

Weissberg (Penn: German & Comparative Literature) and Dr. Thomas Childers (Penn: History) as well as participants from the conference to examine once again the topic in light of the day's proceedings. This brought to a close a fruitful and rewarding intellectual exchange.

The organizers would like to thank the numerous people who made this first annual conference possible. We cannot list you all, but profound thanks are due to all those who helped us from the Departments of Germanic Languages and Literatures, History, and Comparative Literature. Thanks also to the moderators: N. Jeff Rogers, Susan Schwaneflugel, Julia Sneeringer, Daniel White, and Marion Hussong, the professors who gave their support and advice: Dr. Frank Trommler and Dr. Karl F. Otto, Jr. as well as the guest speakers: Dr. Liliane Weissberg and Dr. Thomas Childers. Special thanks is extended to Dr. Horst Daemmrich, whose support and inspiration made this event possible. Finally, we would like to acknowledge our partnership with the journal *Focus*. Devoted to the same basic goals we share, they have graciously agreed to publish select papers from the conference. We salute *Focus* and their commitment to intellectual endeavor and professional development.

Looking back we can only view the 1995 conference as a success and look forward to the 1996 conference. The 1996 *Intersections?! conference*, entitled *Franco-German Discourses: Literary Exchanges from the Middle Ages to the twentieth Century*, will take place March 22-23, 1996. For more information contact Tim Lyons {(215) 898-7332 / tlyons@sas.upenn.edu} or consult the Department Home Page (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/german>).

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Theodor Storm: Writing History Against the Grain

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In the most astute pronouncement on Theodor Storm's thematization of history to date, David Jackson states: "He wrote history against the official grain" (203). Storm's subversion of the norm, Jackson argues, lies in his refusal to acknowledge only the great, heroic figures of the past as participants in history and therefore worthy of inclusion in historical accounts. This commitment to reinscribing the traditionally marginalized into historical discourse is evidenced in texts centered around common folk interacting with local forces rather than an elite corps of intellectual, political, and artistic luminaries (Jackson 203).

Unfortunately, Jackson's primary concern is not Storm's treatment of history and therefore his remarks on the topic are limited. The question of *how* Storm's historical fiction appeals to and problematizes dominant modes of historiography of his day remains largely unanswered. In examining Storm's *Chroniknovellen*, this paper challenges the dismissal of Storm as a sentimental *Heimatsdichter* and offers new strategies for reading his texts as literary protestations against prevailing trends in nineteenth-century German historiography. In particular, Storm addresses the presuppositions of "objective history," a discourse most closely associated with the name Leopold von Ranke. While the objections to Rankean historiography voiced by figures such as Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Burckhardt are well-rehearsed, Storm's role as an active participant in these critiques is unacknowledged. What follows represents an attempt to locate Storm within this critical trajectory. I approach Storm's texts not as a direct and personal attack on Ranke, but rather as a stage in the reception of the historical discourse popularized by him, with all the misprision, simplification, and insight that the reception process invariably involves.

To understand the ways in which Storm might be said to write history "against the grain," it is necessary to examine briefly various principles informing contemporaneous historiographical practice. "Scientific objectivity" has long been the catchword most often associated with the claims of the era, and Ranke has come to be regarded as the founding "father of scientific history" (Iggers 63). His admonition to tell history *wie es eigentlich gewesen* encapsulates this pretense to objectivity, and yet should not obscure the explicitly non-scientific attitudes he expresses. While insisting on his role as objective scientist, Ranke simultaneously conceived of his vocation as a religious mission. The historian's task was to bear witness to and record the divine workings of God as inscribed in the events of history. This paradoxical gesture towards God and objectivity is, as I explain later, explicitly thematized by Storm.

