

**The Ambivalent Author:  
Five German Writers and  
their Jewish Characters,  
1848–1914**

*Hannah Burdekin*

**Peter Lang**

## The Ambivalent Author

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## Introduction

‘Inmitten seiner Antipathien kommt man doch immer wieder in’s Schwanken’, Fontane once wrote to his daughter, referring to his own less than straightforward relationship with the Jews.<sup>1</sup> His mixed sentiments, an uncertain, wavering dislike qualified by intermittent respect and approval, effectively summarise the problem at the centre of this book: what is the reader to make of the frequently ambivalent portrayals of Jews within the works of authors whose words, reputation or political allegiance suggest that they were humane and tolerant towards the same Jewish people they otherwise criticised.

The growth and politicisation of antisemitism in nineteenth-century Germany and its subsequent metamorphosis to something vastly more extreme and violent in the twentieth continue to be a subject for historical research. My particular area of interest is the infiltration of antisemitism into literature, assessing how far antisemitism’s underlying ideas, language and stereotypes permeated the writing of five mainstream writers who were widely-read in their day. To varying degrees, they can be said to have broadcast antisemitic thinking to a wide audience and assisted its normalisation, even if inadvertently. Numerous German writers of the nineteenth century could have been chosen for a fruitful investigation of their attitudes towards Jews and Judaism, still by no means an over-researched aspect of German literary history. Ferdinand von Saar, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and Heinrich Mann would all have been equally interesting subjects for investigation, but were dropped, regrettably, for reasons of space, not of relevance.

Superficially, the authors I have selected constitute a disparate group. Born between 1816 and 1875 in cities as far apart as Lübeck

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1 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 364, 30.8.1895. A list of abbreviations used in the footnotes may be found in the bibliography.

and Lemberg, they represent a wide variety of political, national and religious views. The historical period covered by the texts is likewise broad, stretching from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, encompassing the Thirty Years War at one end, the aftermath of the First World War at the other; the period covered by the items' composition, 1855 to 1921, is much smaller, but arguably one in which the greatest changes affecting the status of German Jews and the nature of the Jewish community occurred. At the start of this period, the background against which these authors wrote was coloured by the ongoing debate about full Jewish emancipation; in the years immediately before and after German unification it was the position of the newly-emancipated Jews in the Empire; to this was soon added the issue of 'race'. By the start of the twentieth century, Zionism had also become an issue. Given the changing nature of the debate and the transformations occurring within the Jewish community, one might expect the first and last of the authors to present vastly different types of Jewish character in vastly different ways, and the arguments in their non-fiction to differ likewise. The question whether or not this is so provides the wider context of this book, which is intended, although primarily a literary rather than historical, political or sociological investigation, to go beyond a consideration of the manifestations of literary ambivalence to touch on the nature of the German-Jewish relationship. This is where the initial disparity between the authors can emerge as a positive aspect. The existence of similar critical arguments, whether given directly in non-fiction or masked as part of the construction, character presentation or inherent reasoning of their texts, would suggest that these writers embody a representative sample of how Germans, and Germany, thought about and treated the Jews in the public arena, and therefore suggests the existence of a trend, despite the temporal and geographic spread which separated the authors.

Chapter One looks at Gustav Freytag, whose best-selling novel, *Soll und Haben*, has frequently been discussed by literary researchers in the area of German-Jewish studies. There is good reason for this, but my interest in Freytag extends beyond consideration of this one text

to include discussion of what Freytag's writing of it, and of various items of non-fiction, implies about the approach of German liberalism to the 'Jewish question'. In this chapter, I investigate the history of liberal thinking about the Jews and the relationship between Jews and liberals (in the general, not necessarily party-political, sense of the word), through the representative figure of Freytag. This aspect of the chapter, which highlights the development through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth of specific criticisms and particular demands made by liberals of the Jews, is also an important strand of discussion in later chapters, where I trace the continuation of this liberal criticism in the writing of other authors.

Chapter Two focuses on Wilhelm Raabe, author of a novel which, like *Soll und Haben*, has become something of a set text for research into the literary expression of prejudice. The combination of negative Jewish images with criticism of anti-Jewish sentiment also makes *Der Hungerpastor* the ambivalent text par excellence. Another of Raabe's texts, the novella *Frau Salome*, has added to the confusion surrounding this author by its positive portrayal of an intelligent, humane and beautiful Jewish woman. However, considering other texts by Raabe reveals the full range of his Jewish characters, enabling comparisons to be made, particularly between male and female figures, and thus a clearer picture to be obtained of which types of Jew are criticised, and for what reasons. On this basis, it should be possible to illuminate Raabe's own approach to Jews and Jewishness and to clarify the confusion caused by the above-mentioned two texts.

Chapter Three deals with an undeservedly neglected Austrian author, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, disregarded by research, either because his works have been forgotten, or because of their association with masochism and the expectation that his texts fall into the genre of erotica. In fact, he was the author of numerous short stories and several novels set in his birthplace, Galicia, in which Jewish characters figure prominently. Besides being to a large extent an act of rediscovery, this chapter also investigates the divergence between Sacher-Masoch's professed solidarity with the Jews and his frequently

unsympathetic portrayals of them in his work, seeking to determine the causes for this and to highlight the particular criticisms of the Jews which come across to the reader.

Chapter Four returns to more familiar ground, with Theodor Fontane. Although he is undoubtedly a very well-known author, the questions raised by what one critic has described as Fontane's 'rather obvious antisemitism' have been considerably overlooked by research.<sup>2</sup> In the first part of this chapter I investigate Fontane's correspondence, in which he gave frequent voice to his 'Antipathien', so as to judge the extent and type of his criticism. In the second part I discuss the fiction in the light of what can be learnt from the correspondence, with the aim of determining whether, as many critics have maintained, Fontane's own views about the Jews really are either absent or so veiled as to be undetectable in his fiction.

The final chapter looks at the early career of Thomas Mann from the 1890s until the First World War. For reasons of space, it is unfortunately not possible to take in the entirety of Mann's career and look at his later novels and his support of Zionist and Jewish refugee organisations during his exile from Germany. Even so, there is an excess of material for one chapter alone, thanks mainly to an early text of Mann's, *Wälsungenblut*, a fascinating and disturbing novella which repays detailed commentary. Its multiple images of Jews and Jewish life beg many questions about Mann's own attitudes and understanding of the 'Jewish question', while other texts and items of non-fiction are useful sources for establishing if my initial conclusions are borne out.

For all five authors I take a roughly similar approach. Considering past and present criticism of each writer on the issue of his approach to Jews and Judaism helps to establish a research basis on which to build. I also include a small amount of biographical detail of the less familiar authors. Discussion of the relevant texts forms the main section of each chapter, where I aim to indicate where descrip-

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2 Paulsen, 'Theodor Fontane: The Philosemitic Antisemite', *LBIYB* 26 (1981), 303–22 (p. 306).

tion or characterisation use the language of popular perception, prejudice or antisemitic rhetoric. Obviously, drawing conclusions on the basis of this alone would be simplistic and would ignore one of the central features of fiction, namely, the role of the narrator versus that of the author. In his discussion of this problem, Wayne Booth argues for the existence of a third figure, the implied author, or the author's 'second self', who emerges when Raabe the man, for example, sits down at his desk, puts on his writing cap and becomes Raabe the author. 'The intricate relationship of the so-called real author with his various official versions of himself', as Booth describes it, indicates that the author may or may not be presenting his own thoughts through the medium of the voice of the characters or of the narrator.<sup>3</sup> This latter, even if seeming to be inseparable from the author, may have been as carefully crafted as one of the fictional characters, as Booth later points out: 'The art of constructing reliable narrators is largely that of mastering all of oneself in order to project the *persona*, the second self, that really belongs in the book' (83).

Negative descriptions of Jewish characters or prejudice towards them expressed by other characters cannot therefore be attributed automatically to the author who wrote the text in question. However, the difference between implied author, or narrator, and real author does not prevent the readers, as Wallace Martin indicates, from forming their opinions of how the real author thinks: 'An author who uses the word "I" in a narrative often seems different from the writer – the person who may be described on the dust jacket. Even in fiction lacking reference to an authorial "I", we may form a conception of the author based on the style and manner of telling.'<sup>4</sup> In the light of that difference, though, readers must question whether their conception is correct. In doing so, they can look for indications of the author's sympathies via the manner in which a character is described,

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3 Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 71.

4 Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 135.



a dominant opinion presented without opposing views, or unnecessary remarks made about a character's Jewish background which do not advance the plot. All help the careful reader to decide whether there is bias on the part of the author. Whether consciously or not, a writer chooses a certain style, emphasises some things above others, orders events in a certain sequence. 'No novelist can escape such choices and in making them he reveals, directly or obliquely, a view of the world which, however disguised, is ultimately his alone', writes W. J. Harvey.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore the case that, when investigating how authors' views impinged on their fiction, I am also careful to consider other items such as essays, pieces of journalism and letters, as well as establishing the historical context and comparing the remarks and opinions of these five authors with those of contemporary nineteenth-century commentators. All provide further evidence which helps the reader to see beyond narrator and implied author to the real author.

Essentially, three main questions demand investigation: What is it about the Jews that attracts the authors' censure and, more rarely, their admiration? How did their ambivalence towards the Jews manifest itself in their fiction and non-fiction? Finally, what can be learnt about how the Germans perceived the Jews, before, during and after Jewish emancipation? Answering these questions is not an exercise in iconoclasm, the exposure of some of the great figures of modern German literature as antisemites or hypocrites, but an honest attempt to understand a frequently occurring ambivalence by surveying as much material as possible, taking a fresh look at some texts which have often been studied and bringing the reader's attention to others which are new, or relatively so, to research.

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5 Harvey, *Character and the Novel* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), p. 74.

## Chapter One

### Gustav Freytag: The Limitations of Liberalism

Gustav Freytag (1816–1895) lived through nine decades of the nineteenth century. Although a journalist, he was far from being a passive reporter of the major events which occurred during his life, seeking instead to shape public debate. His social and political criticisms are most apparent from his journalism, but he also expressed deeply-held convictions and sought to influence the public through his works of fiction.

*Soll und Haben* was Freytag's bestselling work. Together with items of his non-fiction, it demonstrates the political ideas and the political and social concept of Germany which he sought to express through his writing. Although the role of the *Bürgertum*, rather than the Jews, was his primary concern, Freytag's writing evinces a distinctive attitude towards the Jews and a particular construction of that most German of problems, the 'Jewish question', which sit strangely with his political thought in other areas. Freytag's professed and active liberalism must nevertheless be understood within the context of the peculiarities and difficulties of the version of liberalism prevalent in nineteenth-century Germany. The search for a unified state and the desire to maintain the *Bürgertum* in a pre-eminent position placed limitations on the extent, effect and practice of that liberalism. Freytag's liberalism can therefore appear distinctly *il*liberal, especially with regard to anything perceived as threatening the current security and future development of the German nation and its upholder, the *Bürger*. The nobility, the Jews, the Catholics and the Slavic peoples living within German territories could, and frequently did, fall into the general category of 'threat'.

The purpose of this chapter is not to brand Freytag a hypocrite who failed to stick to his principles. Rather, by considering the de-

velopment of German liberalism's approach to the 'Jewish question' in the general historical context of the nineteenth century and then in the specific case of Freytag, it seeks to clarify two things: firstly, the treatment of equality and toleration within the specifically German variety of liberalism; secondly, the extent to which Freytag's views were a detailed reflection of the broader picture. With regard to the former, it is necessary to investigate the development of liberalism in Germany, considering its construct of the Jews and the 'Jewish question' to see how and why liberalism did not live up to its own ideals over this crucial issue. Regarding the latter, the task is to see how Freytag, as both a committed, active liberal and a writer, unwittingly demonstrated the inconsistencies of liberalism and its critical language towards the Jews in the work for which he is best remembered, *Soll und Haben*. This novel, perhaps more than any other of its kind, has been discussed and dissected by those with an interest in the German-Jewish relationship and has been the subject of numerous books and articles. As it does not seem appropriate or necessary to repeat in full what so many have done previously, the novel is not the sole focus of investigation. This chapter aims to look at Freytag as a participant in the liberal tradition of criticising the Jews and the Jewish way of life in order to initiate improvement, and it is in this broader context that *Soll und Haben*, together with other relevant writings, are studied.

## Alle Menschen werden Brüder?

As far as the vast majority of German liberals was concerned, their support for Jewish emancipation was by no means unqualified, let alone enthusiastic, [...] on the contrary their emancipation policy was extremely hesitant and

contradictory and often enough blatantly at variance with the established principles of liberal theory.<sup>1</sup>

As Reinhard Rürup indicates, the relationship between liberalism and the Jews is an outstanding example of the extent to which theory and practice can diverge. The gradual spread in late eighteenth-century Germany of ideas such as the freedom and perfectibility of the individual, equality before the law and toleration of others' beliefs would seem ideally suited to bringing about the removal of medieval anti-Jewish prejudices and the creation of an equal role for the Jews in German society. Liberalism, however, did not exist as a distinct political creed at that time and so the initial re-evaluation of the unbalanced German-Jewish relationship occurred under different auspices and was only later adopted by liberalism. That the motivation for this new departure was not purely liberal was to have a far-reaching effect on the relationship between Jews and Germans in the nineteenth century.

While the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 showed the influence of new thinking towards the end of the eighteenth century, Germany in 1781, a patchwork of hundreds of small sovereign states and Imperial Cities, seemed little changed. In some of the states, however, new ways of thinking were gaining in significance. Prussia especially, the largest of the German territories, governed by what is generally termed 'enlightened absolutism', had developed a system of statecraft in which the educated bureaucrat was an important figure. This new kind of public servant, often university educated and not necessarily a member of the nobility, dedicated to the ideal of *Bildung* and the wider development of the

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1 Rürup, 'German Liberalism and the Emancipation of the Jews', *LBIYB* 20 (1975), 59–66 (p. 59). Also useful in the preparation of this section were: Kampmann, *Deutsche und Juden* (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1979); Pulzer, *Jews and the German State: The Political History of a Minority, 1848–1933* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany: Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).

Enlightenment, had an unforeseen impact on the Prussian state. While the state required such men, it was also at odds with their new thinking which threatened the hegemony of monarch and aristocracy and the traditional power structure from within.

One such man was Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, the Prussian administrator who had a particular interest in the condition of the Jews in Germany. His treatise of 1781, *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*, is widely accepted as inaugurating the era of Jewish emancipation. At the time of its writing, Dohm was a registrar of the Prussian archives and an advisor in the department of foreign affairs. In 1780 he had accepted a request by Moses Mendelssohn to assist in preparing a defence of the Alsatian Jews, then suffering from a rise in popular anti-Jewish feeling. The following year he dealt with the problems of the German Jews in a more comprehensive manner.<sup>2</sup> It must be emphasised at the outset that this book, though important for the eventual liberalisation of state policy towards the Jews, did not itself derive from anything like purely liberal motives. So while Dohm accepted that centuries of oppression at the hands of Christians had caused the Jews' degraded condition, he looked upon the correction of this not primarily as a matter of natural justice but as one of maximising the benefit to the state from those living and working within its borders. Dohm believed that Prussia's success depended on a growing population to increase trade and industry. The doctrine of mercantilism would therefore decree that a state handicaps itself by restricting its Jewish subjects and thus inhibiting the fullest development of their economic activity. Dohm did not see the Jews as subjects who had a natural entitlement to political rights, but rather as a group of people of a different religious background, who, if they became citizens, would then have duties towards the state and become more useful. Any rights could be given only by the grace of the state at a time of its choosing.

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2 For more information on Dohm, see: Liberles, 'Dohm's Treatise on the Jews: A Defence of the Enlightenment', *LBIYB* 33 (1988), 29–42; and Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question: Revolutionary Antisemitism from Kant to Wagner*, 2nd edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 70–90.

For this reason it would be misleading to label Dohm as an early liberal. When it is understood that he advocated reform for the sake of the citizens' usefulness to the state, not for the sake of their human rights, the ostensible inconsistencies of his text become clear. Dohm could therefore argue that the faults of the Jews were circumstantial and not intrinsic to their character; but he could also accept unquestioningly that the Jews were morally and civilly degenerate. Likewise he could write, 'Der Jude ist noch mehr Mensch als Jude', while defending their humanity and arguing that they should be released from oppression, yet place restrictions on the extent of their proposed liberty when it concerned employment in public office:

Indeß würde die gerechte Unpartheylichkeit auch fordern, daß, wenn ein Jude mit einem gleich geschickten Christen sich zeigte, dieser einen Vorzug vor jenem verdiente. Dieß scheint ein ganz billiges Recht der zahlreichern Nation zu seyn, – wenigstens bis dahin, daß die Juden durch weisere Behandlung, zu völlig gleichen Bürgern umgeschaffen und alle Unterscheidungen abgeschliffen seyn werden.<sup>3</sup>

This extract contains Dohm's argument *in nuce* and indicates why, when based on such premises, the development of emancipation took the course it did. While admitting that the past treatment of the Jews has been less than wise, Dohm nonetheless places the onus on them to change so thoroughly that all distinctions between them and the Christian populace disappear, and recommends that discrimination should continue as an encouragement until this occurs. Not explicitly, but effectively, Dohm demanded that the Jews should cease to be perceptibly Jewish and should fulfil the conditions laid down by the Christian majority in order to deserve their emancipation. Detailed means to achieve this were given and show how far Dohm expected the Jews to change in order to suit a certain model. While his fundamental aim was the improvement in their 'moral' character, this was to be reached by bringing about change in their

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3 Dohm, *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden: 2 Teile in einem Band* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1973), part I, pp. 28; 119–20. This is a facsimile of the 1781 and 1783 editions of Dohm's work.

economic activity, especially away from trade and towards the direct production of goods, agriculture or artisanry, and in making the state responsible for the education of Jewish children, to keep the teaching in line with enlightened, reasoned thinking.

Far from being accepted unanimously, Dohm's proposals provoked the counterargument from some that Jews should be left alone precisely because they were corrupt. In 1783 Dohm published part two of the treatise, in which he recorded public response to the first part. In his introduction, he singles out two of his opponents for particular mention, Friedrich Hartmann, author of *Untersuchung ob die bürgerliche Freyheit den Juden zu gestatten sey*, and Professor Hissmann, author of a review in the *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*, summing up their approach as follows:

Sonderbar genug habe ich aber auch Gegner gefunden, welche jenen Grundsatz von der allgemein gleichen Beschaffenheit der menschlichen Natur nicht anerkennen, welche die Juden – gewiß ein fürchterlicher Gedanke – für *unverbesserlich*, für Geschöpfe halten, die durch ihre unabänderliche Natur dazu bestimmt sind, immer und ewig dem übrigen menschlichen Geschlecht Schaden und sich selbst sittliches und politisches Elend zu bereiten. (part II, 21)

From this point on it was Dohm who, in many respects, set the tone for debate about emancipation and the 'Jewish question' among the later liberal reformers. The effect of his ideas, that the Jews required outside intervention to correct their faults and were under an obligation to demonstrate willingness to change – an attitude often summed up by the phrases 'rights for regeneration' or 'the emancipation contract' – could be detected throughout the nineteenth century. Rürup has highlighted what such a perception of emancipation meant for the Jews:

Another element that proved dangerous in the long run [...] was the assumption, taken for granted throughout the duration of the process of emancipation, that the social integration of the Jews could be nothing other than their assimilation, the shedding of group characteristics to the point of a complete loss of collective identity. [...] In the mental map of the future

drawn by the emancipators, the emancipation of the Jews was tantamount to the liquidation of Jewry, the process by which Jewry was to be absorbed as it were, into the great melting pot of civic society, leaving no residue.<sup>4</sup>

Ismar Schorsch similarly highlights the lack of true liberality where emancipation was concerned. He notes how historians, Eleonore Sterling, Jacob Katz and Uriel Tal among them, have reappraised German Liberals and discovered that even those in favour of emancipation 'harboured a decidedly negative image of him [the Jew] and a strong antipathy towards his religion. It was hoped that emancipation would quickly lead to the disappearance of European Jewry'.<sup>5</sup> That Dohm had not based his argument on liberal principles *per se* would prove difficult for the Jews when liberalism took up those same arguments.

The immediate, practical impact of Dohm's treatise was not great. The reform of laws and policy regarding the Jews depended not only on the agreement of the local ruler, but also on outside influences, such as those coming from France, where first the National Assembly and then Napoleon instigated emancipatory measures. However, the liberalisation that occurred during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was checked by the period of reaction which followed the defeat of Napoleon and the re-establishment of the old order at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The *Vormärz* era was not the time for furthering ideas which seemed to have lost their validity, especially as the concept of emancipation was tainted by its association with France, the vanquished enemy. Measures to introduce Jewish legal and civil equality were undertaken in piecemeal fashion and not uniformly in the thirty-nine German states, perpetuating the divisions between the Jews and the rest of society that Dohm had sought to remove. Referring to the period 1781–1871, Rürup notes:

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4 Rürup, 'Emancipation and Crisis: The "Jewish Question" in Germany 1850–1890', *LBIYB* 20 (1975), 15–25 (p. 18).

5 Schorsch, 'German Antisemitism in the Light of Post-War Historiography', *LBIYB* 19 (1974), 257–71 (p. 268).



In Germany during those years there was not just one struggle for emancipation and one emancipatory legislation, but a multitude of parallel developments. [...] There were still 39 German states left after 1815, in each of which a 'Jewish Question' had to be tackled on the road to emancipation. The process of emancipation was greatly impeded by the existence side by side of very diverse concepts and developments.<sup>6</sup>

The achievement of full emancipation therefore came to depend on the achievement of German unity as much as on the prevalence of liberalism.

If Dohm's treatise helped establish the belief that emancipation's ultimate goal went beyond granting equal rights via 'improving' the Jews to the abolition of differences, the events of 1848, when achievement of German unity first seemed possible, established the dominance of a related issue which influenced the emancipation debate – that of the nature and identity of Germany and the Germans. How these concepts were to be understood was obviously of great importance to the Jews. Roy Pascal has indicated how the virulent nationalism which later affected the Empire developed during this period and found expression at the Frankfurt Parliament.

It is [...] inaccurate to ascribe to the post-1866 period the rise of extreme German nationalism, i.e., the infection of the German middle classes with such aggressive imperialistic notions as are found, for instance, in the later works of Treitschke and in those of many of the theorists of the Wilhelmine era; in this same Constituent Assembly we find these views germinating and coming to full flower.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Rürup, 'The Tortuous and Thorny Path to Legal Equality: "Jew Laws" and Emancipatory Legislation in Germany from the Late Eighteenth Century', *LBIYB* 31 (1986), 3–33 (p. 9).

7 Pascal, 'The Frankfort Parliament, 1848, and the *Drang nach Osten*', *Journal of Modern History*, 18 (1946), 108–22 (p. 108). Heinrich von Treitschke (1848–1896) was a professor of German history at various universities. His articles in the *Preußische Jahrbücher* from 1879 onwards unleashed the Berliner Antisemitismusstreit, of which more in Chapter Five.

Although the events of 1848 in many European countries, including Italy, Hungary and Poland, as well as the German states, were fuelled by the popular desire to create unified, independent and democratic nations, the risk existed that this national sentiment could become something far less positive. The problem of how to deal with the non-German minorities within a united Germany aroused a nascent nationalism in the predominantly liberal delegates to the Paulskirche, a nationalism intolerant of the 'other', which did not augur a successful relationship between liberals and Jews. Despite subscribing in principle to the right of national self-determination, the German deputies curtailed the rights of Danes, Poles and Slavs who lived on German territory by insisting on their own expansionist aims and desire to create their Germany at the expense of these other national groups. Pascal reviews the speeches made at Frankfurt on the minorities question, noting how Freytag repeated the expansionist aims only a few years later:

Here is the mysticism of the idea of historic destiny; specifically, it is the 'mission' of Germany to spread culture through the extension of its power, and it is the fate of other peoples never to become states; and this is coupled with an apparently rational and reasonable discrimination between peoples. Behind this ideology lurks grasping power-politics. [...] It is the alliance of imperialistic interests which was soon after to find literary expression in Freytag's famous novel, *Soll und Haben*, which bases the alliance of the trading middle class and the Junkers on their mutual interest in Prussian eastern expansion. (119)

Although Pascal talks specifically about liberal reactions to the non-German minorities, his remarks could apply equally to the Jews. What of liberal principles when it came to their right to self-determination? While a less well-defined group, individuals seeking emancipation rather than a nationality seeking independence, it is quickly apparent that leaving the Jews to determine the outcome themselves was never an issue at any time in nineteenth-century Germany. Furthermore, when nationalism arrived firmly on the political agenda, following the collapse of the revolution, there was never any chance of this occurring. The differences which

distinguished the Jews as a specific social group were objectionable to those seeking a united Germany. While the German ideal became increasingly homogeneous and intolerant of deviation, the revolution itself had only modestly advanced the implementation of emancipation, always at the mercy of the political climate. When the pressure of liberal ideas was strong, governments introduced constitutional or legislative measures. Full emancipation was granted in March 1848 in some of the smaller German states; other states left any decisions up to the Frankfurt Assembly, which incorporated Jewish emancipation into the Basic Rights, proclaimed on 27 December. But even then the tide was turning against the Frankfurt liberals: the revolution had already been suppressed in Austria and the rejection by the autocratic Friedrich Wilhelm IV in April 1849 of the crown of a united Germany under Prussian leadership was the final blow. There was no compulsion for the German states to respect the Basic Rights when the body which had introduced them no longer existed.

However, although the revolution failed, its aims and supporters did not disappear, and increasingly Jewish emancipation came second to the achievement of national unity, which dominated the liberal agenda for the next twenty years. An extract from the programme of the National Liberal Party, founded in 1867, indicates to what extent attaining this goal held sway over liberal thought:

Therefore our motto is: the German State and German Freedom must be achieved simultaneously by the same means. It would be a pernicious error to believe that a nation, its speakers and representatives only have to look after the interests of freedom, and, on the other hand, that unification can be achieved without us by the Government through cabinet policy.

*The unification of the entire German nation under one and the same Constitution is to us the highest task of the present time.*<sup>8</sup>

By 1867, when this programme was published, unification had become as important as the achievement of constitutional govern-

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8 Programme of the National Liberal Party, 12 June 1867, quoted in: *Western Liberalism: A History in Documents from Locke to Croce*, ed. by Bramsted and Melhuish (London: Longman, 1978), p. 552.

ment. Commenting on this document and on the programme of the Prussian Progressive Party, Bramsted and Melhuish note the presence of the customary liberal demands for responsible government, the division of Church and State, etc., and then remark: 'Yet these and similar demands were not so much presented as a goal in themselves but as a means *ad maiorem gloriam patriae*, to the greater glory of a future German Empire' (423). At the same time, the liberals directed many of their resources into attacking Bismarck or each other, while the Jews remained in an uncertain situation, living in a climate of increasing nationalism without the protection offered by legal and civil equality.

This problem became more acute following the unification of Germany in 1871, despite the final granting of emancipation in the new constitution, which extended to the rest of the new Empire the equal rights provided for in the 1866 constitution of the North German Confederation. All parts of the political spectrum sought to determine what sort of polity the new German Empire should be. Neither left, right or centre wished to encourage a pluralist society. Rather, because of the rapidity with which unification occurred, the impulse existed to create artificially the type of polity which other states such as Britain already possessed. Britain, however, had had centuries in which to develop into a united nation state; the same result was sought for Germany without the same timescale. Given its creation out of an amalgamation of states, some of which, especially in the south and west, were considerably less committed to a united Germany than others, the new Empire inevitably tried to repress any evidence of particularism. The fear of the 'other' became a major issue and the Jews were doubly at risk of attack and criticism. Firstly, since they were a well-recognised group who had lived on German soil for centuries and had often been the targets of prejudice in the past, they were easy targets again. Secondly, and more specifically, the terms in which the emancipation debate had been understood from the time of Dohm onwards – the idea of 'rights for regeneration' – meant the Jews were at the mercy of those who accused them of not keeping their part of the bargain. David Sorkin, writing on the enor-

mous changes experienced by the Jews as a group during the century of emancipation, argues that because emancipation took a long time to complete, the Jews developed a rich German-Jewish subculture which mingled aspects from both cultures, but that they retained an element of specific Jewish identity. They did indeed remain concentrated in certain areas of the big cities and certain occupations, such as trade and finance; precisely those areas which they should be encouraged to leave, according to Dohm. The number of Jews to convert or to leave Judaism remained minimal, and though religious affiliation lessened, a rich associational life took the place of a life centred on the synagogue. Sorkin describes how this sub-culture was brought into existence by certain factors:

As a socially differentiated, autonomous community confronting an absolutist state, German Jewry generated a *Haskala*. Under the impact of the emancipation quid pro quo, it transformed the *Haskala* into an ideology of emancipation. And under the combined conditions of incomplete emancipation and partial integration on the one side, and its own transformation into an increasingly homogeneous bourgeoisie on the other, it used the ideology to create a subculture. [...] In other words, while they commanded the majority society's culture, they nonetheless remained somehow outside its system of values, even when self-consciously affirming it.<sup>9</sup>

Within a very few years of complete emancipation in 1871 their critics were complaining that the Jews remained separate and different, threatening the fragile union of the new Empire. The conservative publicist Constantin Frantz, a fierce critic of Bismarck, was concerned with the position of Jews in Germany following emancipation. In his opinion, the opening of the ghetto was the unfortunate result of rationalistic theories, and the position guaranteed to the Jews by the constitution could only damage Germany by destroying state and church. The accusation from such critics was

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9 Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (New York: OUP, 1987), pp. 176–7.

that the Jews did not deserve the equality they had been granted because they still seemed determined to keep their identity:

Die Erwartungen einer durch die sogenannte Emancipation zu bewirkenden inneren Verschmelzung der jüdischen Bevölkerung mit der christlichen haben sich nirgends bestätigt. Dahingegen hat die Erfahrung allerdings gezeigt, daß die Emancipation den Einfluß des jüdischen Elementes außerordentlich steigerte.<sup>10</sup>

Werner Mosse, discussing the problems of identity faced by German Jews in the new Germany, notes:

With the birth of the new heterogeneous and ill-consolidated empire, rabidly nationalist intellectuals led by Treitschke cast around for an integrative ideology and found it in the emotive concept of *Deutschtum* – the alleged common tie destined to fuse the discordant German tribes into one mighty nation. This new nationalism [...] was originally non-racialist, at least in a biological sense. At the same time, its protagonists advanced on its behalf claims to total exclusiveness. German nationalism became a totalitarian ideology, determined to brook no rival loyalties.<sup>11</sup>

The emergence of an exclusively nationalist intellectual climate coincided with a new wave of anti-Jewish feeling occasioned by the collapse of the post-war economic boom, early in 1873. Some blamed the crash on Jewish speculation. In 1874 a series of articles by the journalist Otto Glagau was published in the popular magazine, *Die Gartenlaube*. Glagau's purpose was to expose the guilt of those he held responsible, the investment promoters who had convinced ordinary people to invest in fraudulent or dubious ventures. While some undoubtedly were Jewish, Glagau's interpretation placed the burden of guilt overwhelmingly upon the Jews and also suggests another of his frequent themes, that of a common Jewish bond which places the majority of European finances in their hands:

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10 Frantz, *Der Nationalliberalismus und die Judenberrschaft* (Munich: Verlag des Literarischen Instituts von Dr. M. Huttler, 1874), p. 19.

11 Mosse, *The German-Jewish Economic Elite 1820–1914: A Socio-Cultural Profile* (Oxford: OUP, 1989), pp. 42–3.

Nicht nur in Berlin, Wien, Frankfurt am Main, nicht nur in Deutschland und Österreich-Ungarn sind die Börsianer zu neun Zehnteln Juden, resp. getaufte Juden: auch an den Börsen von London und Paris dominieren die Juden; auch hier stockt 'an den hohen jüdischen Festtagen' das Geschäft. Ich stehe aber nicht an, auch zu behaupten: von den Gründungen der Schwindel-periode in Deutschland fallen gut 90 Prozent auf die Juden.<sup>12</sup>

Such attacks must have been a huge disappointment to the newly-enfranchised and emancipated Jews. But how did the Liberals react to these developments? While the Jews were more likely to find support from among liberal ranks, the relationship was far from unambiguous. Rürup has pointed out: 'Liberal political convictions could not cause deeply rooted prejudices simply to vanish; rather they were often superimposed on them at first, before the prejudices were gradually dismantled in a slow and protracted process.'<sup>13</sup> Even if the political will existed, Liberals were unable to promote policies towards the Jews which their electorate did not support. Furthermore, the relationship between Jews and liberalism could sometimes be burdensome to non-Jewish deputies and supporters of the Liberal parties of the Reichstag – Jewish politicians were overwhelmingly members of the Progressive or National Liberal parties – as conservative opponents used this fact to discredit the Liberals as protectors of Jewish interests. Frantz made the link between Jews and liberalism in 1872 in a collection of essays, *Die Religion des Nationalliberalismus*. Similarly Glagau:

Seit dem Sturze des ersten Napoleons hat die Judenschaft den Liberalismus, dem sie ihre Emancipation (und ihre Herrschaft) gedankt, in Pacht genommen, und sie melkt ihr wie eine eiserne Milchkuh. Für die Finanzleute

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12 Glagau, *Die Börsen- und Grundungsschwindel in Berlin* (Leipzig: [n.pub], 1876), quoted in: Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage: Die wichtigsten Tatsachen zur Beurteilung des jüdischen Volkes* (Leipzig: Hammer, 1937), pp. 468–9.

13 Rürup, 'German Liberalism and the Emancipation of the Jews', p. 64.

und Börsenmänner ist der Liberalismus eine Goldader geworden, und die Banquiers discontiren ihn wie hochfeinen Wechsel kurzer Hand.<sup>14</sup>

However, several events occurred during the later nineteenth century which both thoroughly undermined liberal principles and also impinged on the actual political influence of the Liberal parties. Both situations obviously meant the Jews were less likely to be effectively helped and supported by the Liberals.

Dieter Langewiesche has pointed out that the achievement of the German Empire, of which the liberals were fervent supporters, ironically but inevitably also brought about a weakening in public support for liberalism, as those who had voted liberal from affinity with liberalism's national, rather than political, aims, drifted away:

It may be one of the great ironies of German history that the liberal parties had to pay for the surprisingly rapid consolidation of the national state with the loss of their own political hegemony. Their success as a national movement was reflected in their weakness as political parties.<sup>15</sup>

But away from these external causes, an examination of the period immediately before and after emancipation shows how the compromises made by Liberals in parliament, while they may well have been due to political expediency, nevertheless weakened both liberalism's principles and its strength as a movement. The first great compromise happened during the 1860s, when the Prussian Liberals, who had clashed with Bismarck over budgetary issues for much of the decade, changed their tune after Prussia's defeat of Austria in July 1866 and the formation of the North German Confederation, seeing that their long-time enemy was closer to achieving German unification than they themselves were. The indemnity bill of September

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14 Glagau, *Der Bankerott des Nationalliberalismus und die 'Reaction'* (Berlin: Luckhardt, 1878), p. 5.

15 Langewiesche, 'German Liberalism in the Second Empire, 1871–1914', in *In Search of a Liberal Germany: Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the Present*, ed. by Jarausch and Jones (New York: Berg, 1990), pp. 217–35 (pp. 219–20).



1866, whereby parliament indemnified the government for its illegal collection of taxes without a budget from 1862 onwards, was opposed by only a few left-wing Liberals, thus showing how far attitudes had changed. Understandably, this caused the first of the splits in German liberalism and resulted in the formation in 1867 of the National Liberal Party. The events also confirmed the domination of nationalism over liberalism in liberal thought. Regarding the mood of party members, William Carr notes: 'Many members of this upper-middle-class party had an economic stake in a united Germany, and all of them were dazzled by Prussia's military achievements. They looked to Bismarck to complete the unification of Germany'.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the Liberals showed themselves able to ignore liberal principles when they offered Bismarck their almost undivided support during the *Kulturkampf*. Their attitude to the Catholic, especially Polish Catholic, minority in the new Empire shares many features with their reaction to the Jewish minority. Again, here was a well-established group which could be suspected of less than total commitment to Germany because of its international links. Again, it was viewed as a threat. Helmut Walser Smith, discussing the connection between German nationalism and intolerance, comments on the assumption that *Kultur* was inevitably Protestant and its implications for German Catholics and Jews. Such an assumption 'informed the relationship not only between Catholics and Protestants but also between Christians and Jews. It created an idea about national style – about what it was to be German – and therefore set cultural criteria for national authenticity'.<sup>17</sup> He later expands his discussion of what he terms the 'ethos of complete assimilation':

This ethos, demonstrably shared by the vast majority of German liberals, insisted that if Catholics were to be recognised as true Germans, they must rescind the weight of their dark, intolerant and un-German past, a weight that

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16 Carr, *A History of Germany 1815–1985*, 3rd edn (London: Edward Arnold, 1987), p. 105.

17 Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Intolerance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 22.

bore down heavily not just on the Catholic religious community, but on the development of the German nation as a whole. Once freed, the German nation would then experience a new dawn, a second spring. (36–7)

Such remarks could equally well be applied to the German liberals' understanding of the threat posed by the Jews. That they almost all supported the *Kulturkampf* and the next witch hunt, against the socialists, is not to say that the liberals were also inevitably hostile towards Jews, but their compromises of principle over this period render it unsurprising that when it concerned the Jews, liberal principles could also be weakly or ambivalently followed. Liberalism's public image was also severely damaged by their support for repressive measures, something which could be exploited by their opponents, Glagau for example, writing here in 1879:

Zu den 'liberalen Freiheiten' gehören endlich die Ausnahmegesetze gegen 15 Millionen Katholiken und 2 Millionen Socialdemokraten. Nachdem das deutsche Reich glücklich geeinigt [wurde – sic], begann sofort der 'Culturkampf' gegen ein starkes Drittel der Bevölkerung, und die 'Liberalen' beseitigten mit Wohllust einen Artikel der Verfassung nach den andern.<sup>18</sup>

After 1878 Bismarck no longer depended on Liberal support in parliament and with further schism weakening the Liberal parties, it was other groups such as the Centralverein and the Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus who publicly defended the Jews following the rise of political antisemitism in the 1880s and 1890s.

But is the failure of this relationship really surprising? The concept of the corruption of Jews and the establishment of liberal belief that the Jews must change at all costs, even that of their disappearance as a distinct group, had continued into the last decades of the nineteenth century from the earliest days of the emancipation debate. The later ambiguous liberal-Jewish relationship can be seen to derive from not only the prejudices of individual liberals, but also from the fact that the relationship centred around emancipation, understood

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18 Glagau, *Des Reiches Noth und der neue Culturkampf* (Osnabrück: Wehberg, 1879), p. 264.

to mean different things by the liberals and the Jews. The ‘emancipation contract’ was implicit and never agreed – while the Jews naturally interpreted emancipation to mean the acquisition of rights equal to those of other citizens, irrespective of their commitment to Judaism, Germans expected the Jews to show growing acceptance of Christianity or an alternative means of complete absorption into the German nation. Emancipation, it can be said, was therefore granted on false premises. When the Jews were increasingly attacked after the economic slump of 1873 for not having lived up to the expectations made of them, the liberals were either unwilling or unable to mount an effective defence.

## Freytag and the German Liberal Tradition

The German liberal attitude towards the Jews rested on various expectations which the Jews were to fulfil in order to become more like their critics and therefore eventually to merge seamlessly into the idealised liberal image of the new German nation. Freytag was very much a part of this tradition although he brought his individual experiences and beliefs to bear on it. His outlook on life, society and politics comes across strongly through the medium of his writing, and he can be described as a particularly single-minded individual inasmuch as a very few concepts and values remained of overarching importance to him throughout his life and in turn affected how he perceived everything else. This is certainly true of his thinking regarding the Jews, who were assessed through the lens of a distinct set of values, while not themselves being his primary concern.

## *Political Biography*

Freytag was born in 1816 in the Silesian town of Kreuzburg (now Kluczbork), about 20km from the border with Congress Poland, into a well-established local family. His father, a doctor, was for many years the mayor, an uncle and his paternal grandfather local pastors. From the description in his memoirs of his comfortable and secure upbringing, it can easily be seen how the most important aspects of Freytag's character were formed:

Daß es für mich leicht wurde, in den Kämpfen meiner Zeit auf der Seite zu stehen, welcher die größten Erfolge zufielen, das verdanke ich nicht mir selbst, sondern der Fügung, daß ich als Preuße, als Protestant und als Schlesier unweit der polnischen Grenze geboren bin. Als Kind der Grenze lernte ich früh mein deutsches Wesen im Gegensatz zu fremdem Volksthum lieben, als Protestant gewann ich schneller und ohne leidvolles Ringen den Zugang zu freier Wissenschaft, als Preuße wuchs ich in einem Staat auf, in dem die Hingabe des Einzelnen an das Vaterland selbstverständlich war.<sup>19</sup>

Freytag's self-satisfaction at having been on the winning side is obvious. As a German, a Protestant and a Prussian, Freytag clearly feels he has been blessed from birth with distinct advantages, not least because these characteristics were confirmed as superior by the achievement of a Prussian-led, Protestant German Empire. From the border location of his place of birth and his family background stemmed Freytag's sense of belonging: firstly to a nation – the Germans as opposed to their troublesome Polish neighbours – and then to a class – the active, prosperous and productive middle class, of whom his father, with his well-developed sense of civic duty, must have been an important example. What a local historian writes about Freytag's father's activities as mayor suggests he may also have helped form his son's opinions about the Jews:

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19 Freytag, *Gesammelte Werke*, 5 vols (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1887), I: *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, 4.

Mit besonderem Eifer und großer Strenge ging er gegen den Schleich- und Schieberhandel vor und bekämpfte den Hausierhandel, der besonders von Österreich her betrieben wurde. Auch gegen die Juden, die besonders als Hauslehrer und Musikanten sich breit machten, schritt er ein.<sup>20</sup>

As an adult, Freytag's sense of nationality also defined his support for *kleindeutsch* liberalism: Austria, with its Slav and Hungarian peoples, was simply not German enough for him. When, in 1848, he was asked to represent a Bohemian constituency in the Frankfurt Assembly, he had no difficulty in declining: 'Außerdem hielt ich eine Volksvertretung, in welcher Oestreich mit seinem ganzen Bundesgebiet lagerte, nicht für die Stätte, auf welcher die Entscheidung über die deutsche Zukunft getroffen werden konnte.'<sup>21</sup>

Freytag studied philology, history and philosophy in Breslau and Berlin, gaining his doctorate in 1838. He settled in Breslau, teaching at the university until 1844, but left after his first literary success with the play *Die Brautfahrt* and henceforth lived by his writing. In 1848 he turned to journalism, which, while he continued to write fiction and plays, was his main occupation during the rest of his life. His first job was to take over the editorship, with Julian Schmidt, of the journal *Die Grenzboten*, founded in Brussels during the 1840s by Ignaz Kuranda. Freytag and Schmidt had firm ideas on the political position of their journal, and stuck to it despite a massive drop in circulation:

Die neuen Inhaber beschlossen, die Zeitschrift zu dem Organ zu machen, in welchem das Ausscheiden Oestreichs aus Deutschland und die preußische Führung leitende Idee des politischen Theils sein sollte, dazu von liberalem Standpunkt ein Kampf gegen die Auswüchse der Demokratie. (155)

Freytag continued as editor until 1870, when differences with the publisher led him to leave and work for the new journal *Im neuen Reich*. He divided the greater part of his adult life between Leipzig

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20 *Gemeinde- und Heimatbuch des Kreises Kreuzburgs O/S*, ed. by Menz (Düsseldorf: Verlag der 'Gemeinschaft evangelischer Schlesier', 1954), p. 28.

21 Freytag, *Erinnerungen*, p. 148.

and his country house in Siebleben near Gotha, moving in his old age to Wiesbaden, where he died in 1895.

Although he is frequently referred to as a ‘politician’ in critical or biographical studies, Freytag’s politics cannot be described straightforwardly by detailing his membership of a certain party, or support of a certain political figure. When discussing them, the two important factors of his sense of class and sense of nationality must be borne in mind, because otherwise his opinions can appear incomprehensible, or at least inconsistent with what might be expected from liberal thinking and behaviour. As Renate Herrmann has pointed out in her thorough, clear-sighted study of Freytag’s class and national consciousness, his aim was to influence public opinion and thus bring pressure to bear upon those in power, rather than take direct action himself. Herrmann writes:

Gemäß der Rolle von Publizistik, liberaler ‘Überzeugung’ und der Selbsteinschätzung als Journalist gruppierten sich um die Presse, durch sie und auf sie zurückbezogen, die eigentlichen politischen Aktivitäten, die damit nicht direkt auf den Staat und seine Entscheidungen bezogen waren, sondern auf die Meinungsbildung der Öffentlichkeit.<sup>22</sup>

Freytag did however have a very brief political career in the true sense of the word. After the Austro-Prussian war he was elected to the parliament of the newly formed North German Confederation, serving one term. His memoirs indicate his reservations about his suitability for involvement in the parliamentary system and a worry that he would not achieve very much: ‘Die Thätigkeit eines Abgeordneten lag außerhalb des Kreises, in welchem mich mein Wesen festhielt, auch außerhalb des Gebietes, in welchem mein Ehrgeiz nach Erfolgen zu ringen hatte.’<sup>23</sup> Neither did his experiences of parliament and other parliamentarians impress him greatly: ‘Ich fand auch Gelegenheit, den Schaden zu beobachten, welchen Rechthaberei und

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22 Herrmann, ‘Gustav Freytag: Bürgerliches Selbstverständnis und preußisch-deutsches Nationalbewußtsein’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Würzburg, 1974), p. 181.

23 Freytag, *Erinnerungen*, p. 224.

Eitelkeit in den Seelen verursachen. Von aller Eitelkeit auf Erden ist wohl die parlamentarische die häßlichste, jedenfalls die schädlichste' (224–5).

Freytag should perhaps more correctly be described as a political publicist, rather than a politician, preferring to work outside of government or public office to popularise his cause and bring about the desired result. His activities in the various organisations with which he was involved during his life bear this out. As a student, Freytag participated in student politics very peripherally, his most rebellious act being to wear secretly the colours of his *Burschenschaft*, then a banned organisation following the abortive student-led storming of the Frankfurt guardhouse in 1833, an event which brought down the wrath of the authorities on organised student bodies. But during the 1850s Freytag became associated with Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, elder brother to the husband of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and a focus for liberal hopes and aspirations in Southern Germany. In 1853 Freytag became closely involved in the Duke's plan to establish a political party to unite like-minded German liberals. Initially, the Litterarisch-politischer Verein gave itself the much narrower remit of influencing public opinion in favour of liberal thinking through the press and through its own factual and literary publications, brochures and *Volksbücher*. Freytag's major contribution was the organisation of the *Autographirte Correspondenz*, a mixture of pressure group and press agency, which distributed reports from Berlin on liberal politics to the press throughout Germany. Despite the organisation's far-reaching aims and the number of influential liberals it had attracted, including the historian Johann Droysen and the Badenese politician Karl Mathy, the Verein did not have the anticipated impact on public opinion and never developed into a full-scale political party. It was superseded in 1859 by the Nationalverein, of which the Duke was the honorary head, and in which Freytag was again active. What Freytag says about the Nationalverein in his memoirs demonstrates his idealism, as he praises the vision behind the organisation and the progress it represents after the defeats of 1848:

Dies Unternehmen, die Liberalen der einzelnen deutschen Staaten mit einander zu verbinden und durch den Zusammenhang auf gemeinsame Thätigkeit vorzubereiten, hielt ich für den größten Fortschritt, den das politische Leben im Volke seit den Niederlagen des letzten Jahrzehnts gemacht hatte, ich wurde mit Freuden Mitglied des Vereins und bin ihm, so lange er bestand, treu geblieben. (210)

Despite the political upheavals of the time and the disappointments experienced by German liberals, Freytag maintained that element of idealism, his overwhelming sense of duty to the state and the values of his class preventing his politics from being touched by activism or radicalism when his chosen method of change by influencing public opinion failed to bear fruit. He may of course have felt more suited to using the power of his pen than manning barricades during the revolution, but his less direct form of action is also indicative of his ability to compromise principles in order to keep things safe. Thus, while he sought change, it was in a gradual, unthreatening manner. Herrmann highlights how Freytag's belief in natural, unforced progress influenced his political thinking:

Die Anschauung vom Leben der Nation als Organismus mit dem Vertrauen auf die Vernunft geschichtlicher Entwicklung, den 'natürlichen Gang der Dinge', mußte im Denken Freytags und seiner gebildeten Zeitgenossen eine Abneigung gegen jede Art von Störung des 'stillen Wachsens' ergeben. [...] Deshalb durfte der Fortschritt keinen Schritt zu weit gehen, denn 'die Stürme plötzlicher Affecte', die in der Revolution zum abrupten Ausbruch kamen, entsprachen nicht dem vernünftigen und normalen, d.h. dem gesunden Empfinden des Volksgeistes.<sup>24</sup>

Freytag's attitude to the 1848 revolution justifies Herrmann's assessment. In his memoirs, he attributed his father's death in 1848 to the shock caused by the rebellion of the people against their rulers, and it would seem that Freytag found the idea of popular revolt similarly disturbing. While living in Dresden in the late 1840s, he had become involved in the setting up and running of a Handwerkerverein, committed to the education and self-improvement of its

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24 Herrmann, *Gustav Freytag*, pp. 155–6.



working-class members. With great satisfaction, Freytag reported on the impact of such improvement: ‘Als im nächsten Jahre zu Dresden der Straßenkampf ausbrach, hatten wir die hohe Genugthuung, daß von den 500 Genossen des Vereines sich nicht mehr als fünf an dem Aufstände [sic] beteiligten.’<sup>25</sup> This indicates something about his understanding of the class system, as well as of his politics. Freytag’s recollection of the political situation when he was young shows a wistful longing for a time when there was no such thing as class consciousness and everyone knew, and was happy in, their allotted place:

Die stille heitere Hingabe an die Pflicht des Berufes und die treue Anhänglichkeit an den Staat waren wundervoll stark entwickelt. Das ganze Volk, Vornehme und Geringe, Große und Kleine, Arbeitgeber und Arbeitende, hatten im letzten Grunde dieselben Empfindungen, Jedermann war patriotisch und Jedermann war loyal. (210)

Freytag’s revolution was the one attempted by the *Gelehrten* in the Paulskirche, not the masses in the streets. To his mind, the *Bürger*, by virtue of their better situation in life, their education, property and sense of duty, were ideally suited to bringing about the changes necessary. The lower classes lacked the requisite knowledge and qualifications and their revolutionary activity was regrettable. Instead, they should wait for change to be introduced and aspire to join the ranks of the *Bürger* themselves, like the Dresden members of the Handwerkerverein. In this, Freytag voiced the attitude of many liberals, who feared the lower classes as a source of social disruption and disorder. Freytag had only harsh words for the politicians of the left:

harte Doctrinäre, welche die Wirklichkeit gegenüber dem Idealbild des Staates, wie sie es construiert haben, als unleidlich betrachten, herrschsüchtige und gewissenlose Demagogen, und Manche, denen der Wurm der Eitelkeit allzuviel von dem gesunden Kern ihres Lebens abgenagt hat. [...] Diese Partei [...] wird zum Unglück für die Nation, wenn durch die Verhältnisse, oder durch die Fehler der Regierung ihr Einfluß übermächtig heraufwächst. (226)

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25 Freytag, *Erinnerungen*, p. 152.

Freytag's political motivation can therefore be seen to derive from the direct opposite of activism; in fact, his liberalism was tinged with a goodly dose of conservatism. Where change was admissible, this was directly in line with Freytag's two *idées fixes*: according to his ideas about the *Bürger* and the Prussian state, it was eminently acceptable to change the status quo to increase the influence and security of the *Bürger*. This was expected to produce a beneficial impact on the life of the German nation, whose unification he sought within the context of the *kleindeutsch* model, Protestant and Prussian. While anxious to improve the public good, Freytag always acted according to his own ideas, not according to a party line. Herrmann ascribes this to Freytag's self-belief:

Freytag [blieb] auch im 'politischen' Bereich der überzeugte preußische Bürger, dem wegen seines Bildungsganges das Besserwissen seiner Schicht und seiner selbst natürlich erschien und der sich ausdrücklich 'verpflichtet' fühlte, die 'Wahrheiten zu popularisieren', d.h., seine gesellschaftlichen und politischen Auffassungen zu verkünden.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, Freytag did not necessarily believe that liberalism was always in the right: he described liberal support during the 1840s for the Polish struggle for independence as a 'Modekrankheit des Liberalismus', presumably because it contradicted his own belief about Polish inferiority.<sup>27</sup>

The limitations which Freytag's own values placed on his liberalism might lead the reader of the memoirs to question his commitment. How firm could it be if tempered, even if not entirely negated, by his prior commitment to advancing the interests of his class and of Prussian hegemony? Notions of the intertwined destinies of the *Bürger* and the Prussian state and how these were to be fulfilled formed the philosophical background to his liberalism, rather than abstract concepts of freedom of the individual. To a degree, Freytag was a liberal because liberal politics best represented, to his mind, the

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26 Herrmann, *Gustav Freytag*, p. 174.

27 Freytag, *Erinnerungen*, p. 104.

interests of the *Bürger*, standing for the formation of a new German state on the *kleindeutsch* model and against the vested interests of the aristocracy. His *Bürger* sense of duty allowed him this disloyalty to the political state because he thought of the nation as a vaster and more enduring entity than its actual government. His loyalty was always to the former, not necessarily to the latter. Thus, Freytag could reconcile admiration of Prussia's past and faith in its future importance for Germany with criticism of the current political situation. Describing the years leading up to 1848, Freytag mentions that it was painful for liberal men to observe 'wie die Regierung auf Irrwegen dahinschwankte' (120). Despite the uncertainties caused by the revolution, Freytag continued to believe in Prussia's destiny:

Während nun überall die Menschen in Sorge, Zweifel und thörichten Hoffnungen umhertrieben, empfand ein Preuße unter den Nachbarn das Glück, einem Staate anzugehören, dem trotz Allem die Zukunft in dem zerrissenen und haltlosen Deutschland gehören mußte. (148)

However, it would be wrong to doubt that Freytag felt at least some commitment to the political expression of German liberalism. This is made clear by the bitter regret with which he describes the failure of the liberals to remain a coherent force in the Reichstag after the unification:

Da wurde es für uns Alle ein Unglück von unabsehbarer Weite, auch für mich das bitterste politische Leid meines Lebens, daß die große Partei, welche sich in der Noth gebildet und im Kampfe bewährt hatte, in den Jahren nach dem Siege nicht den Zusammenhang zu bewahren wußte. Die Männer, welche in der Verstimmung des Tages den Werth ihrer Bundesgenossenschaft zu gering achteten, glichen hochfahrenden Corpsstudenten, welche sich von ihren alten Häuptern scheiden. Es gibt für ihr Verhalten hundert Entschuldigungen, keine Rechtfertigung. (211)

At the same time, the passage indicates Freytag's mistrust and dislike of parliamentary politics.

The question which now arises is how Freytag's major ideas and the limitations of his liberalism affected his approach to writing. Although not every word Freytag wrote was subservient to his particular goals, the fact that he chose the written word as his medium to promote the *Bürger* and their values, and the achievement of a liberal, united Germany under Prussian rule, obviously means that Freytag's motives for writing differ greatly from those of the writer who follows the precept of 'art for art's sake'. Within his writing there was a strong pedagogical element, a desire to inform and educate his readers and to change their views, of which Freytag and his contemporaries were well aware. The phrase which heads this section was applied to Freytag by G. Poppenberg in 1895, writing after Freytag's death about how the author should be remembered: 'Niemand wird ihm je den Ehrennamen abstreitig machen können, der auf sein Monument gehört und der am knappsten die Vielseitigkeit und Einseitigkeit seines Wesens zugleich erklärt: Praeceptor Germaniae.'<sup>28</sup>

Freytag's belief in the justification of writing literature with a particular educational goal is demonstrated by his occupation with the establishment of Duke Ernst's Litterarisch-politischer Verein in the 1850s. Writing to the Duke in 1854, Freytag emphasised that, in order to be most effective, the Verein must stick closely to the narrow remit of influencing public opinion:

Deßhalb, wenn der Verein [...] sich und seine Kraft nicht in Brocken zerpfücken und so selbst vernichten soll, so muß er sich eine genau formulierte Aufgabe und nur diese eine stellen und unermüdlich nach diesem Zweck hinarbeiten. Nach vielen Richtungen und für Vieles schreiben ist einem Einzelnen möglich, einem Verein verderblich. Unsere Aufgabe muß

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28 Poppenberg, 'Freytag der Erzieher und Künstler', *Das Magazin für Literatur*, 1895 quoted in Hubrich, *Gustav Freytags 'Deutsche Ideologie' in 'Soll und Haben'* (Kronberg: Scriptor, 1974), p. 32.

sein die öffentliche Meinung in Preußen aufzuklären, aufzuregen, ihr einen starken Ausdruck zu geben.<sup>29</sup>

In an 1853 memorandum to other members, Freytag detailed how this influence might be gained. He firstly expressed regret that the liberals had so far not involved literature in this task of popular enlightenment, a task he described as 'ihre Ideale und praktischen Zwecke der großen Zahl der naiven Leser durch Unterhaltungs- und belehrende Lectüre verständlich und lieb zu machen'.<sup>30</sup> Freytag continued by describing the results which might be expected from such literature:

Freilich muß man die langsame und stille Wirkung der Volksschriften und Unterhaltungsbücher auch nicht überschätzen und schnelle, in die Augen springende Resultate erwarten, wo eine allmälige, aber dauerhafte Einwirkung auf das Gemüthsleben und das Urtheil der Leser das beste Resultat ist. (136)

To say that the desire to obtain such an influence over the reading public applies with equal accuracy to Freytag's own writing is not mere speculation. Reporting on the activities of the Verein and referring to his as yet unpublished novel *Soll und Haben*, Freytag wrote to the Duke on 26 November 1854: 'Lebhaft wünsche ich, daß Ew. Hoheit Huld auch das dicke Buch, das ich geschrieben, für keinen unwürdigen Beitrag zu der Literatur deutscher Volksbücher halten mögen.'<sup>31</sup> That the Verein hoped to achieve its aims by broadcasting them in popular literature is clear from Freytag's correspondence with the Duke; but can his own best-selling novel be included

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29 *Gustav Freytag und Herzog Ernst von Coburg im Briefwechsel 1853–1893*, ed. by Tempelty (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1904), p. 24; italics mine.

30 Freytag, *Die Thätigkeit des Vereins in Bezug auf die Presse* [sic], unpublished memorandum quoted in Köhnke, 'Ein antisemitischer Autor wider Willen: Zu Gustav Freytags Roman *Soll und Haben*', in *Conditio Judaica: Judentum, Antisemitismus und deutschsprachige Literatur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. by Horch and Denkler, 2 vols (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1988–9), II (1989), 130–47 (p. 136).

31 *Gustav Freytag und Herzog Ernst von Coburg im Briefwechsel*, p. 36.

within the series of didactic *Volksbücher* envisaged by the Verein?<sup>32</sup> Klaus Christian Köhnke, whose detective work brought to light the existence of the above-mentioned memorandum, makes a convincing case in his article on the genesis of Freytag's novel for accepting that *Soll und Haben* was indeed planned as a *Volksbuch*. Firstly, it can be stated with some certainty that Freytag was formulating the aims of educational literature at a time when he was engaged in writing something well suited to be such a vehicle for those aims, as the memorandum's date coincides with the early stages of the novel's composition. Secondly, in the memorandum Freytag lists precisely what a *Volksbuch* should contain and what effect it should have on the reader, a list which reads like a summary of the themes of *Soll und Haben*. Amongst other items, Freytag mentions as desirable:

Belebung des deutschen Nationalgefühls.

Musterbilder männlicher Kraft, festen Rechtsgefühls, sicherer Ehre und Beharrlichkeit.

Belehrungen über Auswanderung, das Leben unter fremden Nationen, usw. mit der Tendenz Liebe zur Heimat und zum Haus und Hof zu erhalten.<sup>33</sup>

Köhnke concludes, rightly it would seem, that the evidence for an explicit programmatic element in Freytag's writing and its realisation in *Soll und Haben* necessitates a re-evaluation of the work by today's reader:

Wichtig ist in unserem Zusammenhang auch nur, daß es sich um parteipolitisch eingebundene Schriftstellerei handelt – auf langfristige Beeinflussung der Massen, einschließlich der 'naiven Leser' berechnet, – alles andre also als um eine im gemeinsprachlichen oder auch literaturwissenschaftlichen Sinne 'realistische' Abschilderung. (138)

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32 Other examples of the involvement of the Verein with *Volksbücher* can be found in *ibid.*, p. 8 (letter to the Duke, 27 July 1853) and p. 12 (footnote 2 to letter to the Duke, 31 October 1853).

33 Köhnke, 'Ein antisemitischer Autor wider Willen', p. 137.

## Reception History

Freytag's desire to affect public opinion has undoubtedly affected his work's reception and may well be why his writing, though popular during his lifetime and in the half century after his death, has been neglected since. This is especially true of *Soll und Haben*, a bestseller in its day and for many years afterwards. The risk is that such a work, which openly sought to instil certain values, becomes dated when those values lose their significance or are rejected by later generations of readers. This is in effect what happened in Germany post-1945 to a book which sought to promote 'Belebung des deutschen Nationalgefühls'. Jeffrey Sammons has considered why *Soll und Haben* lost its place in the canon, and points out that once-popular novels often undergo a change in status, being studied, rather than read purely for enjoyment, and acquiring sociological value where they have lost literary value.<sup>34</sup>

Coincidentally, Theodor Fontane made much the same point in his review of the novel in 1855. Fontane's concluding remarks seem particularly perspicacious, a prediction of the book's future which has largely been fulfilled. He leaves the book, he says: 'mit der Überzeugung, daß das Los desselben nicht das eines gewöhnlichen, gut geschriebenen Romans sein wird, sondern daß es von kommenden Geschlechtern als ein Spiegel unsrer Zeit und ihrer Kämpfe betrachtet und gewürdigt werden wird'.<sup>35</sup> While Fontane meant this positively, praising the book's quality of reflecting contemporary life, his prediction also summarises more recent attitudes to the work, as described by Sammons, whereby *all* that the novel is

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34 Sammons, *Imagination and History: Selected Papers on Nineteenth Century German Literature*, North American Studies in Nineteenth Century German Literature, 3 (New York: Lang, 1988), p. 193.

35 Fontane, 'Gustav Freytag: *Soll und Haben*', *Literaturblatt des deutschen Kunstblattes*, 26 July 1855; reprinted in Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Schreinert, 24 vols (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1959–1975), XXI/1: *Literarische Essays und Studien* (1963), 230.

good for is to be studied as a historical and sociological record. However, more important for discussion here is Freytag's avowed didacticism, which raises the issue of the author's awareness of the potential effect on his readership of his Jewish characters. To what extent can Freytag be considered responsible for encouraging his readers to think about the Jews in a certain way? A survey of the differing critical views on this point illustrates how opinions have evolved.

Starting with contemporary views, an editorial by Ludwig Philippson in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* of December 1855 shows above all that this leading Jewish publication felt the depiction of the Jews in *Soll und Haben* would encourage the bigotry its author had displayed in its writing. The novel is a 'Tendenzroman' in which Freytag ignores reality by painting the nobility and Jews as 'verkommen, verkümmert, verkrüppelt', the Jews however coming off worse: 'Die Juden sind ihm der Abschaum unsittlichen Betruges, der scheußlichsten Lasterhaftigkeit, der Kriecherei, Zudringlichkeit und andrer solcher lieblichen Eigenschaften.'<sup>36</sup> Philippson does not dwell on the personal offence this may cause to Jewish readers, highlighting rather the unreality of the supposed realistic story whereby the mercantile middle class can embody all possible virtues, the other social groups none. He concludes by suggesting where the author's 'höchst unglücklichen Griff für Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit' might lead (634). Any member of the middle class could read this novel and feel their superiority confirmed. Addressing imaginary merchants on the verge of bankruptcy, Philippson sarcastically advises them to ignore the corruption and speculation in the Christian business community and read *Soll und Haben* instead:

Tröstet euch, wenn ihr könnet, mit der Nichtigkeit der Adligen und der Schlechtigkeit der Juden. Wenn ihr aber erwachet, werdet ihr einsehen, *daß Beides unwahr ist*, und ihr und sie Andere, als sie euch der Romanschreiber zu eurem Ergötzen vorführet! (634)

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36 Philippson, 'Einiges über Freytag's *Soll und Haben*', *AZJ*, 10 December 1855, pp. 633–4 (p. 633).



Fontane's review contains some of the points to have been raised by later critics, confirming that not only recently, and not only in the Jewish press, has this text been thought to take a particular stance on the 'Jewish question'. Fontane accuses Freytag of allowing a dislike of the Jews to influence his novel unduly. He regrets Freytag's choice of particular Jewish characters, objecting to the lack of balance between positive and negative figures:

Der Verfasser mag uns glauben, wir zählen nicht zu den Judenfreunden, *aber trotz alledem würden wir Anstand nehmen, in dieser Einseitigkeit unsere Abneigung zu betätigen*. Wohin soll das führen? Die Juden sind mal da und bilden einen nicht unwesentlichen Teil unserer Gesellschaft, unseres Staates. Zugegeben, daß es besser wäre, sie fehlten oder wären anders, wie sie sind, so wird uns doch umgekehrt der Verfasser darin beipflichten, daß es nur zwei Mittel gibt, sie loszuwerden: das mittelalterliche Hepp, Hepp mit Schafott und Scheiterhaufen oder jene allmähliche Amalgamierung, die der stille Segen der Toleranz und Freiheit ist. Es erscheint uns als eine Pflicht des Schriftstellers [...] alle Empfindungen zu nähren, die jener Toleranz günstig sind, und *der Verfasser selbst wird kaum von sich behaupten können, daß er dieser Forderung nachgekommen sei*.<sup>37</sup>

Fontane's article, while alluding to his own attitude towards the Jews, also provides an insight for today's reader into how he understood the role of the Jewish characters within *Soll und Haben*. Not all Freytag's contemporaries will have been as intelligent and thoughtful readers as Fontane, but it can safely be assumed his conclusions were not unique. It is noticeable, firstly, that Fontane believes the novel reproduces Freytag's own views: he accepts the one-sided and intolerant portrayal of the Jews as evidence of Freytag's own aversion. Furthermore, while he believes that Freytag is seeking to change the Jews, essentially by eradicating them from German society – Fontane uses the phrase 'sie loszuwerden' – he sees a danger of Freytag promoting this change through violence, rather than 'allmähliche Amalgamierung', which is fostered by tolerance.

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37 Fontane, 'Gustav Freytag', p. 228, italics mine.

The main thrust of Fontane's review deals with the novel's idea and form. Regarding the latter, Fontane discusses its realism, the 'daguerreotypisch treue[r] Abschilderung des Lebens und seine[r] mannigfachsten Erscheinungen', comparing it very favourably with that of contemporary English novelists such as Dickens and Thackeray (216–7). 'Wir glauben nicht zuviel zu sagen,' says Fontane, 'wenn wir diese bedeutsame literarische Erscheinung die erste Blüte des modernen Realismus nennen' (215). The question now apparent is how this novel's supposed realism should be interpreted in the light of what is known about Freytag's desire to influence his readership and bring about change via his writing. Fontane knew nothing about the existence of the Litterarisch-politischer Verein or Freytag's involvement, but it is surely harder to accept that the text is a 'daguerreotypisch treue[r] Abschilderung', that 'all is true', when it is known that the author wrote with a conscious effort to inform, affect and change his readers' views. Today's readers must suspect that the depictions of *Soll und Haben*'s Jewish characters are skewed in order to fit Freytag's model and produce a certain effect. While we understand the artifice involved in constructing the realist novel, 'that purportedly plain artlessness that turns out, on rereading, to be a screen for a complex, inventive, self-conscious artistry', and may feel a scepticism towards nineteenth-century fictional strategies which derives from a belief in the greater sophistication of our understanding compared to the original readers', there is now more reason to doubt the truthfulness of this particular text.<sup>38</sup> Freytag's motivation for writing places a distorting screen between the text and the reader, who can no longer accept the novel as being completely straightforward and uncomplicated. A second such screen is Freytag's use of negative Jewish images and stereotypes, which again hinders the reader's acceptance of *Soll und Haben* as a completely realist text: such images are frequently influenced by prejudice, whether conscious or not.

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38 Furst, *All is True: The Claims and Strategies of Realist Fiction* (Durham N.C. & London: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 190.

At issue here is not the methods of realism as they apply to Freytag's work, but the notion of his responsibility for the negative Jewish characters portrayed in *Soll und Haben*. Three main strands can be detected in post-1945 discussion on this question. Firstly, the acceptance of the book as a realist text has led some critics to claim that Freytag's Jewish portrayals are entirely unproblematic, precisely because it is presumed that the book is based substantially on a reality experienced by Freytag. This type of defence against the charge of antisemitic bias is typical of articles published in the journal of the Gustav-Freytag-Gesellschaft, which, in common with the Raabe-Gesellschaft, has at times adopted a deferential and protective attitude at the expense of truly impartial criticism. In Freytag's case, the defensive stance was encouraged by his son, Gustav Willibald, the founder and first editor, and also by the society's belief that it existed primarily to spread Freytag's message rather than advance scholarship. A representative remark is the following, by Karl Fleischer:

Die Kenntnisse, die er [G.F.] in seiner schlesischen Heimat und deren Hauptstadt einst und in den Freundeskreisen von Dresden und Leipzig vom Judentum erworben, blieben ihm bis im hohen Alter der Schutz gegen Überheblichkeit und Haß.<sup>39</sup>

However, as late as 1980 the society was still using the concept of realism to protect Freytag. Helmut Schwitzgebel reported in the *Blätter* on Freytag's close friendship with the owner of a well-known import and export firm in Breslau and the insights into trade which he would have gained from the relationship, concluding:

So kommt es, daß die in *Soll und Haben* geschilderten Verhältnisse, soweit sie das Kaufmännische betreffen, den Breslauer Verhältnissen entsprechen. Dies ist von Wichtigkeit auch für die Kritik an Freytags Darstellung der jüdischen Händler. Gestalten wie Hirsch Ehrenthal, Veitel Itzig und Tinkles sind den örtlichen Verhältnissen nachgebildet. Es sind nicht Ausgeburten des Judenhasses oder Gestalten, die einer antisemitisch gefärbten literarischen

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39 Fleischer, 'Gustav Freytag und der Antisemitismus', *GFB* 9 (1963), 7–9 (p. 9).

Tradition entstammen, sondern Figuren aus einer selbst erlebten Umwelt, für die es in Breslau zahlreicher Vorbilder und Modelle gab.<sup>40</sup>

This particular line is contradicted by Freytag's own words on the characters of *Soll und Haben*:

Wenn es den Personen in *Soll und Haben* gelungen ist, als wahrhafte und wirksame Darstellungen von Menschennatur zu erscheinen, so kommt das gerade daher, weil sie sämtlich frei und behaglich erfunden sind, und weder der Kaufmann noch Fink, noch selbst Ehrental und Veitel haben jemals ein anderes Leben gehabt, als das in der Dichtung.<sup>41</sup>

While not denying that Freytag used his personal experiences in his work, this simplification of the problem should not be left unchallenged. As David Landes points out, while 'Freytag was no doubt accurate in some of his observations of the business behaviour of these Jewish visitors', the point is not whether Freytag was being true to life or not, but the 'transposition of the discussion to a black-and-white framework [...] consummated by Freytag in *Soll und Haben*'.<sup>42</sup> Maintaining that the novel contains factual details does not adequately tackle how those details are presented and how the text's construction argues for a certain interpretation. This matter of the novel's internal logic is the second approach used by critics to explain the negative role assigned to the Jews, whereby the negativity results from the juxtaposition of good German and bad Jew, and occurred against Freytag's own original intentions. Dieter Kafitz expounds this view. Whilst he comments on 'krasse Schwarzweißkontrastierung', 'die in groben Zügen skizzierte Parallelkontrastierung' and 'eine Aufspaltung in Gut und Böse', he concludes:

Freytags Absichten werden sozusagen von der Eigenlogik der Kontrastkonstellation widerlegt. *Soll und Haben* konnte zur Quelle antisemitischer

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40 Schwitzgebel, 'Gustav Freytags *Soll und Haben* in der Tradition des deutschen Kaufmannsromans', *GFB*, 41 (1980), 3–12 (p. 8).

41 Freytag, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 181–2.

42 Landes, 'The Jewish Merchant: Typology and Stereotypology in Germany', *LBIYB* 19 (1974), 11–23 (p. 18).

Argumentation werden, was zwar den liberalistischen Grundsätzen des Verfassers widerspricht, aber sich letztlich doch konsequent herleitet aus einem ständischen Dogmatismus Freytags, der die bürgerliche Weltsicht zum absoluten Maßstab menschlichen Seins erhebt.<sup>43</sup>

Kafitz's argument suggests that Freytag was not entirely in control of his text, that it acquired an inner life of its own, leading its author to produce something which ran counter to his liberalism without his full knowledge. The suggestion is that his *Bürger* values were of deeper significance to him than his liberalism, and that this was expressed in his writing by the first set of values subjugating the second, the construction of the text leading to a message which contradicted his real feelings regarding the Jews. Köhnke takes a similarly complex stance on this issue, likewise lessening Freytag's responsibility for his text by distinguishing sharply between book and author. He discusses how the *Volksbuch* had the effect on its readers which Freytag originally intended, a gradual but long-lasting influence, and concludes:

Er ist deshalb auch mitverantwortlich für alles, was Deutsche Juden angetan haben. – Aber wohl gemerkt: vor allem das *Werk Soll und Haben* – nicht so sehr der (auch selber von seinem Erfolg überraschte) Mann Gustav Freytag, der zwar – seiner Gesinnung nach – kein Antisemit war, als politischer Schriftsteller dennoch aus propagandistischem Kalkül an bereits damals geläufige antijüdische Ressentiments angeknüpft, sie bestärkt, geschürt und weiterverbreitet hat.<sup>44</sup>

Related to this type of defence is the third approach taken by critics which focuses on the role assigned to the Jews in the text. Like the previous argument, this shifts the blame for Freytag's damaged reputation away from the author, casting it back on the reader, who has failed to understand the text's message. According to Michael Schneider and Hans Otto Horsch, the reader should interpret the

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43 Kafitz, *Figurenkonstellation als Mittel der Wirklichkeitsverfassung* (Kronberg: Athenäum, 1978), pp. 69–71, 75.

