercise in border patrol, with Bousset constructing (containing) *Judentum* as a way of maintaining order and preventing the threat of chaos.

In order to understand the cultural resonances of Bousset's construction of *Judentum*, I read Bousset more specifically against the contemporaneous writing of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the 'prophet' of anti-semitism who provided an academic veneer for anti-semitic discourse.⁴³ Chamberlain's work serves as an example of the entanglement of German Protestant religiosity, German national consciousness, and the

⁴² See Kirsten Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation: Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), for a discussion of the power and scope of representations of German national identity in what was the premier German popular magazine in the nineteenth century. Belgum argues that *Die Gartenlaube*, by using language of borders and boundaries in relation to contested areas such as Alsace-Lorraine and Schleswig-Holstein, played a significant role not merely in reflecting national identity, but in actively producing such common German identity as an example of the process of *Volksbildung*. Treitschke made the connection perhaps even more explicitly: "*da war der Protestantismus allezeit unser sichersten Grenzhüter*" ("Protestantism was our most sure border protection at all times"), cited in Wolfgang Tilgner, "Volk, Nation und Vaterland im Protestantischen Denken zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus (1870-1933)," in *Volk-Nation-Vaterland: Der deutsche Protestantismus und der Nationalismus*, edited by Horst Zillesen (Gütersloh: Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1970), 140.

⁴³ Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Vols. I and II, translated by John Lees (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968); *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, twenty-first edition (München: F. Bruckmann A-G, 1936), originally published in 1899.

discourse of anti-semitism in which ‘Jewishness’ was racialized.⁴⁴ However, my comparison here takes on even more significance since Bousset was not only familiar with the racial theory articulated by both Chamberlain and Gobineau, but connected their racial theory to both the history of religion and the Western colonial enterprise of missionizing.⁴⁵

My intention is not to paint a picture of Bousset as an anti-semite. Certainly, in some of his private correspondence, he clearly expresses distaste for the action of those rowdy anti-semites engaged in violence or polemics in the streets.⁴⁶ Rather, by showing the interpenetration of the discourse of anti-semitism and Bousset’s work, I examine how his writing would function and how it would resonate with the racialized worldview that was becoming hegemonic at the turn of the twentieth century.

Chamberlain utilizes racial theory to describe an essential dichotomy operative throughout world history: that of the Aryan spirit (now represented by the Teutonic

⁴⁴ See Wolfram Kinzig, *Harnack, Marcion und das Judentum: nebst einer kommentierten Edition des Briefwechsels Adolf von Harnacks mit Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 2004), for a discussion of the correspondence between Chamberlain and Adolf von Harnack beginning at the turn of the century. While Harnack did question some of the overt racialization within Chamberlain’s work, his own negative opinion of *Judentum* was apparent in that correspondence.

⁴⁵ Bousset, *Das Mission und die sogenannte Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 15: “Die traurigsten, unwirksamsten und unlebendigsten Zeiten sind immer und überall diejenigen gewesen, in denen die konkreten Religionsgestaltungen sich derart vermengten und vermischten, daß sie dabei ihre eigentümliche Gestalt verwischten und ihr Zentrum verloren. Überhaupt ruht auch im weiteren Leben der Völker aller Fortschritt in der Entwicklung, soweit wir sehen, auf der immer reineren und klareren Herausbildung bestimmter, kräftiger, in sich abgeschlossener Typen und deren gegenseitigem Zusammenstoß in Konkurrenz und im Kampf - und nicht in der Herstellung eines allgemeinen Menschheitsbreis. Wir können in diesem Punkte von Gobineau und Chamberlain lernen. Ganz ebenso verhält es sich mit der Geschichte der Religionen.”

⁴⁶ Bousset, “*Unser Gottesglaube und der Krieg*,” in *Der Krieg und die christliche-deutsche Kultur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915), 91.

peoples) opposed to the ‘Semitic’ spirit that, as in essence materialism, was no spirit at all. While Chamberlain appropriated much of the anthropological work of the late nineteenth century upon which racial theory was built and legitimated, he also drew on the notion of religion as an interior experience, characteristic of a distinctly German Protestant religiosity that was also virtually indistinguishable from German national consciousness throughout the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ Chamberlain’s absolute opposition of ‘the Jew’ to the Indo-European, represented in history by the northern Europeans, is grounded in the ‘*Innenseite*’ of Jews, which Chamberlain ultimately frames as a negation, or negative space.

Since Bousset’s ultimate concern is the ‘*Innenseite*’ of *Spätjudentum/Judentum*, a comparison will be fruitful in showing the cultural resonances of Bousset’s work. In particular, I look at a) the identification of *Judentum* in terms of particularity/exclusivity, that is, as a ‘nation;’ b) the use and function of the tropes of syncretism and chaos; c) the representation of the interiority of *Judentum*; and d) the framing of *Judentum* as a ‘problem.’

(a) Exclusivity and Particularity

For both Chamberlain and Bousset, the exclusivity and particularity of *Judentum* as a people/nation was inseparable from any consideration of the religion of *Judentum*. Moreover, the representation of *Judentum* in terms of a ‘national’ idea was necessarily

⁴⁷ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 215: “Now this glance into the unfathomable depths of his own soul, this longing to soar upwards, this is religion. Religion as primarily nothing to do with either superstition or morals; it is a state of mind.” *Grundlagen*, 260: “Dieser Blick in die unerforschlichen Tiefen des eigenen Innern, diese Sehnsucht nach oben: das ist Religion. Religion hat zunächst weder mit Aberglauben noch mit Moral etwas zu tun: sie ist ein Zustand des Gemütes.”

imbricated within the political, which was understood in terms of seeking dominion over the non-Jewish world.

Bousset's emphasis on the power of the 'national idea' within *Judentum* parallels that of Chamberlain. According to Chamberlain, the "Jewish national idea" was both political and materialistic and thus inimical to the true spirit of religion.⁴⁸ Chamberlain argued that there was no separation within *Judentum* between the religion and the nation: "there would be no Jewish religion if there were no Jewish nation."⁴⁹ For Chamberlain, *Judentum* must always be understood as a whole: "The Jewish nomocracy (that is, rule of law) unites the Jews, no matter how scattered they may be over all the lands of the world, into a firm, uniform and absolutely political organism, in which community of blood testifies to a common past and gives a guarantee for a common future."⁵⁰ Chamberlain highlighted the a-historical nature of Jewishness, stating that the 'national idea' of the Jews had persisted over 2000 years:⁵¹ "This national idea culminates in the unshakable confidence in the universal empire of the Jews, which Jehovah promised."⁵² For Chamberlain, the messianic hope of the Jews is inherently and necessarily political: "essential only is the firm ineradicable conviction that the Jews should one day rule the world."⁵³

⁴⁸ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 490. See also 411ff., where, in a section titled 'Excursus on Semitic religion,' he notes the effect of the "Semitic spirit" on religion as a "power which is still at work in our midst."

⁴⁹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 334; *Grundlagen*, 386: "dass es gar keine jüdische Religion gäbe, wenn keine jüdische Nation existierte."

⁵⁰ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 334.

⁵¹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 360.

⁵² Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 334.

⁵³ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 236. Expressing the same sentiment, Chamberlain states: "The relation of the Jews to their God is from the first political" (232).

Like Chamberlain, Bousset connects the messianic expectations of the Jews with the political, with *Judentum* considered as a political nation on the world stage. Using political language of power and domination, Bousset presents *Judentum* as a potentially active political entity, that is, as a collective entity seeking to re-establish claims to political power and still tied to national and particularistic concerns/goals. For Bousset, the exclusivity and particularity of *Judentum* meant that *Judentum* “understood itself as a close-knit unity” despite being geographically separated.⁵⁴ Bousset describes the Jewish conception of the Kingdom of God as one that would lead to “world-wide domination.”⁵⁵ The realization of messianic expectations would not take place in an ethereal realm, but would be firmly planted on the ground.

Bousset explicitly places what he discusses as the missionizing efforts of *Judentum* in a political context through terms such as “*Weltmacht*” and “*Propaganda*.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Bousset, *RJNT*, 71: “Und diese ganze weit über die Oikumene verbreitete, sicher nach Millionen zählende Masse der Juden lernte sich mehr und mehr als eine eng zusammengehörige Einheit fühlen, deren Macht und Zauber sich doch nur verhältnismässig wenige entzogen.” As the previous discussion has shown, even if *Judentum* perceived itself as a ‘close-knit unity,’ Bousset has, as scholar, shown that perception to be inaccurate because of *Judentum*’s inherent lack of homogeneity.

⁵⁵ Bousset, *WIR*, 219. *Das Wesen*, 197: “Es bedeutete in erster Linie die Hoffnung auf eine Zeit, in der das Volk Israel siegen, zur Weltsherrschaft gelangen sollte, in der es dem verhassten Römerreich den Fuss auf den Nacken setzen würde, in der ein König aus Davids Stamm vom Lande Palästina, von Jerusalem aus machtvoll über die weite Welt gebieten, in der die Heiden Tribut zahlen, die Gefangenen Israels zurückkehren, Jerusalem herrlich gebaut werden sollten—in der natürlich auch Gott auf Erden in seinem Volk herrschen und bei den Frommen wohnen würde.” See also *RJNT*, 74: “wenn zu den Festen ungeheure Menschenmenge nach Jerusalem zusammenströmte, so musste hier das Gefühl entstehen und wachsen, dass *Judentum* eine *Weltmacht* sei.”

⁵⁶ Bousset, *RJNT*, 77-8: “So entstand in mächtigem allmählichem Anschwellen und unter immer engerer Zusammenfassung der Kräfte, durch mächtige geistige nicht mehr nationale Bande zusammengehalten, durch den Druck von aussen nur noch fester zusammengepresst, die jüdische Kirche als eine *Weltmacht*. Und der Widerstand und die Erbitterung der gesamten Aussenwelt gegen sie beweist, dass sie eine solche war. Es kommt aber noch ein weiteres hinzu, worin sich das Hinüberstreben des *Judentums* über

By connecting conversion (*Mission* and *Propaganda*) to political power (*Macht*), Bousset emphasizes the inseparability of the religious and political within *Judentum*. Bousset's repeated deployment of the term 'propaganda'⁵⁷ echoes Chamberlain's use of 'propaganda' to characterize the political elements within the Jewish Diaspora. Chamberlain described Diaspora Jews as "successful propagandists" whose efforts were particularly successful with women.⁵⁸

Bousset depicts *Judentum* as incapable of ever being disconnected from 'national hopes.' He uses the Book of Esther, which contains no reference to God at all, as an example of what he considers the necessarily political hopes of *Judentum*. By pointing to the Book of Esther as an egregious example of such nationalism—"fierce political fanaticism lacking any religious tendency"⁵⁹—Bousset signals that *Judentum* is not only a political threat, but a physical threat as well, since in the biblical account, Mordecai destroys the non-Jews. The use of Esther as the exemplar of the fanaticism of the Jewish national hope emphasizes how the political actually overshadows the religious.

(b) Syncretism and Chaos

The way in which Bousset depicted the heterogeneity of *Judentum*—the influx of 'oriental' influences—would resonate with the racialized framework within which

die Grenzen der Nation erst recht eigentlich vollendet: eine mächtige Propaganda, eine Weltmission." See *WIR*, 142.

⁵⁷ Bousset, *RJNT*, 76ff.; *Das Wesen*, 129: "Weltpropaganda;" and 145: "in der für Zwecke der Propaganda die Quintessenz der jüdischen Religion und Moral kurz zusammengefasst war."

⁵⁸ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 119 fn. Bousset also noted the success of missionizing activity with women; see *WIR*, 81.

⁵⁹ Bousset, *RJNT*, 10: "Das Buch Esther mit seinem grimmigen, jedes religiösen Zuges baaren politischen Fanatismus...."

Chamberlain situated *Judentum* and marked Jewish difference. Chamberlain highlights the ‘oriental’ elements within ‘the Jews’ as the explanation for their essential difference, quoting Herder’s description of the Jews as an “alien Asiatic element” numerous times.⁶⁰

The multiplicity of elements, however, is not the core problem; rather, for Chamberlain, the essential threat is heterogeneity that can never be reconciled holistically into a unity: “chaos is everywhere the most dangerous enemy.”⁶¹ Since mixture represented the transgression of the categories that threatened the firm and distinct boundaries that maintain the hierarchy of races, racial heterogeneity represented that chaos. He consistently attributed the downfall of the Roman Empire to the ‘raceless chaos’ produced by the process of mongrelization following the influx of Asiatic and African elements into the Roman population:⁶² “Throughout the whole extent of the Empire there was thorough mixing of blood, but in such a way that real bastardising, that is, the crossing of unrelated or of noble and ignoble races occurred almost wholly in the most southern and eastern parts, where the Semites met the Indo-Europeans....”⁶³

Chamberlain’s mantra, taken from Darwin, is that “crossing obliterates characters.”⁶⁴

...only certain crossings, not all, ennoble. There are crossings which, far from having an ennobling influence, ruin both races, and moreover, it frequently happens that the definite, valuable characters of two different types cannot fuse at all; in the latter case some of the descendants take after one parent, others after the other, but naturally with mingled characteristics, or again, real mongrels may appear, creatures whose bodies give the impression of being screwed together from parts that do not fit, and whose intellectual

⁶⁰ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 330, 336, 340, and 345-50. See the discussion of Herder in Chapter Two.

⁶¹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 529; see also 252ff.

⁶² Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 252, 262, 258, 286, 346, and 350ff.

⁶³ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 300.

⁶⁴ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 284.

qualities correspond exactly to the physical. Here too it should be remarked that the union of mongrel beings with mongrel beings brings about with startling rapidity the total destruction of all and every pre-eminent quality of race. It is therefore an entirely mistaken idea that mixture of blood between different stems invariably ennobles the race, and adds new qualities to the old. It does so only with the strictest limitations and under rare and definite conditions; as a rule mixture of blood leads to degeneration.⁶⁵

Chamberlain explicitly defines the Jews as a mongrel race, providing a detailed explanation of how ‘the Jew’ was produced through the mixing of different racial types he identified in the ancient world: “The real Jew only developed in the course of separation from the rest of the Israelite family, as also by progressive development of certain mental qualities and systematic starving of others; he is not the result of a normal national life, but in a way an artificial product, produced by a priestly caste, which forced, with the help of alien rulers, a priestly legislation and a priestly faith upon a people that did not want them.”⁶⁶

Bousset’s juxtaposition of syncretism and chaos echoes Chamberlain’s explicitly racialized imbrication of syncretism and chaos. Bousset characterizes *Judentum*’s syncretic combination of alien elements as chaos. The key question throughout his investigation of the essence of *Spätjudentum* is whether it is possible to construct an organic whole out of the disharmonious and fragmented aspects of the Jewish tradition.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 284.

⁶⁶ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 359; see also 353: “This Jew, who appears so eternally unchangeable, so constant, as Goethe says, really grew into what he is slowly, even artificially.”

⁶⁷ Bousset, *RJNT*, 3: “...einer auf den ersten Blick uneinheitlichen, disharmonischen Welt. Wird es möglich sein, aus diesem Chaos ein Gebilde zu gestalten, im Uneinheitlichen doch eine gewisse Einheit, in allen Differenzirungen bestimmte

His claim that the syncretic elements within *Judentum* could not be reconciled in any way again echoes Chamberlain's claim that the multiple elements within *Judentum* did not and could never constitute a holistic unity.⁶⁸

As my earlier analysis indicates, Bousset frames the heterogeneity of *Judentum* as an essential contradiction. Chamberlain explicitly argues that this contradictory heterogeneity is racial in origin and nature:

Whatever, for instance, in a national character is inexplicable contradiction—and the Jewish people is fuller of contradictions than any other—confuses us to begin with, often indeed distresses us; but this impression passes away when we know the organic cause of the contradiction. . . .As a matter of fact the Hebrews obtained a real title to this culture by adopting the blood of the creative Hittites and becoming Israelites; but by this very act contrast and inner discord were henceforth assured. The two types were fundamentally too different to amalgamate completely....⁶⁹

Both Bousset and Chamberlain use the language of '*fremde*' to describe this essential contradiction that *Judentum* represents. While what is described as alien (*fremd*) represents the contradictory nature of *Judentum* within itself, both Bousset and Chamberlain claim that such alienness renders *Judentum* completely alien to the rest of the world as well. Bousset describes *Judentum* in antiquity as a *Fremdkörper* and a

Grundlinien einer Entwicklung aufzuweisen?" His answer after 400+ pages is finally, 'no.'

⁶⁸ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 389: "The chief result of this anatomical survey is that the Jewish race is in truth a permanent but at the same time a mongrel race which always retains this mongrel character. . . .All historically great races and nations have been produced by mixing; but wherever the difference of type is too great to be bridged over, then we have mongrels."