Ranke's legacy as an historian lies primarily in his celebration of the original historical document as the key to objective historical knowledge. Ranke despaired at the thought that history was constantly being rewritten. Each age, he laments, tailors the representation of the past to its own historically specific concerns, resulting in a confusing proliferation of treatments of the same material: "Die Historie wird immer umgeschrieben . . . Jede Zeit und ihre hauptsächlichliche Richtung macht sie sich zu eigen und trägt ihre Gedanken darauf über" (Fuchs 18). Implicit in the dismay surrounding the abundance of historical treatments of the same material is the desire for a monologic "master narrative." Adherence to empirical data and the strict presentation of facts would enable the construction of a single, scientific account of affairs.

One sees in frequent pronouncements by Ranke a certain mimetic ideal, interestingly enough, given that his production coincides with the era of literary realism. That the historian can approach the text and, in turn, produce an historical account without the mediation of ideology or subjectivity is assumed. The goal towards which conscientious historians should strive is, in fact, total transparency of self. This self-abnegating ideal of *Selbstausschöpfung* is revealed when Ranke declares that in his *Englische Geschichte* he had tried to extinguish his own self and let the past speak with its own voice: "Ich wünschte mein Selbst gleichsam auszulöschen und nur die Dinge reden, die mächtigen Kräfte erscheinen zu lassen" (Ranke 241). The radical erasure of individual subjectivity—quixotic as the ideal is—underlies the

stated aims of both mimesis and Rankean historiography. Reliance on the indisputable facts contained in the documents, as well as total disregard for the interference of derivative accounts, would enable the construction of an objective, mimetic representation of the period in question. Such an approach would result in the desired monologic master narrative and eliminate the need for any further revision, for mimesis precludes the possibility of diverse representations of reality.

Finally, one must address the implicit teleology informing Ranke's historical approach as well as the various other *grand récits* of nineteenth-century philosophical and historical discourse. Though the phenomenon of nineteenth-century historicism is frequently defined as a form of historical relativism, that is, as a summons to study phenomena within the context of their own historically specific value paradigms, Ranke remains deeply committed to notions of inevitable progress and an historical telos. The context in which this teleological underpinning is most readily apparent is in the conception of the state. Betraying his affinities with Hegel, Ranke refers to states as "spiritual essences" and "ideas of God." To write history was to bear witness to the development of the German state from atomistic fragmentation to a more "mature" form of organization and unity.

As Georg Iggers observes, it is in regarding the state as an expanding moral potency that an entire historical school maintained its faith in the telos of history: "German historical thought in the decades after 1870 remained remarkably immune from the currents of pessimistic thought. The events of the 1860's had reinforced the faith of German historians in history as a meaningful process. All of history seemed to point in the direction of the Second Reich" (128). History was the medium through which Germany realized its destiny of unification. Historiography became the "chronicle and justification of nation building" (Sheehan xii). Though Ranke himself frequently betrayed an aristocratic cosmopolitanism at odds with then current nationalist trends, figures such as Heinrich von Sybel, Heinrich von Treitschke, and Johann Gustav Droysen took their cue from Ranke's writings to form the vanguard of nationalistic historiography.

To summarize this overview, three central tenets underlie the historical approach introduced by Ranke and adopted by his followers: the demand for a return to original documents, the veneration of those documents as the guarantor of objective knowledge of the past, and the unwavering conviction that history is a teleologically informed,

meaningful process. It would be wrong, however, to create a deceptively monolithic image of the era, for figures such as Burckhardt, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Schopenhauer, and Lamprecht all launched devastating challenges to governing principles of Ranke's historicism. More recent objections can be located in the writings of Walter Benjamin. In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1940), Benjamin attacks the language of historicism as a tool serving the interests of the powerful while simultaneously silencing the past of the oppressed. Operating under the sign of "objectivity," historicism enables a reification of history and the perpetuation of an oppressive status quo of ideologies and cultural norms.