44 Köhnke, 'Ein antisemitischer Autor wider Willen', p. 146.

Jews as metaphorical, not actual, figures. In this scheme, the downfall and death of Ehrenthal and Itzig represent the defeat of capitalism's negative excesses. Horch presents the Jews in *Soll und Haben* as representatives of 'mammonism', arguing that Freytag's use of them in the text was the same as that made by other, Jewish, authors:

Die jüdische Figur in ihrer besonderen Ausprägung steht hier für die bereits seit dem 16. Jahrhundert übliche und auch von Autoren wie Lessing, Börne, Heine und Marx aufgegriffene metaphorische Bedeutung des Adjektivs 'jüdisch' im Sinne unredlichen ökonomischen Verhaltens. Eine Metapher wird also refiguralisiert, die jüdische Figur agiert als Quasi-Allegorie.<sup>45</sup>

Schneider similarly interprets the Jews metaphorically, making the criticism which attaches to them part of Freytag's criticism of the era and its economic climate, not of the Jews *per se*:

*Soll und Haben* verschmilzt die Disparität konkreter Menschen und abstrakter Vorwürfe gegen die Zeit zu einer Einheit und läßt sonach die Menschen in *Soll und Haben* verkörpern. Pointiert formuliert: die semitischen Personen in *Soll und Haben* sind nicht empirische Juden, sondern metaphorische 'Juden'.<sup>46</sup>

Freytag can therefore be seen as guilty of an unfortunate error of judgement, but not of actual prejudice: Schneider talks of Freytag's tragedy in providing propaganda for antisemitism 'ganz gegen seine liberalen Absichten' (413). However, the stance taken by these two critics must be open to question. The remarks of an intelligent reader, Fontane, show that he understood the Jewish characters to represent Jews. Was it really more likely that Freytag's original readers should see the range of characters as metaphors for a certain type of capitalist exploitation and not Jews as a whole? The question raises

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45 Horch, 'Judenbilder in der realistischen Erzählliteratur: Jüdische Figuren bei Gustav Freytag, Fritz Reuter, Berthold Auerbach und Wilhelm Raabe', in *Juden und Judentum in der Literatur*, ed. by Strauss and Hoffmann (Munich: dtv, 1985), pp. 140–71 (p. 149).

46 Schneider, 'Apologie des Bürgers: Zur Problematik von Rassismus und Antisemitismus in Gustav Freytags Roman *Soll und Haben*', *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 25 (1981), 385–413 (p. 403).

the further issue of whether making Jews the representatives of this kind of 'jüdisch' behaviour was more or less likely to reinforce prejudice and stereotypes. If it is accepted that the answer must be 'more', then Schneider and Horch's argument cannot be used as evidence of a lack of prejudice on Freytag's part. Matthias Richter considers Horch's and Schneider's approaches, concluding:

Die Figurengruppen *personifizieren* nicht nur abstrakte Wirtschaftsprinzipien, sondern sie *repräsentieren* auch in stark typisierender Form historische Personengruppen, in denen Freytag das an den Romanfiguren gezeigte Verhalten durchschnittlich am ehesten an den Tag gelegt sah. [...] Aus der Annahme, die Figuren seien Typen, folgt ja keineswegs, Freytag hätte behaupten wollen, *alle* Adligen, *alle* Bürgerlichen und *alle* Juden verhielten sich so wie Rothsattel, Wohlfahrt [sic] oder Itzig. Aber *durchschnittlich*, alles in allem, waren es für ihn doch eher Adlige, Bürgerliche und Juden, die es taten.<sup>47</sup>

Fontane's 1855 review initially raised the issue of textual versus authorial responsibility by evaluating Freytag as an author who risked discouraging tolerance and the gradual assimilation of Jews because of the dissemination of anti-Jewish sentiments in his novel. Later critics have ignored this aspect, denied it, or accepted it to varying degrees. The three strands of argument discussed vary from admitting the Jewish characters are negative but asserting they are thereby true to life, to claiming that the Jews are only negative because of a failure in the text's construction which casts the non-Jewish characters in a better light, to denying that the Jews are to be understood as Jews at all. All three strands partially remove responsibility for the book from Freytag or attempt to place it on the reader. By examining this contentious text I aim to show how Freytag used his writing to criticise the Jews and promote change, and that this shifting of responsibility to the reader is, therefore, fundamentally unjustified.

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47 Richter, *Die Sprache jüdischer Figuren in der deutschen Literatur (1750–1933): Studien zu Form und Funktion* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1995), p. 195.

## The Critique of Jews and Judaism in ‘Soll und Haben’

Given the number of studies of this text, the purpose of this chapter is to consider Freytag’s writing within the context already given, rather than analyse it line by line.<sup>48</sup> Briefly, my argument is that Freytag’s approach to the ‘Jewish question’ falls into a historical tradition of liberal criticism of the Jews which sought their reform and regeneration; that he explicitly thought of literature as a means of broadcasting to a wide audience particular aims and values, especially those deemed typical of the superior educated middle class; and that this knowledge of his avowed didactic intent raises the question of Freytag’s responsibility for the images of Jews portrayed within his writing.

Freytag himself did not seem completely certain of his book’s main theme, as Peter Hubrich has clearly demonstrated by amassing various contradictory pronouncements by Freytag on the text.<sup>49</sup> The plot has at least four strands, being at different times the story of Anton Wohlfart’s *Lehrjahre*, the ruin and rescue of the Rothsattels, the romances of Anton and Sabine, Fink and Lenore von Rothsattel, and the downfall of Veitel Itzig and the Ehrenthals. Common to all four strands, however, is their promotion of certain national and class values. Only in this context can the four be united successfully and it is within the same context that the Jewish characters must be placed and their role interpreted.

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48 The following items were very useful in the preparation of this section, being informative or thought-provoking (inasmuch as I disagreed totally with the conclusion of Matoni’s article): Mosse, ‘The Image of the Jew in German Popular Culture’, *LBIYB* 2 (1957), 218–27; Steinecke, ‘Gustav Freytag: *Soll und Haben* (1855): Weltbild und Wirkung eines deutschen Bestsellers’, in *Romane und Erzählungen des bürgerlichen Realismus: Neue Interpretationen*, ed. by Denkler (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980), pp. 138–52, Matoni, ‘Bernhard Ehrenthal – ein “unnützes” Mitglied der Gesellschaft’, *GFB*, 47 (1989), 17–27.

49 Hubrich, *Gustav Freytags Deutsche Ideologie*, pp. 56–9.



The motto chosen by Freytag for the novel's title page shows how ostensible themes were subordinated to the values he wished to promote. The motto quoted the co-editor of *Die Grenzboten*, Julian Schmidt: 'Der Roman soll das deutsche Volk da suchen, wo es in seiner Tüchtigkeit zu finden ist, nämlich bei seiner Arbeit.' Having read the text, it can be seen that the motto only fits with qualifications. The two major themes are ostensibly 'das deutsche Volk' and 'Arbeit', but by no means does this signify the German people and work in the broad sense of *all* Germans and *all* types of work, or even of all working Germans. The development of both themes in the novel is restricted, very much in accordance with Freytag's thinking on class and nationality, showing how he favoured a particular type of German: Protestant, middle-class and a *kleindeutsch* supporter. Thus, Freytag could use Schmidt's motto to summarise his novel's action and theme, actually meaning by it that *Soll und Haben* is a novel dealing with a certain type of German and type of work which he idealised. This leads to the question of how these ideals are presented. There are two main methods by which Freytag both demonstrates his sympathies and attempts to gain those of his readers: firstly, the juxtaposition of characters; secondly, what can be termed 'graded criticism', i.e., a sliding scale of criticism which functions according to a set of values. The former affects the presentation of Jewish characters by putting them into a negative and inferior role compared to non-Jews, while the latter refines this very general attack by differentiating the criticism targeted at the Jews in proportion to their share of *Bürger* virtues and degree of assimilation.

Various critics have viewed juxtaposition in the novel as an accidental occurrence which is to blame for the negative way Jews are portrayed, but even those who do not believe it implies any anti-Jewish bias on Freytag's part accept that it is the foundation of the text's construction. By contrasting productive and unproductive, German and non-German, the novel makes very clear which are ideal and preferred. The Jews were unfortunate to have the negative role allocated to them in both aspects: together with the aristocracy they form the unproductive element, contrasted with the productive

middle-class, and their national loyalty (like that of the Poles) is suspect. Given Freytag's class-consciousness – the lower classes being unimportant unless they posed a threat to the established order – the working class is a marginal element in the text. The *Bürger* alone were properly German and productive; the aristocracy, while not having the sin of an unacceptable background held against them, shared with the Jews and Poles the crime of not contributing properly to their society because of intrinsic faults.

The contrastive nature of the story-telling affects the book from start to finish and operates on many levels. The opposition of hero and antihero is only the most obvious instance of this method, developed so thoroughly that every person associated with Anton, and every personality trait of his, matches an equal and opposite in Veitel. The many similarities in their background and progress through life highlight the huge divergence in morals and behaviour between them. Both are the sons of poor but honest parents from the same small town, leave home on the same day to work as lowly clerks in the same city and rise through the business to become important members of their respective firms, engaged to marry their employer's sister in the one case, daughter in the other. Both are guided by the advice of an older mentor, both are intricately connected with the financial problems of the Freiherr von Rothsattel.

The descriptions of Anton and Veitel as children and young men indicate their difference of character and suggest their further development. Anton is a model child, arousing admiration in his mother's friends, 'ein Stolz seiner Familie'.<sup>50</sup> Veitel, however, already started demonstrating his dishonesty at school, copying Anton's homework and stealing pens, in order to sell them on to better-off pupils (I, 21). And yet Freytag also mentions that Veitel's family background was honest; his mother, 'ein ehrliches Weib', warns him as he leaves home: 'Es ist eine arge Welt, verdiene dir ehrlich dein Brod, Veitel!' (I, 127). His upbringing to the age of eighteen does not

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50 Freytag, *Gesammelte Werke*, IV & V: *Soll und Haben* I, 6–7 (hereafter given as *Soll und Haben* I or II).

indicate that his later unscrupulousness in business is a foregone conclusion. It is only when Veitel joins the firm of Hirsch Ehrenthal that his potential for wrongdoing really becomes apparent.

The two family firms which employ Anton and Veitel occupy opposite ends of the spectrum of business practice. Schröters, where Anton works, is a solid, long-established firm of unimpeachable reputation:

Dies alte weit bekannte Binnengeschäft [hatte] ein stolzes, ja fürstliches Ansehen, und, was mehr werth ist, es war ganz gemacht, bei seinen Theilhabern feste Gesinnung und ein sicheres Selbstgefühl zu schaffen. (I, 58)

Traugott Schröter, whose name firmly places him within a Protestant environment, rules his business, household and employees in patriarchal style, expecting and receiving their loyalty and dedication to hard work. On his first day, Anton is warned: 'Ihr Leben wird Ihnen [...] mit der Zeit einförmig erscheinen, es ist eine strenge Regelmäßigkeit in unserm Hause, Sie haben viele Arbeit und wenig Zerstreung zu erwarten' (I, 65). Anton is prepared for this by his *Bürger* upbringing, and while the sameness of his days tires him, 'es machte ihn nicht unglücklich; denn durch seine Eltern war er an Ordnung und regelmäßigen Fleiß gewöhnt, und diese beiden Tugenden halfen ihm über manche langweilige Stunde hinweg' (I, 68). In effect, the firm is a summation of all the essential *Bürger* virtues; hard work, sobriety, a sense of honour and duty. The female members of Schröter's family, his sister Sabine and an elderly aunt, embody the same virtues in more domestic fashion, industriously running the household, preoccupied by kitchen and linen cupboard. On his first visit to the dining room in the Schröters' living quarters, where employer and clerks eat together, Anton notes 'den ruhigen und soliden Glanz der Einrichtung' (I, 64). Lunch is served by a servant of faultless appearance and behaviour.

This is most definitely not the case at Ehrenthals. On arriving in the city, Veitel stands outside his employer's home, the exterior of

which is meant to indicate that appearances are deceptive, that there is something rotten at the heart of the firm and family:

Im ersten Stockwerk glänzten die weißen Rahmen, welche große Spiegelscheiben einfaßten, unter dem Dach waren die Fenster blind, schmutzig, hier und da eine Scheibe zerschlagen. Es war kein guter Charakter in dem Hause, wie eine alte Zigeunerin sah es aus, die über ihr bettelhaftes Costüm ein neues buntes Tuch geworfen hat. (I, 46)

This impression is confirmed by further descriptions: Freytag specifically mentions the ‘unsaubere Treppe’ and the ‘unsaubern Fußboden’ (I, 47; 244). The Ehrenthals’ employees, other than Veitel, are a ‘geputzte[s] Dienstmädchen’ and a ‘struppige Köchin’, and none has the sense of deference to their employer and commitment to their work which is displayed at Schröters (I, 46; 271). The Jewish family lacks entirely the domestic harmony so central to the exemplary *Bürger* existence at the Christian firm.

Most important is the contrast between the firms’ type of business. At Schröters it is trade, pure and simple, the import of goods from all over the world and their resale to German customers. The narrator admits that even for the time when the story commences, which, from the historical details, can be judged to be 1846, this is old-fashioned: ‘Das Geschäft war ein Waarengeschäft, wie sie jetzt immer seltener werden, jetzt, wo Eisenbahnen und Telegraphen See und Inland verbinden’ (I, 68). That the firm should stick to old methods whereby the company purchases goods at its own risk is seen as a virtue: this type of trade is noble and dignified, even inspirational. This at least is Anton’s impression. For him there is a sense of poetry involved in a trade in exotic goods produced by different nationalities from far-flung countries:

Die Stunde, in welcher Anton zuerst in das Magazin des Hauses trat und hundert verschiedene Stoffe und merkwürdige Bildungen [...] kennen lernte, wurde für seinen empfänglichen Sinn die Quelle einer eigenthümlichen Poesie, die wenigstens eben so viel werth war, als manche andere poetische Empfindung. (I, 68)

Ehrenthal's trade has none of these qualities. His business involves what the Freiherr disparagingly terms 'Geldgeschäfte', loans, dealing in shares and mortgages, making one-off transactions in goods which come his way (I, 33). This in itself can hardly be described as immoral or illegal, but compared to the methodical, straightforward business carried out at Schröters, with its poetic gloss, it appears shoddy and underhand, an abstract trade in pieces of paper rather than solid, useful items. As if to reinforce the point that Ehrenthal's business is irredeemably bad, his methods of working are repeatedly shown to be dubious at best, downright corrupt and fraudulent at worst. He deliberately does not inform the Freiherr that the business deal he recommends as a means to a quick profit involves a bankrupt desperate to escape from his creditors (I, 80). Later he lies about the condition of the Rosmin estate, convincing the Freiherr he is getting good value when he is actually being charged more than the seller's asking-price, enabling Ehrenthal to pocket a difference amounting to some 4,000 thaler (I, 255).

If this were not bad enough, it soon becomes obvious that Ehrenthal has a long-term strategy to destroy the Freiherr's financial security and take control of his estate and property. While he has been the Freiherr's adviser in matters of trade for many years with perfect probity, his visit to the Rothsattel estate in chapter 3 comes at a time when the Freiherr is already considering how to secure the family wealth for the long term. Although Ehrenthal has ostensibly come to discuss the sale of a horse, the trader cleverly steers the conversation to other financial matters, suggesting that the Freiherr should invest in bonds or build a factory on his land. The suggestions may seem innocent enough, but the section concludes:

Es war Schade, daß der Freiherr nicht das Gesicht des Geschäftsmannes sah, als dieser in seinen Wagen stieg und mechanisch die Bourbonrose ins Knopfloch steckte, welche ihm Lenore beim Abschiede mit schalkhafter Artigkeit überreicht hatte. Auch Herr Ehrenthal machte ein lustiges Gesicht, aber nicht aus Freude über die volle Rose. [...] 'Ein schönes Gut,' sagte dann Herr Ehrenthal in tiefem Nachdenken. (I, 34–5)

This is only the start of an increasingly complex strategy whereby Ehrenthal's advice, apparently given in good faith, leads the Freiherr deeper into debt. His plans are foiled by Anton, who becomes the family's business manager after the Freiherr's failed suicide attempt, and also by Veitel, who has long nurtured a secret desire to own the Rothsattel estate. Ehrenthal's fraudulent dealings, while taking up the larger part of the plot, are by no means the only instance of Jewish dishonesty in the book. Veitel, with his own agenda, goes so far as to arrange the theft of the Freiherr's mortgage documents. Other dishonest Jewish characters include Pinkus, owner of the house where Veitel lodges and receiver of stolen goods; Löwenthal, an associate of Ehrenthal's who assists him in the fraudulent deal with the Rosmin estate; Schmeie Tinkeles, who attempts to swindle Schröters out of a consignment of goods during the unrest in Poland; and Mausche Fischel, seller of those goods, who aims to sell them on to a second buyer, while having already received payment from Schröters. However, not only are the Jews individually corrupt and deceitful, they also collude on many occasions to the disadvantage of Christians. Ehrenthal and Veitel; Ehrenthal and Löwenthal; Ehrenthal and Pinkus; Tinkeles and Fischel: at different times, these characters operate together with some sort of dishonest goal in mind. Beyond their separate instances of illegal behaviour, the Jews pose a collective danger. The continual juxtaposition between Anton and Veitel, and thereby between the families and firms with which they are associated, creates and reinforces the image of the dishonest Jew pitted against the honest and unsuspecting Christian. On every point of contrast, family life, business practice, morals and behaviour the Jews come a poor second to the Christian characters.

While *Soll und Haben* clearly ordains a negative and inferior role for the Jews, establishing beyond doubt that the Jews are in need of reform, the second, parallel strand to Freytag's criticism is more subtle than the straightforward opposition of good German and bad Jew, instead contrasting one Jew against another to show how some are closer to the ideal than others. The Jews in *Soll und Haben* provide

a spectrum of the types of Jews who would have been known, in fiction and in reality, to German readers of the nineteenth century, from the itinerant trader to the intellectual academic. The characters display different amounts of Jewishness and Germanness in their natures, 'Jewish', in this context, meaning the attributes of the traditional orthodox *Ostjude*. Even their names reflect this differentiation in the stages of emancipation and integration. It should be no surprise to note that the more obviously Jewish the character, the less integrated into German society; the more negative the role and the less sympathetic the treatment.

The lowest of the low is Schmeie Tinkeles from Brody in Galicia, the easternmost part of Austria–Hungary. The archetypal *Ostjude*, an excitable, utterly untrustworthy itinerant trader, he wears the typical black caftan and side locks, and speaks German so appalling that it is not recreated in the text. Instead, Freytag uses the conventional device of altered syntax, i.e. incorrect placement of verbs and participles, to represent the German spoken by Jews, although it is noticeable that no distinct non-Jewish group, such as Schröters' warehousemen, whose speech the reader might expect to be depicted as 'lower class' or strongly regional, is excluded from the mainstream by this method. As a group, the Polish Jews with whom Schröters do business are less than ideal trade associates: 'Mit ihnen war der Verkehr am wenigsten geschäftsmäßig, ihr Kommen erregte jedesmal unter den jungen Leuten des Comtoirs stille Heiterkeit' (I, 59). This description certainly holds true for Tinkeles's dealings with the firm. Anton first meets him when he attempts to sell wool to Fritz von Fink, the dashing aristocrat who is gaining business experience with Schröters. In a scene where amusement verges on ridicule, Tinkeles goes in and out of the office, lowering his asking price each time he creeps back in while Fink treats him with the clinical detachment of a scientist observing a laboratory animal: "'39", sagt Fink, und sieht der aufgeregten Mimik des Händlers ungefähr mit demselben Interesse zu, mit dem ein Physiker die galvanischen Zuckungen eines Frosches betrachtet' (I, 62). Wagner, in his essay 'Das Judenthum in der Musik', published anonymously in 1850 and

then reissued under his name in 1869, would describe the Jewish manner of speaking with distaste as ‘ein zischender, schrillender, summsender und murksender Lautausdruck’.<sup>51</sup> In the same year, Freytag would argue against Wagner’s position, but in the scene between Schmeie Tinkeles and Fink, his representation of Tinkeles’s speech is no more positive.<sup>52</sup> Tinkeles ‘ruft krächzend [...], schreit [...], geräth außer sich [...], verschwört sich mit lautem Geschrei [...] ruft’ (I, 61–2). Mark Gelber defines Freytag’s written depiction of spoken Jewish German as follows: ‘Zugleich komisch und kritisch, bewirkt es zusammen mit anderen ästhetischen Mitteln die gewünschte Reaktion dadurch, daß die gesellschaftliche Distanz zwischen Juden und Nicht-Juden betont wird.’<sup>53</sup> Such a definition could hardly be more accurate than in this scene which reinforces that difference by depicting the German as calm, dominating, restrained, and the Jew as his complete opposite and inferior. That the degraded language is an indicator of degraded morals is suggested by the fact that when Tinkeles behaves in a laudable fashion, giving Anton useful information about the Rothsattels’ financial difficulties, his speech, and appearance, are described in a more positive manner: ‘Der Jude [sprach] mit einem eindringlichen Ernst, welcher seine Figur größer machte und sogar seine Sprache weniger mißtönend’ (I, 449).

Anton is securing the firm’s business in Poland after the uprising when Tinkeles admits his involvement in the plan to steal a consignment of goods and return them to their original seller, Mausche Fischel:

Der Mausche hatte doch mit Ihnen gehandelt seit zehn Jahren, und immer ehrlich, und Sie haben verdient ein gutes Stück Geld an ihm; und da hat er

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51 Wagner, *Das Judenthum in der Musik* (Leipzig: Weber, 1869), p. 15.

52 Freytag, ‘Der Streit über das Judenthum in der Musik’, in *Vermischte Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1848 bis 1894*, ed. by Elster (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903), pp. 321–6.

53 Gelber, ‘Das Judendeutsch in der deutschen Literatur: Einige Beispiele von den frühesten Lexika bis Gustav Freytag und Thomas Mann’, in *Juden in der deutschen Literatur*, ed. by Moses and Schöne (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 162–76 (p. 165).



gemeint, daß jetzt gekommen wäre die Zeit, wo er anfangen könnte ein großes Geschäft und mit Ihnen seine Abrechnung machen. (I, 443)

This incident demonstrates most obviously the difference the book seeks to portray between German and Jewish business practice. While Anton is horrified, Tinkeles and Fischel appear completely oblivious to the dishonesty involved. It is not so much the actual fraud to which the reader's attention is drawn, but the Jews' matter-of-fact approach to it and their shameless reaction to being discovered. The malefactors view it as their right to defraud the firm, as repayment for so many years of honest behaviour where they have not made the profits they could have done by acting dishonestly. Tinkeles feels Anton's anger is quite unjustified:

Warum sagen Sie mir, daß ich ein schlechte Mensch bin? Sie haben mich gekannt als ehrlichen Mann seit Jahren, wie können Sie sagen, daß ich schlecht bin, weil ich habe einmal machen wollen ein Geschäft, und habe dabei Unglück gehabt und hab's nicht gemacht? (I, 445)

Despite the blatant wrongdoing of this character, the reader gains the impression that Tinkeles does not know any better. Both Anton and Fink deal with him as with a misbehaving schoolboy, and there is something childish about Tinkeles's behaviour which makes him an easy target for ridicule.

On the next rung of the ladder of Jewish integration is Löbel Pinkus, Veitel's landlord. A large, greasy-looking individual, Pinkus is ostensibly the owner of a brandy shop and lodging house, although neighbours have often wondered how Pinkus and his wife can afford such a comfortable lifestyle. But Pinkus, who makes loans 'gegen ungewöhnliche Procente', also knows how to make money from many different sources: 'In Wahrheit aber war Herr Pinkus eine von den glücklichen Naturen, welche Honig aus allen Blumen zu saugen wissen, auch aus übelriechenden' (I, 53). Pinkus's honey, it turns out, comes from storing stolen goods on his premises and from providing lodgings for men on the wrong side of the authorities, those who are lacking papers or are on the run.

Pinkus is, in effect, Ehrenthal on a smaller scale. Ehrenthal came from lowly beginnings but gives the impression of being a solidly respectable *Bürger* and businessman. He has his own business and, like Schröters, a 'Comtoir', but both the extent and type of business are shabby in comparison. Like Schmeie Tinkes, there can be something vaguely ridiculous about the character of Hirsch Ehrenthal, as here, when he is first introduced: 'Er trug Gamaschen an den Füßen, eine diamantene Busennadel auf dem Hemd, und schritt mit großen Bücklingen und tiefen Bewegungen des Hutes durch die Allee dem Baron entgegen' (I, 30). The elegance suggested by the spats and the diamond contrasts strangely with the exaggerated servility, but Ehrenthal's bowing and scraping is, along with elaborate flattery, an important weapon used to manipulate the Freiherr. When it is too late for the Freiherr to back out of the arrangements made by Ehrenthal for financing a factory on the nobleman's land, the trader stops the obsequiousness and reveals his true colours:

Sein gebeugter Hals war steif, sein unterwürfiges Lächeln hatte sich in einen trockenen Gruß verwandelt, er schritt jetzt mit prüfendem Blick durch den Wirthschaftshof, und statt der feurigen Lobrede kam mancher Tadel aus seinem Munde. Der demüthige Agent war zum anspruchsvollen Gläubiger geworden. (I, 467)

Ehrenthal's social as well as criminal ambitions place him higher up the ladder than Pinkus. His crimes are closely linked to his social climbing, as they stem from his desire to secure his family's, and especially his son's, long-term future by putting them on a par with the aristocracy in property and lifestyle. As he explains to his son Bernhard:

Was ich gethan habe, für wen habe ich's gethan? Nicht für mich und meine alten Tage. Ich habe dabei gedacht jeden Tag an dich, mein Sohn, der du bist ein anderer Mann als dein Vater. Ich werde haben den Kummer, und du sollst gehen aus dem Schloß in den Garten und wieder zurück in das Schloß, und wenn du gehst, soll der Amtmann abziehen seine Mütze, und die Knechte im Hofe abziehen ihre Hüte, und sie sollen zu sich sagen: das ist der junge Herr Ehrenthal, welcher ist unser Herr, der da geht. (I, 516–17)

In his concern, Ehrenthal is no different to the Freiherr, who also seeks to do the best for his children by increasing the family's income, but Ehrenthal's methods place him in the role of aggressor, with the Freiherr as victim. In the end, however, Ehrenthal falls prey to Veitel's machinations and collapses mentally: 'Er war ein Bild des kläglichen Verfalles, wo der Geist dem Körper noch vorläuft auf dem Wege zur zweiten Wiege' (II, 77). Yet this is due more to Bernhard's death and the theft of his valuable mortgage certificate than any attack of conscience. In his final scene Ehrenthal is a pathetic figure, collapsed in his wheelchair, an embarrassment to his family, but the reader is not encouraged to feel pity for him. The narrator closes the last section dealing with the family with a reminder, phrased in 'Jewish' syntax, that Ehrenthal's life-long endeavour to secure his family's wealth by whatever means possible was unjustifiable and ultimately doomed:

Das Geld aber, welches der alte Ehrenthal durch Wucher und Schlaueit mit tausend Sorgen für seine Kinder zusammengebracht hat, das wird wieder rollen aus einer Hand in die andere, es wird dienen den Guten und Bösen und wird dahinfließen in den mächtigen Strom der Capitalien. (II, 383)

Ehrenthal's nemesis, Veitel Itzig, is the only Jew depicted whose character substantially develops during the course of the story. Veitel's physical changes are a reflection of his change of status from the start of the novel, when he is employed by Ehrenthal. At this stage he is not even a clerk, being more of a messenger and errand-boy. The description of his appearance highlights the dubious nature of this character: 'Junker Itzig war keine auffallend schöne Erscheinung; hager, bleich, mit röthlichem krausem Haar, in einer alten Jacke und defecten Beinkleidern sah er so aus, daß er einem Gensdarmen [sic] ungleich interessanter sein mußte als andern Reisenden' (I, 20). Later, after numerous deals, Veitel accumulates enough capital to set himself up in business independently. The reader is told that the new firm:

auch in Sachen der Toilette und Bildung anständiger war, als das in vielen Dingen gewöhnliche Geschäft des Ehrenthal. [...] Itzig selbst hatte sich auffallend verändert, er war an trüben Tagen bei dem zweifelhaften Lichte, welches aus dem Hofraume in die Stuben gelangte, von Weitem betrachtet nur noch wenig von einem eleganten Herrn verschieden. (II, 69)

In both instances the ridicule attached to Schmeie Tinkles and Ehrenthal is again obvious: firstly in the ironic use of the honorific 'Junker' to describe the dubious character, secondly in the list of qualifications necessary for Veitel to seem *almost* elegant and presentable.

While starting lower down the scale of social integration than Ehrenthal, Veitel is at least level with him by the novel's closing phases, apparently with a prosperous future ahead. But despite refinements in his appearance and in that of his business, Veitel as a Jew is not truly integrated into society at large. An episode with Eugen, the Freiherr's son, illustrates that Christians are his victims rather than his equals and he still earns his living from predatory moneylending in what can be seen as the traditional Jewish way (II, 73–5). Morally Veitel develops more than the other characters, although in his case degeneration is the apposite term. From his petty crimes at school, Veitel slides easily into bigger offences. Ehrenthal soon recognises that his apprentice has learnt well and has the potential to achieve great things: 'Herr Ehrenthal starrte immer noch verwundert in das Gesicht seines Buchhalters, es dämmerte ihm die Ansicht, daß sein Gehülfe mehr kaltes Blut und Entschlossenheit haben könnte, als er selbst' (I, 252). By the moment of Veitel's triumph, the successful theft of the Freiherr's mortgage documents from Ehrenthal's office, he has taken on an altogether more sinister aspect, his effect on the terminally-ill Bernhard indicating his evil and predatory nature:

Der Kranke warf sein Haupt zur Seite und starrte auf den Mann, wie der ermattete Vogel auf die Schlange. Es war das Gesicht eines Teufels, in das er blickte, rothes Haar stand borstig in die Höhe, Höllenangst und Bosheit saß in den häßlichen Zügen. (I, 541)

However, Veitel's fate proves that his capacity for evil is not perhaps as great as he or others thought. Following the manslaughter of his mentor, Hippus, Veitel discovers that he does indeed possess a conscience, one which tortures him with incessant images of the old man he killed. Veitel dies ignominiously, drowning as he attempts to flee from the authorities who have discovered his involvement in Hippus's death and other nefarious schemes. At the end of his life, Veitel, like Ehrenthal, is confronted with the knowledge that his plan to acquire the Freiherr's land and property, along with the social standing he would also gain, has come to nothing: 'Er weiß, daß er ausgeschieden ist aus der Gesellschaft der Menschen, daß Alles leer und verächtlich ist, was er angreift' (II, 351–2).

The criticism present in the depictions of the male Jewish characters considered so far has been directed at their immoral and unethical behaviour, highlighting their unscrupulousness and dishonesty. When it comes to the main female Jewish characters, Madame Ehrenthal and her daughter Rosalie, their social behaviour is criticised instead. The obvious note of ridicule in the descriptions of Tinkes, Ehrenthal and Itzig becomes full-scale derision as the narrator teases mother and daughter mercilessly for their pretensions and *nouveau riche* attitudes, portraying their belief in the truly *bürgerlich* nature of their existence as mere delusion. When describing both, the narrator considerably lessens the good impression their appearances would otherwise have made with judicious extra details. Madame Ehrenthal may be a 'sehr stattliche Dame', but that she is often assured of this by young aristocrats who have come to borrow money from her husband reduces the credibility of the statement in the reader's eyes. Likewise Rosalie's flattering description as 'eine Schönheit, eine große, edle Gestalt mit glänzenden Augen, dem reinsten Teint', is undermined by the subsequent comment about her nose, 'nur sehr wenig gebogen' (I, 51). She may be beautiful, but the reader is not allowed to forget her Jewishness while admiring her. The narrator's irony can be biting, as in this passage where Madame Ehrenthal (always 'Madame', never 'Frau', yet another indication of

her social pretensions) considers Veitel's request to eat with the family:

Madame Ehrenthal hatte noch viel mehr Welt und Bildung als er [Ehrenthal] selbst, und war ihm in allen Dingen, welche vornehmes Wesen betrafen, eine große Autorität. Sie war die Tochter eines großen Schnittwaarengeschäftes aus der Residenz und hatte Geschmack für das Neueste und einen sehr energischen Willen in Theetrinken, Stutzuhen, Möbelstoffen und anderen Eigenschaften, durch welche sich ein gebildeter Mensch von einem ungebildeten unterscheidet. [...] 'Wenn der junge Mann sich bilden will in unserer Familie, so kann er keinen besseren Ort finden'. (I, 136)

The implication of this passage is obvious: Madame Ehrenthal's idea of 'vornehmes Wesen' and of what constitutes an educated person is actually woefully inadequate.

The narrator's mocking criticism is repeated in the attitudes of Fritz von Fink and the Freiherr when they meet the Ehrenthal family. During Fink's visit much is made of the contrast between the family's reaction to their aristocratic visitor and of his behaviour towards them. Fink's presence in the house, as might be expected, is the cause for great uproar, with the entire family frantically preparing for their honoured guest. Fink's words to Anton as they walk to the house show a rather different attitude to his hosts: 'Der Mensch muß Opfer bringen. [...] Aber das schönste Mädchen der Stadt ist schon eine Entsagung werth. Ich habe sie neulich im Concert gesehen, ein prachtvoller Leib' (I, 284). For him the visit is a nuisance, only made worthwhile by the chance of again observing Rosalie, who is reduced to the purely physical, as if she were a thoroughbred horse. Fink annoys Anton with snide remarks, as for example when Madame Ehrenthal puts in an appearance. The biblical allusion to an episode of sexual jealousy and seduction is not at all flattering: 'Punkt neun Uhr öffnete sich die Thür des Nebenzimmers, und Frau Sidonie überschritt majestätisch die Schwelle. "Bathsheba tritt ein zu König David," sagte Fink leise zu Anton' (I, 285).<sup>54</sup> His conversation in the family circle entrances the Ehrenthals, but Anton (and the reader) are

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54 The reference is to I Kings 1.

well aware that Fink is having his fun at their expense. Fink flatters the women outrageously, comparing a princess of his acquaintance unfavourably with Rosalie and an expensive piece of jewellery he has seen in a museum with a brooch worn by Madame Ehrenthal. He plays up to the mother's and daughter's social ambition: since they are excluded by their religion from the high society to which they aspire, Fink's words are music to their ears. This passage derides their ignorance for thinking they are fit to be part of the circle, rather than criticising gentile society for excluding the Jews, the narrator making an ironic jibe at their pretension to be 'Leute von Bildung':

Er erzählte kleine Geschichten aus der besten Gesellschaft, in denen er mit Humor die Schwächen derselben karrierte. Er entzückte dadurch die Frauen, die mit Eifersucht auf die Kreise hinsahen, die sich gegen Leute von Bildung so sehr abschlossen. (I, 286)

The Freiherr is similarly mocking about his visit to the Ehrenthals, and looks forward to amusing his wife and daughter with the details. Madame Ehrenthal may consider herself to be an expert in matters of taste, but the description of the drawing-room seen through the Freiherr's eyes indicates again that while she has copied the trappings of middle-class living, she has missed the mark:

Der Freiherr [...] wurde in das distinguirte Putzzimmer des Hauses geführt und sah mit innerer Heiterkeit über die auffallenden Farben der bunten Vorhänge, den rothen Plüsch des Sophas, den unsaubern Fußboden und die zahlreichen schlechten Oelbilder an den Wänden, dicke Farbenmassen, welche wahrscheinlich auf dem Trödel gekauft waren. [...] Der gute Herr freute sich schon darauf, wie er auf den Abend beim Theetisch der Baronin und seiner Lenore dies wunderliche Gemisch von Luxus und Unbehülflichkeit schildern würde. (I, 244–5)

The criticisms are interesting, as it is noticeable that Madame Ehrenthal and Rosalie are much more integrated into the *Bürgertum* than the male Jewish characters. More refined in their behaviour, they are actively interested in culture, attending the theatre and concerts. Rosalie is also an excellent pianist. Both firmly believe in their

own superiority in education, culture and social graces. However, the narrator's own comments and those expressed through Fink and the Freiherr combine to form a relentless stream of criticism. The use of irony, the amused distance and the lack of respect are present in the attitudes of all three. That the reader is clearly directed by the narrator to laugh at both women and view them as pretentious and absurd and their efforts as pathetic is another means of differentiating them from the real *Bürgertum*, as embodied by the Schröters, who are serious rather than ridiculous. But why such mockery when it would be reasonable instead to expect them to be praised for their efforts to assimilate entirely with German society and adopt German customs and culture? The answer can be found in the way in which they interact with German culture and the specific culture of the *Bürgertum*. While they seem to be cultured, actually, the narrator is saying, they are not. Madame Ehrenthal's choice of decor and paintings and Rosalie's piano playing are for show purposes, to indicate that they belong in a certain social class. But Madame Ehrenthal only demonstrates her lack of taste and Rosalie shows no real love of music: her playing comes from an ostentatious desire to impress, and the narrator describes her practising a difficult piece, 'welches bestimmt war bei dem nächsten Soirée zu wirken' (I, 279). To follow the argument's logic, the text seems to suggest that Madame Ehrenthal has created a kind of *Jewish* middle-class existence, one which copies the German *Bürgertum* but misses out some important elements by not understanding it fully and which therefore does not merge seamlessly with it. She and Rosalie do not engage with German culture naturally and unthinkingly, and therefore their behaviour is not genuine. This parallel existence, mocked by Freytag, is precisely the Jewish subculture highlighted by David Sorkin in *The Transformation of German Jewry*.<sup>55</sup>

There is a world of difference between Tinkeles, the most obviously Jewish of all the characters, and Bernhard, at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of Jewish behaviour, morals and

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55 See above p. 24.



assimilation. Unlike his father, he is entirely honest and honourable; unlike his mother and sister, he is utterly unworldly; unlike Veitel and Pinkus, he is not physically objectionable. His appearance is pleasing: 'Es waren feine Züge und ein zarter Körper, kastanienbraunes krauses Haar und zwei graue Augen von freundlichem Ausdruck' (I, 271). As if to emphasise Bernhard's acceptability compared to the other male Jews, for whom dishonest activities are the norm, he plays no part in, indeed has no interest in, his father's business. Bernhard is what used to be termed a philologist, with interests ranging from Native American languages to Arabic and Persian poetry. The aim of his research is impressively profound and learned: 'Er [Bernhard] sagte, daß die Kenntniß der Sprachen für die Wissenschaft die beste Hilfe sei, um das Höchste zu verstehen, was der Mensch überhaupt begreifen könne, die Seelen der Völker' (I, 282). Though innocent, Bernhard suspects that his father is not always entirely scrupulous. He is appalled at the extent of his father's involvement in the Freiherr's downfall and even more so when he finds out that Ehrenthal was acting out of a misguided desire to provide for his son:

'Du verdirbst deinen Sohn,' rief Bernhard in auflodernder Leidenschaft. 'Sieh zu, für wen du geschachert und gelogen hast; aber so wahr es einen Himmel über uns gibt, du wirst Niemandem sagen, daß es geschehen ist für deinen unglücklichen Sohn'. (I, 517)

Bernhard's horror of his father's dealings with the Freiherr is also instrumental in rescuing the nobleman, as Ehrenthal, unable to bear his son's bitter disapproval and rejection, agrees to do what he can to secure the Rothsattels' financial future.

Bernhard is also distanced from his family by his own consciousness of their failings and weaknesses and the vast difference in attitude between them. When he is introduced into the novel, the narrator asks: 'Wie aber kam der Sohn in diese Familie?', something Bernhard, with his acute sense of dislocation from his family, asks himself (I, 51). One particular episode in the Ehrenthal home indicates the deep shame he feels. Bernhard has just met Anton and is greatly struck by Anton's defence of business as honourable. Later,

Bernhard goes into the living room and speaks warmly of his new acquaintance. His family's reaction is telling: as with Fink, their desperate desire to impress and to be approved and accepted reflects badly on them. His father wants to invite Anton to Sunday dinner and overwhelm him with lavish hospitality, his mother thinks of having the silverware cleaned, Rosalie wonders which dress to wear and considers 'durch welche Seite ihrer Bildung sie auf den Fremden Eindruck machen wolle' (I, 279). Then comes a series of rhetorical questions, reflecting Bernhard's despairing reaction to his family's behaviour:

Wie kam es doch, daß Bernhard seiner Familie nicht den Inhalt des Gesprächs mittheilte, welches ihm den neuen Bekannten so lieb gemacht hatte? Wie kam es doch, daß er kurz darauf wieder in tiefes Schweigen verfiel und in sein Arbeitszimmer zurückging? daß er dort seinen Kopf über eine alte Handschrift lehnte und lange auf die krausen Züge hinstarrte? [...] Wie kam es doch, daß der junge Mann, auf den die Mutter so gern stolz sein wollte und den der Vater so sehr verehrte, allein in seiner Stube saß und die bittersten Thränen vergoß, die ein guter Mensch weinen kann? (I, 279)

Despite his fairly modest role in the novel, Bernhard is important to this discussion of Freytag's responsibility for his text and his use of it as a means to promote change. Because of his rejection of his father's business, his lack of those attributes deemed Jewish which make his family laughable and his own undeniable positive characteristics, he is often termed the 'good Jew' by critics and seen to counteract the unfavourable impression left by the other Jewish characters. Citing Bernhard and a very minor character, a Jewish innkeeper in Poland, Michael Schneider states that the positive Jews have a role which can 'sehr wohl die ansonsten durchgängig gezeichnete jüdische Negativität ausgleichen'.<sup>56</sup> Freytag may or may not have deliberately included Bernhard as a gesture of fairness – Ernest Bramsted suggests that Freytag used Bernhard to protect himself from any accusations of antisemitism and that the scholar was 'a concession to the free-thinking minority of his readers' – but this

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56 Schneider, 'Apologie des Bürgers', p. 389.

notwithstanding, the concept of Bernhard, the good Jew, does not stand up to close scrutiny.<sup>57</sup>

Firstly, although undoubtedly morally good enough to oppose Veitel's evil nature, Bernhard is not sufficiently strong to counteract alone the image of dishonourable and exploitative Jews created by Ehrenthal, Veitel, Löwenberg, Pinkus, Fischel and Tinkeles together. His death at the end of Part I considerably lessens his impact, and the positive Jewish characters in Part II are so very minor that they form no substitute. Secondly, his good qualities are not such as to create the impression of a dynamic individual in the manner of the *Bürger* hero, Anton. While always portrayed sympathetically as a gentle, kindly young man, Bernhard's weakness is blatantly apparent in contrast to any of the other younger characters, a difference made explicit by the narrator. When Bernhard first meets Fink, the reader is told:

Kein größerer Gegensatz war möglich, als ihr Wesen. Die magere durchsichtige Hand Bernhards und der kräftige Fleischtou in den Muskeln Finks, die gedrückte Haltung des Einen, die elastische Kraft des Andern, dort ein faltiges Gesicht mit träumerischen Augen, hier stolze Züge mit einem Blick, der dem eines Adlers glich. (I, 281)

Similarly, when Bernhard meets Lenore he takes the inferior role. Bernhard fails to rescue a child drowning in a lake and the effect of the immersion on this physically weak character is his illness and eventual death, whereas Lenore dives in and saves the girl. Afterwards, Bernhard feels the uselessness of his studious life and his weakness when compared with Lenore's strength and vitality:

Er hatte etwas erlebt, was für ihn größer und hinreißender war, als jeder Dichtertraum in seinen Pergamenten. Mit Scham dachte er daran, wie unbehülflich er selbst gewesen war, und wie von seinem tiefen Stand im Wasser sah er zu der Heldin auf, welche so entschlossen und stark geholfen hatte. (I, 353)

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57 Bramsted, *Aristocracy and the Middle-Classes in Germany: Social Types in German Literature, 1830–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 136.

Physical strength is imbued with moral strength and places Bernhard in the inferior position. Towards the end of his life Bernhard regretfully admits his ineffectiveness to Anton and expresses a desire to be more active and practical when he gets better:

Ja ich will leben, und anders will ich leben als bisher, ich will alle Mühe daran setzen, stärker zu werden, ich werde nicht mehr so viel träumen als jetzt, mich nicht mehr aufregen und quälen in meiner Kammer. Ich will versuchen, wie man lebt, wenn man ein tüchtiger Mann ist, der jeden Streich zurückgibt, den er empfangt. (I, 514)

But Bernhard dies before he can do this. So while the critics' description of him as good is justified, since his goodness is not to any useful practical purpose, the value of it in an argument about the balance between negative and positive Jewish characters seems questionable.

Lastly, just how Jewish is this good Jew? Bernhard's manners, morals and behaviour make it very difficult to pinpoint anything about him which defines him as such. Tinkles's caftan and a distaste for sausage on Veitel's part excepted, it is the behaviour or character traits of the other Jews, male and female, rather than external characteristics or an adherence to religion, which define them as Jewish. As Bernhard does not share their negative qualities and is not depicted as a religious Jew, only the detail of his family background remains to make him Jewish, with perhaps also the detail of his study, especially of Oriental languages, being a secularised reflection of traditional Jewish Talmud scholarship. This being the case, Bernhard is more an illustration of the problems faced by educated Jews who have mostly lost touch with their Jewish roots, than an example of one who successfully assimilates into the culture of the German majority while retaining a distinct Jewish identity. Only if this latter scenario were true could Bernhard really fulfil the counterbalancing role of 'good Jew' assigned to him by critics. Instead, he is alienated from other Jews and from Judaism and, while assimilating German ways, is not yet integrated into gentile society or performing an active and useful function within it. 'Der einzige gute Jude ist ein toter

Jude', wrote Jean Améry, commenting on Bernhard's departure from the text, but another interpretation could be that the only good Jew is the one who is least noticeably Jewish.<sup>58</sup>

As well as considering the balance between positive and negative characters, it is necessary to reflect on the overall approach to the Jews to see whether there is a balance between sympathy and censure on the part of the narrator. Within the text there are indications that Freytag did not consider the Jews' outsider status, or even their dishonest and corrupt behaviour, to be all their fault. When Veitel joins Ehrenthal's firm he is in an environment where shady business deals and exploitative practices are the norm, where the dishonesty he had shown as a child is fostered, but it is also possible to see this dishonesty, an expression of Veitel's egoism and ruthless desire to succeed at all costs, as a result of the resentment he feels towards those who have maltreated him. The reader is told in the first chapter that Anton had often defended Veitel from attacks by other children:

Anton hatte in früherer Zeit Gelegenheit gehabt, durch tapfern Gebrauch seiner Zunge und seiner kleinen Fäuste den Judenknaben vor Mißhandlungen muthwilliger Schüler zu bewahren [...] Namentlich einmal in einer düstern Schulscene, in welcher ein Knackwürstchen benutzt wurde, um verzweifelte Empfindungen in Itzig hervorzurufen, hatte Anton so wacker für Itzig plädiert, daß er selbst ein Loch im Kopfe davontrug. (I, 20–1)

Later, in a scene reminiscent of Faust's agreement with Mephistopheles, Veitel decides to pay Hippius, his diabolical mentor, a large sum of money in order to have the mysteries of legal loopholes and unethical business dealings explained to him. While remembering his mother's warning to be honest, he also recalls the verbal and physical abuse he has suffered:

Schwerlich hatten die jungen Herren, welche den zudringlichen Judenknaben die Treppe hinunterwiesen, daran gedacht, daß ihre höhnenden Worte in der

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58 Améry, 'Schlecht klingt das Leid vom braven Mann: Anlässlich der Neuauflage von Gustav Freytags *Soll und Haben*', *Neue Rundschau*, 89 (1978), 84–93 (p. 90).

armen verwilderten Menschenseele einen Dämon erwecken würden, der ihnen selbst in spätern Jahren Elend und Verderben heraufbeschwören sollte. (I, 128)

From these relatively small details of Veitel's honest mother and the abuse he has suffered over the years, two important things can be deduced. Firstly, Freytag is not presenting the Jews as innately corrupt, i.e., dishonesty is not a trait to which Veitel is automatically predisposed because of his Jewish birth. Similarly, Bernhard does not take after his father to the least degree. Secondly, Christians must take at least some of the blame for encouraging Veitel's resentment and causing his corrupt behaviour through their harsh treatment of him. Taking another example, when Bernhard is persuading his father to spare the Freiherr, he gives details about Ehrenthal which point to extenuating circumstances for his preoccupation with monetary gain:

Seit du aus dem Haus des Großvaters weggingst, als ein armer Judenknabe, barfuß, mit einem Thaler in der Tasche, seitdem hast du an nichts Anderes gedacht als an Erwerb. Niemand hat dich etwas Anderes gelehrt, dein Glaube hat dich ausgeschlossen von dem Verkehr mit Solchen, welche besser verstehen, was dem Leben Werth gibt. Ich weiß, daß es dir ans Herz geht, eine große Summe in Gefahr zu setzen. (I, 539)

As for Bernhard himself, the reader learns that his career as a free-lance scholar is not entirely of his own choosing. Although Madame Ehrenthal reports that a university professor spoke to her about Bernhard with the greatest respect and told her that he would be 'ein Stolz für die Wissenschaft', any form of public sector employment remains closed to Bernhard as a Jew (I, 276). He tells Anton: 'Einem jungen Mann von meiner Confession [wird] die Anstellung im Staate nicht leicht' (I, 271–2).

Unfortunately for the overall effect of the book, the details of the prejudice experienced by Veitel and Bernhard and the reasons for Ehrenthal's behaviour are very much hidden in the text. It is extremely easy for the reader to detect the censure but harder to spot the sympathy, which in any case is a far rarer occurrence. Because the

reader sees no obvious reason to excuse the Jews for their corruption, it is consequently harder to sympathise and forgive and much easier to condemn outright. While Freytag by no means depicted Jews as negatively as he could have done, the point that the Jews are victims of prejudice is not made as explicitly as the point that they are untrustworthy and dangerous, deserving criticism and in need of reform.

## Summary

It would be easy, but overly simplistic, to argue that the apparent illiberalism towards the Jews in *Soll und Haben* indicates hypocrisy on the part of Freytag, a professed liberal. Such a view imposes current thinking on this nineteenth-century author, judging him by the standards of an age where there is greater tolerance of the differences of minority groups and less expectation that such groups should assimilate to the majority culture. It is rather the case that the lack of true liberal attitudes vis-à-vis the Jews on Freytag's part stemmed from his acceptance of the German variety of liberalism and hence from liberalism's acceptance and further development of the ideas of Dohm, that the Jews were corrupt and needed reform, and that emancipation was a contract which the Jews must fulfil, deserving equality by losing their outward manifestations of Jewishness: in effect, becoming equal to the Germans by becoming German. Although Freytag wrote *Soll und Haben* over seventy years after the publication of Dohm's treatise, the two concepts of Jewish need for reform and Jewish assimilation to the majority German culture remain firmly at the heart of Freytag's thought. Examination of the novel has shown how Freytag argued for both concepts, juxtaposing Jewish and Christian business and social behaviour to prove Jewish corruption, and establishing a scale of acceptability for the Jewish

characters, whereby the most positively portrayed Jew was also the least 'Jewish'.

Although only one novel has been considered, further evidence of Freytag's views exists in three articles, the first published before *Soll und Haben*, the last only two years before his death. They enable conclusions to be reached about Freytag with greater confidence than would otherwise be possible, reinforcing the opinions about the author that form while reading the novel so that the reader can be more certain that the views of the narrator are those of Freytag himself. This is obviously of great importance when part of the argument centres on Freytag's responsibility for the characters he created and whether or not he was conscious of the negative images of the Jews within his text. Similarities of opinion between an external, non-fictional source and those detectable in the novel would suggest that he was.

The first article, 'Die Juden in Breslau', was published in *Die Grenzboten* in 1849. Within the context of the changes wrought by the recent events of 1848, when Jews were admitted for the first time on equal terms to the Breslau Chamber of Commerce, Freytag discusses Jewish involvement in trade and business. The language he uses, down to particular phrases, will be astonishingly familiar to the reader of *Soll und Haben*. Freytag first sets out a scale of Jewish behaviour, describing the process of Jewish refinement, as he would do in the novel:

Die Lage Schlesiens an der Grenze von Posen, Polen und Galizien, begünstigt ein fortwährendes Eindringen der polnischen Schacherjuden in die Provinz, und dies jüdische Element, welches vom Osten herkommt, beginnt seinen Bildungsprozeß in der ersten Generation bei uns, die zweite Generation geht nach Berlin, die dritte nach Frankfurt. Da hier die Destillation anfängt, bleibt auch der meiste Schmutz bei uns sitzen.<sup>59</sup>

He continues by describing how this 'Schmutz' behaves, each detail recalling characters from the novel. He describes the Polish Jew, who

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59 Freytag, 'Die Juden in Breslau' in *Vermischte Aufsätze*, pp. 339–47 (p. 340).



‘sich mit oder ohne polizeiliche Erlaubniß einen großen Theil seines Lebens hier aufhält, läuft schwarz und geschäftig, wie eine Ameise’, and the reader is reminded of Schmeie Tinkles and of Pinkus, who provides lodgings for Jews without papers (341). ‘Er denkt nicht, er träumt nicht, er will nichts als speculiren’, is how he describes their life, and the reader thinks of Veitel and Ehrenthal and their determined efforts to acquire the Freiherr’s estate. The example Freytag then provides of the Jews’ unethical business dealings matches precisely those parts of the novel describing Tinkles’s relationship with Schröters and his attempt to swindle the firm:

Er nimmt den Schein der Sicherheit und Zuverlässigkeit mit Ausdauer und Erfolg so lange an, bis es ihm lohnt, irgend etwas Bedenkliches zu thun, was nach unsern Begriffen durchaus unehrlich ist, ihm nur einen gewagten Streich gilt. [...] Durch drei, vier, oft mehrer [sic] Jahre, ist er ehrlicher Geschäftsmann, endlich, wenn er seinen Gegner sicher gemacht hat, wagt er den großen Schlag, zieht eine ansehnliche Summe auf den Kaufmann und läßt die Waaren nicht ankommen. [...] Der Jude [empfindet] als unersetzbaren Verlust, daß er so viel Ehrlichkeit umsonst aufgewendet hat. (342–3)

Contrasted with the ‘Schmutz’ is the educated Jew, whom Freytag describes as being pained by his awareness of the faults of his co-religionists:

Ihr Christen habt keine Ahnung von den bitteren Gefühlen der stillen Demüthigung, dem innerlichen Druck, welchen euer alttestamentarischer Freund unter euch sowohl, als unter der Masse seiner Glaubensgenossen empfindet. [...] Unter seinen Glaubensgenossen all der kleine Trödel von alten sinnlosen Bräuchen und Gewohnheiten, von dem näselnden Plärrer der Gebete bis herunter zum Gänsefett, mit dem das Gemüse zugerichtet wird, überall ein Quell des Unbehagens, der peinlichen Befangenheit. (346–7)

Reading this, the reader cannot fail to think of Bernhard and the shame he feels because of his family’s behaviour.

However, just as Dohm had done in his treatise, Freytag then asks who is to blame for the Jews’ behaviour and concludes that Christians must accept responsibility for making them corrupt. This aspect of Freytag’s thought comes across much more strongly in the

short article than in *Soll und Haben*, where understanding for the Jews' situation is harder to detect. In 'Die Juden in Breslau' Freytag lists the characteristics of an honourable businessman and asks: 'War es dem Juden bis jetzt leicht gemacht, sie zu erwerben?'. He concludes in the negative: 'So lange die Juden in den deutschen Staaten unter dem Druck bürgerlicher Unfreiheit lebten, war es nicht an der Zeit, ihnen ihre gemeinsamen Eigenthümlichkeiten und Schwächen vorzuhalten' (344). But, after the events of 1848, when Jewish emancipation was temporarily assured in the Basic Rights (this situation presumably still prevailing at the time Freytag was writing in 1849), the Jews could no longer blame their unacceptable behaviour on Christian oppression, hence Freytag's use of the imperfect tense in the quotation above.

But the onus was now on the Jews to correct their faults, although Freytag by no means ruled out the use of intervention from outside the Jewish community to achieve this. The next passage is very interesting, as it demonstrates both how Freytag believed in publicly expressed criticism as a vehicle to promote change and the way his liberalism turned to illiberalism when confronting the 'Jewish question':

Jetzt ist es ebenso sehr Pflicht der Presse, an die Juden selbst die gemessene Forderung zu stellen, daß sie sich fähig machen, als Gleichberechtigte mit ihren christlichen Brüdern zu leben, und eine Pflicht des Staates ist es geworden, die Schwachen und Verkrüppelten unter den Juden dahin zu *zwingen*, Menschen des 19. Jahrhunderts zu werden, so weit der Staat das Individuum zwingen darf. (344)

While the last phrase of this paragraph suggests there is a limit to state control of the individual, Freytag's subsequent suggestions for reform of the Jews would necessitate a large degree of intervention in previously Jewish-run matters, and would have a huge impact on Judaism and its religious institutions, and hence on individual Jews. He recommends bringing Judaism under state control by establishing a council to govern Jewish affairs, requiring rabbis to be university-educated and Jewish teachers to be trained at state training colleges. Freytag sees such intervention as being perfectly justified, however, if

emancipation is not to have an unwelcome effect on the Christian population:

Der Staat hat ausgesprochen: ich will einen kranken und schwachen Theil des Volkes dadurch aufrichten und heilen, daß ich ihm die Rechte und Pflichten der Gesunden und Starken ertheile; jetzt möge er dafür sorgen, daß die Kranken nicht seine Gesunden anstecken, die Schwachen nicht seine Starken lähmen. (345)

Freytag then lists three conditions which must be fulfilled by the Jews, his own form of Dohm's emancipation contract, although it should be noted that Freytag's proposals go a great deal further. Dohm was not favourably inclined to the 'sophistische Kunst' of the rabbis, whom he blamed for encouraging Jewish separation through an interpretation of Mosaic law which was 'ganz wider den Geist derselben', yet he still supported the idea that Jews should be allowed 'an allen Orten eine völlig freye Religionsübung, Anlegung von Synagogen und Anstellung von Lehrern'.<sup>60</sup> Freytag, however, advocates conditions which are much more far-reaching, proposing that the Jews should change religious services and prayers to make sure they do not encourage distrust of non-Jews or of the state, move the Sabbath to Sunday and accept mixed marriages. Freytag's concluding remarks show he believed that Jewish emancipation and reform was far from being purely for the Jews' own good; rather it was to hasten the end of a distinct Jewish community in Germany. Regarding the three conditions, he says:

Nur die Individuen und Gemeinden, welche sich zu den angeführten Punkten bekennen, haben Theil an der neuen Freiheit; wer den Revers nicht unterschreibt, bleibt tolerirter Jude. [...] Glauben Sie, ein solches Verfahren wird zwei Dritttheile der Juden aufhören machen, und in den zwei bis drei nächsten Generationen die Besonderheiten ihres Wesens zum größten Theil aufheben; das übrige Drittel aber wird sich fortwährend vermindern. (346)

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60 Dohm, *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*, pp. 137–8; 123.

Given the recommendation for such fundamental state intervention, it is not surprising that Freytag's article met with objections from the Jewish side, even from liberal non-orthodox Jews. A response in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* shows how clearly the illiberalism and unfairness of Freytag's proposals, to which he seemed oblivious, appeared to those whom they would affect. Having decried the 'Gehässigkeit, die diesem Art. zu Grunde liegt' and several factual errors in Freytag's understanding of the current practices of Judaism ('die alte Verdrehung und Lüge!'), the writer asks:

Was will denn der Herr bloß von den Juden? Weiß er nicht, daß [...] wenn der Staat erst in die Glaubensverhältnisse der *einen* Religion sich einzumischen beginnt, er nothwendig auch in die der anderen Konfessionen eingreifen muß? Kennt der Verf. nur *eine* Religion, welche in ihrem Schooße alte Satzungen herbergt?<sup>61</sup>

Two other articles by Freytag demonstrate a similar attitude to the first. Although Freytag does not express his ideas in such detail, it is clear he still believed complete assimilation was necessary and achievable until the very end of his life. The second article was a response to the re-publication in 1869 of Wagner's essay 'Das Judenthum in der Musik', in which the composer denounced the perceived *Verjudung* of German art and culture. Freytag strongly rebuts Wagner's position, denying that any faults detectable in Jews are intrinsic to their nature, attributing them, as before, to their unfortunate past: 'weil sie sich alle aus einem unsicheren politischen und sozialen Dasein und aus einem Bildungskreise, der noch nicht ganz der unsrige ist, heraufgearbeitet haben'.<sup>62</sup> He criticises Wagner, and at the same time compliments the Jews, when he accuses Wagner of not taking account of the actual situation in politics, society, science and the arts:

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61 Anon. (possibly L. Philippson), 'Der Kampf um die Wahrung der Gleichstellung', *AZJ*, 6 August 1849, pp. 445–7; 13 August 1849, pp. 457–61 (pp. 446, 458, 461).

62 Freytag, 'Der Streit über das Judenthum in der Musik', p. 323.

denn auf allen diesen Gebieten sind unsere Mitbürger israelitischen Glaubens werthe Bundesgenossen nach guten Zielen, auf keinem Gebiete sind sie vorzugsweise Vertreter einer Richtung, welche wir für gemeinschädlich halten müssen. (321)

However, Freytag's defence of the Jews and his positive words about them derive from his belief in their progress away from their traditions and superstitions towards an enlightened, German, future 'unter der befreienden Einwirkung moderner Bildung'. His next words state his aim quite clearly: 'Wir dürfen mit einiger Befriedigung sagen, daß nur noch die letzten Ueberreste alter Ueberlieferung und Unduldsamkeit zu überwinden sind, *um die Herzen und Geister der deutschen Juden völlig in unser Volksthum einzuschließen*' (322, italics mine).

The third article, although written twenty-four years later in 1893, echoes the earlier ones. Again Freytag defends the Jews from attack, this time from the organised antisemitic movement; again he blames any faults detectable in the Jews on history and circumstances; again he praises their contribution to the arts and sciences. As such, the article could be described as a very positive addition to the debate. Because of this, some commentators have taken it as evidence of a reversal in Freytag's thought. Martin Gubser, for example, sees the text as 'Schluß- und Höhepunkt der Entwicklung, die Gustav Freytag vom antisemitschen Schriftsteller zum projüdisch argumentierenden Publizisten durchläuft'.<sup>63</sup> Gubser admits that the article displays 'einzelne wenige Spuren antisemitscher Argumentationsmuster' but dismisses them as 'kaum mehr wahrnehmbar' (285). Yet does he not miss a vital point? For while Freytag does indeed condemn organised antisemitism, 'das alte Leiden, die Judenhetze', seeing it as part of a continuum that stretches back to the massacres of the Middle Ages, he once again reveals what his long-term aim has consistently been, the complete disappearance of the Jews. Now, as racial antisemitism redraws the demarcation line between German

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63 Gubser, *Literarischer Antisemitismus: Untersuchungen zu Gustav Freytag und anderen bürgerlichen Schriftstellern des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), p. 271.

and Jew, he worries that what he has hoped for is threatened: 'Wir durften hoffen, daß in wenigen Generationen sich ohne große Störungen die völlige Einverleibung in unser Volksthum vollziehen würde, nicht nur in Amt und Beruf, auch in den Herzen und Familien'.<sup>64</sup> Gubser, therefore, seems to have been distracted by the positive statements in the article and overlooks the fact that Freytag's own proposal for solving the 'Jewish question', 'Einverleibung', while gradual and non-violent, would eventually lead to the eradication of a Jewish presence in Germany.

Freytag's position in these articles shows the consistency of his approach to the Jews in fiction and non-fiction and adds to the burden of proof that his own opinions really are present in *Soll und Haben*. The detectable negativity there must consequently be accepted as intentional, not the accidental result of the novel's juxtaposition of Jew and Christian or of a misunderstanding by the reader. The evidence of Freytag's desire to influence public opinion and his statement that the novel is a *Volksbuch* mean that Freytag, as author, must take more responsibility for the impact of his text than has generally been allocated to him in the past. Discussing the writing of his novel, Freytag remarked: 'In dem was ich wollte, war ich ganz sicher'.<sup>65</sup> Yet, in the final analysis, it would be wrong to conclude that Freytag was an antisemite. His use of stereotypes and negative characters does not derive from antisemitism but from his desire to promote the assimilation and complete absorption of the Jews into German society. Viewed from the perspective of an age which values cultural diversity, this seems extreme and reprehensible, but Gelber has stated that, while demands for complete assimilation may seem antisemitic today, those who made such demands in the nineteenth century 'distanced themselves to a degree from the mainstream of hard-core anti-Semitic ideology'.<sup>66</sup> However, as Fontane showed in his review,

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64 Freytag, 'Eine Pfingstbetrachtung', *Neue Freie Presse*, 21 May 1893, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

65 Freytag, *Erinnerungen*, p. 180.

66 Gelber, 'An alternate reading of the role of the Jewish scholar in Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben*', *Germanic Review*, 58 (1983), 83–7 (p. 86).

Freytag's methods of promoting this total assimilation through his novel risk misinterpretation, which is in fact what has frequently happened during the history of this text. At the very least, as Marie-Thérèse Cadaud comments, Freytag displayed a complete lack of comprehension of his text's negative potential:

Dans ces années où l'émancipation progressait toujours malgré des reculs momentanés, il n'imaginait sans doute pas, qu'il était dangereux de nourrir les passions mauvaises au moyen d'une peinture aussi unilatérale et malveillante d'un peuple traditionnellement persécuté. On ne peut s'empêcher de s'étonner devant cette étrange naïveté.<sup>67</sup>

The example of Freytag shows clearly that, when it came to the Jews, there was a blind spot in liberal thinking, whereby illiberal attitudes could be the norm. As such, Freytag was by no means an exception, but was part of the nineteenth-century liberal mainstream.

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67 Cadaud, 'Slaves et Germains dans l'œuvre romanesque de Gustav Freytag: Aspects sociologiques d'une étude littéraire' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Strasbourg, 1973), p. 235. ['At a time when emancipation was making progress despite temporary setbacks, he doubtless did not think that it was dangerous to encourage bad feeling by such a unilateral and malevolent depiction of a traditionally persecuted people. One can but be astonished at this strange naivety.']

## Chapter Two

### Wilhelm Raabe: The Master, the ‘Schöne Semitische Zauberin’ and her ‘Krummnasige Verwandtschaft’

The two quotations from the novella *Frau Salome* which form this chapter's title illustrate the contrasting attitudes towards the Jews which Raabe's fiction can contain.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, Raabe's texts include expressions of sympathy for the Jewish people and direct criticism of anti-Jewish prejudice. Conversely, there is no short supply of insulting remarks and stereotyped characterisations and both criticism of the Jews and criticism of prejudice can appear in the same text. The two quotations also illustrate another aspect, namely Raabe's differing approach to his male and female Jewish characters. Looking at the very different nature of the images associated with each gender can cast light upon the different ways in which prejudice towards the Jews could manifest itself in literature, and can show how a writer, whether consciously or not, appears to judge different types of Jews by different standards according either to current stereotypes or to a particular scale of values held by the author.

Like Freytag, Raabe was a liberal, but was much less involved in politics. Thus, while Freytag is a prime example of liberalism's problems *vis-à-vis* the Jews, Raabe's work does not fit within a particular political context and is more straightforwardly an example of the different stereotypes which could be applied to the Jews in literature. But there are other comparisons between the two men. In the sense that they drew on Germany's distant and recent past as the setting for the vast majority of their writing, both were distinctly German authors, Freytag probably for more ideological reasons than Raabe,

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1 All quotations are taken from Wilhelm Raabe, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Karl Hoppe and others, 20 vols. plus 5 supplementary (Braunschweig: Klemm; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951–94).



who, not being a well-travelled man, perhaps preferred to stick to writing about what he knew and understood. And of course the novels for which both are most famous are, as well as being the main source of contention nowadays, so similar in form and content that the reader must suspect that Raabe's *Der Hungerpastor* was modelled on Freytag's *Soll und Haben*.

Since the historical and political events of the period during which Raabe was active as a writer, roughly 1856–1896, have already been discussed in the Freytag chapter, there is no need to go over the historical background again. Naturally, both men could react quite differently to these events and reflect what they read and heard about Jews and the 'Jewish question' quite differently in their fiction, but the historical details of the period under investigation are common to both. In terms of background, this chapter examines what is known about Raabe's approach towards the writing of fiction and specifically what can be ascertained from non-fictional sources as to his stance towards Jews and the 'Jewish question'. Then, since the nature of the controversy which surrounds Raabe is intricately connected with a period from the history of Raabe criticism, this episode and its effect on Raabe's reputation is considered before taking a close look at five of his texts. Some commentators have sought answers to Raabe's ambivalence in his diaries, notebooks, correspondence and recorded conversations. While these are undoubtedly useful as background, in coming to an understanding of Raabe the *author*, his fiction takes priority. In this section recent critical approaches to his work and the various explanations for Raabe's problematic characterisations are also considered.

The critical debate has been so intense and prolonged that Jewish characters and themes might be expected to play a greater role in Raabe's work than is the case. In fact, neither predominates, since out of almost seventy novels and novellas only seven could be said to touch on this area and of these, some do so only slightly. *Ein Frühlings* (1857) and *Der Heilige Born* (1861) contain very minor Jewish characters and so the focus is on the novel *Der Hungerpastor* (1863) and the novellas *Holunderblüte* (1863), *Gedelücke* (1866), *Frau Salome* (1875) and

*Höxter und Corvey* (1875), where the most fruitful comparisons between Jews and Christians and between male and female Jewish characters are possible.<sup>2</sup>

Raabe's reputation has had to bear two burdens, both of which continue to affect his reception. One is of his own making: the problematic Jewish characters, above all Moses Freudenstein; the other is the literary society set up to promote the study of his works which in earlier years presented him as a *völkisch* antisemite. It is not surprising that he has more recently been judged harshly. As well as raising the question as to whether or not this author thought or wrote antisemitically, the example of Raabe is equally a demonstration of the problems and pitfalls of ambiguity.

## Biographical Background

Born near Hildesheim in 1831, the son of a civil servant, Wilhelm Raabe had sufficient success with his first novel, *Die Chronik der Sperlingsgasse* (1856), to encourage him to make writing his career. A large number of novels and short stories ensued over the next forty-odd years. Upon his marriage in 1862 Raabe settled in Stuttgart, moving to Braunschweig in 1870 where he remained, with wife and three daughters, living quietly and uneventfully until his death in 1910. Politically, Raabe was a liberal. Like Freytag, he was a member of the predecessor to the National Liberal party, the Nationalverein, joining less than a year after it was founded in 1859. He attended its first and second conventions, later becoming a supporter of the party proper. These are the bare biographical bones of what was, in many respects, an unremarkable life. The diary Raabe kept for fifty-three years does not upset this image, recording the progression of each work of fiction in turn, income from publishers, minor domestic troubles and a

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2     Volume numbers respectively: 6, 9/1, 9/2, 11, 12.

busy but uneventful social life. However, beyond the bare details it gives away very little about Raabe's thoughts, feelings or beliefs, his extreme reticence perhaps mirroring his natural taciturnity and frustrating anyone hoping to find insights into Raabe's character and development as a writer.<sup>3</sup> Thus, while it is clear from the diary that Raabe was keenly interested in the events of his day, noting their occurrence, he omitted to give his personal opinions on them. His diary reveals, for example, that he was aware of the debate in the Prussian *Landtag* on the antisemites' petition in November 1880, but there is no indication of what he thought of the background to the petition itself or of what was said in parliament.

More fruitful than the diary are recorded conversations or anecdotes about Raabe. An illuminating reference to his desire to avoid prejudice appeared, surprisingly enough, in the *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft der Freunde Wilhelm Raabes* in 1941. The Gesellschaft had undergone an enthusiastic process of nazification, but the reference cannot be interpreted as showing Raabe's support for antisemitism. Franz Hahne, later president of the Gesellschaft, recalled how he discussed *Der Hungerpastor* with Raabe, asking him directly whether the novel was 'antisemitisch gemeint'. Raabe's response: 'Durchaus nicht. Ich habe nur die Sehnsucht nach dem Licht und das Trachten nach äußerem Erfolg und ruchlosem Genuß darin gegenüberstellen wollen.'<sup>4</sup> Given the attitude of the Gesellschaft when Hahne published this account, it is not surprising that Raabe's dismissive manner was blamed on the state of antisemitism towards the turn of the century, 'damals verpönt und [...] von Raabe vermieden', implying that Raabe would have found the twentieth century's variety of antisemitism much less objectionable (29).

Some of Raabe's letters also suggest that he was critical of antisemitism and, furthermore, wrote his fiction with a conscious

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3 Radcliffe, 'The Diary of a Somebody? Wilhelm Raabe's Record of his Life', *New German Studies*, 10 (1982), 107–22. This article gives the distinct impression that Mr. Radcliffe was rather disappointed with the results of his study of Raabe's diaries.

4 Hahne, 'Erinnerungen an Wilhelm Raabe', *Mitt.*, 31 (1941) 29–33 (p. 29).

effort to depict all his characters fairly and truthfully. In 1866, only three years after the completion of *Der Hungerpastor*, the book which is taken as conclusive evidence of his bias and prejudice towards the Jews, Raabe wrote to a friend to write literature which exposes rather than substantiates lies:

So putze ich denn meine epische Rüstung und gedenke als deutscher Sittenschilderer noch einen guten Kampf zu kämpfen. Es ist viel Lüge in unserer Literatur, und ich werde auch für mein armes Theil nach Kräften das meinige dazu thun, sie heraus zu bringen.<sup>5</sup>

In November 1883 the editor of an antisemitic magazine, *Die Wahrheit*, sought to commission a novella with an antisemitic bias. Raabe rejected the request promptly, again stressing that he strove to make his writing objective and balanced, but in words which indicate a certain ambivalence:

Ich glaube nicht, daß durch Schriften und Bilder, wie Sie mir neulich zugeschickt haben, die Kraft Juda's an der sich seit Jahrtausenden die Völker – Heiden und Christen – vergeblich abraufen, in irgend erklecklicher Weise untergraben werden wird. Dem wirklichen deutschen Volk thut Israel keinen Schaden; wer sich drin von dem 'fremden Element' unter kriegen [sic] läßt, der hat meistens sicherlich seine Einwilligung zu drei Vierteln frei angeboten.