⁶⁹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 409.

Fremdling, i.e., as something alien.⁷⁰ Chamberlain titles one of his subsections as “*Das ‘fremde Volk’*” (the Alien People): “These considerations make it our right and duty to look upon the Jew in our midst as a peculiar and, in fact, alien element. Outwardly his inheritance was the same as ours; inwardly it was not so: he inherited quite a different spirit. One single trait is all that is necessary to reveal in an almost alarming manner to our consciousness the yawning gulf that separates soul from soul: the revelation of Christ has no significance for the Jew!”⁷¹ For Chamberlain, *Judentum* was another life form altogether.⁷²

(c) The *Innenseite* of *Judentum*

While the language of *Fremdkörper* seems to be intended to mark the exclusivity and particularity of *Judentum* as a people, that is, in reference to how *Judentum* was situated and functioned in relation to the world at large, what is really being marked is the inner essence of *Judentum*. Chamberlain asks: “when will men understand that form is not an unimportant accident, a mere chance, but an expression of the innermost being? That in this very point the two worlds...the inner and the outer, the visible and the invisible touch?”⁷³ For Chamberlain, race is not simply a matter of outward physical

⁷⁰ Bousset, *RJNT*, 76ff., 301, 409, 451; *ThR* 10 (1907): 291. Given the linguistic slippage between *Judentum* and *Spätjudentum*, Bousset’s description of *Fremdkörper* can be read as applying transhistorically to contemporary *Judentum* as well.

⁷¹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 336. As the subsequent discussion illustrates, by ‘spirit’ Chamberlain means the essence or nature of the Jews, which he describes as constituted as pure materialism.

⁷² Chamberlain, *Grundlagen*, 301, noted this as an “*andere Wesensgattung*.”

⁷³ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 210. Thus, Chamberlain finds that the unchangeable ‘national idea’ of *Judentum* is an outward projection of its inner nature. *Foundations*, I, 236 n.; *Grundlagen*, 281 n.: “wesentlich ist einzig die felsenfeste Überzeugung, die sie

characteristics: “Are we to suppose that the Jewish national idea has not the force of other national ideas? On the contrary, it is more powerful, as I have shown, than any other, and transforms men to its own image. One does not need to have the authentic Hittite nose to be a Jew; the term Jew rather denotes a special way of thinking and feeling.”⁷⁴

For both Bousset and Chamberlain, how to characterize the inner essence or spirit/*Geist* of *Judentum* necessarily involves the question of religion, since both share the same concept of Protestant religiosity as inward experience that is opposed to dogma, doctrine, or institutional structures.⁷⁵ Religion is actually the religious consciousness of the individual, which, for both, is identified with human consciousness itself. If ‘religion’ is such interiority, then any deficiency in religion implies a corresponding deficiency or defect in the interiority that marks what is truly human.

Both Bousset and Chamberlain identify the exclusivity and particularism of the Jews as evidence that *Judentum* has failed to reach a further stage in religious development, since it remains bound to the nation/people. As noted previously, within Bousset’s narrative of the history of religion, *Judentum* is characterized as stuck half-way

niemals verliess, die Juden würden einmal die Welt beherrschen. Dies ist eben ein Bestandteil ihres Charakters, die sichtbare Hinausprojicierung ihres innersten Wesens.”

⁷⁴ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 491.

⁷⁵ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 216: “Now this very tendency, this state of mind, this instinct, ‘to seek the core of nature in the heart,’ [he is quoting Goethe] the Jews lack to a startling degree. They are born rationalists. Reason is strong in them, the will enormously developed. Their imaginative and creative powers, on the other hand, peculiarly limited. Their scanty mythically religious conceptions, indeed even their commandments, customs and ordinances of worship, they borrowed without exception from abroad, they reduced everything to a minimum which they kept rigidly unaltered; the creative element, the real inner life is almost totally wanting in them.” *Grundlagen*, 261: “das schöpferische Element, das eigentlich innere Leben fehlt hier fast gänzlich.” While rationality would presumably be valued as a marker of human intelligence, the emphasis on creativity illustrates how it is more the imaginative aspect of human consciousness that is privileged.

between a national religion and a universalizing religion. Chamberlain also frames the religion of *Judentum* within an evolutionary framework. For Chamberlain, the Jews were not, in fact a religious people: “as a matter of fact in comparison with the Indo-European races it is quite stunted in its religious growth...[and was] an arrest of development.”⁷⁶

For Bousset, *Judentum* never advanced because the material elements, described in terms that emphasized their primitive character, opposed and overwhelmed the spiritual elements. Chamberlain similarly associates what he describes as materialistic elements of *Judentum* with what he depicts as the negative elements in the history of religion. Thus, Chamberlain claims the destruction of Jerusalem was necessary to preserve a true religious spirit against the “materialistic fanaticism” of the temple and sacrificial system.⁷⁷ Chamberlain associates the obsolete primitive elements within the history of religion, such as magic and witchcraft, with the materializing (and thus Judaizing) Semitic spirit.⁷⁸

Chamberlain is here operating with a strict dichotomy of spirit/matter, such that spirit is always normative. Moreover, Chamberlain winds up claiming that *Judentum*, in fact, has no ‘spirit’ at all. Instead, the very *Geist* of *Judentum* is the Semitic spirit, which is materialism itself: “Whenever the Semitic spirit has breathed we shall meet with this

⁷⁶ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 213-4. *Grundlagen*, 258: “In dieser Beziehung hat bei den Juden das stattgefunden, was Darwin ‘arrest of development’ nennt, eine Verkümmern der Anlagen, ein Absterben in der Knospe.” Here, even in the original German, Chamberlain uses Darwin’s term ‘arrest of development’ in English, which suggests that that phrase should be familiar with his German audience.

⁷⁷ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 224-5: “The peculiar mental characteristic of the Jews, their lack of imagination, brought about by the tyrannical predominance of the will, had led them to a strange abstract materialism”; 230: “fanatical dogmatism”; 225: Jews lack imagination and are “materialistic”; 228: “peculiar national soul”; 241: “very logical fanaticism of the rabbis”; 412-415, 419: the Semite has no sense of the “mystery of existence” and is equated with materialism.

⁷⁸ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, II, 49, 70-1.

materialism.”⁷⁹ Since *Judentum* is materialism actualized, it does not have, and indeed, cannot have, the type of interiority that is represented in the Aryan/Indo-European idea. In the spirit/materiality binary that grounds Chamberlain’s narrative of world history, Jews, as materialism personified, can never get onto the ‘spirit’ side of the binary.

This deficiency within *Judentum* is emphasized by Chamberlain’s depiction of the interiority of *Judentum* as, in fact, dead. He characterizes the kernel of religion within the Jews as a “dying in the bud” (“*ein Absterben in der Knospe*”),⁸⁰ that is, as trapped in a process of deterioration that cannot be reversed:

...for the whole national history of the Jews is like a continuous process of elimination; the character of the Jewish people ever becomes more individual, more simple; finally there remains in a way nothing of the whole being but the central skeleton; the slowly ripened fruit is robbed of its downy, fresh-coloured covering and of its juicy flesh, for these might become spotted and worm-eater; the stony kernel alone remains, shriveled and dry, it is true, but defying time.⁸¹

Bousset’s description of the inner core of *Judentum* mirrors that of Chamberlain. The lack of *Judentum*’s inward vitality is a recurrent trope throughout his writing. Even in his earliest publication, Bousset’s language emphasizes this deficiency. In *Jesus Predigt*, Bousset claims that *Judentum* had no life–force (“*Lebenskraft*”) (13) and indeed no core (“*Keim*”) at all (39). What had been the inner religious core of *Judentum* had been weakened (“*Entnervung*”), even emptied (“*Entleerung*”)⁸² and poisoned

⁷⁹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 422.

⁸⁰ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 213-4; *Grundlagen*, 258.

⁸¹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 354-5.

⁸² Bousset, *Jesus Predigt*, 17-8: “der Prozess, der sich hier vollzieht, besteht in der allmählichen Entleerung und Entnervung der Frömmigkeit Israels.”

(“vergiftet”).⁸³ Similarly in *RJNT*, *Judentum* has no life energy (“*Lebensenergie*”),⁸⁴ while its inner core was decayed or disintegrated (“*zerfällt*”).⁸⁵ Bousset explained the infusion/infiltration of the alien (“*fremde*”) elements into *Judentum* as a result of the loss of its inner living dynamism.⁸⁶ Similarly, he claimed that the overwhelming legalistic nature of *Judentum* had poisoned the inner life of *Judentum*.⁸⁷

For Chamberlain, the materialism that *Judentum* represents constitutes an on-going threat to the viability of the Gospel as the true core of religion through history. He frames the entire history of Christianity in terms of the struggle between the Indo-European interiorized religious consciousness and the materialistic Semitic spirit: “While therefore the highest religious intuitions are dragged to the ground and so distorted as to lose all their fine qualities, long obsolete delusive ideas of primitive men—magic, witchcraft, etc.—were at the same time given an officially guaranteed right of abode *in praecinctu ecclesiae*.”⁸⁸ All of the conflict and contradictions within the development of the historical forms of Christianity are explained by the ‘hybrid’ nature of Christianity,

⁸³ Bousset, *Jesus Predigt*, 59: “Dem System der Heiligkeit, der Abschliessung und Ausschliesslichkeit, das jahrhundertlang die Volkseele Israels beherrscht, entnervt, vergiftet hatte....”

⁸⁴ Bousset, *RJNT*, 353.

⁸⁵ Bousset, *RJNT*, 374.

⁸⁶ Bousset, *RJNT*, 459: “Solange eine Religion noch irgendwie lebendig bleibt und sich eigentümlich weiter entwickelt, wird sie sich im innersten ihres Wesen nicht beeinflussen lassen, sondern selbständig weiter entwickeln.”

⁸⁷ Bousset, *RJNT*, 105: “wie sehr das Recht die Religion des Judentums bis ins innerste vergiftet hat....”

⁸⁸ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 71. While Chamberlain does not tie these practices or ideas explicitly to *Judentum*, he implies that *Judentum* is the source, since it is most closely connected to Christianity; these primitive elements must be attributed to some source in order to explain the loss of purity of the Gospel, so these elements are displaced onto *Judentum*.

which began with Paul.⁸⁹ Chamberlain had described the “hybridization” of Christianity⁹⁰ that he traces to Paul’s ‘two souls’ (one Jewish and one “un-Jewish”).⁹¹

Chamberlain makes this process of contamination explicit: “but as it was the stream of the Jewish spirit was let loose upon the sublime world of Indo-European symbolism and freely creative, rich imaginative power; like the poison of the arrow of the South American this spirit penetrated and benumbed an organism to which only constant change and remodeling could give life and beauty.”⁹² What Chamberlain describes as “infection with fundamental views of a materialistic kind”⁹³ penetrates to the very core of religious, that is, human consciousness: “its tyrannical will extends to cosmic dimensions and changes the whole view of ‘religion.’... Now consider what kind of religion men can

⁸⁹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, II, 68-9: “...all seem to be blind to two simple clear facts: the antagonism of the races, and the irreconcilability of the mutually exclusive religious ideals lying side by side.” Here, Chamberlain is framing the absolute dichotomy between the two ‘ideals’ represented by the Indo-European and Semitic ‘races.’ Although he describes these as lying side by side, his hierarchical privileging of the Indo-European ideal is clear.

⁹⁰ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, II, 18; *Grundlagen*, 652. The term used is “*Zwitterwesen*,” which, like Bousset’s use of *Zwittergebilde*, connotes a hermaphrodite. Other examples are found at 687: “Die lebhafteste Vorstellung des dem Christentum von Beginn an eigenen Zwitterwesens erlangen wir zunächst, wenn wir es in einzelnen ausserordentlichen Männern, z. B. in Paulus und Augustinus, am Werke sehen”; and 688: “In zwei so verschiedenen Persönlichkeiten wie Paulus und Augustinus tritt natürlich das Zwitterwesen des Christentums sehr verschieden zu Tage.”

⁹¹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, II, 57-65. “Indeed Paul himself confesses that he is ‘all things to all men,’ and that certainly explains some deviations; but the roots strike deeper. In this breast lodge two souls: a Jewish and an un-Jewish, or rather an un-Jewish soul with pinions fettered to a Jewish thinking machine” (65). These contradictions, according to Chamberlain, were “not as the colours of the rainbow which merge into each other, but as light and darkness which exclude each other” (66); See *Grundlagen*, 690-705. Recall Bousset’s comment in *WIR* about the ‘fettters’ of Paul’s Jewish soul.

⁹² Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 70.

⁹³ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 422. Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 410: “the influence of the Semitic spirit upon religion. That is clearly the essential question, if we are to understand the origin and character of Judaism...in the sphere of religion the Semitic element strongly predominates.”

have whose most outstanding characteristic is the absolute lack of every metaphysical emotion, every philosophical capacity.”⁹⁴

The metaphors that Bousset and Chamberlain employ to describe *Judentum* in relation to Christianity highlight this lack of true inwardness, that is, true religion. Bousset’s description of *Judentum* as a “Retorte” or ‘container’⁹⁵ implies that *Judentum* lacks inner content (*Innenseite*) that is intrinsic to itself. A container represents a material object that is purely external, with no necessary connection to the contents within. This functional depiction of *Judentum* mirrors Chamberlain’s description of *Judentum* as the ‘scaffolding,’⁹⁶ i.e., as an external framework without content. The scaffolding also represents a material object, which is not only merely functional, but which can ultimately be dismantled and removed.

For Bousset, *Judentum* has been and remains an inherent contradiction, which it is not able to remedy by itself; only the arrival of a personality greater than that of the apocalyptic writers or rabbinic scholars could create something new: “Out of the

⁹⁴ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 411. See 415: “Imagination is the hand-maid of religion, she is the great mediator....” See also 419: “the Semite banishes from religion contemplative wonder, every feeling of a superhuman mystery, and he banishes likewise creative fancy.”

⁹⁵ Bousset, *RJNT*, 493: “Das Judentum war die Retorte, in welcher die verschiedenen Elemente gesammelt wurden.”

⁹⁶ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 233: “He found here what He would have found nowhere else in the world: a complete scaffolding ready for Him, within which His entirely new conception of God and of religion could be built up. After Jesus had lived, nothing remained of the genuinely Jewish idea; now that the temple was built the scaffolding could be removed. But it had served its purpose and the building would have been unthinkable without it.” *Grundlagen*, 279: “ein vollständiges, fertiges Gerüst....” Chamberlain goes on to say that “now that the Temple was built [i.e., Jesus], the scaffolding could be removed.” *Grundlagen*, 279: “Von dem eigentlichen jüdischen Gedanke blieb, nachdem Jesus gelebt hatte, nichts mehr übrig; wie nach vollendetem Tempelbau, konnte das Gerüst abgetragen werden.”

fermenting chaos the unity and liveliness of true and genuine piety could again arise.”⁹⁷

Like Bousset, Chamberlain understands Jesus as the heroic personality that provides the creative impetus to spark the higher stage of religion that Christianity (via the Gospel) represents.⁹⁸

The foregoing comparison with Chamberlain indicates that Bousset’s representation of *Judentum* within the history of religion and within the specific history of Christian origins is grounded at its core on a notion of Jewishness that reflected the same emphasis on the materialistic essence of Jewishness found within anti-semitic discourse. The preceding subsections have illustrated how Bousset and Chamberlain both mark the heterogeneity of *Judentum* in similar ways. The dichotomy of religion/nation functioned as a way of marking the boundary between *Judentum*’s particularism and exclusivity and Christianity’s universalism. Their shared tropes of syncretism and chaos provided a way for both to claim that the disparate elements within *Judentum* could never be an organic unity, but would remain merely an aggregation. Characterizing *Judentum* as *fremde* allows both to emphasize what they take to be the utter alienness of *Judentum*.

Despite their differences, both Chamberlain and Bousset are interested in describing this Jewish essence, and their conclusion is similar: Jews and *Judentum* both lack ‘spirit’ altogether, that is any interiority at all. Indeed, any ‘kernel’ of living religion has died, so that *Judentum* constitutes a negative space within the history of religion.

⁹⁷ Bousset, *RJNT*, 493: “aus jenem gärenden Chaos wieder die Einheit und die Lebendigkeit echter und wahrer Frömmigkeit entstehen konnte.”

⁹⁸ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 179 on ‘personality.’

Bousset's Jewish Problem

While Bousset's language of syncretism and chaos would resonate with racial theory, his writing explicitly reflects the way in which the discourse of anti-semitism framed *Judentum* as a problem. In this section, I parse how Bousset frames (and constructs) *Judentum* as a 'problem.'