Most scholars are aware of the aforementioned objections to nineteenth-century historicism. Yet in the works of a writer often dismissed as a marginal *Heimatlidhter*, one discovers one of the most incisive critiques of precisely those principles associated with Ranke. Theodor Storm invokes the methodology of scientific historians through his use of the *Chroniknovelle*, a genre typically defined by its structural dependence on historical documents. The fact that the sudden valorization of original documents and chronicles in German historiography coincides directly with the ascent of the *Chroniknovelle* in German fiction gives rise to a series of crucial yet hitherto unasked questions. Precisely at that moment when historians began to invest their professional faith in original historical documents, a literary genre devoted to critical reflection on that very gesture emerged. The intersections and negotiations between the two fields over the status of the historical text have been ignored by historians and literary critics alike. We as readers must ask: how does Storm's use of the trope of the discovered historical manuscript frustrate or affirm the claims of scientific historians who regard the authentic document as the key to objective historical knowledge?

The investigation of nineteenth-century reflections on the role of the original document in historical inquiry assumes particular importance at the present moment. The highly contested status of the historical text defines, in part, the contemporary debate initiated by figures such as Hayden White and Dominick LaCapra between historiographical and literary disciplines. Attacking the methodology of objectivist historians, LaCapra bemoans their refusal to engage critically with source material and acknowledge the extent to which the histori-

cal document is always already a mediated representation of the past. He states: "a restricted documentary or objectivist model diverts attention from the way 'documents' are themselves texts that 'process' or 'rework' reality and require a critical reading that goes beyond traditional philological forms of *Quellenkritik*" (19-20). He suggests that "all forms of historiography might benefit from modes of critical reading premised on the conviction that documents are themselves texts that supplement or rework 'reality' and not mere sources that divulge facts about 'reality'" (11). Returning to the nineteenth century's reflections on the status of the historical text seems appropriate, for despite the aura of radical novelty surrounding figures such as White and LaCapra, the debate was indeed already underway at that time.

Written in the 1870s and 1880s, Storm's *Chroniknovellen* address a readership steeped in the demands of literary realism by organizing themselves around "real" documents. Storm repeatedly thematizes the manner in which historical documents are used to establish the truth of the past by historical inquirers of an objectivist bent. In this sense, his *Chroniknovellen* are perhaps best described as metahistorical rather than historical. The embedded historical manuscripts in *Renate* (1878) are discovered after years of personal speculation on and inquiry into the local legend of the supposed witch, Renate. The narrator is confident that the manuscripts will finally provide the definitive answer to his questions: "Mir ahnte freilich nicht, daß ich die Antwort in nächster Nähe, daß ich sie auf dem Boden meines elterlichen Hauses hätte suchen sollen" (620).¹

The narrator's conviction that these manuscripts provide unmediated access to the past is reinforced later in the text when he compares reading them to viewing the bare corpse of history. Prefacing the presentation of the second manuscript, he states: "Aber der Zufall, der uns vergönnt hat, das Bahrtuch über einem verschollenen Menschenleben aufzuheben, lüpf es noch einmal" (667). The narrator equates reading these documents with having an unobstructed view of naked historical truth. This faith in the ability of the historical document to offer a transparent window to the past is thematized further in *Zur Chronik von Grieshuus* (1884). Here the narrator approaches his manuscripts not only with faith, but with somber reverence: "Ich faßte mit Andacht das Papier; die alte Zeit begann ja selbst zu sprechen" (879). Both narrators exhibit a pseudo-Rankean respect for the abso-

lute authority of the historical document. Both narrators are confident of their ability to acquire objective, unmediated knowledge of the past through immersion in these documents. Yet both narrators are subjected to unceasing ironization and criticism by Storm.

While the narrator of *Renate* claims to be offering a direct view of "ein verschollenes Menschenleben," he remains oblivious to the many contradictions underlying this claim. The tension between this pretense to objectivity and the fact that the manuscripts are revealed to be highly mediated, unreliable accounts is extreme. At the very outset we are told that the narrator has in fact "translated" the archaic language of the first manuscript to make it more "lebendig" for the reader. We as readers are prompted to interpret the manuscripts, and yet simultaneously warned that any interpretation is necessarily limited. Yet the narrator refuses to acknowledge his own interference and concludes his introduction of the manuscript, stating: "Und somit möge der Schreiber jenes alten Aufsatzes selber das Wort nehmen" (620).