Was mich persönlich betrifft, so habe ich mir mein ganzes litterarisches Leben nur Mühe gegeben, *objective Dichtungen hinzustellen*, habe aber nie die Absicht gehabt, durch Partheischriften den Tageslärm zu vermehren. Ich hoffe nicht, daß aus meinen Arbeiten eine solche Tendenzenhaftigkeit hervorgeht, wie Sie darin zu finden meinen. Habe ich den *Hungerpastor* geschrieben, so habe ich auch der *Frau Salome* ihr Recht in der Welt zuerkannt.<sup>6</sup>

While it is abundantly clear from this that Raabe rejected the methods used by organised antisemitism to propagate its message, he does not deny that it has reason to try to do so. His words betray a mindset by which Germans and Jews are seen as separate and

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5 Letter to A. Glaser, February 1866, *Sämtliche Werke*, supp. volume II, 112.

6 Letter to M. Schulze, 21.11.1883, *Sämtliche Werke*, supp. volume II, 242, italics mine.

opposite, the latter as a potential threat to those Germans who have not resisted sufficiently. Interesting as it is, this letter does not clarify Raabe's thoughts entirely. Why are the words 'fremden Element' in quotation marks, for example? Is Raabe merely quoting his correspondent's own words, accepting their meaning, or does he use the quotation marks to indicate distance from a sentiment he does not actually believe? Without access to the editor's letter the matter cannot be decided and the result is once again ambivalence and uncertainty.

The details provided here cannot therefore conclusively determine Raabe's own beliefs and sympathies one way or the other, but they are worth bearing in mind when considering the texts themselves. What is known about Raabe would indicate that he was far from actively being an antisemite or a supporter of overtly antisemitic causes, while not being completely without prejudice. He genuinely seems to have wanted his fiction to be an objective depiction of his characters' lives and acknowledged no bias in himself. Others, such as Hahne and the editor of *Die Wahrheit*, did detect a bias, and thus the burden of a dubious or antisemitic attitude was first placed on Raabe's reputation. It is for this reason that the history of Raabe reception is an important part of the overall picture.

## The Raabe-Gesellschaft: The Burden of the Past

This sorry episode is a cautionary tale of how innocent adulation and respect can be manipulated into something a good deal more sinister. Jeffrey Sammons justifiably designated this period of Raabe scholarship the 'Era of the Cult': it does indeed share the unquestioning belief common to some more extreme religious groups.<sup>7</sup> Beyond

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7 For much of what follows on the history of the Raabe-Gesellschaft I am indebted to the research carried out on this subject by Jeffrey Sammons,

that, the actions of the Gesellschaft der Freunde Wilhelm Raabes, set up shortly after Raabe's death to promote interest in his works, confirm that a critical mind is certainly necessary when approaching the Jewish element in Raabe's fiction. After all, what was it in his writing that encouraged the Gesellschaft to promote Raabe as a *völkisch*-nationalist antisemite?

In the years leading up to his death, Raabe had eventually become an 'elder statesman' of German letters. With public celebrations of his seventieth birthday in 1901 and the award of honorary doctorates from the universities of Tübingen and Göttingen he felt he had attained the recognition and acclaim which he deserved but had long despaired of finding. The society's commitment to its author after his death may well have been instrumental in making Raabe known to a wider audience, but must answer for many of the difficulties that Raabe's reputation had later to surmount. The Gesellschaft developed the respectful approach which had existed before Raabe's death into something akin to veneration of a saint, guarding its author jealously and condemning outsiders who criticised him whether justly or unjustly. This proprietorial attitude and the stifling of unacceptable opinion strengthened the society in its common ideology. Because of the convention of non-criticism which developed and the absence of truly open debate, the image of Raabe presented in the society's journal, the *Mitteilungen*, was open to manipulation. This may have been due to the evangelistic zeal of the writers, not to underhand motives, but Raabe achieved an iconic stature as the 'Master', the visionary writer credited with a unified *Weltanschauung* and the ability to guide his readers through life via the message of his works. The nature of the society meant that such propaganda went unchecked. There was perhaps also an element of self-interest and conceit which aided the continuation of this trend: as 'Raabemenschen' and 'Raabefreunde', the enlightened few could

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especially in his book *The Shifting Fortunes of Wilhelm Raabe* (Columbia S.C.: Camden House, 1992).

take pride in their exclusivity and feel that they too shared the superior emotions and ethics of their 'Master'.

Most decisive for future development, though alien to current interpretation, was the adulation of Raabe as the ideal German and nationalist. Events such as German defeat in the First World War and the economic crises of the 1920s only strengthened the idealisation of a writer who represented a time when the Germans could be surer about themselves. Naturalism, Thomas Mann and the Weimar republic were attacked in the *Mitteilungen* as representatives of the modern in literature and society. A 1924 article by the Düsseldorf section shows both the fervour of their feelings towards Raabe and their interpretation of him as the embodiment of all German virtues. Reading Raabe's fiction becomes an intense revelatory experience and Raabe himself a Christ-like figure:

Was wollen wir? Zunächst: wir wollen Raabe – seine Deutschheit und Menschlichkeit, sein Verstehen und Verzeihen, seine Gemütswärme und sein Lächeln, seine Überwinderkräfte und Lebensmeisterung [...]. Was in uns denkt, im Tiefsten fühlt und strebt, wollen wir in schönen Stunden der Gemeinsamkeit fest auf den Meister hinrichten, in ihm, dem Unerschöpflichen, uns sammeln und erhöhen, ja uns finden [...]. Kurz, wir wollen in Raabe uns selbst [...] – Wilhelm Raabe, des Deutschtumes Meister, Schatzhüter und Spender, kommt: er kommt 'aus ihm selbst', wie alles aus dem Reich Gottes!<sup>8</sup>

Such articles may well seem to be nothing more than the laughable and bathetic outpourings of eccentric enthusiasts, but they also hint at the route the Raabe-Gesellschaft would later take. The nazification of the society did not happen overnight in 1933 but was a lengthy process. Along with the reverence for German ideals, a nascent fascism can be detected elsewhere. The nationalism and imperialism of the society were reinforced by the First World War, which offered ample opportunity for the *Mitteilungen* to express the superiority of Germany and rail against its enemies. An extract from

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8 Bösser, 'Eine Erklärung der Düsseldorfer Ortsgruppe über Ausgang, Richtung und Ziel ihrer Tätigkeit', *Mitt*, 14 (1924), 26–9 (pp. 26, 28).

such an article by Franz Hahne incidentally shows how Raabe was interpreted according to the bias of the writer:

Das Germanentum ringt um sein Fortbestehen mit dem französischen Erbfeinde, den beutgierigen Russen und den gehässigen Verrätern germanischer Kultur und Rasse jenseits des Kanals. Wie würde den Meister Raabe dieser Krieg erregt haben! [...] Würde ihm bange geworden sein? O nein! Wer wie er das Deutschtum in sich trug, war sich auch darin liegender geistiger und sittlicher Kräfte bewußt, die den Sieg behalten werden.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1920s, the Gesellschaft moved rapidly towards fascism. National chauvinism became increasingly influenced by biological theories of race. 'Wilhelm Raabe und die nordische Rasse', an article which appeared in 1927, is deeply influenced by racial jargon and theories and purports to place Raabe in this context by describing a variety of physical and emotional nordic traits and showing how they apply to Raabe's work.<sup>10</sup> Then in 1932 Hahne, an enthusiastic antisemite and Nazi supporter, became president and the society's increasing proximity to National Socialist doctrine was further enforced. Some post-war commentators have hinted at forcible nazification of the Gesellschaft and resistance to this from within the organisation.<sup>11</sup> According to this 'resistance myth', the racist or otherwise Nazi-influenced articles published in the *Mitteilungen* after Hitler's seizure of power appeared solely to appease the Nazi regime and convince them of the organisation's loyalty. This position is not easily defensible, given that all crucial steps were taken before 1933. In that year, the *Mitteilungen* greeted the new regime by publishing a sonnet to Hitler, which, with its glowing praise for Germany's 'Frühlingsheld, den keine Drachen schrecken', shows more of willing,

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9 Hahne, 'Raabes "Deutscher Adel"', *Mitt*, 4 (1914), 85.

10 Mohr, 'Wilhelm Raabe und die nordische Rasse', *Mitt*, 17 (1927), 18–39.

11 See, for example, the article by Fritz Meyen, 'Einige Bemerkungen zu Töteberg/Zander', *JRG* 15 (1974), 105–10, in which he attempts to defend the society against an attack on its pre-war record by M. Töteberg and J. Zander, 'Die Rezeption Raabes durch die "Gesellschaft der Freunde Wilhelm Raabes"', *JRG* 14 (1973), 178–93.



grateful submission than resistance: ‘Denn Du bist da, und alles Widerstreben | Verwandelst Du in glühendes Vertrauen’.<sup>12</sup> An ensuing article by Hahne on ‘Raabes Stellung im Dritten Reich’ contains many examples of the trends which had been developing within the Gesellschaft since its inception. Hahne presents Raabe as a prophetic figure, who, in *Ein Frühling* (1857), foresaw the social revolutions of 1918 and 1933. By attributing to Raabe the ability to see into the future, Hahne was able to give his own opinions about current events, yet say that Raabe would have thought the same and greeted the Nazi era ‘durchaus bejahend’.<sup>13</sup> In ‘Raabes Sehnen und des Führers Erfüllung’, written a few years later, Hahne would similarly present Raabe as being totally in tune with the Nazi regime.<sup>14</sup> If Hahne were to be believed, the life-long supporter of liberalism would have approved of the suppression of democracy under the Third Reich. Furthermore, despite evidence to the contrary such as Raabe’s stories *Holunderblüte* and *Frau Salome*, which Hahne is at pains to brush aside, Raabe would also have approved of the Nazi measures against the Jews.

As can be imagined, by this stage the Gesellschaft had shed its Jewish members and its enthusiastic support for Hitler continued unabated throughout the course of the war. With its atrocious history recorded for posterity, it is perhaps remarkable that the Gesellschaft decided to re-form as early as 1947. Eventually, the Gesellschaft did recover to become a respected scholarly society although Raabe’s reputation has taken longer to return from obscurity. The hero worship, poor scholarship and anti-criticism ethic of the Gesellschaft justify, as Sammons has pointed out, the dismissal of their contributions to Raabe *criticism* as entirely irrelevant.<sup>15</sup> They are, however, crucial for understanding the ebb and flow of Raabe’s literary fortunes and why it was that Raabe’s fiction had to make a fresh start

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12 Fehse, ‘Dem Führer’, *Mitt*, 23 (1933), 65.

13 Hahne, ‘Raabes Stellung im Dritten Reich’, *Mitt*, 23 (1933), 97–110, (p. 98).

14 id., ‘Raabes Sehnen und des Führers Erfüllung’, *Mitt*, 29 (1939), 33–5.

15 Sammons, *The Shifting Fortunes of Wilhelm Raabe*, p. 38.

after 1945. In effect, he has been recovering from his fan club ever since.

## Heroines and Antiheroes: The Burden of the Fiction

In discussing Raabe's fiction, the dichotomy inherent in his work cannot be ignored. On the one hand are Raabe's own statements condemning prejudice and stating his desire for honesty; on the other, the history of the Raabe-Gesellschaft encourages the suspicion that he failed to make this sufficiently clear in his writing, for, although frequently economical with the truth, the men who wrote for the *Mitteilungen* based their ideas about Raabe's perception of the Jews on his actual texts. An article in the *Mitteilungen* from 1939 perfectly demonstrates how the ambiguities in Raabe's fiction allowed for diametrically opposed interpretations. Hahne, in full flow, uses the evidence of Raabe's work to defend the author as properly antisemitic and eminently suitable for reading in the Third Reich, after Raabe was attacked in the journal *Am heiligen Quell deutscher Kraft* because his fiction was seen as supportive towards Jews and Jewish emancipation. In reply, Hahne used the example of *Der Hungerpastor* as the *coup de grâce* of his argument, irrefutable proof that Raabe was suitably harsh and critical in his presentation of Jewish characters:

Freudensteins pietät- und skrupelloser Entwicklung zum smarten Literaten, internationalen Politiker, bezahlten Verräter und mädchenverführenden Schuft [...] ist aber gerade das Ausschlaggebende für Raabes Beurteilung des Judentums, diese genial gesehene, folgerecht und schonungslos durchgeführte Darstellung des internationalen Judentypus. [...] Raabe kannte sie schon 1863, seine Ausführungen aus dem zehnten Kapitel des *Hungerpastors* stehen heute im *Handbuch der Judenfrage* von Theodor Fritsch.<sup>16</sup>

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16 Hahne, 'Eine "ketzerische Betrachtung über W. Raabe"', *Mitt*, 29 (1939), 68–75 (p. 74).

This is indeed the case. Fritsch seems to have been particularly impressed with Raabe's approach towards the Jews in *Der Hungerpastor*, calling it only one of four novels to treat the 'Erkenntnisse von Treitschke, Dühring, Lagarde und ihrer Vorgänger' in a meaningful way.<sup>17</sup> One of the others, coincidentally but unsurprisingly, is *Soll und Haben*. Quoting from chapter ten of the novel, in which the main Jewish character pours scorn on the national loyalty of ordinary Germans, Fritsch concludes:

Das wurde – wohlgemerkt – nicht nach dem Weltkriege, sondern 1863 geschrieben, Raabe schildert auch in seinem *Hungerpastor* vorahnend die Art und die Tätigkeit des jüdischen Literatentums. Die Maximilian Harden, Emil Ludwig, Siegfried Jacobsohn, Alfred Kerr, Kurt Tucholsky usw. sind samt und sonders Söhne von Moses Freudenstein.<sup>18</sup>

The Raabe-Gesellschaft was not then alone in endowing Raabe with prophetic gifts. Fritsch also views him thus because of his portrayal of Moses Freudenstein, perhaps seeing a further similarity because Harden (Isidor Witkowski) and Ludwig (Cohn), like their supposed fictional forebear, had been baptised and had shed the Jewish-sounding parts of their names. The passage in *Der Hungerpastor* to which Hahne and Fritsch refer is examined in detail later on, but for now it should be clear that Raabe's Jewish characters, particularly in *Der Hungerpastor*, easily allowed for antisemitic interpretation. Thanks to its enormous popularity, this contentious text helped establish Raabe's reputation as an author more than any other. It went through thirty-four impressions during his lifetime and was so widely read that Raabe himself called it 'nicht ein deutsches Volks-

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17 Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, p. 522.

18 *ibid.*, p. 523. Harden (1861–1927), Ludwig (1881–1948), Jacobsohn (1881–1926), Kerr (1867–1948) and Tucholsky (1890–1935) were all variously active pre-1933 as journalists or editors, literary or drama critics and novelists. Harden was probably the most controversial, described thus in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*: 'Among his German contemporaries he was the symbol of Jewish arrogance.'

buch, sondern eben das deutsche Volksbuch'.<sup>19</sup> It is also, because of its two male Jewish characters, whether or not they were consciously intended to be antisemitic, the major source of problems when looking for the motivation behind Raabe's depiction of Jewish characters.

Unfortunately, a close reading of this text does not dispel its troubled image. The two Jewish characters, Moses Freudenstein and his father Samuel, conform to two traditions in the literary depiction of Jews; more specifically, male Jews. The representation of Samuel harks back to a long-established image of the *Ghettojude*. Although there is no physical ghetto in Neustadt, Samuel lives in one of his own making and choosing. Despite his great wealth, the family's living quarters are in the basement of the most dilapidated house in the poorest part of town. The reader is told that he 'verlangte gar keine bessere. [...] Das einzige Lokal, welches jenen troglodytischen Einrichtungen größerer Städte ähnelte und welches somit dem Geschmacke Freudensteins entsprach, hatte dieser bei seiner Ansässigmachung in Neustadt bald gefunden' (44). This suggests not only avarice on Samuel's part but also a pre-existing moral degradation which leads him to choose this environment of physical decay. The Freudensteins' house in the Kröppelstraße – a suitable street for Samuel's tastes – is described using images of darkness and enclosure. When Hans Unwirrsch first meets him, Samuel approaches 'aus der Finsternis' (48). A later description reads: 'Es war so dunkel, wie man es nur von einem Gemach, das auf einen so schmutzigen und dunkeln Hof hinaussah, erwarten konnte' (87). When Raabe describes the living quarters in detail, images of confinement are added to those of darkness to create the idea of a self-imposed ghetto: 'Feuchte Mauern sperrten jeden frischen Hauch von seinen niedern Fenstern ab, und der Sonnenschein war wirklich künstlich ausgeschlossen von dem Baumeister' (87). There is an obvious contrast between the fresh air and sunlight which are shut out and the dampness and darkness shut in with the inhabitants.

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19 Letter to O. Janke, 15.2.1901, *Sämtliche Werke*, supp. volume II, 434.

The description of the atmosphere of dirt, decay and neglect surrounding the house echoes descriptions elsewhere of conditions within Jewish ghettos. A notable parallel to this is Raabe's own description of the Prague Ghetto in *Holunderblüte*, which was based on his impressions, albeit superficial, gained during his visit to Prague in 1859. In personal appearance too Samuel fits in with the traditional topos of the 'dirty Jew'. He is described in unsavoury terms, 'ein Sechziger, der wenig auf äußere Eleganz hielt [...] ein Greuel für jeden, der etwas auf ein wohlgewaschenes Gesicht und reinlich beschnittene Nägel gab' (45). In the same paragraph, however, there is an example of the entirely different treatment of male and female Jews. Samuel's wife, who died in childbirth and does not appear in the novel, is his complete opposite: 'daß er einst ein Weib gefunden hatte, und zwar ein sehr hübsches und sehr reinliches, das glaubten nicht alle, welche mit der Tatsache bekannt gemacht wurden. Es war aber doch so, und das Weib hatte ihn sogar geliebt' (45–6). The sinister aura already surrounding Samuel intensifies with the description of his approach to business: 'Er [...] saß in seinem Gewölbe wie eine Spinne in ihrem Netz und lauerte auf seine Kunden' (57). In this, Samuel is both fulfilling the stereotype of dangerous Jewish business practice which turns customers into victims, and foreshadowing the predatory nature which his son will demonstrate in later life.

Samuel's wish is that Moses should not follow him into his trade but should 'herausbrechen wie das Licht', a common enough desire of parents for a better life and education for their children, but perhaps also a reference to the attraction of Enlightenment ideals to Germany's Jews (88). Since Moses' birth, Samuel has worked to instil in his son a hunger for learning through his constant emphasis on knowledge as a way of being armed against the (gentile) world and a means to power:

Wenn du hast Kunst und wenn du hast Geld, kannst du sie stecken alle in den Sack. Und wenn du jetzt sitzt im Winkel, kannst du denken: du bist die Katz, und die Mäus tanzen vor dir und pfeifen dir zum Hohn. Laß sie pfeifen und lern; wenn der jungen Katz sind gewachsen die Krallen, kann sie spielen mit der Maus und die Maus hat das Schlimmste davon. (60)

This threatening attitude towards the outside world is repeated when Samuel expresses his wish that Moses should be equipped to avenge the insults he himself has suffered: 'Ein großer Mann soll er werden; er soll alles haben, was er will. Ein Knecht war ich, er soll ein Herr sein im fremden Volk, und leben will ich in seinem Leben' (74). Samuel's ambitions for Moses also exemplify the 'Jewish' syntax which Raabe uses when reporting Samuel's speech, emphasising once more the difference between him and his Christian neighbours.

Moses, who has absorbed from his father the desire for power, does indeed break out of Samuel's ghetto and the narrow confines of Neustadt. If Samuel personifies the dirty 'Trödeljude' (36) who speaks sub-standard German, in Moses this topos alters radically. Physically he leaves behind the traditional way of life of his father when he leaves the shop and the town for university; mentally he had left it several years earlier. In sharp contrast to Samuel, Moses is the 'enlightened Jew'. As he grows older, his spoken German loses the influence of his father's Jewish speech patterns. His education does indeed serve him as a weapon, but the personal cost has been great: 'Ein Kind, ein wahres, rechtes, echtes Kind war er eigentlich nie gewesen' (62). During his childhood, Moses is 'immer mehr beschäftigt, die bunte Mannigfaltigkeit des Lebens aufzulösen und sie in Fächer einer unbarmherzigen Logik zu ordnen. Je mehr Wissen er aufhäufte, desto kälter wurde sein Herz' (88). His lack of emotional vulnerability and his overly rational mind are demonstrated by an episode from the boys' childhood, the death of a playmate:

'Wohin wird sie nun gehen, wenn sie tot ist?' fragte der Jude, ohne seinen Freund dabei anzusehen. Moses schien für sich allein tief darüber nachzugrübeln, und das Grübeln schien das Gefühl in den Hingergrund zu drängen.

'In den blauen Himmel, zu den Engeln, zu dem lieben Gott geht sie!' flüsterte Hans. (54)

Moses takes this quite literally, commenting on how cold Sophie will become on the way to heaven. Making the contrast between the two quite clear, the narrator adds: 'Er [Hans] konnte über das, was hinter

der dunklen Tür vorging, nicht solche Fragen aufwerfen, wie der kleine, scharfe semitische Dialektiker ihm zur Seite; er war zu unglücklich dazu' (54–5).

Moses' clinical, unemotional reaction to this death seems to foreshadow in a weaker form his response to his father's death, ten years later. The day Moses comes top of the class in the *Abitur* proves significant for more than just facilitating his entry to university and the wider world. It is also the day on which Samuel reveals to his son the extent of his wealth, which will eventually become Moses' as the prize for his years of study:

Es war eine böse Minute, in welcher Samuel Freudenstein seinem Sohne verkündete, daß er ein reicher Mann sei und daß der Sohn es dereinst sein werde. [...] Was dunkel in Moses' Seele war, wurde von diesem Augenblick an noch dunkler, heller wurde nichts; der Egoismus richtete sich dräuend empor und streckte hungrige Polypenarme aus, um damit die Welt zu umfassen. Das Dasein des Vaters war in diesem sich überstürzenden, wild heranschwellenden Gedankensturm nichts mehr, es war ausgelöscht, als ob es nie gewesen sei. (109–10)

The next day, Samuel suffers a stroke. Hans visits the Freudensteins and finds Moses watching his unconscious father, showing no emotion, but rather waiting, wishing, for his father's death:

Es war, als sei er mit dem Examentag um einen Kopf höher geworden, der Ausdruck seiner Augen war unbeschreiblich, – es war, um ein schreckliches Gleichnis zu gebrauchen, als ob der Todesengel auf das Niederfallen des letzten Sandkornes lausche. (106)

Under Samuel's guidance, Moses has collected a battery of armaments, including fearsome powers of logic and argument, which his father intended to be protection against a hostile world, but Moses' upbringing has also killed his capacity to feel for anyone else, whether it be true friendship for Hans, respect for women, or love for his father. The image of Moses as the angel of death waiting for the sands of time to run out recurs a few pages later in a way which

strongly suggests Moses' complicity, psychological rather than physical, in his father's stroke. After father and son have worked late into the night over the account books and money chests, Moses gives his father a severe fright on the day of his collapse, waking him by placing a long-unused hourglass by the bed: 'Der Sand in der Uhr rieselte nieder – nieder, und die Augen des Greises wurden immer starrer' (112). That Moses is to some extent guilty of causing his father's death is at least the impression given by the Freudensteins' housekeeper, Esther, as Hans's distant cousin, Base Schlotterbeck, reports: 'Sein Vater sei um seinetwillen gestorben und er sei ein schlechter Mensch und sie habe es nie geglaubt, daß es also sei, bis zum Tode des alten Samuel' (227).

It is thus as a wealthy man but a confirmed and absolute egoist that Moses sets off with Hans for university a few weeks later. An incident as he leaves Kröppelstraße emphasises his emotional isolation as well as his desire to shake off his past. Gathered to give Moses their blessing are four old Jewish ladies, one of them Esther. Moses greets their wishes 'mit schlecht verhehltem Ekel und Verdruß' and their blessings turn to curses: 'Sie verglichen ihn mit Absalom, dem Sohne Davids, und manchem andern alttestamentlichen Übeltäter. "Hat er gelernt zuviel, ist er geworden zu klug, wird er werden ein Verräter an seinem Volk!"' (119). Initially, their curses seem to have little effect, for Moses finishes a successful university career with a stunning display of intellectual virtuosity during his viva and his keen wit and attractive appearance then enable him to make his way in society. Their prophecy of Moses as a traitor to his people comes true soon enough, however, whether those people are taken to be German or Jewish. Moses' relationship with Germany is described by him as one of convenience in a long speech to which the horrified Hans can only listen in silence:

Ich habe das Recht, nur da ein Deutscher zu sein, wo es mir beliebt, und das Recht, diese Ehre in jedem beliebigen Augenblick aufzugeben. Wir Juden sind doch die wahren Kosmopoliten, die Weltbürger von Gottes Gnaden [...]. Durch lange Jahrhunderte hatte diese Ausnahmestellung ihre großen Unannehmlichkeiten für uns; jetzt aber fangen die angenehmen Seiten des



Verhältnisses an, zutage zu treten. Wir können ruhig stehen, während ihr euch abhetzt, quält und ängstet. Die Erfolge, welche ihr gewinnt, erringt ihr für uns mit, eure Niederlagen brauchen uns nicht zu kümmern. [...] Wir sind Passagiere auf eurem Schiff, das nach dem Ideal des besten Staats steuert; aber wenn die Barke scheitert, so ertrinkt nur ihr; – wir haben unsere Schwimmgürtel und schaukeln lustig und wohlbehalten unter den Trümmern. (128–9)

This is the passage to which Fritsch referred and which Hahne, and others in the Raabe-Gesellschaft, accepted as evidence of Raabe's personal position towards the Jews. It is not difficult to imagine that words such as these coming from a Jew may well have made a lasting negative impression on many German readers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moses' speech touches on almost every transgression which at some point or another has been laid at the door of the Jews in modern times. The depiction of the Jews as unpatriotic, untrustworthy cosmopolitans who are loyal only to each other, exploiters of the hard labour of others who take without giving anything in return and would quite happily see Germany and the Germans founder when it is no longer in their interests to save them, corresponds to many stereotypes and preconceived ideas of the time. More than just the content, it is the straightforward, unashamed delivery which also makes Moses' longest uninterrupted speech so memorable and so hard to reconcile with an image of its author as being anything but deeply prejudiced against the Jews. Moses is certainly not shown to redeem himself later in the novel; in fact, his behaviour is entirely in accordance with these stereotypes. His treachery continues in Paris, where he reports back to the reactionary authorities in Germany on the activities of German dissidents who fled to France after the 1848 revolution. This is not out of a late-dawning loyalty but purely for money, as his abandoned wife Kleophea, the daughter of the household where Hans is a tutor, reports:

Ich glaube, wir nahmen es nicht allzu genau mit unserer Ehre, wir hatten zu viel Geld nötig, um uns mit lächerlichen Vorurteilen zu befassen. Wir knüpften Korrespondenzen mit allerlei merkwürdigen, hochgestellten

Personen in Deutschland an und schrieben Briefe, die uns sehr gut bezahlt wurden. (456)

Raabe's initial plan for *Der Hungerpastor* ended with the death of Moses, an idea he later dropped in favour of a different style of retribution. While Moses achieves outward success, becoming a Privy Councillor, Raabe has him die socially as a despised pariah:

Man vernahm in Grunzenow nicht eher wieder etwas [...] als im Jahre achtzehnhundertzweiundfünfzig, wo er [Moses], verachtet von denen, welche ihn gebrauchten, verachtet von denen, gegen die er gebraucht wurde, den Titel Geheimer Hofrat erhalten hatte, *bürgerlich tot* im furchtbarsten Sinne des Wortes. (461)

The depiction of Moses as a traitor to the Jewish people may have been less shocking for the text's original readers than his purely selfish feelings towards Germany. That he is a 'Verräter an seinem Volk' is another of those problems which confronts today's reader, for, as Raabe himself argued and some critics have accepted, by turning away from Judaism and hiding his Jewish past Moses becomes a renegade, something which could allow his behaviour to be criticised in the text without that criticism necessarily attacking him as a Jew. However, the major obstacle to not regarding his portrayed negative behaviour as implicit criticism of his Jewishness, is that the actions under scrutiny, his change of religion and of name, are specific to the German-Jewish experience and, like the earlier depiction of Moses as disloyal and self-centred, formed part of the recognised library of stereotypes about the Jews which existed when Raabe wrote *Der Hungerpastor*. But before considering in detail the defence of 'Moses as Jewish renegade', it is first necessary to examine the nature of Moses' treachery towards his own people.

Hans learns of the transformation of Moses Freudenstein, a Jew, into Theophile Stein, a Catholic, when the two meet in Berlin after Moses' first sojourn in Paris. Hans, not surprisingly, is shocked and cannot help but question the sincerity of Moses' conversion:

‘Und du glaubst? *Du glaubst?* Du bist gläubig zur katholischen Kirche übergetreten?’

‘Zur alleinseligmachenden’, sagte Theophile. ‘Ich, der Sohn Samuels, des jüdischen Trödlers, habe es vollbracht im Besitz meiner gesunden fünf Sinne und bei vollständigem geistigem Bewußtsein.’ (245–6)

This, it later turns out, is far from being the case. Two other much more pressing reasons presented themselves: obtaining a good position in society and making a well-connected marriage:

‘Mit Recht bist du im unklaren über den innersten Grund meines Übertritts zum Katholizismus. Ist es nicht so?’

Hans nickte. [...]

‘Ich wünsche Vortragender Rat im Kabinett Seiner Majestät des Königs zu werden!’ schloß Moses Freudenstein aus der Kröppelstraße zu Neustadt. [...] Ich bin ganz offen, Hans. Es ist meine Absicht, mich um die Neigung und späterhin um die kleine Hand des Fräuleins Kleophea Götz zu bewerben.’ (269)

In this respect, Moses appears as a Heine-like figure. That his baptism was motivated not by conviction but by a desire to improve his station in life must surely remind the reader of Heine’s famous utterance about the opportune uses of conversion when seeking to get on in Christian society: ‘Der Taufzettel ist das Entréebillet zur europäischen Kultur.’<sup>20</sup> Moses himself had earlier introduced the poet into the text during his ‘unpatriotic’ speech of chapter 10, given well before he converted: ‘Mein Freund Harry Heine in Paris bleibt trotz seines weißen Katechumenengewandes ein echter Jude, dem alles Taufwasser, aller französische Champagner und deutsche Rheinwein das semitische Blut nicht aus den Adern spült’ (129). What he said then about the permanence of Jewish nature despite baptism, implying that a change of religion is ultimately pointless, makes his later behaviour seem even more suspect. Before converting, Moses had nothing but contempt for Jews who go out of their way to adapt and assimilate, calling it foolish to give up the benefits

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20 Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by K. Briegleb, 6 vols (Munich: Hanser, 1968–76), VI/i, 622.

of cosmopolitan independence: 'Einzelne Narren unter uns mögen diese günstige Stellung aufgeben und sich um ein Adoptivvaterland zu Tode grämen à la Löb Baruch, germanice Ludwig Börne' (129).<sup>21</sup> His later change of heart is an example of the Jewish behaviour Moses had described in his speech, such as reserving the right to switch loyalties and acting for no-one's benefit but one's own. Furthermore, these extracts contain two ideas which were fundamental concepts of antisemitic thought. Raabe, writing in 1863 of 'das semitische Blut' which outlasts baptism, is using the language of biological, racial antisemitism, the new variant of an age-old prejudice which began to gain ground around that time. Yet he also draws on the older variant of national-based prejudice with Moses' description of the 'Adoptivvaterland': the Jew, being non-German by origin cannot, however hard he tries, actually become German. He can only stand in relation to Germany as a child to an adopted parent, a relationship which does not presuppose any reciprocal feeling from parent to child. That such ideas emphasising the separation of Germans and Jews are expressed in the text by a Jew, and in approving fashion, can only lend them weight and credence.

Beyond the self-interest which motivates Moses, the text also hints strongly at an element of conscious deception, a cover-up of those characteristics which could betray his Jewish background. The second part of his conversion, his change of name from something so markedly Jewish to one with distinct Christian overtones, falls into this category. Moses' physical description in *Der Hungerpastor* emphasises his attractive, elegant appearance rather than any features which could be defined as distinctly Jewish: 'Moses Freudenstein war allmählich ein schöner Jüngling geworden' (106). Only his name could give the game away, once Moses has acquired a circle of acquaintances unaware of his earlier incarnation as the son of the Neustadt *Trödeljude*. When Hans and Moses accidentally meet in a

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21 Börne (1786–1837), converted in 1818, 'not out of religious conviction but to open the door to wider public activity', according to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, and like Heine was a political exile in Paris, where he was regarded as leader of the emigrés.

crowded Berlin tavern, Moses is at great pains to ensure that his old friend does not betray his past to those around him:

‘Sprich nicht so laut! O wie ich mich freue! Nenne meinen alten Namen nicht mehr, ich will dir später sagen warum nicht. Jetzt bin ich der Doktor Theophile Stein. Mach mir hier keine Szene, Freund! Alle die Narren sehen auf uns! Nachher – morgen, nachher!’

Moses Freudenstein schob den bestürzten Jugendfreund von sich. [...] ‘Geh zu deinem Tisch zurück! Errege kein Aufsehen, es hängt viel für mich davon ab.’ (218)

It is of course ironic that the arch-cynic and egocentric should have chosen such a ‘godly’ name. Although its meaning – loved by God – is not specifically Christian, Theophilus was an early Christian convert, to whom Luke addressed the writing of his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and therefore the name has distinct Christian overtones.<sup>22</sup> More than just being a symbolic rejection of his past, Moses’ renaming, perceived by him as a disguise, recalls a fear which existed at the time the book was written and for many years after, that educated, modern, assimilated Jews were more dangerous than their forebears because without the external features which marked them out, i.e. ghettoisation or specifically Jewish speech, clothing, trade or name, they could pass undetected in society.

Moses’ deceitful nature, of which his change of name and religion is but a part, has been emphasised throughout the text and culminates in the scene in which Hans, who has innocently accepted Moses, belatedly realises the truth. The scene goes one step further than usual and does not merely suggest Moses’ wrongdoing but positively paints him in blacker colours than ever before as a thoroughly evil, destructive and morally dangerous character. Hans is severely ill and Moses, thinking him unconscious, has read through his letters and made muttered threats about the ‘Tölpel’:

Aber er irrte sich: Hans sah klar, ganz klar, erschrecklich klar. Zwischen Sein und Nichtsein, Bewußtsein und Bewußtlosigkeit kam ihm die Erkenntnis

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22 Luke 1.3 and Acts 1.1.

gleich einem Blitz. Er sah die Augen des Mannes, der vor ihm stand, leuchten wie die eines bösen Geistes, der sich an einem Unglück weidet. Die ganze Herzlosigkeit dessen, den er einst seinen Freund nannte, offenbarte sich in diesen Augen, diesem Lächeln. Hans Unwirrsch fühlte zum erstenmal in seinem Leben, was der Haß sei; er haßte die schlüpfrige, ewig wechselnde Kreatur, die sich einst Moses Freudenstein nannte, von diesem Augenblick an mit ganzer Seele. (281–2)

This passage presents Moses as being entirely without humanity. As well as being a comment on his inherent deception, the image of him as a slippery, ever-changing creature suggests a snake shedding its skin and the strong sense of the demonic in his description likewise makes him less human. The idea of Moses' power for destruction and evil is repeated in Hans's judgement when it is suspected that he has eloped with Kleophea: 'Diese Mann würde ihre Seele wie ihren Leib töten' (302). Similarly, Kleophea's own description after her abandonment unites the animal with the demonic: 'Der Dämon, der in mir war, suchte in seinem wüsten Hunger nach seinesgleichen, und als er fand, was er suchte, da faßten sich die Bestien mit den Zähnen' (454). All of these images point forward to Moses' eventual fate, when, morally dead already, he will end as 'bürgerlich tot'.

The crux of the problem is this: how did Raabe – apparently an enlightened, liberal man who had expressed more than once a determination to be objective and truthful in his writing – come to write a novel which so obviously draws on many clichés and stereotypes about Jews, dirty and greedy in their traditional role, infinitely more dangerous and destructive in their newer incarnation? It would be wrong, however, to create the impression that Raabe advanced an entirely negative picture of Jews in *Der Hungerpastor*, for there are passages early in the text which seem to show genuine sympathy for Jewish suffering, understanding for their condition and maltreatment as well as condemnation of state-sponsored or individual acts of prejudice. Moses appears near the beginning of the story as the victim of the other small boys in the street, an event used by the narrator to set the scene regarding attitudes towards the Jews:

In jenen vergangenen Tagen herrschte [...] noch eine Mißachtung der Juden, die man so stark ausgeprägt glücklicherweise heute nicht mehr findet. Die Alten wie die Jungen des Volkes Gottes hatten viel zu dulden von ihren christlichen Nachbarn; unendlich langsam ist das alte, schauerliche Hepphepp, welches so unsägliches Unheil anrichtete, verklungen in der Welt. Vorzüglich waren die Kinder unter den Kindern elend dran, und der kleine, gelbe, kränkliche Moses führte gewiß kein angenehmes Dasein in der Kröppelstraße. (41)

Perhaps the estimation that there has been much progress since the 'bad old days' is a little over-optimistic, but it is nevertheless clear from this passage that such prejudices are held to belong firmly in the past, not in the more enlightened present. Hans gains in stature when he realises that it is wrong to spit on the Jewish child as the other children are doing and the other Kröppelstraße Christians are diminished in theirs by their acceptance, even enjoyment, of the spectacle: 'Man lachte, zuckte die Achseln und hetzte wohl gar noch ein wenig; es hatte eben wenig auf sich, wenn der schmutzige Judenjunge ein bißchen in seiner Menschenwürde gekränkt wurde' (42). Their approval of violence when the victim is Jewish contrasts strongly with the narrative's prior highlighting of Jewish suffering. Hans's fight to defend Moses, who for the first time dares to fight back, is in comparison 'eine glorreiche Stunde' (42). The narrator shows distinctly whose side he is on, describing the Freudensteins as people 'über welche die Kröppelstraße sehr mit Unrecht sich erhaben dünkte' (43).

In other places the narrator's disapproval of intolerance is demonstrated via irony and mockery of the old prejudices, such as in this description of the Kröppelstraße's version of the ritual slaughter myth:

Übertrieben war es doch, wenn die Mütter ihre hoffnungsvollen Sprößlinge vor dem Trödellden dadurch warnten, daß sie behaupteten, man verfertige darin Würste aus dem Fleisch kleiner unartiger und unschuldiger Christenkinder und benutze dazu statt ihrer Därme ihre wollenen Strümpfe. (48)

Even members of Hans's family, otherwise portrayed completely positively, are susceptible to this type of folklore. When Hans comes home one day after visiting Moses, utterly speechless with amazement and envy that his friend will be going to grammar school, the conclusion to which Base Schlotterbeck immediately leaps is that he has been cursed by the Jews: 'Jesus, sie haben es fertiggebracht, sie haben dem Kinde den Kopf verwirrt! O das Volk, das Volk! Hans, Hans, mein Liebling, komm zu dir und gib aus, was dir passiert ist, was sie dir getan haben!' (63). The text also repeats the apocryphal story of how Moses Mendelssohn, arriving from Berlin in another town for the first time, had to pay the hated *Leibzoll* and was registered along with 'drei Rinder, vierzehn Schweine, zehn Kalber'. The past prejudices embodied in this episode could not be more harshly mocked and criticised:

Die Schlacht bei Jena, welche so manche Niederträchtigkeit, so manchen Unsinn über den Haufen warf, machte auch diesem Skandal ein Ende, aber Anno fünfzehn hätte mancher liebende Landesvater die gute, alte Sitte allergnädigst gern wiedereingeführt. (47)

In a less obvious fashion the narrator's sympathy is demonstrated in the way Samuel's motivation for supporting his son's education is above all a desire to protect him from the impact of prejudice. Like Hans's father, Anton, Samuel appreciates the value of learning, but can he really be blamed for valuing it as a weapon, even though this seems less noble in contrast with Anton's appreciation of learning for learning's sake?

Doch wenn dieser sie [Wissenschaften] um ihrer selbst willen einst verehrte, so schätzte jener sie, weil er darin den Talisman glaubte gefunden zu haben, der zugleich mit dem Gelde ein Schild und eine Waffe sei für sein immer noch ob seiner und der Väter Sünden so vielfach bedrängtes und zurückgesetztes Volk. Das Leben, welches dem Manne so arg mitgespielt hatte, hatte ihm immer von neuem diese Lehre vor die Augen gerückt. (59)

Similarly, care needs to be taken when judging Moses. To what extent should he be blamed for his undoubtedly contemptible behav-



iour, given his upbringing and his father's intensive but misguided efforts which must play some part in making him what he is? This idea is not emphasised in the text, but together with the undeniable compassion attached to Samuel's motivation, it adds to the confusion of empathetic understanding and facile cliché which fills this text.

Critics have advanced numerous theories to explain this dichotomy. Some have sought answers in Raabe's non-fiction; Horst Denkler particularly has set out the minutiae of Raabe's contact with Jews, gleaned from his diaries and letters, as evidence that Raabe was free from antisemitic sentiments.<sup>23</sup> Robert Holub took a far more intellectually satisfying approach, indicating the inherent pitfalls in Denkler's approach; namely that amassing information about Raabe's private life and opinions cannot detract from the fact that in discussing the reception of *Der Hungerpastor*, the text must be the primary evidence.<sup>24</sup> In his 'Verantwortungsethik' article, Denkler went so far as to ignore Raabe's literary output entirely, taking an approach which can crudely be described as 'some of his best friends were Jews'. He also saw two possible real-life role models for Moses Freudenstein in the figures of Joel Jacoby and Friedrich Stahl. Jacoby (1807–1863) was a baptised Jew, a press censor and police informer, who worked for several governments during the course of his life and was much hated for his activities by supporters of the revolution and of liberalism, especially as he had initially been in favour of revolution. Stahl (1802–1861) was likewise a baptised Jew, politically active in conservative circles, a proponent of the idea of the 'Christian State' and opponent of Jewish emancipation. Denkler's contention that Moses Freudenstein's negative image somehow becomes less significant because he is based on a real character and therefore

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23 Denkler, 'Das "wirkliche Juda" und der "Renegat": Moses Freudenstein als Kronzeuge für Raabes Verhältnis zu Juden und Judentum', *GQ* 60 (1987), 5–18 (pp. 7–8). Also id.: 'Verantwortungsethik: Zu Wilhelm Raabes Umgang mit Juden und Judentum', in *Conditio Judaica*, ed. by Horch and Denkler, II, 148–68.

24 Holub, 'Raabe's Impartiality: A Reply to Horst Denkler', *GQ* 60 (1988), 617–22.

has an innate justification of his own is hard to sustain, despite the apparent similarities. Whether Moses represents Stahl or not, it is still disturbing that Raabe should have chosen a Jew to be the morally evil character in the novel. Similarly unsatisfactory is Denkler's theory that Raabe dared not attack too obviously the recently deceased Stahl and so ignored characteristics which would have rendered him recognisable, using instead the less important Jacoby as a substitute: 'Schlug er den Sack und meinte er den Esel?' (13). Denkler cannot answer this question, and so his defence of Raabe on these grounds remains no more than supposition. Furthermore, as noted in the case of Freytag, using realism as a defence simplifies the problem by overlooking how the author presents his details, lessening authorial responsibility for the finished text.

Denkler also excused the negative characterisation of Moses on the grounds that he is not a representative figure. As was noted earlier, he is condemned as a 'Verräter an seinem Volk' as he sets off for university. Denkler used Raabe's own defence to show that he sought to portray Moses not as a typical Jew but as an outcast from his own people: Moses 'erweist sich [...] als Abtrünniger in mehrfacher Hinsicht'.<sup>25</sup> Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz similarly did not see Moses as inherently evil but as an example of human weakness paralleled in other (non-Jewish) characters in other works: 'So lösen sich die starren Zügen der bösen Maske Moses Freudensteins allmählich in Merkmale menschlicher Schwäche auf'.<sup>26</sup> Support for Denkler's and Goetz-Stankiewicz's conclusions can indeed be found in Raabe's replies to two critical letters from Jewish readers, in which he used this justification for his portrayal of Moses. In the first to a Rabbi from Gestemünde, Raabe states bluntly: 'Für mich hat der Renegat nichts mit dem rechten Israel zu thun und wird letzteres in dem Buche mit dem größtmöglichen Respekt behandelt'.<sup>27</sup> The following year, answering a similar criticism from a Jewish lady,

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25 Denkler, 'Das "wirkliche Juda" und der "Renegat"', p. 7.

26 Goetz-Stankiewicz, 'Die böse Maske Moses Freudensteins: Gedanken zum *Hungerpastor*', JRG 10 (1969), 7–32 (p. 32).

27 Letter to S. Bachenheimer, 24.2.1902, *Sämtliche Werke*, supp. volume II, 437.

Philippine Ullmann, he uses almost the same wording: 'Behandle ich nicht im *Hungerpastor* das wirkliche Juda mit allem Respekt? Ist es *meine* Schuld, wenn Sie den Renegaten noch zu den Ihrigen rechnen?'.<sup>28</sup> Two things must be borne in mind. Firstly, Raabe was defending himself against criticism from Jewish readers and his responses would have been influenced accordingly; secondly, to accept Moses as an exceptional case – which may well have been Raabe's intention – overlooks the fact that he and his father are the major representatives of Jewish figures in the novel. Esther's role is minute and only twice are Jews otherwise mentioned at all, members of the Jewish community in Neustadt who assist Moses after his father's death and some Polish Jews Hans meets and converses with in Hebrew while travelling. Neither incident is such as to counteract the overwhelming and enduring impression made by Samuel and Moses.

Whatever the arguments advanced in mitigation, it is inescapable that the novel's dualistic structure itself, like that of *Soll und Haben*, argues for the prosecution rather than the defence. This dualism is presented in the first paragraph in the motif of the Hindu gods Vishnu and Shiva, the opposing principles of light and darkness, good and evil, creation and destruction. The contrast continues throughout the novel as the underlying theme of hunger shows its opposing sides: the hunger for the ideal, for love and creativity is confronted with the hunger for power and egotistical advancement of the self. Above this dualism of opposing principles there runs on the surface of the novel the parallel and constantly contrasted development of the two contemporaries, Hans and Moses. Born on the same day, the similarities between them are presented in order to make the ensuing divergence more noticeable. The darkness of Moses' environment, both actual and metaphorical, has already been noted. Yet Hans's circumstances at his birth differed very little from this: 'In einem niedern, dunkeln Zimmer, in das wenig frische Luft und noch weniger Sonne drang, erwachte Hans zum Bewußtsein' (19). Despite the same starting-point, the hunger both boys feel leads

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28 Letter to P. Ullmann, 4.2.1903, *ibid.*, 445.

them apart. In every respect of their emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual existence they are shown to be opposites. Martin Gubser sees ‘das eigentlich Antisemitische an *Der Hungerpastor*’ in this dualistic structure.<sup>29</sup> In order to make Hans appear as rounded and interesting a character as possible, Gubser says, Raabe simply used the opposite of each positive characteristic for the description of Moses, avoiding realistic characterisation ‘zugunsten einer grellen Klischeefigur, die er in einem Juden finden zu können glaubt. Mit diesem Trick stehen ihm sofort alle tradierten Vorurteile als Epitheta ornantia zur Verfügung, und Raabe schöpft dann auch fleißig aus der Quelle’ (91).

In a persuasively argued article, Walter Sokel places this dualism in the context of what he terms ‘ontological antisemitism’, a hostility towards Jews which focuses on their actual *being* rather than religious differences, economic practices or any attribute of character or personality in particular.<sup>30</sup> On a timescale of prejudice, he places this variant of antisemitism after dogmatic Christian belief had begun to give way to more secularised thought but before the pseudo-scientific theories of the likes of Marr, Dühring and Lagarde had established a ‘scientific’ base for prejudice. Sokel locates *Der Hungerpastor* within this intermediate type of antisemitism, arguing that the novel seeks to ‘vindicate hatred of the Jews to a modern consciousness that feels accountable to the humanist ethos of the Enlightenment and claims to stand above medieval prejudice’ (158). Raabe can therefore be seen as part of the ontological process in that Moses is judged in a way which condemns his very being as wanting, not in a religious or race-oriented dimension. It is his nature that is condemned as cold, calculating, egotistic and diabolically motivated and this is continuously emphasised by the dualism which places Hans before the reader as a positive example.

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29 Gubser, *Literarischer Antisemitismus*, p. 90.

30 Sokel, ‘Dualistic Thinking and the Rise of Ontological Anti-Semitism in Nineteenth Century Germany: From Schiller’s Franz Moor to Wilhelm Raabe’s Moses Freudenstein’, in *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, ed. by Gilman and Katz (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 154–72 (p. 154).

However, Sokel concludes that Raabe's 'enlightened humane-ness, irony and feeling for complexity' separate him from those who acclaimed him as a prophet of Nazism (167–8). If Sokel is right, an answer must still be found for how Raabe could combine 'enlightened humaneness' with such a use of cliché and stereotype that interpretation of his novel as antisemitic was not difficult. Did he have a conscious motive or was he unconsciously responding to his own prejudices? Regarding the former, and without suggesting that Raabe wrote with a desire to propagate certain ideas and values, like Freytag did, it could well be relevant that he had not had a major literary success since the publication of *Die Chronik der Sperlingsgasse* eight years previously and at the time of writing *Der Hungerpastor* was still seeking to establish himself in the public eye. It is known from letters and recorded utterances how deeply he sought public recognition and popularity, possibly because writing was his sole source of income. It is far from inconceivable that the personal ambition of an author looking for this acclaim influenced the novel inasmuch as Raabe consciously wrote what he thought would appeal to the masses.

But perhaps this is too cynical a view, for the available evidence suggests that Raabe was probably more tolerant and liberal than many. He would nevertheless be susceptible to accepting and using stereotypes, possibly subconsciously, as Holub says in his 'Reply': '*Der Hungerpastor* clearly shows that he was not able to transcend the rampant prejudices which marked German society' (621). It is useful to refine this idea further, as it seems that an answer may well lie in a consideration of the different types of prejudice demonstrated in the text. For while Samuel Freudenstein is a stereotype of the *Trödeljude*, the early part of the text which portrays him and the prejudices of the Kröppelstraße Christians is also very much directed against the traditional physical abuse and moral degradation of the Jews. Such intolerance is frequently mocked and criticised, but after Samuel's death the criticism of Jewish persecution dries up entirely when Moses becomes the sole Jewish representative in the novel. Moses, however, represents a very different type from Samuel, modern, at ease with

new ideas, one who has broken out of the confines of traditional Jewish life and made a place for himself in the outside, German, world. Instead of the old prejudices, the idea of the 'dirty Jew' or the ritual slaughter myth, no longer relevant in this different situation, there are new ones: the Jew as superficial German but fundamental cosmopolitan, corrupting, disloyal, untrustworthy. Hans's defence of Moses as a boy, the 'glorreiche Stunde', is presented as just and good and is an action taken to defend him from the earlier, more primitive type of anti-Jewish feeling. What threat, after all, does the five-year-old boy pose? Hans's later rejection of Moses comes after the latter's conversion and change of name when he is a member of the Berlin intelligentsia and portrayed as infinitely more dangerous and threatening than his father.

Because of this clear distinction, there would seem to be grounds for believing that the text's dichotomous mixture of sympathy and aversion is evidence of a deep ambivalence on Raabe's part towards the new type of Jew and their place in German society. Thus, he could genuinely condemn 'das alte, schauerliche Hepphepp' and yet hold Moses up to criticism within the same text, because of a sharp differentiation in the type of Jew being portrayed. Considered thus, Moses and his father become more than just representatives of different generations. They also represent a different type of threat to their gentile surroundings and the greater the threat, the harsher the presentation in the text. Regarding the early pro-Jewish and later anti-Jewish strands of the text, Egon Schwarz places them in a similar context to the one described here. He also suggests a logical basis why this should be, seeing Moses' portrayal as embodying criticism of the emancipation process which furthers his behaviour:

Das wohlwollende Verständnis des Anfangs gerät in Vergessenheit, sobald der Roman in Fahrt kommt und sich anschickt, Moses Freudenstein auf seinem Weg zu begleiten. Daß er sich als Scheusal entpuppt, kann unter diesen Umständen weniger der Gesellschaft zur Last gelegt werden, deren Produkt er ist, als der Emanzipation, derzufolge die Juden die ihnen

zugewiesenen bescheidenen Plätze mit den offenen Sphären vertauschen, wo sie die existierende neuzeitliche Korruption nutzen und vermehren.<sup>31</sup>

Gubser too reads the text similarly, while broadening the context of Raabe's antipathies to the manifestations of the modern in society, in which the Jews played an important part:

In der Konterkarierung von Unwirrschs Idealen scheinen die drei großen Animositäten von Raabe [...] durch: die Feindschaft gegen die Großstadt, die Feindschaft gegen den aufgeklärten bürgerlichen Intellektuellen und, diese beiden in sich vereinigend, die Feindschaft gegen die Juden. Moses Freudenstein trägt schwer an der ihm vom Erzähler aufgebürdeten Last.<sup>32</sup>

Without unambiguous statements from Raabe about his position on Jewish emancipation, it is impossible to tell if the text, although written before full emancipation was granted throughout Germany in 1871, was informed by Raabe's dislike of the already well-emancipated Jewish middle-class. Yet the text itself supports, rather than contradicts, this idea, suggesting that it should not be rejected out of hand. 'Seit man uns nicht mehr als Brunnenvergifter und Christkindermörder totschrägt und verbrennt, sind wir viel besser gestellt als ihr alle, wie ihr euch auch nennen mögt, ihr Arier' (129), says Moses in chapter 10. In other words, it is the emancipation of the Jews from their old role and the old prejudices which enables them to progress socially and economically and exploit the Germans in the manner he describes in that speech. This idea of a differentiated threat and a differentiated portrayal of pre- and post-emancipation Jews necessitates something of a rethink in the way Raabe is viewed. It removes much of the ambiguity from *Der Hungerpastor*, suggesting that there was a distinct prejudice on his part which influenced the way he wrote. It is something to bear in mind during

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31 Schwarz, 'Das Bild der Juden in deutschen und französischen Romanen des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. by Kocka, 2 vols (Munich: dtv, 1988), II, 421–50 (p. 432).

32 Gubser, *Literarischer Antisemitismus*, p. 91.

examination of the remaining texts, in order to see whether it holds true for them also.

Raabe broke off writing *Der Hungerpastor*, with its mixture of positive and negative Jewish images, to turn to the novella, *Holunderblüte*, likewise with a Jewish central character but with a very different approach. The story is the reminiscences of a doctor about his student days in Prague when he became captivated by a young Jewish girl, Jemima Löw, and by the atmosphere of the ancient Jewish cemetery, the *Beth-Chaim* [House of Life]. There are a couple of similarities with *Der Hungerpastor*: the ghetto features in both, and in choosing an occupation for Jemima's father, Raabe once again resorted to the topos of the Trödeljude. However, there is a striking difference in portrayal between Jemima and Moses, characters who were created almost concurrently. The positive presentation of Jemima, still rooted in a traditional Jewish environment like Samuel, can be seen as evidence supporting the contention that Raabe's perception of a differentiated Jewish threat affected the characters' portrayal. Her depiction concentrates to a greater extent on physical appearance; Jemima is 'nicht unzierlich', 'ein liebliches Bild', a 'reizende Geschöpf' (94; 98; 99). The narrator describes how his heart and nerves are of 'zähem Material' and yet he was susceptible to the charms of this young Jewish girl (87). In another place perhaps, Jemima would not have seemed so attractive, but with the mystery of the *Beth-Chaim* around them, Jemima gains her own aura of magic. Her image is otherworldly and illusory rather than erotic. Supernatural terms are to be found throughout the story: Jemima is a 'Kobold', a 'Spuk', a 'kleine Hexe' (96; 98; 100), and Hermann, despite his education and a certain stolidity of character, is bewitched: 'der Zauber lag einmal auf mir, und es war ein mächtiger Zauber und sollte ein böser Zauber sein' (99). His existence becomes dreamlike and he is tortured by images of the girl. The spell which has been cast upon him by Jemima and the atmosphere of the cemetery cause him physical pain, and he considers himself 'fieberkrank' (101).

Jemima is not portrayed as flirtatious: she treats Hermann's feelings for her with maturity beyond her years. When he declares



that he loves her, she sees that his declaration does not truly come from the heart and is more likely motivated by his sympathy for her or by the emotion of the moment following the story she tells of the life and premature death of her historical alter ego, the dancer Mahalath. Her maturity and practicality contrast strongly with Hermann's dreams and illusions although in one respect she wrongs him, asking 'wie lange wirst du wohl denken an Jemima Löw aus der Judenstadt zu Prag in der Zeit der Fliederblüte?' (108). The answer, of course, is that Hermann is driven to return to Prague the following spring and decades later the memory of her remains vivid. Jemima's beauty is not the over-riding impression created by this novella; rather it is the emphasis on the unfamiliarity of the ghetto of which she is a part, which Florian Krobb has summarised as 'die verlockende Fremdheit einer unbekannten, unverständenen Welt'.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the sympathetic telling of the story there are some less complimentary details. Raabe does not refrain from describing the dirty surroundings of the Jewish quarter in Prague, where the people whom Hermann encounters are 'durchgängig häßlich wie die Nacht' (94). To describe the cemetery gatekeeper's Talmud study as 'unergründliche Spitzfindigkeiten' shows an outsider's miscomprehension of the religious practices of orthodox Judaism (102). Such remarks can seem like carelessness on Raabe's part, especially when he also shows sympathy for the 'arggeplagte, mißhandelte, verachtete, angstgeschlagene Generationen' of Prague's Jewish population and compares the cemetery to a ghetto for the dead: 'Seit tausend Jahren hatten sie hier die Toten des Volkes Gottes zusammengedrängt, wie sie die Lebenden eingeschlossen hatten in die engen Mauern des Ghetto' (97). But *Holunderblüte* is above all an outsider's view of a very different world to that which both narrator and author inhabited and it is perhaps not surprising that a lack of understanding should mingle with this otherwise sympathetic portrayal of a Jewish girl.

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33 Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin: Jüdische Frauengestalten in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, *Conditio Judaica* 4 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993), p. 119.

The eponymous heroine of the novella *Frau Salome* is at first sight a complete contrast to Jemima. Salome is a very wealthy, elegant, sophisticated and educated Jewish baroness, a banker's widow, holidaying at her villa in the Harz mountains, seemingly a typecast character, a Madame Ehrenthal who made it. But far from it. As with Jemima, Salome is a sympathetic Jewish character who impresses the reader with her humanity and compassion, both in her concern for Eilike, the painter Querian's neglected daughter, and for the whole village during a serious fire. However, it is emphasised that she is not to be envied, despite her comfortable circumstances. In the retelling of the story of Goethe and the snake he keeps in a jar, taken with little alteration from the original source, Raabe sets up an image in the opening paragraphs which recurs later in the novella and suggests Salome's own assessment of her situation.<sup>34</sup> Raabe describes Goethe addressing the snake: 'Armes Ding! Wie das drinnen steckt und nicht heraus kann, so gern es auch wollte! Ich meine zwiefach, einmal im Zuckerglas und sodann in dem Hauptfutteral, das ihr die Natur gab' (8). Salome says later on that she is 'wie eine fremde Schlange in der Menagerie' (68). During the course of the novella it is revealed why she makes this comparison. Despite her wealth and status she describes herself as a 'geplagte Frau' (67). At fault is the 'Ichor', the blood which flowed in the veins of the Greek gods and differentiated them from mortals, a motif applied to Salome by her long-time friend Scholten, who, with his cantankerous cynicism, is also something of an outsider. Although Salome often uses the first person plural to identify herself with her co-religionists, the identification seems incomplete. As with the gods, the 'Ichor' in her veins distinguishes her from others, but her difference, felt by both sides, makes life difficult: 'die so weit über ganz Europa verbreitete Blutverwandtschaft gab nichts auf den Ichor, sie ärgerte sich sogar dann und wann an dem Ichor, sie ließ es die Kusine häufig merken, daß der Ichor keinen Kurs bei ihr habe' (67). Salome also compares herself to her

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34 The original is in: Falk, *Goethe aus näherm persönlichem Umgange dargestellt* (Leipzig: [n.pub.], 1832), pp. 37–41.

‘Stammesgenosse, der gute Heinrich Heine’ (67), saying that she, like him, is from ‘Affrontenburg’, a reference to Heine’s poem of the same name about the gulf between him and his own relations, his ‘ganze schmutz’ge Sippschaft’ recalling Salome’s ‘krummnasige Verwandtschaft’.<sup>35</sup>

If not completely at home with her *Stammesgenossen*, neither does Salome feel comfortable in non-Jewish society. In this respect, she is like the other characters of the novella, all of whom are outsiders. The lawyer, Scholten, is set apart by his Voltairean cynicism; Querian by his mad genius; Eilike by her strange upbringing and her father’s behaviour; and, although he does not appear physically, Scholten’s friend and correspondent Schwanewede is isolated by his mysticism. Heine himself could also be included in this group of outsiders as his image seems constantly to hover in the background as a point of reference for Salome’s feelings of belonging and yet not belonging. Towards the end of the novella Salome sums up her feelings of being separate and yet not at liberty with some pessimistic words:

Wir stecken in uns, wir stecken in der Menschheit, wir sind gefangen in dem harten Gefängnis der Welt. Wir keuchen nach Freiheit, Erkenntnis, Schönheit, und im günstigsten Falle wird uns gestopft der Mund mit Erde.  
(96)

Again Salome is referring to Heine, this time to the first part of the poem-cycle *Zum Lazarus*, beginning *Laß die heiligen Parabeln*, which expresses similar pessimism. The last stanza runs: ‘Also fragen wir beständig, | Bis man uns mit einer Handvoll | Erde endlich stopft die Mäuler – | Aber ist das eine Antwort?’<sup>36</sup> Like the snake, Salome feels imprisoned, and once again the ghetto is brought to mind, though not the physically confined, crowded streets and houses of Jemima’s Prague: Salome’s restrictions are of a mental nature, but none the less real, akin to the transparent but confining glass in which Goethe’s snake is kept. Krobb draws the comparison between

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35 Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften*, VI/i, 200.

36 *ibid.*, p. 201–2.

Salome and the snake to a conclusion thus: 'Das doppelte Eingesperrtsein in dem Käfig der feindlichen Gesellschaft und einer eigenen Haut, die ebenfalls als unzulänglich empfunden wird, kennzeichnet Frau Salomes *Conditio Judaica*'.<sup>37</sup> More than just superficially, Salome has moved away from her Jewish origins, but it would appear that she now feels unsure of herself and her position. On the one hand, she expresses herself negatively about her Jewish connection, telling Scholten that thinking about it can be unpleasant:

Lassen wir die Toten ruhig unter ihren Steinplatten im Tale Josaphat; die Lebenden machen uns wohl genug zu schaffen, vorzüglich, wenn man eine große Verwandtschaft hat wie ich und einen bei den Namen Wien, Berlin und Frankfurt am Main eine Gänsehaut am heißesten Sommertage überkommt. (66–7)

Yet at moments of stress and emotional difficulty she also expresses a longing to return to the security of her childhood and its Jewish traditions and her usually impeccable *Hochdeutsch* slips to the Jewish syntax of her original environment: 'Jetzt sehne ich mich nach der dunkeln Ecke auf der Weiberseite der Synagoge, wo ich saß mit meiner Mutter und sang, und wo ich hörte ablesen die Thora – das Gesetz' (96).

Throughout this novella, Raabe constantly alludes to the topos of the 'Schöne Jüdin'. Scholten uses not only that phrase and the 'schöne semitische Zauberin' (24) of this chapter's title but many others, sometimes three to a page; 'schöne Dame', 'hebräische Millionärin' 'närrische Judenmadam' and 'jüdische Edelfrau', for example (22; 27; 36). All refer either to Salome's beauty or her origins and are over-emphasised almost *ad absurdum*. What is the reader to make of Scholten's attitude towards Salome? Even if he is only referring to her appearance, everything he says seems designed to emphasise her Jewishness and her difference. When he meets her riding a donkey on the Brocken, he comments that this is not her natural habitat, a remark Salome finishes for him:

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37 Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin*, p. 160.

‘Frau Baronin Salome von Veitor [...] – reitet vortrefflich, nimmt sich ausgezeichnet aus zu Maultier auf einem Felsvorsprung unter den germanischen Buchen und Tannen, würde jedoch unter den Palmen des Orients, auf einem Dromedar, sich –’ ‘Noch viel besser ausnehmen’. (23)

He talks about her ‘krummnasige Verwandtschaft’ and calls the Jews ‘Eure Leute’ (27; 28). He says he is not surprised that some Jews remain committed to the God of their fathers: ‘da er dergleichen aus dem Handel mit alten Kleidern und neuen Papieren aufwachsen läßt’ (66). When he visits her one afternoon and finds her reading the papers he enquires whether she is occupied with the ‘Orientalischen Frage’ (71). Only once does Salome seem to take offence at Scholten’s comments, calling him ‘ein furchtbarer Grobian’ (28). The rest of the time she responds to his comments in kind, even drawing attention to her own Jewishness.

The accentuation and exaggeration of her background seems strange and makes the reader wonder about Raabe’s motivation for writing *Frau Salome* in this manner. But Raabe’s presentation is such that the reader sees behind the stereotype of her position as presented at the story’s outset – the wealthy, ennobled banker’s widow – to the humanity and real personality beneath the typecast image. Is Raabe in some way poking fun or ironising the facile acceptance of old clichés? This is Krobb’s explanation:

Durch die beharrliche Übertreibung bei der Etikettierung der Frau Salome wird der Blick des Lesers durch die Hohlheit der Bezeichnungen hindurch auf das individuelle und das durch das Individuum repräsentierte kollektive Schicksal gelenkt.<sup>38</sup>

In the same context, Raabe’s denial to the magazine editor in 1883 that his writing was biased, on the grounds that his characters balanced out, should also be recalled: ‘Habe ich den *Hungerpastor* geschrieben, so habe ich auch der *Frau Salome* ihr Recht in der Welt zuerkannt.’<sup>39</sup> It could well be understood from this that Raabe’s por-

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38 Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin*, p. 162.

39 Letter to M. Schulze, 21.11.1883, *Sämtliche Werke*, supp. volume II, 242.

trayal of Salome was a conscious effort on his part to counteract the impression created by Moses Freudenstein twelve years earlier, hence an ironised presentation of stereotype in literature via the figure of Salome. Certainly there is irony in the choice of her name. The Salome of the Gospels is mentioned merely as being present at the crucifixion, but the most infamous and memorable woman to bear the name was the daughter of Herodias who has gone down in folklore as the seductive head-hunting siren of seven veils fame, an image strengthened in Germany at least by Karl Gutzkow's description of her in his 1869 essay, 'Die ewige Jüdin'. The image conjured up by this Salome has little in common with the woman the reader comes to know, who may be beautiful, but cannot seriously be described as a temptress. However, the images created by this novella are not quite as positive as they might seem. Salome may well embody many laudable characteristics and the symbolic 'Ichor' emphasises this. But what of the reverse of the coin, her 'Verwandtschaft' who do not understand or appreciate this 'Ichor'? They are devalued by the comparison between themselves and Salome, who, it would seem, is an exception to the rule, an honorary Greek and a more civilised person by virtue of her 'Ichor'. The stress that is placed on her difference must make the reader wonder at the attitude of her author towards the vast mass of Jews who are not blessed with 'Ichor'. Would it be as positive? Once again, below the surface of the fiction, there remain ambiguities and contradictions in the portrayal of Jewish figures. For this reason it seems justified to doubt Krobb's assertion that the novella is evidence of 'Raabes Solidarität und Sympathie mit den Juden angesichts des neuerlichen Antisemitismus, der nach Gründungseuphorie und plötzlicher Ernüchterung nach der Wirtschaftskrise von 1873 einsetzte'.<sup>40</sup> 'The Jews', that is, Jews en masse, are not presented in *Frau Salome*. One very exceptional Jewish woman is. The two are not the same. And yet, Schwarz's conclusion that Freytag and Raabe, in their portrayals of Jewish characters, failed to show 'Interesse oder Verständnis für die psychischen Leiden und

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40 Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin*, p. 160.

das soziale Unbehagen einer solchen Position zwischen dem Wunsch nach eingliedernder Anerkennung und dem Zurückgestoßenwerden durch die Umwelt', surely overlooks *Frau Salome*.<sup>41</sup> Definite sympathy is displayed in the text towards the character and her situation. The question whether this can, or should, be used to suggest a generally positive attitude on the part of the author towards the Jews remains, however, debatable.

The next example is the historical novella *Höxter und Corvey*. Anyone seeking to portray Raabe as an antisemite would have difficulties in accounting for this novella, as it is perhaps here more than anywhere else that his sympathies are most apparent. Set in Höxter in 1673, it is the story of the religious tensions in the town, initially between its Lutheran and Catholic citizens, who are supported by the nearby abbey of Corvey, and then between the Christian and Jewish communities. The two Jewish characters, the elderly Leah and her granddaughter Simeath, are victims caught up in the aftermath of war and the destruction caused by French occupation but their refusal to accept defeat emphasises their strength of character. Leah especially is determined not to submit to circumstances: although 'wegmatt, zeitmatt, kriegszerzaust' she is nonetheless 'kriegerisch, ja kriegerisch unter ihrem Packen trotz ihrem Alter und ihrer Müdigkeit' (265–6). Simeath, likewise not defeated by the devastation of their home, sets about creating some order with what resources she can muster and is described as a 'Sprößling jenes tapfersten aller Völker' (286). After fighting each other, the Lutheran and Catholic rioters then unite in common cause against the Jews who are caught in the middle as non-participants, the battle cry changing from 'Höxter und Corvey!' to 'Nun auf die Juden!' (319). In the highly-charged atmosphere, someone accuses the Jews of colluding with the French and bribing them to save themselves and their property from the destruction which was wreaked on the town. The mob decides to expel the Jews, and after setting one Jewish home on fire, rampages through the streets with the Lutheran pastor at its head, to remove Leah and Simeath

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41 Schwarz, 'Das Bild der Juden', p. 448.

from their home. Only the pastor's nephew, Lambert Tewes, and the monk Henricus stand in their way, but not until the shock causes Leah's death does the mood of violence change and the mob disperse. Transparently clear to the reader is the stupidity of the prejudice and wanton destruction in this story where, except for Lambert and Bruder Henricus, Christians are little more than louts and ruffians, the Lutheran pastor included.

The final text, *Gedelöcke*, while written in 1865/6 and thus in the same decade as *Der Hungerpastor* and *Holunderblüte*, has more in common, in terms of philosophical content, with *Höxter und Corvey*. Peopled with as interesting a mix of typical Raabe eccentrics as *Der Hungerpastor* or *Frau Salome*, this story tells the strange events surrounding the death in 1731 of the Danish registrar, Jens Pedersen Gedelöcke. For some time, rumours about him have been flying around Copenhagen:

Der Kurator streife allgemach sein Christentum ab wie die Schlange ihre Haut; er gehe zu seinem größten Seelenschaden nur noch mit den verstockten Juden, ihren Lehrern, Rabbinern und Büchern um, zum Tische des Herrn sei er schon seit Jahren nicht mehr gegangen, den Sonntag halte er nicht mehr heilig, wohl aber der Juden Sabbat, und vor dem Fleisch der Schweine habe er einen unchristlichen Ekel. (170)

As Gedelöcke lies confined to bed with severe gout, his devoutly religious wife, complaining to Pastor Moekel of the heavy burden she has to bear, adds substance to the rumours: 'Drinne liegt er, und der Juden Vorsänger, Meister Henrich Israel, sitzt neben seinem Bett und muß ihm psalmodieren, und es wird von Tage zu Tage schlimmer, wie er mit seiner ewigen Seligkeit umgehet' (174–5). While the suspicions of his wife and the town at large are not groundless, they are not entirely correct. Gedelöcke, it transpires, is not a secret convert to Judaism, but rather a freethinker who gains a vicarious pleasure in causing righteous indignation amongst the pious. As Moekel leaves after a heated discussion, Gedelöcke talks to his famulus, David Bleichfeld:



Hoffentlich hat Er nach Seiner Gewohnheit an der Tür das Notwendige erhorchet; – Herr Ludovikus hat keine bessere Kömodie aufführen lassen, und Er hat's gratis gehabt, Davide. Ei, ei – riechet Er noch den Schwefel? – hat der Pfaff mir eingeheizt, wie der König Nebukadnezar den drei Männern im feurigen Ofen. (181)

While Gedelöcke dies confessing a religious faith: 'Ich weiß, daß ein allmächtiger Gott ist!', which religion and what he actually believes in terms of doctrine is never made clear. But this is not really important. As the story unfolds, it becomes apparent that, as in *Höxter und Corvey*, criticism is directed against religious intolerance of whatever variety. In *Gedelöcke*, orthodox Christianity is held up to criticism as much as orthodox Judaism, if not more so. Once Gedelöcke is dead, a bizarre struggle over his last resting place occurs. Knowing the likely attitude of Pastor Moekel and his ilk and the confusion over which religion should claim him, Gedelöcke's will asks his old friend Colonel von Knorpp to organise his immediate burial. With the assistance of the colonel and the garrison doctor, the body is spirited away and buried in the military cemetery. Several months later, Bleichfeld reaches Norway, where the colonel is stationed, and tells how the secret burial was discovered, a royal commission convened and the Jews of Copenhagen rounded up and marched to the cemetery, where a royal decree was read out:

Daß er, Jens Pedersen Gedelöcke, der, obwohl vorhero ein Christ, als ein Jude starb [...] und daß er, Jens Pedersen Gedelöcke, derowegen von den Ältesten der jüdischen Nation sollte wiederum aufgegraben, nach ihrem eigenen Kirchhof transportieret und daselbst von neuem beigesetzt werden – mit Hülfe des Scharfrichters und seiner Knechte, wann sie – die Juden – es nicht alleine verrichten könnten und wollten. (204)

The colonel scarcely has time to absorb this news, when a new arrival is announced, Henrich Israel, now no longer cantor of the Copenhagen synagogue. While Gedelöcke was despised by the Christian community of Copenhagen for his association with the Jews, Israel has been similarly mistreated by his co-religionists for his

association with Gedelöcke, forced to dig up the coffin in the Jewish cemetery and rebury it in a field:

Da hat die Stadt wiederum ihr Gaudium gehabt; ich aber bin mit Tränen hinausgegangen aus der Gemeinde, und sie haben mir nachgespitten in das Elend. Ich bin ausgestoßen worden aus der Gemeinschaft meines Volkes; wenn ich läge, wo der Herr Kurator lieget, so würde es besser um mich bestellt sein. (208)

That criticism attaches to both religious communities, both presented as unyielding and inhumane, is emphasised in the story's concluding paragraphs in the words of the garrison doctor:

Wenn ich in Bedacht nehme, wie alt der Mensch werden kann, ohne aufzuhören ein Esel zu sein, so möchte ich mir selber zu einem Greuel werden. [...] O Kommandante, wie sind sie über uns gekommen, Christen und Juden, der Herr Hieronymus Moekel wie Meister Jakob Jakobsohn der Oberrabbiner! [...] Hat Er Lust, seine fürwitzige Nase noch einmal hinauszuschieben in die Welt nach solcher Blamage? (208–9)

As in *Höxter und Corvey*, it is the eccentrics or outsiders standing back from the mainstream, who, by the comments they pass on events or their behaviour during them, demonstrate the stupidity and intolerance of the majority.