As noted earlier, by calling on references to *Judentum* in antiquity and using the term 'anti-semitism,' Bousset implies that this essentially paradoxical and contradictory character of *Judentum*, as *Fremdkörper*, is self-evident to all people at all times, from antiquity up to and including the time in which he was writing. However, Bousset marks this persistence by identifying *Judentum* as a continuing problem for academic scholarship as well. Bousset's suggestion that the Jewish 'problem' persisted is reflected in the title of the last chapter of *RJNT*, '*Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem.*' Bousset frames *Judentum* as a problem for academic scholarship because of its very heterogeneity; as a negative space within the history of religion, *Judentum* continues to perplex scholars.

Framing *Judentum* as a 'problem' resonates with the way in which *Judentum* was framed in anti-semitic discourse as a continuous and insoluble 'problem.' For Chamberlain, "the problem of Judaism in our midst is one of the most difficult and dangerous questions of the day."⁹⁹ Chamberlain went further and framed this "hard insoluble kernel of the Jewish problem"¹⁰⁰ as the single and singular 'problem' within the

⁹⁹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 116; *Grundlagen*, 163: "...man müsste blind oder unehrlich sein, wollte man nicht bekennen, dass das Problem des Judentums in unserer Mitte zu den schwierigsten und gefährlichsten der Gegenwart gehört...."

¹⁰⁰ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, II, 482; *Grundlagen*, 1115 n1: "Hier liegt der Kern, der harte, unlösbare Kern der sogenannten 'Judenfrage.' ...ihre Gegenwart in unserer Mitte in

entire course of history; that is, as the central moving force in history, the ‘problem’ for Chamberlain was not limited either temporally or territorially to the ‘so-called’ Jewish question in nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany. And for Chamberlain, it remains a problem: “For it is a question of a power that is still in our midst, and which presumably will make itself felt in future, distant centuries—a power which we cannot fathom by the exclusive consideration of limited, specific Judaism.”¹⁰¹

Bousset’s language, in similar fashion, claims that *Judentum* presented a single and singular ‘problem’ for the history of religion. Since he has conflated the periodized *Spätjudentum* and transhistorical *Judentum*, his framing of the ‘*religionsgeschichtliche Problem*’ becomes the ‘*religionsgeschichtliche Problem of Judentum*.’ In this way, *Judentum* as a problem for the history of religion is not limited in terms of time or territory. While Chamberlain’s formulation begins with his contemporary context and travels back through history, Bousset’s formulation does just the reverse: he frames a problem in the ‘history of religion’ from antiquity in a way that can be mapped onto his contemporary context.

Conclusion

Some of the similarities between Chamberlain and Bousset can be traced to a common grounding in contemporary biblical scholarship. Chamberlain utilized much of the same earlier biblical scholarship as did Bousset, citing Wellhausen and Robertson

grosser Zahl für eine nicht zu unterschätzende Gefahr halten kann und muss. Nicht aber der Jude allein, sondern alles, was vom jüdischen Geist ausgeht, ist ein Stoff, welche das Beste in uns zernagt und zersetzt.”

¹⁰¹ Chamberlain, *Foundations*, I, 411.

Smith for descriptions of the religion of the Jews and of the ‘Semites.’¹⁰² However, the resonance between Bousset and Chamberlain goes far beyond the appropriation of anti-Jewish representations in biblical studies. What is distinctive about Bousset is how the *völkisch*/anti-semitic tropes of chaos and syncretism ground his entire approach.¹⁰³ While both Wellhausen and Robertson Smith reflect long-standing theological anti-Jewish representations, Bousset specifically conjoins the deficient (absent) Jewish spirit and the alien body (*Fremdkörper*), echoing anti-semitic representations of Jews. Bousset also frames the deficient inner Jewish core in terms that resonate with anti-semitic discourse since he employs the language of *Volksseele*—the notion of what constitutes the inner essence of a nation/people; thus, Jesus is characterized as fighting against the Jewish *Volksseele* itself.¹⁰⁴

In determining the essence of *Spätjudentum*, Bousset polices the boundaries of ‘*Volk*’ and nation, guarding against transgressive activity on the part of *Judentum*. Since Bousset ultimately grounds his depiction of *Judentum* on an essentialized, interior quality of Jewishness, I argue that Bousset’s academic work, in particular, would resonate not merely with *völkisch* ideology, but with the discourse of anti-semitism, and therefore legitimates such discourse.

In the next chapter, I draw together the analysis of Bousset from the last two chapters in order to show how Bousset’s scholarship functioned in terms of constructing,

¹⁰² See Geoffrey Field, *Evangelist of Race: the Germanic vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 302ff., for his discussion of Chamberlain’s use (and what he deems abuse) of existing biblical scholarship.

¹⁰³ The importance of these tropes for Bousset is indicated by the way he uses recognition of the syncretism of *Judentum* as his measuring stick in critiquing the work of other scholars, a matter that will be considered in more depth in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁴ Bousset, *RJNT*, 64: “...begannen sie nun mit um so grösserer Intensität und Zähigkeit auf die Volksseele zu wirken.

and then controlling, the category of *Spätjudentum/Judentum* in relation to his framework of the history of religion.

CHAPTER V

DISCIPLINING *JUDENTUM*

The previous two chapters considered Bousset's construction of *Spätjudentum/Judentum* and how it functioned within his narrative of the history of religion. In this chapter, I show more explicitly how Bousset's role in the production of the discourse of *Spätjudentum* represents what has been described as orientalism in scholarship. By constructing and controlling the object of study, i.e., *Spätjudentum* (and thus *Judentum*), Bousset facilitated the transformation of what was originally an occasional adjective with pejorative connotations—*spät* (or *spätere*)—into what became the normative designation for the Judaism of Jesus's time in Germany and throughout the Anglo-American world not only within, but also beyond academic scholarship for most of the twentieth century.¹ Bousset accomplishes the creation and control of *Spätjudentum* as a category by: 1) locating and naming the 'space' between the Old Testament and the

¹ Various scholars have attempted to trace the first appearance of 'spät' in reference to what is now generally referred to as Second Temple Judaism. See, for instance, Gerd Lüdemann, ed., *Die 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule': Facetten eines theologischen Umbruchs* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), where the usage is dated to the early 1890s. Hans-Günther Waubke, *Die Pharisäer in der protestantischen Bibelwissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 259, has identified a 1795 work titled *Theologie der späteren Juden*, but states that the first systematic use begins with Wrede's use of the adjectival 'spät-jüdisch' in his 1891 licentiate thesis. The scholarly consensus is that this term (and its translation as 'late Judaism') did become the standard academic term for this period and that Bousset played a key role in this normalization. See E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); and idem, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). My object in this chapter is not to engage in a word study of *Spätjudentum*, but to show how Bousset did not merely popularize the term, but constructed the conceptual space of the term.

New Testament; and 2) exercising authority over both the representation and periodization of *Spätjudentum* by virtue of his institutional location and academic position.

Through the construction of the conceptual space of *Spätjudentum*, Bousset also claims the scholarly authority to determine who can participate in the investigation and analysis of *Spätjudentum/Judentum*. Bousset's institutional location at one of the top German theological universities reinforced his authoritative voice. Given the primacy of German scholarship within biblical studies at the turn of the twentieth century, Bousset's representation of *Spätjudentum* as Germany's internal other helped both to produce and to legitimate the racialization of the category of religion itself.

Periodization of *Spätjudentum*

While Bousset was not the first scholar to characterize the Jewish post-exilic period as '*spät*,' he effectively transformed *Spätjudentum* into the definitive scholarly designation for what he (and others) had identified as a gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament. By naming this space, Bousset makes the category 'real' as if it existed independently of such scholarly designation. Creating such designation and category also creates opportunity for further scholarly investigation of the period, since it marks the category as being of academic interest.

The naming and periodization of *Spätjudentum* was both useful and necessary for the production of a 'history of Christian religion' that was Bousset's desideratum. Bousset wanted to situate the emergence of Christianity within both the larger religious environment in antiquity and within the narrative of the history of religion overall. He

needed to include *Judentum* within this religious environment, since he did not dispute that Jesus was a Jew whose life and ministry, according to biblical accounts, was fully engaged with Jews in the Jewish homeland.² However, in order to maintain his narrative framework that privileged Christianity as the final realization of the telos of ‘religion,’ Bousset needed to bracket, and thus exclude, *Judentum* from the progression within that narrative framework. The category of *Spätjudentum* allows Bousset to separate *Judentum* from the line of religious development out of the prophets of Israel, while preserving the connection between the prophetic age and Jesus himself. Bousset, like other scholars, had claimed that the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament was not simply a matter of turning the page in the Bible. Rather, there was an extracanonical space; as he explained, this space was not empty, and he proceeded to ‘fill’ it through his periodization.³

Bousset characterizes this space that he has opened up as a new epoch (*Zeitalter*) within the religious history of Israel, which, as a new period of time that he has identified, warrants a new designation.⁴ In this way, Bousset’s use of *Spätjudentum* crystallized and extended the discontinuity that biblical scholar DeWette had introduced into scholarship by claiming a distinction between Israel (Hebraism) and a post-exilic

² What Bousset disputed, however, was the nature of Jesus’s Jewishness. As noted in Chapter Three, Bousset identified Jesus’s Jewishness with his nation or ethnicity (husk) and clearly distinguished it from Jesus’s interiorized religiosity (kernel), which Bousset claimed was free of Jewish constraints.

³ Bousset, *ThR* 7 (1904): 267-8: “kein leerer Raum sich befindet.” How Bousset’s effort in fact colonized this space is considered later in the chapter. Bousset also recommends the work of Gunkel, since Gunkel shows “dass das Spätjudentum keine Weiterbildung der alttestamentlichen Religion...” (273).

⁴ Bousset, *ThR* 3 (1900): 287: “Wir werden gut thun, wenn wir uns gewöhnen, diese Zeitalter mit einem bestimmten Namen etwa das Zeitalter des Spätjudentums zu nennen.”

degenerated *Judentum*.⁵ Bousset's category of *Spätjudentum* added the terminology of 'spät' to DeWette's characterization of post-exilic *Judentum*; the language of 'spät' with its negative connotation of supersession provided a concrete instantiation of DeWette's representation of *Judentum* as distinct from the tradition of Israel. Bousset not only concretized DeWette's distinction, he spatialized that distinction by situating *Spätjudentum* between the Old Testament, which was DeWette's research area, and Jesus himself. However, Bousset intensifies the negative connotation of 'spät' through his use of tropes of death, destruction, and disintegration. For example, in his initial essay setting out the parameters of the study of *Spätjudentum*, Bousset uses the language of destruction and disintegration in characterizing this period in order to demonstrate the importance of this period for the 'history of religion.'⁶

The textual sources that Bousset uses function as a canon that supports and delineates the periodization that he outlines.⁷ In filling the 'space' of *Spätjudentum*, Bousset relies almost completely on the pseudepigraphal and apocryphal literature, rather than on the rabbinic tradition that is later codified in the Mishna and Talmud.⁸ Bousset

⁵ See Chapter One for discussion of DeWette.

⁶ Bousset, *ThR* 3 (1900): 297: "die Auflösung und Zersetzung der nationalen Religionen und ihr gegenseitiges Ineinanderfliessen..."; Bousset, *ThR* 3: 301: "[Spätjudentum] eine Religion der Zersetzung und eines Auflösungsprozess, ist."

⁷ Bousset, *ThR* 3 (1900): 287: "auf dem zwischen altem und neuem Testament liegenden Grenzgebiet der spätjüdischen Literatur."

⁸ This is true of the first and second editions of 1903 and 1906; the third edition edited by Hugo Gressmann in 1926 after Bousset's death did include references to rabbinic literature (as well a change in title from 'New Testament period' to 'late Hellenistic period'), but the basic framework of *Spätjudentum* established by Bousset originally remains in the later edition. Gressman's third edition was used for the fourth edition published in 1966 as part as a series of handbooks for the study of the New Testament, thus assuring Bousset's continuing significance in scholarship, although this work has never been translated. See E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* for discussion of the influence Bousset has had on subsequent scholarship, especially in relation to Rudolf

rejected the rabbinic writings not only because that literature was customarily dated much later than the New Testament writings, but more important, because he characterized the rabbinical material as intellectualist and elitist in contrast to what he identified as the religion of the *Volk* represented in the sources he did privilege.

Bousset's rationale for this limitation of sources is grounded in his distinction between 'religion' and theology: the influence of the educated elites/intellectuals, i.e., the rabbinical writers, on the tradition represents theology as second-order reflection, while the non-rabbinical texts reflect the thought-world of the non-elite, that is, the piety of the *Volk* on the ground.⁹ He privileged *völkisch* piety because he understood individual religious consciousness as being necessarily rooted within the consciousness of the *Volk*.¹⁰ By using non-rabbinical literature, Bousset is able to suggest that he is in a privileged position to articulate the *völkisch* consciousness of the Jewish people in relation to his notion of Jewish piety (*Frömmigkeit*). His privileging of sources that had been transmitted through the Christian tradition and virtual exclusion of rabbinical sources allowed him, as the scholarly 'authority' on Judaism, to delegitimize the claims of those who drew on rabbinic sources.

Despite his periodization of *Spätjudentum*, Bousset's 'object of study' actually becomes mapped onto *Judentum* across time because of the way in which he shifts

Bultmann, who is considered to be the 'father' of New Testament studies in the twentieth century.

⁹ Of course, his claim here is not consistent, since apocalyptic literature itself is a product of an educated elite, not the uneducated masses in whom he argues 'true' religion resides.

¹⁰ See Chapter Four for how Bousset incorporates '*Volksseele*' (soul of the people) into his analysis of piety/religion. This connection is reflected in Bousset's later work as well; see *Kyrios Christos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921), 98: "im Unbewussten...in der unkontrollierbaren Tiefe der Gesamtpsyche einer Gemeinde." This can also be seen in his earliest work, *Jesus Predigt*, 87: "So in der Stille, in der Tiefe des unbewussten vollzieht sich das schöpferische hier auf Erden."

effortlessly back and forth between the periodized *Spätjudentum* and the transhistorical *Judentum*. An example of the slippage in Bousset's terminology appears in the first *Rundschau* article in which Bousset frames *Spätjudentum* as a new and separate area of scholarly research. In a discussion of the Slavic recension of 1 Enoch, Bousset first notes how *Spätjudentum* was susceptible to alien elements.¹¹ The very next sentence begins with the unperiodized 'das *Judentum*.' He follows this with two references to the literature of *Judentum* (*der Literatur des Judentums*), while two lines later he makes a reference to the literature of *Spätjudentum*.¹² Thus, even at the beginning of his construction of the category *Spätjudentum*, Bousset's slippage in terminology means that all of the negative representations he associates with *Spätjudentum* are mapped onto *Judentum* throughout all time periods, including Bousset's own early twentieth-century context.

Bousset as Authoritative Voice

Bousset was not engaged in the description of something that is really 'out there,' but was actively creating this object of study by situating himself as the authoritative voice. By popularizing his own designation of *Spätjudentum*, Bousset effectively positioned himself as the 'expert' on this period through both his academic and popular writing. This representation of *Spätjudentum* was solidified and disseminated more

¹¹ Bousset, *ThR* 5 (1902): 136: "wie aufnahmefähig das Spätjudentum gegenüber fremdartigen, von aussen her einströmenden religiösen Phantasieen war."

¹² Bousset, *ThR* 5 (1902): 137-8. In the other article in that volume under the category of *Spätjudentum* (175-81), Bousset does not use the descriptor of 'spät' in relation to his discussion of Alexandrian Jewish literature. Instead, he uses the designation of *Diaspora Judentum*. Bousset does use *Spätjudentum* in his two-part book review (397-407 and 437-49) of Johannes Weiss's *Die Predigt Jesus vom Reiches Gottes*, second edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900).

broadly through his role as contributor and editor of the *Theologische Rundschau*, the journal he co-founded in 1897.¹³ Contributing all of the literature reviews relating to *Spätjudentum* that appeared periodically in that journal was the primary means by which he controlled the representation of *Spätjudentum* within the *Theologische Rundschau*,

However, Bousset's editorial role was also important. As editor, Bousset participated in decisions about what essays and authors would be included, as well as what books would be reviewed, thus shaping the sources of information for his target audience. More significant, how *Spätjudentum* is constituted as an object of study within scholarship in relation to the history of religion is reflected in the way in which *Spätjudentum* became an organizing category within the pages of the *Rundschau*. *Spätjudentum* was situated as a separate and distinct space from New Testament scholarship and work on Christian origins, emphasizing its discontinuity with the 'true' religious history of Israel.¹⁴

¹³ Co-founded by Bousset and Wilhelm Heitmüller, the *Rundschau* served as a major vehicle for disseminating broader views of both the history of religion and the role of the church in the larger social sphere. As previous notes indicated, the *Rundschau* reviewed works, both academic and popular, concerning the relationship of religion and science, anthropology and religion, and what was termed the 'social question,' that is, how to respond to the dislocation and fragmentation produced by urbanization and industrialization. However, the *Rundschau* also included material relating to traditional theological and biblical studies.