The narrator's quest to render the manuscript more "lebendig" can be regarded as an attempt to "resurrect" the historical corpse alluded to through the image of the pall. Indeed, the very title "Renate," Latin for "reborn," announces this principle theme of resurrection. This desire to resurrect the past so as to stand in a more immediate relation to it is, in effect, a desire to *cancel* history. Yet in acting out this desire, Storm's narrator *violates* history. His translation eliminates the historicity of language and distorts the historical utterances contained in the text. The insistence on unmediated access to the past necessarily destroys that which it seeks to explore. It is precisely this paradox of historical inquiry—that any attempt to grasp the past directly invariably results in its destruction—that the scientific historian elides.

Thus our ability to interpret is thwarted from the start. Not only is the "authentic" manuscript in fact a translated manuscript, it is a translated manuscript based on a set of memories being recalled years after the events in question. In the middle of Josias' account of his relationship to Renate, we suddenly learn that some thirty years separate him from the events recounted. Thus the manuscript is now doubly mediated; by the narrator's linguistic interference and Josias' memory. The inclusion of a letter written by Josias' father introduces yet another nexus of interpretive obstacles. The letter, intended to

convince Josias of Renate's diabolical affiliations by relaying a peculiar episode in which she is alleged to have been involved, is, by the father's own admission, based on hearsay and popular legends that grew out of the incident. The inclusion of the letter in the manuscript only serves to augment the layers of interpretation and further conceal the "truth" of Renate's identity. The second embedded manuscript is no more reliable than the first; not only is the document partially based on someone else's account, it is someone else's account of rumours circulating throughout the community. Finally, one must acknowledge the admitted editing and paraphrasing function of the frame narrator, for it underscores the degree to which the subjectivity of the inquirer inevitably participates in the construction of meaning assigned to the historical text.

Thus far one can recognize how Storm seizes one of the seminal features of nineteenth-century historiography thought to guarantee absolute objectivity—the original historical document—only to undermine radically its authority. Storm's challenge to dominant historiographical trends is evidenced further in his problematization of the claim of historical progress. Whether one identifies this claim as a general feature of nineteenth-century liberalism and its concomitant faith in the process of enlightenment, or as a principle adopted by historians with their own political agenda, this commitment to the telos of history permeates the era.

Critical consensus has deemed *Renate* a text revealing the process of Josias' personal enlightenment. Josias' ultimate decision to abandon his fear that Renate may be in league with demonic forces represents, scholars claim, Storm's faith in the ideal of enlightened progress. Yet the evidence cited as proof of Josias' "Aufklärung" suggests just the opposite. In the crucial passage at issue, Josias refers to Renate as the "Engel" from his youth, an obvious allusion to the cherished childhood encounter with Renate described at the beginning of the manuscript, in which he perceived her as an angel rescuing him from the attack of her wild dog (669). His final reference to her as the "angel from his youth" radically problematizes the claim that this represents a linear process of enlightenment. In effect, Josias renounces fanatical, superstitious beliefs in witches in favor of adolescent fantasies, a gesture which conveniently masquerades as "enlightenment." Even this supposed advancement to a more enlightened consciousness remains

embedded in the same pre-enlightenment categories of "Hexe" and "Engel." Josias remains statically trapped in allegorical modes of perception and interpretation.

The notion of enlightened progress is further problematized through the figure of Andreas. Andreas distinguishes himself from the previous generation of religious fanatics, claiming for himself the ability to ascertain the true meaning of "Heilige Schrift" whereas the vision of others is mediated by unfounded superstition. Rejecting the superstitious claim that Renate maliciously caused Josias' death, he concludes his manuscript: "Wir aber, wenn du alles nun gelesen, du und ich, wir wissen besser, was sie war, die seinen letzten Hauch ihm von den Lippen nahm" (670). There is no return to the original frame and the text ends on this acutely ironic note. Andreas's claim to have gained the factual, objective truth regarding Renate by reading the manuscript appears ludicrous given its extraordinarily mediated content. His arrogant claims to "truth" in the name of enlightenment are revealed to be just as invalid as the fanatical views of those before him. The very notion of objectivity, which he so confidently vaunts, is exposed as yet another myth. Rather than signaling progress, the historical move into an enlightened world is revealed to entail a mere reconfiguration of prejudice, furnishing the space emptied of superstition with its own set of mythical beliefs.