## Summary

On a first comparison of all five texts it seems that a clear ranking order emerges, whereby *Der Hungerpastor* is the most critical towards the Jews, *Holunderblüte* and *Frau Salome* contain only minor elements of criticism and *Höxter und Corvey* and *Gedelöcke* are pro-Jewish, inasmuch as they strongly condemn religious intolerance, of whatever variety. By such a scheme of things, *Der Hungerpastor* becomes something of an anomaly in Raabe's body of work. This does not

completely accord with Raabe's own view. He consistently maintained that his fiction was to be considered as a whole and that the negative images of *Der Hungerpastor* were balanced by *Frau Salome* and *Höxter und Corvey*, rejecting any accusations that he was a tendentious writer and claiming that objectivity was his aim. In the letter to Philippine Ullmann this is part of his defence: '[Sie] können wohl entnehmen, daß ich nicht zu den „Antisemiten“ zu zählen bin, sondern nur wie unser Herrgott in seiner Welt mein Licht in meiner Kunst leuchten lasse über – Gerechte und Ungerechte'.<sup>42</sup> It is difficult to accept Raabe's claims to objectivity at face value, but if his output is considered as a whole, then *Der Hungerpastor* would indeed appear to be the 'problem child' which tarnished his reputation both by its content and its reception history.

The attitude which seems to inform the Jewish characterisation in *Der Hungerpastor*, the sharp differentiation between traditional Jew and modern Jew, allows for the criticism of traditional Jew-hatred, but also seems to embody an inherent criticism of the emancipation that permits Moses to obtain a more influential place in German society than his father and to be a greater, albeit more subtle, threat. The novel differs substantially from Raabe's other texts, none of which portrays such a menacing Jewish character, quite the opposite, in fact. *Höxter und Corvey* is set around the time of the 'Thirty Years' War when the Jews were still very much a vulnerable and persecuted minority. The story depicts them as such and criticises those Christians involved in their oppression. *Holunderblüte*, while set in the early nineteenth century, nevertheless deals with the traditional orthodox Jewish community of Prague which has yet to engage fully with the modern world. (*Gedelöcke*, a text where the Jewish character is little developed and important only as part of the overall condemnation of intolerance, can be left aside in this context.) Another fundamental difference between the novellas and *Der Hungerpastor* exists, namely that the Jewish characters are female. This is of course the case with *Frau Salome*, but an interesting question arises here, given that

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42 Letter to P. Ullmann, 4.2.1903, *Sämtliche Werke*, supp. volume II, 445.

Salome, ennobled, intelligent, wealthy, would seem to be the epitome of modern nineteenth-century Judaism, someone who has achieved in the gentile world and has broken away from tradition: exactly like Moses Freudenstein, except that she is *not* presented as a threat. Why should this be?

The answer, it seems to me, and the reason why the idea of a differentiated portrayal for a differentiated threat which was developed during discussion of *Der Hungerpastor* can apply to *all* of Raabe's texts, is precisely because Salome and the other characters are female, whether they are traditional or modern. This touches on a common theme of the literary presentation of Jewish characters, something already mentioned with respect to *Frau Salome*, and that is the topos of the 'schöne Jüdin'. The impressions created by Raabe's characters do vary according to sex and his female Jewish characters are depicted in a vastly more positive light than their male counterparts. Krobb has demonstrated in *Die Schöne Jüdin* that images associated with female Jews achieved a literary life of their own, female characters being more readily associated with intelligence, wit, physical attractiveness, cleanliness, moral rectitude and a cultivated mind than male characters. This fact has a twofold impact on discussion here. Firstly, while the view exists that emphasising the beauty of a Jewish woman also emphasises her exotic nature and, therefore, the difference between Jews and whatever is being given as the fictional norm, the emphasis on positive female Jewish attributes could also lessen the distance between Jew and German. Thus, although a stereotype, the 'schöne Jüdin' could work for, rather than against, the ideas of emancipation and rapprochement, as Krobb argues: 'Das Substantiv "Jüdin" bezeichnet dabei das Trennende zwischen dem Sprecher und der Bezeichneten, das Epitheton "schön" dagegen das aus christlich-männlicher Sicht Anziehende, das diese Kluft zu überbrücken in der Lage ist' (5). In the eyes of Christian male authors, possibly including Raabe, the female Jew appeared more redeemable and more worthy of redemption, an attitude which could work against a negative literary portrayal.

Secondly, and perhaps more directly applicable in this context, is the view expounded by Ruth Angress, who sees the grounds for this different treatment in the fact, 'daß Frauen als Rivalen nicht in Frage kamen, daß sie wegen ihrer untergeordneten Stellung politisch wie wirtschaftlich ungefährlich waren und daher nicht dieselben feindseligen Phantasien auslösten'.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the period in which the action of Raabe's texts takes place, Jewish and Christian women alike had less access than men to political and economic power and education because of their subordinate position. However emancipated the Jews eventually became in the nineteenth century, Jewish women, unlike their male counterparts, could or did not go to university, become journalists, run companies or invest in the stock market, all ways in which male Jews were perceived to threaten the fabric of German society. Even Salome, modern, intelligent and independent as she is, would have had no more political power and probably just as many social restrictions as Leah and Simeath two centuries before. In this way, the 'schöne Jüdin' topos, while definitely informing Raabe's portrayal of Salome and probably affecting the other texts inasmuch as it prevented negative portrayals of female Jews, reflects an attitude widely-held in German society, the fear of the Jew as a threat. Those whose gender excluded them from being threatening could be, and frequently were, treated differently and more positively.

The confusion of positive and negative images surrounding Raabe's Jewish characters now reveals itself differently. Moses Freudenstein becomes not an anomaly in Raabe's work but a potential key to understanding the way he thought about the Jews. The difference in male and female presentation was based not solely on gender, but also on the role of that gender in society. This positive-negative confusion proved tragic for Raabe's reputation as it enabled the ambiguities to be exploited and allowed for the misinterpretation

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43 Angress, 'Wunsch- und Angstbilder: Jüdische Gestalten aus der deutschen Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts', in *Kontroversen, alte und neue: Akten des VII Internationalen Germanisten Kongresses, Göttingen 1985*, ed. by Schöne, 20 vols (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), I: *Ansprachen; Plenarvorträge; Berichte*, 84–96 (p. 94).

of his fiction and misrepresentation of him as an author. Raabe did indeed vehemently deny being an antisemite, but that did not prevent the undoubted influence upon him, whether consciously or not, of various prejudices which were prevalent at the time he was writing, fundamentally that of the danger posed by the emancipated, modern Jew. The influence of the Raabe-Gesellschaft on his reputation was overwhelming but Sammons is right in stating that Raabe must also take some blame for the disastrous events which surround his reception:

There is, to be sure, something ludicrous about associating him, with his contempt for despotism, his hatred of war, and his sympathy with human suffering, with the Nazi atrociousness. But he *was* a nationalist; there *was* a conservative facet to his temper; he *was* a representative of his class while being deeply critical of it from within. The 'friends' of the Society *were* originally his friends. He was grateful for the response and was little inclined to monitor its accuracy or appropriateness. [...] Thus, he cannot be wholly excised from the reception history, at the same time as we recognise it as reductive and distortive.<sup>44</sup>

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44 Sammons, *Wilhelm Raabe: The Fiction of the Alternative Community* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 70.



## Chapter Three

### Leopold von Sacher-Masoch: Erratic Solidarity

Sacher-Masoch's notoriety during his lifetime was such that his name was used – without his permission – as the label for the psychosexual disorder now known as masochism. Nowadays, the man behind the apparent counterpart to Sade's sadism is forgotten and, despite the prolific nature of his writing, many students and teachers of German literature may well not have heard of him. It is more likely that the book which established his dubious reputation and still remains in print, known as *Venus in Furs* in its English translation, will trigger recognition of a song of the same title by The Velvet Underground rather than of the book's author.

This reputation is a monumental under-representation of who Sacher-Masoch was and what he wrote, but is a mistake mostly of his own making. His fate disproves the maxim that 'all publicity is good publicity'. By expressing his idealised image of women and his domination fantasies in his fiction, Sacher-Masoch created his own notoriety; his reputation became so rigidly fixed that he is now largely overlooked as an author and viewed as a psychological case-study. Even *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, while allowing that his fiction is skilfully written, is dismissive, not to say incorrect, in describing it as 'devoted almost exclusively to the perversion, which, since Krafft-Ebing, is known as masochism'.<sup>1</sup> Although Sacher-Masoch had been widely criticised for his 'Pikanterie' before the publication of the second edition of Richard Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia sexualis* in 1890, the Viennese psychiatrist's identification of Sacher-Masoch as a sufferer from *algolagnia* and the association of

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1 Garland, *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford: OUP, 1986), p. 774.



the name and the disorder became crystallised in the public mind.<sup>2</sup> From this point on, his notoriety acted entirely negatively. The majority of his work quickly became unavailable after his death and new editions of the erotic fiction have served only to reinforce the image of Sacher-Masoch as a writer of little literary merit obsessed with fur-clad, whip-wielding, dominant women.

Because Sacher-Masoch is thought of as a writer of erotic fiction, his work has been almost entirely neglected by scholars interested in the Jewish presence in German literature. Research into this aspect of his work is more or less an exploration into unknown territory. This is unfortunate, since although an erotic element is present, a considerable part of Sacher-Masoch's prolific output is specifically devoted to Jewish themes, with further texts containing a Jewish presence of some sort. Why this should be with a non-Jewish author is interesting per se, but becomes more intriguing, given the inconsistency of Sacher-Masoch's approach to his Jewish subject matter. Sacher-Masoch published several collections of short stories which concentrate on depicting life in the ghetto. Some of these show such understanding for traditional Jewish life, customs and religious observances that it seems justified to describe Sacher-Masoch as philosemitic. Some critics have suggested that Sacher-Masoch's choice of Jewish themes and subjects for his stories is an indication of his solidarity with the outsiders in his society. However, in other parts of his work, where the Jews are depicted as part of the wider environment or appear as background characters, the author's attitude can seem to be the complete opposite and indicates a negative and stereotyped concept of Jews and Judaism.

This chapter investigates this erratically dualistic and ambivalent approach within the work of a fascinating and complex author, to see

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2 The word 'masochism' appeared in *Psychopathia Sexualis* from the 2nd edition onwards: 'So named from the writer Sacher-Masoch, whose romances and novels have as their particular object the description of the perversion.' Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct*, 7th edn, trans. by Charles Gilbert Craddock (Philadelphia: Davis, 1904), p. 5 (footnote 2).

where the balance between solidarity and prejudice lies. In order to go some way towards counteracting the received image of who Sacher-Masoch was and what he wrote, the chapter begins with a brief biography of the man and continue with a look at his reception amongst his contemporaries and more recent critics.

## A Life under Scrutiny

For almost all his adult life Sacher-Masoch remained in the public gaze, subjected to a barrage of mainly negative criticism. He was ridiculed as a man and as an author, even immortalised in cartoon form in satirical journals.<sup>3</sup> Sacher-Masoch's childhood and early years were ordinary compared with his colourful and eventful later life. He was born in 1836 in Lemberg (now L'viv), the first child of Police President Leopold von Sacher and his wife Charlotte, née von Masoch, whose surnames were combined when Sacher-Masoch was two. Both the place of his birth and his parents' backgrounds are of vital importance to understanding of Sacher-Masoch's subsequent development.

Until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Lemberg was the capital of Galicia, the Empire's easternmost province. When Austria acquired Galicia following the partitions of Poland in 1772 and 1775 it took control of an area populated by a bewildering number of nationalities and religions where no single group formed an absolute majority. Poles, Ukrainians, Russians and Jews formed the bulk of the population, upon which was superimposed the thin layer of the governing class of Austrian bureaucrats and officials. To Cisleithanian Austria, this part of the Empire really was the back of beyond, a halfway point between the enlightened West and the un-

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3 A cartoon by the French artist Robida is reproduced in the illustrated section of: Michel, *Sacher-Masoch (1836–1895)* (Paris: Laffont, 1989).

civilised East, barbaric and uncultured and described by that other Galician author, Karl Emil Franzos, as 'Halb-Asien'. To Sacher-Masoch, however, Galicia was the inspiration for much of his writing. Although twelve when he left Lemberg for Prague, he would frequently return to the province in his fiction. It was the source for stories that revelled in its diverse cultures, history and folklore, presenting it as a strange and exotic place in order to appeal to the reader.

Because of his family history, Sacher-Masoch experienced Galicia's typical cultural and linguistic plurality at first hand. He was proud to have traced his father's ancestry back to a Spanish nobleman who had married the daughter of a Bohemian aristocrat and settled in Prague. His mother's family was part Ukrainian. His place of birth was important in determining his interests as a writer; his mixed background no less so in determining how he thought politically and treated his subject matter. Sacher-Masoch was not the only German writer to exploit the different customs and cultures in Eastern Europe for a Western audience by emphasising the region's exotic nature, but he did not write tendentiously, with the aim of proving German culture superior. The multi-ethnic environment in which he lived and his own family's mix of nationalities seem to have instilled in him an appreciation of differences, a lack of nationalist feeling and a cosmopolitan outlook. That is not to say that he resented the Empire as the unwelcome imposition of a German structure on non-Germanic peoples. On the contrary, while Sacher-Masoch does not refrain from criticising it, the Empire takes the role in his fiction of maintaining a balance between the many nationalities to prevent one group from dominating another.

Both factors, place of birth and family background, can be seen to have inclined Sacher-Masoch towards writing about Galician Jews. Forming a substantial part of the population, as a group they had retained many of their centuries-old customs and traditions, aided in this by sheer weight of numbers and their relative isolation from the non-Jewish population. As such, they appealed as subject matter to Sacher-Masoch, with his interest in the folklore, culture and history

of minority groups. His writing career began when he was in his early twenties. Although he always wrote in German, it was not even his mother tongue. Sacher-Masoch had a Ukrainian nurse as a child and grew up speaking Ukrainian and Polish. It was apparently not until the family's move to Prague that he started to learn German. He must have been an intellectually precocious child, for he matriculated at Prague University at the age of seventeen and gained his doctorate in history from Graz University by the age of twenty. For a couple of years he was a *Privatdozent* at Graz, but his academic career was brief. Encouraged by a friend, who had been impressed by his story-telling abilities, Sacher-Masoch wrote his first novella, *Eine galizische Geschichte: 1846*, set during the events of the Polish uprising in Galicia. Published in 1858, its success emboldened the young author to leave the university and live from his earnings as a writer.

Not long afterwards he met Anna von Kottowitz, the first of several women with whom he had complicated and turbulent relationships. Kottowitz, several years older than Sacher-Masoch, was the wife of a Graz doctor. The pair remained together for about three years, during which time he attempted to induce her to live out the role of his ideal woman, but although spirited and extravagant, she had no real inclination to be his dominatrix and hurt him more financially than physically. Their relationship ended bizarrely when Sacher-Masoch encouraged Kottowitz to have an affair with a Russian count, who was in fact a syphilitic impostor of distinctly plebeian origins. It seems that Sacher-Masoch requested certain behaviour and actions from Kottowitz who complied to a degree, indicating that Sacher-Masoch's fantasy of a sexual partner who would inflict physical and emotional punishment on him predated their meeting. The psychological motivation for his behaviour remains obscure. It has been suggested that it was due to events in Sacher-Masoch's childhood, such as witnessing the violence in Prague during the 1848 revolution or a seminal event he observed by accident when playing hide and seek. Sacher-Masoch apparently saw his aunt whip her husband when he discovered her with her lover; she, when she realised that her young nephew had observed her, pro-

ceeded to beat him as well.<sup>4</sup> A similar episode is recounted by Severin, the narrator of *Venus im Pelze*. It is hard to differentiate between fact and embellished fantasy. This is how Sacher-Masoch described the event years later:

This event became engraved on my soul as with a red-hot iron; I did not understand at the time how this woman in voluptuous furs could betray her husband and maltreat him afterward, but I both hated and loved the creature who seemed destined, by virtue of her strength and diabolical beauty, to place her foot insolently on the neck of humanity. Subsequently other strange scenes, other figures, in regal ermine, in bourgeois rabbit or in rustic lamb's fleece, produced new impressions on me; until one day this particular type of woman became crystallised in my mind. [...] I became aware first of the mysterious affinity between cruelty and lust, and then of the natural enmity and hatred between the sexes which is temporarily overcome by love, only to reappear subsequently with elemental force, turning one of the partners into a hammer and the other into an anvil.<sup>5</sup>

Current medical thinking supports the view that an event in childhood was the cause of Sacher-Masoch's behaviour, while admitting that the aetiology is unknown: 'One theory is that, as a result of beatings delivered to pubertal children, sexual arousal becomes associated by chance with the experience of pain and humiliation.'<sup>6</sup>

All Sacher-Masoch's subsequent relationships continued this search for the right woman to fulfil a fantasy role. After Kottowitz he had an affair with a Baroness Bogdanoff, during which they travelled to Italy, he in the guise of her servant, having signed a six-month contract with Bogdanoff which gave her complete control over his

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4 These details are provided by Carl von Schlichtegroll in his biography, sympathetic to Sacher-Masoch, *Sacher-Masoch und der Masochismus: Litterarhistorische und kulturhistorische Studien*, (Dresden: Dohrn, 1901), the first to be published on the author.

5 Sacher-Masoch, 'Choses vécues', *Revue Bleue*, 1888, given in translation in: Deleuze, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty* (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 275–6.

6 Gelder and others, *Oxford Textbook of Psychology* (Oxford: OUP, 1996), p. 503. The authors coincidentally demonstrate the obscurity into which Sacher-Masoch has sunk by giving his date of death as 1905 instead of 1895, this in an article about the condition named after him.

person. These details were of course immortalised in the Wanda-Severin relationship of *Venus im Pelze*. Following Bogdanoff came Fanny von Pistor, with whom Sacher-Masoch had himself photographed in classic *Venus* pose: she, looking severe, reclining fur-clad on a couch; he, crouched at her feet and gazing up adoringly.<sup>7</sup> It was around this time, the early 1870s, that Sacher-Masoch met his first wife, a woman with supporters and detractors and controversial in her own right, but of whom it can be said that, on balance, she was an unhealthy influence on her husband. Aurora Rümelin wrote her own description of her life with Sacher-Masoch, but some proven inaccuracies of date and content, together with suspicion about her motives for writing this account, cast doubt over its veracity.<sup>8</sup>

Some facts can be ascertained. Rümelin was the daughter of a Graz railway official who abandoned his wife and family. She seems to have been interested in literary figures, having struck up an anonymous correspondence with Peter Rosegger, which he ended, being unhappy about corresponding with an unknown woman. Rümelin then turned her attention to Sacher-Masoch, the object of much local interest following the publication in 1870 of *Die Liebe*, part one of the planned six-part cycle of novellas *Das Vermächtniß Kains*, which included the notorious *Venus im Pelze*. The journalist Theodor Lessing, later tutor of Sacher-Masoch's son from his second marriage, defended Sacher-Masoch in the debate which followed publication of Rümelin's autobiography in 1906. With a fine display of mud-slinging in an article published in *Die Gegenwart* he set out to defend Sacher-Masoch's name by destroying Rümelin's presentation

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7 The photograph is reproduced as the frontispiece to Deleuze's *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch: Le Froid et le Cruel*, Arguments 32 (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967).

8 Wanda (Aurora) von Sacher-Masoch, *Meine Lebensbeichte* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1906). For an alternative view of Wanda and her autobiography, see: Gerstenberger, 'Her (Per)version: *The Confessions of Wanda von Sacher-Masoch*', *Women in German Yearbook*, 13 (1997), 81–99.

of herself as the injured and innocent party.<sup>9</sup> Lessing quoted from an anonymous letter written by Rümelin to Sacher-Masoch. Why it was in his possession is not explained, but although Rümelin wrote to the magazine condemning Lessing's article and correcting a few minor details, she did not deny her authorship of this letter. It is not hard to imagine what effect sentences such as the following had upon Sacher-Masoch, promising fulfilment of his fantasies. Signing herself Wanda von Dunajew, this woman seemed to be the perfect Wanda to his Severin: 'Doctor: ein Dämon rast in mir! Ich weiß nicht, ist es Liebe oder Haß, was mich zwingt, Sie zu meinen Füßen zu sehen, vergehend in Lust und Weh. Sterben möchte ich Sie sehen vor Verlangen – o! während ich dies schreibe, bebt mein Herz in Erwartung' (210).

Rümelin did not have long to wait. A few letters, in which she described herself as the unhappily married wife of an army officer, a few meetings, at which she appeared heavily veiled and dressed in furs, were sufficient to arouse Sacher-Masoch's curiosity. By late 1872 she was pregnant. To avoid a scandal, the couple moved to Vienna where the baby was born in August and died a few days later, and then on to Bruck an der Mur. Their marriage in the autumn of 1873 produced two more children and a good deal of strange behaviour from both parties, ending acrimoniously ten years later when Rümelin left Sacher-Masoch for Jakob Rosenthal, a sub-editor on the review *Auf der Höhe* which Sacher-Masoch was editing at the time in Leipzig and later editor of *Le Figaro*. Both Schlichtegroll, Sacher-Masoch's biographer, and Lessing, who apparently had access to the author's diaries after his death, aver that Rümelin was the author's evil genius: although precisely what he had been looking for, she caused him immeasurable damage by encouraging his algolagnic tendencies:

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9 Lessing, "'Meine Lebensbeichte': Eine Ehrenrettung", *Die Gegenwart*, 11 August 1906, pp. 85–8 and 18 August 1906, pp. 104–7, reprinted in: *Leopold von Sacher-Masoch: Materialien zu Leben und Werk*, ed. by Farin (Bonn: Bouvier, 1985), pp. 205–20.

Die Tagebücher des Unglücklichen beweisen, daß er seine Perversion klar kennt, daß er von ihr los möchte und nicht los *kann*. [...] Immer wieder und wieder kehrt im *späteren* Leben Sacher-Masochs die Versicherung, daß der passivistische Vorstellungskreis *nicht* zur monomanen fixen Zwangsidee in ihm geworden wäre, wenn er nicht in entscheidenden Jahren gerade an *diese* Frau gekommen wäre, welche willig ihm alle Träumereien verwirklicht hat, daraus aber für sich selbst Lebensunterhalt, Folie, Stellung und die Coulisse für unglaublichste Degairtheit gewann.<sup>10</sup>

Sacher-Masoch had already met his second wife, Hulda Meister, who also worked for the review, and with whom he had three children. After a brief period as an editor in Mannheim, Sacher-Masoch retired to the house bought by his wife in Lindheim, Hessen, where he founded the Oberhessischer Volksbildungsverein, an organisation with Jewish financial support which played a role in combating anti-semitism and promoting Jewish and Christian integration via its cultural activities.<sup>11</sup> Sacher-Masoch died peacefully on 9 March 1895 of heart failure, no longer *compos mentis*, having suffered a nervous breakdown the day after his fifty-ninth birthday on 27 January. According to his wife, this was caused by the complete absence of the recognition of his achievements and congratulations which it was customary for public figures to receive on their birthdays at that time. This could have been the case merely because he had dropped out of the public eye, but given the way Sacher-Masoch's work was received over the course of his career and evaluated after his death, it could well be that he was ignored because he was so reviled.

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10 *ibid.*, pp. 212, 216.

11 Demandt, 'Leopold von Sacher-Masoch und der Oberhessische Volksbildungsverein zwischen Schwarzen, Roten und Antisemiten', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 18 (1968), 160–208.



## ‘Aus dem trüben Schimmer des Sumpfes’

The general tenor of nineteenth-century criticism on Sacher-Masoch can be summarised in three words: hätte leisten können. Over again in articles by critics and in his obituaries regret is expressed that Sacher-Masoch did not fulfil his potential. The explanations focus on his precarious financial situation and consequent need to write and be published, as well as his personal weaknesses. Moral outrage and condemnation are by no means rare, as in the above quotation. It comes from an article by A. von Schweiger, which mixes regret and disgust.<sup>12</sup> Karl von Thaler expresses similar criticisms in his obituary:

Er war ein großes Erzählertalent, mit Phantasie und durchdringender Menschenkenntniß begabt; er hat einige Novellen geschrieben, welche zu den besten der deutschen Literatur zählen; aber die Hoffnungen, zu denen er durch seine Erstlingsarbeiten berechtigte, hat er nicht erfüllt, sondern traurig betrogen. Man bewunderte ihn in seinen Anfängen und wendete sich später angewidert von ihm ab.<sup>13</sup>

In 1870 Thaler had reviewed the six novellas of *Die Liebe*, attacking Sacher-Masoch as a literary representative of nihilism. By this, Thaler meant Russian influences, which he thought to be profoundly unhealthy and dangerous. Thaler could thus portray Sacher-Masoch's writing as an attack on Germany:

Wer sein Vaterland und die Freiheit liebt, der muß mit aller Kraft gegen jeden Versuch kämpfen, die nihilistischen Ansichten in Deutschland einzuschleppen. [...] Ob sie in publicistischer oder novellistischer Form eindringen

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12 Schweiger, 'Literarische Streifzüge VII, Sacher-Masoch', *Laibacher Zeitung*, 7 February 1870, pp. 1–2; Farin p. 43. The majority of quotations in this section were taken from Michael Farin's excellent book on Sacher-Masoch, which brings together a wide selection of original criticism on the author. Initial quotations will give original source and page no. in Farin; further quotations from the same text will give the page no. in Farin only.

13 Thaler, 'Leopold von Sacher-Masoch', *Neue Freie Presse*, 12 March 1895, pp. 1–2; Farin, p. 156.

wollen, die Demokratie hat die heilige Pflicht, das deutsche Haus, die deutsche Zukunft vor solcher Ansteckung zu beschützen. (50)

Sacher-Masoch, Thaler concluded, was guilty of sinning against ‘den Geist des deutschen Volkes’ (51). His mixed nationality also left Sacher-Masoch open to censure from the public guardians of all things German, creating a new myth, that of Sacher-Masoch the cosmopolitan, the internationalist with suspect national sentiments. This internationalism was attacked violently by Oswald Zimmermann, who targeted the review *Auf der Höhe* founded and edited by Sacher-Masoch: ‘Das *französische*, das *jüdische* und das *slawische* Element, diese drei größten Feinde des Germanenthums, haben in der *Revue* allezeit Schutz und Unterkommen gefunden, um unter falscher Flagge deutsches Wesen und deutsches Volksthum zu beschimpfen.’<sup>14</sup> Of these three enemies, it is the Jews who receive the worst criticism, and Sacher-Masoch’s perceived connection with them is portrayed as the worst of his failings. For Zimmermann, ‘internationalism’ equates with philosemitism. By alleging that the review is in the pockets of the Jews, publishing articles sympathetic towards them in order to gain Jewish financial backing, Zimmermann raises the spectre of secret and subversive international Jewish co-operation:

Wo und wann immer in Deutschland der *internationale* Schwindel auftauchte, stets hat er mit dem Judenthum geliebäugelt und bei demselben Sympathien gefunden. Der Jude ist oder vielmehr gerirt sich international, weil er dabei im Trüben fischen kann. [...] Internationale Bestrebungen von jener Sorte, wo [sic] sie in *Auf der Höhe* vertreten sind, können als Vorarbeiten gelten für das neue Zionsreich. Kein Wunder, daß die Juden direct und indirect für die *Revue* thätig waren. (350)

Sacher-Masoch’s controversial reputation during his lifetime was obviously founded on more than the erotic nature of his fiction. Of

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14 Zimmermann, ‘Sacher-Masoch’s “Auf der Höhe”: Ein Beitrag zur Charakteristik der philosemitischen Presse’, *Deutsche Reform*, March 1885; Farin, p. 348.

course, his connection with Jews was not always viewed negatively. It was in the nature of the defence against antisemitism that a Christian who could be claimed as a supporter of the struggle was extremely valuable. In the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* M. Friedeberg recorded how the Chief Rabbi of Leipzig, where Sacher-Masoch lived in the early 1880s, could hardly believe that Sacher-Masoch was not Jewish, so impressed was he with the understanding of Judaism which the story *Pintschew und Mintschew* displayed.<sup>15</sup> Referring to Sacher-Masoch's *Jüdisches Leben im Wort und Bild*, a collection of Jewish stories from around Europe, Friedeberg expresses his own pleasure at the 'begnadete Tiefblick' and the 'hohe Achtung vor dem Ringen und dem Glauben des jüdischen Volkes' which Sacher-Masoch possesses: 'Daß diese Achtung bei Sacher-Masoch nicht literarische Phrase und Mache war, konnte Jeder erfahren, der Gelegenheit hatte, mit ihm persönlich zu verkehren.'<sup>16</sup> After the author's death Joseph Kahn published an account in the *Mitteilungen aus dem Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus* of an afternoon spent with Sacher-Masoch in 1892. Kahn's description of Sacher-Masoch, 'einer, der so das Herz des armen Talmudjünglings kennt, der alle Geheimnisse des jüdischen Familienlebens ergründet hat und der so mit den Verfolgten aller Jahrhunderten sympathisirt,' indicates the esteem in which he was held by some Jews.<sup>17</sup> Kahn continued:

Der Antisemitismus stand damals in seiner vollen Blüthe und einen größeren Gegner dieser ungerechten Bewegung als Sacher-Masoch konnte man nicht finden. Wir sprachen an diesem Nachmittage viel darüber. Sacher-Masoch liebte die Juden. [...] Manche mochten glauben, daß ein Christ, der die Juden so in Schutz nahm, und was nicht zu leugnen ist, die Charaktere öfters in einem zu rosigen Lichte gezeichnet hat, einen – pekuniären Vortheil dabei suchte. Nichts lag Sacher-Masoch ferner. (379)

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15 'Pintschew und Mintschew', in *Judengeschichten* (Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1878).

16 Friedeberg, 'Sacher-Masoch', *AZJ*, 22 March 1895, p. 144; Farin, p. 188.

17 Kahn, 'Erinnerungen an L. von Sacher-Masoch,' *Mitteilungen aus dem Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus*, 28 February 1900, pp. 67–9; reprinted in: Sacher-Masoch, *Jüdisches Leben in Wort und Bild*, ed. by Farin (Dortmund: Bibliophile Taschenbücher, 1985), p. 376.

Kahn concluded by quoting Sacher-Masoch on the reasons he gave for rejecting antisemitism:

Ein Volk, das die Schriften seiner Geisteshelden so unermüdlich studirt, muß als auf der höchsten Stufe der Kultur stehend betrachtet werden, und eben deshalb solle man dem Juden jede Karriere öffnen. Was die Welt schon alles durch Intoleranz verloren hat, ist gar nicht zu ermessen. Man muß dem Juden eine Gelegenheit geben, etwas zu thun. (382)

Carl Spitteler also interviewed Sacher-Masoch, providing further evidence that the author considered himself to be an active and sympathetic supporter of the Jews. Spitteler describes how Sacher-Masoch denied his supposed Jewish origins on the grounds that, had he been Jewish, he could hardly have intervened for the Jews himself: 'Wie hätte ich denn in meinen Werken so offen Partei für den Juden ergreifen können, die Juden mit so liebevoller Zärtlichkeit schildern dürfen, wenn ich selbst ein Jude wäre?'<sup>18</sup> Carl von Schlichtegroll, the author's biographer, also reports a conversation with Sacher-Masoch on the subject of the Jews, in which Sacher-Masoch explained what drew him to them in the first place:

Ich habe die Juden kennen gelernt wo sie am elendsten sind, in Galizien; ich sah sie als die arbeitsamste Dienstleute wirken, und sie doch von den Slaven mißhandelt werden, nur weil sie Juden waren. Mir ist die Anhänglichkeit dieses Volkes an den Sitten ihrer Väter und ihre gleichzeitige Hilflosigkeit sehr nahe gegangen, und als ich nachher eine Stellung in der Welt einnahm, und einen Einfluß errungen hatte, benutzte ich beides zu Gunsten der Schwachen.<sup>19</sup>

From Schlichtegroll's statement it would certainly seem that Sacher-Masoch saw himself as a knowledgeable and sympathetic supporter of the Jews. Furthermore, all the statements and recollections indicate that this is the impression Sacher-Masoch gave to anti-semitic and Jew alike. In recent years, criticism has been divided on

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18 Spitteler, 'Eine Erinnerung an Sacher-Masoch', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 13 March 1895; Farin, p. 165.

19 Schlichtegroll, *Sacher-Masoch und der Masochismus*, p. 158.

this issue. Often, his Jewish fiction is classified as *Ghettogeschiedten* and his contribution to this genre is judged favourably. David Biale, for example, wrote in 1982: 'Sacher-Masoch belongs to the minority of Ghettogeschiedten authors who were not Jews, yet his philosemitism in many ways surpassed that of his Jewish colleagues.'<sup>20</sup> While Biale is undoubtedly correct when he identifies Sacher-Masoch's emotional attachment to Galicia as being of crucial importance to how he wrote, perhaps he is hasty to describe the author as *philosemitic* because he chose to write about Jews and did so without an *antisemitic* agenda. Biale's article, however, only considers the specifically Jewish short stories without looking at the longer stories and novels which place the Jews in the wider context of Galician society as a whole. Similar to Biale, Adolf Opel, who edited a collection of Sacher-Masoch's fiction, judges the author's approach to Jews to have been entirely positive, describing it as 'bedingungslose Eintreten', 'unbeschränkte Parteinahme und Identifizierung'.<sup>21</sup> Svetlana Milojevic's book on Sacher-Masoch, the most recent contribution, goes even further, making the surprising claim that 'wenn es überhaupt einen unzweideutigen und unkomplizierten Bereich in Sacher-Masochs Leben und Werk gegeben hat, so war es ohne Zweifel seine Haltung zum Judentum'.<sup>22</sup>

Far more considered is Hans Otto Horch, who looks in greater depth at a wider range of texts than Biale or Milojevic. He accepts that Sacher-Masoch's approach to the Jews is variable, ascribing this to a move from the cheap sensationalism of much of Sacher-Masoch's output towards a more sympathetic attitude which took place over the course of the author's career but did not prevent later

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20 Biale, 'Masochism and Philosemitism: The Strange Case of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17 (1982), 305–23 (p. 306).

21 Sacher-Masoch, *Der Judenraphael: Geschichten aus Galizien*, ed. and with epilogue by Opel, Österreichische Bibliothek, 10 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989), pp. 454, 457.

22 Milojevic, *Die Poesie des Dilettantismus: Zur Rezeption und Wirkung Leopold von Sacher-Masochs*, German Studies in Canada, 11 (Frankfurt/M: Lang, 1998), p. 217.

‘Rückfälle[n] ins Klischee’.<sup>23</sup> Horch quite correctly mentions the ambivalence so often to be found in Sacher-Masoch’s work, the contradictions which undermine the intentions of a ‘durchaus freundlichen, um “Objektivität” bemühten Schriftstellers’, and gives as an example the way in which physical or emotional suffering by the Jews can be described by the author ‘recht genüßlich’ (276, 277). His judgement of Sacher-Masoch, ‘ein Autor, der sich zwar nicht vom Judenhasser zum Judenfreund bekehren muß [...], der aber nicht frei ist von der ambivalenten Faszination des liberalen Schriftstellers durch den (scheinbaren) Exotismus der (ost)jüdischen Welt’, is more balanced than Biale’s and Milojevic’s generalised acceptance of Sacher-Masoch as philosemitic and prejudice-free (286). It also encourages the asking of further questions about the manifestation of this ambivalence and its causes.

Gabriele von Glasenapp’s section on Sacher-Masoch in her book on ghetto literature shows a favourable judgement of the author, ‘der zumindest den Versuch unternahm, als Nichtjude jüdisches Ghettoleben ohne antisemitische Vorurteile zu schildern’.<sup>24</sup> As a reason for the impetus behind Sacher-Masoch’s literary expression of his interest in the Jews, she highlights the interplay between the historical fate of the Jew as sufferer and victim and Sacher-Masoch’s own highly-charged fantasies about being subjected to physical and mental cruelty. Glasenapp views the result of this link between author and subject as a ‘Solidarisierung des Außenseiters (Sacher-Masoch) mit anderen Außenseitern der Gesellschaft’ (236). That this author had a deep-seated interest in the struggle between weak and powerful and in violent subjugation, there is no doubt. However, while there may well be some truth in the idea of solidarity between Sacher-Masoch and his Jewish characters, is it justifiable to assume that Sacher-Masoch’s masochism influenced his fiction to

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23 Horch, ‘Der Außenseiter als “Judenraphael”’: Zu den Judengeschichten Leopolds von Sacher-Masoch’, in *Conditio Judaica*, ed. by Horch and Denkler, II, 271.

24 Glasenapp, *Aus der Judengasse*, *Conditio Judaica* 11 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), p. 251.

this extent and was the cause of the solidarity? Bluntly, did what occurred in the bedroom influence what he wrote in his study? Rümelin's *Lebensbeichte*, descriptions given by Sacher-Masoch and the impression from the fiction all suggest that his masochism took a highly ritualised form. The psychological context, the signing of contracts or taking the role of servant, was important to him, as was a range of fetishistic props, the inevitable furs, whips and ropes for restraint. Such incidents are related in the Jewish fiction, somewhat incongruously, but in other texts there are instances of violence or cruelty which do not fit neatly into a masochistic framework, being too remote from the masochistic norm of a tyrannical woman dominating a willingly subservient man. When this situation is absent, when nothing suggests that Sacher-Masoch is identifying with his characters and the description is of physical or mental suffering *without* the masochistic embellishments, it seems questionable to describe such episodes as influenced by masochism. It would be easy to fall into the trap of ascribing a sadistic element to Sacher-Masoch's masochism, something which would then explain the occasional relish with which suffering is described, as noted by Horch. Gilles Deleuze, however, is at pains to point out in his psycho-literary comparison of Sade and Sacher-Masoch that the behaviours and literatures of the two rest on entirely different psychologies. Deleuze describes the assumption that 'the *same person* enjoys both undergoing pain and inflicting it', as 'transformist presuppositions, the unity of sadism and masochism [...] taken for granted. Our intention has been to show that this approach only leads to very crude and ill-differentiated concepts'.<sup>25</sup> While Deleuze condemns as unrealistic the well-known joke about the meeting between the sadist and the masochist (the masochist says 'Hurt me!', the sadist refuses), he uses it to demonstrate the fundamental incompatibility of the two perversions, namely that the genuine sadist desires an unwilling victim, the genuine masochist not a torturer, but a person who can be manipulated and moulded into taking on the desired role (36). On this foundation,

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25 Deleuze, *Masochism*, p. 132.

other factors would be more likely to produce Sacher-Masoch's occasional inappropriate taste for cruelty in his fiction, namely sensationalism or perhaps merely carelessness.

## Sacher-Masoch's Fiction

The question which now arises concerns the attitudes detectable in the fiction. Do the Jewish characters of his novels and short stories confirm or refute the image of Sacher-Masoch, philosemite, the writer who depicted the Jews 'mit so liebevoller Zärtlichkeit'? However, Sacher-Masoch was a prolific writer: his first item of fiction was published in 1858 when he was 23 and at least one novel or collection of stories was published every year until his death, thirty-seven years later. It would therefore be impossible here to deal with everything he wrote containing Jewish characters and so this chapter examines a novel and two novellas: *Der neue Hiob* (1878), *Der Iluj* and *Der Judenraphael* (both 1882), as well as a selection of the Jewish short stories. While bearing in mind that the notion of Sacher-Masoch's fiction and his life being an indivisible unit did so much to blacken his character, a consideration of these items of fiction should help to illuminate Sacher-Masoch's concept of the place of the Jew in society. Given his inconsistent approach, there is, unsurprisingly, no one model which can account for the entirety of Sacher-Masoch's Jewish-related fiction, for while the instances of Jewish suffering are not influenced by pure antisemitism, neither can they be explained as pure masochistic fantasy. More than with any other author treated in this book, Sacher-Masoch confronts the reader with a confused approach to Jewish characters. The aim must be to highlight the erratic nature of their characterisation, rather than to offer one definitive conclusion on Sacher-Masoch's own attitudes.

The novel *Der neue Hiob* (1878), whose Jewish characters are depicted with a mix of narratorial sympathy and criticism, perfectly ex-



emphasizes this confusion. The book's title indicates that suffering is an absolutely central theme and it the different presentation of suffering in Jewish and non-Jewish characters which is of interest. The biblical story of Job, transposed from the land of Uz to the province of Galicia, is retold as the biography of Theofil Pisarenko, born in 1794 in a Ruthenian village near Kolomea. The Ruthenians as portrayed by Sacher-Masoch are one of the most abused national groups of the Empire. Almost exclusively peasants, predominantly illiterate and deeply superstitious, they are at the mercy of the Polish land-owning class for whom they must provide forced labour, but remain stoic in the face of suffering, which Theofil frequently sees and experiences at first hand.

The text's main Jewish characters are Joadan Abeles, Theofil's first fiancée, and her father, Wolf, the village innkeeper. Other Jews are often nameless and presented en masse, but all are essential in building up a picture of Sacher-Masoch's portrayal of the Jews in Galician society. In his work, Wolf is representative of the other Jews in the novel, who, as traders, merchants or factors working for the Polish-owned estates are economically active in ways deemed traditional for Jews. Wolf also acts in financial matters for the local land-owner, Saborski, a situation which gives rise to some implicit criticism of both the Polish ruling class and Jewish money. Saborski has just chased the village children out of the school and set the teacher to training his hunting dogs. Wise beyond his nine years, Theofil ponders the injustice of this and of Saborski's provocative action in leasing the church key to Wolf, which leads to some unseemly haggling before a service can take place:

Es befremdete ihn jetzt auch, daß der Herr das Recht haben sollte, die Kirchenschlüssel an den Juden zu verpachten und daß Wolf Abeles jeden Sonntag mit den Bauern gleichsam um ihr Seelenheil markten dürfte, bis sie in schlechten kupfernen Groschen die Summe zusammengelegt hatten, die er für das Aufsperrn des Gotteshauses begehrte.<sup>26</sup>

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26 Sacher-Masoch, *Der neue Hiob* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1878), p. 19.

Another of Wolf's roles is as village innkeeper. If he is depicted traditionally, his daughter is nothing less than the archetypal 'schöne Jüdin'. Theofil's reaction on first seeing Joadan is to stare open-mouthed:

Joadan war eine glühende Rose von Saron in voller Blüte, [...] mit sechzehn Jahren ein üppiges Weib, dessen Blut wie Feuer durch die Adern fließt. Ihr scharfgeschnittenes edles Gesicht spielte in das Zigeunerbraun hinüber, ihre Augen schmachteten hinter langen Wimpern hervor [...]. Ihr Gang hatte etwas sprunghaftes, wildes [sic]; wenn sie aber saß, so lag sie immer halb dabei, und zwar träge wie eine ruhende Löwin. Ihre blendenden Zähne wurden jedesmal sichtbar, wenn etwas ihren Spott herausforderte und sie die Oberlippe emporzog. Sie hatte dann einen Zug im Gesichte, der das Gefühl und auch den Geschmack eines Europäers verletzte. (55)

This thumbnail sketch includes a wealth of stereotypical images of the Jewish woman, every phrase carrying a sub-text of implicit details. The reference to the Song of Solomon brings the theme of sensuality into play, fulfilled in the description of Joadan, who is defined entirely by her smouldering sexuality.<sup>27</sup> So precocious and obvious that it makes her seem more animal than human, it is emphasised by the animal references, especially to her gait and her teeth, which together with her darker skin colour stresses her savage, exotic and non-European nature.

The attraction between Theofil and Joadan is mutual, although they react to it differently. By a series of carefully managed coincidences, Joadan is always at the inn when Theofil visits and sits close to him. Her interest in the young farmer, which she does not hide, is intensified after he saves her from accidental drowning in a lily-pond. The consequences of this are used to indicate an inherent difference between Jewish and non-Jewish mentalities when Wolf visits Theofil the following day and offers him money and new clothes, which Theofil rejects: 'Du sprichst eben wie du es verstehst, deine Gedanken sind jüdische Gedanken, dafür kannst du nicht; ich aber würde eine Sünde begehen, wenn ich mich von dir bezahlen ließe' (61).

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27 Song of Solomon 2.1.

Theofil is as much frightened by Joadan's direct approach as by his own feelings towards this woman, unavailable to him because of her religion. Tortured by his emotions, Theofil prays one evening at a wayside crucifix, where Joadan finds him. The ensuing exchange marks the turning point in their relationship, Theofil's reactions, imbued with a simplistic religious antisemitism, demonstrating his own understanding of that difference between them.

'Du hier?' sprach Theofil, [...] 'ist es nicht genug, daß ihr den Erlöser gekreuzigt habt und dafür verflucht seid bis an das Ende der Welt, mußt du auch meine Andacht stören? [...] Seid ihr es nicht, die den Heiland geschmäht, verspottet, mißhandelt haben?'

'Das ist lange her,' erwiderte [sic] Joadan, 'so lange, daß wenn es eine Sünde war, nichts davon über mich kommt. Was weiß ich von deinem Messias; ich habe ihm nichts Gutes zugefügt, aber auch nichts Böses.'

'Lästert Ihr [sic] ihn nicht heute noch!' rief Theofil.

'Weshalb sollte ich ihn lästern?' sagte die Jüdin, [...] 'ist er, der hier am Kreuze hängt, der Erlöser der Welt, dann ist er auch mein Erlöser.'

'Wie soll er deine Seele retten, wenn du ihn nicht bekennt?'

'Wie soll ich ihn bekennen?' gab Joadan sanft zurück. [...] 'Ist dein Glaube der wahre, so lehre mich, zeige mir den Weg des Heiles, rette meine Seele!' (63–5)

Theofil's hatred of the Jews as deicides is more powerful than his attraction to Joadan and until the moment when she asks him to help her convert, he savagely condemns her as guilty by association for the Crucifixion. He understands Jewish guilt as collective and permanent. But Joadan's willingness to convert removes all barriers immediately as it effectively stops her being Jewish in his eyes. Theofil's uneasy conscience about his sinful feelings towards her is soothed and their love becomes permissible. The ease with which Theofil accepts this change is countered by Wolf's reaction. Given that, to an orthodox Jew, conversion meant not only shame and disgrace for the convert's family, but also complete ostracism of the convert, the reader should not be surprised by Wolf's initial response, which indicates his grief as well as his anger. Wolf cries out, 'wie ein Raubthier, dem man sein Junges genommen; da begann er das arme

Mädchen mit den Fäusten zu schlagen, beim Haare durch die Stube zu reißen, anzuspucken und mit Füßen zu treten, bis er sich zuletzt selbst zur Erde warf, seinen Talar zerriß und sich den Bart ausraufte' (67). His passion, like his daughter's sensuality described earlier, is such as to make him seem more animal than human. Wolf goes to desperate lengths, spiriting Joadan away to relatives in Tarnopol. But she escapes en route and finds sanctuary in the Carmelite nunnery at Kolomea, only to be abducted and tortured by a group of Jews to prevent her conversion. The description she gives to Theofil when he finds her bleeding to death is in itself an accusation against her father, who permitted this to happen: 'Die Unmenschen haben mich durchbohrt mit hundert Stichen und gewürgt und geschlagen und mit Füßen getreten. [...] Juden waren sie, sie haben Gericht gehalten über die Abtrünnige' (79).

With Joadan's death, the novel loses its main Jewish character. The Jews who appear in the rest of the story are sometimes presented as individuals who fulfil an economic role, without having their own individual personalities, sometimes as an undifferentiated group or even a mob, as in the following example, which occurs when Theofil takes Joadan's body back to Kolomea:

Die Juden [...] forderten mit wüthendem Geschrei von ihm die Todte; er aber kehrte sich weder an ihre Bitten noch an ihre Drohungen und brachte die entseelte Geliebte in das Kloster.

'Sie gehört uns, uns gehört sie,' tobte der fanatische Volkshaufe.

'Sie ist als Christin gestorben,' erwiderte Theofil mit der erhabenen Würde des Schmerzes. 'Ihr habt kein Recht mehr auf sie.'

'Sie ist getauft,' jammerten die Juden, 'wer hat sie getauft?'

'Ich habe sie getauft.'

'Wehe! Wehe!' schrie der fanatische Pöbel. Einige zerrissen ihr Gewand, Andere rauften sich Haar und Bart. 'Gras soll wachsen auf seiner Schwelle, Krankheit und Unglück sollen nisten in seinem Hause, sein einziger Gast soll der Malach Hamowes [angel of death] sein.' Mit diesem Fluche zerstreuten sie sich. (80–1)

The contrast between Theofil and the Jews could hardly be greater. Despite his grief, his calm air of nobility elevates him above the

crowd's crude behaviour. Twice described as fanatical, their image as unforgiving and hate-filled people whose desire for revenge is not satisfied with the murder of Joadan is reinforced by the vocabulary that describes their actions: furious shouts, threats, rage and wails, finally a curse.

That the Jews come off worse when compared to Theofil is a common occurrence. Back in Zablotow, Theofil encounters Wolf, who, like the Jews of Kolomea, spits at him and curses him. Too honourable to retaliate in kind, Theofil later has the opportunity, during the cholera outbreak in which his entire family dies, to demonstrate again the superiority of Christianity over Judaism; specifically the moral superiority of Christian forgiveness over Jewish vengeance. Wolf catches the disease despite having taken his own precautions, rather mockingly depicted, consisting of slaughtering a lamb and smearing the doorposts with its blood, 'damit der Würengel, wie seinerzeit in Aegypten, den Sohn des auserwählten Volkes erkenne' (149). Theofil and some farmers find Wolf collapsed at the side of the road, and despite the others' protestations, Theofil helps him: "Für mich ist er jetzt nur ein hilfloser Mensch," erwiderte [sic] Theofil. Wolf Abeles klammerte sich an ihn und bot all' sein Geld für sein Leben, aber die Bauern waren zu spät gekommen; er starb in den Armen seines Todfeindes' (159). Wolf's money is depicted as equally ineffective in the face of death as his superstitious faith in Jewish customs.

Theofil's exceptional nature, which highlights the moral deficiencies of others, is emphasised in a curious incident from his time in the Austrian army, where, as a Ruthenian peasant, he is treated very badly. Having dreamt of his parents, Theofil walks from Vienna to Zablotow, but is arrested the day after his arrival and taken to Kolomea, where he is ridiculed by the Jews. Theofil's punishment is to run the gauntlet: a battalion of soldiers armed with sharpened canes is lined up and Theofil has to run past the lines a number of times. With the Jews laughing as he is punished, Theofil refuses to ask for pardon and thus shorten his ordeal, but continues until the requisite number of runs is completed. He then turns away the

wagon which was to take him to hospital, lights his pipe and walks to the hospital himself. Presented as a Christ-like figure who bears suffering and mockery without complaint, his exceptional courage and endurance have an inspirational effect on the bystanders. That they turn on the watching Jews is given as the natural outlet for the heightened emotions which Theofil's bravery has caused. 'Alles bewunderte ihn und die Schuljugend des Gymnasiums verstieg sich zu einer solchen Begeisterung, daß sie, während das Bataillon abmarschierte, mit Steinwürfen und Stöcken die Juden vor sich hin trieb' (107).

The violence inflicted upon the Jews on this occasion is minor compared to a later event, again presented in a matter-of-fact manner. Theofil is now in his forties. A gang of robbers, led by a Robin Hood-like figure, has been stealing from the landowners and Jews but leaving the peasant farmers alone. One night Theofil is wakened by two robbers and taken to their headquarters. The leader informs Theofil that he has caught the two Jews, a rabbi and a merchant, who were responsible for Joadan's death. The masked man then proceeds to charge and convict them:

Ihr seid überwiesen, durch mehr als zwanzig Zeugen, daß ihr Joadan, die Tochter des Wolf Abeles, ermordet habt. So oft ich einen Juden martern ließ, so oft ich einen todtschlug, ich habe Gott sei Dank deren genug geschlagen, sagte ich zu ihm, du erleidest den Tod zur Strafe für den Mord, den du begangen an Joadan, der Tochter des Wolf Abeles und ein Jeder schrie Angesichts des Todes, wo Keiner lügt: Ich war dabei, die Anstifter aber waren Rabbi Markus Bernstein und Jainkew Kornberg. (228–9)

The rabbi denies any involvement but is told to confess if he wants a merciful death; Kornberg blames the rabbi and offers money to the masked man to spare his life. 'Zwei Räuber ergriffen den jammernden, schlotternden Juden und schleppten ihn zu dem Felsenthron hin. "Dreitausend," kreischte er. [...] "Zwanzigtausend," brüllte der Jude, aber schon fuhr es nieder wie ein Blitz und er sank mit gespaltem Kopf zu Boden' (229–30). Kornberg's dependence on his money is shown to be as futile as Wolf's offer of money to

Theofil to save him from the cholera. Perhaps because of his status, the rabbi, still protesting his innocence, suffers a worse fate. The scene which follows is shocking in its graphic depiction of the barbarity meted out on this man. The rabbi is held down by six robbers, his mouth forced open with knives, molten lead poured down his throat and his eyes put out with red-hot iron rods. As a final mark of contempt, the corpses are thrown into a ditch. The wealth of lurid details which heighten the horror felt by the reader, without encouraging condemnation of the robbers' actions, are a prime example of the 'recht genüsslich' attitude described by Horch. The tremendous physical and mental pain inflicted on the Jews is not mentioned. *Their* suffering is not presented sympathetically but as inevitable and thoroughly deserved. Theofil indicates he disapproves of what has happened, but on the grounds that he thinks it wrong for man to usurp God's place as judge, not because it was wrong to kill the Jews, or to kill them in such a manner. Throughout the proceedings, Theofil makes no attempt to intervene to spare the men's lives or to ask that their deaths be merciful, although as the injured party in this 'trial', he is the only person present who could have pleaded for them with any authority.

Jewish characters appear in a number of cameo roles in this novel and, although presented with more individuality, they are no more sympathetically drawn than these victims of outlaw justice or the nameless members of the mob. One of Theofil's many misfortunes is to be swindled out of payment for his grain crop by a Jewish merchant: 'Honig Silbermann hieß der kleine Jude; schwarz und dürr, wie eine getrocknete Pflaume, hüpfte er beim Handeln wie ein hungrier Floh' (267). When Theofil returns to collect payment, he discovers that Silbermann declared bankruptcy the same day he accepted Theofil's grain and has departed Kolomea to stay at a spa resort. The theme of Jewish dishonesty continues in the figure of Herr Strohmann, the former estate manager, whom the farmers suspected of being Jewish. Now working as an unqualified legal advisor – in effect, encouraging the farmers to take each other to court and taking a cut of any damages – he has started a case against Theofil

and offers to drop proceedings if paid enough. Even though Theofil's wife kicks Strohmann into the mud where the pigs wallow, he gets up with his smile still fixed.

'Bis jetzt habe ich ihn noch immer für einen Deutschen gehalten,' bemerkte Pisarenko, 'jetzt weiß ich aber, daß er ein getaufter Jude ist, denn das Sprüchwort hat Recht: "Küsse den Juden, so betrügt er dich, schlage ihn aber, so wird er dich küssen."' (269–70)

The village doctor is likewise portrayed as an unsavoury character with dubious personal hygiene. A baptised Jew, he is described in terms which nonetheless mockingly emphasise his Jewish background:

Er hieß Lewin [...], trug einen Hemdkragen wie eine Speckschwarte, aber stets Handschuhe und Lackstiefel. [...] Er kam, untersuchte den Kranken [Theofil], wackelte hin und her, nichts anders als ein Sänger in der Synagoge und sagte endlich: 'Ein schwieriger Fall. Euch hilft Niemand mehr.' (312)

In the Galician environment of *Der neue Hiob* it is apparent that all characters suffer as a consequence of the rivalries and conflicts between the different national groups. Comparing the differing presentations of suffering provides a means of understanding the Jewish role in the novel. At the bottom in education, social standing and wealth, the Ruthenian peasant farmers are shown to be the least protected and most exploited. To them, the Emperor in far-off Vienna assumes a mythical status as their protector against the excesses of the Polish land-owning class. Until the ending of the forced labour, they are little more than slaves at the mercy of the aristocrats, who can punish resistance as they see fit with little regard for any consequences. But the peasants suffer equally at the hands of the Jews. Silbermann's swindling of Theofil for his grain is not an isolated case. The farmers frequently complain of the unhealthy Jewish influence in trade and the unfairly low prices they receive for their crops. Theofil's friend Burlak implicates the Jews in the suffering caused by the winter famine after the destruction of the crops by locusts: 'Steht es geschrieben, daß ein Christenmensch das Hemd



vom Leibe hergeben und dennoch Hunger leiden soll, weil diese verfluchten Juden alles Getreide zusammengekauft haben oder die Edelleute es lieber ihnen geben als uns, die wir für sie arbeiten und uns mühen?’ (130). After a mysterious illness, Theofil’s prosperity returns when he expresses his subjection to whatever is God’s will. He improves the lives of the village farmers by buying their crops to sell them direct to merchants, cutting out altogether the Jewish traders, whose worries over the loss of their livelihoods are described derisively:

Die schwarzen Talare flogen wie aufgeschreckte Raben hin und her, aus so und so viel großen Bärten schrie es über ‘Gewalt’ und die Kinder Israels beriethen sich, heftig spuckend, aber auch die größten Weisen aus dem Morgenlande wußten kein Mittel, das den ehrlichen und zugleich vorsichtigen Zablotower Bauern hätte zu Fall bringen können. (326–7)

This depersonalised description reduces the Jews to the sum of their beards and black caftans, mocking them as the wise men of the Orient who fail when confronted by the honourable farmers: the implication is of course that the Jewish traders themselves are *not* honourable, and deserve to lose their stranglehold on the grain trade.

Despite being presented as oppressors, the Poles also suffer. Although the reader is not encouraged to sympathise with their national aspirations, described in the novel as damaging to the good of the Empire, the Poles periodically try to throw off the Austrian yoke. They too are badly affected by the Jewish involvement in trade and their dependence on Jewish money, but with the novel’s anti-Polish slant, Polish subjection to the Jews is given in a positive light, as being likely to lead to the downfall of the land-owning class. By the end of the novel in the mid-1870s, Galicia is still in Polish hands, but Theofil can content himself that this will not last:

Die galizische Frage [wird] ohne Mithilfe der Wiener Regierung gelöst werden, indem der Adel von Tag zu Tag mehr in die Netze der Juden fällt, verarmt und verdirbt, während seine Güter in fremden Besitz übergehen, so daß es in Galizien bald keine Polen geben wird. Die Zukunft gehört den Arbeitsamen. (368)

That the Jews suffer greatly from the prejudices of the rest of the population has been most vividly demonstrated in the passages describing the schoolboys stoning the Jews and the executions of Kornberg and the rabbi, but can also be detected from the remarks scattered throughout the text which indicate the prevalence of religious intolerance and the low esteem in which the Jews are held. However, their treatment shows no evidence of the understanding and sympathy that Theofil and the farmers receive. It is this which suggests it is justified to make a distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish suffering, which can also be defined as warranted and unwarranted suffering. The Ruthenian farmer's life is a ceaseless struggle against hardship. Theofil must also cope with the extra tribulations fate throws at him and only his exceptional nature enables him to bear the strain. Clearly his misfortunes, due to weather, illness or others' inhumanity are not his fault and are wholly undeserved. The Jews, however, are always assigned negative roles because of their economic function and the practice of their religion. Their Jewishness, in effect, is enough to make them guilty of causing suffering to others. Their contribution to the farmers' and to Theofil's misery, their unnatural cruelty in killing one of their own kind in cold blood and their decide are emphasised in the text and the lack of sympathy with which their suffering is depicted works to alter the readers' view of their physical or economic hardship from straightforward suffering to warranted punishment for their behaviour.

This is underlined at the end of the novel by the way in which alleviation of the Ruthenians' suffering means removing the Jews from the farmers' immediate environment. It has already been noted how Theofil's capture of the grain trade from Jewish hands is presented as an improvement, but for Theofil this does not go far enough, since Jews remain involved in the economic life of the village. He visits the landowner's wife and proposes that the village collectively leases and farms the heavily indebted estate land, to which she agrees. Theofil has a further proposal: 'Und wie ist es mit der Schenke und der Branntweinbrennerei, gnädige Frau? Der Pacht läuft wohl nächstens ab und wir möchten um Alles den Juden aus

dem Dorfe bringen. Wir geben gerne weitere 2000 Gulden' (358). A little later, the reader learns the outcome: 'An derselben Stelle, wo sonst der Jude in schmutzige Kelchgläser seinen Brantwein schenkte, steht jetzt ein hübsches Kaffeehaus, in welchem die Bauern Billard spielen und Zeitungen lesen' (365). Jewish involvement in village life is therefore represented as a malign influence. Once the Jews are excluded, economic, educational and social progress advances in massive strides.

The text's construction also directs the reader to think in a certain way. Apart from Joadan, all the Jewish characters are presented negatively. This departure from the norm seems connected with her status as a 'schöne Jüdin' and also as Theofil's fiancée. Her exceptional beauty and her love for a Christian exclude her from the criticism expressed about all other Jewish characters. Although she is portrayed in no less stereotyped a manner than the Jewish merchants and traders, the stereotypes describe her as tempting and dangerous, but an object of desire nevertheless, not one of derision or hatred. Her death in the first quarter of the novel also effectively prevents her from acting as a balance. Theofil's exceptional status also plays a part in determining reactions to the Jews suggested by the novel. He is so undoubtedly the hero of the story, his speech and actions portrayed without criticism, irony or sarcasm, that the reader is directed to approve of him, rather than condemn his obvious prejudices towards the Jews.

The basis of the novel's construction is to oppose Jews and Christians, providing the former with a wholly negative role and determining that the latter cannot live prosperously with a Jewish presence in their society. In *Der neue Hiob*, with the explicit declaration of Theofil as 'a good man', there was no room for a balanced approach. Sacher-Masoch's Job has been detached from his Jewish roots, unlike his biblical model and the more well-known fictional Job of Joseph Roth's 1930 novel, where the suffering is placed within the context of the poverty and hardship experienced by Russian Jews at the start of the twentieth century and their mass emigration to America. While Theofil as Job suffers the death of family members, economic de-

struction and illness, he does so with a meekness and acceptance which emphasise his similarity with the suffering Christ. The final words of Theofil's conversation with God on the night his suffering turns to prosperity, 'du hast mich ganz verlassen und hast mein vergessen', recall Christ's last words on the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'<sup>28</sup> The Jews, however, are guilty from the moment they are born by sole reason of their Jewishness; the traditional Jewish roles they fill in society or their adherence to their religion make them doubly guilty by rendering them responsible for the suffering of others. The novel's polarisation forces the Jews to become oppressors rather than oppressed, victims who deserve society's prejudices.

This is all very reminiscent of *Soll und Haben*, except that there is no supporting evidence from non-fictional sources to conclude definitely that Sacher-Masoch's presentation of the Jews in this text matches his own opinions. The example of the type of antisemitism expressed by the characters in *Der neue Hiob*, a traditional Jew-hatred which views the Jews as Christ-killers and sees Jewish-Christian differences mainly in purely religious terms, is a case in point. It would be absurd to deduce that Sacher-Masoch, not a religious man himself, endowed Theofil with his own beliefs: rather, a religious-based Jew-hatred would have been entirely typical for a peasant population at the time the story was set. Similar to *Soll und Haben*, however, is the impression of carelessness on the part of the author, an ignorance of the impression created by the text and of its negative potential, rather than a planned, programmatic desire to promote antisemitic attitudes towards the Jews. The idealistic ending, the happy peasants in their rural idyll where agricultural improvements have increased everyone's wealth, the village's new school, amateur dramatic society and choir, Theofil the patriarch surrounded by his intelligent, educated children who are nevertheless all committed to the land, smacks of an overly simplistic attitude on Sacher-Masoch's part, a tendency to write in black and white terms without great subtlety of detail. With Theofil

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28 p. 319. The reference is to Matthew 27.46.

so very definitely the hero, it was not possible for the Jews, Joadan excepted, to be anything but the villains of the piece.

The novella *Der Judenraphael* (1882) is of interest because of the reactions of the non-Jewish characters to a large population of background Jewish characters. Even more than in *Der neue Hiob*, the novella provides a clear example of Sacher-Masoch's strange mixture of occasional sympathy and a relish for descriptions of human suffering. The 'hero' is Plutin Samojlenko, rebellious son of the Greek Catholic pastor of Winogrod, given up as a hopeless dreamer and non-achiever by his parents at an early age, despite his artistic talents. His nickname, 'Judenraphael', derives from his gift for portrait painting and his preference for Jews as the subject matter, something which stems from hatred rather than sympathy. This, the reader is told, is due to a picture in his father's church which made a great impression on Plutin as a child: 'Der fortgesetzte Anblick der grauenhaft gemalten Leiden Christi war es, der den ersten Samen des Judenhasses in die reine, schuldlose Kinderseele senkte.'<sup>29</sup> Combined with his artistic talents, this hatred leads him to paint Jews as caricatures, distorting and satirising his sitters. The activities of Plutin and his gang of friends as the town's practical jokers, whose targets are always Jews, earn him the reputation of a *Rasche*, a persecutor of the Jewish people. However, Plutin seemingly undergoes a miraculous conversion when he falls in love with a beautiful Jewish girl. Unable to marry her, he tires of life, and the symptoms of tuberculosis he had suffered earlier return with a vengeance. He retreats to an abandoned hut on the steppe where he dies.

As Plutin seeks to establish himself as an artist, he comes into contact with two Jewish families. The brief episodes present a certain type of Jew to the reader, neither in a positive light. In the first instance, Plutin, apprenticed to a portrait painter, goes with his master to the estate of Baron Hirtenfeld, a baptised Jew, where the Baron's wife is to be painted. In this couple are an exaggerated portrayal of assimilated Jews. Wealthy, but definitely *nouveau riche*, they are pre-

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29 Sacher-Masoch, 'Der Judenraphael', in *Der Judenraphael*, p. 42.

tentious and ignorant. The ‘adlernasige Baronin’ greets Tscharko and Plutin accompanied by her husband and a neighbouring aristocrat, apparently her lover, a young man who is deeply in debt and relies on her infatuation with him for his survival. As the group discuss the portrait, the Baron suggests his wife should wear furs. The young aristocrat supports this idea: “Natürlich einen Pelz”, sagte der von der Anbetung der in ihrem Fett schnaubenden Baronin lebende, sich nährende und kleidende junge Herr’ (50). The Baroness, whose deeply unflattering description suggests an overweight pug, seizes on this suggestion and demonstrates her ignorance of art history by stating that *all* women painted by ‘Herrn von Tizian, Herrn von Rubens, Herrn von Raphael, und wie die Herrn Maler alle heißen’, were wearing furs. (51)

Soon after, Plutin is invited by the richest Jew in the neighbouring *shtetl* of Wrublowize to paint his wife. Frau Axamit is a typically ‘Sacher-Masoch’ type, ‘eine üppige, glühende Schönheit. Als ihr Mann Plutin hereinführte, lächelte sie zugleich süß und böse’ (55). Certain of her own beauty, she attempts to seduce Plutin. “Kind!” sprach sie, und ihr berückendes Antlitz kam ihm so nahe, daß er ihren duftenden Atem fühlte, aber er wußte nichts Besseres zu tun, als rot zu werden und zur Erde zu blicken’ (56). To punish him for his rejection, Frau Axamit now makes fun of Plutin and turns her husband against him. The whole family criticises the finished portrait severely and Axamit will only pay half the agreed price. Angered by this attitude, Plutin simply cuts the picture from the frame and walks out.

His offence at the Axamits’ behaviour must be deep-felt. From this point on Plutin’s attitude to his talents changes: ‘Eine dämonische Gewalt schien seine beseelten Finger zu leiten, und diese Gewalt war ebensosehr aus Haß wie Liebe gemischt, aus Liebe zur Natur und ihrer herben Wahrheit und aus Haß gegen die Juden’ (63–4). His entire artistry is now dedicated to satirising and belittling the Jews with his pens and brushes:

Plutin's Haß übte eine ähnliche Wirkung wie die Liebe; wo er ging und stand und saß, zeichnete er Juden und wieder Juden und immer nur Juden [...] und alle, klug oder albern, schön oder garstig, hatten einen Stich in das Komische, es waren Karikaturen, deren raffinierte Bosheit darin lag, daß man sie vollkommen ernst nahm. (65)

As an adult, Plutin's low opinion of the Jews seems more informed by their rejection of his talent than by the religious hatred he absorbed as a child, as the following conversation between him and his friends indicates:

Er bestritt den Juden jeden aufrichtigen Sinn und jedes Verständnis für Wissenschaft und Kunst, und er ging noch weiter, er ließ nicht einmal zu, daß man sie schlau oder durchtrieben nannte.  
'Ich begreife nicht, wie man sich von einem Juden betrügen lassen kann,' sagte er einmal. 'Der Jude ist so töricht, abergläubisch und leichtgläubig, daß man ihm alles weismachen kann, was man nur will.' (64)

The rest of the story concerns Plutin's attempts to demonstrate the foolishness and gullibility of the Jews, while exacting his revenge. He carries out innumerable practical jokes on the local Jews, each more elaborate than the last and all designed to ridicule their traditional behaviour or religious customs in some way. One Sabbath Plutin drops a coin on the ground near a Jew and sits back to enjoy the spectacle of the Jew standing still with his foot over the coin until sunset, when he can touch the money without breaking the Sabbath. He later arranges a complicated farce with his friends, whereby they march into town in the guise of recruiting officers and announce that all Jews are to be conscripted to fight against Turkey. The whole episode plays on the Jewish fear of the army, ridiculing their efforts to evade conscription. The 'joke' ends with all the local men rounded up and marched off towards Turkey, while Plutin and friends pretend not to notice as they all sneak away and run home. Differently disguised, they later announce that the Kaiser has offered to send all Jews back to Jerusalem. As the local families gather in the town square with their hurriedly packed belongings, Plutin declares that, to save costs, those wishing to travel will be fired from a cannon, and

watches with great amusement as those who were first in the queue become desperate not to go to Jerusalem after all. Every time the Jews come off worst against Plutin's wit and invention and the narrative clearly revels in recounting such episodes.

During the story Plutin apparently overcomes his hatred sufficiently to express a liking for a Jew. The lucky man is Abraham Tabak, a musician who scratches a living by playing his violin to customers at local inns. Abraham offers to play at Plutin's table one evening and is subject to the usual variety of leg-pulling:

'Hast du Korkzieher zu verkaufen?' fragte Plutin ernsthaft.

'Nein', sagte der Jude liebenswürdig lächelnd, 'ich spiele nur Musik zu spielen auf der Geige.'

'Was hast denn du da rechts und links hängen?' fuhr Plutin fort, 'Sind das vielleicht Würste?' (67)

Abraham, however, does not take Plutin's insulting remarks about his side-locks meekly, but surprises and impresses Plutin by defending himself:

'Es sind keine Würste und es sind keine Korkzieher', sagte der Musikant, [...] 'es sind Peies. Wenn der junge Herr will einen Juden foppen, so soll er einen reichen Juden foppen und keinen armen, der ist so gefoppt genug.'

'Das ist der erste Jude, der mir gefällt', rief Plutin, indem er auf den Tisch schlug. (67–8)

Two further incidents indicate just how capricious and erratic Plutin's behaviour towards the Jews can be. Immediately after expressing this 'liking' for Abraham, Plutin, who knows that the poor man has not eaten, orders a plate of ham which Abraham naturally refuses. Plutin eats it instead and then offers Abraham wine from his own glass. In a disturbing scene, Plutin's friend holds a gun to Abraham's head, thus fulfilling the teaching of the Torah that, under threat of death, a Jew may break the kosher laws. This scene encapsulates the problem of much of Sacher-Masoch's writing. While it does indeed demonstrate the author's knowledge of the practices of orthodox Judaism, and while Abraham's refusal to drink is portrayed as a desire to avoid



what is not kosher rather than a stand-offish rejection of Gentile hospitality, the scene presents the occurrence as yet another amusing practical joke played by the dominant Plutin on the fearful, and therefore amusing, Jew. Yet, later in the story, Plutin saves Abraham and his family from starvation, when the musician is ill and cannot work:

Zum Glücke kam zufällig Plutin, er sah das namenlose Elend und gab nicht nur alles her, was er bei sich hatte, sondern brachte überdies noch einen Arzt und ging mit dem Rezept, das dieser verschrieb, in die Apotheke. Er saß [...] an dem Schmerzenslager des armen Abraham und gab ihm selbst den ersten Löffel Medizin. (119)

Furthermore, the first picture he paints since the incident with the Axamits which does not satirise its Jewish subject is of Abraham and his family eating their Sabbath meal, depicting with great sympathy their happiness despite their humble surroundings.

Only one Jewish character does not suffer at all at the hands of Plutin. Hadasska Chefez is the beautiful and intelligent daughter of one of the town's wealthier Jews and is allocated the role of reforming the Jew-hater Plutin. The text, however, fails to convince the reader that she succeeds in this. Plutin meets Hadasska because of yet another practical joke. It is Purim, the commemoration of Esther's saving the Jewish people from Haman's plans for their destruction, celebrated by the Jews by dressing up in costume and acting out the story. Plutin and friends also dress up, joining in the celebrations unrecognised. In a conversation which is the start of his 'conversion', Plutin talks to Hadasska, who, unaware of his identity, tells him that Haman is alive and well in the person of Plutin Samojlenko:

'Aber ich glaube nicht, daß er [Plutin] ein Bösewicht ist. Wie kann ein Künstler, dem Gott einen Funken seiner eigenen Schöpferkraft in die Brust geworfen, ein böses Herz haben?'

'Aber er haßt und verfolgt die Juden, und so würden Sie ihn dennoch hängen lassen, an einen Galgen, fünfzig Ellen hoch.'

'Nein, gewiß nicht. Er kennt uns Juden nicht, oder vielmehr er kennt nur unsere schlechten Seiten, denn wie jeder Mensch, hat auch jedes Volk solche,

ich würde ihm also unsere guten Seiten zeigen und ihn von seinem Haß bekehren.' (94)

Leaving the house, Putin realises he has fallen desperately in love and seems to have made a radical discovery about himself: 'Jetzt weiß ich, was ich gegen die Juden auf dem Herzen gehabt habe! Es war nicht Haß, es war eine böse Ahnung'. With his friends teasing him about his feelings, he admits he loves Hadasska, but has to ask: 'Warum muß sie, gerade sie eine Jüdin sein?' (96).