¹⁴ A brief review of selected volumes of other leading German theological journals of the pre-WWI period illustrates the primary role that Bousset had in normalizing *Spätjudentum*, since *Spätjudentum* was not used in those more conservative journals as a major organizing category for the presentation of theological literature. The *Theologische Literaturblatt* contained general articles, along with a listing of new literature; specific headings included biblical theology, biblical history, comparative religion, and *Judentum*; the listing for *Judentum* identified articles relating to contemporary Jewish history as well as to rabbinic literature. In the early twentieth century, the earliest volumes of the *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie* did not contain literature reviews, but consisted of long essays mainly on biblical exegesis and church history. In Volumes 51-4 (1909) and 52-4 (1910), the journal included a literature review with section headings.

While the terminology of *Spätjudentum* appears in book reviews by Bousset in the early volumes of the *Rundschau*,¹⁵ Bousset introduced *Spätjudentum* as a specific area of scholarship in the 1900 volume through three ‘leading articles’ on what he called the most recent research in the area of the religious literature of *Spätjudentum* (*‘Neueste Forschungen auf dem Gebiet der religiösen Literatur des Spätjudentums’*).¹⁶ The use of

Volume 51 had a section titled *‘Altes Testament und Judentum’* that contained subsections on exegesis, geography, and *‘Religionsgeschichte’*; this last subsection noted many titles that reference *Religionsgeschichte*, including one entry that used the terminology of *‘spätere Judentum.’* Volume 52-4 has a section titled *‘Allgemeine Religionswissenschaft,’* but nothing specifically on *Judentum*.

The *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, between 1900 and 1909, had only one volume that indexed new literature; Volume 11 (1901) included as subsections under the general section heading of *‘Altes Testament’* the following: *‘Geschichte der israelitischen religion’*; *‘Judentum’* (further broken down into headings of literature and history for the post-Maccabean -135 CE period, i.e. the period Bousset specifically marks as *Spätjudentum*); and *‘aus dem späteren Judentum’* (which included materials on Targums and the Talmud, indicating that rabbinic literature was considered as associated with *‘späteren Judentum.’*)

The *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (edited by Harnack and Schürer), from 1906 through 1910, did not have categories for a review of literature; in a 1907 (Volume 32:14) review of the second edition of Bousset’s *RJNT*, the reviewer uses only *‘Judentum’* (395). Even Bousset in a book review in the 1910 volume (35-26: 810-14) only uses *Judentum*. Beginning in 1911, this journal contains headings for literature reviews: *‘Religionsgeschichte,’ ‘Altes Testament,’* and *‘Neues Testament’*—nothing on *Spätjudentum*.

Theologische Studien und Kritiken contained articles and book reviews, but no categories for new scholarship.

While the 1902, 1905, and 1908 volumes of *Theologischer Jahrbuch* are devoted solely to church history, Volume 18 (1898) was organized into categories; under the general heading of *‘Exegetische Theologie’* the section titled *‘Literatur zum Alten Testament’* contained a subsection *‘Judentum,’* itself further broken down into numerous headings, including *‘Allgemeine,’ ‘Talmud,’ ‘Mischna,’* and *‘Antisemitismus und modernes Judentum.’*

¹⁵ Bousset, *ThR* 2 (1899): 76-77, review of E. Stave’s work on the influence of Parsism on *Judentum* (*Über den Einfluss des Parsismus auf das Judentum*). While Stave does use the expression *‘späteres Judentum’* a few times, he does not use *‘Spätjudentum’* itself; however, Bousset does use *Spätjudentum* in discussing Stave’s work.

¹⁶ Bousset, *ThR* 3 (1900): 287-302; 327-35; 369-81. The first of these three articles was designated as ‘general’ (*Allgemeines*), while the other two were marked as ‘literature of the Maccabean period.’

Gebiet (area or field) highlights the notion that *Spätjudentum* (at least the religious literature) constitutes not only a separate concern within research, but a separate space as well. While the general literature review heading of ‘*Altes Testament*’ in that volume included the subheadings of ‘*Geschichte Israels*’ and ‘*Geschichte der israelitischen Religion*,’ a special notation under ‘*Geschichte der israelitischen Religion*’ invited a comparison to ‘*Geschichte und Literatur d. Judentums*,’ (note that this designation does not specify ‘*spät*’) under which all three entries listed under the ‘*religiösen Literatur des Spätjudentums*’ are also referenced.

While this heading (*religiösen Literatur*) might suggest that Bousset’s focus is strictly textual, the 1904 volume of the *Rundschau* makes clear the inherent connection between the category (and representation) of *Spätjudentum* and his over-arching framework of the history of religion in his three articles on ‘*Die Religionsgeschichte und Das Neue Testament*.’ In these articles, the terminology of *Spätjudentum* appears repeatedly, cementing the association of *Spätjudentum* as a separate and separable periodization within the history of religion.¹⁷ The connection between ‘history of religion’ and *Spätjudentum* is reproduced by other influential scholars; for example, in a book review, Johannes Weiss uses the language of *Spätjudentum* in his discussion of the value of the ‘history of religion’ method.¹⁸

¹⁷ Bousset, *ThR* 7 (1904): 265-78; 311-18; 353-65.

¹⁸ Weiss, *ThR* 7 (1904): 185-97. In this review of W. Heitmüller’s *Im Namen Jesus*, Weiss describes the reviewed book as “*Das Studium des Spätjudentums*” (187), specifically as the “*Namensglaubens im Spätjudentum*” (190), even though Heitmüller does not use that specific language.

Spätjudentum becomes an explicit organizing category within the history of religion in the 1907 volume.¹⁹ Here, under the heading of Old Testament (*‘Altes Testament’*), the table of contents clearly separates *Spätjudentum* from the rest of the history of Israel; the subheadings are: *‘Geschichte Israels,’* the newly appearing designation *‘Geschichte, Literatur, und Religion des Spätjudentums,’* and *‘Religionsgeschichte.’* The four review essays under *‘Geschichte, Literatur und Religion des Spätjudentums’* break down the category even further: *‘Geschichte des Judentums’*²⁰ (note the absence of *‘spät’*), *‘Literatur,’*²¹ and two entries for *‘Die Religion des Spätjudentums.’*²² These headings, thus, perform the discontinuity between the religion of Israel and *Spätjudentum* that is at the core of Bousset’s work. At the same time, moreover, these headings reflect Bousset’s slippage between *Spätjudentum* and *Judentum* as a whole.

¹⁹ The explicit framework is itself reinforced by the way in which Bousset engages the work of other scholars, which will be fully examined in the next section.

²⁰ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 281-98. It is not clear how Bousset intends to differentiate ‘history’ and ‘religion’ in these various sections; the essay on ‘history’ makes reference to religiosity/piety (*“spätjüdische Frömmigkeit,”* 282, 286), and religious development (*“der religiösen Entwicklung des Spätjudentums,”* 283). Included in this review were the fifth edition of Wellhausen’s *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* and Edward Mayer’s *Geschichte des Altertums*, along with several general histories of the New Testament period. Although Wellhausen uses *‘Judaismus’* (75; 298) to describe the shift in the history of the religion of Israel, Bousset himself refers to this as *Spätjudentum* (282-3).

²¹ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 333-50. This review essay includes many textual studies on the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings, as well as brief mentions of Jewish scholarship on the Talmud and the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which indicate how far Bousset has extended his periodization of *Spätjudentum*.

²² Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 379-90; 418-36.

Spätjudentum appears again as a category as ‘*Geschichte, Literatur und Religion des Spätjudentums*’ in Volume 13.²³ The first review essay is designated as ‘*Allgemeines und Geschichte.*’ The books reviewed range from Schürer’s revised edition of his history of the Jewish people, to several dealing with the fifth and sixth centuries BCE, and conclude with a book dealing with anti-semitism in second century CE Egypt; the implication is that *Spätjudentum* can be marked as a single historical period that covers seven centuries. This range is much broader than the periodization of *Spätjudentum* initially articulated by Bousset, i.e., from the second or third century BCE through first century CE. The remaining review essays are both labeled as ‘*Literatur,*’ one dealing with apocryphal and pseudepigraphical texts, with the other limited to the rabbinical literature of the Mishna and the Talmud; such differentiation furthers Bousset’s goal of retaining a sharp distinction between the sources that he privileges and the rabbinic literature. While this volume has two lengthy essays by Edward Mayer on the state of scholarship on the essence (*Wesen*) of religion,²⁴ there is no review essay on what had been marked as ‘*Die Religion*’ of *Spätjudentum* in previous volumes, as noted above, implying that what constitutes ‘religion’ is within Bousset’s control as editor.

The heading of ‘*Geschichte, Literatur und Religion des Spätjudentums*’ appears in the very next volume in 1911. Both review essays by Bousset here are subtitled simply ‘*Die Religion.*’²⁵ However, the second review essay renders Bousset’s heading of ‘*Die Religion*’ problematic, since it includes works dealing with rabbinic literature that in

²³ Bousset, *ThR* 13 (1910): 381-400; 417-38; 457-62. *ThR* 11(1908) and *ThR* 12 (1909) contain articles by Bousset in which he uses the language of *Spätjudentum* or *späteres Judentum*.

²⁴ *ThR* 13 (1910): 1-15, 45-63: “*Zum Stand der Frage nach dem Wesen der Religion.*”

²⁵ *ThR* 14 (1911): 20-31; 63-85.

previous essays had been included under ‘*Literatur*,’ as well as a multi-volume series on the writings of Moses Maimonides, a Jewish philosopher in the late medieval period. Although Bousset does acknowledge that Maimonides is outside of the usual periodization of *Spätjudentum* and gives a favorable response to the scholarship reviewed, its placement under the general rubric of ‘*Spätjudentum*’ still reinforces the notion that the religion of *Judentum* has remained the same, not only for centuries preceding the emergence of Christianity, but also through the medieval period.

The final appearance of *Spätjudentum* as an organizing category is found in the 1915 volume, with the slightly altered heading of ‘*Literatur und Religion des Spätjudentums und des rabbinischen Judentums*.’²⁶ While the first two review essays cover ‘*Literatur*,’ the third essay again is simply titled ‘*Die Religion*.’ The final essay is labeled as ‘*Literatur und Religion des Judentums*’; this last essay title again conflates what appear to be separate periods of *Spätjudentum* and rabbinical Judaism and *Judentum* as a whole.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, *Spätjudentum* did not appear as an organizing category in every issue, let alone every volume of the *Rundschau*. However, even when the heading of *Spätjudentum* does not appear in the table of contents, the category of *Spätjudentum* remains implicit. Once the category of *Spätjudentum* has been established for the ‘history of religion,’ it remains as a space within both the history of religion and the scholarship that Bousset controls. Even when the category is not

²⁶ *ThR* 18 (1915): 23-37; 41-58; 115-31; 269-84. Note that ‘*Geschichte*’ has dropped out of the category title, while the purported scope of the category has been expanded through the addition of ‘*des rabbinischen Judentums*.’

reflected in a particular volume, such absence still reinforces the notion that *Spätjudentum/Judentum* was not included within the history of the religion of Israel.

Controlling Scholarship

Bousset shapes *Spätjudentum* as an object of study not simply through his own writing but also through the way in which he responds to and critiques the work of other scholars. In the next section I examine Bousset's engagement with Jewish scholars; however, here I focus on his response to scholars within the German academic community from which Jewish scholars were excluded. As Elisabeth Schlüssler-Fiorenza notes, scholars "are not just scholarly investigative communities but also authoritative communities. They possess the power to ostracize or to embrace, to foster or to restrict membership, to recognize and to define what 'true scholarship' entails...."²⁷ As the sole scholar producing the literature reviews in the 'new' area of *Spätjudentum* in the pages of the *Theologische Rundschau*, Bousset is able to reinforce his own representation and construction of *Spätjudentum* through his critique of other scholars.

With his peers in the German academic system, Bousset uses the trope of syncretism as his scholarly weapon. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the trope of syncretism played a central role within Bousset's construction of *Spätjudentum* as the means by which he framed the essentially ambiguous and contradictory *Wesen* of *Judentum*.²⁸ Through his literature reviews, he praises those scholars whose conclusions

²⁷ Elisabeth Schlüssler-Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethics: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 22.

²⁸ See the discussion in Chapter Four of Rosalind and Charles Stewart, "Introduction," in *Syncretism/Antisyncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London and New York:

mirror his own view of *Spätjudentum* as syncretic and chaotic and sharply critiques those who fail to recognize the fundamental syncretism that constitutes *Spätjudentum*.

For example, in one review under the heading of ‘*Die Religion des Spätjudentums*,’ Bousset praises Georg Hollmann’s small book for laypersons on the Jewish religion at the time of Jesus for what Bousset considers an accurate depiction of Jewish religion in antiquity.²⁹ Hollman recognized all of the elements that Bousset himself associates with *Spätjudentum*: a transcendent God, ceremonial and ritualized practice that overwhelmed Jewish piety, and fantastical apocalyptic elements. In particular, Bousset notes that Hollmann has correctly identified the fundamental nature of *Spätjudentum* as contradictory and confused.³⁰ Thus, Bousset gives positive evaluation to a scholar who recognizes *Judentum* as essentially and necessarily syncretic.

In a later review essay, Bousset praises the new additions to Emil Schürer’s multi-volume work on the history of the Jewish people³¹ because he finds that these include elements of Bousset’s ‘history of religion’ approach lacking in previous editions. While

Routledge, 1994), 1-26, who note how syncretism serves an ideological function by inscribing a negative connotation of ‘mixture.’

²⁹ Georg Hollman, *Welche Religion hatten die Juden, als Jesus auftrat?* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1905), which was part of the series of the *religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher* that Chapter One identified as one of the key vehicles for popular dissemination of ‘history of religion.’ The literature review containing Bousset’s discussion of Hollmann, *ThR* 10 (1907): 379-90, leads with the discussion of his own *RJNT*. Hollmann’s text reflects Bousset’s influence when Hollmann, 76, describes *Spätjudentum* as a ‘mixed religion’: “...das Spätjudentum den Charakter einer Mischreligion trägt.”

³⁰ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 383: “...aber hervorgehoben mag noch einmal werden, dass es ihm gelungen ist, ein Bild jener merkwürdigen, in sich widerspruchsvollen und verworrenen Frömmigkeit zu zeichnen, in deren Mitte dann Jesus mit seiner in vielem einzelnen alten, im ganzen aber neuen und originalen Botschaft aufstand.”

³¹ Emil Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, volumes 2 and 3, fourth edition (Leipzig: Heinrichs, 1907). As noted in Chapter One, one of the key motivations for Bousset’s own work on *Spätjudentum* was what he considered to be Schürer’s inattention to the ‘religion’ of *Judentum*.

Bousset notes that Schürer has specifically included bibliographic references to scholarship on the history of religion, he particularly focuses on Schürer's implicit recognition of syncretism within *Spätjudentum*, which, for Bousset, is the result of the intermingling of 'alien' elements such as angelology and eschatology.³²

Conversely, Bousset is quick to note when scholars fail to recognize syncretism as the fundamental characteristic of *Spätjudentum*. For example, despite his favorable opinion of Adolf Harnack's focus on the history of the development of Christianity in the enormously popular *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Bousset still sharply critiques Harnack for failing to understand the core of *Spätjudentum* as confused and chaotic.³³

In a review essay a decade later, Bousset critiques yet another scholar, Couard, who according to Bousset also failed to recognize the confusing elements (“*wirbelnden Stimmungen*”) within *Judentum*.³⁴

³² Bousset, *ThR* 13 (1910): 383-4: “Charakteristisch für die Weiterarbeit Schürers ist endlich die kurze Ausführung S. 370 ff. über die Verunreinigung der Hände durch heilige Schriften, in der er erfreulicherweise die neue religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung dieses merkwürdigen Ausdrucks übernimmt. Und besonders erfreulich waren mir die neuen Sätze auf S. 587 über die fremden religionsgeschichtlichen Einflüsse, die bei der Entwicklung der jüdischen Zukunftshoffnung in Betracht kommen sein könnten.” See *ThR* 13 (1910): 384, where Bousset praises Schürer's greater attention to the expansion of *Judentum* in antiquity, so that the “*Motiv der jüdischen Propaganda*” was properly recognized.

³³ Bousset, *ThR* 4 (1901): 93. Harnack fails to grasp: “das wirre Durcheinander, das gährende Chaos der zeitgenössischen jüdischen Religion wirklich einmal....”