The fact that beliefs in Renate's nefarious witchcraft persist into the present day of the frame narrative casts further doubt on claims of historical progress and enlightenment. Far from being the vehicle for inevitable advancement, history is repeatedly portrayed in this text and others as perpetuated traditions and unceasing repetition. Not only does the text stress the persistence of tradition, it calls attention to the way in which that very tradition is established and maintained through the transmission of history. The process by which the narrative surrounding Renate is constructed by the community and transmitted from one generation to the next is revealed to be one that reinforces dominant ideologies of the community. Renate's identification as a witch is inextricably linked to her violation of established gender and social norms.

These dual processes of construction and transmission of historical narrative form a thematic axis in the majority of Storm's later novellas, the most well-known case being *Der Schimmelreiter* (1888).

And yet, the open-ended structure of the texts (there is frequently no return to the original frame) suggests the possibility for a rupture in this continuum of tradition. It is unclear, for example, how the frame narrator will respond to the local legend after reading the manuscripts. We do not know whether he will be complicit in the perpetuation and reification of the narrative or retrospectively adopt a more critical stance vis-à-vis its collective authors. The (non)conclusion of *Renate* presents the reader with two approaches to historical understanding: the townspeople's ideologically based allegorization of history as a tale of holy and demonic forces, and Andreas's equally fallacious claims to objective interpretation. Both modes—modes simultaneously enacted by Ranke—are implicitly criticized, yet precisely the fact that the text is open-ended points to the possibility, albeit one left undefined by Storm, of a novel mode of historical reception and interpretation.

In problematizing the authority of the original manuscript, Storm seeks to cultivate in the reader a new, more critical attitude towards historical documents and culturally transmitted accounts. He preempts by a century LaCapra's demand for reading strategies concerned not solely with discovering naked historical facts, but with identifying the layers of competing interests engaged in the construction of historical narrative. Without categorically negating the ability of historical documentation to provide information about historical reality, Storm's texts do reject a readership blind to the manifold ideological forces necessarily operant in the acts of historical representation and interpretation. Storm's *Chroniknovellen* consistently call attention to our need to question the reified narratives of the past and, in this sense, read history against the grain.

This mandate for heightened interpretive responsibility, with which most of Storm's *Chroniknovellen* end, directly contradicts the seminal feature ascribed to realism by one of its most prominent critics. In defining nineteenth-century realism, Russell Berman argues that the realist text inhibits the interpretive freedom and critical responsibility of the reader by authoritatively guiding him/her through its narrative (175). The regressive politics of the realist aesthetic are revealed, Berman argues, in this attempt to suppress individual subjectivity and participation in the construction of textual meaning. As one of the most celebrated realists of the nineteenth century (and an

author conveniently omitted from Berman's study), Storm provides a crucial opportunity for a reassessment of these frequently homogenizing claims.

Storm's deliberate thematization of local history and the structural fragmentation of his works further frustrate such totalizing schemata. Claiming that realism represents a literary analogue to Bismarck's Reich, Berman suggests that realism's preference for unity of form and narrative perspective over asymmetricalness and fragmentation is informed by the politics of national unification. Again, Storm provides a salient counterexample in manifold respects. His texts repeatedly deny the reader a single, authoritative narrator, thematizing instead a multiplicity of perspectives, and frequently displaying the structural asymmetry of non-concluded frames. The monologic discourse valorized in the mandate to tell history *wie es eigentlich gewesen* is consistently rejected in favor of dialogic strategies of representation. The incorporation of various temporal and conceptual horizons highlights the way in which each individual consciousness is embedded in, determined and limited by its own particular historical moment. This narrative structure underscores the necessarily provisional nature of any single interpretation. Storm's final novella, *Der Schimmelreiter*, is the most radical example of a text in which the coexistence of multiple perspectives and refusal to privilege any one of them thwarts the interpreter's efforts to discover uniform historical meaning.