On the second day of Purim, Putin returns to Hadasska's house to reveal who he is and how he feels about her:

Ich staune über Sie [...] wie über ein Märchen, in dem Engel niedersteigen, Feenhände Gewänder aus Mondesstrahlen weben und Paläste auf dem schaukelnden Wasserspiegel erbauen [...] und deshalb verstehe ich nicht, daß Sie eine Jüdin sind. (100)

Hadasska's answer is a defence of the Jewish people, using the example of the Jewish sect, the Karaïtes, renowned for their scrupulous honesty, to prove that it is wrong to generalise about the Jewish character:

Haben denn die anderen Menschen keine Fehler? Ich glaube, jeder hat die Fehler dessen, was er tut, womit er sich beschäftigt. [...] Die Juden sind ein Handelsvolk und haben alle Fehler eines solchen. Wenn aber diese Fehler eines Handelsvolkes den jüdischen Charakter ausmachen, wie kommt es dann, daß die Karaïten dieselben nicht an sich haben? [...] Je mehr man die Juden ausstößt, je länger man ihnen die Rechte vorenthält, welche die Christen haben, um so später werden sie jene Eigenschaften ablegen, die vielen so verächtlich und gefährlich erscheinen.<sup>30</sup>

It appears that Putin's whole attitude towards the Jews has changed: 'Nein, die Juden sind doch nicht so schlecht, sie können

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30 pp. 100–1. Karaism dates from the 8th century and differs from rabbinic Judaism in its rejection of Talmudic tradition. The teaching of Karaism is supposed to represent the pure Mosaic faith, free of rabbinic distortion and corruption.

nicht schlecht sein, wenn *sie* eine Jüdin ist' (103). Nevertheless, the practical jokes continue unabated and do not become any less humiliating. Pretending to be a marriage broker, Putin goes to elaborate lengths to arrange a wedding for Lebele Hirsch, who had fallen for 'Esther' at the Purim celebrations, actually a friend of Putin's in disguise. When Hirsch arrives for a rendez-vous with the mysterious beauty he is so frightened by 'her' passionate attentions that he flees up the chimney. An even more elaborate prank occurs when it becomes known that a comet will shortly be visible in the night sky. Preying on the superstitions of the Wrublowize Jews, Putin announces that the comet presages a flood of biblical proportions. He starts building an ark, but causes widespread consternation when he announces that, as only two of each species were allowed on to the original ark, he will only accept two Jews on to his. The effect on the assembled Jews can well be imagined: Putin is overwhelmed with offers of money and other valuables as every person tries to outdo the others with reasons why they should be saved. His final trick is equally unpleasant, inspired by animosity towards its victim. Putin and Hadasska realise from the start that their love for each other is doomed and that they can never marry. When Hadasska's father arranges for her to marry Hirsch, she feels she cannot refuse. Putin, however, postpones the inevitable when he waylays Hirsch one night and cuts off his side-locks and beard, leaving the embarrassed Jew to wait four months for them to grow back before he can bear to be seen in public. Finally, the wedding takes place, although not quite as planned. Putin's last confrontation with the Jews of Wrublowize occurs when he gatecrashes the wedding party and dances with Hadasska, causing uproar among the orthodox Jews, who traditionally do not allow mixed-sex dancing.

Although *Der Judenraphael* does not include instances of such obvious cruelty as the execution of the rabbi in *Der neue Hiob*, the question of how Jewish suffering is presented is still relevant. The figure of Putin, who is after all the chief victimiser and persecutor of the Jews, is the key to answering it. Although it is explicitly mentioned that he hates the Jews, initially because of the impression

made upon him by the picture of Christ's crucifixion, his persecution of them is not presented in a way to invite condemnation of him as a bigoted bully or of his actions as cruel and contemptible. Nowhere is it indicated that what he does is wrong; rather the manner in which each of his pranks is described emphasises how amusing they all are, suggesting that Sacher-Masoch fully expected a humorous reaction from his readers. It should also be remembered how Plutin's so-called conversion does not prevent further humiliations for the Jews. It is as sudden as Saul's experience on the road to Damascus, but the reader must necessarily remain unconvinced about its authenticity. While Hadasska, who brings about this conversion, is given a relatively long speech in defence of the Jews, in which she argues powerfully in favour of toleration and equality, its impact is lessened by the lack of obvious effect on Plutin's behaviour.

The manner of Plutin's death also affects the reader's understanding of how Sacher-Masoch intended this character to be viewed. After losing Hadasska completely when she dies of a broken heart shortly after the wedding service, Plutin withdraws from society and lives as a hermit on the steppe. He already knows that he is about to die when he is discovered by his friends, and, in a scene with obvious Christian overtones, they share a last meal. Also present at Plutin's death is Abraham, so inspired by his grief that his violin playing touches the sublime. Plutin is buried by his hitherto unyielding father, deeply remorseful for having rejected his son. At the end of his life, Plutin is elevated by the text from Jew-hater to a saintly figure. Yet this is the same character who had emotionally and physically tormented the Jews of Wrublowize right until he departed. Their suffering may be different to that of the characters in *Der neue Hiob*, but as in that novel, Sacher-Masoch depicts it without sympathy. Apart from Hadasska and Abraham, all the other Jews are figures of fun, satirised and caricatured by Sacher-Masoch as much as by Plutin in his paintings. The public humiliations which the Jews are forced to suffer are presented as more than normal and acceptable. They are amusing, and their perpetrator is not condemned for his actions, but is portrayed as a misunderstood romantic hero.

*Der Iluj* (1882) is different in tone and content from the two previous texts. Rather than the interaction between a non-Jewish hero and background Jewish characters, the issues here are how a Jewish hero interacts with the Jewish community and with Christians in society at large and what the text implies by its depiction of traditional Jewish customs and religious practices. The word *iluj* (or *ilar*: the spelling varies in different editions of the text) denotes a learned Jewish scholar, especially a precociously learned boy. Sabatai Benaja, a rabbi's son in his early teens, has already acquired this title in his home town of Maslow, gaining the respect and admiration of much older men because of the depth of his knowledge of Talmud and Torah. Sacher-Masoch's story follows Sabatai's progress as he loses his faith, converts to Christianity to marry the woman he loves, and loses not only her, but also his new faith and his position as a university lecturer when he refuses to retract his public declaration of the superiority of natural laws over religious belief. Rejected by two faiths as an apostate and by the state for his intellectual non-conformity, his spirit is broken when he is forcibly detained in a lunatic asylum on false charges. Through this process of disintegration the various outside forces which destroy Sabatai's existence are held open to searching criticism, accentuating the failures and hypocrisies of orthodox Judaism, the Catholic Church and the Austrian state. Sabatai's story is in effect a progressive alienation from all the communities in which he attempts to find a home, until his status as an outsider cuts him off entirely from the normal sphere of human relations. The similarities of many aspects of this with the life of Salomon Maimon, born 1754 in Lithuania, who made a similar journey from Talmudic scholarship to Western ideas and education, suggest that Maimon's autobiography, published in 1792–3, may well have been known to Sacher-Masoch.<sup>31</sup> The reader also gains the distinct impression that Sacher-Masoch, no stranger to violent denunciation because of his own dislocation from mainstream thinking and

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31 On Maimon (1754–1800), a protégé of Moses Mendelssohn, see: Robertson, 'From the Ghetto to Modern Culture: The Autobiographies of Salomon Maimon and Jakob Fromer', *Polin*, 7 (1992) 12–30.

morality, felt a strong sense of identification with this character, injecting his own emotions and experiences into the description of Sabatai's persecution by the religious and secular establishments. Glasenapp's contention that Sacher-Masoch's portrayals of Jewish characters demonstrated his solidarity with other outsiders seems more justified with this text than any other, although this by no means prevents the text being the vehicle for fierce criticism of the Judaism practised by the vast mass of Jews who do not seek secular knowledge like Sabatai, an exceptional individual.

When introduced to the reader, so engrossed in his studies that he is oblivious to the outside world, Sabatai seems completely secure in his environment. By a chance occurrence the outside intrudes upon him, setting in motion the train of events which leads to his expulsion from this way of life. As he studies, the wind blows some blossom through his window and on to his desk. Because Sabatai has lived such a reclusive and scholarly life, when he picks it up to move it off his book it is the first time he has touched a flower. He starts to examine it, fascinated by its natural beauty. His sudden encounter with this small piece of the outside world is a revelation and suddenly his preoccupation with the Talmud is disturbed:

Bis jetzt war ihm der Talmud eine Freude wie ein fruchtbarer Garten, der modrige Bücher Geruch wie Blumen- und Wiesenduft, seine Augen spazierten vergnügt zwischen den Buchstabenreihen wie auf weißen Kieswegen. [...] Jetzt war ihm diese Freude mit einem Male welk geworden, welk wie die Blüte, die er zerpflückt in seiner Hand hielt.<sup>32</sup>

From now on Sabatai starts to notice his natural environment and to satisfy his growing curiosity he collects the plants, stones and insects he finds during the brief periods away from his books. The situation reflects a familiar criticism of the gulf between orthodox Jews and the natural environment, one caused by their attachment to scholarship, one which Sacher-Masoch would hold up to criticism in other stories.

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32 Sacher-Masoch, 'Der Iluj', in *Der Judenraphael*, p. 300.

Sabatai's father unwittingly encourages his son's new interest when he suggests that Sabatai should broaden his knowledge with some 'profane' subjects. Delighted by this opportunity, Sabatai learns foreign languages, mathematics and geography. Through his teacher he meets other Jews, very different to those of his own community, finding that while they know little of the Talmud, they know much about subjects which the orthodox would forbid as sinful. Their company is a window on the outside world and becomes preferable to that of other Talmud scholars. Thinking to protect his son, the rabbi eventually stops these lessons, but achieves the opposite effect to that which was intended:

Je mehr es ihm unmöglich gemacht wurde, sich mit den Wissenschaften zu beschäftigen, ja, sich nur überhaupt ein nicht hebräisches Buch zu verschaffen, um so verhaßter wurde Sabatai der Talmud, auf den er nun wieder ausschließlich beschränkt war, um so heftiger erwachte in ihm der Drang nach Wissen, nach Wahrheit, vor allem nach der Erkenntnis der Natur. (306)

Having once tasted forbidden fruit, Sabatai cannot return to his earlier studies without feeling their restrictions. Sabatai's own assessment of his situation is that his desire for knowledge, truth and an understanding of nature cannot be satisfied by the Talmud, that this text, fundamental to the Jewish faith, is fundamentally lacking. Inevitably, Sabatai doubts what he previously accepted:

'Soll ein kleines Volk allein auserwählt sein unter den Völkern der Erde?' fragte er sich; 'soll Gott sich demselben wirklich offenbaren haben und nur diesem? Und wenn es der Fall ist, warum würdigt er dasselbe keiner neuen Offenbarung? Wie kommt es, daß erleuchtete Geister anderer Völker seine Schöpfung heutzutage besser erkennen als wir und daß ihre Entdeckungen im Widerspruche stehen mit unseren heiligen Büchern? Wie sollte auch die Welt stille gestanden sein? Und wenn nicht durch Offenbarung, wo soll man Gott besser kennen als in der Natur? Aber die Juden wissen nichts von der Natur, weder die Thora, noch der Talmud.' (307)

Now the Talmud seems deficient, likewise the concept of the Jews as God's chosen people. How can one people be closer to God than

another if they do not understand God's creation and the teachings on which their faith is grounded are contradicted by science?

Keeping his doubts to himself, Sabatai's reputation as an *ilui* remains untarnished and he marries the daughter of an extremely wealthy Jew who respects his son-in-law's learning above his looks or background, expecting Sabatai's wisdom to bring glory on his household. Held in high esteem, it is easy for Sabatai to pretend to be immersed in the Talmud. Secretly he continues with his new studies, deeply frustrated by his lack of knowledge:

Kein Liebender kann so unsäglich leiden, wenn ihn die Geliebte verstößt und verlacht, kein für die Freiheit Begeisterter, wenn man ihn in Ketten legt, wie der arme Maslower Jude in seinem brennenden Durste nach Erkenntnis und Wahrheit litt, von dieser reinen und erhabenen Wißbegierde erfüllt. (318)

Sabatai's 'pure and exalted' curiosity changes his outlook and character. His knowledge leads to doubts which eventually cause him to reject his faith:

Mit einem tiefen Schrecken bemerkte er, daß die neuen Wahrheiten, die er kennengelernt hatte, mit den Lehren seines Glaubens durchaus nicht in Einklang zu bringen waren. [...] Die Entdeckungen der Geologie, welche er sich zu eigen gemacht hatte, wiesen die jüdische Schöpfungsgeschichte, welche das Erste Buch Moses gibt, in das Reich des Märchens. Wenn aber ein Teil, ein noch so kleiner Teil, ja nur ein Satz der Lehre, auf welchem der Tempel seines Volkes aufgebaut war, Trug war, wer wollte dann noch die Wahrheit des übrigen behaupten oder gar verbürgen? [...] So stürzte auch Sabatais Glaube in sich zusammen, gegen seinen Willen, ja trotz seiner verzweifelten Gegenwehr, und er kam zu dem Ergebnis, die wahre Offenbarung Gottes fortan nur in der Natur zu suchen. (327)

Once again, the text emphasises the incompatibility of Judaism with real learning, real science, real thought. As a religion based on divine revelation, it is vulnerable if only a tiny part of that revelation is disproved. As Sabatai can no longer accept the truth of creation over evolution, the rest of his belief soon collapses, and despite the grief this causes him, the implication of this passage is clear: he is correct to stop believing.



Having made this decision, Sabatai increases his efforts to learn. He makes the acquaintance of Julius Sedlatschek, steward to the Galician provincial president, and asks for access to the president's library. Sedlatschek remarks that he was obviously wrong in thinking that Jews were ignorant. Sabatai replies that he is far from typical and sharply criticises the Jewish concept of learning, which perceives 'healthy' knowledge as evil:

Die Juden wissen von den Wissenschaften ebensoviel als von den Bewohnern der Sterne. Es wäre aber falsch, sie deshalb für ungebildet zu halten. Die galizischen Juden leiden nicht an Unbildung, sondern an Überbildung. Wie sie die Frömmigkeit in der Asketik suchen, so gelten ihnen nur Scharfsinn, Witz und Sophistik als Tiefe, während ihnen das gesunde Wissen in seiner einfachen Form seicht erscheint. (330)

Sedlatschek, not seeing the complexity of the situation, suggests that Sabatai should set about changing the minds of his fellow Jews:

'Es wäre vergebliche Mühe', sagte Sabatai schmerzlich; 'sie sind noch verstockter und intoleranter, als es die Päpste, die Jesuiten und Pastoren je waren, bis jetzt ist noch jeder, welcher in unserem Volke die Leuchte der Vernunft erhob, mit Dornen gekrönt worden. In früherer Zeit hat man die Reformatoren verfolgt, jetzt begnügt man sich, den Bannfluch an ihre Tür zu schreiben und die Luft nicht zu atmen, die sie atmen.' (330)

These words of condemnation of Jewish intolerance and narrow-mindedness acquire considerably more weight through being given to Sabatai, rather than to Sedlatschek, as this dissuades the reader from rejecting them as the expression of Christian intolerance of Jewish behaviour. Sabatai is also prophesying his own fate at the hands of his fellow Jews. Because of his position within the Jewish community, he is vulnerable to attack from those who are jealous of his reputation. Having spied upon him and bribed a servant of the provincial president, they discover that he has been visiting the library and also the theatre. His downfall is certain when his books and a skeleton acquired for his anatomical studies are discovered during a search of his room. Summoned to a rabbinical court, Sabatai chooses

to divorce his wife and leave Lemberg rather than face the accusations, a situation reminiscent of Spinoza's expulsion from Amsterdam. By the time the excommunication order arrives, Sabatai has already departed.

Three years later Sabatai returns to Lemberg from Vienna, where he studied at the university and received his doctorate. He now wears western dress, although he has not converted. He discusses his future plans with Sedlatschek, who suggests that he should give public lectures, so long as this is not prevented by Sabatai being Jewish. Sabatai corrects him, saying that rather it is the case that he is not a Christian and from his current position as an enlightened academic makes fun of his earlier intellectual concerns:

Je mehr ich auf dem Gebiete der Naturwissenschaften vorwärts geschritten bin, um so lächerlicher erschien mir mein früheres Streben und Studium: die Sophistik des Talmud, an dem ich so lange Jahre mit Entzücken gehangen hatte. Ich selbst komm mir komisch vor, wie ich nur je mit so viel Ernst und so viel Aufwand von Scharfsinn Fragen erörtern konnte, wie die, ob in der Synagoge eine Orgel angebracht werden darf. (349)

He continues, describing how he laughed at his former self until one day he had to ask whether he was still Jewish, and admitted that the answer was 'no'. Sabatai's strange situation, where he feels neither Jewish nor Christian but has at least gained personal integrity, contrasts favourably with that of a member of Lemberg society, the converted Jew, Dr. Popper, described unfavourably by the narrator as:

ein Mensch ohne Talent, ohne Wissen, ohne jedes edlere Streben. Der Idealismus war ihm so fremd wie einem Wolfe das Grasfressen. Er war nur von Eitelkeit und Habgier beherrscht. [...] Vielleicht verdankte er seine Stellung ausschließlich seiner Suada und seiner schmetternden Stimme, die derselben zu Hilfe kam. Er war unglaublich zudringlich, frech und dabei von hündischer Kriecherei, jedes an seinem Platze und zu seiner Zeit. (349–50)

As Popper's conversion has no impact on the story and need not have been mentioned, the implication must be that this detail is provided in order to create a link in the reader's mind between con-

version and a lack of principles, honesty and integrity. Soon enough, however, Sabatai himself faces the dilemma of conversion. During the course of public lectures he has given, he has fallen in love with a member of his audience. Having let him understand that she returns his feelings, she takes him to discuss the matter with her father. The conversation shows how little even his future bride, Isabella, understands what marriage to a Christian would mean for Sabatai:

‘Ich verlange kein Opfer von Ihnen. Sie selbst haben sich mir gegenüber als Freigeist bekannt, es wird Ihnen also keinen Kampf kosten, Ihren Glauben abzulegen; nur auf diese Weise ist es möglich, daß wir uns für immer vereinen.’

Benaja schwieg.

‘Es versteht sich, daß Sie zuerst Christ werden müssen,’ sprach der Major.

‘Es versteht sich,’ wiederholte der Jude. (358)

Sabatai has no choice in the matter. In the minds of Isabella and her father, his conversion goes without saying. Isabella may be right in judging Sabatai as a freethinker but she is mistaken to conclude that a change of faith will be easy. In fact, the only person to understand Sabatai’s internal struggle is the narrator, who sympathetically describes what the connection to Judaism means, even to an ‘Abtrünniger’:

Kein Mensch, nicht einmal seine fromme, zartfühlende Braut ahnte was er in jenen Tagen litt, welche Seelenkämpfe er durchzukämpfen hatte. Wer hätte ihn aber auch verstanden! Für den polnischen Juden heißt seinen Glauben wechseln – *auswandern*, das Haus verlassen, in dem er geboren wurde, seine Geschwister, seine Freunde, die Gräber seiner Eltern, das Volk, das seine Sprache spricht und dessen Herz den gleichen Schlag hat, alle Erinnerungen ausraufen wie das Gras, das die Juden beim Begräbnis, ohne umzublicken, hinter sich streuen, und fortan in der Fremde leben unter Fremden. (360)

Faced with this awful choice, only his love for Isabella and his hope that as a Christian he will have new freedom for study and research, stop him backing down. But it is the Jewish reaction to the news of his impending conversion and marriage which finally pushes him towards overcoming his fear of complete exclusion from the

community of his birth. A deputation of Lemberg Jews, including his former father-in-law, comes to tell him they misunderstood him and wrongly imposed the excommunication order. Sabatai, aware that the real motivation for this visit is not shame, but a last-ditch attempt to prevent his conversion, roundly condemns them for their past behaviour and their current actions:

‘Genug,’ stammelte Benaja mit vor Wut erstickter Stimme; ‘als ich, eurem Glauben treu, mich gleich anderen Talmudisten den Wissenschaften widmete, um Gott besser zu erkennen, da nanntet ihr mich einen Abtrünnigen, einen Ketzer und verfluchtet mich und stießet mich hinaus, einem Hunde gleich. Jetzt, wo ich das bin, wozu ihr mich gemacht habt, jetzt wollt ihr Ehren häufen auf den Ungläubigen, den Ausgestoßenen. Es ist zu spät! Ihr Heuchler! [...] Ich habe mich losgesagt von euch.’  
‘Posche Jisrael! [wicked Jew]’ schrien die Juden alle zugleich.  
‘Ja, das bin ich,’ fuhr Benaja fort; ‘jetzt bin ich es durch eure Weisheit, eure Nächstenliebe, und wenn ich eine Sünde tue, so kommt sie über euch!’ (360–1)

Although Sabatai’s anger is most obviously directed at his visitors, his speech has to be read also as a condemnation of orthodox Judaism in general. In Sabatai’s first conversation with Sedlatschek, he showed that he was well aware of the fate of those who cannot keep orthodox laws. That his fellow Jews sought to excommunicate him when his actions were uncovered could have come as no surprise. Although Sabatai is angry at the hypocrisy of this attempt to bring him back to the fold, he also condemns the very structure of the religion itself which deemed his search for knowledge to be criminal. This confrontation marks the final break between Sabatai and his past, except this time he effectively excommunicates himself.

Sabatai seems briefly to have found new spiritual and intellectual homes. He converts to Catholicism, marries Isabella, and becomes a popular lecturer at Lemberg University. He is greatly respected by the students for his honesty in telling them that the information in the approved textbooks is vastly outdated and teaches them about the scientific discoveries he and other modern researchers have made. However, this happy period in his life is only a lull before the storm.

Just as his early researches contributed to the death of his Jewish faith, his current studies also work to change his ideas: 'Wie die grünen Ketten einer Pflanze den Baum mehr und mehr umarmen und endlich erwürgen, so knüpfte sich in seiner Forschung Glied an Glied, Schluß an Schluß, bis die letzte Wurzel seines Glaubens zerstört war' (365). Sabatai's commitment to free speech and his denial of the official teachings of church and state lead swiftly to his second downfall. Despite his popularity with the students, Sabatai is mistrusted by the university authorities and the professorship he was promised goes to Sedlatschek, who has plagiarised Sabatai's work. Isabella, an overly pious woman completely under the sway of her Jesuit confessor, believes absolutely that her soul is at risk of damnation if she is married to an atheist and threatens to leave him unless he makes a public retraction of his teachings.

Rather than lose his wife, Sabatai makes up his mind to do what she asks. But with his students watching, Sabatai cannot bring himself to deny what he feels to be fundamentally right. Instead of reading his statement, he repeats his belief in the superiority of natural laws over the teachings of religion. Sabatai pleads for the kind of enlightened humanism which ignores national and religious boundaries and would have prevented the criminalisation of his own intellectual pursuit for truth and knowledge. His speech is directed to the students, rather than the cowardly chancellor or the sycophantic Sedlatschek:

Lassen Sie Ihre noch offenen empfänglichen Herzen von keinem Glauben, keinem nationalen Gefühl, keiner Art von Vaterlandsliebe beherrschen, denn das ist jederzeit nur Liebe, die ebensoviel Haß und Verachtung zeugt; entwickeln Sie Ihre Bildung, Ihre Intelligenz unbekümmert um die traurigen, armseligen Grenzen, welche der Staat Ihrem Wissen zu stecken sucht, und Sie werden sich mehr und mehr nicht als Juden oder Christen, Polen, Russen oder Deutschen fühlen, sondern als *Menschen*, als Brüde und jeder in seinem kleinen Kreise die großen Ziele der Menschheit erreichen helfen, die Freiheit, die Gleichheit und den Weltfrieden. (418)

Given the circumstances, Sabatai can only retain his integrity at great personal cost. His attack on restrictions imposed by the state, in

*Vormärz* Austria, can obviously not be tolerated by the authorities. Despite the students' protestations, he is forcibly removed from the university. When he arrives home, Isabella has packed her belongings and is ready to leave, accompanied by her confessor. In the days which follow, she collaborates with Dr. Popper to have Sabatai diagnosed as incurably insane and committed to the asylum. Soon he is completely forgotten by townspeople and students. It is not until the Polish uprising of 1848 that this intellectual freedom fighter is remembered and released but by then it is too late; his spirit is broken and he refuses to be the longed-for revolutionary leader. After the defeat of the revolution in Poland, Sabbatai is thought to have fought and died in Hungary as a simple soldier. However, some people in Lemberg are not so sure, having seen a man in modern dress, but wearing two tiny side-locks and a skull cap, collecting stones, plants and insects in the local area. His response to questions demonstrates the unexpected profundity of the simple-minded: 'Fragt ihn aber jemand, der ihn rastlos suchend durch den Wald oder die Heide streichen sieht, ob er etwas verloren habe, so sieht er ihn erstaunt an und antwortet leise und heimlich: "Ich suche Gott und kann ihn nicht finden"' (430). Although the possibility exists that Sabatai did die fighting for freedom in Hungary, the similarities between this man and Sabatai are a strong indication that the reader is meant to accept this as Sabatai's final fate. His apparent outward reversion to Judaism seems strange, but this is a man whose mind is impaired. If his thought processes are hard to follow, one thing is clear: Sabatai's life-long search for truth by means of knowledge of the natural world continues compulsively and hopelessly. He has reverted to looking for God, just as he did as a boy with his study of the Talmud, but now lacks his earlier certainty that He is to be found and understood.

Thus, it is the futility of religious belief which is the final message of *Der Iluj*, one which has been delivered in various ways throughout the text. What does this message say about Sacher-Masoch's understanding of his subject matter? While Catholicism undoubtedly comes in for some criticism in the form of Isabella's brainwashing by the Jesuits and her consequent intolerance of any

deviation from her own beliefs, the perceived failings of orthodox Judaism receive more emphasis. Even the blossom which landed on Sabatai's desk at the start of the story embodies a particular criticism of traditional Jewish life. That it should be such a revelation to him accords with the view that the Jews were unable to comprehend the natural environment. Forbidden to own land, the Jewish people could not easily become involved in agriculture. With the passing of time this fact mutated into an image of the Jews being excessively attached to trade and business or, as in Sabatai's case, arcane and abstract studies, which compared unfavourably to the healthy simplicity of rural life. In this context Sabatai's desire to understand the natural world appears entirely laudable and the condemnation of his quest by the Jews doubly wrong.

Linked to the criticism of Jewish alienation from the real world (in physical and intellectual terms), is the text's presentation of Jewish learning. Explicitly condemned by Sabatai as 'Scharfsinn, Witz und Sophistik' (330), it is held up to criticism in other ways. That Sabatai should have spent all his young life poring over books can easily appear as harsh treatment by his father and that first his father and then father-in-law seek to ban his studies as profane and sinful condemns their Judaism as blinkered, backwards and restrictive and the Jews themselves as intolerant and fanatical. However, the worst criticism is directed at the Jewish religion itself. Sabatai's doubts come when he has looked outside the Talmud and learns about scientific theories of nature and evolution. The clear implication is that knowledge about the world is incompatible with the Jewish faith and that once knowledge has been acquired, the inconsistencies and errors of Judaism become only too obvious. Sabatai's geological studies and his subsequent conclusion that the world evolved and was not created are presented as the triumph of science over fairy tale. As he recognises, once one part of the Jewish faith has been disproved, the entire religion collapses. In the final analysis, this text goes further than just condemning Jewish behaviour. It attacks the very foundations of Jewish faith, and denies that faith a reason to exist.

Sacher-Masoch wrote several collections of short stories and sketches which focus entirely on mainly traditional Jewish life. *Judengeschichten* (1878) was followed by *Neue Judengeschichten* (1881), *Polnische Ghettoesgeschichten* (1886) and lastly *Jüdisches Leben in Wort und Bild* (German edition 1891, French translation 1888). Other Jewish stories were included in collections with different overall themes, such as *Liebesgeschichten aus verschiedenen Jahrhunderten* (1874), *Polnische Geschichten* (1886) and *Lustige Geschichten aus dem Osten* (1893). The shorter fiction is particularly interesting for its different approach to the subject matter, including many more positive portrayals of Jewish life and characters than in the texts considered thus far. It is these contradictions which makes understanding Sacher-Masoch such a complicated matter.

As yet, Sacher-Masoch's Jewish characters have not encouraged the reader to think of their author as unprejudiced and sympathetic. Those characters which are not presented negatively, such as Joadan, are still described in stereotypical terms. Even the story of a Jewish hero, Sabatai, is a vehicle for sharp criticism of orthodox Judaism. However, in the shorter fiction one can find instances of great understanding of Jewish life and customs. Sacher-Masoch's last collection of Jewish stories, for example, *Jüdisches Leben*, brings together tales set all over Europe, simple sketches of triumph over adversity, poverty or bad luck in love. The reader learns of the machinations of the marriage broker in *Der schöne Kaleb*, the resolution of clashes between parents and children over the choice of marriage partners in *Die Erlösung* and *Der falsche Thaler* and the continuity of Jewish life as the year's festivals take place: Purim in *Haman und Esther*, Passover in *Schalem Alechem*, Yom Kippur and Kol Nidre in *Bär und Wolf*. All are told with affection, and Sacher-Masoch's interest in the details of Jewish life is very apparent.

One short story, *Der alte Pfarrer*, first published in Sacher-Masoch's review *Auf der Höhe* in 1881, stands out as Sacher-Masoch's most powerful fictional plea for understanding between Jews and Christians and can even be described as *anti*-antisemitic. With real engagement for the Jewish side, it tells of how refugees from a



pogrom in Russia cross the Austrian border and arrive exhausted in a Ruthenian village. The crowd of peasants which comes out to meet them is initially not hostile, until stirred up by the village good-for-nothing, who warns of ritual slaughter and well poisonings if they allow these Jews to stay. Unable to pay for their safe passage, the Jews are attacked by the villagers and take refuge in the churchyard under a hail of stones. Only the priest, whose understanding of Christianity differs greatly from that of his parishioners, comes to the aid of the Jews and prevents widescale injury and death:

‘Halt! Ihr Rasenden!’ rief er, ‘ist das die Religion der Liebe, die ich euch predige, seid ihr Tartaren oder Türken?’

‘Sie sollen ihr Geld herausgeben,’ schrie die Menge wie *ein* Mann.

‘Niemand soll ihnen ein Haar krümmen,’ fuhr der Priester Christi mit erhobener Stimme, die wie ein kräftiger Orgelton in der Luft zitterte, fort; ‘seht hier den Heiland, der für die ganze Menschheit am Kreuze gestorben ist, für diese ebensogut wie für uns, er, der die Liebe ist und das Erbarmen, er weiß nichts von euch, ihr Heiden, ihr Gotteslästerer!’<sup>33</sup>

The priest’s words are not enough to calm the crowd, eager to inflict violence on the Jews whom they mistakenly believe are carrying money with them. When the priest finishes speaking the hail of stones recommences. The descriptions of suffering in this text differ greatly from those in *Der neue Hiob* and *Der Judenraphael*, as they treat the subject with seriousness, not as an interesting or amusing spectacle. The author’s sympathy with the ‘arme gehetzte Juden’ and condemnation of the peasants, an utter reversal of the situation in *Der neue Hiob*, is apparent during the refugees’ ordeal and its resolution:

Hier sank ein jüdisches Weib verwundet auf den nächsten Grabhügel nieder, dort weinte ein Kind, dem das Blut durch die schwarzen Locken herabrann.

Da öffnete der greise Pfarrer rasch entschlossen die Tür der Kirche. ‘Hierher, ihr Unglücklichen! Eure Brüder morden euch, er aber, der die Liebe ist und der Schutz der Verfolgten, er nimmt euch in seinem Hause auf.’

Die Menge blieb erstarrt stehen, während die armen gehetzten Juden in die Kirche flüchteten, deren Türen sich mitleidig hinter ihnen schlossen. (37)

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33 Sacher-Masoch, ‘Der alte Pfarrer’, in *Der Judenraphael*, p. 37.

For three days the priest feeds and houses the Jews in the church while refusing to baptise, marry or bury his congregation until they repent. Finally they surrender and escort the refugees to the nearest town, where there are other Jews to take care of them. However, rather than conclude with a happy ending, the story finishes with a mixed note of hope and uncertainty, which more accurately reflects the Central European Jewish experience of the late nineteenth century. Having begun by recounting the wanderings of the Jewish people during biblical times and after the Diaspora, the text moves full circle and poses the question: how long will these refugees be safe in their new home? 'Dann heißt es weiterziehen, nach Spanien und weiter über den Ozean, dorthin, wo das Sternenbanner der Freiheit weht. Und wieder wandern und wandern!' (38)

Sacher-Masoch wrote other stories in which antisemitism is attacked, by Hadasska in *Der Judenraphael*, for example, but none is told with such seriousness or conviction as *Der alte Pfarrer*. The stories *Frau Leopard (Jüdisches Leben)* and *Cipre Goldfinger (Neue Judengeschichten)* both recount how antisemites have their beliefs and behaviour challenged and changed by the eponymous heroines of the stories. However, the reader is left with the distinct impression that, similar to Hadasska's case, had the male antisemites not fallen in love with the 'schöne Jüdinnen', their arguments for toleration and respect would have made no headway. Because of this, *Der alte Pfarrer* stands alone as an exception.

However, despite the anti-antisemitism of *Der alte Pfarrer* and the obvious sympathy detectable in many of the short stories, the shorter fiction is not free of confusion and criticism. A few stories in particular illustrate the affinities between these specifically Jewish texts and those which were considered earlier. While *Der alte Pfarrer* is a straightforward and sympathetic account of the suffering caused by irrational prejudice, other short stories show suffering in a way which reflects the author's somewhat dubious interest in the infliction of mental and physical pain. *Sabbathai Zeny: 1666*, published in 1877 in the collection *Liebesgeschichten aus verschiedenen Jahrhunderten*, is a prime example of how Sacher-Masoch imposed his fantasies on to a story

to make it more closely reflect life as he desired it to be. In this particular story, the imposition is all the more remarkable because Sacher-Masoch is using a well-known historical event as his subject and therefore any deviation from the accepted version of events would be more noticeable. Sabbathai, probably the most well-known of the Jewish Messiahs who have appeared over the centuries, was born in 1626 in Smyrna, and declared himself to be the Messiah in 1665 in Jerusalem. For a year he announced his claim in towns throughout the Near East and acquired a large following. The unrest caused by his movement was unacceptable to the Sultan of Turkey, who had Sabbathai imprisoned. Under threat of death he converted to Islam in 1667, causing shockwaves among the thousands of Jews of Europe and Asia Minor who had believed him.

Sacher-Masoch borrows this historical model and then adds extra details to make the story fit his ideals. His Sabbathai is a saintly, mystic figure, with leanings towards asceticism so extreme that they would do credit to Simeon Stylites. His every waking moment must be filled with physical or emotional pain in order for him to feel that he is pleasing God. This carries over into his personal life to the extent that his wife's sexuality becomes an instrument of torture. Having married a beautiful woman, and despite being fully aware of her charms, Sabbathai will not sleep with Sarah in order to punish himself. Not having expected such treatment, Sarah asks him if it is not difficult to ignore her:

‘Ob ich leide?’ schrie Sabbathai auf, ‘bin ich nicht ein Mensch, strömt nicht heißes Menschenblut durch meine Adern? Ob ich leide, Sarah, ich kann es nicht mit Menschenworten aussprechen, wie Du mich marterst. Der Türke martert seinen Christensklaven nicht so, wie Du mich marterst. Aber je mehr ich leiden muß, um so mehr jauchze ich, Weib, und lobe Gott.’<sup>34</sup>

Sabbathai's desire to suffer has led him to make a vow of chastity even harder, by surrounding himself with temptation at all times.

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34 Sacher-Masoch, ‘Sabbathai Zewy: 1666’, in *Liebesgeschichten aus verschiedenen Jahrhunderten*, 2 vols (Berne: Froben, 1877), II, 87.

When, inevitably, his marriage with Sarah ends, Sabbathai repeats these tortures with his new wife, Hanna, along with others designed to test his strength of mind in different ways:

Sabbathai peinigte sich in seiner neuen Ehe in unerhörter Weise. Er ließ sein verführerisches Weib die halbe Nacht an seiner Seite ruhen, dann lag er bis zum Morgen auf einem Lager von Dornen, das seinen Leib blutig riß. Oder er nahm mit Hanna am Sabbath ein köstliches Mahl ein und fastete dann ununterbrochen vom Ausgange bis zum Eingange des Sabbath, sechs volle Tage und Nächte, und zwar so, daß er die ganze Woche hindurch weder Speise noch Trank nahm. (91)

When this marriage ends, Sabbathai marries Miriam, apparently a girl of excellent family, but actually a former courtesan. Sabbathai's fame is at its height, and soon afterwards he is captured by the Sultan. Told in a secret meeting with the Sultana that Sabbathai will be executed if he continues to claim to be the Messiah, Miriam decides that he must be made to sin if he is to stop believing this about himself. Having made elaborate preparations, she wakes Sabbathai one moonlit night and informs him that she has been inspired by God to do and say certain things and that he must obey her. Dressed in furs (naturally) she takes him to a nearby river and orders him to undress and wash. Unsurprisingly, he is distracted when she slips out of her furs, revealing herself to be naked underneath, and joins him in the water. She then leads him to the Sultana's summerhouse, which has been made ready for her use, and reclines upon the cushions:

Sabbathai stand vor ihr und bebte in namenloser Qual.

'Weib!' schrie er mit einem Male auf, 'Du bist eine mörderische Geißel über mir!'

'So will es der Herr,' sagte sie, 'entblöße Deinen Rücken, Mann, und kniee nieder, denn es ist sein Wille, daß Du vor mir knieest.'

Sabbathai entblößte seinen Rücken und ließ sich auf beide Kniee vor ihr nieder.

'Du sollst Deine Sünden beichten und büßen, befiehlt der Herr durch meinen Mund,' rief sie jetzt, 'bete die Wido Beichte.'

Sabbathai begann die Wido zu beten. Miriam aber ergriff die mit scharfen Dornen besäeten Zweige, welche auf den Polstern bereit lagen und flocht

eine Krone und band eine Geißel darum, und die Dornenkrone drückte sie Sabbathai auf das Haupt, daß ihm das rothe Blut über die Stirne herabrann, und mit der Dornengeißel begann sie ihn grausam zu schlagen, daß ihm das rothe Blut über den Rücken herabrann. Sabbathai aber fühlte keine Schmerzen, er sah nur das Weib, das vor ihm stand, wie die Schaumgeborene, deren Leib gleich einem Lichte des Himmels hervorleuchtete aus dem dunkeln Pelz und deren aufgelöstes rothes Haar sie gleich Flammen Gottes umloderte. (114–5)

This passage well illustrates the peculiar way in which Sacher-Masoch invests an originally Jewish story with alien elements. It contains a fascinating combination of religious, mythical and sexual imagery, ranging from the pagan sensuality of Aphrodite, the goddess born of the sea-foam, to the extreme asceticism of Sabbatai's flagellation, with its overt masochistic tone. Sabbathai's fall from grace takes the form of a pseudo-religious ceremony conducted by a physically and sexually powerful woman, whose sensuality, as far as both Sabbathai and the author are concerned, is heightened by the furs she wears. In many respects, Sabbathai seems to represent Sacher-Masoch, who projects on to his character the treatment he would desire from a woman. Sabbatai voluntarily places himself in the submissive role and experiences not pain, but an ecstatic vision of womanhood during his whipping, administered during the confession as immediate punishment for the sins admitted. That the passive Sabbathai should have a crown of thorns thrust on his head is an obvious comparison with the fate of Jesus, who more famously claimed to be Messiah and King of the Jews. With Sabbathai's status thus elevated by the comparison, his fall seems more startling. Miriam has understood her husband better than his previous two wives, who tried to seduce him by their beauty or their words, and quite literally beats him into accepting sexual fulfilment. Only with his senses stimulated by the whipping he has received at his wife's hands, can he finally lose the control he imposed on himself and break his vow of chastity. Having made a man out of her saint, Miriam does not find it hard to persuade Sabbathai to convert, rather

than continue with his claim to be the Messiah, which he now cannot believe himself to be.

Whereas *Sabbathai Zeny* clearly shows the imposition of masochistic fantasies on a Jewish subject, Sacher-Masoch wrote another story, where a masochistic mistress-slave relationship is the central theme and the Jewish gloss on the story seems like an unnecessary and awkward addition. In *Lewana*, one of the stories from the collection *Jüdisches Leben*, Nahum Bukarest travels on a ship which turns out to belong to a slave trader. He is sold to a rich widow, Zamira ben Oporto, given to wearing furs while reclining on cushions and displaying her smouldering sensuality. She gradually becomes displeased with herself as she realises she is attracted to her slave, while Nahum, having once seen Zamira unveiled, feels that he would belong to her even if she had not bought him. The link between love and pain is forged when Nahum is punished for behaving clumsily. Zamira reaches for her whip:

und traf ihn wiederholt mit grausamer Energie.

Plötzlich warf sie dieselbe weg und hieß ihn gehen. Dann warf sie sich unmuthig in die Kissen zurück und nagte an den Nägeln ihrer kleinen Hand. Sie war unzufrieden mit sich selbst, sie schämte sich, während er sie Stelle an seinem Arm küßte, wo ihn die Peitsche getroffen hatte.<sup>35</sup>

Sacher-Masoch's fantasy seems to be at work again, turning his fiction into a kind of wish-fulfilment with the substitution of one of his characters for himself. That Nahum actually desires to be treated as a slave in his personal relationship with Zamira as well as in his employment is demonstrated by the conclusion to the story. Outside in the garden that evening, Nahum notices *lewana*, the new moon, and performs the short ceremony which, according to custom, protects Jews from their enemies. He is seen by Zamira, who reveals that, although she hides the fact from the majority Armenian and Muslim population, she is also Jewish. She offers to free Nahum, but for him release from his mistress would be a far worse punishment

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35 Sacher-Masoch, 'Lewana', in *Jüdisches Leben in Wort und Bild*, p. 54.

than the whipping: 'Lass mich bleiben, ich verlange nichts weiter als immer Dein Sklave zu sein. Setz' Deinen Fuß auf meinen Nacken und erlaube mir ihn nur jedesmal zu küssen, wenn er mich getreten hat' (56). Zamira accepts this strange declaration of love, and the story ends as she proposes to Nahum.

In other short stories the affinity with the longer fiction is demonstrated in a different way. The attacks on traditional Judaism contained in *Der Iluj* have already been noted, and although Sacher-Masoch did not take his criticisms as far in the short stories, the suggestions made in his fiction as to what the Jews should do to improve themselves are in effect implicit criticisms of the orthodox way of life. Certain stories in the collection *Jüdisches Leben* demonstrate that Sacher-Masoch could write about Jews with affection and understanding, but not all of them give quite such a glowing report of Jewish life, often containing quite specific criticisms.

*Rabbi Abdon* directly addresses the Jewish attachment to learning and study and criticises the honoured position it continued to maintain among the orthodox. The rabbi is a lonely old man who has spent his life engrossed in the Talmud and cabbala. His dearest wish was for his son to be a learned rabbi, but Simon preferred to watch the farmers at work rather than study: 'Oh! ich kenne ein schöneres Buch,' sprach er dann zu seinem Vater, auf den Talmud deutend, 'das hat Gott selbst geschrieben, darin ist der grüne Wald zu sehen und Sonne, Mond und Sterne.'<sup>36</sup> In his old age, the rabbi remembers how he confronted his son, who had fallen in love with the daughter of a poor Jewish farmer. Simon argued passionately for a different way of life for Jews, blaming the current widespread poverty and misery squarely upon their own shoulders and demanding radical change. He condemned the current occupation with trade and learning as being instrumental in the continued inferior position of Jews in society. Above all, he advocated mass Jewish involvement in agriculture, extolling the virtues of a physically active life spent close to nature

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36 Sacher-Masoch, 'Rabbi Abdon', in *Jüdisches Leben in Wort und Bild*, p. 38.

and using the example of Jewish agricultural settlements north of the Black Sea which had been encouraged by the Russian government between 1835 and 1850:

Der Jude [...] wurde durch seine Verfolger in die engen, finsternen Strassen des Ghetto gesperrt und von jeder Arbeit, jedem anderen Beruf ausgeschlossen, gezwungen sich ausschliesslich dem Handel zu widmen. Es ist aber unsere Schuld, wenn wir heute diese zweite babylonische Gefangenschaft verlängern, die Ketten sind gesprengt, die Schranken gefallen. Wer es mit seinem Volk, seinem Glauben ehrlich meint, der verlasse diese finstren Winkel, in denen nur ein kleinlicher, engherziger Geschäftsgeist zu blühen vermag, oder eine düstre, grillenhafte, unfruchtbare Wissenschaft. Heute liegt das Feld der geistigen Arbeit offen vor uns, offen jede Art menschlicher Tätigkeit. In Odessa haben erleuchtete Männer unseres Stammes sich an die Spitze einer Bewegung gestellt, welche den Juden vor allem zu der Landwirthschaft, zum Ackerbau zurückführen soll, welche das Volk Israel im gelobten Lande glücklich und mächtig gemacht hat. (40)

The rabbi has not seen Simon for ten years, but as he thinks about the past, Simon, with wife and family, suddenly arrives at the house. In order to give weight to Simon's plea for a Jewish return to the land, the story has him returning to his father as a wealthy and successful farmer, but is careful to emphasise that he is still a practising Jew, so as to promote the idea of this different lifestyle being compatible with Judaism. The rabbi is astonished by how strong and healthy his son appears, and it transpires that Simon has fought as a soldier with the Russian army, a further indication of successful Jewish integration into the majority. The story ends with the rabbi accompanying his son back to his farm, where he, too old to start farming, nevertheless spends a happy old age sitting in the garden rather than studying his books inside. Similarly, *Cipre Goldfinger* expresses the hope that youth has a role to play in leading this return to the land. Cipre's father has received a farm in lieu of payment for a debt and has been unable to sell it. Cipre and her siblings decide what is to be done: 'Du bist gewohnt zu handeln, Tate, wie sollst Du auf einmal einen Bauer vorstellen? Aber wir Kinder, wir sind noch jung genug und kräftig, wir werden es noch erlernen, zu bebauen das



Feld.<sup>37</sup> During a confrontation with a neighbouring farmer, Cipre's brother, who has spent all his youth studying, compares very unfavourably with the no doubt illiterate, but strong and healthy Ruthenian:

Ruben erhob sich, aber er dachte kaum daran, sich zur Wehr zu setzen, er, der schmalbrüstige, bleiche, schwächliche Stubenmensch, dem an Kraft strotzenden Naturkind gegenüber, dessen schönes Gesicht die Sonne mit einem wildfremden Indianerbraun überzogen hatte und dessen blaue Augen drohend blitzten. (117)

The message of these two texts is clear: traditional Jewish life is unhealthy and unnatural and improvement comes by moving away from learning and trade and integrating with Christian society. Sacher-Masoch's concept of Jewish reform shows its links with the general tenor of the liberal concept of emancipation and its originator, Dohm, whose 'bürgerliche Verbesserung' involved a change of occupation, away from trade and into agriculture and direct production of goods.

*Der Buchbinder von Hort* shows how Sacher-Masoch's criticisms could be more specifically directed against the religious practices which at other times he detailed with such care and attention. The story paints a portrait of Kalimann the bookbinder, a conscientious and moral person who nonetheless sets his own religious standards and does not accept anything blindly:

Kalimann galt in Hort als Freigeist, und doch war er fromm und beobachtete strenge alle religiösen Vorschriften, aber er hatte sich von verschiedenen Gebräuchen losgemacht, die ihm weder in der Lehre begründet, noch mit dem Fortschritt vereinbar erschienen. Er bedeckte sein Haupt nur im Tempel, er kümmerte sich wenig um die minutiösen Speisegesetze des Talmud, er zog sich an, wie alle anderen, er gestattete seine Frau, das Haar

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37 Sacher-Masoch, 'Cipre Goldfinger', in *Neue Judengeschichten* (Leipzig: Morgenstern, 1881), p. 114.

wachsen zu lassen und verbot in seinem Hause strenge jede Art von Aberglauben.<sup>38</sup>

Kalimann is presented as a positive example of the integration of the old and new. While retaining his Jewish belief, he has abandoned the orthodox teachings which seem to him irrational and, because of his participation in the 1848 revolution in Hungary on the Hungarian side, has developed a sense of national identity. While this text does not explicitly criticise orthodoxy, it is condemned indirectly for its rejection of progress and for perpetuating differences by adherence to its age-old customs, the argument of *Der Iluj* given in miniature.

In opposition to this story is another in *Jüdisches Leben* which attacks the Hasidic sect while commending Orthodox Judaism as the true belief. *Die Iliade von Pultoff* is the story of Vögele Kaftan and her confrontation with the Zadik, Levi Jaffa Löwenstamm, a man with a tyrannical hold over the Jews of Pultoff:

Der Rabbiner Mayer Horowitz, ein gelehrter Mann von tadellosem Charakter, war diesem Papst der jüdischen Ketzer gegenüber machtlos und war zufrieden, daß er noch eine kleine Gemeinde verständiger Menschen um sich versammelt sah, die den wahren Glauben festhielten und vertheidigten.<sup>39</sup>

These heretics cause trouble for Vögele by informing the Zadik that she is growing her hair and reads forbidden books. Her husband is told to send a gift to placate Löwenstamm, but when none is forthcoming, Vögele is summoned to answer to her 'crimes'. She accuses the Zadik of being a fraud, and, as chance would have it, soon proves herself right. Encouraged by his followers, Löwenstamm curses Vögele, who remains unaffected and taunts him by saying that she will subjugate him and place her foot on his neck. As he rushes towards her, he trips and falls at her feet, whereupon she does as she threatened. Although Vögele has defeated one Hasid, the Zadik's

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38 Sacher-Masoch, 'Der Buchbinder von Hort', in *Jüdisches Leben in Wort und Bild*, p. 106.

39 Sacher-Masoch, 'Die Iliade von Pultoff', in *Jüdisches Leben in Wort und Bild*, p. 302–3.

erstwhile followers demonstrate their fanaticism by acclaiming Vögele as divinely inspired while their humiliated leader creeps away.

As a final point, it should be noted that while Sacher-Masoch at various times condemns both Orthodox and Hasidic Jewry, he also wrote very unflatteringly about assimilated Jews. Dr. Popper in *Der Iluj* is a case in point, as are Baron and Baroness Hirtenfeld in *Der Judenraphael*. Sacher-Masoch dedicated an article to the subject of assimilation in one of his short-lived reviews, the *Belletristische Blätter*, published weekly between April and July 1880 in Budapest and Leipzig, in which he painted a deeply unflattering portrait of assimilation, personified in Madame Kreipeles of Budapest. Her grandfather started the process of assimilation when he arrived from Tarnopol, 'in langem fettglänzenden Talar, sehr kothigen Stiefeln, einem schäbigen Filz, mit zerzaustem Haar, getheiltem Bart und jenen berühmten, an Hobelspäne oder Korkzieher mahnenden zwei Löckchen, als armer Schnorrer'.<sup>40</sup> As times change, Kreipeles, unsatisfied with her life at the age of 20, is faced with choices. On the one hand, she could dedicate herself to family life. Or:

sie müßte den Muth haben, die uralten Gesetztafeln zu zerbrechen, dem Tempel ihres Volkes den Rücken zu kehren und sich zu jener geistigen Höhe echter humaner Bildung zu erheben, wo sich die Menschen aller Racen, aller Nationen, die Bekenner der verschiedensten Religionen brüderlich die Hände reichen. (1)

Again, Judaism is depicted as being incompatible with true spiritual understanding and learning, but Kreipeles does not take the author's recommended path. Instead, she decides to assimilate into Hungarian society. She persuades her husband to buy a country estate, magyarises their surname and does whatever is in vogue in terms of clothes, holidays, recreation, and charitable activities. Because it is fashionable, she also takes a lover, even though she loves her husband and children:

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40 Sacher-Masoch, 'Budapester Nebelbilder' in *Belletristische Blätter* (Beilage), 2 May 1880, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

[Sie] wurde so zu einem jener jüdischen Typen, deren widerlichem Gebahren wir die Treitschkes und Istóczy zu verdanken haben, denn nur diese, nicht mehr gläubigen und auch nicht geistig freien, halbgebildeten Exemplare, welche sich vorzüglich in der deutsch-jüdischen Journalistik und in der Finanzwelt finden, diese Juden, welche keine Juden mehr sind, nur diese sind es, welche durch ihr einerseits flaches und lächerliches, anderseits aufdringliches Wesen das Judenthum in Mißkredit bringen.<sup>41</sup>

She is presented as an entirely ridiculous figure, shallow and trivial. Her behaviour is placed in a wider context of changing Jewish circumstances in Europe, where the Jews who attempt to integrate into non-Jewish society are blamed for causing antisemitism, the anti-semitic backlash of Treitschke and Istóczy being a natural reaction to these semi-educated, superficial yet pushy Jews. Whereas Sacher-Masoch seems to be promoting greater integration in the figure of Kalimann, also Hungarian, in *Der Buchbinder von Hort*, in this review article he could hardly be more scathing.

## Summary

The preceding study of Sacher-Masoch's Jewish fiction has attempted to address the issue of whether Sacher-Masoch's attitude to his Jewish subject matter shows more evidence of his solidarity with society's outsiders or of his prejudices against this group. *Der neue Hiob*, for example, assigns a malevolent role to the Jewish characters with the one exception of Joadan, separated from the mass of Jews by her beauty and willingness to convert. Their economic role in society is criticised, the text ultimately depicting its destruction as a progressive move. Their religion and its traditions are derided, as with Wolf's

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41    *ibid*, p. 1. Viktor Istóczy (1848–1915) was the leader of the Hungarian Anti-semitic Party which was successful in the 1884 elections in the wake of the Tisza-Eszlar blood libel trial of the previous year. In 1878 he had advocated repatriating all Jews to Palestine.

precautions against cholera, or exposed as profoundly inhumane, as with Joadan's beating by her father and her abduction, torture and murder. Frequently, the Jews who stand against Theofil and the peasants in any way are punished: Wolf dies of cholera, the rabbi and Kornberg are brutally executed, the Jews in Kolomea are stoned by the schoolboys, but their suffering or death is presented as the deserved punishment for their Jewish behaviour. While the prejudices of the Ruthenian peasants cannot be accepted as reflections of Sacher-Masoch's own, the text suggests far more a simplistic, stereotyped attitude on the author's part than one of solidarity. Similarly, *Der Judenraphael* also deals with the Jews as victims without sympathy for their lot, but ridicules rather than murders them and presents their persecution as amusing. The presentational standpoint is that of a non-Jew, Plutin; the narratorial sympathy is unwaveringly with him, as it was with Theofil. Coming from a sympathetic character, Hadasska's plea for toleration is undoubtedly powerful and may well be closer to Sacher-Masoch's own stance than Plutin's mockery, but its impact is practically negated by the lack of effect on Plutin's behaviour. Less black and white than *Der neue Hiob*, this text could be seen to show an attempted sympathy and solidarity on the author's part, but one which fails because of the consistent positive presentation of a Rosche as its hero.

*Der Iluj* is a different type of text, because of its focus on a central Jewish character. Here there is solidarity of a kind, created by the sense that Sacher-Masoch's own feelings about his alienation from society have contributed to the sympathetic description of the protagonist's struggle when he becomes alienated from successive religious and intellectual communities. The solidarity, however, applies only to the one, exceptional character who is in the process of losing his Judaism, not to the mass of Jews. As such, *Der Iluj* is Sacher-Masoch's fiercest attack, not just on the Jews but on Judaism itself, depicting it in entirely negative terms as backward and bigoted, incompatible with reason and modern understanding of the world. In a less overtly condemnatory sense, various short stories take this presentation further by holding various aspects of Jewish life open to

criticism. While in no sense as reformatory in intent as Freytag, Sacher-Masoch also described various means whereby the Jews could improve their lot: a return to the land (*Rabbi Abdon*) or a move away from orthodoxy (*Der Buchbinder von Hort*).

However, there are other texts which contain no critical note and are undeniably proof that Sacher-Masoch, probably more than any other Gentile author of his day, possessed a great depth of knowledge about Galician Jews and could on occasion argue strongly in their favour. Evidently, there are many inconsistencies within the corpus of Sacher-Masoch's Jewish fiction, which includes *Der alte Pfarrer* at one end of the spectrum and the persecutions in *Der neue Hiob* at the other. Plutin Samojlenko's capriciousness towards the Jews of Zablotow is very redolent of his author's own erratic approach. Whereas Sacher-Masoch would sometimes emphasise the good points of Jewish life and customs, praising the strengths of the family and a sense of tradition, other texts belie this completely by criticising preoccupation with Talmud study and attachment to religious precepts which prevent enlightened progress. The reader often feels that Sacher-Masoch's fiction must have been written by two authors, with different displaying praise or criticism of the Orthodox, the Hasidim and those Jews who assimilated with a majority culture.

Understanding these divergent approaches is no easy task. It is one rendered harder by the very narrow existing research base and by the large number of Sacher-Masoch's texts currently unavailable, making it impossible to read the entirety of the relevant fiction and take in the whole picture. For those texts covered here, no single explanation seems adequate on its own, which is why this chapter has been more concerned with demonstrating the problem than presenting an answer, but a couple of suggestions may be made. It would seem that, while not withholding suggestions for change among the Jews, Sacher-Masoch could show himself to be thoughtful, sympathetic and knowledgeable when concentrating on stories with a central Jewish theme played out in an enclosed Jewish community. But when not writing this specific genre of fiction, when the focus broadened to take in the wider, non-Jewish community, the

consideration seems to falter. Sacher-Masoch was distinctly less 'careful' with his presentation of Jewish characters when they formed the background to another story, tending to keep the narratorial sympathy with the non-Jewish characters. It is then that the Jews fell easily into the role of victims. This carelessness in his writing, a disregard for the effect of his black and white characterisations and the construction of his texts, could well have been caused by Sacher-Masoch's constant concerns about money. It is known that he frequently needed to write in order for him and his family to survive. While there is no evidence to suggest that the negative Jewish portrayals were a deliberate attempt to flatter the prejudices of his readers, the stereotyping and mockery could certainly be due to the haste in which the texts were written. The carelessness is similarly demonstrated by the imposition of masochistic fantasies upon unsuitable foundations to bizarre effect, *Sabbathai Zenvy* for example. His masochism also affected his use of stereotypes. His portrayals of women, for example, clearly demonstrate his propensity to use them. The Sacher-Masoch woman is incontrovertibly a *type*, imposed on the character, whether Christian or Jewish, without due regard for the suitability of a dominant fur-clad figure to the story's plot. This disposition to think of characters in one-dimensional terms applies as much to his Jewish fiction as to his erotic stories. He could use equivalently clichéd terms to portray male Jews who are described in other places with apparently sincere affection. It is thus overwhelmingly his carelessness as a writer which means that Sacher-Masoch himself calls into question the reality of his professed sympathy for the Jews. He certainly was capable of sympathising with them, but ultimately his own fantasies and his deeply critical attitude towards many aspects of Jewish life and Judaism are demonstrated in the erratic and contradictory nature of his solidarity with the Jewish people.

## Chapter Four

### Theodor Fontane: The Uncertain Critic

At first glance, there is scant evidence for casting doubt on Theodor Fontane's critical abilities by describing him as an uncertain critic, since it was as an observer and reporter of contemporary life, society and culture that he made both his name and his living. Based in London in the 1850s as foreign correspondent for a Berlin newspaper, he later reported on Prussia's wars with Denmark, Austria and France and from 1870 wrote theatre criticism for the *Vossische Zeitung*. All this occurred well before Fontane turned his talents to writing fiction.

However, it was a quotation of Fontane's which was used in the introduction to summarise the problem which is the focus of this book. 'Inmitten seiner Antipathieen, kommt man doch immer wieder in's Schwanken', he wrote to his daughter Martha (Mete), in a letter in which, prompted by the presence of many Jews at a dinner he attended, he discourses upon the contribution made by Jews to German society.<sup>1</sup> Both the Jews he knew personally and those whom he met in the course of his life in Berlin or during his summer holidays were the object of his 'Antipathieen' and his 'Schwanken', reflected as much in this letter as in the larger body of his work. The combination of both elements suggests a profound uncertainty and ambivalence in Fontane's attitude towards Jewish people. This chapter investigates this uncertainty of Fontane's against the background of the society about which and for which he wrote.

Fontane's approach to Jews and Judaism in his life and work has not received much critical attention, either recently or in the past. Criticism of his fiction has tended to deal with aspects such as his realism, his relationship with the Prussian aristocracy, his depiction

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1 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 364, 30.8.1895.



of Berlin life and of certain social types and classes of society; but not generally with Jews as part of that society. Although Fontane now ranks among Germany's greatest nineteenth-century writers, this aspect of his work has not been as hotly debated as in the case of Freytag or Raabe. That this issue has hitherto been ignored or at best dealt with very summarily is not because Fontane's depictions of Jewish characters are so unproblematic or minor as to add nothing to the overall picture. There *are* Jewish characters in a number of Fontane's works and many further references to Jews by other characters displaying a variety of opinions. It is of course uncomfortable to admit that a well-loved author held offensive racial views, but contrasting Fontane with Raabe suggests another reason for the absence of research. A small part of Raabe's fictional output allowed for antisemitic interpretation, a fact exploited by the Raabe-Gesellschaft to elevate Raabe to the status of an antisemitic German prophet. The consequent controversy surrounding Raabe's treatment of Jewish characters makes it understandable that this area has been much studied. However, no one novel of Fontane's is so problematic as Raabe's *Der Hungerpastor*, no one character has the capacity for arousing controversy of Moses Freudenstein and there is no such polarised presentation of Jew and Christian as with Moses and Hans Unwirrsch. Therefore no great debate over Fontane's depiction of Jewish characters or his own supposed anti- or philosemitism has arisen to attract wider and more substantial critical attention.

The preservation and publication of many of Fontane's letters have also diverted attention from his fictional Jewish characters. In general, literary researchers welcome access to an author's diaries or letters as a means of clarifying problematic or obscure issues. However, research has mainly been content to consider the direct opinions expressed in the correspondence. Here the tone of Fontane's references to Jews is often outspokenly critical, sometimes straying from objective comments to personal remarks about supposed Jewish characteristics, which, at the least, appear downright offensive to the modern reader, if not influenced by antisemitic rhetoric. In contrast, the fiction, where the references are less out-

spoken and Fontane's own views less apparent, has been neglected, as has the possibility that the opinions expressed in the letters were repeated in the fiction, and so a study of Fontane's fictional depictions of Jews becomes both more interesting and more complex, a fuller understanding of the one assisting a fuller understanding of the other. This chapter considers the extent to which Fontane's own views, as expressed in his letters, informed the images produced in his fiction and the relationship of these images to ones which were prevalent in late nineteenth-century Germany, exploring correspondence and fiction to see if a unity of opinion links the two. The texts *Die Poggenpuhls*, *Der Stechlin* and *Unwiederbringlich* are studied in depth, others more briefly.

## Criticising the Critics

Rarely the subject of in-depth research, the issue of Fontane's 'Jewish connection' appears essentially as a minor detail in a discussion focusing on some other aspect of Fontane's life or works. A detailed study of Jewish characters and references in both Fontane's letters *and* fiction does not yet seem to have been undertaken, although critics have long drawn attention to this deficiency and urged that it should be remedied. As far back as 1981, Wolfgang Paulsen, who has done more than most in recent years to publicise this side of Fontane, demonstrated his exasperation:

Watching recent Fontane critics at work – and this includes some of his Jewish apologists – one feels a marked sense of frustration. With few exceptions, they have avoided the issue of their author's rather obvious antisemitism as if it did not exist or as if it were a natural phenomenon of German cultural history – as it very well may be. It is, of course, a painful subject for those of us who love his work, many of whom would much prefer to keep the skeleton in the closet. This disinclination to face the facts

becomes outright falsification if we disregard all evidence and call his attitude 'philosemitic', as has been done.<sup>2</sup>

It is not as if Fontane research has only recently become aware of this area. As early as 1905, the journal of the Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus considered Fontane's treatment of Jewish characters in an article written in response to 'Streifblicken auf Fontanes Stellung zum Judentum [...] von antisemitischer Seite' but judged that his disapproval was directed against certain bourgeois attitudes, regardless of whether the character which embodied them was Christian or Jewish. The author forgave Fontane for some of the statements which had appeared in the recently published *Briefe an seine Familie* on the grounds that they were isolated outbursts only directed to members of his own family, excusing the distinctly negative comments contained in a letter to Mete for the peculiar reason that 'diese Zeilen just in der ersten Woche einer Karlsbader Brunnenkur geschrieben sind, die bekannt dafür ist, daß sie bei den meisten Kurgästen eine erhöhte Reizbarkeit und Verstimmung zu erzeugen pflegt'.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, Adolf Bartels in the *Konservative Monatsschrift* provided a long list of Fontane's Jewish correspondents and blamed Fontane for alienating his Prussian admirers with his modern Berlin novels. If only everything Fontane wrote had been like *Vor dem Sturm*, Fontane's historical novel, 'er hätte wohl sein großes Publikum in ausgesprochen deutschen, ja preußischen Kreisen erhalten'.<sup>4</sup> Three years later, Ernst von Wolzogen attacked Fontane in his memoirs for not taking the 'Jewish question' seriously enough:

Der alte Fontane war einer von den Wenigen, die damals schon ahnten, wie es kommen würde. Er besaß den starken arischen Rasseninstinkt wider die 'Perser'. [...] Er durchschaute ihre Schliche und merkte wohl, daß sie ihren süßen Schaum nicht schlugen, um ihn mit Apfelkuchen zu verzehren,

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2 Paulsen, 'Theodor Fontane: The Philosemitic Antisemite', p. 306.

3 J.C., 'Fontane und das Judentum', *Mitteilungen aus dem Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus*, 22.3.1905 and 29.3.1905, page numbers illegible.

4 Bartels, 'Zum hundertsten Geburtstag Theodor Fontanes', *Konservative Monatsschrift*, 77 (1919), 182–91 (p. 187).

sondern um den deutschen Michel damit einzuseifen. Das Unglück war nur, daß er es sah und dazu – lachte.<sup>5</sup>

Occasionally, attempts were made to prove that Fontane had sympathised with antisemitism, a 1920 article in the antisemitic journal *Der Türmer*, for example, but Fontane's Jewish characters were not such as to allow him to be branded as a wholesale supporter of the antisemitic cause.<sup>6</sup> Hence the damage which occurred to Raabe's reputation was avoided, but for the same reason research after the Second World War lacked the impetus to reassess the views and conclusions of the first half of the twentieth century. Fontane's use of Jewish characters and his description of Jews have only gradually attracted attention in the decades since.

One of the first to consider this theme directly was Rolf Linn, who dedicated a short section of his 1949 thesis to Fontane's opinions about the Jews as expressed in his letters. Linn ascribed to Fontane a 'progressive anti-Semitism', one which increased with age and developed in response to Jewish prominence in society and in this viewed him as 'completely in tune with his time and his environment'.<sup>7</sup> The next worthwhile contribution to the debate came only with the publication of Hans-Heinrich Reuter's colossal biography of Fontane in 1968. Previously, work on Fontane had either entirely ignored his feelings towards the Jews, or, as in the book by Peter Demetz, the target of Paulsen's particular criticism in the passage quoted earlier, had glossed over the issue with a few sentences. Demetz felt able to call Fontane a 'Philosemit' while in the same sentence claiming that the character Eginhard aus dem Grunde in *Cécile* is influenced by an 'antisemitisches Element', without feeling the need to investigate this paradox further.<sup>8</sup> Four years later, Reuter

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5 Wolzogen, *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte* (Braunschweig: Westermann, 1922), p. 103.

6 Schm[?], 'Fontane und die Juden', *Der Türmer*, 22 (1920), 341–2.

7 Linn, 'Prussia and the Prussians in the Works of Theodor Fontane' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1949), pp. 143–4.

8 Demetz, *Formen des Realismus: Theodor Fontane* (Munich: Hanser, 1964), p. 121.

took a more considered approach. He judged it to be impossible to come down on one side of the fence when taking both letters and fiction into account. Having quoted from some of the letters, Reuter added: 'Mit einem schönfärbenden und pauschalen Philosemitismus haben alle diese Äußerungen ebensowenig gemein wie mit einem bornierten Antisemitismus.'<sup>9</sup> Reuter placed the criticisms expressed by Fontane in the context of the confrontation between the Prussian aristocracy and the Jewish bourgeoisie, a confrontation between old and new in which the Jews generally came in for less censure than the aristocracy. Yet Reuter acknowledged that Fontane's judgements were not always objective, admitting: 'sein kritisches Verantwortungsbewußtsein ließ ihn dennoch schließlich im Stich'. He had to concede: 'seine Äußerungen [wurden] im Augenblick bestürzend einseitig, ja selbst – das harte Wort muß hier erstmals auf ihn angewendet werden – *borniert*' (754).

Kenneth Attwood's 1970 contribution appears much less substantial, agreeing with Reuter's conclusions and restricting itself to comments on Fontane's correspondence. Paulsen's frustration seems justified. Attwood admitted both that the issue was a 'heißes Eisen' and that some of Fontane's statements are such that they cannot simply be dismissed, 'Äußerungen, die so starke Vorbehalte gegen sie aufweisen, daß auch ein Unvoreingenommener zugeben muß, sie lassen eine anti-jüdische Haltung erkennen'.<sup>10</sup> Yet he took his investigation no further. Ernst Simon, writing in the same year, referred directly to Fontane's ambivalence, which he saw as characteristic of his attitude to both Jews and antisemites and therefore as a factor which should soften judgement of Fontane. But like Attwood he declined to address how such ambivalence could alter the reader's interpretation of Fontane, concluding somewhat lamely with Herr von Briest's catchphrase: 'Das ist ein zu weites Feld.'<sup>11</sup>

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9 Reuter, *Fontane*, 2 vols (Berlin: Verlag der Nation, 1968), II, 752.

10 Attwood, *Fontane und das Preußentum* (Berlin: Haude & Spener, 1970), p. 224.

11 Simon, 'Theodor Fontanes jüdischer Komplex', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 16 August 1970, pp. 39–40 (p. 40).

Paulsen's 1981 article is relatively brief but nevertheless shows a welcome directness and willingness to confront a difficult problem. Describing Fontane as a 'philosemitic antisemite', he does not flinch from highlighting Fontane's contradictory pronouncements on the Jews in considerably more detail than his critical predecessors. But while he spends some time pondering the ambivalent prejudice demonstrated in the letters, he does not discuss the fiction in any detail, rendering his approach less than comprehensive. Occasionally, his attempt to understand falls into conjecture, as when he ascribes the harshening of Fontane's attitude to the influence of his wife, Emilie, a conclusion for which, as he confesses, there is no direct evidence.

Regrettably, more recent criticism has not taken up the subject where Paulsen left off. Writing in 1992, Stefan Greif glosses over the presence of Jewish characters in the novels, relegating Fontane's characterisations to a footnote which itself relegates discussion of the issue to another time and another place, although recognising the need for investigation: 'Diese Äußerungen bedürfen einer eingehenden Untersuchung. In den meisten Fällen handelt es sich um salopp eingeworfene pauschale Floskeln; dies ändert natürlich nichts an der Tatsache, daß sich auch Fontane solcher Urteile oder Redensarten unkritisch bedient.' He continues with an extraordinarily sweeping generalisation: 'Es muß aber festgehalten werden, daß in den Zeitromanen keine negative besetzte Figur jüdischen Glaubens auftaucht'.<sup>12</sup> Hans Ohff, writing in 1995, falls into the trap of using the 'some of his friends were Jewish' approach to defend Fontane, whom he describes as 'absolut kein Antisemit', while admitting that 'er [hat] bisweilen Äußerungen getan, die beinahe antisemitisch anmuten'.<sup>13</sup> Ohff sees a cause for Fontane's intolerant statements in the unhealthy influence of Treitschke, but although Fontane had corresponded for many years with the historian and was certainly a keen observer of events such as the 'Berliner Antisemitismusstreit' originated by Treitschke's articles in the *Preußische Jahrbücher*, it is

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12 Greif, *Ehre als Bürgerlichkeit in den Zeitromanen Theodor Fontanes* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1992), p. 356 footnote.

13 Ohff, *Theodor Fontane: Leben und Werk* (Piper: Munich, 1995), pp. 365–6.

surely erroneous to imply they effected a sudden change of heart. Ohff also goes against general critical opinion, which, where it exists, has tended to see Fontane's prejudices as a development of his old age. Instead, Ohff writes, 'hier schwimmt Fontane in einer Zeitströmung mit, von der er später bewußt abgerückt ist', continuing: 'Um 1890 setzt bei Fontane ein plötzliches Bedauern über manche ungerechte Urteile ein, die er in Jugend- oder Mannesjahren von sich gegeben hat' (367). It would be interesting to know how Ohff came to this conclusion, given that controversial and distasteful remarks can be found in Fontane's correspondence up until the last months, if not weeks, of his life.

Of the items considered in this section, some have indeed made a valuable contribution to the study of this aspect of Fontane, whereas others ignore the complexities involved. The task ahead now is to attempt to untangle the web of censure and admiration that is Fontane's treatment of Jews in his correspondence and fiction.

## A Portrait of the Artist in his Letters

'Wie lange, daß ich nicht mit Ihnen geplaudert habe!' Thus Fontane started a letter in December 1880 to the 'Stiftsdame' Mathilde von Rohr, with whom he had corresponded since they first met in the 1840s.<sup>14</sup> His confession of a lull in their correspondence does not give a true picture of his customarily conscientious attitude. Even judged by the standards of the age, Fontane was a prolific letter-writer, keeping in regular contact with family, publishers and members of his literary clubs and also maintaining a number of 'friendships by post'. Although many letters were destroyed by their recipients or during the Second World War, over five thousand are extant, though not all have been published. Their value was recog-

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14 PB III Letter to Mathilde von Rohr, no. 670, 3.12.80.

nised very soon after Fontane's death, the first collection being published in 1905, others following periodically as more letters came to light. They show Fontane to have been a fascinating correspondent, who touched on a wide range of contemporary events and issues. While the Jewish characterisation in the novels is the primary focus here, an investigation of the trends and tone of the criticism exercised by Fontane in his correspondence forms an important point of reference with the texts discussed in the next section.