³⁴ Bousset, *ThR* 14 (1911): 26. Bousset's language here can be read as biologizing *Spätjudentum* with a reference to genetic representation: “nirgends findet sich eine einen wirklichen Einblick gewährende genetische Darstellung.”

That Bousset's chief concern is the ultimate and unchangeable heterogeneity of *Spätjudentum* is reflected in his treatment of Alfred Bertholet's *Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem des Spät-Judentums*.³⁵ Given Bertholet's title, which echoes the title of Bousset's final chapter in *RJNT*, a positive review might be expected. Bousset does note positively that Bertholet acknowledges the influence of alien religions upon *Spätjudentum*.³⁶ However, he then criticizes Bertholet's conclusion that *Judentum* had achieved a unity through its disparate elements.³⁷ In this way, Bousset reinforces his claim that *Spätjudentum* was essentially heterogeneous, with such mixture always retaining a negative connotation.

Through these responses, Bousset is claiming to be the authoritative voice in relation to *Spätjudentum* while emphasizing the necessary and negative association between *Spätjudentum* and syncretism.

Authoritative Voice Over and Against Jewish Scholars

While Bousset shaped the representation of *Spätjudentum* through his reaction and responses to the scholars grounded in the Christian tradition, Bousset's construction of *Spätjudentum* also represented an attempt to assert intellectual hegemony over and

³⁵ Alfred Bertholet, *Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem des Spät-Judentums* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1909).

³⁶ Bousset, *ThR* 14 (1911): 23-4.

³⁷ Bousset, *ThR* 14 (1911): 24: "ob es wirklich im Stande gewesen sei, alle die fremden Stoffe zu einer Einheit zusammen zu gestalten, oder ob nicht doch in ihm trotz aller ihm bleibenden Konzentrationsfähigkeit Spuren eines beginnenden Synkretismus im Sinne der Auflösung zu erblicken sind." Bousset's shift between *Judentum* and *Spätjudentum* is evident here. The title of Bertholet's book appears correctly in the initial listing of the reviewed books; however, as Bousset begins to comment on the work, he notes the title as '*Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem des Judentums*,' providing another example of the conflation of *Judentum* and the periodized *Spätjudentum*.

against contemporary Jewish scholars, who were excluded from the German academic community. As Christian Wiese has argued, Jewish scholars at the turn of the twentieth century involved in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* “started an intellectual revolt against the way Protestant historiography constructed Judaism and tried to impose its own narrative and system of meaning and values.”³⁸ However, as Wiese demonstrates, the structure of the German academic community and the exclusion of Jewish scholars from that community prevented any possibility of a symmetrical relationship between the university community and the Jewish scholars in such engagement.

In particular, Bousset’s periodization of *Spätjudentum* and his privileging of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical textual sources became areas of contention with Jewish scholars such as Felix Perles and Joseph Eschelbacher.³⁹ Jewish scholars pushed back against Bousset’s periodization of *Spätjudentum* and against Bousset’s de-valuation of rabbinical sources in his examination of *Judentum*. In this resistance, the Jewish scholars recognized how the construction of *Spätjudentum* framed *Judentum* solely as an object of study, particularly as an object over and against which Christian origins had to be articulated.⁴⁰

³⁸ Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, translated by Barbara Harshav and Christian Wiese (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 25. Following Susannah Heschel, Wiese, 27, sees the emergence of Jewish Studies in the nineteenth century as a challenge to the master narrative produced by Protestant theology. This section draws extensively upon Wiese’s study.

³⁹ Perles was a rabbi in Königsberg, having completed a doctorate at the University of Munich prior to his rabbinical training. Eschelbacher also had received a doctorate and held rabbinical positions, including his last in Berlin.

⁴⁰ For example, Joseph Eschelbacher, *Das Judentum im Urteile der modernen protestantischen Theologie* (Leipzig: Buchhandlung Gustav Fock, 1907), 24, refers to ‘what is called *Spätjudentum*.’ See Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse*, who outlines the various efforts of Jewish scholars to articulate why Jewish studies (*Wissenschaft des*

Perles's critique of Bousset, along with Bousset's response to Perles, illustrates the asymmetry that Wiese describes. In 1903, Perles published a stinging critique of the first edition of Bousset's *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*.⁴¹ The appearance of Perles's book in the same year as Bousset's provides an indication of the significance Jewish scholars placed on the representation of *Judentum* in relation to the 'history of religion.'

Perles criticizes both Bousset's periodization of *Spätjudentum* and his use and knowledge of Jewish sources. Perles recognizes that Bousset's representation of *Judentum* is part and parcel of the entire trajectory of the investigation of the 'history of religion,'⁴² indicating in his Forward that his critique is directed not only at Bousset, but also at any representative of the 'history of religion.' Thus, while Perles understands that both Bousset and the 'history of religion' school are theologically driven and centered on Christian origins, he also clearly recognizes that the question of 'history of religion' is not merely a matter of theology.

Perles clearly resists how Bousset framed the significance of *Judentum* in relation to the New Testament by arguing that the Jewish textual sources lack any evidence that

Judentums) should be recognized as an academic field of scholarship within the German university structure.

⁴¹ Felix Perles, *Bousset's Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter kritisch untersucht* (Berlin: Wolf Peiser Verlag, 1903). According to Perles's Forward, dated March, 1903, the material in the book represented an expansion of material that appeared earlier in a scholarly publication.

⁴² Perles, *Bousset's Religion*, "Vorwort": "Unsere Kritik trifft daher nicht nur den Autor des hier besprochenen Werkes, sondern alle jene Vertreter der Religionsgeschichte, die teils aus Vorurteil, teils aus Unkenntnis (häufig auch aus beiden Gründen,) dieses nach Umfang und Inhalt so bedeutsame Schrifttum gar nicht oder doch nicht gebührend berücksichtigen."

Jesus or the Gospels had any significant impact on the history of *Judentum* at all.⁴³ Perles argues that even Bousset's title represents an inaccurate periodization, since while it refers to 'New Testament times' it begins at least two centuries before the birth of Jesus and ends a century after Jesus's death. Perles suggests the correct title would be '*Die Religion des Judentums im tannaitischen Zeitalter*.'⁴⁴ In this, Perles is trying to reverse Bousset's framework by insisting that *Judentum* be understood on its own terms and not solely in relation to how it fits into the history of Christian origins. By re-framing the scholarly question, Perles makes it clear that the real issue is who has, or claims to have, the authority to name and articulate that history. This reversal of the scholarly gaze provokes an antagonistic reaction, as Bousset's response discussed below indicates.

Perles also resists the 'canon' of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings that grounded Bousset's representation of *Spätjudentum*. Perles insists that rabbinic literature reflects what he refers to as 'official' (*offizielle*) *Judentum*, while the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical sources used by Bousset are 'unofficial.'⁴⁵ Perles points out that Bousset had no first-hand knowledge of rabbinic writings and thus was completely reliant

⁴³ Perles, *Bousset's Religion*, 19: "Schon der Titel des Werkes weist einen methodologischen Mangel auf. Denn die Begrenzung des Gegenstandes durch das neutestamentliche Zeitalter ist in den geschichtlichen Tatsachen nicht begründet. Weder der Beginn noch der Abschluss des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters fällt mit tieferen Einschnitten in der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte zusammen; weder die Geschichte noch die Religion Israels ward direkt beeinflusst durch Jesus oder das NT....in der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte vermögen wir keine Spur eines von ihm bewirkten oder an ihn sich knüpfenden Einflusses zu bemerken, und seine Gestalt kann darum auch nicht als Ausgangspunkt für die Darstellung derjenigen Periode der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte, in die sein Auftreten fällt, gewählt werden."

⁴⁴ Perles, *Bousset's Religion*, 21. The Tannaitic period refers to the earliest rabbinical literature of the first two centuries CE, codified in the Mishna.

⁴⁵ Perles, *Bousset's Religion*, 22-23. Of course, Perles's use of 'official' is itself problematic, although G.F. Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *Harvard Theological Review* 14-3 (July 1921): 197-254, also frames his critique of Bousset in terms of that dichotomy.

on the work of others. Because of the nature of the rabbinic writings, very few Christian scholars (and Bousset was not one of these) had the requisite background to utilize the large rabbinic corpus.

Bousset's response to Perles's critique of *Die Religion des Judentums* illustrates the asymmetry that Wiese documents.⁴⁶ While Bousset's critique goes to the substance of Perles's own position, much of his response reflects an attempt to undermine Perles's credibility within the academic community as a whole. He does this by his negative and pejorative depictions of Perles's scholarship, credibility as a scholar, and personal characteristics.

How Bousset positions himself as a scholar in relation to Perles is reflected overall in the way in which Bousset refers to him. Although he does occasionally use the respectful 'Herr Perles' in voicing his position, he repeatedly refers to Perles as his adversary/opponent (*Gegner*) throughout this pamphlet.⁴⁷ Such a designation suggests that Bousset does not perceive Perles as a fellow scholar within the academic community, but as necessarily an outsider whose goal is to attack Bousset.

Bousset emphasizes his superior position by undermining the substance and scope of Perles's scholarship. Bousset situates his own work as comparative history of religion,⁴⁸ and himself as a historian of religion.⁴⁹ While Bousset is confident that his

⁴⁶ Wilhelm Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit und Schriftgelehrtentum: Antwort auf Herrn Perles' Kritik meiner 'Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter'* (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther und Reichard, 1903). See Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse*.

⁴⁷ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*. The following is a partial list, indicating the frequency of this term within the 45-page pamphlet: 3, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 30, 34, and 37.

⁴⁸ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 17: "Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Vergleich."

⁴⁹ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 23: "Religionshistoriker."

work is *wissenschaftlich* and thus value-free,⁵⁰ he describes Perles's claims as apologetic and polemical, suggesting that Perles lacks the kind of scholarly approach Bousset claims for himself.⁵¹ Rather than the scholarly detachment that is part of the *wissenschaftlich* enterprise, Bousset describes Perles as driven by "blind zeal"⁵² and naiveté.⁵³

The outsider status to which Perles is seemingly consigned is reinforced by the way in which Bousset describes Perles's personal character and demeanor, using language such as wrath and insolence,⁵⁴ as well as nervousness and anxiety,⁵⁵ that evokes late nineteenth/early twentieth century anti-Jewish stereotypes in relation to an unchanging and unhealthy Jewish 'psychology' and which are qualities Bousset used to describe *Spätjudentum* itself.⁵⁶ Going even further, Bousset suggests not only that Perles lacks such capacity for *religionsgeschichtlich* work, but that his inability to progress in scholarship is a function of his own Jewishness, since Bousset states that "no one can escape his own skin."⁵⁷

Bousset's continued engagement with Jewish scholars within his review essays in the *Theologische Rundschau* reflects the same asymmetry that is evident in his response

⁵⁰ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 30: "In dieser ganz objektiven Beurteilung...."; 13: "ganz objektiv."

⁵¹ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 3: "gehässige Polemik"; 8: "Was soll man zu solcher Polemik sagen?"; 21: "polemische Tendenz"; 22: "Sein stärkste Polemik" and "nur um zu polemisieren"; 29: "Jedenfalls hätte Herr P. hier in einer etwas weniger gehässigen Art polemisieren können."

⁵² Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 21: "Er hat in blindem Eifer nicht gesehen...."

⁵³ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 23, 30: "naiv."

⁵⁴ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 22: "hier schüttet er die ganzen Schalen seines Zornes aus...."; 31: "auf die Höhe seines Zornes"; 39: "kecke Unverfrorenheit."

⁵⁵ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 13: "Für die Nervosität meines Gegners"; 21: "ohne Nervosität lesen"; 25: "Angst."

⁵⁶ See Chapter Three.

⁵⁷ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 20: "Dass mein Gegner diese Ausführungen nicht versteht, begreife Ich; niemand kann aus seiner Haut heraus."

to Perles's critique. These essays illustrate how he both ascribed a common 'Jewish' position to Jewish writers and situated himself over and against the Jewish scholars as a whole. A key example of this effort is one of his 1907 review essays on '*Die Religion des Spätjudentums*.'⁵⁸ In this lengthy essay, Bousset explicitly locates himself as the authority on *Spätjudentum* and marginalizes any contribution by the Jewish scholars mentioned in the essay. Bousset accomplishes this by using his own work— both the first and second editions of his own *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*— as the standard against which the work of the Jewish scholars is assessed. Given Bousset's previous heated exchange with Perles, it is not surprising that Perles is the focus of his initial discussion. Although Bousset explicitly references Perles's earlier critique and his own response, Bousset does not actually outline Perles's position at all; instead, he uses harsh and negative language to describe Perles's response, naming Perles as especially guilty of a tendentious critique that was biased in favor of *Judentum*.⁵⁹ While Bousset does admit that he has corrected some of his description of the rabbinic material in the second edition of *RJNT*, he is otherwise dismissive of Perles, devoting three pages to summarizing his own representation of *Spätjudentum*.

Later in the same essay, Bousset again diminishes the work of Jewish scholars by lumping many of them together in terms of a 'Jewish response' to both his work and Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*. In addition to Perles, he lists Joseph

⁵⁸ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 379-90.

⁵⁹ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 380: "Gegen die erste Auflage hat sich neben andern jüdischen Gelehrten namentlich Perles in einer fulminanten Streitschrift gewandt... doch nach wie vor nur als eine arge Tendenzschrift zu Gunsten des Judentums zu beurteilen vermag."

Eschelbacher,⁶⁰ Moritz Güdemann,⁶¹ and Joseph Elbogen,⁶² all of whom he accuses of ‘one-sidedness.’⁶³ While he admits that these Jewish scholars provided valuable scholarship on rabbinic literature, as a whole he labels them pejoratively, comparing what he characterizes as their apologetic and polemical representations of *Judentum* to fungi that shoot up everywhere.⁶⁴ By framing the work of Jewish scholars as apologetic and as constituting a singular Jewish response, Bousset is identifying the contemporary Jewish scholars with the particularism that he has repeatedly marked as a core attribute of *Spätjudentum* itself. By connecting contemporary Jewish scholars and the apologetics of the rabbinical material, Bousset is reinforcing his conflation of *Spätjudentum* and *Judentum* across the centuries. Just as Bousset had argued that *Spätjudentum* failed to attain the full realization of ‘true’ religion, he is suggesting that contemporary Jewish scholars still lack the ability to recognize true ‘religion,’ and thus the ability to be ‘true’ scholars. Thus, ‘history of religion’ remains only within the grasp of the non-Jewish scholars such as Bousset, a result that parallels Bousset’s privileging of Germanic Christianity as the highest form of religion within *Religionsgeschichte*.

⁶⁰ Joseph Eschelbacher, *Die Vorlesung Ad. Harnacks über das Wesen des Christentums* (1904).

⁶¹ Moritz Güdemann, *Das Judentum im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter in christlicher Beleuchtung* (1903).

⁶² Joseph Elbogen, *Die Religionsanschauungen der Pharisäer* (1904).

⁶³ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 388. Friedländer’s response is described as “*Phantasie*.”

⁶⁴ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 384: “schiessen wie Pilze allgemeinere Darstellungen des Judentums apologetischer und polemischer Art aus dem Boden.” This trope represents a negative anti-Jewish stereotype that goes back to the medieval period; in addition, the identification of Jews with mushrooms becomes a central element in Nazi propaganda, especially through Julius Streicher’s publication of the anti-semitic children’s book *The Poisonous Mushroom* (*Die Giftpilz*).

Bousset characterizes these Jewish scholars as not only incapable of objectivity, but incapable of understanding their own tradition, that is, their own historical past;⁶⁵ instead, such knowledge has only been produced through the efforts of Christian scholars working in the area of *Religionswissenschaft*. For Bousset, the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings that are the textual sources for his periodization of *Spätjudentum* were ‘lost’ in a sense, since those writings had been rejected by rabbinical leaders and handed down primarily through the Christian tradition, rather than the Jewish tradition.⁶⁶ While, according to Bousset, neither the rabbinic tradition nor contemporary Jewish scholars recognized these sources as ‘Jewish,’ Bousset claims the privileged position as *Wissenschaftler* that allows him recognize the true provenance of that literature. In this way, Bousset is able to dismiss both Jewish scholarship relating to that period and the critique of his own work by contemporary Jewish scholars.

Bousset also pushes back against the Jewish critique of his misuse/non-use of rabbinic sources by questioning the academic integrity of Perles, and, by implication, other Jewish scholars, raising the issue of whether Jewish scholars had deliberately misrepresented the rabbinic writings.⁶⁷ Indeed, part of Bousset’s initial response to Perles centered on Bousset’s outrage that Perles had questioned his translation of Hebrew in the

⁶⁵ Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 385: “Aber schlimm ist es, dass sie nicht imstande sind, ihre eigene Vergangenheit richtig einzuschätzen und zu verstehen, dass ihnen der Sinn für den religiösen Unterschied zwischen Psalmen und Propheten einerseits, Mischna und Talmud andreseits abhanden gekommen ist”; and “Ihrer eigen Vergangenheit stehen sie mit völligen Mangel an Kritik und naiver Bewunderung gegenüber.”