Unlike celebrated contemporaries such as Gustav Freytag, Wilhelm Riehl, and Wilhelm Jensen, Storm refused to instrumentalize history in the project of nation-building. Storm refrained from portraying the history of the greater German Reich, focusing instead on local history. Thematizing the history of regions within Schleswig-Holstein *after* 1871 and without any reference to "Preußen," an ethnic-national entity of "Deutsche" or the newly formed Reich can be regarded as a literary form of protest against the politics of Bismarck's unification. Storm evokes the past of his native region without allowing it to become subordinate to a teleologically unfolding narrative of German nationhood. The hegemony of a German national culture is subverted through the consistent privileging of the regional.

The reevaluation of Storm's choice of historical subject matter is long overdue. One must question the ideological assumptions attending the negative dismissal of Storm as a provincial *Heimatlidher* un-

able to deviate from his own *Husumerei*. The denigration of Storm's emphasis on regional history—a still prevalent attitude originating in Wilhelm Jensen's suggestion that Storm lacked any sense "für das an sich geschichtlich Bedeutungsvolle" (cited in Bollenbeck 502)—carries with it certain implications regarding the "appropriate" subject matter for historical writing. Yet his commitment to focusing his historical fiction almost exclusively on local settings in his native Schleswig-Holstein must not be confused with the regionalism characterizing *Dorfliteratur* of the period. Storm does not seek to celebrate the sturdy virtues of the *Volks-gemeinschaft*, nor does he anywhere advocate a *Blut und Boden* ideology. Texts such as *Draußen im Heidedorf* (1871) actively condemn the xenophobia fostered through the medium of *Dorfliteratur*. His texts do not put history in the service of defining an emergent German national identity, as is the case in Freytag's *Bilder aus deutscher Vergangenheit* (1859-67), *Die Ahnen* (1872-80), and countless works by contemporary luminaries such as Jensen and Riehl.

The extent to which Storm's *Chroniknovellen* explore history's function as a mediating force of both language and self constitutes yet another gap in their reception. At the beginning of *Zur Chronik von Grieshuus*, the narrator recalls observing the standing ruins of the Grieshuus estate. He realizes moments later, however, that the structures he perceived were the product of his own imagination and that his perception of the environment had been mediated by historical accounts he had heard long ago:

Nur meine Phantasie hatte sich dort den Turm erbaut: Nicht jetzt, einst, sagte ich mir, hatte ein derartiges Gemäuer dort gestanden . . . Nicht, daß ich jemals selbst hier gewesen wäre; aber mit aufhorchenden Knabenohren hatte ich, und mehr als einmal, von diesem Orte reden hören. (838)

The narrator's dreams are also structured by previously viewed historical documents, further revealing the extent to which even the 'private' realm of the unconscious is mediated by publicly circulating histories. This emphasis on the way in which selves are inescapably mediated by history and historical accounts not only problematizes the Rankean distinction between historical object and inquiring subject, it also undermines the very subject/object dualism upon which

realism is based. Rather than being a discrete interpreting agency, the self is revealed at every turn to be constituted by and through the supposedly 'external' phenomenon of history. The perceiving subject is shown both to determine and to be determined by the supposedly autonomous object under investigation.

Storm's concern with language and its historical mediation is foregrounded in both *Renate* and *Aquis Submersus* (1876). The fact that the etymology of the name "Schwabestadt" is relayed in the first sentence of *Renate* is not incidental: "In einiger Entfernung von meiner Vaterstadt, doch so, daß es für Lustfahrten dahin nicht zu weit ist, liegt das Dorf Schwabestadt, welcher Name nach einigen Chronisten so viel heißen soll: Suavestätte d.i. lieblicher Ort" (618). The first concern broached by Storm involves the historically mediated quality of language. The suggestion that language is not an ahistorical constant, but rather a thoroughly historical system in which each term carries and is destabilized by semantic traces already begins to undermine the very notion of objectivity in representation.