Those critics who have considered Fontane's prejudices towards the Jews have not been able to discover traces of what Paulsen terms 'incipient antisemitism' during his early life and have consequently viewed it as having developed with age.<sup>15</sup> To blame Treitschke and the upsurge in political antisemitism for this and say that Fontane was simply 'swept along' (Paulsen again), is perhaps unjust to Fontane, who, although elderly, remained fully *compos mentis*. Whatever the reason for Fontane's prejudice, it is true that references to Jews, positive or negative, rarely occur in Fontane's letters before 1880. From then onwards references appear increasingly often, offering unequivocal evidence that Fontane recognised the 'Jewish question' as a serious issue. Writing to a publisher, Julius Grosser, Fontane discussed an essay he had planned but which remained unwritten on the subject of the Jews and Berlin society: 'Das Thema ist so ernst und so gut zugleich, daß ich es mir durch flüchtige Behandlung nicht verderben will.'<sup>16</sup> The following year he wrote to Rohr of his wish for a good friendly chat with her, undisturbed by the 'großen Dingen, nicht einmal von der "Judenfrage", so sehr mich diese bewegt und gerade aufregt'.<sup>17</sup>

A letter to Gustav Karpeles likewise shows that Fontane was very aware of the changing nature of German-Jewish relations and a corresponding change in what was acceptable in the public domain. Karpeles had written to Fontane on behalf of the Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus requesting that a ballad of Fontane's entitled 'Die

15 Paulsen, 'Theodor Fontane: The Philosemitic Antisemite', p. 305.

16 HB III Letter to Julius Grosser, no. 22, 16.6.79.

17 PB III Letter to Mathilde von Rohr, no. 670, 1.12.80.



Jüdin' (translated and adapted from one contained in Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*) be left out of the next edition of his poetry, as it was no longer suitable for publication. A few verses from the poem, a retelling of the ritual slaughter legend, indicate why Karpeles had such reservations:

Ausschaute die Judentochter,  
'Komm Knab' und speise mit mir!  
'Nicht ohne meine Gespielen  
'Tret' ich ein bei dir.'

[...]

Sie hatte ein silbernes Messer,  
Das trennte gut und schnitt;  
Des Knaben Blut und Leben  
Trennte sie heute damit.

Erst floß es rot und dunkel,  
Dann floß es dünn und hell,  
Zuletzt, da floß sein Herzblut,—  
Hin sank er auf die Schwell'.<sup>18</sup>

Fontane's reply shows somewhat grudging acceptance of Karpeles's argument. Forty years earlier the same poem had caused similar complaint, he admitted, but he had resisted then on grounds that the form was more important than the content:

Ich mochte es nicht fallen lassen, weil es ein Musterstück von Balladenton ist. Es stammt aus der berühmten Percy'schen Sammlung. Anno 50 war das alles nicht schlimm, heute liegt es anders, und so verspreche ich Ihnen [...] die Ballade aus der nächsten Auflage wegzulassen. Mehr ist nicht zu thun.<sup>19</sup>

However, when Fontane did discuss the subjects which by his own admission he thought important, what he says is very illuminating about his attitude to Jews and Judaism and shows less sensitivity

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18 Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, XX: *Balladen und Gedichte*, p. 504.

19 BrFreun II Letter to Gustav Karpeles, no. 346, 19.6.92.

than his letter to Karpeles might suggest. Firstly, there are purely negative remarks which indicate that whatever Fontane thought about antisemitism (and, as he made clear later in his life, he had little sympathy for the organised antisemitic movements), he held the Jews responsible for the problems they faced. 'Die Juden können froh sein,' he wrote to Mete, 'daß ein Lump und ein Verrückter, Ahlwardt und Paasch, den Antisemitismus in die Hand genommen haben, die *eigentlichen* antisemitischen Prediger sind sie selbst.'<sup>20</sup> Other remarks demonstrate a similar mastery of the barbed comment, seemingly complimentary but with a negative twist in the tail. 'Die Judenfeindschaft ist, von allem Moralischem abgeschn, ein Unsinn, sie ist einfach undurchführbar', wrote Fontane to Georg Friedlaender. Seeing such a phrase, the less perceptive reader could take this as proof of Fontane's lack of bias. True, Fontane is admitting there are moral objections to antisemitism, but why does he call it nonsense? The continuation of the sentence provides the answer: not because it is inherently wrong, but because it is not practicable, given the indebtedness of the ruling classes towards the Jews: 'Alle Menschen die ich hier kenne, ganz besonders auch Militär und Adel, sind in eminentem Grade von den Juden abhängig und werden es mit jedem Tage mehr.'<sup>21</sup> Similarly he wrote to Mete, objecting to the large numbers of Jews visiting Berlin for an exhibition and concluding: 'und dabei darf man nicht mal Antisemit sein, weil das wieder zu dumm und zu roh sein würde'.<sup>22</sup> Ohff, for example, has read this as a criticism of antisemitism, but the careful reader will note that Fontane is not actually objecting to antisemitism per se, but expressing regret that the crudeness of the movement makes it impossible for a cultured person to be an antisemite.

But why did Fontane blame the Jews for antisemitism and wistfully object to the form the antisemitic movement was taking? From

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20 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 345, 21.8.93. Hermann Ahlwardt (1846–1914), antisemitic agitator and founder of the Antisemitische Volkspartei, had been elected to the Reichstag in 1892. Karl Paasch was an antisemitic pamphleteer.

21 BrFried, no. 184, 9.11.92.

22 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 380, 14.7.96.

the letters it becomes clear that Fontane was convinced the Jews were a separate people, quite different from the Germans and all other nationalities, and that what he termed the ‘germanischer Geist’ was generally immeasurably superior. An early letter to Georg Friedlaender discusses this in some depth. Fontane’s relationship with Friedlaender, a lawyer of Jewish descent, great-grandson of David Friedlaender, is interesting and complex and is discussed in more detail later, as Friedlaender’s Jewish origins seem to have prompted discussion of the ‘Jewish question’ by the two men.<sup>23</sup> In the letter Fontane addresses the ‘Unterschied zwischen christlichem und jüdischem Geist’. He continues:

Der letztere hat so viel Blendendes und Verführerisches und jeder Berliner (ich selbst in hohem Maaße) ist ihm auf länger oder kürzer verfallen gewesen. Er hat auch viel Fördersames. Im ganzen ist er aber ein Unglück und etwas durchaus niedrig Stehendes. [...] Die Juden haben nichts von der germanischen Schwerfälligkeit, sie sind quick, witzig, zugespitzt im Ausdruck, aber der germanische Geist ist dem jüdischen unendlich überlegen.<sup>24</sup>

Fontane was not the first to describe the Jews in such terms. The idea of this difference in natures entered German popular consciousness and there are also examples of Jews describing themselves in such a manner. Ludwig Bamberger, for example, leader of the National Liberal party, compared the two natures in similar terms to Fontane. The German’s ‘deliberate, solemn, reverent, earnest, dutiful character contrasts with an amazingly versatile, sarcastic, sceptical, undisciplinable spirit’ which belongs to the Jew.<sup>25</sup> On the question of nationality, Fontane clearly believed that a Jewish background subsumed any other national element to become the dominant and determining factor. ‘Juden sind fast noch gar nicht hier, auch nicht

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23 David Friedlaender (1750–1834) was a pupil and friend of Moses Mendelssohn and was active in the Jewish Reform movement and as a campaigner for emancipation.

24 BrFried, no. 66, 19.9.86.

25 Ludwig Bamberger, ‘Germanenthum und Judenthum’, quoted in Meyer, ‘Great Debate on Antisemitism’, *LBIYB* 11 (1966), 137–70 (p. 153).

solche, die sich Russen oder Amerikaner nennen,' he wrote to his daughter while on his summer holiday.<sup>26</sup> The suggestion in the word 'nennen', that Jews can only call themselves Russian or American without actually being it, is repeated later. This time Fontane places stronger emphasis on the pretence he attributes to the Jews, who cannot naturally belong to a national group:

Liest man die Badeliste durch, so findet man, daß bis auf Australien, Uruguay, Buenos Ayres und Capstadt alle Länder und Nationen hier vertreten sind, bei näherer Untersuchung (glücklicherweise nur der Namen) findet man aber freilich daß sie alle gleichmäßig aus Jerusalem stammen und sich God save the Queen und Yankee-doodle nur vorspielen lassen, um auf die Weise fremde Nationalität [zu] heucheln.<sup>27</sup>

It would appear that Fontane viewed as desirable the separation between Jew and Gentile, a natural occurrence which should not be denied or countered since the difference between Jews and Germans was too great to be bridged. Writing to his son Theo after the latter's engagement he explains that it would have been possible to ignore 'ein bißchen Katholizismus' but he is glad his son has chosen a Christian rather than a Jewish wife: 'Die frühere Deklination Deiner Gefühle nach der semitischen Seite hin, so begreiflich sie mir war, war doch nicht das Richtige. Das Richtige ist: Verbleib innerhalb der eigenen Sphäre, dieselbe Nationalität, dieselbe Religion, dieselbe Lebensstellung.'<sup>28</sup> Fontane had expressed similar sentiments to his wife a few years earlier, referring to her search for a new cook and her rejection of a Catholic applicant, and had also spoken scathingly of what he saw to be the evils unleashed by Enlightenment ideas:

Je älter ich werde, je mehr bin ich für reinliche Scheidungen, Haare aparte und Cotelette aparte. Jude zu Jude, Christ zu Christ, und natürlich auch Protestant zu Protestant [...]. Ich habe vieles erlebt, das mir eine tief-innerliche Freude gemacht hat: die Herausreißung Deutschlands aus der politischen Misere, die Mündigwerdung des Volks [...]. Zu diesen

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26 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 327, 5.6.91.

27 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 345, 21.8.93.

28 BrFam II Letter to Theo, no. 251, 15.3.86.

Herrlichkeiten [...] gehört auch der immer mehr zu Tage tretende Bankrott der Afterweisheit des vorigen Jahrhunderts. Das Unheil, das Lessing mit seiner Geschichte von den drei Ringen angerichtet hat, um nur *einen* Punkt herauszugreifen, ist kolossal. Das 'seid umschlungen Millionen' ist ein Unsinn.<sup>29</sup>

It is significant that Fontane should direct his attacks specifically against Schiller and Lessing, reducing their contribution to German culture to 'Afterweisheit', given the high esteem in which both authors were held by Jews, who valued them as the embodiment of humane enlightenment.

Fontane also seemed convinced the Jews could not change. However German they might appear externally by dress, profession or cultural involvement, to him this remained only a veneer. Describing a social occasion to Friedlaender, Fontane reports a conversation about another guest, Professor Lehfeld: 'Ich sagte zu meinem Nachbar: "er sieht so sehr jüdisch aus", worauf der Nachbar antwortete: "ja; und doch ist er schon in der 6. Generation Christ; freilich, wenn so wenig dabei herauskommt, sollte man's eigentlich lassen."<sup>30</sup> Fontane was content to report this anecdote in approving fashion without commenting on the absurdity of expecting an individual's religion to affect his or her appearance. In the last year of his life, Fontane wrote Friedrich Paulsen a long letter – some would say a diatribe – expressing his feelings about the Jews.<sup>31</sup> Again he gives his opinion that Jewishness is more than a religious aspect open to reform; rather it is permanent: 'Auch der Hoffnungsreichste hat sich von der Unausreichendheit des Taufwassers überzeugen müssen.'<sup>32</sup> Fontane, not a very religious man, seemed to perceive Judaism as more of a nationality than a religion, but this letter from the last year of his life suggests he pictured it in racial terms as a permanent part of human nature, unchanged by external circumstances.

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29 PB I Letter to Emilie, no. 128, 12.8.83.

30 BrFried, no. 231, 9.12.94.

31 Friedrich Paulsen (1846–1908) was a professor at Berlin University.

32 BrFreun II Letter to Friedrich Paulsen, no. 615, 12.5.98.

Fontane's general comments about the separation between Jews and Germans would often turn to specific criticisms of certain aspects of Jewishness, giving the impression that he had very low expectations of the Jewish character. As well as criticising what he saw as Jewish deceit in assuming a certain nationality, he used the common stereotype of Jewish dishonesty when writing to his sister Elise about the amount of household work which fell on his shoulders: 'In Polen hat jedes Haus einen "Juden", der alles besorgt; ich wollte mich gern um 25% betrügen lassen, wenn ich solchen braven Abraham oder Israel zur Hand hätte.'<sup>33</sup> In more serious mood he wrote to Friedlaender about Moritz Lazarus, whom Fontane knew from his literary club 'Rütli', and who had recently been found to have lost on the stock market with money entrusted to him by others.<sup>34</sup> This one incident is taken by Fontane to be characteristic of Jews in general:

Die Juden bringen es fertig, im höchsten Maße feingeistig, auch wirklich *ehrlich* mit idealen Dingen beschäftigt zu sein, allerlei Gutes zu thun, zu geben und zu helfen und dabei beständig zu mogeln oder auch direkt zu betrügen, immer mit einem herrnverklärten oder rabbinerhaft feierlichen Gesicht und immer durchdrungen von dem Gefühl 'was ganz Besondres und ein Liebling Jehovas zu sein.'<sup>35</sup>

Another common theme was the Jewish domination of German public life. The Jews just did not know their place, was the tone of his complaint. Writing to Count Philipp zu Eulenburg the day after a parliamentary debate where a government minister had defended the constitutional right of Jews to be members of parliament and civil servants against opposition demands for their exclusion, Fontane showed where his sympathies lay: 'Was das Staatsministerium gestern [...] geleistet hat, ist mir doch denn *zu* wenig. Ich liebe die Juden, ziehe sie dem Wendo-Germanischen eigentlich vor – denn es ist bis

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33 PB II Letter to Elise Fontane, no. 417, 9.1.70.

34 Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903) was the founder of *Völkerpsychologie* and a professor at Berlin University from 1873.

35 BrFried, no. 261, 6.4.97.

dato mit letztem nicht allzuviel – aber *regiert* will ich nicht von den Juden sein.<sup>36</sup> Commenting to a family friend, Emilie Zöllner, obviously intending to be witty, Fontane refers to the recent ritual murder trial in Hungary where Jews had been accused of the murder of a Christian woman: ‘Die Gesellschaft hier wird immer profilierter [...] und giebt einem die Gewißheit, daß in Tisza-Eßlar wenigstens keine Juden geschlachtet worden sind.’<sup>37</sup> This feeling of being overrun by the Jews is frequently expressed, and also inspired a poem, *Veränderungen in der Mark* (*Die Mark und die Märker, Anno 390 und 1890*), which describes the return to German soil of certain Germanic tribesmen and their shock at the people now inhabiting the country:

‘Himmel, was sind das für Menschen!’ [...]
 Am Tore rücken sie sich stramm,  
 Erst Neuer Markt, die Börse, Mühlendamm,  
 Dann Spandauer- und dann Tiergartenstraße –  
 Wohin sie kommen, dieselbe Rasse.<sup>38</sup>

The ancients cut short their visit and rush back to Valhalla, commenting to Odin, ‘Gott, ist *die* Gegend ’runtergekommen’ (401). It is not hard to guess the identity of these newcomers who have lowered the tone to such an extent, especially as the stock market and the *Tiergarten* area were both places where a large Jewish population was to be found. But it was not merely a question of numbers: Fontane saw much to criticise in the Jewish character, annoyed by what he saw as Jewish superciliousness and cheeky behaviour. He wrote to Rohr about Jewish pride riding for a fall in a chilling phrase which stands out because of the prediction’s fulfilment. The outburst seems to have been occasioned by a report in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* to which Fontane refers later in the letter of a Jewish man who had named his dog ‘Stöcker’ (the assumption being that this was after Court Chap-

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36 HB III Letter to Philipp zu Eulenburg, no. 107, 21.11.80. Eulenburg (1849–1921) was a Prussian diplomat.

37 BrFreun II Letter to Emilie Zöllner, no. 229, 17.8.83.

38 Fontane, *Balladen und Gedichte*, pp. 399–401 (p. 400).

lain Adolf Stoecker).<sup>39</sup> Fontane starts with one of his not uncommon expressions of sympathy: 'Ich bin von Kindesbeinen an ein Judenfreund gewesen und habe persönlich nur Gutes von den Juden erfahren'. Then comes the 'but':

Dennoch hab' ich so sehr das Gefühl ihrer Schuld, ihres grenzenlosen Uebermuths, daß ich ihnen eine ernste Niederlage nicht bloß gönne, sondern wünsche. Und das steht mir fest, wenn sie sie jetzt *nicht* erleiden und sich auch nicht ändern, so bricht in Zeiten, die wir beide freilich nicht mehr erleben werden, eine schwere Heimsuchung über sie herein.<sup>40</sup>

More specifically, Fontane criticised the Jews for their involvement in German culture, complaining that they dominated the cultural scene as well as public life. A letter to Friedlaender reports a conversation with a Jewish teacher.

Wir sprachen über moderne Kunst und Literatur in Deutschland und er sagte: 'Sonderbar, die Juden bei uns thuen die deutsche Kulturarbeit und die Deutschen leisten als Gegengabe den Antisemitismus'. Kolossal richtig, leider die erste Hälfte noch richtiger als die zweite.<sup>41</sup>

This sentiment obviously made an impression, as Fontane would repeat the anecdote to different correspondents in 1896 and 1898.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Fontane criticised Jewish involvement in journalism, a common complaint against the Jews. Writing to Mete, he says: 'Wenn ich bedenke, daß der Figaro zu gutem Theil von deutschen Juden geschrieben wird, so richtet sich mein deutsches Gefühl ein bißchen auf und ich sage mir dann: "es kann mit der großen Ueberlegenheit

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39 Adolf Stoecker (1835–1909) founded the Christlichsoziale Arbeiterpartei in 1878, with the aim of winning the working class voter back from socialism. The addition of antisemitism to the party's platform the following year gained it support, making Stoecker a high-profile agitator in the *Berliner Bewegung*.

40 PB III Letter to Mathilde von Rohr, no. 670, 1.12.80.

41 BrFried, no. 158, 4.10.91.

42 Compare with HB IV Letter to Heinrich Horwitz, no. 655, 7.10.96 and HB IV Letter to Paul Linseman, no. 740, 17.6.98.



drüben auch so weit nicht her sein.”<sup>43</sup> As journalism was a field in which Fontane had worked for many years, the reader is faced with the problem of accepting Fontane’s criticisms on the strength of his experience, or rejecting them and ignoring his background. However, one of the last letters to Friedlaender shows the same kind of criticism, but coloured with the myth of the sinister Jewish plot for world domination. Despite his involvement with the press, it would seem that Fontane was as vulnerable as the next German to picking up and using this particular stereotype. The outburst in question is occasioned by a discussion of the Dreyfus affair and the involvement of Emile Zola, put on trial after the publication of his famous ‘J’accuse’ article. Fontane writes how the trial of Zola is evidence of:

eine der schwersten Niederlagen, die das moderne Judenthum erlitten hat. Auch *das* ist schrecklich, freilich nur nach der andern Seite, daß wir uns in diesem Prozeß, mit Ausnahme Frankreichs selbst, einer vollkommenen Preßverschwörung gegenüberbefunden haben; die europäische Presse ist eine große Judenmacht, die es versucht hat, der gesamten Welt *ihre* Meinung aufzuzwingen. In dem Gelingen oder Mißlingen dieses großen Versuchs liegt die wahre Bedeutung des Zola-Prozesses, weit über Zola und Dreyfus hinaus.<sup>44</sup>

However, it is typical of Fontane’s uncertain attitude towards the Jews that even such direct and negative criticism as this should elsewhere be tempered by a large measure of doubt, or even grudging admiration. The Jews may be over-involved in German culture, in his opinion, but at least they do not ignore it. Despite Fontane’s fondness for Prussia’s history and people, demonstrated in his historical ballads and his *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*, when it comes to modern culture, he has to admit that traditional Prussia is backward and uninterested. ‘Wie sähe es aus,’ he wrote in the last year of his life, ‘wenn die Pflege der “heiligsten Güter” auf den Adel deutscher Nation angewiesen wäre. Fuchsjagd, getünchte Kirche,

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43 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 331, 25.7.91.

44 BrFried, no. 271, 16.3.98.

Sonntagnachmittagspredigt und jeu.<sup>45</sup> Writing to the Guttmanns in 1890, he describes the problem:

Ich [habe] [...] unserm von mir aufrichtig geliebten Adel gegenüber einsehen müssen, daß uns alle Freiheit und feinere Kultur, *wenigstens hier in Berlin*, vorwiegend durch die reiche Judenschaft vermittelt wird. Es ist eine Tatsache, der man sich schließlich unterwerfen muß und als Kunst- und Literaturmensch (weil man sonst gar nicht existieren könnte) mit Freudigkeit.<sup>46</sup>

It would be incorrect to overlook the obvious tone of resignation, expressing Fontane's desire for an audience. The tone is very similar to that of the poem *An meinem Fünfundsiebzigsten*, in which Fontane records the impression left by the discovery that the people who offered congratulations are overwhelmingly Jewish, 'fast schon von prähistorischem Adel'.<sup>47</sup> Unlike the Prussian aristocracy, these unexpected congratulators know of and have read Fontane: 'Und das ist die Hauptsache... "kommen Sie, Cohn"'.<sup>48</sup> While the poem concludes on this apparent note of acceptance, it is far from unlikely that Fontane was masking his disappointment and that his true feelings were closer to those expressed in the letter to the Guttmanns. In both letter and poem, however, the Jews are only a substitute for something else, a tolerated second best and never acceptable on their own merits. But Fontane must also concede that the interest and informed opinion expressed by the Jewish public is superior. Thus, in a letter to Mete:

Nimm Zöllners letzte Gesellschaft – und die Zöllnerschen Gesellschaften sind gut-mittel [...] – so muß ich mit Trauer gestehn, daß das alles an Bildung,

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45 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 389, 20.3.98.

46 BrZS Letter to Herr & Frau Guttmann, 25.1.90.

47 Fontane, *Balladen und Gedichte*, p. 409–10 (p. 410).

48 For an eyewitness account of Fontane's 75th birthday, see: Meyer, *Erinnerungen an Theodor Fontane, 1819–1898* (Berlin: private printing, 1936), p. 12. Meyer recounts that the controversial phrase in the poem was originally addressed to a young man, a friend of Friedrich Fontane, who really was called Cohn, inviting him to partake of the celebratory buffet.

Angeregtheit, Interesse, hinter solcher Judengesellschaft zurückbleibt. Unter Thränen wachse ich immer mehr aus meinem Antisemitismus heraus, nicht weil ich will, sondern weil ich muß.<sup>49</sup>

Beyond an admission by Fontane that, at the very least, his thinking in the past has been influenced by antisemitism, this is not a rejection of antisemitism out of conviction that it is wrong, but rather a regretful resignation for practical reasons. If, as Fontane wrote to the Guttmanns, he could not live without art and literature, then he would have to reject antisemitism in order to co-exist with the Jews who participated in the creation and enjoyment of that culture. In Fontane's case, familiarity certainly seemed to breed contempt. He might move in a cultural sphere along with many Jews, but did not find their company any more acceptable with the passing of time. A letter to Mete in 1895 sums up his dilemma:

Das beständige Voraugenhaben von Massenjudenschaft aus allen Weltgegenden, kann einen natürlich mit dieser schrecklichen Sippe nicht versöhnen, aber inmitten seiner Antipathieen kommt man doch immer wieder in's Schwanken, weil sie – auch die, die einem durchaus mißfallen – doch immer noch Kulturträger sind und inmitten all ihrer Schabigkeiten und Geschmacklosigkeiten Träger geistiger Interessen. Wenn auch nur auf ihre Art. Sie kümmern sich um alles, nehmen an allem Theil, erwägen alles, berechnen alles, sind voll Leben und bringen dadurch Leben in die Bude. Wie stumpf, wie arm, auch geistig arm, wirkt daneben der Durchschnittschrist!<sup>50</sup>

That Fontane had a tendency to generalise becomes apparent to the reader of the correspondence. Even those two old chestnuts of Jewish stereotypes, wealth and appearance, feature occasionally. Fontane often seemed unable to write about Jewish people without appending the adjective 'reich' to the description or hinting at their wealth. Describing a linguistically gifted Jewish family he met he says in a letter to Emilie: 'Die jüdisch-polnischen Leute verfügten über einen reizenden Sprachenfond (auch wohl über andre Fonds)' and

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49 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 313, 9.6.90.

50 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 364, 30.8.95.

writing from his summer retreat the following year: ‘Heute verläßt uns “Herr Cohn” ein interessanter alter Jude (natürlich sehr reich).’<sup>51</sup> Perhaps in both instances the people concerned *were* rich, but Fontane’s use of ‘natürlich’ gives the impression that these descriptions were based on his own expectations of their wealth, given that he knew they were Jewish. When it comes to physical description, there is an interesting mix of criticism. On the one hand, Fontane could be extremely negative, as for example when he describes two people to whom he was introduced while on holiday in Karlsbad: ‘Mit dem Baron [...] habe ich nicht angebändelt, [...] weil er mir zu jüdisch aussieht’. Fontane admits that the man is not at fault for the way he looks, but finds it inexcusable ‘daß er hierher kommt’, inflicting his Jewish appearance on others.<sup>52</sup> However, there are also instances of that grudging acceptance with which Fontane greeted participation on the cultural scene, this time relating to Jewish appearance. He writes to Friedlaender from Kissingen, a town whose attractiveness has been diminished by Fontane’s boredom and the number of Jews, ‘auf die man noch viel böser sein würde, wenn man nicht schmerzlich empfände, daß das christliche Element in seiner Poplichkeit noch tief drunter stände. Die Juden haben doch wenigstens eine Nase und einen guten Schneider’.<sup>53</sup>

But even Fontane had to admit there were exceptions. Among the barbed comments it is noticeable that he differentiated between those he felt deserved criticism and those who were more acceptable. Writing to Emilie in 1880, he contrasted the Jews he had met at a hotel with Jewish acquaintances of the family: ‘Gegessen habe ich an der Table d’hôte des Kurhauses eingekeilt in eine Sippe von 10 bis 12 Liegnitzer Juden beiderlei Geschlechts. Gräßlich! Man muß die Juden nicht nach Hertzens Lachmanns oder Lazarus beurtheilen.’<sup>54</sup> His

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51 PB I Letter to Emilie, no. 121, 19.7.83 & no. 153, 23.6.84.

52 BrFreun II Letter to Karl Zöllner, no. 376, 21.8.94.

53 BrFried, no. 132, 23.7.90.

54 PB I Letter to Emilie, no. 74, 24.7.80. The Berlin firm of Wilhelm Hertz (1822–1901) and his son Hans (1848–95) had been publishing Fontane’s

criticism tends, however, not to make this distinction, as in the following example from a letter to Friedrich Paulsen, where Jews in general rather than Jewish individuals are the subjects of blanket criticism:

Ueberall stören sie (viel viel mehr als früher) alles vermenschlichen sie, hindern die Betrachtung jeder Frage als solcher. [...] Es ist, trotz all seiner Begabungen, ein schreckliches Volk, *nicht* ein Kraft und Frische gebender ‘Sauerteig’, sondern ein Ferment, in dem die häßlicheren Formen der Gährung lebendig sind, – ein Volk, dem von Uranfang an etwas dückelhaftes Niedriges anhaftet, mit dem sich die arische Welt nun mal nicht vertragen kann. Welch Unterschied zwischen der christlichen und jüdischen Verbrecherwelt! Und das alles unausrottbar.<sup>55</sup>

Can the impression which the correspondence leaves upon the reader really be of a fair and unbiased man, as Reuter, for instance, has suggested?

Fontanes menschliche Unvoreingenommenheit, seine ehrliche Hochachtung vor jeder wirklichen Leistung, vor allem auf dem Gebiet der Kultur, sind unvereinbar mit religiöser, nationaler oder rassischer Intoleranz; jede Form von Fanatismus widerspricht der ständigen kritisch-rationalen Verantwortungsbereitschaft des alten Fontane.<sup>56</sup>

Fontane may insist, as he did in the same letter to Paulsen and elsewhere, that he speaks as one who has ‘von den Juden bis diesen Tag nur Gutes erfahren’, as if to emphasise his impartiality, but such a claim is surely refuted by the language in which his criticism is couched. It requires little effort to notice the disturbing use of racist terminology and thought in the letter, which presents the Jews as a polluting influence and refers to the struggle between them and the ‘arische Welt’. These words were written in the last months of Fontane’s life, and while probably his most intolerant contribution to

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work since 1859. The son of the Lachmann family was a friend of Fontane’s son Theo.

55 BrFreun II Letter to Friedrich Paulsen, no. 453, 12.5.98.

56 Reuter, *Von Dreißig bis Achtzig* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1959), p. 397.

the debate on the 'Jewish question', they nonetheless show the reader the extreme opinions he was capable of holding. The question which remains to be answered is whether, and how, such extremes translate into the fiction.

## Fontane's Fiction in Context

Even more than the plentiful anti-Jewish remarks which litter his correspondence, Jewish characters and references in Fontane's fiction have been ignored by the critics. Both Stefan Greif and Ekkhard Verchau, for example, overlook the Jewish characters in *L'Adultera* and the Jewish background of the Bartenstein family in *Die Poggenpuhl*, failing to comment on the blatant antisemitism of Therese von Poggenpuhl.<sup>57</sup> Paulsen accepts that looking at Fontane's personal bias is important but does not seem to have decided whether the fiction can advance understanding of Fontane's attitude to Jews. He is inclined to dismiss its usefulness in this discussion, his opinion of Jewish themes in the novels being that Fontane 'sugar-coated them to the point of innocuousness, or played "hide and seek" with them'.<sup>58</sup> However, he later contradicts himself, stating that:

the web of Fontane's novels is so carefully woven that it takes more than a keen eye and at least our more sharpened sensitivities to look through it. They are full of that antisemitic dynamite that will do little harm as long as it is properly kept under control but which can become deadly when it blows up. (322)

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57 Greif, *Ehre als Bürgerlichkeit*, p. 356; Verchau, *Theodor Fontane: Individuum und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/M: Ullstein, 1983), pp. 144–50, 201–6.

58 Paulsen, 'Theodor Fontane: The Philosemitic Antisemite', p. 305.

Florian Krobb considers two novels and a fragment in his study of Jewish women in German fiction but does not accept that the fictional descriptions in any way clarify Fontane's own standpoint:

Die Art der literarischen Darstellung jüdischer Frauen [...] zeigt auch bei Fontane die Begrenzung der Überlegungen auf den gesellschaftlichen-geselligen, halböffentlichen Raum; eine Benennung der dahinterstehenden politischen oder philosophischen Zeitfragen ist daraus nicht abzulesen, ebensowenig irgendeine Stellungnahme des Autors zu dem öffentlichen Streitpunkt des Antisemitismus im Wilhelminischen Kaiserreich.<sup>59</sup>

There is some truth in this: Fontane certainly never directly addressed the 'Jewish question' in his fiction, inasmuch as he did not make it a topic of conversation among his characters or part of his narratorial description, and of course his fictional treatment of Jews is immensely more subtle than the outspoken nature of much of his correspondence. He could certainly write about Jewish characters without necessarily displaying his own feelings: in *L'Adultera* (1882), for example, where nothing is made of the background of the two baptised Jews. But after all, it is not generally the case that an author's mind can be read with perfect accuracy through the medium of his or her fictional work, and Fontane offers indications, rather than outright explanations. What Krobb says raises the important issue of the authorial standpoint, and, as was mentioned in the Introduction, a critical narratorial tone or any stereotypes or prejudices relating to Jewish characters cannot simply be ascribed directly to the author. But the indications from Fontane's correspondence are overwhelmingly that a bias existed, and, although it would be incorrect to expect it to carry over directly into the fiction, its presence can still be felt.

Only one of Fontane's novels or short stories has a Jewish main character. Despite this, there is less direct engagement with the 'Jewish question' in this text, *Unwiederbringlich* (1891), than might reasonably be expected. Although not displaying the difficult relationship between the Jews and the aristocracy which figures in *Die Poggenpubls*

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59 Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin*, p. 186.

and *Der Stechlin*, the text is particularly interesting because this character, Ebba von Rosenberg, is both Jewish and aristocratic. However, although her title is not in doubt, whether or not she is Jewish could be a moot point. The value of this text here, given that her Jewishness is not emphasised, comes from looking at Ebba's function in the society portrayed in the text and trying to understand Fontane's motive for giving her a Jewish background.

Ebba herself provides all that the reader learns about her Jewish origins, which cannot be deduced from her appearance, dress or speech. She is first described when Baron Holk reports for duty at the palace and is introduced to the Danish Princess's court: 'eine junge blonde Dame, von schöner Figur und schönem Teint, aber sonst wenig regelmäßigen Zügen'.<sup>60</sup> Later Holk learns of her unconventional background, when he speculates about her relationship to other Rosenberg families, a connection Ebba regretfully rejects: 'Ich bin nämlich eine Rosenberg-Meyer oder richtiger eine Meyer-Rosenberg, Enkelstochter des in der schwedischen Geschichte wohlbekannten Meyer-Rosenberg, Lieblings- und Leibjuden König Gustavs III' (87). It must be presumed that Ebba's family had converted to Christianity for her to have become a lady-in-waiting at the Danish court, but despite her current distant connection with Judaism, Ebba takes a vicarious pleasure in telling Holk about her family history and shows a studied lack of concern at her listener's discomfort. However, Holk is not too embarrassed by this revelation of Ebba's antecedents, feeling secure in the knowledge of the excellence of his own:

Und so geschah's denn auch heute, daß er sich von dem ersten Schreck, den ihm der schwedische Rosenberg mit seinem unheimlichen Epitheton ornans eingejagt hatte, nicht nur rasch erholte, sondern es sogar höchst pikant fand, diese doch in der Mehrzahl der Fälle nicht leicht genug zu nehmende Frage von einer augenscheinlich so klugen Person auch wirklich leicht behandelt zu sehen. (89)

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60 Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, V: *Umwiederbringlich*, 78.



The narrator confirms the impression that Ebba greatly enjoys her capacity to shock and arouse interest:

Die Rückfahrt war ohne weitere Zwischenfälle verlaufen, aber natürlich nicht ohne Medisance, darin sich Ebba nicht leicht zu viel tun konnte. Die Geschichte mit den 'Rosenbergs' und den verschiedenen Verzweigungen der Familie war ihr dabei das denkbar glücklichste Thema. (93)

Holk is attracted rather than repelled by Ebba's 'Pikanterie' and ability to shock. Although Ebba appears as the originator of their affair, Holk is more than willing to respond. Away from Schloss Holkenäs and his beautiful but overly pious and repressive wife, Holk feels liberated in Copenhagen's easier atmosphere. Before meeting Ebba, he has already cast an approving eye over his landlady's attractive and enigmatic daughter, Brigitte Hansen, 'eine merkwürdige Mischung von Frou-frou und Lady Macbeth', and seems to be considering a dalliance with her, encouraged by what he hears from the elder Frau Hansen about her daughter's not entirely spotless past (68). Similarly, Holk's interest in Ebba, already aroused by her own shock tactics, is further encouraged by what he learns at a performance of *Henry IV Part II*, which the Princess attends with her ladies-in-waiting and courtiers. Ebba becomes quite obviously upset by a conversation during the interval about the character Dorchen Lakenreisser ('Doll Tearsheet, a whore', as she is described in the *Dramatis Personæ*). Later Holk expresses his surprise and Baron Pentz gives his view that Ebba's distress is caused by her recognition – or possibly her fear of others' recognition – of Dorchen as a distorted representation of her own character. He provides evidence for his opinion by telling Holk that Ebba too has a shady past and only recently left the Swedish court after her affair with the king's youngest son was discovered. Holk's knowledge about Ebba's reputation has the same effect on him as when he learnt about Brigitte's past, i.e. the woman concerned seems even more intriguing and exciting. This indicates that the main stimulus for the affair from Holk's side is the desire for a complete change of moral climate, one which is satisfied by the freer atmosphere of Copenhagen and by his liaison

with Ebba, part of his changed behaviour within this different moral and social environment.

Ebba's motivation for the affair is even clearer. When Holk rushes back to Copenhagen expecting her to accept his proposal of marriage, having arranged to divorce his wife, he is cruelly disappointed. What happened was a mere diversion as far as Ebba was concerned. She blames Holk for failing to recognise this: 'Ja, Holk, Hofleben ist öd und langweilig, hier wie überall, und weil es langweilig ist, ist man entweder so fromm wie die Schimmelmann, oder ... nun, wie sag ich ... so *nicht*-fromm wie Ebba' (202). Her denial of responsibility recalls an earlier conversation she had with the Princess, who, better understanding Ebba's character, endeavoured to warn her off Holk, for his wife's sake. Ebba rejected this: 'Aber bin ich die richtige Adresse? Nun und nimmermehr. Holk ist es. Er ist seiner Frau Treue schuldig, nicht ich, und wenn er diese nicht hält, so kommt es auf ihn und nicht auf mich. Soll ich meines Bruders Hüter sein?' (119).

As Florian Krobb has shown, Ebba is only one of Fontane's female characters who are in conflict with the traditional values of their society.<sup>61</sup> Effi Briest, Melanie van der Straaten and Cécile St. Arnaud all attract censure for their adultery, although not, it must be emphasised, from Fontane himself. Effi's extreme youth and inexperience, Melanie's deep shame about her husband and Cécile's highly irregular upbringing are all apparent and can be accepted by the reader as mitigating factors. In contrast, Ebba's excuse of boredom is not designed to attract sympathy. However, while Krobb's assessment seems accurate, it is perhaps debatable whether Ebba should be thought of as a 'Heldin', as he describes her. The lengthy list of her bad points could only really be balanced by her honesty and lack of pretension to be better than she is. Although her Jewish background first attracts Holk's attention, it is the moral difference, not her Jewishness, which sets her apart from his wife. Inasmuch as she is nominally Jewish, she differs from Fontane's other Jewish

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61 Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin*, pp. 171–2.

characters by being integrated into her society, rather than seeking entry to it, but the integration started by her grandfather has taken place at the expense of a distinct Jewish identity. Did Fontane make Ebba Jewish for no other reason than to provide a conversational gambit when she first meets Holk? It obviously is that, but her Jewishness is also a means of emphasising her different background. It can only be speculation, but is it coincidence that, of all Fontane's female characters, Ebba should be the least sympathetic and easily the most morally corrupt? In the figure of Ebba von Rosenberg, a combination of both aristocrat and Jew, Fontane portrays a character who does not possess the traditional values of her class and instead functions as a corrupting influence from within it.

Fontane's novella *Die Poggenpuhls* (1896) is a text which, although without a 'speaking part' for a single Jewish character, is nevertheless an excellent example of the problem of reading through what the characters say to find the author's own view. The Jewish characters are portrayed at two removes, viewed firstly through the narrator's eyes and secondly through those of the Poggenpuhl family. The reader does not have the option of forming his or her own opinion by meeting the Jewish characters in question. The novella tells of an aristocratic family reduced by the father's death to severely straitened circumstances. One of the plans for rescuing the family's fortunes involves marrying the younger son to Flora Bartenstein, daughter of a rich Jewish banker, and although the Bartensteins do not appear in the story, the scene is set for much comment and discussion about them. The idea of the marriage provokes very different reactions which recall the relationship between the Jews and the German aristocracy as Fontane described it in his correspondence. The youngest of the three daughters, Manon, is Flora's friend and actively recommends the marriage to her brother Leo, whereas the eldest, Therese, who sees it as a matter of duty 'die Poggenpuhlsche Fahne hochzuhalten', views the idea as demeaning and degrading.<sup>62</sup> Manon's friendships with the 'Bankiershäusern, unter denen sie die nicht-

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62 Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, IV: *Die Poggenpuhls*, 290.

christlichen bevorzugte' are a source of irritation for Therese (291). She is enraged by a remark made in jest by Leo in a letter home from the garrison in Poland where he is stationed. He ends his complaint about the lack of money and somewhat miserable surroundings in tongue-in-cheek style: 'Ach, Mutter, warum bist du keine geborene Bleichröder?'. 'Empörend', is Therese's response, 'wir haben schon Manon mit ihren ewigen Bartensteins, und nun fängt Leo auch noch an' (296).<sup>63</sup> She possesses a clear belief in German superiority and criticises Manon for her attempts to draw Leo into:

jene gesellschaftliche Sphäre, darin du dich leider wohl und immer wohler fühlst. Du willst nicht einsehen, daß *die* Welt, die du leichtfertig und hochmütig und, bloß um dich zu mokieren, als die 'christlich-germanische' bezeichnest, daß diese Welt mehr bedeutet, als ein halbes Dutzend Gersons. [...] Es kommt auf das innerliche Leben an, nicht auf das äußerliche: die Äpfel mit der schönen Schale sind meist wurmstichig. (350)<sup>64</sup>

The siblings appear to differ widely in their social acceptance of Jews: Leo and Manon do not express the same kind of prejudices as Therese. But the latter, although critical of the Bartensteins, accepts the value of such wealthy connections and the reader is told that she is 'schließlich auch froh [...], daß sie existierten' (298). In the same way, both Leo and Manon's relationships with Jews involve an element of exploitation. Manon may be Flora's best friend and therefore only too happy to welcome her as a sister-in-law, but she is also very aware of the enormous financial benefits of the marriage. This appears to be the overriding concern when she discusses her match-making plans with Leo: 'Flora Bartenstein ist ein kluges und schönes Mädchen und dazu meine Freundin. Und reich ist sie nun schon ganz gewiß. Also darüber ließe sich reden' (331). Furthermore, the Bartensteins have excellent social connections, better than those of the Poggenpuhls who, even though Therese considers the family to be a 'Pfeiler der Gesellschaft, [...] eine staatliche Säule', are socially

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63 Gerson von Bleichröder (1822–1893) was a Jewish banker, financial adviser to Bismarck, and was ennobled for his services.

64 Gersons was a large department store in Berlin with a Jewish owner.

disadvantaged through poverty (330). The social connection is another enticement used by Manon to encourage Leo to press his suit with Flora:

‘Bei Bartensteins war der Kronprinz, Bartenstein ist rumänischer Generalkonsul, [...] und bei Bartensteins war Droysen und Mommsen [...] und sie haben in ihrer Galerie mehrere Bilder von Menzel, ich glaube einen Hofball und eine Skizze zum Krönungsbild. Ja, lieber Leo, wer hat das?’ (348)<sup>65</sup>

From her tone, Manon evidently expects the cumulative effect of such a dazzling display of royal, political, intellectual and cultural connections to be utterly irresistible. Even the pictures in the Bartensteins’ gallery stand testimony to their conservatism and support of the traditional order and hence suitability for marriage into an aristocratic family.

However, Leo has already been considering the option of an advantageous marriage and again, the girl involved is Jewish. Leo’s discussions of this with the family servant, Friederike, and later with Manon show that the girl’s appearance as well as the financial benefits are of concern. He has already referred to the ‘paar Judenmädchen’ as the only consolation, along with gambling, that the garrison town can offer (301). In terms which emphasise an exotic, Oriental appearance, he describes one of the ‘Judenmädchen’ who has caught his eye as marriage material: ‘schöne schwarze Person, Taille so, und Augen, na, Friederike, ich sag dir, Augen, die reinen Mandelaugen und eigentlich alles schon wie Harem’ (309). In response to Friederike’s objection that such a marriage would not be acceptable to the family, Leo gives his opinion that financial considerations will gain the upper hand:

‘Sieh, so dumm sind die Poggenpuhls auch nicht, wenn es nur recht viel ist, sind sie ganz zufrieden und geben alles zu.’  
‘Is es denn viel?’

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65 Johann Droysen (1808–84) was a historian and politician, Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903) an expert historian on the Roman Empire.

‘Ja, das weiß ich selber noch nicht. Und dann sind diese Orientalen so gräßlich vorsichtig und machen immer Ehekontrakte, wo man nichts kriegt.’ (309)

When Manon hears about this challenge to Flora, she certainly does not object that the girl is Jewish, but shows concerns of a related kind, as demonstrated by her interrogation of Leo about the vague hints included in his letters:

‘Aber in Thorn, wovon du ständig schreibst und sprichst,... freilich immer nur so dunkel und bloß in Andeutungen. Ich bitte dich, Leo, was soll das? In Thorn!... Wie heißt sie denn eigentlich?’

‘Esther.’

‘Nun, das ginge. Viele Engländerinnen heißen so. Und ihr Vatersname?’

‘Blumenthal.’

‘Das ist freilich schon schlimmer.’ (331)

This brief exchange contains two important criticisms. Manon’s first concern is that the girl comes from Thorn (now Toruń in Poland) and not from somewhere more western and presumably civilised. Secondly, there is the all-important question of the name. That the first name should sound English is eminently acceptable, but Blumenthal is just too obviously Jewish. Manon finds consolation in the fact that a General Blumenthal was a member of the General Staff in the Franco-Prussian war and she therefore expects that society would assume the wife of a member of the Prussian aristocracy to be a relative of his. Writing to Leo after his departure, Manon finds another reason why Flora should be preferable to Esther: ‘Die ganze Zukunft, so viel wird mir immer klarer, dreht sich um die Frage: Esther oder Flora. Flora, Gott sei Dank, ist blond, sogar hellrotblond’ (347).

It should be apparent by now that Manon’s preference for Flora, reasons of friendship apart, and her implicit expectation that Leo fundamentally thinks the same, are based on a concept of Jewish acceptability which holds that the less obviously Jewish the person in name, appearance and place of origin, the more acceptable to the rest of German society. There is no evidence of genuine, unqualified

acceptance – the relationship between German and Jew portrayed in this story is ultimately unequal, with only those Jews who fulfil the unspoken conditions being successful, though Manon should be given credit for rejecting her sister's overt antisemitism. At the end of the story, when a small inheritance has eased the family's worries somewhat and renders an advantageous marriage unnecessary, Therese encourages Manon, as the one who is 'am weitesten ab vom rechten Wege', to 'drop' the Bartensteins, a suggestion roundly rejected by Manon: 'Ich bitte dich... Ich möchte wohl das Gesicht des alten Bartenstein sehen, wenn ich mich, angesichts meiner zweihundert Taler Zinsen, plötzlich auf meinen alten Adel besönne. Wenn es mehr wäre, verzieh er mir's vielleicht.' Besides, she adds, 'Flora selbst aber bleibt meine Freundin. Das ist das, was *ich* haben will' (373). However, both Manon and Leo show that while not rejecting contact, friendship or even marriage with Jews qua Jews, they distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable manifestations of Jewishness. Their views are nonetheless coloured by a prejudice which is less extreme and less apparent than Therese's, but more insidious and therefore still damaging.

Where, then, do Fontane's own views figure in this story? The obvious indications which can be helpful when judging an author's standpoint, i.e. the way in which a character is described and the lack of opposing views, do not apply in *Die Poggenpuhls*, where there are no actual Jewish characters and Therese is opposed, at least to some extent, by Manon. Here, however, Fontane's correspondence can prove useful rather than obstructive, since making a comparison with the criticisms expressed in the letters can indicate the presence of a good deal of Fontane's opinions in the fiction. In the correspondence, Fontane frequently commented on what he perceived to be the difference between Jews and other nationalities, a division he thought of as both enduring and also entirely advantageous from the German point of view. From the portrayal of Therese, it could be judged that she would hold such views as self-evident, but Manon and Leo also show signs of thinking the same way. Even though they are not deterred by the Jewishness of the Bartensteins and the

Blumenthals, it remains a defining factor for both of them. Marriage into a Jewish family may be under consideration, but even the Jews who are known to them can still be significantly different and 'other'. Leo, for example, describes the Jews as 'Orientalen' during his discussion about Esther with Friederike. The difference between Jewish and non-Jewish is related to the difference between acceptable and unacceptable Jews, whereby the Jew who is most like a German is most acceptable, an attitude which informs Manon's urging that Leo marry Flora rather than Esther, an inferior in terms of social connections and appearance. Fontane also expresses similar opinions in his letters, where he makes a distinction between those Jews whom he feels to be in some way exceptional, usually by reason of their cultural involvement, and the majority who do not possess such a redeeming feature.

This is a perfect example of the irrationality of antisemitic argument, which confronted those who tried to argue against it with an impossible situation. Reduced to its bare bones, Fontane's position seems to be that Jews can only become acceptable by hiding their Jewish identity and constructing a German one, and yet those who do so are criticised for dominating German society. Jewish involvement with German culture is an enduring feature of Fontane's criticism, closely related to his fear of excessive Jewish influence. Both of these surface to some extent in Manon's description of the illustrious cultural and political connections of the Bartensteins. Another of Fontane's often-expressed fears, that German society, particularly the aristocracy, was becoming increasingly dependent on the Jews, is demonstrated in the relationship between the Poggenpuhls and the Bartensteins. Changing circumstances meant that families such as the Bartensteins took on the role the aristocracy were unable to fill due to their resistance to change. *Die Poggenpuhls* clearly shows the profound inequality of this relationship, where the Jews benefit society and are still thought of as inferior by the Germans. Yet, as the story shows, it is not only those like Therese who adhere to such views. Comparatively, Manon and Leo are far more moderate and it is possible Fontane intended that they should



represent such a position in order to highlight the way Therese judges people and society according to traditional and anachronistic values. But although they superficially represent a less extreme position, Leo and Manon nonetheless embody many of the same prejudices that their author demonstrated in his letters.

As in *Die Poggenpuhls*, the relationship between Jews and the Prussian aristocracy features in *Der Stechlin* (1898), Fontane's last novel. Jewish characters are present in this text, but are given a minor role and therefore sketchily portrayed. The remarks of other characters help to fill out the picture, however, although once again the reader has to exercise caution in deciding on the presence of Fontane's own voice in the text. The 'Stechlin' in question is concurrently a lake, a forest, a village and also the estate and family home of Dubslav von Stechlin, 'Major a. D. und schon ein gut Stück über Sechzig, [...] der Typus eines Märkischen von Adel, aber von der milderen Observanz'.<sup>66</sup> The Prussian-Jewish relationship portrayed here concerns Dubslav and, in the first instance, Baruch Hirschfeld, the village draper whose business interests stretch far beyond selling the latest in women's clothing and millinery. Although described initially as Dubslav's old friend, his motivation for this friendship is rendered doubtful by the reported conversation between him and his son, Isidor. Baruch's affection for Dubslav, 'eine[r] Art Zärtlichkeit', leads to regular disagreements with Isidor, who feels little respect or consideration for the traditional nobility (10). It is revealed that Baruch's money finances the estate and despite his professed liking for Dubslav, he made the loans for motives other than friendship:

'Ich bin fürs Alte und für den guten, alten Herr von Stechlin. [...] Der zahlt auch, wenn er kann und wenn er hat. Und wenn er nicht hat, und ich sage: "Herr von Stechlin, ich werde schreiben siebeneinhalb", dann feilscht er nicht und dann zwackt er nicht. Und wenn er kippt, nu, da haben wir das Objekt: Mittelboden und Wald und Jagd und viel Fischfang. Ich seh es immer so ganz klein in der Perspektiv' und ich seh auch schon den Kirchturm.'

'Aber, Vaterleben, was sollen wir mit'm Kirchturm?' (10)

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66 Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, VIII: *Der Stechlin*, 7.

The comic way in which this speech is given, especially Isidor's confusion about why his father should want a church tower, prevent Baruch's intentions from appearing too sinister, but despite this, the image of the scheming and untrustworthy Jew has been introduced into the text.

During the story an election is held, in which Dubslav stands as the conservative candidate. Isidor's support for the social-democratic candidate causes the local policeman, Uncke, to comment to Dubslav on what he sees to be Isidor's lack of principles: 'Das Prinzip ist ihm aber egal. Er will bloß mogeln und den Alten an die Wand drücken. Und das ist das, was ich das Zweideutige nenne' (246). At this stage, Dubslav defends Isidor, having no reason to be concerned about him. His opinions of the Hirschfelds are radically altered during his illness by a visit from Baruch, who rather obviously steers the conversation on to the topic of money and attempts to advance a further loan. Dubslav turns this offer down but the meeting leaves both men disappointed: 'Eine Viertelstunde später fuhr Baruch auf seinem Wägelchen wieder in den Stechliner Wald hinein und dachte wenig befriedigt über alles nach, was er da drinnen gehört hatte. Die geträumten Schloß-Stechlin-Tage schienen mit einem Male für immer vorüber.' Dubslav, although not aware of any of Baruch's plans, now has his suspicions:

Es war ihm zu Sinn, als hätt er seinen alten Granseer Geld- und Geschäftsfreund (trotzdem er dessen letzte Pläne nicht einmal ahnte) zum ersten Mal auf etwas Heimlichem und Verstecktem ertappt, und als Engelke kam, um die Sherryflasche wieder wegzuräumen, sagte er: 'Engelke, mit Baruch ist es auch nichts. Ich dachte wunder, was das für ein Heiliger wär, und nun ist der Pferdefuß doch schließlich 'rausgekommen.' (294)

The two men do not meet again before Dubslav's death. In the meantime, the locum replacing Dubslav's doctor has been introduced into the story. Dr. Sponholz had already 'warned' Dubslav that the man is called Moscheles and comes from Brünn, 'und da heißen die meisten so' (298). Baruch and Moscheles are the subjects of a conversation between Dubslav and Superintendent Koseleger, interest-

ing for what it indicates about Dubslav's attitude to individual Jews and to antisemitism. Dubslav begins by admitting he has taken a dislike to Moscheles:

'Er faßt seinen Stock so sonderbar an und schlenkert auch so.'

'Ja, so was muß man unter Umständen mit in den Kauf nehmen. Und dann heißt es ja auch, der Major von Stechlin habe mehr oder wenig einen philosemitischen Zug.'

'Den hat der Major von Stechlin auch wirklich, weil er Unchristlichkeiten nicht leiden kann und Prinzipienreitereien erst recht nicht. Ich gehöre zu denen, die sich immer den Einzelfall ansehen. Aber freilich, mancher Einzelfall gefällt mir nicht. So zum Beispiel der hier mit dem neuen Doktor. Und auch mein alter Baruch Hirschfeld, [...] auch der gefällt mir nicht mehr so recht. Ich hielt große Stücke von ihm, aber – vielleicht daß sein Sohn Isidor schuld ist – mit einem Mal ist der Pferdefuß 'rausgekommen.' (300)

That Dubslav's dislike should be based on a harmless sounding mannerism is a little strange, but the suspicion is that this is not the whole story. Dubslav may say he has a 'philosemitischen Zug', but this has its limitations. His claim to consider the individual rather than to generalise is refuted in the next sentence, which shows he does not live up to this in practice. Indeed, he tells his servant to inform Dr. Moscheles that he is out, an obvious lie given his ill health, should the doctor call on him (308).

This passage is also interesting because of the way in which Dubslav has been seen as Fontane's representation of himself. Edgar Gross, for example, who edited the Nymphenburger edition of Fontane's works, wrote in his notes to *Der Stechlin*:

In keinem schriftlichen Zeugnis, außer in den Briefen an den befreundeten Georg Friedlaender, hat sich der sonst gern verschlossene Fontane so persönlich offenbart wie in dieser Bekenntnisdichtung. Im alten Dubslav spiegelt sich seine eigene Natur wider, mit allen Zwiespältigkeiten und Zweifeln, aber auch die Abgeklärtheit des Weisen, der Menschen zu beobachten und zu gestalten versteht und als lebenswürdiger Causeur eine Atmosphäre humaner Wärme um sich verbreitet. Das ist Dubslav, das ist auch – Fontane. (365)

Compared with his formidable half-sister Adelheid, most certainly not ‘von der milderen Observanz’, Dubslav definitely appears as warmer, more generous and more humane. There do seem to be some valid comparisons between Fontane and Dubslav, in personality and also in their attitudes towards Jews. But in this latter respect can Gross’s definition of the two men as enlightened and wise be accepted at face value? Dubslav’s rejection of Dr. Moscheles would seem to deny this, even if this is not ascribed totally to the doctor being Jewish. The reader is told that Dubslav’s antipathy stems initially from bad memories of the music of the composer Ignaz Moscheles, which he was forced to practice for music lessons as a boy (298). However, it would not be very credible to accept this as the sole reason for his dislike, which increases after he has met the doctor. In the case of Baruch, with whom Dubslav has maintained friendly relations for many years, the reader can at least see the reason for the breach between the two men, although the point of this part of the story seems questionable. Why did Fontane include these details about the scheming, devious Jews, the younger of whom has no respect for tradition, votes for the socialist candidate and, as emerges from a conversation between the two, is of somewhat dubious moral character?

Isidor, sprich mir nicht von Prinzip. Ich habe dich gesehn, als du hast charmiert mit dem Mariechen von nebenan und hast ihr aufgebunden das Schürzenband, und sie hat dir gegeben einen Klaps. Du hast gebuhlt um das christliche Mädchen. Und du buhlst jetzt, wo die Wahl kommt, um die öffentliche Meinung. (151)

This aspect of the novel is very reminiscent of Wilhelm von Polenz’s *Der Büttnerbauer* (1895), the story of a traditional German farming family which is tricked out of its property and livelihood by the machinations of Jewish moneylenders.<sup>67</sup> Fontane read this novel and wrote to its author to express his enjoyment, giving his opinion that ‘die Juden, weil verhältnismäßig “milde” gehalten, alle wunder-

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67 Polenz, *Der Büttnerbauer* (Leipzig: Reclam, [n.d.]).

voll sind'.<sup>68</sup> In real life, the Hirschfeld episode reflects Fontane's description of the investment scandal which surrounded his erstwhile friend, Moritz Lazarus. What he wrote then, one year before publication of *Der Stechlin*, of the Jews who manage 'zu geben und zu helfen und dabei beständig zu mogeln oder auch direkt zu betrügen' appears very close to the fictional depiction and it does not seem implausible that the one influenced the other.<sup>69</sup> One quite striking similarity between fiction and correspondence is a criticism Fontane expressed to his wife, using practically the same words as Dubslav uses to defend his image as possessor of a 'philosemitischen Zug': 'Ich bin in nichts ein Prinzipienreiter und so recht einer, der ein Verständnis und meist auch ein liking für Ausnahmefälle hat.'<sup>70</sup> The criticisms inherent in the portrayal of the Hirschfelds: the Jews plotting the downfall of a financially dependent aristocratic family, a destructive force which will overthrow the traditional order, can also be seen in Fontane's correspondence. As in *Die Poggenpuhls*, the family is saved from dependency on Jews by intervention from within its own class when Dubslav's son marries into a wealthy Christian family. Again, the relationship between Jews and the Prussian aristocracy is presented, in the final analysis, as fundamentally unhealthy.

In *Mathilde Möhring* (1891), a similar theme can be detected. The Jews in this story, the businessmen Silberstein and Ehrenthal, are not highly developed characters but provide a running commentary on the actions of Hugo Grossmann and Mathilde, who becomes Grossmann's wife during the course of the story. Like Isidor Hirschfeld, the two men are identified with progressive politics and opposition to traditional conservatism in the west Prussian town of Woldenstein. Hugo's speech on taking up the position of mayor has dwelt on the duty of even a small town towards the monarchy but has not pleased all the sections of the crowd: 'Hugo, der gut sah, hatte doch das spöttische Lächeln bemerkt, mit der eine kleine Gruppe seiner Zuhörer diese patriotische Wendung begleitete.'

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68 HB IV Letter to Wilhelm von Polenz, no. 487, 24.9.95.

69 BrFried, no. 261, 6.4.97.

70 PB I Letter to Emilie, no. 128, 12.8.83.

However, by adding a remark about the constitution he wins over the rest of his listeners, including Silberstein and Ehrenthal, who are impressed enough to hold a small party for him. Even this modest gesture is tied up in the political conflict: 'Die Konservativen schlossen sich aus, aber nicht gegen Hugo, sondern aus Demonstration gegen die fortschrittliche Firma.'<sup>71</sup> Writing to her mother, Mathilde describes the two men as 'sehr reelle Leute, fortschrittlich, aber sehr reell', a comment which reveals a certain amount of surprise that such a combination is possible (300). However, any bias she feels against Silberstein and Ehrenthal is directed against their politics, not their religion, and both she and Hugo make a very positive impression on them. Discussing the couple with Ehrenthal, Silberstein says:

Ist er [Hugo] nicht wie Nathan, ist er nicht der Mann, der die drei Ringe hat, ist er nicht gerecht und sieht doch aus wie ein Apostel, und seine Frau Gemahlin, eine sehr gebildete Dame, hat gesprochen von der Dreieinigkeit, und daß der Papst in Rom und Luther und Moses müßten aufgehen in einem. Und das eine sei Preußen. Und sie sei gesegnet wegen der Einheit. (287)

Certainly Silberstein's remarks about Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* show how play and author were held in high regard by assimilating Jews in Germany, and that it is a compliment indeed, from a Jewish point of view, for Hugo to be compared favourably with Nathan.

However, a passage in *Effi Briest* written four years later in 1895 portrays the story of the three rings from Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* in a very different light. During the Christmas gathering at the forester's house, Baron von Guldensee makes a short speech in which the association of Jews with the forces of progress and the perceived danger to the traditional order are obvious:

Viele Ringe gibt es, und es gibt sogar eine Geschichte, die wir alle kennen, die die Geschichte von den 'drei Ringen' heißt, eine Judengeschichte, die, wie der

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71 Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, VI: *Mathilde Möhring*, 283.

ganze liberale Krimskrams, nichts wie Verwirrung und Unheil gestiftet hat und noch stiftet. Gott bessere es.<sup>72</sup>

Fontane may not have realised it, but here he was quoting himself, using many of the same words as in a letter to his wife written over a decade earlier in 1883. This letter has already been quoted, but doing so again will show the striking similarity between Fontane's own opinion and that expressed by one of his characters. In addition, he says, to various political events which have pleased him:

gehört auch der immer mehr zu Tage tretende Bankrott der Afterweisheit des vorigen Jahrhunderts. Das Unheil, das Lessing mit seinen Geschichte von den drei Ringen angerichtet hat, um nur *einen* Punkt herauszugreifen, ist kolossal. Das 'seid umschlungen Millionen' ist ein Unsinn.<sup>73</sup>

In the light of this, the reader may wonder whether Fontane's attitude to Silberstein and Ehrenthal, who are portrayed without the devious plotting which characterised the Hirschfelds in *Der Stechlin*, is really as positive as it seems. The theme of the opposition between conservative and Jewish which was first noticeable in *Der Stechlin*, is also apparent in *Mathilde Möhring* and *Effi Briest* and, not least, in Fontane's own words.

But how do Fontane's comments compare with those made by contemporaneous public figures who also expressed opinions on the 'Jewish question'? From his description of Ahlwardt and Paasch as 'ein Lump und ein Verrückter', he obviously had little respect for the leaders of organised political antisemitism.<sup>74</sup> A comment he made on the 'kolossale Grobheiten' exchanged during the course of a Landtag debate about recent arson attacks on synagogues, indicates that at least part of his objection was based on the crude tone of much anti-semitic debate.<sup>75</sup> Be that as it may, there are some distinct parallels between the *content* of antisemitic rhetoric and Fontane's own ex-

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72 Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, VII: *Effi Briest*, 302.

73 PB I Letter to Emilie, no. 128, 12.8.83.

74 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 345, 21.8.93.

75 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 250, 26.3.84.

pressed criticisms. Essentially, there was nothing original in what Fontane had to say about the Jews. Of course, the period during which Fontane wrote the letters and fiction considered in this chapter, roughly 1880–98, was marked by increased public discussion about the ‘Jewish question’ and by changes in the antisemitic movement, including its politicisation and the growing acceptance of racially motivated thought. The start of this period coincides with what has come to be known as the *Berliner Antisemitismusstreit*, a very public debate conducted in open letters and pamphlets about the position of Jews in Germany and their involvement in public life. The ball was set rolling in November 1879 by an article in the *Preußische Jahrbücher* by Heinrich von Treitschke, Professor of Modern History at the University of Berlin. Although from Saxony, Treitschke supported Prussian supremacy and a strong and powerful German Empire. The objections against the Jews expressed in his article stem, to a large extent, from his conception of the Empire and the threat posed to it by division and diversity. As a distinct minority, the Jews were blamed for propagating that diversity which Treitschke saw as so dangerous to the German state. To his mind, there was only one answer: ‘Was wir von unseren israelitischen Mitbürgern zu fordern haben, ist einfach: sie sollen Deutsche werden, sich schlicht und recht als Deutsche fühlen’.<sup>76</sup> In the rest of the article, and in the one which appeared in the next issue of the *Jahrbücher*, Treitschke went on to expand his criticisms against the Jews and the danger they posed to common German aims, values and culture.

Although Treitschke’s initial demand was that the Jews should become German, his criticism is directed mainly against those who have become involved in aspects of German public life, such as the stock market, of which he disapproved. When Treitschke talks of Jewish participation ‘an dem Lug und Trug, und der frechen Gier des Gründer-Unwesens [...] an jenem schnöden Materialismus unserer Tage’; or of the danger of ‘das unbillige Uebergewicht des Juden-

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76 Treitschke, *Ein Wort über unser Judenthum* (Berlin: Reimer, 1880), p. 2. Other articles which formed part of the debate at the time can be found in: Boehlich, *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit* (Frankfurt/M: Insel, 1965).



thums in der Tagespresse; or of Jewish involvement in finance and business, such criticisms appear very familiar to the reader of Fontane. Nonetheless, it still seems justified to reject the attempt made by some commentators to pass the blame for Fontane's expressions of prejudice on to Treitschke, who was not the only person to be expressing such views. The following from Otto Glagau expresses similar criticisms to those of Treitschke and Fontane:

Nicht länger dürfen wir's dulden, daß die Juden sich überall in den Vordergrund, an die Spitze drängen, überall die Führung, das große Wort an sich reißen. Sie schieben uns Christen stets beiseite, sie drücken uns an die Wand, sie nehmen uns die Luft und den Atem. Sie führen tatsächlich die Herrschaft über uns; sie besitzen eine gefährliche Übermacht.<sup>77</sup>

The similarities show more the presence of a common theme of argument in late nineteenth-century Germany, rather than a reason to excuse Fontane for his antisemitic bias.

It is perhaps more surprising to find similarities between the criticisms of Fontane and those of Theodor Mommsen. Mommsen, who is generally acknowledged as Treitschke's opponent in the Antisemitismusstreit, is a good example of the fact that when it came to the Jews, as was the case with Freytag, those supposed to be liberal-minded spoke much the same language as the conservatives. Mommsen's reply to Treitschke initially seems to reject his arguments: 'Was heißt das, wenn er von unsern israelitischen Mitbürgern fordert, sie sollen Deutsche werden? Sie sind es ja, so gut wie er und ich.'<sup>78</sup> His conclusion, however, shows that actually he rejected the possibility of cultural diversity just as much as Treitschke. Discussing the predominantly Christian nature of the civilised world, he says:

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77 Glagau, *Die Börsen- und Grundungsschwindel in Berlin*, quoted in: Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, p. 469.

78 Mommsen, *Auch ein Wort über unser Judenthum* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1880), p. 7. Useful on this issue: Liebesschütz, 'Treitschke and Mommsen on Jewry and Judaism', *LBIYB* 7 (1962), 153–82.

Außerhalb dieser Schranken zu bleiben und innerhalb der Nation zu stehen ist möglich, aber schwer und gefahrvoll. Wem sein Gewissen [...] es verbietet dem Judenthum abzusagen und sich zum Christenthum zu bekennen, der wird dem entsprechend handeln und die Folgen auf sich nehmen. [...] Der Eintritt in eine große Nation kostet seinen Preis [...] und wir fühlen wohl, daß wir damit von unserem Eigensten ein Stück hingeben. Aber wir geben es dem gemeinsamen Vaterland. Auch die Juden führt kein Moses wieder in das gelobte Land; mögen sie Hosen verkaufen oder Bücher schreiben, es ist ihre Pflicht, [...] auch ihrerseits die Sonderart nach bestem Vermögen von sich zu thun und alle Schranken zwischen sich und den übrigen deutschen Mitbürgern mit entschlossener Hand niederzuwerfen. (14,15)

Essentially, Mommsen, like Fontane, is criticising the Jews for being Jewish. Mommsen's answer is wholesale conversion to Christianity for the good of the nation, something suggested by Fontane in a letter to Friedlaender: 'Es giebt kein andres Mittel als Stillhalten und sich mit der allmäligen Christianisirung zufrieden zu geben.'<sup>79</sup> On other occasions Fontane contradicted this statement, expressing his view of the enduring nature of Jewishness. Certainly by the end of his life, Fontane seemed to reject any possibility of Jewish change. Fontane's letter to Friedrich Paulsen in May 1898, the last one, chronologically, to have been discussed, made this abundantly clear. His use then of racial terminology is also indicative of the changes in antisemitism which had taken place since the Antisemitismusstreit of the early 1880s. Although racial theories already existed – Joseph Gobineau's seminal *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* was published in 1853 – it was during the 1880s and 1890s that racial antisemitism took root in Germany. Wilhelm Marr, author of *Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum* (1873), went on to found the Antisemiten-Liga in 1879 and a whole range of antisemitic pressure groups and parties arrived on the scene. The involvement of a public figure such as the Court Chaplain Adolf Stoecker, who in 1878 founded the Christlichsoziale Arbeiterpartei which included antisemitic policies as a popularising measure, helped to give antisemitism a high profile. The language of racial antisemitism was

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79 BrFried, no. 197, 9.11.92.

propagated in public meetings, newspapers and pamphlets as well as in parliamentary debate, and judging by the Paulsen letter, Fontane agreed with it sufficiently to be able to use it. Although Herman Ahlwardt, author of *Die Verzehweflungskampf der arischen Völker gegen die Juden* and antisemitic agitator, was described by Fontane as a ‘Lump’, Fontane’s perception of the Jews expressed in the Paulsen letter as ‘ein schreckliches Volk, *nicht* ein Kraft und Frische gebender “Sauer-teig”, sondern ein Ferment, in dem die häßlicheren Formen der Gährung lebendig sind’, has much in common with Ahlwardt’s own views. A quotation from a speech made by Ahlwardt in the Reichstag in favour of banning Jewish immigration indicates disturbing similarities. Ahlwardt rejected immigration ‘for they [the Jews] do not belong to a productive race, they are exploiters, parasites’.<sup>80</sup> When Ahlwardt demanded the exclusion of Jews from Germany, he was repeating Fontane’s view of the fundamental difference between Germans and Jews and taking it to its natural conclusion:

The Jew is no German. If you say, the Jew was born in Germany, he was nursed by a German wetnurse, he abides by German laws, he has to serve as a soldier, [...] he fulfils all his obligations, he pays his taxes – then I say that all this is not the crucial factor with regard to his nationality; the crucial factor is the race from which he stems. Permit me to make a rather trite comparison which I have already used elsewhere in my speeches: a horse that is born in a cowshed is far from being a cow. (304)

## Summary

The fundamental issue for this chapter has been Fontane’s uncertain relationship with Jews both actual and fictional. It has addressed the complexities of this relationship by considering correspondence and

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80 Reichstag Stenographische Berichte, 6.3.1895, quoted in Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction* (New York: Harper, 1949), p. 302.

fiction and has covered much ground hitherto ignored or only summarily discussed. The picture of Fontane to emerge is quite different from that formed by previous critics, and argues for a change in the generally accepted view of Fontane as a person and as a writer. Where Fontane's attitude towards Jews *has* been discussed, the tendency has been to look at the correspondence in isolation and not to give much consideration to how the opinions expressed there impact on the fiction. Krobb, for example, rejected the idea that Fontane's own views could be detected from the fiction.<sup>81</sup> However, by highlighting the fact that criticisms expressed in letters have resonances in the fiction, it is possible to see much more of Fontane's own views in his fiction than has formerly been thought to be the case. A reassessment of Fontane's engagement with Jews and Judaism would seem to be necessary. No longer should he be thought of as a man with many Jewish friends and acquaintances who occasionally lapsed or was provoked into criticism of Jews. Rather, the reverse of this impression, reinforced by the resonances in the fiction, would seem to be the case: that Fontane was a man with a profoundly negative image of Jews, who occasionally made exceptions for ones he knew, although even here the relationships were uneasy. His tendency, however, was not to make the exception, but to judge Jews *en masse*, with the attendant generalisation this implies.

This is not to deny that Fontane had Jewish friends. Certain names are often mentioned in order to defend Fontane from a charge of prejudice, by showing he was capable of maintaining close and friendly relations with Jews. One such person was Wilhelm Wolfsohn whom Fontane met when living in Leipzig in 1841–2 and with whom he corresponded until Wolfsohn's death in 1865. The other name is Georg Friedlaender, briefly mentioned earlier. Fontane's friendship with Friedlaender, often described as the friend of his old age, is deeply interesting for what it reveals about the uneasy nature of Fontane's relationships with Jews. It was conducted mainly by post between 1884 and 1898, although the two families

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81 Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin*, p. 186.

occasionally met during summer vacations. Unfortunately only Fontane's side of the correspondence has been preserved, as Emilie Fontane destroyed Friedlaender's letters after her husband's death. However, from this half of the correspondence it is evident that the two men not infrequently discussed the 'Jewish question', sometimes in general terms, sometimes referring to Jewish figures in the public eye or Jews of their acquaintance. What is of extra interest is that Friedlaender was of Jewish descent. Lacking his responses to Fontane, it is hard to tell to what extent he felt himself to be Jewish, if at all. Today's reader can only guess that his letters emphasised the German part of his nature, since Fontane did not refrain from expressing strongly-worded criticism of the Jews in his letters to Friedlaender. It is unlikely that the relationship would have continued for so long had Friedlaender constantly felt his Jewishness to be under attack. Other than by saying that Fontane showed an appalling lack of sensitivity during the entire course of their relationship, it is hard to see how he could make remarks such as those quoted earlier, had he not expected, and received what he felt to be confirmation, that Friedlaender more or less agreed.

Whether Friedlaender felt himself to be German or Jewish, comments made by Fontane about him to other correspondents are fascinating and disturbing for what they have to say about Fontane's own views on the matter. They make it extremely doubtful whether Fontane's feelings towards Friedlaender should be described as friendship in any meaningful sense of the word. Kurt Schreinert, who edited the Friedlaender letters, had this to say about the relationship between the two men:

Das bleibende Zeugnis dieser Freundschaft sind die zahlreichen Briefe Fontane's an den schlesischen Freund; sie begleiten seine letzten vierzehn Lebensjahre und zeigen ihn so, wie er 'ganz zuletzt', d.h. wie er 'eigentlich' war.<sup>82</sup>

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82 BrFried, p. xii.