⁶⁶ Bousset, *ThR* 3 (1900): 288ff.; 292 n1: “Noch heutigen, in der jüdischen Tradition stehenden jüdischen Gelehrten wird es daher schwer, jene Schriften als Fleisch von ihrem Fleisch anzuerkennen.”

⁶⁷ See Bousset, *ThR* 10 (1907): 333-50, where Bousset, 348, discussing Bacher’s work on the Haggadah, praises Bacher as “einer der wenigen jüdischen Gelehrten, die uns mit ihren Forschungen auf ganz sicheren Boden stellen.”

rabbinical materials.⁶⁸ However, Bousset here challenges the authority claimed by (and attributed to) Jewish scholars with respect to the rabbinic corpus, suggesting that such scholars do not have a special connection to those writings.

The following lengthy excerpt from a review of Bousset's response to Perles in the English-language journal, *The Expository Times*, illustrates how the Christian-Jewish asymmetry of authority in the Bousset-Perles exchange was not only acceptable, but indeed was the norm within the larger academic world:

Professor Bousset recently published a valuable work entitled *Religion des Judentums im N.T. Zeitalter*, which was noticed in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES (February 1903, p. 208). That work has been fiercely attacked from a Jewish standpoint by Dr. Felix Perles, who, we are sorry to say, has shown Dr. Bousset neither the courtesy we expect from one scholar to another, nor the respect which is usually accorded by the representatives of one religion to those of another. It augurs ill for the future relations between Jewish and Christian theologians, if we are to have many exhibitions like that of Dr. Perles. And this is not the only case in which one may see cause for anxiety. There are methods of editing and other points connected with the great *Jewish Encyclopedia* now being issued that have provoked an energetic protest from one so well entitled to a hearing as Professor Nestle (see *Theol. Literaturblatt*, 1903, Nos. 17 and 30; *Monatsschrift für die kirchliche Praxis*, September 1903, p. 349ff.). We feel sure, in any case, that the pamphlet before us, which Dr. Bousset has felt compelled to write in answer to Dr. Perles' attack, will be admitted by every impartial judge to accomplish its object, not only convicting Dr. Perles of the discourtesy to which we have referred, but proving conclusively that, whether from haste or for some other reason, he has misapprehended the view-point of Dr. Bousset's book....⁶⁹

According to this excerpt, Jewish scholars were considered to be doing scholarship as specifically 'Jewish' scholars and were lumped together, as if there was a single unitary and particularistic 'Jewish' position. By 'convicting' Perles of discourtesy

⁶⁸ Bousset, *Volksfrömmigkeit*, 39: "kecke Unverfrorenheit."

⁶⁹ *Expository Times* 15 (1904): 66.

and non-objectivity, this review not only confirms the authoritative primacy accorded German scholarship as a whole in the first half of the twentieth century, but, even more significantly, reproduces Bousset's subordination of Jewish scholarship and marginalization of Jewish scholars themselves.

Problematizing *Spätjudentum*/Colonial Construction

By constructing both the category and the conceptual space of *Spätjudentum* within his over-arching framework of the history of religion, Bousset helped transform a pejorative characterization (*spät*) that was employed occasionally into the normative designation for *Judentum* within biblical scholarship and beyond.⁷⁰ The implications of Bousset's work, however, go beyond simple terminology, since the negative representations of Judaism and Jewishness are structurally embedded within the categories of both *Spätjudentum* and religion itself. Bousset's work, both academic and popular, presented *Spätjudentum*/*Judentum* as a 'problem' within not just the study of Christian origins, but within the investigation of the history of religion overall.

The language of 'problem' constitutes *Spätjudentum* (and *Judentum* by implication) as a question that needed to be confronted, addressed, and resolved. As such, the use of 'problem' in relation to *Judentum* mirrors the articulation of the 'Jewish Question' (*Judenfrage*) that had been a persistent and deeply troubling element within

⁷⁰ How *Spätjudentum* is reproduced as a category even by scholars who don't agree with Bousset's conclusions is reflected in Gustav Hölscher's *Urgemeinde und Spätjudentum* (Oslo: A.W. Brøgger, 1928). Hölscher argues that the Jewish roots of Christianity cannot be denied and that the key question is out of which branch or sect it emerged. Although his title uses *Spätjudentum*, Hölscher never uses that term in the body of the work itself; instead, he uses a variety of other terms, including *Judentum*, *offizielles Judentum*, *palästinisches Judentum*, and *Judenchristentum*.

German intellectual and cultural thought of the nineteenth century and that Bousset had depicted as a problem recognized even in antiquity.⁷¹

This ‘problemization’ of *Judentum* plays a central role in Bousset’s work. The final chapter in all of the editions of *RJNT* is titled “*Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem,*” which situates the ‘problem’ of the religion of *Judentum* within the history of religion (*Religionsgeschichte*) as a whole.⁷² Bousset’s normalization of *Spätjudentum* serves to define and legitimate *Judentum* as a persistent and perennial problem within the narrative of the history of religion, because it is a persistent problem within the history of Christian origins. In this way, then, what seems to be the simple terminology of ‘history of religion’ or ‘history of religions’ reflects a bracketing of *Spätjudentum* as the persistent conceptual space between the prophetic religion found in the Old Testament and the Gospel message of Jesus; as such, *Spätjudentum* (and *Judentum*), given the privileging of Christianity within the history of religion, remains a continuing object of study.

The subsequent work of New Testament scholar Gerhard Kittel reflects how *Spätjudentum* is problematized in terms of the history of religion.⁷³ The title of Kittel’s

⁷¹ See the discussion of the Jewish Question in Chapter Two; how Bousset’s representation of *Spätjudentum* reflected anti-semitic discourse is considered in Chapter Four.

⁷² Bousset’s characterization of *Spätjudentum* as ‘problem’ is affirmed by Hermann Gunkel, *Zum die religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments*, third edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), originally published in 1903, 4, who notes that Bousset has both recognized and begun to ‘solve’ this problem: “das religionsgeschichtliche Problem des Judentums als eines der wichtigsten Probleme für die Forschung dieser Epoche erkannt und bereits eine Fülle von Material zu seiner Lösung zusammentragen.”

⁷³ Kittel, best known for his editorship of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (*Theologische Wörterbuch*), became a member of the Nazi Party in the early 1930s, with his later writing (*Die Judenfrage*) reflecting explicit anti-semitism. See Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians Under Hitler* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985) for an extensive discussion of Kittel’s work. Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of*

1926 work, *Das Problem des palästinischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum*,⁷⁴ identifies *Spätjudentum* not only as a ‘problem,’ but specifically as a problem in relation to early Christianity. Here Kittel reproduces almost exactly the language Bousset used in *RJNT*. In his later work, *Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum*,⁷⁵ Kittel clearly recognizes that the relation of *Judentum* to Christian origins is not simply a matter of theology but is a question within the wider history of religion in antiquity. There, Kittel frames his discussion of early Christianity within the overall history of religion using the terminology of syncretism, arguing against the idea (of Bousset and Gunkel) that either Judaism or Christianity represented a syncretic religion. Although Kittel critiques Bousset’s conclusions in relation to syncretism, his approach as a whole, particularly his focus on syncretism, reflects and reproduces how Bousset framed *Spätjudentum/Judentum* within the history of religion.⁷⁶

By situating *Spätjudentum/Judentum* as a problem within scholarship, Bousset rendered *Judentum* as an object of study; as an objective, ‘scientific’ category, *Judentum* is subject to the same types of *wissenschaftlich* investigation as any other historical phenomenon. Bousset’s control over this object of study is emphasized in the way in which he frames the scholarly enterprise in terms mirroring those of Western colonial discourse.

Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semmler to Kittel and Bultmann (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), 417-530, has a lengthy treatment of Kittel.

⁷⁴ Gerhard Kittel, *Das Problem des palästinischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1926).

⁷⁵ Gerhard Kittel, *Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum* (Gütersloh: C. B. Bertelsmann, 1932). In this and in his earlier work, Kittel critiques Bousset for his lack of understanding and misuse of rabbinic sources, citing both G.F. Moore and Felix Perles.

⁷⁶ By using syncretism as a conceptual category, Kittel legitimates it as such in relation to ‘history of religion.’

In his essay on the relationship between theology and ‘religion,’ Bousset described *Spätjudentum* as “an immense unexplored land” (“*ein grosses unerforschtes Land*”).⁷⁷ Given the geographical and territorial connotations of ‘land,’ his depiction of *Judentum* as a ‘land’ that is unexplored transforms biblical scholarship into a colonial enterprise, and renders the scholar the ‘discoverer’ of that territory. By describing *Spätjudentum* as ‘unexplored,’ Bousset not only suggests that it is an area of study that has not been properly investigated and, therefore, ‘virgin’ territory, but that it *needs* to be ‘explored.’ Within the colonial context, exploration necessarily entailed taming and controlling the area in question. Even in Bousset’s earliest discussions of the significance of the ‘history of religion’ approach, Bousset described the scholarly enterprise as a colonial project: “The sensation excited by all works that advanced vigorously in this direction showed that a virgin forest was being cleared here and a decisive advance achieved in theological work.”⁷⁸

Bousset situates the biblical scholar (e.g., himself) as the one who will appropriate that ‘field.’ Given his stinging critique of Jewish scholars, Christian biblical scholars remain the only viable candidates to determine how to situate *Spätjudentum* within the over-arching ‘history of religion,’ or to use Bousset’s own language, the otherwise ‘empty space’ in which he has created and constituted *Spätjudentum*.

⁷⁷ Bousset, “*Religion und Theologie*,” in *Religionsgeschichtlichen Studien*, edited by Antonie Verheule (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 41. This essay was presented as a lecture in 1919.

⁷⁸ Bousset, *ThR* 7 (1904): 267ff., cited and translated in Hans G. Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 213 n12. See Georg Hollmann, *Welche Religion hatten die Juden, als Jesus auftrat?*, 1, who similarly describes *Spätjudentum*: “so unsichere und dunklen Gebiet wie dem Spätjudentum.”

Bousset uses a common colonialist trope of gardening to characterize the academic enterprise as a whole and his role as scholar. He highlights the significance of the theologian within the comparative enterprise by analogizing theology as a ‘gardener’ of the ‘tree of religion.’ As gardener, theology exercises control over ‘religion,’ conceptualized by Bousset as piety, a *sui generis* inward quality.⁷⁹ According to Bousset, it is the task of theology as a scholarly, i.e., *wissenschaftlich*, enterprise to recognize and eliminate the outward or external constraints that would impede the growth and fulfillment of religion itself and to create the conditions under which religion can flourish. This language suggests that the very viability of religion is within the hands of scholars, such that they need to be vigilant in protecting and preserving religion. This metaphor obscures the reality that Bousset is actively constructing both religion and *Spätjudentum* as his object of study; that is, he is not ‘tending’ something that exists independently of his scholarship.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined Bousset’s role in the production of the category of *Spätjudentum* through his periodization, his control over content, and his engagement with other scholars. Bousset frames *Spätjudentum* (and thus *Judentum*) as a problem, that is, as an object of study, within the history of religion as a whole, one that is not confined to biblical scholars. In effect, Bousset has both discovered and colonized the space of *Judentum* and has policed those borders through his critique of other scholars.

⁷⁹ Bousset, “*Religion und Theologie*,” 37-8: “Theologie kann nur den Gärtner am Baum der Religion sein....Er kann nur äussere Hemmnisse des Wachstums beseitigen, äussere Bedingungen schaffen, teile Triebe abschneiden, gute zur Entfaltung bringen.”

Bousset's construction of, and exercise of authority over, the category of *Spätjudentum* serves as a way of framing *Spätjudentum* (and because of the slippage in terminology, *Judentum* overall) as the internal colonial other over and against which Bousset, and subsequent biblical scholars, can articulate the history of Christianity and of 'religion' itself. Bousset grounds his scholarly authority by drawing on the disciplinary authority of the emerging discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*, which as a 'science' is presumed to be beyond the realm of Christian apologetics. By drawing on the authority of the comparative method, he places himself in such a "privileged epistemological position"⁸⁰ as the scholar who controls the categories and the textual sources. Bousset creates his taxonomy, i.e., his categories, in such a way that obscures how his use of the category of religion as a universal, a-historical category of analysis produces the elision of *Judentum* from the narrative of the history of religion. In doing so, to continue with Bousset's own colonial metaphor, Bousset has situated himself as 'gardener-in-chief.'

In this chapter, and the previous two, I disentangled the multiple discursive threads of development, degeneration, and syncretism in order to examine more clearly

⁸⁰ In this respect, what Bousset is doing is similar to the analysis offered by Jeremy M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), concerning the discourse of syncretism in late antiquity. There Schott examines the formation of Christian identity in the Roman imperial world of the third century CE by looking at the writings of Lactantius; he argues that Lactantius constructs his 'history of religions' in such a way that '*religio*' becomes a transcendent, universal category. Schott, 168, argues that this discourse is both constituted by and constitutive of the Roman imperial discourse: "Empire is the Foucauldian *episteme* that grounds both ancient and modern comparative practice." Schott demonstrates how such discourses and the taxonomies produced were used through the centuries as a way of exercising control over minority populations and situates his argument in relation to comparative religion as a discipline: that comparative religion, framed as a science "...served to insulate it from implication in the conquests that provided the data for analysis. Such move in turn acquired for practitioners a privileged epistemological position" (175).

how Bousset's construction of *Spätjudentum/Judentum* was imbricated within his framework of the history of religion itself. In the final chapter, I offer a summary of my analysis and argument that brings these threads back together.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

While Bousset's representation of *Spätjudentum* and its subsequent dissemination throughout the fields of biblical studies and Christian theology have been both interrogated and critiqued in earlier scholarship, my study has attempted to demonstrate why his work remains significant a century later and is not merely of historiographical interest. Bousset's work remains relevant because he connected 'history of religion' to the construction of *Judentum*; that is, he rendered *Judentum/Spätjudentum* as an object for scholarly study within the larger framework of *Religionswissenschaft*.

In the first chapter, I framed the core questions grounding my study: if biblical scholarship has recognized and eliminated overt anti-Jewish elements, why and how are negative representations of Judaism still embedded in the way the historical relationship between Judaism and Christianity is framed? And, if the notion of 'religion' itself is a Western colonial product grounded in Christian universalism, and Christian universalism has been constructed in opposition to Jewish particularity, how does the representation of *Judentum* fit into the disciplinary history of the study of religion and the conceptualization of religion itself?

These questions led me to the intersection of biblical scholarship and the emerging discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* in the late nineteenth century in order to examine the imbrication of constructions of race and religion, which both rest on the assumption structuring Western intellectual thought in general: the binary of spirit/matter

that both constructs and maintains hierarchical difference in which the West/Eurocentric is always in the dominant, superior position. In traditional Christian theology, this binary constructs Jewish difference in multiple forms: spirit/body or universality/particularity or grace/law. In each, Christianity fills the spirit/universality/grace side of the binary, while Judaism is marked as body/particularity/law.

In the Western colonial project, enabled in part by the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*, this theological binary is reconfigured as an anthropological binary in which rationality/intelligence/human consciousness, i.e., what is marked as Western/European, is opposed to irrationality/primitivity/ materiality and sensuality, all of which are attributed to non-European peoples. Since German biblical scholarship reigned supreme throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, there is actually a third question: whether and how such scholarship reflected the German/Jew binary produced within the intersecting discourses of anti-semitism and *völkisch* nationalism in Germany.

I framed this problematic through Bousset's work, since he was situated at the intersection of biblical studies and the emerging discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* in what became known as the 'history of religion' school. I noted how the scholars associated with this school privileged 'religion' over 'theology' in their reconstructions of the origin and history of Christianity within the larger religious environment of antiquity. Their approach assumed the universality of religion as a unique and *sui generis* human capacity. While Christianity represented the telos of religion, this human capacity, or religious consciousness, was equated with interiorized Protestant religiosity. Despite liberal Protestantism's rejection of the supernaturally based elements within Christian

theology, the operative notion of ‘history’ remained fully teleological, reflecting the dominant nineteenth-century historicist paradigm.

Chapter Two sought to provide a thick description of the social and cultural context in *fin de siècle* Germany in order to contextualize Bousset and his ‘history of religion’ approach within the multiple discourses of German *völkisch* ideology and anti-semitism, Western colonialism, and scientific racial theory. This contextualization identified key notions that circulated within the multiple discourses—essence/kernel, development/teleology, degeneration, and syncretism— in order to see how they functioned in relation to questions of German identity, Protestant religiosity, and representations of Jewishness. While these discursive threads intersected in multiple ways, I do not claim that these concepts can be neatly mapped onto each other. My goal, rather, was to show how Bousset’s representation of *Judentum/Spätjudentum* would resonate in a public sphere where *Judentum* could be conceptualized as not merely Christianity’s theological other, but, via anti-semitic discourse, as Germany’s racialized other as well.

The first key trajectory I explored was the imbrication of German Protestantism and German identity. I considered how German identity was rooted in the ideal of *Bildung*, which was understood as a dynamic teleological process of self-formation, and its complement, the interiority of Protestant religiosity. *Bildung* also grounded the emerging German national consciousness, necessarily raising a question as to if and where *Judentum* would, or even could, function in relation to the German *Volk*. Hence, the articulation of modern German identity was worked out in relation to the question of Jewish Emancipation and the place of *Judentum* within the public sphere. While much

German *völkisch* thought articulated a German/Jewish binary as the fundamental explanation for all of the dislocations associated with the modernization of society, the discourse of anti-semitism that emerged by the end of the nineteenth century racialized the German/Jewish binary.

I then moved to the discourse of racial theory, since it provided both the scientific legitimation and the conceptual vocabulary of organicity, development, and degeneration that grounded anti-semitic discourse. I traced the teleological notion of organic development and the concomitant trope of degeneration of the kernel (*Keim*) within the biological sciences. When Darwin's non-teleological theory of evolution was combined with the ideology of progressive development that marked Social Darwinism, biological determinism was then transposed into the social and cultural spheres and served as the explanation of social, cultural, and racial difference, in which European superiority was assumed and thereby confirmed. I then considered how racial theory/racialization was performed in the public sphere and how that related to notions of German identity, in order to set the stage for how Jewishness was racialized in and through anti-semitic discourse.

My goal has been to demonstrate how Bousset's work, while grounded in the traditional Christian theological framework that privileged Christian universalism in contrast to Jewish particularity, intersected with these other discourses and to show how they, and thus his scholarship, were shaped by the fundamental oppositions of Western intellectual thought. In the next two chapters, I demonstrated how these other broader oppositional formulations were reflected within his writing.

In Chapter Three I foregrounded ‘religion’ as I outlined how Bousset’s evolutionary and teleological narrative of the history of religion mirrored the framework produced by the comparative method of *Religionswissenschaft*. Employing the reigning nineteenth-century discourses of degeneration and development, Bousset situated *Judentum* as a dead branch within a religious history where Christianity represented the telos of religion itself. By mapping all of the markers of ‘otherness’—primitivity/irrationality/materiality/sensuality—onto *Judentum*, Bousset rendered *Judentum* as the internal colonial other of Christianity. Since he went even farther and articulated the telos of religion as Germanic Christianity, Bousset reflected significant elements within German *völkisch* thought and thus could be read as reframing the Christian/Jew theological opposition as a more specific German/Jew opposition.

In Chapter Four, I foregrounded Bousset’s discussion of the ‘religion of *Judentum*’ within the specific history of Christian origins. My goal here was to show how his construction of *Judentum* mirrored the way in which anti-semitic discourse had racialized what was framed as the amorphous, but very real and threatening, Jewish spirit (*Geist*). Here, Bousset’s chief concern is identifying the essence of *Spätjudentum* in order to bracket it out from the genuine development of the universalizing spirit of true religion, that is, from the history of Christianity. Bousset described the essence of *Judentum* as necessarily confused and chaotic due to alien oriental elements that had infiltrated it following the exilic period. *Judentum* represented essential ambiguity because it reflected a heterogeneity of religion/nation. In order to show the interpenetration of discourses of religion, race, and German identity, I read Bousset against the widely popular anti-semitic writer, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who at the turn of

the twentieth century rendered *Judentum* as the Aryan's enemy and racial 'other' throughout history. I analyzed how Bousset's construction of *Judentum* through the tropes of syncretism and chaos and his claim of objective *wissenschaftlich* scholarship not only participated in the articulation and dissemination of the German/Jew binary, but also legitimated racialized anti-semitic discourse.

While those two chapters focused on a careful analysis of Bousset's representation of *Spätjudentum*, in Chapter Five I shifted gears in order to examine Bousset's significant role within the disciplinary discourse of Christian origins in normalizing *Spätjudentum* as a designation for *Judentum* at the time of Jesus. In particular, I argued that Bousset represents orientalist scholarship, through which knowledge is both produced and controlled. While Bousset exercised control over the content of the representation of *Spätjudentum* through his own work, even more importantly, he was instrumental, especially through the pages of the *Theologische Rundschau*, in structuring *Spätjudentum* as a separate and separable object for scholarly study. Bousset exercised control over the category through his critique of both Christian biblical scholars and Jewish scholars that centered on his core notions of syncretism and chaos. I concluded the chapter by demonstrating how Bousset's own conceptualization of the activity of the scholar mirrored the language of Western colonialism.

Bousset's work, particularly his construction of *Spätjudentum*, certainly reflects the legacy of anti-Judaism within the Christian tradition. If his work is viewed solely through the theological lens of supersessionism, then Bousset would represent a sad chapter in the historiography of biblical studies that would bear little relevance to either contemporary biblical studies or the academic study of religion.

However, I have argued that Bousset's construction of *Judentum/Spätjudentum* was imbricated within the construction of the category of religion itself. The language of 'history of religion' is not value-free, but contains a host of unacknowledged presupposition about religion, Protestant religiosity, and the telos of history. Grounded in such presuppositions, Bousset's work constructs *Judentum* as Germany's internal other just as *Religionswissenschaft* more broadly was implicated within the racialization of the non-European/Western other. In the Afterword that follows, I seek to move the scholarly discussion forward, by briefly outlining the implications of my study for both contemporary scholarship in Christian origins and the discipline of the academic study of religion.

AFTERWORD: LOOKING FORWARD

My purpose in this Afterword is to consider how Bousset's construction of *Judentum* in his narrative of the history of religion remains problematic for both contemporary biblical scholarship and the contemporary study of religion. In the first section, I examine scholars who have explicitly taken on the mantle of the 'history of religion' school in their own scholarship while distancing themselves from its theological underpinnings. I also highlight how their use of scientific language and organic metaphors in framing the relationship between Judaism and early Christian origins runs the risk of reinscribing the potential for the racialization of 'religion' that I have identified as inherent in Bousset's work.

In the second section, I suggest trajectories for further research that would investigate more specifically the relationship between the 'history of religion' school and the academic study of religion. In particular, I indicate how contemporary scholars of religion who have identified and problematized the ideological grounding of the category of religion have failed to recognize how their own work reflects and performs the erasure of post-biblical Judaism within this disciplinary discourse.

Appropriating the 'History of Religion' Mantle

The historiography of biblical studies has attributed the decline of Bousset and the 'history of religion' school to the reorientation of biblical studies toward post-WWI dialectical theology and form criticism, as represented in the work of Barth and

Bultmann.¹ Certainly, the quest for parallels that marked the ‘history of religion’ school has largely been abandoned and many of Bousset’s textual interpretations have been modified or rejected.² Despite Bousset’s effort to situate his work in opposition to theology, the theological presuppositions within his work are widely recognized.³

While the juxtaposition of religion and history, particularly in the various quests for the Historical Jesus, has continued to engage biblical scholars since the decline of the ‘history of religion’ school, some contemporary scholars have specifically self-identified as a new ‘history of religions’ school.⁴ Birger Pearson, for example, situates himself

¹ W.G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, second edition (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1973), 309ff.

² Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E.S. North, “Introduction,” *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*, edited by Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E.S. North (London and New York: T & T International, 2004), 7-8, note how new sources of information on Second Temple Judaism, such as archaeological finds and the Dead Sea Scrolls, have undermined Bousset’s work.

³ Gerd Lüdemann, “*Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*” in *Theologie in Göttingen*, edited by Bernd Moeller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 325-6, at 360: “*innertheologisch Bewegung in Auseinandersetzung mit der bibelwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen der Theologie Albert Ritschls...*” See also Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, 263; Karlheinz Müller, *Das Judentum in der religionsgeschichtlichen Arbeit am Neuen Testament* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1983), 196-8; Kurt Rudolph, *Geschichte und Probleme der Religionswissenschaft* (Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1992), 414-9.

⁴ Jarl Fossum, “The new *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*: The Quest for a Jewish Christology,” in *SBL Seminar Papers* 30 (1991), 638-46; Larry W. Hurtado, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?: Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005); idem, *Lord Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003); idem, *One God, One Lord*, second edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clarke, 1998); Heikki Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology: a story and a programme*, revised edition (London: SCM Press, 2000); Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E.S. North, eds., *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*; Alan F. Segal, “Paul’s Religious Experience in the Eyes of Jewish Scholars,” in *Israel’s God and Rebecca’s Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity*, edited by David B. Capes, et al (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007); idem, *Rebecca’s Children* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1986).

“squarely in the camp of the history of religions....I mean that tradition of philologically based scholarship that has been carried out for more than a century and a half in continental Europe. In a sense, I can be regarded as an heir of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*.”⁵ This group of scholars is attempting to situate Christian origins more closely within the Jewish matrix of Jesus, an effort that, given the nineteenth- and twentieth-century work that distanced Christianity from Jewish tradition, is, and will remain, valuable.⁶

However, much like the original school, these scholars treat ‘history of religions’ as a self-evident term in which ‘history’ is assumed as a marker of objectivity and a non-apologetic agenda. For example, Fletcher-Louis,⁷ in noting the emergence of the new *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, uses ‘history of religions’ in multiple configurations without actually explaining what he understands ‘history of religions’ to be: “history-of-religions approach” (1); “wider history-of-religions perspective” (8); “history-of-religions context” (23); “in-depth history-of religions examination of ...Jewish categories” (27);

See Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 11-18, for a brief outline of the emergence of the ‘new’ school.

⁵ Birger A. Pearson, *The Emergence of the Christian Religion* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 215-6.

⁶ Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 2, describes the new history of religions school as a “general shift towards an appreciation of the Jewish nature of early Christianity; a defining characteristic of the new History-of Religions school is an emphasis on the extent to which the full breadth of Christological expression is fashioned from Jewish raw materials.” See Hurtado’s description in *Lord Jesus Christ*, 12: “connoting a group of contemporaries with a shared interest in historical investigation of early devotion to Jesus in the context of the Roman-era religious environment, and a shared conviction that the Jewish religious matrix of the Christian movement is more crucial than was recognized in the older *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*.” Here, Hurtado is framing the new school in terms of interest in Christology. In this, Hurtado centers his attention on Bousset’s 1913 *Kyrios Christos*, a lengthy treatment of the development of Christology over the first three centuries CE.

⁷ Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*.

“important history-of-religions questions” (36); “a history-of-religions category” and “without the necessary history-of-religions spadework” (37); “history-of-religions background” (43). The way in which he refers to ‘the history-of-religions’—using dashes—accentuates the way in which history of religions is presented as a self-evident category that also evokes the contemporary denomination of the academic study of religion as history of religions.

Further investigation of how the language of history, religion, or history of religion(s) is actually used within this trajectory of scholarship would be valuable in identifying why these scholars self-consciously appropriate such label. However, in using the language of ‘history of religions’ as a form of talisman, these scholars fail to recognize how the phrase ‘history of religion(s),’ when situated within the genealogy of the ‘history of religion’ school, functions ideologically in grounding a phenomenological notion of religion that privileges Christianity and potentially inscribes a racialized notion of religion.

Certainly, how the ‘history of religion’ school was grounded in a phenomenological notion of religion is acknowledged by some scholars. For example, Heikki Räisänen, outlining the problematic juxtaposition of history and theology in biblical studies, has described the work of the ‘history of religion’ school as “a phenomenology of early Christian thought [rather] than as its history.”⁸ In a recent essay, Gerd Lüdemann, who has been perhaps the most active scholar reconstructing the historiography of the ‘history of religion’ school, also highlights the experiential element within the history of religion school: “it was the history of religions school that initially

⁸ Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology*, 118.

discovered the depth dimension of religion and infused a sort of psychoanalysis into theology by summarily introducing it as a legitimate element of historical construction.”⁹

While the de-contextualized search for parallels that marked the methodological approach of the ‘history of religion’ school has been rejected, the notion of ‘religion’ as Protestant religiosity that was the foundation and primary motivation of the ‘history of religion’ school in general, and of Bousset in particular, remains unexamined, and, therefore, unchallenged. The normativity of this notion of religion is assumed. For example, Pearson acknowledges a phenomenological notion of religion that mirrors Bousset; for Pearson, religion is a “universal human phenomenon with prehistoric roots.”¹⁰

However, the notion of religion itself is not adequately (if at all) theorized within the disciplinary discourse of Christian origins.¹¹ As Arnal states:

The shortcut from a Jewish Jesus to a ‘religious’ Jesus relies on a distinctively modern and in fact anachronistic classification of religious discourse. Indeed, ironically enough, it relies on a definition of religion that is Protestant in its inception and focuses on individual and personal commitments, inner feelings, and ideational content at the expense of ordinary

⁹ Gerd Lüdemann, “The Relationship of Biblical Studies to the History of Religions School, with Reference to the Scientific Study of Religion,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 24/2 (2008): 171-81, at 177. While Lüdemann’s use of ‘psychoanalytic’ may be a stretch, he clearly recognizes the interiority of this conceptualization of religion. Robert Morgan, “Introduction,” *The Nature of New Testament Theology: the contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1973), 67, also identified Bousset and Gunkel as “important prolegomena for the phenomenology of religion.”

¹⁰ Pearson, *The Emergence of the Christian Religion*, 218.

¹¹ William E. Arnal, “A Parting of the Ways? *Scholarly Identities and a Peculiar Species of Ancient Mediterranean Religion*,” in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews and Christians and Others, Essays in Honour of Stephen G. Wilson*, edited by Zeba A. Crook and Philip A. Harland (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 269-70.

behaviors and customary actions...and assumes
Protestant religiosity as normative.¹²

While the assumed normativity of Protestant interiorized religiosity is problematic, a larger concern is the use of biologized language in framing the relationship between Jesus's Jewish matrix and the early Christian movement. Whether these scholars frame their work as historical or theological, or something in between, the use of the language of science, particularly metaphors of organicity, in articulating continuity or discontinuity between Judaism and the early Christian movement, echoes the racialized categories that grounded 'religion' at the turn of the twentieth century. I will highlight briefly the work of Larry Hurtado in order to frame the types of questions that such biologized language raises.¹³

Hurtado, who has been at the forefront of the 'new' history of religions school for more than two decades, explicitly uses scientific and organic language in characterizing the relationship between Judaism and the emerging Christian movement. His metaphor of choice for what he deems the religious innovation represented by Jesus-devotion is

¹² William E. Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus: Historical Scholarship, Judaism and the Construction of Contemporary Identity* (London and Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2005), 35.

¹³ How 'development' is represented, especially in terms of contemporary cultural conflict over the place of evolution, is highly contested in scholarship and would be an important focus for additional analysis. For example, James D.G. Dunn, "The Making of Christology: Evolution or Unfolding?," in *The Christ and the Spirit* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 388-404, outlines what he sees as two very different meanings of development: one is the connotation of unfolding (example is seed→ tree), which inscribes a nineteenth-century sense of teleology, while the other is in the sense of species development, as different forms altogether. Hurtado puts a negative valence on 'slow' development proposals, in particular those of P.M. Casey and Dunn, while insisting on 'mutation' as representing a sudden and major change. See Hurtado, *How on Earth*, 14ff., especially 25: "So, instead of an evolutionary/incremental model, we have to think in terms of something more adequate. What we have suggested in the evidence is a more explosively quick phenomenon, a religious development that was more like a volcanic eruption."

‘mutation.’¹⁴ Hurtado only briefly (and in a footnote) explains his choice of ‘mutation’:
“Though ‘mutation’ carries a certain pejorative connotation in some colloquial usage, I draw upon the use of the term in the biological sciences, where it describes a sudden and significant development in a species.”¹⁵

Framing the ‘development’ of Christian devotion of Jesus in terms of species differentiation is problematic since it recalls the explicitly evolutionary and racialized framework of development that marked early *Religionswissenschaft*:

¹⁴ Hurtado used mutation as his key conceptual framework in his 1988 *One God, One Lord*, the second edition of which appeared in 1998. Mutation also serves as his key metaphor in his 2005 book, *How on Earth Did Jesus become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*, which was based on an earlier series of articles and lectures.