But is this really the case? If only these letters were available, the reader would probably agree that they are evidence of friendship. However, neither Fontane's wife nor his daughter concealed from him their dislike of the Friedlaenders. Remarking on this to Mete, Fontane displays his own feelings:

Gegen F[riedlaender] ist viel zu sagen und Mama, die Deine Ausstellungen mit ungeschwächten Kräften fortsetzt, bemängelt eigentlich alles, demunerachtet muß ich froh sein überhaupt einen Gesellschafter zu haben und schließlich, trotz alledem und alledem, auch einen so guten. Denn wenn ich meine Berliner Garde Revue passiren lasse, was habe ich denn da Besseres. Neben meinem Berliner Umgangsmaterial ist, auf Unterhaltlichkeit, Esprit und gute Einfälle angesehen, Friedländer noch ein Gott. Wäre er nicht so kolossal kleinstietzig, könnte er über seine Nasenspitze wegsehn und irgend eine große Frage losgelöst vom eignen kleinen Ich betrachten, so wäre er ausgezeichnet. Er ist aber ganz Jude. Freilich mir dadurch auch wieder *sehr* interessant, weil ich das Jüdische an ihm und auch an seiner Tochter, so wundervoll studiren kann. Preußenthum, Berlinerthum, Assessorthum, Geheimrathsgöhre, Bildungsallüren – alles geht unter im Juden oder erhält durch ihn eine bestimmte Färbung.<sup>83</sup>

There is no indication that Fontane felt he had to defend Friedlaender; rather he concurs and gives his own criticisms. Far from being a friend, Friedlaender appears as a way of passing the time while on holiday ("Was habe ich denn da Besseres") and as an object of interest, like an exotic animal in a zoo. However German Friedlaender felt himself to be, the last sentence quoted shows that Fontane did not accept Friedlaender *was* German. Despite those things which *seem* German, the Jewishness is prominent to Fontane and affects everything else in Friedlaender's character.

Much the same devastating criticism is expressed three years later in Fontane's letter to Friedrich Paulsen, which was quoted during discussion of Fontane's tendency to generalise. Moving from blanket to targeted criticism, Fontane uses Friedlaender as an example to back up his argument that Jewishness is an indestructible element of the personality. Although Friedlaender is not mentioned

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83 PB II Letter to Mete, no. 362, 22.8.95.

by name, the biographical details indicate that it is obviously he to whom Fontane refers:

Ein Freund von mir, Rat und Richter, aus einer angesehenen und reichen und seit 3 Generationen im Staatsdienst stehenden Judenfamilie, der längst verstorbene Vater orthodoxer Musterchrist, der Sohn selber klug und gescheidt und mit einem ehrlich verdienten eisernen Kreuz bewaffnet. Und doch Stockjude, *so* sehr, daß seine feine und liebenswürdige Frau blutige Tränen weint, bloß weil ihr Mann die jüdische Gesinnung nicht los werden kann. Es ist auch kein Ende davon abzusehn und es wäre besser gewesen, man hätte den Versuch der Einverleibung nicht gemacht. Einverleiben lassen sie sich, eingestigen nicht. Und das alles sage ich (*muß* es sagen), der ich persönlich von den Juden bis diesen Tag nur Gutes erfahren habe.<sup>84</sup>

Fontane uses Friedlaender in this instance as a symbol for what he feels to be wrong with the Jewish attempt to become German. This is an attempt doomed to failure, as he sees it, because of a fundamental impediment in the Jewish nature to stop being Jewish. Where in this statement, and the earlier to Mete, is there even the remotest hint of friendship, tolerance or respect? Was Fontane really the 'philosemitic antisemite' that Wolfgang Paulsen has suggested? While Fontane was by no means an active supporter of organised, political antisemitism and did not hesitate to criticise its leaders, it must be conceded that his philosemitism can only have been of a very qualified kind.

Over a century later, and with the benefit of hindsight, the observer could well say that what prevented German Jews like Friedlaender achieving the assimilation they so keenly sought were the attitudes of Germans like Fontane, who denied them that possibility and mocked their behaviour. With careful thought and reading, the danger of accepting Fontane at face value becomes apparent. As in the fiction, *Die Poggenpuhls* and *Der Stechlin* in particular, where the superficially cordial relationships between Germans and Jews were shown to be fundamentally unequal, so in real life Fontane's friendship with Friedlaender is revealed to be lacking in

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84 BrFreun II Letter to Friedrich Paulsen, no. 453, 12.5.98.

genuine feeling on Fontane's part. His view of an unbridgeable difference between German and Jew ultimately precluded a relationship based on equality and mutual respect.





## Chapter Five

### Thomas Mann: The Blindness of the 'bequeme Mehrzahl'

Von einer ungemein kritischen, wenn nicht gar abwertenden Kritik des deutschen Judentums, besonders der Intellektuellen unter ihnen, entwickelt er sich – einige Vorurteile und Ambivalenzen wohlgermerkt beibehaltend und keineswegs geradlinig – zum Fürsprecher, Verteidiger und, die Tat dem Wort folgen lassend, zum Nothelfer in der Zeit der Verfolgung.<sup>1</sup>

This is how Guy Stern described Thomas Mann's attitude towards the Jews – a multifaceted mixture of criticism and prejudice giving way over time to defence and support. Such ambivalence, coupled with the complexity of writing for which he is renowned, make it difficult to define Mann's approach and beliefs in concrete, unequivocal terms.

However, the examination of various texts from the early part of Mann's career and some items of non-fiction can at least suggest why Mann reacted to the Jews as he did and show how this was expressed in literary form. It is not difficult to think of general reasons why Mann chose to include Jewish characters in his work and discuss the 'Jewish question' in his essays: a consciousness of his own differences, such as his mixed nationality or equivocal sexuality, for instance, could well have led Mann to have a greater awareness of differences in others. Moreover, he was a product of his times, open to being influenced by general opinion, and it indeed would be remarkable to find unlimited approval about the Jews rather than the presence of some negative opinions.

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1 Stern, 'Thomas Mann und die jüdische Welt', in *Thomas-Mann-Handbuch*, ed. by Koopmann (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1990), pp. 54–67 (p. 54).

This chapter looks at Mann's approach towards the Jews over a period dating from his earliest writing, when Mann was just twenty, to works written during the next fourteen years as he established himself as an author of repute. Stern writes of a progression from the ambivalence and prejudice of the early period to Mann's later defence of the Jews during the 1930s and 1940s. The question is how that prejudice manifested itself at this early stage and whether it changed or developed with time. The discussion starts with a close study of *Wälsungenblut*, a crucial text in the context of this chapter, continuing with other items of fiction before moving on to some non-fiction and episodes from Mann's life which shed further light on a complex problem as expressed by this complex writer.

### *Wälsungenblut* (1905)

*Wälsungenblut*, probably more than any other text by Mann, has been the focus for research into Mann's portrayal of Jewish characters. And rightly so, because the first-time reader can hardly fail to be astounded, perhaps appalled, at the wealth of negative detail attached to the Jewish characters. But *Wälsungenblut* is also a highly sophisticated text in which more subtle nuances and parallels appear each time it is read, so that ascertaining the attitude of the author to his characters and, in the wider context, to German Jews, is a fascinating, intricate task.

The story's publication history is interesting but peripheral and has been given at length elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Briefly, in November 1905 Mann sent the manuscript of *Wälsungenblut* to Oskar Bie, editor of the

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2 On the controversy over Mann's withdrawal from publication of his story see in particular: Pringsheim, 'Ein Nachtrag zu *Wälsungenblut*', in *Betrachtungen und Überblicke: Zum Werk Thomas Manns*, ed. by Wenzel (Berlin: Aufbau, 1966), pp. 253–68; Mendelssohn, *Der Zauberer: Das Leben des deutschen Schriftstellers Thomas Mann*, 2 vols (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1975–1992), I (1975), 658–68.

magazine *Die neue Rundschau* which was published, like Mann's books, by Fischer. Bie felt the two Yiddish expressions in the final sentence were vulgar, and Mann, although preferring the original, agreed to change the sentence for the magazine. Returning to Munich in mid-December from a lecture tour, Mann was met with the news that the proof sheets of *Wälsungenblut*, sent to a bookshop as packing material for books from Fischer in Berlin, had been circulating in the city, causing a rumour that he had written a *Schlüsselgeschichte* based on his wife's family. Katia Mann's father, Professor Alfred Pringsheim, was, unsurprisingly, furious. Mann contacted *Die neue Rundschau* and had the story withdrawn from publication.

More relevant is what can be ascertained of the author's attitude to this situation. Thomas had discussed it in several letters to Heinrich Mann, asking for advice about the changed ending. At the end of November 1905, he described Bie's reaction to the piece:

Professor Bie aber beanstandet den Schluß, den allerletzten Satz mit Fremdwörtern, von dem er fürchtet, daß der Durchschnittsleser ihn als roh empfinden würde, und bittet mich himmelhoch, die Sache [...] auch am Schluß noch so discret einzuhüllen, wie ich es im ganzen Verlaufe gethan. Er hat gewiß recht.<sup>3</sup>

Two weeks on he again referred to his treatment of the Jewish content of the text:

Vorher [i.e. before the final sentence] ist all dergleichen vermieden, umschrieben, verhüllt. Das Wort 'Jude, jüdisch' kommt nicht vor. Der jüdische Tonfall is nur ganz discret ein paar mal angedeutet.<sup>4</sup>

Then in January 1906 he brought his brother up to date:

Von meiner Dezember-Reise zurückkehrend, fand ich hier bereits das Gerücht vor, ich hätte eine heftig 'antisemitische' (!) Novelle geschrieben, in der ich die Familie meiner Frau fürchterlich compromittirte. Was hätte ich

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3 *Thomas Mann / Heinrich Mann: Briefwechsel*, ed. by Wysling (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1984), p. 63 (20.11.05).

4 *ibid.*, p. 65 (5.12.05).

thun sollen? Ich sah meine Novelle im Geiste an und fand, daß sie nicht gerade geeignet sei, das Gerücht niederzuschlagen.<sup>5</sup>

From this it is evident that, firstly, Mann acknowledged the story's potential to cause offence, both to the average reader and, when he was being honest with himself, to his wife's family. He somewhat reluctantly accepted that the former could be upset by the vulgarity of the final sentence, the latter by the public's expectation that the fictional milieu represented the actual. In the rest of the text, however, Mann believed himself to have been completely discreet, not giving anyone grounds for complaint. Secondly, he rejected outright the notion that his text was antisemitic. The quotation marks around 'antisemitisch' and the bracketed exclamation mark indicate not only that Mann denied the substance of the rumour, but also that he found the very idea ridiculous and fully expected Heinrich to think the same. The tone is of amused incredulity.

However, this raises more questions than it answers. How much credence can be given to Mann's own denial that *Wälsungenblut* was antisemitic? Is he saying that his discretion negates the possibility of what he wrote being offensive; in effect, that the clever writer can confuse his readers by hiding certain details so deep within the text that few notice their existence? The fact remains that, however guardedly he wrote in *Wälsungenblut*, Mann nonetheless included several deliberate clues that his characters were Jewish. That in itself does not indicate prejudice but it still begs the question as to what Mann intended by that choice of background for the text's protagonists and what the details of their presentation imply about Mann himself.

A measure of *Wälsungenblut*'s complexity is the difficulty in defining its central theme. Writing to Heinrich, Mann described it as a 'Tiergartengeschichte' and a 'Judengeschichte'.<sup>6</sup> Does this infer that

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5 *ibid.*, p. 68 (17.1.06).

6 *ibid.*, p. 61 (17.10.05); p. 63 (20.11.05). The *Tiergarten* was an exclusive residential area of Berlin with wealthy, often Jewish, inhabitants. Katia

he thought the Jewish content was its primary focus? Perhaps, but the reader also notices many other threads running through it. Foremost is the reflection of Mann's relationship with Wagner, a mixture of admiration and aversion. Recent criticism has read the story in a bewildering variety of ways, seeing in it a parody of Wagner's *Die Walküre*; an argument against decadence and dilettantism; an expression of Mann's sympathy with the outsiders in society; a comparison between the outsider and the artist; a discussion of the link between sexuality and creativity and an outlet for Mann's feelings about his own bisexuality.<sup>7</sup> None of these is necessarily wrong, nor one more correct than the others, as the story contains elements of each. *Wälsungenblut*'s action is easier to determine, occurring from midday to late evening in an extremely wealthy Berlin Jewish family. After lunch the reader accompanies the twins Siegmund and Sieglinde Aarenhold as they attend a performance of *Die Walküre*, following which, in emulation of their Wagnerian counterparts, the incest takes place. Interwoven amongst these simple plot details is a wealth of references and allusions. *Wälsungenblut* may be a short text, but almost every word is loaded with significance, resulting in a richly-textured story which invests certain repeated words and phrases with a deeper meaning in order to construct a subtle subtext.

It can be argued that Mann's description of the Jewish elements to the story being 'nur ganz discret ein paar mal angedeutet' is a considerable understating of the case. Certainly each family member's details are sketchy rather than elaborate. But when all the details are considered together it becomes quite obvious that Mann's characters

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Mann's aunt, Else Rosenberg, lived on Tiergartenstraße. Thomas and Katia visited the family shortly after their marriage in 1905.

7 The following brief selection of items dealing with *Wälsungenblut* indicates the differing interpretations: Fischer, *Fin de Siècle: Kommentar zu einer Epoche* (Munich: Winkler, 1978), pp. 233–41; Finney, 'Self-Reflexive Siblings: Incest as Narcissism in Tieck, Wagner and Thomas Mann', *GQ* 56 (1983), 243–56; Kraske, 'Thomas Manns *Wälsungenblut*: eine antisemitische Novelle?', in *Thomas Mann: Erzählungen und Novellen*, ed. by Wolff, Sammlung Profile 8 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1984), pp. 42–66.

are Jewish. The story starts as the family gathers for lunch. Herr Aarenhold speaks first, asking, 'indem er sich leise die Hände rieb', if Sieglinde's fiancé, Beckerath, has arrived.<sup>8</sup> His wife answers with a further question: 'Wie wird er nicht kommen?', and attention is drawn to her: 'Sie war klein, häßlich, früh gealtert und wie unter einer fremden, heißeren Sonne verdorrt' (380). The children arrive: Kunz, the eldest son, 'ein schöner, brauner Mensch mit aufgeworfenen Lippen', and Märli, 'ein strenges Mädchen von achtundzwanzig mit Hakennase'. Finally the twins: 'Sie hatten dieselbe ein wenig niedergedrückte Nase, dieselben voll und weich aufeinander ruhenden Lippen' (381). There is also the surname, in which the name of the first Jewish High Priest, Aaron, seems to be lurking, disguised by the Germanic first syllable, 'Aar', and suffix, 'hold'. Tiny details when considered alone, each easy to overlook but conveying an unmistakable message when considered en masse. Mann includes all the old chestnuts of Jewish portrayal: hand-rubbing, altered speech-patterns, exotic colouring, hooked and flattened noses and fleshy lips. The effect of the whole is greater than that of the individual parts, as if each family member has been given a separate characteristic which could be interpreted innocently or understood as typically Jewish, but when combined in one family there can be no doubt as to their origin. Mann is using a form of shorthand which the observant reader would be able to interpret. His discretion is not as thorough as he himself appears to have thought.

However, while these details denote the characters as Jewish, there are no intrinsically negative values attached to them. Admittedly, the very fact of a fictional person being Jewish may evoke a negative reaction in the minds of some readers, but the words used by Mann in his initial sketch do not invite such a response. But once the reader is persuaded the Aarenholds are Jewish, many aspects take on a deeper significance and reveal themselves to be loaded with very negative content. The following discussion of the text demonstrates

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8 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke in dreizehn Bänden* (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1960–74), VIII: *Erzählungen* (1960), 380.

how comments on the characters or descriptions of their actions take on a critical note when they are read and considered in the light of the family being Jewish.

Two broad groups of themes can be discerned, one dealing with what can be termed the 'intrusion of Jewishness', i.e., the way in which Jewish traits and behaviour break through the characters' German veneer; the second dealing with the Jewish characters' reaction to the German world outside the family unit. In both cases it must be remembered that the Aarenholds represent a very particular type of Jewish existence, one which was not only extremely wealthy and cultured but which also felt more German than Jewish, while living in a society dubious about accepting them as such. This tension, the interaction between minority and majority, lies at the heart of the text.

### *The Intrusion of Jewishness*

Mann clearly intends to convey that this household is highly cultured, modern and elegant, detailing the livery-wearing servants, the antiques, the eighteenth-century wood panelling and the heavy tapestries in the spacious dining room, the warmth of the carpeted rooms lit by electricity and the general luxury of the furnishings. But then come hints that the occupants of this sumptuous house are somehow unsuitable inhabitants for such surroundings. The criticism divides along generational lines, Herr and Frau Aarenhold being depicted with more obvious manifestations of what can be interpreted as typically Jewish behaviour or attitudes. Two aspects of Frau Aarenhold's description take on a particular significance. Firstly, she contrasts with the surrounding elegance by her vulgarity, indicated by her attachment to ostentatious dress and adornment. Despite her age and unattractive appearance and the protestations of her family, she indicates her bad taste by habitually dripping with diamonds:

Eine Kette von Brillanten lag auf ihrer eingefallenen Brust. Sie trug ihr graues Haar in vielen Schnörkeln und Ausladungen zu einer umständlichen und



hochgebauten Coiffure angeordnet, in welcher, irgendwo seitwärts, eine große, farbig funkelnde und ihrerseits mit einem weißen Federbüschel gezielte Brillant-Agraffe befestigt war. (380)

Secondly, her accent indicates a divergence from the good High German a member of the upper middle class be expected to use and the way in which she answers questions with further questions demonstrates supposedly typical Jewish behaviour:

Frau Aarenhold [...] antwortete, nach ihrer Art, ausschließlich mit Gegenfragen, die wenig förderlich waren. Ihre Rede war mit sonderbaren und an Kehllauten reichen Worten durchsetzt, Ausdrücken aus dem Dialekt ihrer Kindheit. (385)

Herr Aarenhold, a man with a cultured, literary mind and a bibliophilic collector of first editions in many languages, is in contrast not at all vulgar or coarse. But in a certain respect he manifests the same naïve attitude towards wealth as his wife – not flaunting it in his appearance, but taking a childish and not unappealing delight in its possession. Talking to Beckerath, he describes how the trappings of his fortune continue to surprise and please him:

Ich bin nun seit manchem Jahr in der Lage, mir einige Annehmlichkeiten des Lebens zu gönnen [...] und doch versichere ich Sie, daß ich noch heute jeden Morgen, den Gott werden läßt, beim Erwachen ein wenig Herzklopfen habe, weil meine Bettdecke aus Seide ist. [...] Ich kann um mich blicken wie ein verwunschener Prinz. (384)

Clearly, Herr Aarenhold's attitude towards his current wealth derives from the poverty of his early years. But that background also gave him the impetus to achieve success, something twice mentioned during lunch. Firstly, prompted by his story of the silken bedspread, Herr Aarenhold ponders how he came by such possessions, describing himself in terms which smack of self-hatred, or perhaps a hatred of his own former self:

Er war ein Wurm gewesen, eine Laus, jawohl; aber eben die Fähigkeit, dies so inbrünstig und selbstverachtungsvoll zu empfinden, war zur Ursache jenes

zählen und niemals genügsamen Strebens geworden, das ihn groß gemacht hatte... (385)

Later he returns to how his aspiration to achieve affected his thinking in his younger days:

Ich hätte mir sagen können: Du bist nur ein Lump, ursprünglich; 's ist rührend, wenn du dich aufschwingst zum eigenen Kontor. Ich säße nicht hier. Ich habe die Welt zwingen müssen, mich anzuerkennen. (388)

Herr Aarenhold's attitude in these two extracts is much the same as Dr. Sammet's in *Königliche Hoheit*, which is examined later: a desire to achieve despite the low expectations of the gentile world. Knowledge of the social disadvantage of being Jewish acts as a spur to success, which becomes an act of retaliation against the majority.

The children's Jewish background manifests itself in their behaviour very differently. Born into an already wealthy family, they take the advantages of money for granted. The features distinguishing them as Jewish are less obvious, as in Mann's depiction of the lunchtime conversation. While not giving word-for-word coverage, Mann several times draws attention to its style and content, especially to the way in which Herr Aarenhold and, in particular, Beckerath, cannot keep up with the fast pace, aggression and contradictory wordplay employed by the children:

Das Gespräch glitt ab [...] und zog dann Kreise um einen Punkt, eine Frage rein logischer Natur, die beiläufig von Kunz aufgeworfen war. [...] Dies umstritt man, zersetzte es in Scharfsinn, brachte Beispiele bei, kam von Hundertsten ins Tausendste, befahdete einander mit einer stählernen und abstrakten Dialektik und erhitzte sich nicht wenig. (386–7)

It does not seem far-fetched to see in this extract, which mentions logic, astute analysis of minute details and abstract argument, a reflection of gentile understanding of orthodox Jewish methods of Talmud study, which used such a style of debate, considering the fine points of the matter under discussion, but which often appeared to non-Jews to be pointless hair-splitting and thus evidence of the

spiritual and emotional sterility of orthodox Judaism. Linked to this is a later part of the conversation, which has moved on to considering what constitutes a successful work of art. Again the reader feels that logic rules supreme in the children's minds, at the cost of sentiment: 'Sie nannten 'sehr gut' das Werk, das durch eine unverträumte Intellektualität vor jedem Einwand gesichert schien, und sie verhöhnten den Fehlgriff der Leidenschaft' (388).

The idea of the 'intrusion of Jewishness' also applies to the twins, mostly to Siegmund but sometimes to Sieglinde, and concerns the indication of something primitive lurking beneath their cultured, witty, German veneer. The idea of the primitive existing as a force within the ordered luxury of the household has been introduced into the text at the outset with the description of the butler striking the gong for lunch:

Der erzene Lärm, wild, kannibalisch und übertrieben für seinen Zweck, drang überall hin: in die Salons zur Rechten und Linken, den Billardsaal, die Bibliothek, den Wintergarten, hinab und hinauf durch das ganze Haus, dessen gleichmäßig erwärmte Atmosphäre durchaus mit einem süßen und exotischen Parfum geschwangert war. (380)

The notion carries over to the twins: a motif attached to each one continues through the text, a recurrent hint that a less civilised aspect lies below the polished exteriors. In Sieglinde's case the motif is her gaze, described as if she had the eyes of an animal and conveying the idea that there is something unknowing, and unknowable, about her: 'ein glänzend ernstes Blick, der diese drei Sekunden lang begrifflos redete wie der eines Tieres' (386). With Siegmund, the motif is much more crude and occurs more frequently. The reference is to his hair, eyebrows and beard, which all grow abundantly. Whereas Kunz demonstrates his masculinity in the form of a duelling scar, Siegmund's hairiness, normally a symbol of virility and vigour, forms an interesting contrast with the frequent references to his boyish looks and the graceful slenderness of his figure as well as with his assumed air of foppish elegance. Siegmund (and Sieglinde) are described as 'grazil wie Gerten und kindlich von Wuchs' (381); Mann

later describes Siegmund's body as 'mager wie der eines Knaben' and mentions his 'dunklen Knabenhaupt' (394, 401). Opposed to this are the six references to his 'zusammengewachsene Brauen' or 'schwarz zusammengewachsene Brauen', two to his thick black curly hair, 'die ihm weit in die Schläfen wuchsen'; three to his facial hair and the speed with which it regrows after shaving. Siegmund is very self-conscious of this aspect of his appearance and his discomfort shows in his excessive, obsessive preoccupation with personal hygiene:

Ein außerordentliches und fortwährendes Bedürfnis nach Reinigung war ihm eigen, dergestalt, daß er einen beträchtlichen Teil des Tages vorm Lavoir verbrachte. Er [...] tauchte den Puderquast in die getriebene Büchse und puderte sich Kinn und Wangen, die frisch rasiert waren; denn sein Bartwuchs war so stark, daß er, wenn er abends ausging, genötigt war, sich ein zweitesmal davon zu säubern. (390)

Mann's choice of the verb 'säubern' is significant, indicating Siegmund's feeling that his hairiness represents something dirty and unpleasant which he must remove from public view. The distaste he feels about his body hair and his fascination with his clothes, accessories, perfumes and toiletries possibly also indicate a certain ambivalence towards his masculinity. It is as if, with his constant washing, shaving and perfuming, he wishes to remove the overt signs of his maleness, and he does indeed appear effete and effeminate. Siegmund could also be seen to be attempting to remove the evidence of his Jewishness: perhaps in a parody of baptism his routine of cleansing is described like a ritual, his dressing table an altar covered with vessels containing his version of holy water: 'Das Licht ward aufgenommen von den wasserklaren Spiegeltiefen des Schrankes, des Waschtisches, der Toilette; es blitzte in den geschliffenen Flakons auf den mit Kacheln ausgelegten Borden' (391). The frequency of references to Siegmund's hair leaves a suggestion in the reader's mind that this outward sign of primitive physicality must have a deeper inward significance and reflect upon his character. Can it be complete coincidence that, after the twins have returned from the opera and just before the act of incest takes place, the reader's

attention is once again drawn to the beard growth shadowing the cheeks which had been clean-shaven earlier in the evening? 'Seine Wangen, unter den hervortretenden Knochen, fingen schon wieder an, sich dunkler zu färben vom Bartwuchs' (407). It is as if this signals the breakthrough of the primitive behaviour which is to come. That the incest takes place on a bearskin rug further suggests the link between the twins and primitive, animal behaviour.

Significant in this context is how the subtext, given depth by the repeated use of particular words and phrases, argues for a certain interpretation of the facts. What is disclosed about Frau Aarenhold's bad taste and Herr Aarenhold's fascination with wealth and possessions could be interpreted as the typical manifestations of *nouveau riche* attitudes. The children's love of intellectual discussion could just be an indication of generational differences in the level of education. The hint of something primitive in the twins' characters could be easily overlooked. But having once unravelled the clues in the first pages of the story which point towards the family being Jewish, all these aspects take on another meaning, arguing strongly for a negative interpretation of the characters. Herr Aarenhold has his particular understanding of wealth precisely because he comes from a poor Jewish background, a fact which also gave him his drive to succeed. Frau Aarenhold's vulgarity becomes attributable to her Jewishness, as do the children's love of logic and intellectuality and the suggestion of primitive forces underlying the sophisticated exterior of the twins. Thus, while there is a distinct separation in terms of Jewish characteristics between the older and the younger generations, marking the different degrees of assimilation to the German environment between Herr and Frau Aarenhold and their children, the intrusion of Jewishness into all the characters separates the entire family from the society to which it obviously believes it belongs.

### *Escape from the Outside World*

The question now is how this intrusion affects the interaction between the Jewish family and the majority German society. It is clear this relationship is not a happy one, even for the Aarenhold children who are (at least superficially) totally assimilated. With their Germanic names, Sieglinde's engagement to a member of the aristocracy, Kunz's and Märit's occupations – he a soldier, she training to be a lawyer – and their love of that ultra-German composer, Wagner, how could they be more integrated? Yet the reader soon notices indications of the deep insecurity beneath the surface harmony. This first becomes apparent during the lunchtime conversation. Herr Aarenhold has just held forth to Beckerath about his enjoyment of life's pleasures, including his silken bedspread. His conversation embarrasses his children:

Die Kinder tauschten Blicke, jedes mit jedem und so rücksichtslos, daß Herr Aarenhold nicht umhinkonnte, es zu bemerken und sichtlich in Verlegenheit geriet. Er wußte, daß sie einig gegen ihn waren und daß sie ihn verachteten: für seine Herkunft, für das Blut, das in ihm floß und das sie von ihm empfangen, für die Art, in der er seinen Reichtum erworben. [...] Er wußte es und gab ihnen gewissermaßen recht; er war nicht ohne Schuldbewußtsein ihnen gegenüber. (384–5)

Here, the notion of shame about background and origins is introduced into the story; shame on the part of the children that their father is who he is and that he should betray his background in front of others, and shame, or perhaps self-hatred, on Herr Aarenhold's part for the same reason. Frau Aarenhold, who gives away her origins by her accent, is also a source of embarrassment. During the general conversation about Sieglinde's wedding, Kunz, the reader is told: 'blieb stumm, weil er sich in von Beckeraths Gegenwart an seiner Mutter ärgerte' (385–6): again, the same indication of shame, felt especially keenly in Beckerath's presence because of his indubitable membership of the class to which Kunz also wants to belong. His mother's Jewishness is a painful reminder that he cannot present

himself as so completely German as he would like, despite name, duelling scar, and regiment. In this same vein is a tiny detail included in the description of the effect on the family of Beckerath's request to marry Sieglinde: 'Er hatte um Sieglinde geworben und dabei die wohlwollende Neutralität Herrn Aarenholds, die Fürsprache Frau Aarenholds, die eifernde Unterstützung Kunzens, des Husaren, auf seiner Seite gehabt' (394). That it is Kunz, specifically as a Hussar, who is enthusiastic in his support is a subtle hint that having an aristocratic brother-in-law would be beneficial to someone of Jewish origins desiring success in the army. Siegmund, too, shows similar feelings of self-hatred about his background, but also shows shame about the irresistible pull towards covering it up. It was he who was instrumental in getting Sieglinde to accept Beckerath's proposal:

Und Siegmund selbst, dem sie [Sieglinde] untertan war, hatte an diesem Ausgang teil, er verachtete sich, aber er war dem nicht entgegen gewesen, weil von Beckerath im Ministerium tätig und von Familie war... (394)

Siegmund's obsession with his appearance, in particular his hair, can also be seen to derive from his feelings about his Jewish origins. While preparing for bed he ponders his reflection in the mirror:

Lange stand er und prüfte die Abzeichen seines Blutes, die ein wenig niedergedrückte Nase, die voll und weich aufeinander ruhenden Lippen, die hervorspringenden Wangenknochen, sein dichtes, schwarz gelocktes, gewaltsam auf der Seite gescheiteltes Haar, das ihm weit in die Schläfen wuchs, und seine Augen selbst unter den starken, zusammengewachsenen Brauen. (408)

As has been noted, the amount of time spent grooming and shaving can be interpreted as Siegmund's attempt to lessen the visual impact of the 'Abzeichen seines Blutes', as well as of his masculinity. In past centuries, Jews were distinguished by a material badge, the yellow star on their clothing. Now it is their blood, their race, which replaces the badge. But Siegmund's obsession is also undoubtedly motivated by feelings of superiority and exclusivity towards the majority German society outside the family, a further aspect of the interaction between

majority and minority. This superiority firstly manifests itself in the family's attitude to Beckerath. Much as he may be considered an enviable catch for Sieglinde, the Aarenholds quite obviously have a very low opinion of him. Arriving late for lunch, he is met by a barrage of cutting remarks and can only stammer an excuse about 'business': 'Sie ließen seine Antwort gelten, als fänden sie, daß sie ihm angemessen sei' (382). Throughout lunch he is belittled by the children's cutting wit: 'Er ward beständig kleiner auf seinem Stuhl, drückte das Kinn auf die Brust und atmete verstört durch den offenen Mund, bedrängt von ihrer lustigen Übermacht' (388–9). His embarrassment over his mistaken belief that he is included in the evening at the opera is greeted with open laughter: 'Sie lachten, indem sie dem Bräutigam in die Augen sahen', his humiliation compounded when Siegmund, with affected casualness, admits he has already bought the tickets, making it clear he was only pretending to ask Beckerath's permission and embarrassing the unhappy fiancé further (390). When Sieglinde later mentions Beckerath's name in a conversation with her twin, Siegmund could not be more dismissive, the epithet 'Germane', imbued with racial overtones, suggesting Beckerath belongs to a primitive tribe: 'Übrigens möchte ich dich bitten, dieses Germanen im Laufe des heutigen Abends nicht mehr Erwähnung zu tun.' Sieglinde concurs: 'Du kannst dich versichert halten, daß mir das unschwer gelingen wird' (395).

The superiority felt particularly by Siegmund towards all 'Germanen' informs his dealings with the outside world. His failure to attend lectures at university is not his fault, but that of the surrounding lesser mortals who rendered his attendance impossible: 'Er besuchte es [the lecture] nicht mehr, da die Herren, die außer ihm daran teilnahmen, dem Urteil seiner Geruchsnerven nach bei weitem nicht genug badeten' (393). A similar tone of condescension pervades his description of a sartorially challenged acquaintance, 'der sich in Unbewissenheit darüber erhalten habe, welches Kleidungsstück man als Jackett und welches als Smoking bezeichne. Dieser Parsifal rede von einem karierten Smoking' (387). Like Beckerath and this unnamed acquaintance, Parsifal, the eponymous hero of Wagner's



opera, is yet another innocent fool. But Siegmund's superiority is actually the symptom of a deep-seated insecurity that he spends much time compensating for in other ways:

Wieviel Umsicht und Geisteskraft ging nicht auf bei einer gründlichen und vollkommenen Toilette, wieviel Aufmerksamkeit in der Überwachung seiner Garderobe, seines Bestandes an Zigaretten, Seifen, Parfums, wieviel Entschlußfähigkeit in jenem zwei- oder dreimal täglich wiederkehrenden Augenblick, da es galt, die Krawatte zu wählen! Und es galt. Es lag daran. Mochten die blonden Bürger des Landes unbekümmert in Zugstiefeletten und Klappkrägen gehen. *Er gerade, er mußte unangreifbar und ohne Tadel an seinem Äußeren sein vom Kopf bis zu Füßen.* (392–3, italics mine)

This passage indicates perfectly the complex mixture of emotions which dealing with the outside world provokes in Siegmund. The sneering description of the 'blonden Bürger' and their elastic-sided boots demonstrates his superiority, but also noticeable is his desire to conform precisely to the standards set by fashionable society, not to stick out, to be blameless by appearing blameless. Siegmund's obsession with exterior perfection is therefore an expression of a longing to be accepted and to avoid criticism by not being noticeably different. Ironically, he then isolates himself by setting his standards too high.

The result of Siegmund's conviction of his own superiority is that, unable to find anyone else acceptable, he is backed into an unhealthy exclusivity with the only other person who meets his criteria, Sieglinde: 'Er hatte keinen Freund, nie einen gehabt, als sie, die mit ihm geboren, sein kostbar geschmücktes, dunkel liebliches Ebenbild' (393). But as the quotation hints, their rejection of the outside world leads to a very lonely existence. As such, incest becomes the ultimate expression of exclusivity and, shocking though it may be, the liberally scattered details of the intense closeness of the twins' relationship render the action of the last few paragraphs inevitable. Their constant holding of each other's hands is mentioned no less than eight times. The embroidery on Sieglinde's dress, 'zwei gestickte Pfauen, einander zugewandt' (395), indicates exclusivity and vanity, and Siegmund's

bracelet, a present from Sieglinde, is described as a ‘gewichtige goldene Fessel’ (381). Mann’s choice of the word ‘Fessel’, literally a bond or fetter, indicates again the strength of the ties between them. Also important is how the meeting of their eyes signifies a deeper communication between them, a private language incomprehensible to others. Thus, over lunch: ‘Zuweilen fanden sich ihre Blicke, verschmolzen, schlossen ein Einvernehmen, zu dem es von außen nicht Wege noch Zugang gab’ (386). Indeed, their *only* intense feelings seem to be for each other. The following scene occurs just before they leave for the opera and is a reflection, in less extreme form, of the text’s final scene. The description shows the peculiar kind of logic at work which makes incest inevitable, for each one loves about the other, and finds confirmed in the other, the things they love about themselves, above all their air of spoiled opulence. Literally and metaphorically, everyone else outside their relationship smells bad:

Sie setzten sich auf die Chaiselongue, um noch einen Augenblick zu kosen, wie sie es liebten. [...] Sie küßten einander die Hände. Mit einer süßen Sinnlichkeit liebte jedes das andere um seiner verwöhnten und köstlichen Gepflegtheit und seines guten Duftes willen. (396)

Another intimation of the story’s conclusion is given during an interval at the opera, where Sieglinde’s shoulders are described as ‘ein wenig zu hoch und waagrecht, wie man es an ägyptischen Statuen sieht’ (405). This allusion to Oriental, and therefore alien, descent, also refers to a culture in which brother-sister marriages occurred precisely because they maintained exclusivity. The occurrence of incest between Jewish siblings creates here a link between Jewish exclusivity and decadence.

As they reject the outside world, they are brought ever more into each other’s company. Mann describes the twins going for a walk, carrying a bunch of flowers which they sniff from time to time:

Sie atmeten im Gehen den holden Duft mit wollüstiger und fahrlässiger Hingabe, pflegten sich damit wie egoistischer Kranke, berauschten sich wie

Hoffnungslose, wiesen mit einer inneren Gebärde die übelriechende Welt von sich weg. (394)

It is as if, by taking something sweet-smelling with them during their forays outside, they are maintaining the illusion of being in the the exotically perfumed house rather than the evil-smelling world. Even mundane, practical matters, such as travelling to and from the opera, become representative of their exclusivity:

Rings um [...] brauste, gellte und dröhnte das Treibwerk des großen Lebens. Und abgeschlossen davon, weichlich bewahrt davor, saßen sie still in den gesteppten, braunseidenen Polstern, – Hand in Hand.  
[...] Und wieder diese lautlos rollende Geschwindigkeit zum hurtig taktfesten Hufschlag der Pferde, dies sanfte, federnde Getragenwerden über Unebenheiten des Bodens, dies zärtliche Bewahrtsein vor dem schrillen Leben ringsum. Sie schwiegen, abgeschlossen vom Alltag. (397, 406)

Cocooned from the outside world, the twins lead a comfortable, safe existence, protected from any shocks and jolts which it could cause, just as their carriage carries them smoothly over the rough ground. Yet the above passage provides the clearest possible hint about the result of their contemptuous exclusivity. While caused by their belief in their own superiority, it is shown to be essentially sterile and worthless, a dead-end. Life outside the carriage may be noisy and chaotic, but it is nevertheless authentic. Real life, real experience, real feelings all pass them by. The conversation over lunch which demonstrates the Aarenhold children's disdain for the 'Fehlgriff der Leidenschaft' in art has already suggested the possibility and the idea is expanded through the text's presentation of Siegmund, the archetypal dilettante and underachiever whose greatest achievement is that he so successfully manages to fill his days with nothing of any substance. Of Siegmund's activities on the day of the text's action Mann wrote: 'Sein Tag war vergangen, wie seine Tage zu vergehen pflegten: leer und geschwinde' (391). Rather than experiences, his life is filled with the accoutrements of his luxurious lifestyle, the books and journals he buys being an example. He acquires more than he is able to read and while reading, worries about the ones left unread:

‘sie [standen] da und beschwerten sein Leben wie ein Besitz, den sich zu unterwerfen ihm nicht gelang’ (392). Thus, preoccupied, Siegmund has no time for feeling, wanting or achieving, as if luxury has deadened the emotions: ‘Dennoch fand Siegmund in seinem Innern keine Zeit zu einem Wollen, geschweige zu einem Vollbringen’ (392). To compound the situation, no-one demands anything different of him, and this lack of expectation suffocates any desire he may feel to live more fully:

Zuweilen, in Augenblicken, wenn eine Unruhe um das, was das ‘Eigentliche’ sein mochte, sich schwach in ihm regt, empfand er, wie dieser Mangel an fremder Erwartung sie wieder lähmte und löste... (393)

However, Siegmund is not entirely without self-awareness. Seemingly unable to change the situation, he is nevertheless conscious that there is more sterility than creativity in his life: ‘Er war zu scharfsinnig, um nicht zu begreifen, daß die Bedingungen seines Daseins für die Entwicklung einer gestaltenden Gabe nicht eben die günstigsten waren’ (391). One night at the opera alters everything, although nothing suggests this initially. *Die Walküre* is familiar to both twins, whose conversation as they leave their box during the first interval shows their usual attitude of dismissive criticism and scorn for anything representing feeling and emotion:

‘So suche ich nun, bessere Luft zu gewinnen. Übrigens war der Siegmund nahezu schwach.’

‘Auch fühlte’, sagte Sieglinde, ‘das Orchester sich bewogen, bei dem Frühlingslied schrecklich zu schleppen.’

‘Sentimental’, sagte Siegmund. (403)

Yet during Act Two, Siegmund is struck by the orchestra, not so much by its music but by the work and effort which goes into creating the sound:

Der vertiefte Raum war hell gegen das lauschende Haus und von Arbeit erfüllt, von fingernden Händen, fiedelnden Armen, blasend geblähten

Backen, von schlichten und eifrigen Leuten, die dienend das Werk einer großen, leidenden Kraft vollzogen. (404)

The sight of this creativity triggers a greater awareness than usual in Siegmund of the deficiencies of his own life. His thoughts express vague dissatisfaction and a sense of searching for something more that he does not yet understand:

Wie tat man ein Werk? Ein Schmerz war in Siegmunds Brust, ein Brennen oder Zehren, irgend etwas wie eine süße Drangsal – wohin? wonach? Es war so dunkel, so schimpflich unklar. (404)

Then, in a moment of self-revelation, Siegmund starts to understand what he is seeking:

Er fühlte zwei Worte: Schöpfung... Leidenschaft. Und während die Hitze in seinen Schläfen pochte, war es wie ein sehnächtiger Einblick, daß das Schöpfung aus der Leidenschaft kam und wieder die Gestalt der Leidenschaft annahm. (404)

With greater honesty than ever before, he looks hard at the emotional basis of his own life – and questions the essence of its values and substance:

Er sah sein eigenes Leben an, [...] dies Leben, in dem es kein Erlebnis, nur logisches Spiel, keine Empfindung, nur tötendes Bezeichnen gab, – und ein Brennen oder Zehren war in seiner Brust, irgend etwas wie eine süße Drangsal. (404)

Longing for something is in itself a change from Siegmund's usual emotional stasis. This dissatisfaction with his former logical, unemotional attitude can also be seen as an attempted subconscious rejection of its Jewish attributes, the words used repeating the earlier description of the lunchtime conversation which recalled the methods of Talmud scholarship. This passage of Siegmund's thoughts at the opera ends with questions: 'Wohin? wonach? Nach dem Werk? Dem Erlebnis? Der Leidenschaft?', indicating that Siegmund is undecided about how to solve his problem (404).

It can only be significant for the story's outcome that the opera has reached a particular stage as he ponders these matters. Act One has the mythical Siegmund and Sieglinde sinking into an incestuous embrace as the curtain falls. Mann passes over the first scenes of Act Two (Wotan and Fricka; Wotan and Brünnhilde) and continues from scene three, when the twins are resting during their flight from Hunding. Mann's description emphasises Sieglinde's sexuality and passion:

Er [Siegmund Aarenhold] sah das weiße, erschöpfte Weib auf dem Schoße des flüchtigen Mannes hängen, dem es sich hingegeben, sah ihre Liebe und Not und fühlte, daß *so das Leben sein müsse, um schöpferisch zu sein*. (404, italics mine)

This is not to say that Siegmund is so suggestible that it is *only* because of this scene in *Die Walküre* that the incest occurs, but as the continuation of the scene shows, it plays a role in his thinking. The link has been forged in his mind between passion, particularly sexual passion, and creativity, as an escape from the sterile, experience-free life into which his disdain for the outside world has led him. During the next interval the twins walk along the theatre corridors and there is something about how he looks at his sister to suggest that subconsciously, he is sexually appraising her:

Sie sah ihn an, und als er den Blick auf sie richtete, zog sie den ihren zurück, ging still und in etwas gespannter Haltung an seiner Seite und ließ es geschehen, daß er sie betrachtete. (404–5)

Returning home, the twins remain completely absorbed in the atmosphere created by the performance, 'die mit Zaubermitteln auf sie gewirkt, sie zu sich und in sich gezogen' (406). Siegmund's behaviour seems to continue to be influenced by the opera's hypnotic spell once at home. While the reader has been told earlier in the story, in connection with Siegmund's lack of achievement, that 'er war kein Held, er gebot nicht über Riesenkräfte' (392), he now attempts some heroic posturing in his room, as if modelling himself

on his mythical namesake. He stretches out on his chaise-longue and inhales the perfumes of tobacco and toiletries:

Er [gab] sich ihnen hin wie jemand, der schmerzlich ein wenig Wonne und zartes Glück der Sinne genießt in der Strenge und Außergewöhnlichkeit seines Schicksals... (408)

Getting up to consider his appearance, he catches a glance of the bearskin rug in the mirror:

Er wandte sich, ging mit tragisch schleppenden Schritten hinüber, und nach einem Augenblick des Zögerns ließ er sich der Länge nach auf das Fell sinken, den Kopf auf den Arm gebettet. (408)

Not only does Mann use exactly the same words to describe Siegmund's movements here as he does for the Wagnerian Siegmund's first entrance in his paraphrase of *Die Walküre*, but the gesture of collapsing and resting the head on the arms, and the location, the bearskin rug, are precisely the same too (cf 398). Siegmund Aarenhold, it would seem, is at this stage consciously imitating his operatic counterpart. It is uncertain how far he is doing so later, when he commits incest with his sister, which can be interpreted in several ways. Firstly, incest is the ultimate expression of exclusivity, the logical conclusion to the twins' belief in their own superiority and distaste for the lesser mortals, such as Beckerath. If Siegmund now believes that sexual passion is at the root of creativity, who, apart from Sieglinde, is there for him to feel passionate about? At one remove, it can also be read as indicating a deeper level of exclusivity on Siegmund's part, a rejection of everyone else. That the incest occurs between twins suggests an element of self-love is involved because of the greater physical and emotional similarities between twin siblings than others. The text encourages this interpretation. Before his sister, 'sein dunkel liebliches Ebenbild' (393), comes to his room, Siegmund has been studying himself in the mirror, 'ganz dicht, Aug in Aug mit sich selbst' (408). She crouches down beside him on the rug: 'Er [...] sah sie an, betrachtete sie, wie er

vorhin sich selbst betrachtet, ihre Augen und Schläfe, Stirne und Wangen... "Du bist ganz wie ich", sagte er mit lahmen Lippen' (409–10).

To discuss the incest within the context of an examination of the interaction between the Aarenholds, Siegmund in particular, and the German world outside the Jewish family may seem to have strayed somewhat from the point. In fact, the incest symbolises a new departure in the German-Jewish relationship portrayed in *Wälsungenblut*. Beyond the interpretations of incest as exclusivity and narcissism, the act indicates the introduction of revenge into the relationship. Only with the final paragraphs does this become an explicit theme. Siegmund's confused speech to Sieglinde as he lies on the rug touches on both the desire for experience which has taken shape in his mind that evening and introduces the new concept of desire for revenge:

Alles ist ... wie mit mir ... und für das ... mit dem Erlebnis ... bei mir, ist bei dir das mit Beckerath ... das hält sich die Waage ... Sieglind ... und im ganzen ist es ... dasselbe, was das betrifft ... sich zu rächen, Sieglind... (410)

This is not easy to understand, nor is it meant to be. Siegmund is attempting to express thoughts which have only just started to crystallise. What he seems to be suggesting is that Sieglinde too is searching for experience (which can also be understood as passion or an expression of sexuality), something she will gain from her marriage to Beckerath, only eight days away when the story takes place. The text implies an awakening sexuality since Sieglinde's engagement:

Seine Worte legten sich wie ein Nebel um ihren Sinn, zogen sie hinab, dorthin, woher sie kamen, in ein tiefes Reich, wohin sie noch nie gelangt, zu dessen Grenzen aber, seit sie verlobt war, zuweilen erwartungsvolle Träume sie getragen. (410)

It is not so easy to understand Siegmund's statement that it is the same for Sieglinde with regard to revenge, as the reader has not been privy to Sieglinde's thoughts and feelings to anything like the



same extent as to her brother's. How and why is revenge a concern for her? It is only a suggestion, but a possible answer can be found in the fact that she is marrying Beckerath without loving him, gaining social status and an aristocratic surname, but not offering emotional commitment in return. The description of his proposal and her acceptance, couched in similar terms to those of the quotation above, imply that she was persuaded to accept for reasons other than love:

Und endlich, nachdem sie ihm oft genug gesagt, daß sie ihn nicht liebe, hatte Sieglinde begonnen, ihn prüfend, erwartungsvoll, stumm zu betrachten, mit einem glänzend ernsten Blick [...] – und hatte Ja gesagt. (394)

The idea of revenge is solidified in the reader's mind by the final lines of *Wälsungenblut* and, combined with the shock of the incestuous encounter, is the strongest image left by the story. This is the sentence which Oskar Bie found distasteful and potentially controversial, and which Mann then altered. Despite his intention to revert to the original, the altered version was kept for the story's first publication, a limited collector's edition of 1921, and for the first mainstream publication in 1958 in a volume of short stories. The original ending appeared in a French translation of *Wälsungenblut* in 1931 and is discussed in Mann's letters to Heinrich of November and December 1905. It is from these sources that the original German words can be ascertained. The twins' kisses and caresses on the rug have gone further than usual and have concluded in shocking, but not entirely surprising, manner:

Sie saß noch auf dem Fell, mit offenen Lippen, auf eine Hand gestützt, und strich sich das Haar von den Augen. Er lehnte, die Hände auf dem Rücken, an der weißen Kommode, wiegte sich in den Hüften hin und her und sah in die Luft.

'Aber Beckerath...', sagte sie und suchte ihre Gedanken zu ordnen. 'Beckerath, Gigi, ... was ist nun mit ihm?...'

‘Nun’, sagte er, und einen Augenblick traten die Merkzeichen seiner Art sehr scharf auf seinem Gesichte hervor, *‘was wird mit ihm sein? Beganeft haben wir ihn, – den Goy!’*<sup>9</sup>

Compare this with the revised ending, which replaced the italicised text with: ‘dankbar soll er uns sein. Er wird ein minder triviales Dasein führen, von nun an’ (410). In both versions the sense of revenge comes across, but in slightly different ways. Revenge can be understood as a mixture of two impulses: a retaliation of the underdog against the oppressor for past insults, or as a vengeful act to assert power over that oppressor and to suppress or eradicate feelings of inferiority. In neither case does the ‘victim’ actually need to know what has occurred for the perpetrator to increase his or her own sense of potency. In *Wälsungenblut* Beckerath need not be aware of events for Siegmund to feel he has won a victory.

The original version expresses this most clearly, the Yiddish word ‘beganeft’ signifying not only the act of deceiving, but also contempt for the deceiver’s victim. The second version, true to Mann’s wish to be discreet, is subtler. How will Beckerath henceforth lead a less trivial life? This is surely not meant to imply that Siegmund intends to tell the cuckolded bridegroom what has happened – such a move could only lead to the wedding’s cancellation and a major scandal surrounding his sister and the entire family. Rather, it indicates a perpetuation of the mocking manner with which Siegmund has always treated the ‘Germane’. Like the situation with the opera tickets, the joke is on him. He may not realise it, he may think all is as normal, but the nineteen-year-old virgin he thought would be his bride has been deflowered by her brother on the bedroom floor. Siegmund will know this and can always laugh behind his brother-in-law’s back about how he gained the upper hand over the man who took his sister from him. Beckerath’s life will become less trivial in that his marriage will be based on a fraud and have hidden at its heart the most monumental moral transgression, but, and here lies

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9 Quoted after: Mendelssohn, *Der Zauberer* I, 659, italics mine; cf. Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* VIII: *Erzählungen*, 410.

Siegmund's greatest joke, the victim will not know any of this himself. He will be 'beganekt' both by the original deceit and by the continuing deceit which hides the shameful details from him. There is also the possibility that Sieglinde becomes pregnant from the encounter, whereby Beckerath would be even further deceived, imagining himself to be father of a child whose parents are actually both Jewish. It is unsurprising that Beckerath is the victim. The scenes over lunch have established a pattern of behaviour: the Aarenhold children laughing and mocking, Beckerath very much in the position of the child who is picked on by the school bully, trying to join in with the jokes while in fact being the butt of them. Not only do his slightly apologetic demeanour and self-effacing manner make him an easy target, he is also in many respects the arch-German. As a member of the nobility and a government employee he possesses a degree of belonging and of rootedness in German society which Siegmund, with his deep-seated insecurities, must envy. Sexual intercourse with Sieglinde is therefore not only an attempt at satisfying the desire for experience and passion which took shape when seeing *Die Walküre*, it is also a means of getting the better of his sister's fiancé, the representative of the majority which Siegmund despises while desiring to belong to it. Thus, he gains revenge in both senses, as an act of retaliation, and one which reduces his feelings of inferiority.

Revenge is then the final experience of the German-Jewish relationship depicted in *Wälsungenblut*, a surprising conclusion perhaps, given that it makes its appearance only on the last page. But quite the opposite of not being internally justified, Mann's introduction of revenge into the text appears quite logical, when the different stages of this relationship are reviewed. The starting point is the shame about family origins detectable in the children's behaviour. Through the personality of Siegmund in particular, it is possible to trace a chain reaction of emotions and attitudes. While attempting to suppress shame and inferiority, Siegmund has cultivated the very opposite attitude, an almost unshakeable belief that he is actually superior to those around him, leading logically into a rejection of the

outside world and an exclusive relationship with his sister. The reader, and eventually Siegmund himself, sees from his wasted days and experience-free life that this is a sterile, dead-end route. The particular form of revenge he takes is both an attempt to experience something new, i.e. sexual passion, and a retaliation against the German society from which he feels excluded, directed towards the representative figure of Beckerath. Viewed in this context as the result of a combination of factors, revenge per se becomes logical and understandable, even if the form in which it manifests itself in *Wälsungenblut* goes against the normal rules governing human conduct.

### *Operatic Parallels*

A reading of the scenes in *Wälsungenblut* which deal with the performance of *Die Walküre* provides another reason for accepting revenge as a logical end result, given the parallels with the opera. But comparisons can be made in more than this one area: the Wagnerian twins have many connections with Siegmund and Sieglinde Aarenhold. By studying Mann's paraphrase of the opera some very interesting parallels emerge, both with the specifics of the German-Jewish relationship as it appears in the Aarenhold twins' lives and with German-Jewish society at large, although Mann sometimes forgoes accuracy in order to make the parallels between his re-telling of *Die Walküre* and the main plot even closer. Using this eminently Germanic myth to shed light on an eminently Jewish experience may well seem slightly bizarre, and Mann's employment of *Die Walküre* is both clever and amusing. But though interesting, the question of how far Mann is parodying Wagner in *Wälsungenblut* is not relevant here. More important are aspects such as race or family and the feelings they can arouse.

The primary emotions associated with race in the minds of the Aarenhold children are shame and embarrassment about their parents' more obvious manifestations of Jewishness and fear, detect-

able in Siegmund in particular, that he may also betray his origins. This does not feature with Wagner's twins, but there is a similarly acutely felt sensitivity about the difference between themselves and others. Wagner's re-imagining of his sources, the thirteenth-century *Nibelungenlied* and Old Norse sagas, such as the *Edda* and the *Völsunga saga*, makes the Wälsungen the twin children of a mortal woman and the god Wotan, who was masquerading on earth as a mortal under the name Wälse.<sup>10</sup> Because of their unsettled, mysterious background they have always been viewed askance or rejected by those around them. When Siegmund sings of his past to Hunding, Sieglinde's husband with his 'einfache, ordnungsgemäße und in der allgemeinen Achtung ruhende Existenz' (399), he gives voice to the keenly-felt differences between himself and the majority:

[Er] kündete ausgezeichnet von dem Haß, der Scheelsucht, womit man seinen fremdartigen Vater und ihn verfolgt. [...] Ein Fluch habe auf ihm gelegen, das Brandmal seiner seltsamen Herkunft ihn immer gezeichnet. Seine Sprache sei nicht die der anderen gewesen und ihre nicht seine. Was ihm gut geschienen, habe die Mehrzahl gereizt, was jenen in alten Ehren gestanden, habe ihm Galle gemacht. (400)

This passage contains some interesting allusions. Taken out of its context, it could well be a description of the Jewish experience of rejection and alienation from German society. More specifically, the notions of a curse or a visible distinguishing feature or a difference in speech are intriguing. The 'Brandmal' recalls the mark of Cain who, cursed by God, was expelled from his family and marked on his forehead so that everyone would recognise him.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the idea of a curse and a life of wandering evokes the late-mediaeval legend of Ahasverus, doomed to eternally wander for having insulted Christ on the way to Calvary. A comparison with Wagner's libretto shows that Mann did not paraphrase this passage particularly accurately. The original reads thus:

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10 For a detailed discussion of Wagner's sources for the *Ring*, see: Magee, *Richard Wagner and the Nibelungs* (Oxford: OUP, 1990).

11 See Genesis 4.

Immer doch war ich geächtet,  
Unheil lag auf mir.  
Was rechtes je ich rieth,  
Andern dünkte es arg;  
was schlimm immer mir schien,  
And're gaben ihm Gunst.<sup>12</sup>

Mann's version places more emphasis on the idea of a curse and adds the extra detail of a difference in speech with the net result of making the Jewish connection more apparent.

Like Cain and Ahasverus, Siegmund is forced on from place to place, his life described as a 'fragwürdige, abenteuerliche und unregelmäßige Art von Dasein' (400). Here Mann is giving Hunding's reaction to his visitor, which speaks of the rejection of those with a settled existence of the foreigner, the outsider, anyone appearing too different. The mention of speech in Mann's paraphrase above can be understood in both a metaphorical and actual sense, but automatically brings to mind Frau Aarenhold, whose Yiddish-influenced speech patterns and accent betray her background. The conclusion of Siegmund's aria, as given by Mann, emphasises the complete rejection of one type by the other, their total irreconcilability:

In Streit und Empörung habe er gelegen, immer und überall, Verachtung und Haß und Schmähung sei ihm in Nacken gewesen, weil er von fremder, von hoffnungslos anderer Art als die andern... (400)

Sieglinde too, though less central to Mann's representation of the opera, as in the main story, is aware of something which sets her apart and as with Sieglinde Aarenhold the way to hide this difference is through marriage into the majority group. Her statement that she was given to Hunding and told to be pleased 'ob der achtbaren Ehe, geeignet, ihre dunkle Herkunft vergessen zu machen', recalls the situation with Sieglinde Aarenhold and Beckerath and seems to jus-

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12 *Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung: A Companion*, ed. and trans. by Spencer and others (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993), p. 128.

tify the reader's suspicion that she is marrying him to gain social standing (401–2).

The second aspect of the German-Jewish relationship portrayed in *Wälsungenblut* was that of the superiority the twins feel towards the badly-dressed, badly-smelling 'Germanen'. In the opera the situation is reversed and it is not Siegmund and Sieglinde who express their own perfection but Hunding who describes the relationship from the opposite angle. Though coarse and clumsy, Hunding is more perspicacious than Beckerath, his equivalent in the main story through their common role of cuckolded husband. Seeing Siegmund for the first time, Hunding's instincts instantly tell him that, like his wife, there is something different about the stranger:

Dieser Tölpel sah sehr wohl, daß sie einander glichen, von ein und derselben Art waren, jener ungebundenen, widerspenstigen und außerordentlichen Art, die er haßte und der er sich nicht gewachsen fühlte... (399)

Given the clear parallels between the main part of *Wälsungenblut* and the *Walküre* section, it seems justified to read this as a description of the German-Jewish relationship as viewed from the German side. With reference to the earlier action of the text, what Hunding says could easily be taken for a description of Beckerath's feelings during lunch, where he is unable to keep up with the clever, fast-moving conversation of the Aarenhold children and is the butt of their jokes. The words used, *ungebunden*, *widerspenstig* and *außerordentlich*, well describe their behaviour. But in a more general sense, Hunding voices the feelings of those 'blonden Bürger' whom Siegmund so despises. The passage eloquently illustrates the mixture of hate and envy in this relationship. Siegmund (like Kunz and Sieglinde) is deeply jealous of the sense of belonging and rootedness in society possessed by someone like Beckerath, while nevertheless looking down on him. Hunding expresses the inferiority caused by the brilliance of the other type, which is hated both for its difference and for daring to make the majority feel second-class. This attitude recalls that of Fontane, who, while admiring Jewish energy and involvement, espe-

cially in the fields of art and culture, nevertheless regretted this and viewed their influence as mainly deleterious.

While the detail of Siegmund and Sieglinde Aarenhold's superiority is the reverse of the opera's portrayal of Hunding's feelings of inferiority towards Siegmund and Sieglinde, the second part of the equation, i.e. the twins' resultant exclusivity, is present in the same manner. In *Die Walküre*, this forms part of their gradual recognition that the other is the twin sibling from whom each was separated when very young. Now meeting for the first time as adults, they soon realise that something links them together, even before they are aware of their blood relationship. Initially, this is knowledge of shared hardship and sorrow. Finding Siegmund collapsed in her house, Sieglinde has brought him a drink. He turns to leave, but Sieglinde calls him back, 'und da er nicht hörte, ließ sie sich [...] das Geständnis ihres eigenen Unheils entfahren. [...] Zu ihren Füßen sprach es dunkel erzählend von Leid, das beide verband' (399). The link becomes strengthened by a shared hostility towards Hunding, who, recognising an enemy in Siegmund, swears to kill him in the morning. Sieglinde doctors Hunding's drink to leave him insensible and returns to Siegmund: 'sie freuten sich miteinander, daß der schwere Dummkopf überlistet war' (401).

Alone with Siegmund, Sieglinde expresses her hope that he is the rescuer she has been waiting for: 'der Freund, der mehr als ihr Freund, der Tröster ihrer Not, der Rächer ihrer Schmach' (402). Here revenge is first introduced into the sub-plot, echoing the libretto, where Siegmund and Sieglinde sing of 'süßeste Rache', 'freudige Rache'.<sup>13</sup> Siegmund is quick to pick up on this, expressing his feelings in a passage which closely parallels the main storyline:

Alle Sehnsucht seines verrufenen Lebens war gestillt in ihr, und alles, was sich ihm kränkend versagt, wenn er sich zu Männern und Frauen gedrängt, wenn er mit jener Frechheit, welche Scheu und das Bewußtsein seines Brandmals war, um Freundschaft und Liebe geworben hatte, – es war

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13 *Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung*, pp. 131, 132.



gefunden in ihr. In Schmach lag sie wie er in Leide, entehrt war sie wie er in Acht, und Rache – Rache sollte nun ihre geschwisterliche Liebe sein! (402)

This passage combines many of the ideas and emotions from the main plot's dealings with Siegmund, suggesting new ways of understanding them. Firstly, it continues the theme of exclusivity. Siegmund, who has already revealed the rejection he has suffered at the hands of others, talking of 'seine Sehnsucht, und seine unendliche Einsamkeit', here expresses delight at having found someone who has suffered likewise and empathises with him (400). The phrases 'gestillt in ihr' and 'gefunden in ihr' suggest that for the first time in Siegmund's life a deep emotional need for love and understanding has been met by Sieglinde. Because of their common bond of having suffered for being different the link between them is further strengthened. Their exclusive relationship, like that of the Aarenhold twins, derives from a reaction against the outside world, but there is an important difference. The Wagnerian Siegmund makes it quite clear in this passage that he has been a victim of the hatred and prejudice of others in spite of his desire for friendship, whereas the story of Siegmund Aarenhold shows him rejecting the outside world and remaining aloof from everyone but his sister, rather than suffering rejection, a preventative measure on his part perhaps, in that he makes the break with society before it can reject him. This is where the operatic sub-plot can suggest new ways of understanding the main story. The reactions of both Siegmunds when considered together seem to illustrate two facets of the Jewish experience: on the one hand, a desperately sought assimilation, on the other, a withdrawal from German society into an exclusive relationship within the Jewish family.

Secondly, the passage suggests why the Wagnerian Siegmund was confronted with hate and rejection, and allows a parallel to the German-Jewish relationship as a whole. In his dealings with people, Siegmund has been searching for 'Freundschaft und Liebe'; i.e. membership of a community or a sense of belonging to a society, an innocent and understandable desire. Mann paraphrases Siegmund's

aria, but at the same time hints at the views of the members of the majority group Siegmund sought to join. The verb used is 'sich drängen' and the way Siegmund tried to approach people is described thus: 'mit jener Frechheit, welche Scheu und das Bewußtsein seines Brandmals war'. The reason for their rejection is implicit: not only was Siegmund unwelcome because of his difference, but he tried to force himself into the group against their resistance and his immodest approach aroused their disapproval. If this criticism is now considered on a different level, i.e. placed within the context of the time at which it was written, it becomes an expression of the resentment, frequently expressed in Germany from the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards, that the Jews should push themselves forward where they are not wanted. To take Fontane as an example again, his correspondence, as has been noted, is littered with references to Jewish cheekiness, forwardness, superiority – in short, 'attitude'. Compare the phrasing of the passage with the following from a letter by Fontane to his wife: 'Fatal waren die Juden; ihre frechen, unschönen Gaunergesichter [...] drängen sich überall auf'; similarly, writing to Mathilde von Rohr, he accuses the Jews of 'grenzenlosen Uebermuth' and complains to Georg Friedlaender of 'jüdische Ueberlegenheit'.<sup>14</sup> There are many similar criticisms, but these three demonstrate the striking similarity in tone and support a reading of Siegmund's experience as an analogy of the German-Jewish relationship.

Finally, the passage concludes with Siegmund affirming Sieglinde's desire for revenge: 'Rache sollte nun ihre geschwisterliche Liebe sein!'. While the motive is different, deriving from the shame and rejection they have felt, rather than a desire for experience and passion as in the main plot, it follows a similar pattern. Firstly, the siblings' shared awareness of separation from the majority leading to a shared feeling of exclusivity, then vengeance against the majority in the form of an insult delivered to a representative figure, with

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14 PB I Letter to Emilie Fontane, no. 100, 17.8.82; PB III Letter to Mathilde von Rohr, no. 670, 1.12.80; BrFried, no. 116, 25.7.89.

Hunding and his 'in der allgemeinen Achtung ruhende Existenz' taking the role of Beckerath, similarly rooted in the norms of German society. However, this impulse towards forbidden love as revenge occurs before the siblings' final recognition of each other. It is not until after Siegmund's aria that their suspicions of being related are confirmed. That their relationship then moves smoothly from adultery to incest indicates their satisfaction with the breaking of a much stronger taboo, and a greater insult is dealt to the society which has for so long insulted them.

However, on the matter of sterility, the parallels between opera sub-plot and main text are not straightforward. While, in the sense of being denied love and friendship, Siegmund's life could well be described as barren, this does not result from the exclusive relationship with his sister, but pre-dates it to when he was forced to wander from place to place. The Aarenhold twins lead sterile, passionless lives, but the sub-plot has Sieglinde conceive in accordance with the gods' predestined plan, as revealed in the last sentence of Mann's paraphrase: 'Jedoch im Schoße des Weibes [...] keimte es zähe fort, das verhaßte, respektlose und gotterwählte Geschlecht, aus welchem ein Zwillingspaar seine Not und sein Leid zu so freier Wonne vereint' (405). There is always the possibility, as was suggested earlier, that Sieglinde Aarenhold will have conceived from her own incestuous encounter, which is, as John Whiton suggests, only taking the Walsungen-Aarenhold parallel to its logical conclusion. The act of revenge on Beckerath would become even more profound, but Whiton must concede: 'in the last analysis there is no way of answering these questions on the realistic plane. Who can say that Sieglinde will conceive?'<sup>15</sup> The idea must remain no more than a possibility, albeit a fascinating one.

But Mann's final paraphrase of *Die Walküre* can also reflect back on the wider German-Jewish experience. The phrase 'respektlose und gotterwählte Geschlecht' could apply equally to both sets of twins

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15 Whiton, *Faith and Finality: Collected Essays in German Literature*, American University Studies Series 1: Germanic Languages and Literatures, 93 (New York: Lang, 1991), p. 225.

and reflects another commonly-held set of attitudes towards the Jews in German society, highlighting the contradiction that existed. For while the Jews are hated for their irreverence and lack of respect (that cheekiness, to which Siegmund earlier referred, the cause of resentment that the Jews push themselves forward rather than fade into the background as the majority wishes) they, and not the Germans, are nevertheless the biblical chosen people of God. The Wälsungen twins have now guaranteed the continuation of their hated type: similarly the Jews in Europe, despite centuries of rejection, repression and worse, would, until the middle of the twentieth century, also 'zähe fortkeimen'.

#### *Text and Author: Provisional Conclusions*

Having studied how plot and sub-plot reflect upon each other, the question to be resolved is how *Wälsungenblut* reflects on its author. Critics have voiced a bewildering variety of opinions on the text and on Mann's implied attitudes towards the Jews. At one end of the spectrum, Erwin Koppen states that the story is about the challenging of bourgeois triviality 'durch dekadentes Raffinement und wider-natürliche Sexualität', seeing the Jewish element as 'nebensächlichen jüdischen Lokalkolorit'.<sup>16</sup> This view renders Mann's treatment of the Jewish characters less important and does not explain why he chose them to represent this deviant sexuality. Thomas Hake takes this argument one step further. *Wälsungenblut*, he believes, should be read in the context of Mann's feelings about his own socially unacceptable sexuality, whereby Mann, partially unmasking himself, 'verlegt das Stigma in Judentum', transferring his own skeleton in the cupboard on to another class of person stigmatised by society, the Jew.<sup>17</sup> The

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16 Koppen, *Dekadenter Wagnerismus: Studien zur europäischen Literatur des Fin de siècle* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973), p. 158.

17 Hake, "Theaterwelt und "tiefes Reich": Beobachtungen zur Erzähl- und Bedeutungsstruktur von Thomas Manns Novelle *Wälsungenblut*", *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 24 (1991), 287–305 (p. 300).

Jewish characters fulfil a function and are therefore not important as Jews per se. Thus, Hake views Mann's attitude towards Siegmund as one which swings between sympathy for a fellow outsider and criticism of his sterile, decadent life; but not criticism of him as a Jew:

Gleichzeitig signalisiert der Erzähler diskret, aber deutlich sein Verständnis, seine Sympathie dem jugendlichen Außenseiter und seiner skandalösen 'Rache' am 'Leben' gegenüber und läßt zugleich keinen Zweifel daran, daß Siegmunds Distanz-Attitüde eine tiefere Berechtigung [...] besitzt. (300–1)

This interesting argument is based on the justifiable acceptance by both general reader and critic alike that Mann's consciousness of his own differences, whether his mixed Brazilian-German background, his vocation as an artist or his sexuality, permeated his writing and influenced the development of such characters as Paolo Hoffmann in the early novella *Der Wille zum Glück*, Tonio Kröger and Gustav Aschenbach, to name but a few. Karl Böhm argues convincingly that Mann's repressed homosexuality should be given a greater role in interpreting his development as a writer and that his repeated 'artist as outsider' characterisations should be seen as masks for a stigma which was more personally felt by Mann:

Wo der eigentliche Leidensfaktor [...] verschwiegen werden muß, sucht sich das trotz allem zur Gestaltung drängende Leiden kurzerhand eine neue Motivierung, glaubwürdige 'Formen und Masken', die es erlauben, die persönliche Leidenserfahrung öffentlich zu machen. [...] Das Künstler-Stigma war für Thomas Mann nur das Gefäß für die Lebens- und Erfahrungsgehalte des Stigmas Homosexualität.<sup>18</sup>

Although Böhm does not develop the point, his displacement model can easily be applied to Mann's Jewish characters, outsiders for a different reason. This is particularly the case when Jewishness, artistry and deviant sexuality combine in one character, as they do with Siegmund. However, the danger of seeing one character as rep-

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18 Böhm, *Zwischen Selbstzucht und Verlangen: Thomas Mann und das Stigma Homosexualität*, Studien zu Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte, 2 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1991), pp. 134–5.

resenting something else, which is Hake's approach, is to lessen Mann's responsibility for the presentation of his Jewish characters. They become, as some critics argued in the case of Freytag's *Soll und Haben*, metaphorical figures whose Jewishness is a mere detail. Furthermore, Hake's reading, which places emphasis on Siegmund and, to a lesser extent, Sieglinde, overlooks the negative images attached to the other Aarenholds. Ruth Klüger, at the other end of the spectrum of critical attitudes, points out another side effect of Hake's approach. While she refers specifically to Mann's transference of feelings about artistic block, rather than sexuality, on to Siegmund, the end result is the same: 'Eine solche Absicht belegt ja nur die Sündenbockfunktion des Juden'.<sup>19</sup> Rather than seeing Mann's Jews as representative figures, Klüger places *Wälsungenblut's* characters in a tradition of negative Jewish portrayals inspired by ignorance and fear of what the Jews do when unobserved:

Auch Thomas Mann stellt diese Frage und beantwortet sie wie das Mittelalter: Juden brechen Tabus, wenn niemand zuschaut, sie benehmen sich widernatürlich. [...] So gesehen, steht die Novelle in einer langen Tradition angstbesetzter christlicher Phantasien über die Juden. (53)

Sander Gilman similarly views the text as drawing on a tradition in antisemitic writing which linked Jews with degenerate sexuality, a means in *Wälsungenblut* of maintaining their exclusivity: 'The Jew, the most visible Other in late-nineteenth-century Europe, is also the bearer of the most devastating sexual stigma, incest.'<sup>20</sup>

But perhaps it is misleading to construct mutually exclusive interpretations of *Wälsungenblut*. Cannot the text contain elements of confession and be a critique of the Jews at same time? The depth of detail about the Aarenholds' Jewishness suggests that, whatever element of himself as alienated individual he included, Mann was also concerned with portraying the Jewish experience as he saw and

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19 Klüger, *Katastrophen: Über deutschen Literatur* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1994), p. 51.

20 Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 292.

understood it. Mann's description of the text to Heinrich in 1905 of a 'Judengeschichte' or a 'Tiergartengeschichte' suggests how he viewed it, but in 1921 Mann added to this, calling *Wälsungenblut* 'die Novelle eines wild verzweifelten Zwillingspaars und seiner Gefühlsverwirrung aus Üppigkeit, Einsamkeit und Haß'.<sup>21</sup> Ten years later, defending his story after the French translation was attacked in the French press, he wrote of it as:

die Geschichte zweier Luxuswesen, jüdischer Zwillinge des überfeinerten Berliner Westens, [...] deren üppig-spöttisches Einsamkeitspathos sich den Ur-Inzest von Wagners Wälsungen-Geschwisterpaar zum Muster nimmt.<sup>22</sup>

Neither statement is particularly revelatory, highlighting aspects of the plot which have already been considered, but both emphasise the idea of loneliness. This has briefly been discussed in the context of the Aarenhold twins' exclusivity and their ensuing solitary lives and it has also been noted how it figures in the Wagnerian twins' experience. But what is the root cause of their 'Einsamkeitspathos'? It is surely incorrect to sideline the story's Jewish element, since, whether a parody of Wagner, an examination of decadence, the portrait of a dilettante or whatever else, *Wälsungenblut* must also be considered as an examination of the assimilation process. With the twins' loneliness so firmly connected to a Jewish environment, the reader is bound to consider it in this context, something Mann suggested in 1936 when he wrote: 'das eigentliche Thema dieses Sittenbildes von Berlin W. [war] das Motiv der Isolation, das zu dieser Zeit noch den Geist des Erzählers beherrschte'.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, given Mann's recent marriage into an assimilated Jewish family and the essay of 1907, discussed in the next section, in which Mann expressed his opinions on

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21 Mann, 'Zur jüdischen Frage', in *Gesammelte Werke* XIII: *Nachträge*, 466–75 (p. 472).