¹⁵ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 162 n20. Although Hurtado cites no scientific reference for his definition of ‘mutation,’ his use of mutation reflects an outdated theory of mutation promoted by Hugo DeVries, a Dutch biologist at the turn of the twentieth century, who was seeking a way to explain species change without relying on the slow evolutionary model derived from Darwin. See DeVries, *Species and Varieties: Their Origin by Mutation* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1905). In *Lord Jesus Christ*, his lengthy treatment of Christology, Hurtado acknowledges that he had received criticism (which is not identified) for the use of mutation and therefore shifts to the more neutral term derived from the field of textual criticism: ‘variant-form.’ Hurtado’s invocation of ‘science’ serves as a way of authorizing his own work as scholarly, rather than apologetic. Although outside the scope of this project, examining how Hurtado more specifically draws on the language of scientific method—data, evidence, theory, falsification—to support his own work would be fruitful in showing how the dance of the natural sciences, *Wissenschaft*, and biblical studies continues. Since Gerd Theissen frames his work theologically rather than in terms of the history of religions, I do not consider him in my brief outline in this chapter. However, in his *Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), he outlines a detailed evolutionary theory of religion, appropriating the language of variation, mutation, and selection, in an attempt to show that science and theology need not be irreconcilable. While he does state that cultural evolution cannot be mapped fully onto biological evolution, he clearly recognizes the danger of racialization: “...concern with evolutionary epistemology (stimulated by reading Karl Popper) has convinced me that a comprehensive theory of evolution need not be ‘biologistic.’ In this way I have gradually overcome the antipathy against applying what were originally biological terms to history and religion, an antipathy which is particularly understandable in Germany” (xii).

The binitarian shape of early Christian devotion did not result from a clumsy crossbreeding of Jewish monotheism and pagan polytheism under the influence of gentile Christians too ill-informed about the Jewish heritage to preserve its character. Rather, in its first crucial stages, we have a significantly new but essentially internal development within the Jewish monotheistic tradition, a mutation within that species of religious devotion.¹⁶

Hurtado's reference to 'clumsy crossbreeding' represents his attempt to push back against Bousset's conclusion that pagan syncretic elements marked early Christianity. In his effort to establish an early date for the divinization of Jesus, Hurtado has inadvertently provided a way in which the relationship between the Jesus movement and Jesus's Jewish matrix can be rendered in biological and, thus, potentially racialized, terms. While I would argue that his usage of 'mutation' represents both bad biology and unfortunate theology, Hurtado's work facilitates the dissemination of the language of mutation as a marker of Jewish/Christian difference, such that its continuing appropriation by both scholars and those outside of the academy obscures the ideological work performed by such language.¹⁷

¹⁶ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 100. Although Hurtado consistently claims to be looking at praxis rather than belief, his use of language such as 'devotion' and 'devout' (in terms of Jews) and his insistence that only religious revelatory experience can explain the 'sudden' inclusion of Jesus as God, indicates that he is grounded in a phenomenological notion of 'religion.'

¹⁷ The language of mutation is not found solely in Hurtado's work, although his use of it as his primary framing device has helped to disseminate and even normalize it within the disciplinary discourse of Christian origins. For example, book reviews of Hurtado's *One Lord, One God* employ his mutation metaphor without questioning its validity or appropriateness. Examples include Daniel F. Polish, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 28:1 (Winter 1991): 158-9; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Review and Expositor* 87:3 (Summer 1990): 493-5; Joel B. Green, *Pneuma* 12:1 (Spring 1990): 58-9; John C. Kesterson, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52:1 (January 1990): 123-5; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108:4 (Winter 1989): 712-4. Hurtado's mutation language has been reproduced within the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, one of the best-known biblical reference works in the articles on the worship of Jesus and the historical Jesus. The *ABD* 'Worship

While this section has identified how the theoretical framework of the academic study of religion can inform the disciplinary discourse of Christian origins, the next section shifts the focus to the disciplinary discourse of the study of religion. I argue that how biblical scholarship functioned within the disciplinary history of *Religionswissenschaft* remains relevant to the contemporary disciplinary discourse.

Significance for the Academic Study of Religion

As I noted at the outset of my study, contemporary scholars of religion, such as Daniel Dubuisson, Richard King, Timothy Fitzgerald, and Tomoko Masuzawa, have identified how the ‘Western construction’ of the category of religion was grounded in both Christian universalism and the Western colonial enterprise beginning in the early modern period. However, the role of biblical studies and how Judaism was represented/constructed in that process has not been adequately investigated. In this section, I identify several avenues for further research.

of Jesus’ article by Richard Bauckham represents an example of cross-pollination and mutual re-legitimation, in which the mutation metaphor is further naturalized. Bauckham cites Hurtado’s 1988 *One Lord, One God* as his source for mutation as a descriptor of difference in Christian practice. In the reissued 1998 edition of *One Lord, One God*, Hurtado himself cites Bauckham’s *ABD* article as support for his own use of mutation, without any acknowledgement (or recognition) that Bauckham had legitimated his own use of mutation through Hurtado’s earlier work. N.T. Wright’s mutation language in the *ABD* ‘Historical Jesus’ article is further legitimated by its extensive presence in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in dialogue*, edited by Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), the publication of the public presentations by N. T. Wright and John Dominic Crossan concerning the resurrection. The use of that language by recognized scholars such as Wright and Crossan, in turn, legitimates this biologized discourse as an appropriate marker of difference. By gaining such legitimacy, the further use of the language of mutation by the audience within their different spheres of interest—academic, ecclesiastical, pastoral, etc.—is facilitated.

One such trajectory would be the examination of how Judaism/*Judentum* functioned within the disciplinary history of *Religionswissenschaft* from Bousset's time to the present. Given the fact that *Religionswissenschaft* developed more vigorously and earlier in non-German scholarship, how scholars such as Tiele, de la Saussaye, and others represented Judaism within their surveys of religions bears further investigation in order to determine whether and how German scholarship has differed and may have influenced the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*.¹⁸

¹⁸ A quick survey of some of this early work in *Religionswissenschaft* reveals a variety of different approaches and attitudes. For examples, Kuenen, in his well-known Hibbert Lectures, *National Religions and Universal Religions* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), articulated a classification system in which he distinguished national religions from what he called universal religions. There, 182ff., he included a long discussion of Israel. He did not use the language of 'late Judaism' and provided a more sympathetic treatment of Diaspora Judaism, acknowledging that it contained elements of universalism that took it beyond his category of national religions. Kuenen, 199ff., also reflects a more nuanced view of the continuity between Judaism and Christianity by rejecting the claim that Jesus constituted a 'new creation' that explained Christian origins. C. P. Tiele's *Elements of the Science of Religion, Part I: Morphological* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), 87, outlines an evolutionary framework/classification of religions in the plural that was explicitly grounded in a phenomenological notion of religion as religiosity: "Religion too, like every human phenomenon, is governed by the all-embracing law of development—from the lower to the higher, from the natural to the spiritual. The tree must first be a sapling, and a sapling a seed; but in that seed lurks already embosomed the majestic tree with its wealth of foliage and its treasure of fruit." In dividing his classification into nature religions and ethical religions, he situated Judaism as an ethical religion, though clearly subordinate to Christianity, 206-7: "we know for certain that there are here two different streams, though rising within the bosom of the same nation, which meet and unite. And the consequence is that Judaism casts off the fetters of particularism, that it is transformed from a purely national into an almost universalistic—that is, a generally human—religion, and that it thus paves the way for Christianity." For a discussion of Tiele's role overall in the history of the discipline, see Hans G. Kippenberg, "One of the Mightiest Motors in the History of Mankind: C.P. Tiele's Impact on German *Religionswissenschaft*," in *Modern Societies and the Science of Religions: Studies in Honour of Lammert Leentouwer*, edited by Gerard Wiegers (Leiden/London/Köln: Brill, 2002): 67-81. In addition to these scholars, others to investigate would include Frank Jevons, *Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1908), whose approach to the history of religions was thematic, looking at phenomena such as magic,

Given Rudolf Otto's importance in the subsequent development of the academic discipline of the study of religion, and his role in introducing Bousset to the philosophy of Jakob Fries, further analysis of the connection between his work and that of Bousset would be fruitful.¹⁹ Closer analysis of the trajectory of scholarship represented by Van der Leeuw, Wach, and Eliade, bracketing the question as to whether to label any of these scholars as a phenomenologist or not, is necessary in order to see how Judaism/*Judentum* was represented in that line of scholarship.²⁰

Jungiger, in particular, has identified the significance of the connection between the 'history of religion' school and the emergence of the phenomenology of religion that grounded the study of religion. According to Jungiger, the anti-Judaism of liberal Protestantism and the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*: "eventually generated a form of scientific antisemitism which aspired to modernize the old religious antagonism toward

prayer and sacrifice, though still grounded in the notion of parallels between the evolution of religion and human development.

¹⁹ Such analysis would include both *The Idea of the Holy* and Otto's *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1957), originally published in 1934 as *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn: ein religionsgeschichtlicher Versuch* (München: Beck, 1934), and would require investigation as to how he represented *Judentum*, including whether and how Otto used the terminology of *Spätjudentum*. See Tim Murphy, *The Politics of Spirit: Phenomenology, Genealogy, Religion* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2010), for an extended discussion of Otto in relation to phenomenology.

²⁰ See Christian K. Wedemeyer and Wendy Doniger, eds., *Hermeneutics, Politics, and the History of Religions: The Contested Legacies of Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), for a very recent discussion of the influence of Wach and Eliade, especially the essay by Steven M. Wasserstrom, "The Master-Interpreter: Notes on the German Career of Joachim Wach (1922-1935)," 21-50, who discusses Wach's representation of *Judentum* and the failure of other scholars to do so.

the Jews with a combination of racial arguments and the methods used in the history of religions.”²¹

Finally, consideration of the representation of Judaism in the contemporary academic study of religion remains a desideratum of further scholarship. Here I consider several scholars who have been instrumental in unpacking the ideological baggage associated with the category of ‘religion’ and its imbrication with the Western colonial enterprise. My brief discussion of King and Fitzgerald is intended to highlight how Judaism has been submerged or obscured in their analysis of religion as a Western/Christian concept, thus performing the same kind of essentialization of religion that they are attempting to interrogate throughout their own work.

Richard King focuses on how the modern construction of Hinduism and Buddhism rests upon a thoroughly Western and Christian understanding of religion; he argues that the category of religion is “a product of the culturally specific discursive processes of Christian history in the West and has been forged in the crucible of inter-religious conflict and interaction.”²² Although he suggests, without describing, the ‘inter-religious’ contestation that shaped the formation of the modern Western notion of religion, his discussion actually flattens such history by consistently conflating what he identifies as Western/Christian with what he refers to multiple times as the ‘Judaeo-Christian tradition.’

²¹ Horst Jungiger, *The Study of Religion under the Impact of Fascism* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 17. See also Tim Murphy, *The Politics of Spirit*.

²² Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the ‘Mystic East’* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 40; also, 211: religion and Hinduism are problematic terms that “have a discursive history that is bound up with the power struggles and theological issues of Western Christianity.”

Unfortunately, King occludes the asymmetrical relationship between Christianity and Judaism by including Judaism itself as part of the Western Orientalist enterprise. He describes Hinduism as a “Western explanatory construct” which “reflects the colonial and Judaeo-Christian presuppositions of the Western Orientalists....”²³ In doing this, King has obscured how the construction of Judaism as Christianity’s internal other functioned in the formation of this Western and Christianized concept of religion.

Timothy Fitzgerald, even more so than King, frames the entire ‘ideology of religious studies’ as a “Judaeo-Christian” product.²⁴ He argues that Christian theology, through the prevailing non-reductionist and phenomenological understanding of ‘religion,’ is thoroughly embedded within the disciplinary discourse of religious studies as a whole.²⁵ What he identifies as the “Judaeo-Christian theological core of religious

²³ King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 100; also, 90: “The notion of a Hindu religion, I wish to suggest, was initially invented by Western Orientalists basing their observations upon a Judaeo-Christian understanding of religion.” Other references include: “traditional study of the Judaeo-Christian religions” (41); “contemporary understandings of the Judaeo-Christian traditions” (101); “the Judaeo-Christian paradigm” (102-3); “Judaeo-Christian presuppositions about the nature of religion.” (104).

²⁴ Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁵ See also Russell McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: the discourse on sui generis religion and the politics of nostalgia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and idem, *The Discipline of Religion: structure, meaning, rhetoric* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), for his argument about the prevailing *sui generis* discourse of religion within the discipline of religious studies.

studies”²⁶ is tied to what he frames as the “Judaean-Christian God,”²⁷ that is, a “Judaean-Christian ethnocentric idea of the transcendent....”²⁸

While Fitzgerald argues that the term ‘religion’ retains too much ideological baggage to be useful within academic scholarship, that baggage is specifically equated with “its Judaean-Christian semantic load.”²⁹ Fitzgerald fleshes this out by stating that ‘religion’ has semantic associations “with the faith in Yahweh of the people of Israel and the faith in Christ mediated by the Christian church....”³⁰ While his persistent use of ‘Judaean-Christian’ does, like King’s, conflate Judaism and Christianity, Fitzgerald’s analysis more specifically echoes that of Bousset and the ‘history of religion’ school: that Christianity represents the genuine development of religion as ‘faith,’ thus allowing Judaism to actually be bracketed out of this history of Christianity; through this language, 2000 years of Jews and Judaism disappear.

Masuzawa, in her valuable analysis of the emergence of the discourse of ‘world religions,’ has begun the work of interrogating what King had described as the “culturally specific discursive processes” producing the category of religion.³¹ Masuzawa has

²⁶ Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, 67; see also 7: “a Judaean-Christian idea that is smuggled into cross-cultural research;” and 23: “exposing fully the Judaean-Christian theological core of the debate.”

²⁷ Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, 86; other examples include 18: “the Judaean-Christian God;” 19: “so thoroughly imbued with Judaean-Christian monotheistic associations...”; 63: “in the context of Judaean-Christian theism and authoritarianism.”

²⁸ Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, 249; 168: “Judaean-Christian notion of transcendence.”

²⁹ Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, 146.

³⁰ Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, 59.

³¹ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How Universalism was preserved in the language of pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). See *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 20: 2 (2008) for the publication of a 2006 AAR panel discussion of Masuzawa’s work, including her own sharp response to that

recognized how the phrase ‘Judaean-Christian’ has functioned within the study of religion: “Today, the idea of the Judeo-Christian West seems to have displaced and occluded the notion of Christian Europe and usurped the subject position of the world historical unfolding.”³² While the scholars mentioned above conflate Judaism with the Christian West, Masuzawa recognizes that, especially in European scholarship, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity remained a point of contestation: “Closely tied to these weighty concerns was the question of the historical (or possibly congenital) relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and the question of whether Jews and Judaism had a role in the future of Europe.”³³

By examining the discursive formation of ‘world religions’ through nineteenth- and early twentieth-century comparative theology, she is able to identify how ideology is embedded within that discourse. Masuzawa specifically connects the work of the ‘history of religion’ school and the ideology of European universalism by using Ernst Troeltsch, hailed as the systematic theologian of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, as her entry point into German scholarship on world religions. Noting how Troeltsch shifts effortlessly from religions in the plural to ‘religion’ in the singular as a universal human phenomenon, she problematizes Troeltsch’s claim that Christian Europe served as the

discussion. Since she finds that King, among others, has misunderstood the scope and intention of her project, she might balk at being included here.

³² Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 301-2. Masuzawa firmly situates the expression within the American social and cultural environment beginning in the 1920s and 1930s: “In effect, the ‘Judeo-Christian’ tradition, the self-styled alliance of the ‘religions of democracy,’ was forged as a unified front not only against the urbane, cultured secularism of Western Europe and the outright Bolsheviks, but above all against the pernicious Aryan separatism cum genocidal anti-Semitism of the Third Reich, which, after all, had claimed for itself a form of radically de-Semitized Christianity” (301-2).

³³ Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 18.

guardian of religion, since the issue then becomes who is sufficiently 'European': "This would immediately put into question, most obviously, the status of European Jews...."³⁴

Conclusion

Masuzawa's suggestion that the specific instances of the scholarly construction of the traditions collectively named as Hinduism and Buddhism "...must be investigated, not generally and abstractly, but in each specific colonial or contact situation"³⁵ applies equally well to what might be called the originary colonialist enterprise within Christianity, that is, its identity constructed over and against Judaism. My study is intended as a first step in examining that process at ground level. My study serves as a case study for analyzing what recent scholarship has identified as the ideological function of the seemingly de-historized phenomenology of religion. By using the work of Bousset, who best represents the entanglement of German national consciousness, Protestant theology and emerging *Religionswissenschaft*, I have analyzed how the Christian universalized notion of religion is implicated within the construction of *Judentum* as Germany's internal colonial other.

³⁴ Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 322. Although she recognizes that this shift reflects a phenomenological view of religion that can be traced subsequently through Otto, van der Leeuw, and Eliade, she frames Troeltsch's own use of the term 'religion' as coming 'from out of the blue.'

³⁵ Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 283.

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