22 id., 'Noch einmal *Wälsungenblut*', in *Gesammelte Werke* XI: *Reden und Aufsätze*, 557–60 (p. 558–9).

23 id., 'Vorwort' [*Zu Stories of Three Decades*], in *Gesammelte Werke* XIII: *Nachträge*, 116–21 (p. 118). Retranslation into German of English translation, original missing.

assimilation, it seems justified to accept that it was an issue on his mind at this period of his life which could be expressed in his literary work. How does this fit with what is already known?

In the Aarenholds, Mann presents a family with few outward manifestations of Jewishness, whose interaction with German society and German culture seems intensive and profound; apparently a success story for the process of integration, until closer investigation shows the cracks in the façade. The twins' attitudes and behaviour, particularly the desire for revenge, show their alienation from the very society to which they appear to belong. Siegmund especially shows a longing to fit in with the majority, overlaid with a deep disdain for it. In a reversal of what the reader might expect, the younger generation represents this unfulfilled assimilation: outwardly participating in the lifestyle and behaviour of the upper-middle class, inwardly alienated by the consciousness of the struggle that goes into trying to seem naturally and effortlessly one of the majority.

But why has assimilation failed? It is worthwhile to compare the older and younger generations, particularly in those passages detailing Herr Aarenhold's early years and struggle to achieve. Whereas his consciousness of the low social status caused by poverty and Jewishness was a powerful impetus to him to force his way into society and secure his place, his children faced no such challenge. Cocooned in luxury, the symbolism of the closed carriage ride through the hustle of the real world indicating their insulation from society, they have become soft and decadent. In *Wälsungenblut*, Mann portrays assimilation as a process of external motivation prompting achievement against the odds. When the obstacles are removed, the assimilation stalls at an incomplete stage.

Another connected thread runs through the text, that of the Jews being fundamentally different and 'other'. The unfinished process leaves distinct Jewish traits which distinguish them from the majority. This is detectable in the older generation's attitude towards wealth and possessions and the younger's intellectualism. The notion is reinforced by the twins' own perception of the difference between them and the disparagingly-termed 'blonden Bürger' of the majority,



culminating in the act of incest as revenge. The parallels with the opera also argue for the importance of the outsider in the text, as do two other outsider figures whose existence is suggested in the story, the artist and the sexual deviant. Viewed this way, rather than as purely autobiographical emanations, it can be seen that all help to emphasise the outsider status of the central figure, the Jew. Furthermore, all those negative characteristics associated with the characters which appear once the 'code' has been cracked, fall into place as tools to argue for the existence of Jewish difference.

Mark Anderson places the problem of unfinished assimilation at the centre of *Wälsungenblut*, describing Mann's depiction of assimilated Jews as being of 'quintessential moderns, nervous, masochistic aesthetes with a split or fragmented consciousness deriving from their condition as Jewish outsiders within German culture'. The text espouses 'the prevailing view in Wilhelminian Germany that saw Jews as racial, decadent others in need of moral regeneration'.<sup>24</sup> However, given that the characters in *Wälsungenblut*, despite appearances, are aware of their outsider status and have retained their differences, failing to assimilate completely, is it logical to conclude that Mann was portraying the Jew as so different that assimilation was impossible?

Not necessarily. It need not automatically be assumed from the twins' incomplete assimilation that Mann believed the process was generally impossible, or undesirable, because it potentially absorbed into the German people such morally repugnant examples as Siegmund and Sieglinde, as it must be conceded that the conflicts and tensions inherent to the situation provide greater interest and scope for the writer than a successful integration, such as that demonstrated by his wife's family. It could be suggested that Mann was pro-assimilation, and, in this instance, was showing how it could go wrong – a cautionary tale, perhaps. In *Wälsungenblut* Mann does not provide a solution for his protagonists' divided existence and so,

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24 Anderson, "Jewish" Mimesis? Imitation and Assimilation in Thomas Mann's *Wälsungenblut* and Ludwig Jacobowski's *Werther, der Jude*, *GLL* 49 (1996), 193–204 (p. 204).

ultimately, the text indicates uncertainty – an uncertain position, half in, half out of German society for the characters, an uncertain attitude on the part of their author. The reader leaves the text with an essential idea of Jewish loneliness and alienation from the majority and with serious doubts as to whether Mann was accurate, justified or wise in his portrayal of Jewish characters.

## The Other Fiction (1896–1909)

The considerable time and space dedicated to *Wälsungenblut* is justified by both the primary role afforded to the Jewish characters and the richness of detail in their presentation. In no other text, except perhaps *Tristan* (of which more later), do Jewish characters feature more than superficially. But it is nevertheless worthwhile to consider the Jewish cameo parts in the remaining fiction to see how Mann presented a wider range of Jewish characters from backgrounds other than the elite upper middle class. Having studied the most detailed text in depth, useful comparisons can be made with the other texts in which Jews feature.

Some immediate similarities appear on examination of *Der Wille zum Glück*, one of Mann's earliest stories, published in *Simplicissimus* in 1896. The unnamed narrator meets an old schoolfriend who offers to introduce him to the Steins, having fallen in love with the daughter of the family:

'Der Baron war Börsenmann, hat früher in Wien eine kolossale Rolle gespielt, verkehrte mit sämtlichen Fürstlichkeiten und so weiter... Dann geriet er plötzlich in Décadence, zog sich mit ungefähr einer Million – sagt man – aus der Affaire und lebt nun hier, prunklos, aber vornehm.'

‘Ist er Jude?’

‘Er, glaube ich, nicht. Seine Frau vermutlich.’<sup>25</sup>

Several points of comparison are obvious. Firstly, the family’s position in society with a comfortable, wealthy existence. Secondly, the suspicion of disapproval attached to the manner in which this wealth was acquired. The baron is described as belonging to the *Geldadel*. Both he and Herr Aarenhold became rich through business dealings or stock market transactions, methods not held in high regard and thought of as typically Jewish, and indeed the narrator immediately asks if the baron is Jewish when presented with these details. Lastly, the manner in which the family’s Jewish background is concealed behind a veneer of wealth, title and elegance echoes the description of the situation in the Aarenhold household. This notion of veneer is taken further in the person of the baron, ‘ein eleganter, untersetzter Herr’, but the narrator has his suspicions: ‘Es ließ sich nicht mit Bestimmtheit erkennen, ob seiner Erhebung zum Freiherrn einst ein paar Silben seines Names zum Opfer gefallen waren’ (49). There is no such doubt surrounding the Freiherrin, however, who is simply an earlier incarnation of Frau Aarenhold, even down to the diamonds: ‘Seine Gattin [war] einfach eine häßliche kleine Jüdin in einem geschmacklosen grauen Kleid. An ihren Ohren funkelten große Brillanten’ (49). Like his wife, and in this respect Siegmund Aarenhold and his mother, Baron Stein has a taste for showy jewellery, wearing a heavy gold bracelet to which he draws attention by constantly pushing it back up his sleeve. In the daughter’s description Mann draws on the well-established trend, not to say cliché, of the portrayal of a female Jew as the ‘schöne Jüdin’:

Sie [Baronesse Ada] war von eleganter Gestalt, aber für ihr Alter reifen Formen und machte mit ihren sehr weichen und fast trägen Bewegungen kaum den Eindruck eines so jungen Mädchens. Ihr Haar [...] war glänzend schwarz und bildete einen wirksamen Kontrast zu der matten Weiße ihres Teints. Das Gesicht ließ zwar mit seinen vollen und feuchten Lippen, der fleischigen Nase und den mandelförmigen, schwarzen Augen, über denen

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25 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* VIII: *Erzählungen*, 46.

sich dunkle und weiche Brauen wölbten, nicht den geringsten Zweifel aufkommen über ihre wenigstens zum Teil semitische Abstammung, war aber von ganz ungewöhnlicher Schönheit. (48)

This is one of Sacher-Masoch's voluptuous women but without the fur, a character formed from a collection of stereotypes. Similar to Mann's later work is the highlighting of certain physical details to determine race, a feature used with far greater economy and subtlety in *Wälsungenblut* compared to here, where every feature, hair, eyes, nose, lips, betrays the girl's background.

Mann also used this technique in *Buddenbrooks*. By the time of its publication in 1901, he seems to have become more discerning in his use of clues to hint at a character's origins, the style being closer to *Wälsungenblut* than *Der Wille zum Glück*. In fact, he seems to have been sufficiently discerning for many critics not to have noticed the text's Jewish element. But some do accept that the Hagenströms, the Buddenbrooks' competitors who flourish as the old-established family declines, are Jewish.<sup>26</sup> Egon Schwarz considers the textual clues concerning the Hagenströms' Jewish background and concludes: 'all [...] seems to point to it in its stereotypic predictability' (125). What might be termed Mann's 'Jewish shorthand' in *Buddenbrooks*, his method for suggesting Jewish origins, will be familiar to the reader of *Wälsungenblut*. The Jewish connection comes about through the

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26 Darmaun, 'Thomas Mann und die Juden – eine Kontroverse? Thomas Manns Bild des Judentums bis zur Weimarer Republik', in *Kontroversen, alte und neue*, ed. by Schöne: V: *Auseinandersetzungen um jiddische Sprache und Literatur, jüdische Komponenten in der deutschen Literatur, die Assimilationskontroverse*, 208–14 (p. 210); id., *Thomas Mann et les juifs*, Collection Contacts III: Etudes et documents 27 (Berne: Lang, 1995), pp. 31–6; Heftrich, 'Thomas Manns Verhältnis zum Deutschtum und Judentum', *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch*, 1 (1988), 149–66 (p. 150); Klüger, *Katastrophen*, p. 40; Schwarz, 'The Jewish Characters in *Doctor Faustus*' in *Thomas Mann's 'Doktor Faustus': A Novel at the Margins of Modernism*, ed. by Lehnert and Pfeiffer (Columbia N.C.: Camden House, 1991), pp. 119–40; Thiede, *Stereotypen vom Juden: Die frühen Schriften von Heinrich und Thomas Mann. Zum antisemitischen Diskurs der Moderne und dem Versuch seiner Überwindung*, Dokumente-Texte-Materialien 23 (Berlin: Metropol, 1998).

marriage of Hinrich Hagenström to a young lady from Frankfurt, 'eine Dame mit außerordentlichen dickem schwarzen Haar und den größten Brillanten der Stadt an den Ohren, die übrigens Semlinger hieß'.<sup>27</sup> While this is quite discreet, it has already been seen how abundant black hair contributes towards defining Siegmund Aarenhold and Baronesse Ada as Jewish, as does the ostentatious display of wealth, also diamonds, by Frau Aarenhold and the Freiherrin von Stein. The name Semlinger is then used by Mann as the clinching characteristic. Although it is not an obviously Jewish name, Rolf Thiede makes the interesting connection between the first syllable, 'Sem', and the racial description, 'semitic': 'Frau Semlinger ist ein Sem-ling, Nachkomme des am Ursprung der jüdischen Genealogie plazierten Sem und damit Semitin; ihr Judentum offenbart sich unmißverständlich in ihrem Namen.'<sup>28</sup> On the subject of the origin of names, it is intriguing to see in the notes Mann made when planning *Buddenbrooks* that the Hagenströms were based on the actual Lübeck family of Fehling, one of whom had actually married a daughter of the well-known Jewish Oppenheim family.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, in an earlier plan for the minor characters, the Hagenströms appear as 'Familie Kohn'. The thumbnail sketch of a son who likes foie gras is unmistakably Hermann Hagenström in a previous incarnation.<sup>30</sup> Mann indicates the disapproval aroused by the Hagenström-Semlinger marriage because of the wife's background: 'Herr Hagenström [...] hatte jedoch bei Leuten mit strengeren Traditionen [...] mit seiner Heirat einiges Befremden erregt' (62–3). One of the offspring of this union would be called Moritz, a name which, because it was often used by Jews to replace the name 'Moses', has a certain Jewish flavour. Dietz Bering, who has researched how certain names acquired Jewish resonance, describes how the link between

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27 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* I: *Buddenbrooks*, 62.

28 Thiede, *Stereotypen vom Juden*, pp. 90–1.

29 Mendelssohn, *Der Zauberer* I, 297, 615.

30 *ibid.*, 296.

the two became 'feste Tradition [...]: 'Moritz' als Gleichklangsname zu 'Moses'.<sup>31</sup>

As well as using hair and name to define Jewishness, Mann also employs two other familiar physical features. Julchen Hagenström's 'großen, blanken, schwarzen Augen' (62) recall Sieglinde Aarenhold's eyes, described in the same manner but with 'glänzend' substituted for 'blank' (*Wälsungenblut* 386). In later life, Julchen too will be ostentatious in her wearing of diamonds (348). Hermann Hagenström's distinguishing feature is the nose: 'Hermann war blond, aber seine Nase lag ein wenig platt auf der Oberlippe' (64). The blond schoolboy with his Germanic name could be just another Hans Hansen, but the nose, which is like his mother's, is frequently appended to any mention of its owner to deny this possibility (348, 601).

Also significant is the role played by the Hagenströms. While the Buddenbrooks represent a solid, conservative tradition, emphasising duty and ethical business, the increasing success of the Hagenströms at their expense shows the rise of a new, more aggressive type of capitalism. While it could be argued that Mann is merely describing typically nouveau riche attitudes and behaviour, as Fontane did in *Frau Jenny Treibel*, surely the point is that Mann chose a Jewish family as their representatives. Although he was no great admirer of the patrician families of his hometown, is it not significant that, in the novel, it falls to a Jewish family to be the opponents of the Buddenbrooks and all that they stood for, and, by extension, to hasten the disintegration of traditional German social and business structures?

The Jewish businessman returns, in slightly more detail, in *Gladins Dei*, a short story written towards the end of 1901, and also in the 1903 story *Das Wunderkind*. Both stories touch on the Jewish commercialisation of art and as such anticipate a later Mann character, Saul Fitelberg in *Doktor Faustus*. Set in Munich, *Gladins Dei* follows the crusade of Hieronymus against what he considers to be

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31 Bering, *Der Name als Stigma: Antisemitismus im deutschen Alltag, 1812–1933* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), p. 99 and passim for other references to Moses/Moritz.

corrupt and blasphemous art in a campaign like that of Savonarola, the cleric who fought against decadence in Renaissance Florence. The locale is one of Munich's most prestigious commercial galleries, owned by Herr Blüthenzweig: 'Ein Mann mit kurzem braunen Vollbart und blanken Augen von ebenderselben Farbe, bewegte sich händereibend um sich herum'.<sup>32</sup> Yahya Elsäghé points out that Mann most probably based this faintly ridiculous name on that of Hanfstaengl, a non-Jewish art publishing company well-known in Munich.<sup>33</sup> Mann's conversion of his model to Judaism allows for a portrayal of a greedy, grasping businessman which would not have the same resonance were the character Christian. Blüthenzweig's bright eyes and hand-rubbing are familiar, recalling Sieglinde and her father. The nose makes its regular appearance, 'ein wenig platt auf der Oberlippe, so daß er beständig mit einem leicht fauchenden Geräusch in seinen Schnurrbart schnüffelte'. The notion of the servile and obsequious Jew is reinforced by the dealer's body language towards any customer appearing sufficiently wealthy: 'manchmal näherte er sich dabei dem Käufer in gebückter Haltung, als beröche er ihn' (206). This strange mannerism is then given a commercial reason: 'Ein neuer Herr trat ein. Herr Blüthenzweig blickte ihn kurz, als wollte er so den Grad seiner Kauffähigkeit erkunden' (207). Hieronymus enters the shop, is thus investigated, judged a modest spender or mere browser and ignored. However, when he asks about a print on display, a modern, sexualised interpretation of the traditional 'Madonna and Child', the manager senses a sale: 'Herr Blüthenzweig [...] begann sich die Hände zu reiben: "Siebenzig Mark im Rahmen, mein Herr. Es ist unveränderlich... eine erstklassige Reproduktion."' (207). That is not Hieronymus's opinion, and his demand that the manager remove the picture from his window and preferably burn it is unsurprisingly greeted with outrage. Neither is it surprising, given the thoroughly stereotyped nature of Blüthenzweig's portrayal, that financial concerns dictate his response:

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32 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* VIII: *Erzählungen*, 206.

33 Elsäghé, "'Herr und Frau X. Beliebige'"? Zur Funktion der Vornamensinitiale bei Thomas Mann', *GLL* 52 (1999), 58–67.

Herr Blütenzweig [wandte] sich um. Sei es, daß die Zumutung, diese Siebenzig-Mark-Reproduktion zu verbrennen, ihn so aufrichtig entrüstete, oder daß überhaupt Hieronymus' Reden seine Geduld am Ende erschöpft hatten; jedenfalls bot er ein Bild gerechten und starken Zornes. (212)

The narrator's mockery is easily detectable, as he connects the manager's righteous anger, described in very biblical-sounding terms, with something so venal as money. But while this might seem incongruous in another character, it is clearly intended as natural and straightforward when the person concerned is Jewish. To be fair, though, Blütenzweig is not alone in being mocked. Hieronymus too cuts an absurd figure, his ravings against modern decadence given scant attention by the sophisticated population of Munich. His zealotry earns him no more than a violent ejection from the shop and a hard landing on the pavement.

A complete change of approach is detectable in *Tristan*, written about the same time as *Gladins Dei* and published with it in Mann's second collection of short stories in the spring of 1903. Set in the sanatorium Einfried, perhaps a pun on the name of Wagner's Bayreuth house, Wahnfried, the story concerns the meeting of a young woman and a Jewish writer and the crucial role played by an impromptu performance of a piano adaptation of Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*. The woman, Gabriele, has been in a fragile state since the birth of her first child, her extreme pallor defining her as an invalid. The physical features of the Jewish character, however, are minimally important, barely sufficient to distinguish him as such. He is 'ein befremdender Kauz, dessen Name wie der eine Edelsteines lautete'.<sup>34</sup> His name is Detlev Spinell, not an indication of Italian extraction as might be supposed, since he is 'bloß aus Lemberg gebürtig' (225). For today's reader, only the fact that he is a Galician with a name like a precious stone betrays his origins, and while his physical description mentions bright, shiny eyes and a slightly fleshy nose, the point is not laboured as it has been before: however, Jost Hermand argues convincingly that Mann based this character on the Jewish

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34 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* VIII: *Erzählungen*, 220.



author Peter Altenberg, which would have been more immediately apparent to Mann's contemporaries.<sup>35</sup> Even today, Altenberg's style as described in the *Oxford Companion to German Literature* (second edition) – 'sensitive, over-refined, even effete' – bears more than a passing resemblance to his fictional manifestation. While understated, Spinell's physical description is still important, suggesting not his moral character as such, but his moral function in the text. Nick-named 'der verweste Säugling' by the other guests, Spinell is depicted as an individual in his thirties with a peculiarly hairless face, a flattened, fleshy nose and a large upper lip above large rotten teeth. His decaying teeth and the effeminacy suggested by his lack of facial hair can be seen to represent his role, where he combines both degeneration and sterility.

Initially, Spinell appears ridiculous, rather than dangerous, mocked by the other guests and by Mann. His claim to being an author rests on a single book whose presentation is more interesting than its contents. His creativity has deserted him and his work consists of writing letters, rather than the next novel. A pretentious aesthete, his catchword, 'Gott, sehen Sie, wie schön!', is provoked by things as variable as sunsets, furniture and Gabriele Klöterjahn, the latest arrival at Einfried. Attracted by her beauty, Spinell's sensibilities are offended by the prosaic nature of her life as a merchant's wife and a mother and his fantasy invents a different, more aesthetically acceptable account, whereby she was singing with her friends in the garden when she first saw her husband-to-be, not discussing a recipe for potato cakes. During the story's central scene Spinell acquires a more sinister aspect, essentially acting as the catalyst which causes the final breakdown in Gabriele's health. Alone with her one afternoon, he encourages her, against strict doctor's orders, to play the piano, first a Chopin nocturne and then the love-duet from Act II of *Tristan*, for which he shows an enthusiasm bordering on the fanatic. Mann's clever paraphrase, portraying in words the ebb and flow of emotion

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35 Hermand, *Der Schein des schönen Lebens* (Frankfurt/M: Athenäum, 1972), pp. 180–7. Peter Altenberg (1859–1919) lived and worked in Vienna. Hermand points out many parallels between his life and writings and Spinell's.

in the music, disorients the reader by confusing the sensations felt by the operatic characters and those felt by the listeners in the text. 'Zwei entrückte Wesen strebten in Leiden und Seligkeit nacheinander und umarmten sich in dem verzückten und wahnsinnigen Begehren nach dem Ewigen und Absoluten', writes Mann (244). But which couple is he describing? The answer is both Tristan and Isolde, and Spinell and Gabriele, although this latter union occurs only in Spinell's imagination. He experiences Gabriele's playing only in terms of emotion and fantasy, but for her the physical effects of the episode are only too real:

Wie farblos und klar ihre Lippen waren, und wie die Schatten in den Winkeln ihrer Augen sich vertieften! Oberhalb der Braue, in ihrer durchsichtigen Stirn, trat angestrengt und beunruhigend das blaßblaue Äderchen deutlicher und deutlicher hervor. (247)

The playing induces the nervous exhaustion she was supposed to avoid and she dies shortly after. In a peculiar fashion, a Jew's enthusiasm for Wagner's music proves too dangerous and potent for a life which Spinell considers too ordinary, corrupting and destroying it.

In the final scenes Spinell once again appears as a ridiculous figure, losing pitifully in a confrontation with Gabriele's husband, the excessively masculine and virile-sounding Herr Klöterjahn (Klößen = testicles). Hearing that Gabriele is dying, the 'verwusste Säugling' seeks refuge in the gardens. But there he is repulsed by a real baby, Klöterjahn junior, a thriving, vigorous infant whose gurgles of laughter pursue Spinell as he tries to flee this manifestation of the real, ordinary, solid life which he hates, as he described in his accusatory letter to Herr Klöterjahn:

Nehmen Sie das Geständnis, mein Herr, daß ich Sie hasse, Sie und Ihr Kind, wie ich das Leben selbst hasse, das gemeine, das lächerliche und dennoch triumphierende Leben, das Sie darstellen, den ewigen Gegensatz und Todfeind der Schönheit. (254)

In the figure of the Jewish aesthete, and in other aspects of *Tristan* (the central role played by a Wagnerian opera, for example), there are some distinct parallels with *Wälsungenblut*. Spinell's Jewishness is not as clearly defined as Siegmund Aarenhold's, but the sterility of his life with its lack of achievement, his disdain for real life and ordinary people, his obsession with style and outward beauty are all familiar themes which Mann would expand in the later character.

A shift in approach is detectable in *Königliche Hoheit*, in which the meaning and problem of racial difference are given a less superficial treatment than has hitherto been the case. In this strange mixture of fairy story and veiled autobiography, published in 1909, Prince Klaus Heinrich wins the hand of the doubtful heiress, an independent American called Imma Spoelmann whose ancestry includes German, Portuguese, English and Native American elements. Interestingly, Mann's notes reveal that the surname was originally to be Davis and that Imma's father was Jewish: 'Davis' Vater und Mutter sind Deutsche (eigentlich Davids oder Davidsohn heißend). Als kleine Händler nach Amerika ausgewandert'.<sup>36</sup> Mendelssohn suggests Mann then decided that Imma's Jewish parentage would make marriage to a prince improbable and changed her family tree accordingly. Her racial background is still an issue, however, as in this discussion between the Court Chamberlain and Klaus Heinrich:

Herr von Knobelsdorff [...] erwähnte der vierfachen Blutzusammensetzung Imma Spoelmanns [...] und betonte, daß er sich von der belebenden Wirkung, welche die Mischung der Rassen bei alten Geschlechtern hervorzubringen vermöge, für die Dynastie das Beste verspreche.<sup>37</sup>

Eugenics seem to be a major issue in the chamberlain's dynastic concerns, but it is doubtful that racial mixing would be viewed in the same positive light if Imma were still half-Jewish.

A Jewish physician, Dr. Sammet, plays a minor but interesting role in *Königliche Hoheit*. While his nose, 'zu flach auf den Schnurrbart

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36 Mendelssohn, *Der Zauberer* I, 725.

37 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* II: *Königliche Hoheit*, 341.

abfallend', is mentioned, his physical appearance is not given any particular significance and there are none of the jibes which are noticeable in earlier texts (28). He is instead an exemplary doctor and citizen: 'Der Blick seiner grauen Augen sprach von Klugheit und tätiger Sanftmut. [...] Redlichkeit und Sachlichkeit waren in seiner Erscheinung ausgedrückt; sie erweckte Vertrauen. Der Großherzog redete ihn ungewöhnlich gnädig an' (28). The Grand Duke, 'dem die bedingungslose und private, nicht nur amtliche, Geltung des paritätischen Prinzips besonders am Herzen liegt', takes the opportunity to enquire into his subject's opinions: 'Haben Sie Ihre Herkunft je als ein Hindernis auf Ihrem Wege, als Nachteil im beruflichen Wettstreit empfunden?' (31). Sammet, whose background is described by the narrator as 'ein Malheur von Geburt' (83), initially answers in noncommittal fashion: 'Jedermann im Großherzogtum [...] hat das Recht zu arbeiten.' His reply perhaps reveals more than he intended, as having the right to work is far from being treated equally when applying for work and what he says next confirms that this has been his experience:

Kein gleichstellendes Prinzip [...] wird je verhindern können, daß sich inmitten des gemeinsamen Lebens Ausnahmen und Sonderformen erhalten, die in einem erhabenen oder anrühigen Sinne vor der bürgerlichen Norm ausgezeichnet sind. Der Einzelne wird guttun, nicht nach der Art seiner Sonderstellung zu fragen, sondern in der Auszeichnung das Wesentliche zu sehen und jedenfalls eine außerordentliche Verpflichtung daraus abzuleiten. Man ist gegen die regelrechte und darum bequeme Mehrzahl nicht im Nachteil, sondern im Vorteil, wenn man eine Veranlassung mehr, als sie, zu ungewöhnlichen Leistungen hat. (32)

This drive to achieve against the odds, while not ringing false, nevertheless puts a positive gloss on the individual's experience of prejudice and antisemitism. Seen in this light, bigotry becomes an encouragement to success and above-average achievement rather than one of society's evils. The idea expressed by Sammet, that the Jews would do better not to query why they are disadvantaged, suggests an attitude of quiet, unquestioning acceptance of the status quo, a belief that the benefits of prejudice outweigh the disadvantages.

Ruth Klüger has commented: 'Wenn man Dr. Sammet zuhört, glaubt man, daß es den Juden so geht, wie es ihnen gehen soll, und daß keine Änderung notwendig sei.'<sup>38</sup> While this may have been Sammet's experience, as well as that of Herr Aarenhold and maybe many Jews in reality, reading such an account from the pen of a gentile author raises problems for the reader. The notion of the intelligent, educated Jew forgiving antisemitism on the grounds that it has been beneficial for him is a troubling one, as, while not denying the existence of discrimination, it removes the onus from society to fight it. It raises the question of how far Mann is expressing his own idealistic and romanticised view of the situation of Jews in German society, putting his words into Sammet's mouth. Commenting on *Königliche Hoheit* over a decade later, Mann seemed to accept that Sammet's speech lacked realism. Having quoted the exact passage given above, he admitted: 'Das ist Romantik, ich gebe es zu.'<sup>39</sup> An alternative description could well be blind optimism, complacency or ignorance.

## Essays and Controversies (1895–1921)

A fuller picture of Mann's thinking can be obtained through consideration of his engagement with issues concerning Jews in his non-fiction. This engagement, which mostly occurred in the years 1937–48 when Mann had become an unofficial spokesman for exiles from Nazi Germany, consisted of speeches or radio broadcasts given in America. Volume XIII of the *Gesammelte Werke* contains seven such speeches or articles from this period, which falls well outside the time constraints of this book; however, there is much interesting detail to be found in the earlier articles more or less contemporaneous with the items of fiction which have already been examined.

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38 Klüger, *Katastrophen*, p. 53.

39 Mann, 'Zur jüdischen Frage', p. 472.

Mann's involvement with the journal *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert* gave rise to his earliest contributions on the subjects of the Jews in Germany and antisemitism. Subtitled 'Blätter für deutsche Art und Wohlfahrt', it was founded in 1890. The 1895 Berlin *Presse-Handbuch* described it as giving particular attention to the 'antisemitischen Bestrebungen unserer Zeit'.<sup>40</sup> During the editorship of Friedrich Lienhard, *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert* had been published for a period in 1893 by the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung*, the paper of Liebermann von Sonnenberg's Deutschsoziale Antisemitische Partei.<sup>41</sup> It was an explicitly antisemitic publication, reporting on the activities of well-known propagandists such as Stöcker and Glagau and carrying articles on the Pan-German movement, racial theories and, naturally, the threat posed by Jews and socialism. Mann's involvement with this publication started in August 1895, a few months after Heinrich Mann had become editor, and continued throughout 1896.<sup>42</sup> While Thomas Mann's eight or so articles plus book reviews are a minimal contribution compared to his brother's lengthier and more frequent offerings, his involvement suggests a certain amount of sympathy for the views the journal propagated. While it would be injudicious to read too much into this and various excuses – he was young, it was convenient to have the work put his way by Heinrich, he was under Heinrich's influence, etc. – may all be true to an extent, Mann's art-

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40 Quoted in: Mendelssohn, *Der Zauberer* I, 212.

41 Friedrich Lienhard (1865–1929) was later (1920–29) editor of the antisemitic journal *Der Türmer*, in which an article attempting to claim Fontane as an antisemite appeared in 1920. (See Chapter Four). Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg (1848–1911) assisted in the 1880 antisemites' petition and formed the DAP in 1889, sitting as a *Reichstag* deputy for 20 years.

42 Heinrich Mann's changing attitude towards the Jews as reflected in his fiction and essays is at least as interesting as that of his brother, but deserves more attention than could be devoted to it here. On this subject, see: Loose, *Der junge Heinrich Mann*, *Das Abendland Neue Folge*, 10 (Frankfurt/M: Klostermann, 1979); Thiede, *Stereotypen vom Juden*. On Heinrich's involvement with the journal: Hahn, 'Heinrich Manns Beiträge in der Zeitschrift *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*', *Weimarer Beiträge*, 13 (1967), 996–1019.

icles show at least that he had entered into the conservative, nationalistic style and spirit of the journal.

An example is a review of a volume of poems, *Ostmarkklänge* by Theodor Hutter, in which Mann praises the poet for voicing the ‘ganz innige Kraft lutherischer Gesänge’ and for his ‘schlichte, echt protestantische Zuversicht’.<sup>43</sup> He also highlights another section of the book, ‘eine Reihe nationaler Lieder, die warme Liebe zum deutschen Vaterland und zur deutschen Sprache bekunden’ (370). ‘Am bemerkenswertesten’ Mann found the poem ‘Wach auf, mein Volk!’ from which he quoted the following:

Ein Feind ist da – er rastet längst  
Inmitten deutscher Lande,  
Er ward zum Fluche jedem Volk,  
Und uns ward er zur Schande.  
Er stritt mit Hinterlist und Trug,  
Hat allzeit uns befehdet,  
Hat Scham und Ehr’ und Redlichkeit  
Mit seinem Gift ertötet.

The second stanza quoted by Mann, a call to expel the enemy, concludes: ‘Und laß ihn nicht in Deinem Land | Nomadenzelte bauen’ (370). It is not hard to guess the identity of the nomadic enemy on German soil: Hutter’s verses are a poeticised version of the notion, prevalent at the time, that the Jews, the outsiders, had become the enemy within, but Mann’s approbation may well be surprising. Another review, of Karl Weiss’s *Von Gibraltar nach Moskau*, similarly shows Mann at home with the sentiments of *völkisch* nationalism. He comments that ‘nationales Empfinden’ has deeper roots in Germany than elsewhere, ‘denn die Deutschen sind, als das jüngste und gesündeste Kulturvolk Europas, wie keine andere Nation berufen, die Träger von Vaterlandsliebe, Religion und Familiensinn zu sein

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43 Mann, ‘*Ostmarkklänge*’, *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*, December 1895, reprinted in: *Gesammelte Werke XIII: Nachträge*, 369.

und zu bleiben'.<sup>44</sup> While Mann's articles in *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert* do not permit the reader to conclude, at this stage of his life, that Mann was a convinced and committed antisemite, the tenor of his writing, stamped with a conservative nationalism, in no way contradicts the journal's antisemitic orientation. At the very least, the evidence from this part of Mann's life supports the belief that he was unlikely to be a philosemite.

Yet that is precisely what Mann claimed to be in his 1907 essay, 'Die Lösung der Judenfrage'. Julius Moses of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* had asked a number of well-known figures for their thoughts on Zionism and this fascinating document was Mann's response. Denying that he is Jewish himself, in spite of Adolf Bartels's claims to the contrary, Mann states: 'Immerhin habe ich weder Recht noch Lust zu irgendwelchem Rassen-Chauvinismus, bin, wenn auch sonst mit ganz zweifellosen Überzeugungen nicht sehr reich gesegnet, ein überzeugter und zweifelloser "Philosemit"'.<sup>45</sup> The reader is obviously expected to find Mann's philosemitic credentials convincing. Knowing of his work for *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*, the question arises: was Mann lying, and if so, was he pretending to be an antisemite when he wrote for the journal, or a philosemite when writing this article? Or had his views really undergone a complete reversal in the eleven intervening years? But maybe the answer lies halfway between the two and is rather that he was never completely committed to one or the other approach. It has been noticeable, especially with Fontane, that the philosemitic attitudes claimed by an author can turn out to be of a very qualified kind and indeed the evidence from Mann's fiction suggests approval of

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44 id., 'Ein nationaler Dichter', *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*, June 1896, quoted in: *Gesammelte Werke XIII: Nachträge*, 376.

45 id., *Gesammelte Werke XIII: Nachträge*, 459. Bartels (1862–1945) wrote several histories of German literature. His claim that the Mann brothers were Jewish first appeared in his *Deutsche Dichtung der Gegenwart* (1907). Thomas Mann protested but Bartels refused to drop the claim, repeating it in *Deutsches Schrifttum* (1910).



some aspects of Jewishness and some types of Jews, but deep suspicion of others. Such an attitude clearly informs the rest of the article.

While he would lend support to Zionism in later life, in 1907 Mann describes the potential exodus of Jews from Germany as ‘das größte Unglück’ and the Jews themselves as ‘diesen unentbehrlichen europäischen Kultur-Stimulus’ (459). Of course, Mann was not alone in thinking this; many Jews thought the same.<sup>46</sup> Mann then addresses what he sees as the root of the problem, a conflict between Jew and non-Jew caused by the former’s outsider status. All aspects of the Jewish character are derived from this one source:

Alle Kontraste und Kompliziertheiten seines Wesens, Freigeisterei und revolutionäre Neigungen einerseits und perverser Snobismus andererseits, Sehnsucht, sich den Regelrechten zu ‘assimilieren’ und Stolz des Einzelnen, zähes Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl und abtrünniger Individualismus, Frechheit und Unsicherheit, Zynismus und Sentimentalität, Schärfe und Schwermut und was noch alles – sind Ergebnisse seiner Außerordentlichkeit. (459–60)

This reads very much like a list of the characteristics of the Aarenhold twins in *Wälsungenblut* and is a strong indication that Mann’s own thoughts and opinions about Jews and Judaism could manifest themselves in his fiction. The complex mixture of attitudes, especially the longing to assimilate and the snobbery, seems particularly familiar.

Before suggesting his solution, Mann highlights what he sees as a positive side to the Jews’ outsider status, very interestingly providing another literary connection:

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46 Walther Rathenau would express similar sentiments in a letter to a Dr. Apfel: ‘Die überwältigende Mehrzahl der deutschen Juden, unter ihnen viele, deren Vorfahren seit ungezählten Jahrhunderten in Deutschland leben, hat nur ein einziges Nationalgefühl: das deutsche. Wir wollen, wie unsere Väter, in Deutschland und für Deutschland leben und sterben. Mögen andere ein Reich in Palästina begründen –: uns zieht nichts nach Asien’, in: *Walther Rathenau: Briefe*, 2 vols (Dresden: Reissner, 1926), II, 76 (16.11.18).

Voltaire äußerte einmal: 'Übrigens ist es nicht schlecht, wenn man einen Fehler gutzumachen hat. Es verpflichtet zu großen Anstrengungen, um die Öffentlichkeit zur Achtung und Bewunderung zu nötigen.' Das ist ganz klar. Überall, wo es sich um Wettstreit handelt, ist man gegen die korrekte und darum bequeme Mehrzahl nicht im Nachteil, sondern im Vorteil, wenn man eine Veranlassung mehr als sie zu ungewöhnlichen Leistungen hat. (460)

This may well seem familiar, because the final sentence appeared two years later unaltered, except for the replacement of 'korrekte' by 'regelrechte', in Sammet's speech to the Grand Duke in *Königliche Hoheit*. The question posed during discussion of that text, whether Mann was putting his words into the doctor's mouth, is answered now in the affirmative. This piece of textual recycling seems to have passed virtually unnoticed by critics. It is impossible to say whether the sentence existed first in novel or essay format, as Mann started planning *Königliche Hoheit* in the summer of 1906 and the essay was published in August 1907, but clearly he was sufficiently convinced by the sentiment to use it twice. It is not inconceivable that Mann thought it applied to himself, in the sense of an overcoming of the personally-felt blemish of his homosexuality by gaining public admiration. But what can be inferred from its use in this essay? Voltaire's saying, when applied to the particular context of anti-Jewish prejudice, lessens the perceived impact on those concerned. It is comfortable and unchallenging for the majority to believe that a minority's problems are in fact a blessing in disguise. Mann's apparent belief in the eventual benefits of social stigma suggests the naïveté and ignorance of one who has not himself suffered from the prejudice he so lightly dismisses. While Katia Mann's family were of Jewish origin, the Pringsheims' wealth positioned the family securely among the ranks of the upper middle class. Mann was unlikely to have his views challenged by hearing of antisemitic prejudice experienced by his wife or in-laws. His words place him amongst the 'bequeme Mehrzahl' of which he writes.

Mann shows a certain confusion when he gives his answer to the 'Jewish question'. He first states he does not believe the solution lies with any particular method, whether Zionism or assimilation, but

that improvements are inseparable from ‘allgemeinen kulturellen Fortschritt’ (460). However, he later admits that of all the current possible solutions, he sympathises most with assimilation, although not in the sense of absorption into a nation, but as the Europeanisation of the Jews. Reading Mann’s definition, it is hard to see a difference. The disappearance of a distinct Jewish existence is still the end result. This Europeanisation would be:

gleichbedeutend mit einer Nobilisierung der zweifellos entarteten und im Getto verelendeten Rasse: einer Wiedererhöhung und Veredelung des jüdischen Typus, die ihm alles für gute Europäer Abstoßende nehmen würde und die allererst zu erstreben ist. (461)

The unquestioned premise of Mann’s argument is the degeneracy of the Jews and the need to improve them to externally imposed standards. As such it differs little from the approaches of Dohm and Freytag. ‘The reader of Mann’s remarks cannot help but wonder that no basic transformation among the Jews was perceived after a period of 120 years, in which the Jews had to a large extent given up their own culture’, writes Michael Brenner, highlighting the continuity of thought which links Dohm and Mann, and the latter’s apparent ignorance of the very fundamental changes which the Jews had undergone.<sup>47</sup> Although Mann places the process in a European rather than German context, the underlying theme is the same demand for radical change which he believes is achievable: ‘Der Typus des Juden, “wie er im Buche steht”, des fremden, physisch antipathischen Tschandala ist eigentlich schon recht selten geworden’ (461). Mann has already seen among the ranks of the ‘wirtschaftlich bevorzugten Judentum’ this objectionable type’s successor:

junge Leute, die bei englischem Sport [...] erwachsen, ohne ihre Art zu verleugnen, doch eine Grad von Wohlgeratenheit, Eleganz und Appetitlichkeit und Körperkultur darstellen, der jedem germanischen

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47 Brenner, ‘Beyond Naphta: Thomas Mann’s Jews and German-Jewish Writing’, in *A Companion to Thomas Mann’s The Magic Mountain*, ed. by Dowden (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1999), pp. 141–57 (p. 151).

Mägdlein oder Jüngling den Gedanken einer 'Mischehe' recht leidlich erscheinen lassen muß. (461–2)

In this section of his essay Mann shows the influence of Nietzsche upon his thinking, specifically in his use of the word 'Tschandala', which Nietzsche had come across in 1888 in a translation of a Sanskrit text, *Manava-Dharmasastra*, concerning Hindu secular and religious codes of conduct and which then appeared in Nietzsche's published writings, in *Der Antichrist* in 1888 and in *Götzendämmerung* the following year. While in a strict sense a chandala is the offspring of a male from the highest caste and a woman from the lowest, Nietzsche used the word in a broader sense, as Robert Holub describes:

The notion of the chandala [...] struck Nietzsche as a perfect label for the despicable, the despised, the miserable, the wretched, the lowly, the outcast – in short, for everything that originates in natural differences and ends up opposing a hierarchical social order.<sup>48</sup>

Nietzsche had also specifically applied the term to the Jews, writing to a friend in 1888: 'Die Juden erscheinen aber wie eine Tschandala-Rasse, welche von ihren Herren die Principien lernt, auf die hin eine Priesterschaft Herr wird und ein Volk organisirt.'<sup>49</sup> Mann, however, seems to misunderstand the term: having stated that this despised type is becoming rare among the Jews, he then goes on to advocate the very thing which, by Nietzsche's definition, would cause its continuation – intermarrying between Jews and Christians. Mann foresees that the Europeanisation, i.e. dejudaisation, of the Jews will bring about an increase in the number of mixed marriages – a further dilution of the Jewish population – and continues: 'und was die

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48 Holub, 'Nietzsche and the Jewish Question', *New German Critique*, 66 (1995), 94–121 (p. 117).

49 *Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Colli and Montinari (Munich and Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), III/5, 325; letter to Heinrich Köselitz, 31.5.88.

Taufe betrifft, so ist ihre praktische Wichtigkeit offenbar nicht zu unterschätzen' (462).

Intermarriage *and* Christian baptism: the implicit recommendation of Mann's article is therefore the end of the Jewish community in both the social and religious sense. His attitude towards the Jews is revealed to be more disapproving than his claims of convinced philosemitism at the start of the text would lead the reader to believe. While he rejects the preferred solution of the Zionists and some antisemites of a Jewish exodus from Europe for Palestine, the Jews he favours are those, like the Pringsheims, who by baptism, intermarriage and acquisition of German culture are Jewish in only the remotest sense of the word. For those who remain more distinctly Jewish, Mann's message was 'change'. In this, Mann found support in an unexpected quarter: Jakob Fromer, originally a Talmud scholar from the Łódź ghetto, who, by a long process of self-education, had eventually obtained the post of librarian at the Jewish library in Berlin. Mann's description of Fromer as 'ein glänzendes Beispiel persönlicher Entwicklung vom chassidischen Getto-Juden zum europäischen Menschen' (462) and the similarity of his article's conclusions with those of Fromer's controversial article of 1904, *Das Wesen des Judentums*, which Mann briefly and approvingly paraphrases, suggest that Fromer's views had been instrumental in forming Mann's outlook. While Fromer obviously took a completely different route from Mann to arrive at his opinion, one coloured by his experience of losing his faith while not being able to remove himself entirely from the despised Jewish community, he likewise calls for the disappearance of a distinct Jewish existence:

Tauchet unter, verschwindet! Verschwindet mit euren orientalischen Physiognomen, dem von eurer Umgebung abstechenden Wesen, eurer 'Mission' und vor allem mit eurer ausschliesslich ethischen Weltanschauung.

Nehmet die Sitten, Gebräuche und die Religion eurer Wirtsvölker an, suchet euch mit ihnen zu vermischen und sehet zu, dass ihr spurlos in sie aufgehet.<sup>50</sup>

A comparison with the writings of another Jewish advocate of complete assimilation, Walther Rathenau, who, writing in *Die Zukunft* in 1897, described German Jews as ‘ein abgesondert fremdartiger Menschenstamm, [...] eine asiatische Horde’, shows that Mann was following something of a trend.<sup>51</sup> Ritchie Robertson, writing on Fromer, highlights the link between the two:

Both Fromer and Rathenau are demanding the impossible. They demand that Jews shall cease to be alien by becoming Germans, even if several generations are required. But the criteria by which they condemn the Jews as alien are derived from the new racist discourse, which credits the German with inalienable qualities. [...] Such qualities cannot be acquired; they can only be inherited.<sup>52</sup>

Robertson’s words apply equally well to Mann: he too seemed unaware of the impossibility of the task he demands of the Jews.

A less than exalted episode occurred in 1910 when Mann crossed swords with one Jewish critic, Theodor Lessing, while defending another, Samuel Lublinski.<sup>53</sup> The problem is not so much

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50 Fromer, *Vom Ghetto zur modernen Kultur: Eine Lebensgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Ficker, 1906), p. 234. Included in this autobiography is an expanded version of the 1904 article, originally published in *Die Zukunft*, 25 (1904).

51 W. Hartenau (Walther Rathenau), ‘Höre, Israel!’, *Die Zukunft*, 18 (1897), 454–62 (p. 454).

52 Robertson, ‘From the Ghetto to Modern Culture’, p. 27.

53 Theodor Lessing (1872–1933) a doctor of philosophy and medicine, worked as a university and high school professor and wrote theatre criticism. He also caused controversy with the publication of his book *Der jüdische Selbsthaß* in 1930. He was murdered by Nazi supporters. Mendelssohn gives a one-sided portrait of Lessing, calling him ‘hauptsächlich ein Narr’, (p. 826). In *Theodor Lessing, 1872–1933* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1987), Rainer Marwedel gives an alternative, but still rather one-sided view, defending Lessing’s attack on Lublinski as being against the latter’s hypocrisy: ‘Hier hatte vielmehr ein selbstkritischer Jude, der sich den ostjüdischen Parias verbunden fühlt, zeigen wollen, wohin es die assimilierten Westjuden mit ihrer Kultur und

Mann's actions as the tone of his polemics, which, as in the 1907 article, seem to indicate an inability to strike the right note due to a flawed understanding and lack of sensitivity. In January 1910 Lessing had published a virulent personal attack on Lublinski, his insults overwhelmingly directed against Lublinski's supposedly typically Jewish appearance and character. Thirty-three German writers rushed to defend Lublinski, by far the more respected critic, but Mann declined to add his name to their public declaration of support, preferring a more aggressive attack as the best form of defence. Whether or not Mann's outrage was genuine, he could well have felt he owed Lublinski a favour. Lublinski was one of the very first critics to praise *Buddenbrooks*, in a review in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of 13 September 1902, and had also hailed Mann as the 'bedeutendste Romandichter der Zeit' in his 1904 book, *Die Bilanz der Moderne*. As the affair rumbled on, Mann confessed to Heinrich another reason for his involvement, writer's block with *Felix Krull*: 'Das Geheimnis ist, daß ich mit dem *Hochstapler* nicht anfangen konnte; aus gequälter Unthätigkeit schlug ich los, dessen bin ich mir innerlich wohl bewußt.'<sup>54</sup> Perhaps frustration caused Mann's response, 'Der Doktor Lessing', published in the *Literarisches Echo* on 1 March, to boil over from support of Lublinski or factual refutation into the same kind of personal assault on Lessing as Lessing had made on Lublinski. The following two passages, where Mann turns to racial slurs as part of his attack, are probably the lowest points of his involvement in the affair:

Herr Lublinski ist kein schöner Mann, und er ist Jude. Aber ich kenne auch Herrn Lessing (wer kann für seine Bekanntschaften!), und ich sage nur soviel, daß wer einen Lichtalben oder das Urbild arischer Männlichkeit in ihm zu sehen angäbe, der Schwärmerei geziehen werden müßte. [...]

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'Tradition gebracht hatten' (p. 136). Samuel Lublinski (1868–1910) wrote historical tragedies as well as theoretical and critical essays.

54 *Thomas Mann / Heinrich Mann: Briefwechsel*, p. 109 (20.03.10). The 'Hochstapler' would eventually be published as *Felix Krull* (1923).

Wer im Glashause sitzt, lehrt das Sprichwort, sollte nicht mit Steinen werfen; und wer sich als Schreckbeispiel schlechter jüdischer Rasse durchs Leben duckt, verrät mehr als Unweisheit, verrät schmutzige Selbstverachtung, wenn er sich für Pasquille bezahlen läßt, deren drittes Wort 'mauscheln' lautet.<sup>55</sup>

Why did Mann go this far? It would obviously be wrong to deduce that the sentiments are indicative of an antisemitism felt towards all Jews: what he wrote is too bound up with the particular instance. But Lessing definitely touched a nerve and it seems more justified to see the motivation for Mann's anger as lying in his dislike of Lessing as a particular type of Jew, one who is clever and opinionated. In the article Mann lists the characteristics he found objectionable: 'Woher [...] die Lust, das innere Recht zur Aggressivität und zur lyrischen Unverschämtheit? Woher die Selbstgefälligkeit, mit welcher er sein verfehltes Ich einer erstaunten Leserschaft aufzudrängen sucht?' (724–5). Jewish cheek, overfamiliarity, forced on an unwelcoming audience: this description is not unfamiliar, resembling the characteristics listed by Mann in his 1907 essay or those belonging to Siegmund Aarenhold and his Wagnerian alter ego. Lublinski, in contrast, is serious, restrained, unobtrusive: 'einen ernsten, ja starren und nicht ohne Mißtrauen auf seine Würde bedachten Menschen, der sich die Zunge zerbisse, ehe er das ranzige Geschwätz, das Herr Lessing ihm zulügt, über seine Lippen brächte' (722). Thus, while Mann undoubtedly found much in Lessing to which he, and many others, understandably objected, it also seems as if the critic's Jewishness presented itself to Mann in a way he was less able to tolerate.

As a postscript to this section, an exchange of letters in 1921 between Mann and the author Jakob Wassermann concerning the latter's autobiography, *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, is highly illuminating.<sup>56</sup> While falling just outside the time boundaries of this book, Mann's letter and Wassermann's reply are important, confirming what the evidence covered in this section has suggested:

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55 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* XI: *Reden und Aufsätze* 3, 723–4.

56 Jakob Wassermann (1873–1934) worked in journalism before launching a successful career as a novelist with *Die Juden von Zirndorf* in 1897.



that Mann, despite his protestations of philosemitism and tolerance, had a fundamental blindspot towards the realities of the Jewish situation in Germany, massively underestimating the spread and impact of antisemitism. That in itself is not antisemitism on Mann's part but could indicate why he was capable of lapses of judgement or taste when it came to writing about the Jews in both fiction and non-fiction.

Mann wrote to Wassermann after reading the autobiography, in which Wassermann's struggles and injustices are retold in detail. Mann's difficulty with the book occurs because he cannot accept that Wassermann's problems have resulted from being Jewish. 'Ist denn das alles wirklich so?' asks Mann. 'Ist nicht doch viel dichterische Hypochondrie im Spiel?'<sup>57</sup> The reader of the autobiography may indeed agree, and feel that only Wassermann's heightened sensitivity caused him to interpret events otherwise, but that said, there is sufficient evidence of injustice and antisemitism in his book to make Mann's denial of the possible impact of prejudice seem terribly shortsighted. Mann argues that Wassermann should see his problems as being the lot of every artist in Germany. He even suggests that a German-Jewish author has it easier because there are so many educated Jews among the reading public. He enumerates Wassermann's literary successes and asks: 'Grob gesagt: Ist Ihnen Unrecht geschehen?' (464). Mann's closing sentences show a staggering lack of understanding; in effect denying the existence of antisemitism in Germany:

Ein nationales Leben, von dem man den Juden auszusperren sucht, in Hinsicht auf welches man ihm Mißtrauen bezeigen könnte, gibt es denn das überhaupt? Deutschland zumal, kosmopolitisch wie es ist, alles aufnehmend, alles zu verarbeiten bestrebt [...] – sollte es ein Boden sein, worin das Pflänzchen Antisemitismus je tief Wurzel fassen könnte? Wie ich bin und lebe, muß ich so fragen. (465)

Wassermann's response is a passionate rebuttal of Mann's position. His justified frustration seems entirely comprehensible. In the

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57 Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* XI: *Reden und Aufsätze* 3, 463.

autobiography he had described the lack of understanding he often encountered from well-meaning Germans, and here was Mann fulfilling perfectly that very description:

Aber wenn ich mit meiner Qual, mit meiner Bitterkeit, mit meinem unentwirrbaren Problem, mit Hinweis, Frage, Sorge zu einem von ihnen [the Germans] komme, ich supponiere zum Edelsten, Bewährtesten, *so faßt er doch nicht die ganze Tragweite des Unglücks und verschlimmert meine Ratlosigkeit* nur durch Argumente, die kein Gewicht mehr für mich haben.<sup>58</sup>

Mann's blindness to reality is only too clear to Wassermann, who, describing his book as a 'Feldzug gegen die Lüge', accuses Mann of having no idea what this means:

Es bestätigt sich mir wieder aus Ihrem Brief, daß ein solcher Konflikt für Menschen von Ihrer Art, Ihrer Erziehung, Herkunft und innerer Verfassung kaum greifbar ist. Sie dürfen sich nicht auf das Los des Künstlers im Allgemeinen berufen, denn die Erschwernis war, auf meiner Seite, dadurch eine doppelte; waren Sie unter zehn Atmosphären Druck, so war ich unter zwanzig.<sup>59</sup>

He urges Mann to imagine how he would feel were their situations reversed and paints a vivid and disturbing picture of the personal impact of prejudice:

Was hätten Sie empfunden, wenn man aus Ihrem Lübecker- und Hanseatentum, ein Mißtrauensvotum konstruiert hätte? Das Gegenteil war der Fall, geehrt wurden Sie deshalb. Noch heute, trotz alles Gelingens, trotz aller Auflagen, stoße ich auf jene insipiden Vorbehalte, auf jene Wand, erlebe ich jenes geheimnisvolle, fürchterliche Zurückweichen, das den Kern des Wesens in einem beschädigt und verwundet. (887–8)

Wassermann also counters one of Mann's pet ideas: the benefits to the Jews of a challenge (i.e. prejudice). The letter displays not the

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58 Wassermann, *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude* (Berlin: Fischer, 1921), p. 124, italics mine.

59 Jakob Wassermann's answer to Mann's letter is given in: Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* XIII: *Nachträge*, 887–9, (p. 889).

comfortable words of Mann speaking through Dr. Sammet or substantiating his argument by quoting Voltaire, but those of a German Jew who has had to face this ‘challenge’:

Sie sprechen von dem Erfolg der Juden, von ihrer Herrschaft im gegenwärtigen Europa; aber ist dieser Erfolg, dieser Herrschaft nicht von beständigem, nicht zu löschendem Haß der Massen und dem Argwohn und Bedenken selbst erlesener Einzelner begleitet? [...] Und ist denn der ‘Erfolg’ dieser Herrschaften natürlich und heilsam? Beruht er auf gesunder Entwicklung und ist er nicht vielmehr eine Rückwirkung verpreßter, dämonischer Kräfte, Sackgassenverzweiflung? (888)

*This* is the reality, says Wassermann. Jewish university students declared ‘satisfaktionsunfähig’, Jewish soldiers excluded from the officer class, Jewish lawyers and academics excluded from official posts. Only a small minority can succeed against the odds while the remaining millions are disadvantaged because of their background. As this has not been Mann’s experience he cannot understand and therefore treats the matter so lightly:

Man muß im Golus [exile] geschmachtet haben, um zu wissen, was das heißt, Schande, Erniedrigung, Hohn geschmeckt und erlebt haben, um zu wissen, was sie heißen, sonst urteilt man leichtfertig. (888)

But having no experience of prejudice should not excuse failing to understand the problems of those who do encounter it. Mann is a writer, one whose livelihood depends on using fantasy to invent and create, so why, Wassermann asks, can he not imagine what the Jewish experience of prejudice is really like? Of all the questions posed by Wassermann in his letter, surely the two most pertinent are the following:

Rechnen Sie die dadurch [through exclusion] entstehende Bitterkeit für nichts, die Beleidigung des innersten Selbstgefühls für nichts? *Dringt Ihre Phantasie nicht in diese beständig aufzehrende Lebenspein von Tausenden, den niedergetretenen Stolz, die freche Umgehung von Menschenrecht und Bürgerrecht?* (889, italics mine)

For the reader who has examined Mann's opinions expressed through various formats, the answer to the second question must be, no: Mann *was* seemingly unable to imagine the impact of prejudice. Regrettably, Mann's reply to Wassermann, if indeed he did reply, is unknown. It would be fascinating to see whether he conceded on any points to Wassermann or still maintained that the other writer was suffering only from 'dichterische Hypochondrie'.

## Summary

Although this chapter has not considered any fiction written after 1909 or articles after 1907, there is still a large corpus of relevant work, covering a period of fourteen years. Mann's thinking could change quite radically – witness his conversion from criticism to support of the Weimar Republic – but, despite such seemingly contradictory events as working for an antisemitic magazine and marrying into a Jewish family, fundamentally, his writing over this period shows a relatively stable, unchanging attitude towards Jews and the 'Jewish question'.

Given the contrasts within Mann's work – it is necessary only to compare Dr. Sammet with almost any other Jewish character to see evidence of them – this view is perhaps surprising. To take only two examples from Mann's early stories: Baroness Ada in *Der Wille zum Glück*, a positive character but nevertheless defined as the one-dimensional sum of all her stereotypically semitic parts and the sycophantic Herr Blüthenzweig of *Gladius Dei* – surely the vast difference between them and the sympathetic and admirable Sammet, a rounded, believable character, argues for a substantial change having taken place in Mann's thinking. Maybe. But does that contrast really derive from a softening of attitudes or greater sympathy towards the Jews on Mann's part?

To briefly continue with a consideration of Sammet: the Jewish doctor has been taken by Guy Stern as a 'positive[s] Konterfei' to all Mann's negatively or ambivalently portrayed Jewish characters and may be, as he writes, 'durchaus positiv gezeichnet', but Egon Schwarz indicates the hazard of accepting a positive portrayal at face value: 'Philo-Semitism, based as it is on racial traits, is simply the reverse side of anti-Semitism and by no means devoid of danger.'<sup>60</sup> Leaving aside the problematic issue of making one character counterbalance all others, the point raised by Schwarz suggests that the existence of a later, positively-drawn character need not necessarily indicate a lessening of prejudice or stereotyped views on the part of their holder, but rather that the prejudice could be manifesting itself differently. What, then, does the evidence covered suggest is the case here?

I noted earlier how Mann's depiction of the impact of prejudice given in the doctor's speech seems hopelessly complacent – or romanticised, to use Mann's later verdict. A similar view pervades *Wälsungenblut*, with Herr Aarenhold's reported thoughts and speech about feeling the disadvantage of birth as a reason to succeed and the removal of challenge for his children preventing full assimilation; again in the letter to Wassermann, where Mann in effect denies that the Jewish author has experienced antisemitism; above all in the 1907 essay where Sammet's words reappear as Mann argues that all Jewish characteristics, not least success in public life, derive from the Jews' outsider status. Wassermann's reply, however, gave the views of one of those outsiders and recounted a very different experience. Sammet, then, despite the superficially positive aspects of his characterisation, indicates much less a change in Mann's thinking than his continued failure to understand the realities of Jewish life and experience in Germany, something which can underlie a negative portrayal as much as a complacent one. Both stem from a certain ignorance – or a complete lack of imagination, as Wassermann put it.

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60 Stern, 'Thomas Mann und die jüdische Welt', pp. 59, 60; Schwarz, 'The Jewish Characters in *Doctor Faustus*', p. 123.

Mann, it would seem, had a blind spot. Ruth Klüger writes of his ‘inspirierte Ignoranz über Juden’, Erich Frey of ‘a detached, condescending attitude, [...] the kind of insensitivity and glib paternalism often found among seemingly enlightened *Bildungsbürger*’, suggesting that Mann’s inability to understand the reality of prejudice resulted in inadvertently prejudicial and stereotyped thinking.<sup>61</sup> A certain thoughtlessness or naïveté certainly seems to be evident in Mann’s life and work, *Wälsungenblut* and its publication being an obvious example. Whereas no evidence exists to suggest that Mann described the Jews as morally decadent, calculating, exclusive, sterile cultural imitators etc., because he really believed this and had an agenda to expose it, his use of the language of antisemitism in their portrayals and his surprised reaction to Professor Bie’s criticism of the final sentence show a failure to think through the implications of what he had written. ‘Die Tücken des Sujets scheint er nicht wahrgenommen zu haben. Er war blind’, wrote Klaus Harpprecht.<sup>62</sup> As an example of ‘Mann’s flagrant insensitivity to the ever-precarious Jewish position in German society’, Mark Gelber quotes the following from a letter written by Mann in 1940, on the subject of *Wälsungenblut*’s original context:

The story *The Blood of the Walsungs* must not be thought of in terms of present day conditions. It was written thirty-five years ago, when antisemitism was rare in Germany and when a Jewish setting for a story had no particular significance.<sup>63</sup>

While admittedly Mann was looking back to the first decade of the twentieth century from a time when the expression of antisemitism in Germany was vastly more violent and prevalent, was antisemitism per se, while comparatively rare in 1905, really as unknown as Mann seems to think? With the passing of time he could have forgotten the

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61 Klüger, *Katastrophen*, p. 48; Frey, ‘Response to Egon Schwarz’, in *Thomas Mann’s Doktor Faustus*, ed. by Lehnert and Pfeiffer, pp. 141–3 (p. 141).

62 Harpprecht, *Thomas Mann: Eine Biographie* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995), p. 265.

63 Gelber, ‘Thomas Mann and Antisemitism’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 17 (1983), 31–40 (p. 35).

reality of the situation – but the evidence of his essays and his response to Wassermann in particular beg the question of whether he ever really knew it.

Apart from this blindness, another reason for the negativity so often detectable in Mann's Jewish characters can be seen in his desire to write what he wanted without regard for possible offence on the part of others – a firm belief in intellectual freedom, which a writer is undeniably justified in defending, but which in Mann's case added to the amount of criticism of the Jews in his work. Following the publication of *Doktor Faustus* at a later period of his career, Mann responded to accusations of negativity in the Jewish characters by arguing: 'Das Buch hat es so gewollt.'<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, regarding *Wälsungenblut* and the concluding sentence to which Bie had taken offence, Mann had written to Heinrich of its 'innere Berechtigung'.<sup>65</sup> If the characters are negatively or offensively portrayed, then, following Mann's argument, that is because it is justified by the internal logic of the text. On this issue, Gelber writes:

Mann maintained a notion of artistic freedom and superiority, which he seemed to develop early on in his career. He thus appeared to feel no restraint in terms of satirizing what he saw as negative Jewish types, bitterly or humorously, before the Holocaust as well as after it.<sup>66</sup>

This is something Mann touched upon in a later essay of 1921, when he mentioned his dislike of a particular kind of Jewish reaction to the depiction of Jews in literature:

Am wenigsten angenehm waren mir immer jene Dissimulanten und Verdrängungskünstler unter den Juden, die bereits in der Tatsache, daß

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64 Mann, *Briefe 1948–1955*, ed. by E. Mann (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1965), p. 49, (letter to Agnes Meyer, 7.9.48).

65 *Thomas Mann / Heinrich Mann: Briefwechsel*, p. 64 (5.12.05).

66 Gelber, 'Indifferentism, Anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and Zionism: Thomas Mann and Max Brod', *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, 20 (1991), 327–37 (p. 335).

jemand ein so markantes Phänomen wie das jüdische nicht geradezu übersieht und aus der Welt leugnet, Antisemitismus erblicken.<sup>67</sup>

It is not known if Mann was referring to a specific case or was generalising when he describes this wish on the part of some Jews to repress their literary depictions, but his belief in being able to speak his mind in his work without hindrance or criticism pervades the passage, which ignores the possibility that it may be Mann's actual manner of Jewish portrayal which arouses valid objections, not simply the existence of Jewish characters in the text.

Mann's definition of Jewishness as 'ein so markantes Phänomen' leads to the final point, the sense of Jewish difference and distinction with which the words are imbued. It is precisely this attitude of separation between German and Jew which suggests an underlying reason for Mann's negativity towards the Jews, first making it possible. Mann's belief in Jewish difference and distinct characteristics was clear from the 1907 essay. This is how he described the Jew:

Überall als Fremdling kenntlich, das Pathos der Ausnahme im Herzen, stellt er eine der außerordentlichen Daseinsformen dar, die sich, in einem erhabenen oder anrühigen Sinne von der gemeinen Norm ausgezeichnet, aller human-demokratischen Nivellierung zum Trotz, inmitten des bürgerlichen Lebens erhalten.<sup>68</sup>

The Jew, it would seem, could not be part of the norm, but had to deviate from it by being somehow superior (Sammet) or dubious (the majority of Mann's other Jewish characters), and had an enduring outsider status resistant to change. Mann then proceeded to list many contradictory characteristics in an attempt to sum up what it was to be Jewish. It should not be forgotten that it was in this essay that Mann proposed assimilation as a means of overcoming these differences. The inconsistency of his attitude, whereby he did not then allow the possibility that Jews could have negative experiences qua Jews, informs his response to Wassermann, whose exposure to

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67 Mann, 'Zur jüdischen Frage', p. 472.

68 Mann, 'Die Lösung der Judenfrage', p. 459.



prejudice is dismissed as the artist's lot. Even in later years when supporting Zionism, Mann retained this confused sense of difference, writing in his diary in 1945 of the problem of how to describe the Jews after Hitler:

'Rasse' ist vollends kompromittiert. Wie soll man sie nennen? Denn irgend was anders ist es mit ihnen und nicht nur Mediterranes. Ist dies Erlebnis Anti-Semitismus? Heine, Kerr, Harden, Kraus bis zu dem fascistischen Typ Goldberg – es ist doch *ein* Geblüt.<sup>69</sup>

Sammet or no Sammet, in the final analysis Mann maintained a sense of separation and difference and thus the attitudes detectable in his work should be thought of as a continuum of thought, rather than a progression towards sympathy and positivity. Whether ignorant of or ignoring the reality of prejudice, Mann showed himself in many ways to be firmly rooted in that 'bequeme Mehrzahl' of which he wrote.

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69 Mann, *Tagebücher 1944–1.4.1946*, ed. by Jens (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1986), p. 269.

## Conclusion

When Fontane wrote of his 'Antipathien' and 'Schwanken', he did more than voice his own ambivalence towards the Jews. His words are also an accurate description of the attitudes of the other four authors who have been studied and, beyond that, of a train of thought in German society which started in the late eighteenth and continued into the twentieth century. Despite the apparent differences of all five writers, on the issue of the 'Jewish question' the same ambivalence is to be found – a professed admiration for certain aspects of Jewish life and the Jewish character combined with a critical discourse which sought radical change of the Jews. The approach of each writer to this issue within the confined sphere of his work is necessarily individual and yet all five shared this uncertainty, which manifested itself in their writing as an inconsistency, a divergence between public and private utterance, between the apparent and the hidden meanings of what they wrote, and between their varying descriptions conveying different levels of approval of what were perceived as different types of Jews. At the most basic level, it is the causes and expression of this inconsistency which provide the key to understanding the authorial ambivalence.

Different issues have arisen with each individual author. Chapter One was occupied with showing how the discrepancy in Freytag's *Soll und Haben* between the one supposedly positive Jewish character and the others, of various degrees of negativity, emerged from his commitment to profound reform of the Jews in order to encourage their complete assimilation, and how that commitment derived from a liberalism which encouraged criticism, rather than acceptance, of the Jews and Judaism. For Raabe, whose work similarly contained an apparent confusion of positive and negative, a vein of criticism also emerged which distinguished between the threatening and non-threatening Jew. The chapter showed how this distinction and the

ensuing differentiated characterisation ultimately revealed itself to be a criticism of Jewish emancipation. The carelessness of much of Sacher-Masoch's writing makes it harder to judge clearly, but it became apparent that, despite a professed solidarity with the Jewish people and the evident sympathy of the short fiction, Sacher-Masoch also had firm ideas, very much in the liberal tradition, about how the Jews could be 'improved'. Fontane's ambivalence, encapsulated in the not entirely amicable 'friendship' with Friedlaender or the resignation of his birthday poem about the regrettable necessity of accepting the Jews as participators in German culture, is of a slightly different kind. He is less concerned than the other authors with proposing reform, but it has been possible to show both the surprising extent of his negativity and the overwhelming probability that this was reflected in his fiction. Mann also made suggestions for reform which, like those of Freytag and of Dohm before him, were directed towards removing distinct Jewish characteristics with the eventual goal of total assimilation. A comparison of his works of fiction reveals that, despite the ostensible differences between the characters considered, all are linked by Mann's perception of the Jew as permanent outsider. His frequently repeated opinion that this exclusion was beneficial as an encouragement to above-average achievement demonstrates that Mann could be as blind to his own prejudices as he was to the impact of antisemitism in society at large.

Having been exposed to scrutiny, the ambivalence of the authors now reveals itself to be less confused and illogical than might at first be supposed. In no case, even that of Sacher-Masoch, is it merely an instance of randomly mixed positive and negative Jewish characters. Using the other evidence available, it has been possible to uncover the rationale which underpinned the fictional portrayals. It is not simply irrational prejudice which decides that a certain character is malign or benign, but judgement based on a range of factors: how the character concerned approximated to the desired norm, the threat posed by the character to the norm, or the presence of mitigating features, such as cultural participation. That is not to exclude prejudice from the discussion: it undoubtedly played a role, but one

that is hard to quantify, although from the similarities of argument and perception between some of the often avowedly antisemitic commentators of the time and the authors considered here, the impact of prejudice on their thinking can be clearly demonstrated. For very good reason, I have been cautious in my use of the words 'antisemitic' and 'antisemite'. As these words entered the popular consciousness in the period under question, they were adopted as descriptions by individuals and groups of vastly more extreme and consistent prejudice than that displayed by the five men in question here. Used today when discussing nineteenth-century Germany, the words imply an ideological or political commitment to one or other of these individuals or groups, something which patently is not the case for these authors, and to describe them as antisemites or their writing as antisemitic would be to suggest otherwise. However, while none of them was a professed antisemite and none wrote about the Jews with the clear purpose of writing tendentious literature in order to advance the goals of antisemitism, their portrayals and descriptions of the Jews contain sufficient stereotyped, negative or degrading elements to suggest that the prejudices of the antisemites and the limitations of liberal-minded Germans in responding to the presence of the Jewish community in Germany were two sides of the same coin. While their proposed solutions to the 'Jewish question' differed radically, both groups confronted the Jews with the same kinds of criticism and with demands for change. Aspects of the antisemitic and the liberal way of thinking about the Jews can be found in the work of those who did not belong, even in the loosest sense, to either movement.

Freytag in particular encapsulates the difficulties experienced by both the liberals and by German writers in treating the same problematic subject, but the problem of defining their relationship with the Jews, whether before or after emancipation, is common to all the authors treated here. Seemingly, for liberal politicians and for these writers it was a matter of seeking radically to alter German Jews by means of publicly expressed criticisms. While they might find offensive the anti-Jewish sentiments or crude demagoguery of the antisemitic

parties, they were not necessarily more accepting of the perceived peculiarities and differences of the Jewish community. Both could have the same kind of 'blind spot' whereby otherwise humane and enlightened people expressed negative and stereotyped feelings towards the Jews, viewing their criticism as completely justifiable but at the same time failing to see their own lack of tolerance and the divergence from their avowed principles. The repetitive usage of negative images of Jews by generations of writers was in effect a code which argued for change within the Jewish community or certain groups of Jews following some specific criticism. Positive images, where they existed, were also based on stereotypes, this time on an idealised image which presented a 'better' type of Jew, one more acceptable to the German majority. As such, these ideal Jews were the inverse form of the negative image, condemning by means of their superiority those who did not fit into the correct pattern of behaviour, identity or appearance. The critical code inherent in the presentations of Jews was a shorthand for a longer argument which demanded change and held up 'actual', 'real' Jews and Judaism to criticism and sometimes ridicule, while idealising certain aspects of Jewish existence. German liberals and writers both sought to mould the Jews to a particular idealised image. They endeavoured to effect change, presenting a personal view of what the Jews should and should not do, how they should and should not behave, and what made them more or less acceptable. After all, what is the fundamental purpose of criticism if not to effect change? Criticism holds up to public scrutiny something worthy either of praise or blame, an invitation to side with or against a critic's expressed opinions which takes personally held views into the public domain and both fiction and non-fiction can be vehicles for it. In this context, it should not be forgotten that this criticism was not directed against impersonal structures but at people. The keenly felt reactions demonstrated by articles in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* and Wassermann's response to Mann are a clear indication that the targets, the Jews who needed 'improving', perceived the ignorance and intolerance which frequently lay behind the criticisms directed at them.

It is unfortunate that the story of the Jewish response to the texts by Freytag, Raabe, Sacher-Masoch, Fontane and Mann which have been considered and to the distinct criticisms given there and elsewhere by these five authors remains beyond the scope of this book. That story would be a fascinating one; however, the fact that I have been restricted to giving a one-sided account of the literary manifestations of antisemitism should not be taken to indicate that the other side of the story does not matter. It was by ignoring the opinions, thoughts and feelings of those they criticised that the ambivalent prejudice manifested by these five writers was able to develop. And it was by ignoring them that readers could come to accept as approximations of the truth the distorted presentations of Jewish life and character produced by an author's ambivalence.



## Select Bibliography

This bibliography contains all texts to which reference is made or which were particularly useful during the preparation of this book. For reasons of space it has not been possible to mention every work which was consulted in the process.

### *Abbreviations for journals used in this book*

AZJ	<i>Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums</i>
GFB	<i>Gustav-Freytag-Blätter</i>
GLL	<i>German Life and Letters</i>
GQ	<i>German Quarterly</i>
JDSG	<i>Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft</i>
JRG	<i>Jahrbuch der Raabe Gesellschaft</i>
LBIYB	<i>Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook</i>
Mitt.	<i>Mitteilungen für die Gesellschaft der Freunde Wilhelm Raabes</i>

### *Abbreviations for volumes of letters used in Fontane chapter*

HB	Hanser Briefe, 4 vols
PB	Propyläen Briefe, 4 vols
BrFreun	Fontanes Briefe an die Freunde, 2 vols
BrFried	Briefe an Georg Friedlaender
BrFam	Briefe an die Familie, 2 vols
BrZS	Briefe Zweiter Sammlung, Gesammelte Werke, Zweiter Serie, vol 11



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