In seeking to stabilize the meaning of the enigmatic Plattdeutsch inscription in *Aquis Submersus*, "Geliek as Rook un Stoof verswindt,/ Also sind ock de Minschenkind," both the narrator and reader must sift through various layers of historical contexts and referents; the notion of stable signification is thereby replaced with the concept of mediated meaning, in linguistic as well as historical terms. These meditations on the semantic instabilities and "slippages" introduced through history call into question the writer's ability to represent reality mimetically using such an inherently unstable system of signification. These instances illustrate the self-problematization of mimesis typical of "poetic realists" such as Storm, Keller, and Meyer. Moreover, Storm's reflections reveal his affinities with Nietzsche's contemporaneous musings on language and history, musings encapsulated in the dictum: "definierbar ist nur das, was keine Geschichte hat."

To return to the heading at the beginning of this paper, one can argue that in many respects Storm's *Chroniknovellen* do indeed write history "against the grain." Certainly the admonishment to read history against the grain is communicated at multiple levels of his texts. Yet to avoid the dual risks of proposing a deceptively monolithic view of this "official grain" and employing Ranke as a polemical strawman, one must again acknowledge Storm's critique as a function of

the reception of the particular historiographical discourse associated with Ranke. In their reflections on the epistemological aporias of objective history, Storm's texts call into question the assumptions of those nineteenth-century thinkers seeking to endow historical inquiry with the 'exact' qualities of a science. His challenges to the nationalistic instrumentalization of history and popular conceptions of historical progress undermine pivotal assumptions informing contemporaneous approaches to the writing of history.

In many ways, Storm's historical fiction resembles very recent trends in historiography such as the penchant for *Alltagsgeschichte* or "history from below." Whereas Ranke and his disciples believed history could be written exclusively on the basis of documents pertaining to state politics, diplomacy, and military strategy, Storm reveals a much broader conception of the documentary "evidence" at the historian's disposal. The historical manuscripts discovered in Storm's texts are written from the perspective of common individuals removed from the affairs of the dominant political players of their day. They include representations of everyday life among the lower classes, depictions of class conflict, and descriptions of how major events such as the Thirty Years' War affected those at the lowest levels of society. Like many other works of nineteenth-century historical fiction, Storm's texts helped expand academic history's narrow definition of the "geschichtlich Bedeutungsvolle," suggesting that history consisted of far more than the details of diplomatic negotiations and the public deeds of great men.² Not only does he call for a revised approach to the reading of historical documentation, he calls for a more inclusive conception of what kind of documents could become the legitimate basis for historical investigation.

Given Storm's own concern with interrupting the processes of historical transmission and reification, it seems particularly appropriate to read the historical reception of Storm as a "provincial" writer of sentimental novellas against the grain. And in light of the recent popularization of homogenizing definitions of realism as the literary counterpart to Bismarck's Reich, it seems such attention to the *Chroniknovellen* of Storm is a necessary corrective.

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Notes

¹ All subsequent citations to Theodor Storm occur parenthetically in the text.

² For an insightful study of the role played by fiction in broadening the discourse of history in the nineteenth century, see Brent Peterson's article.

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Helga Schubert's *Judasfrauen*: The Use of Narrative in Documentary Literature

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Helga Schubert, born in 1940 in Berlin, spent years as a clinical psychologist before devoting herself exclusively to her writing in 1977. Since then she has written a number of novels and short stories, many of which deal with everyday problems of women. Schubert's distinct style is at once characterized by rational distance and empathy toward her characters.

Helga Schubert's *Judasfrauen*, published in 1990, begins with a chapter entitled "Spitzel und Verräter," an exploration of possible motives and psychological processes behind acts of political denunciation. Ten of the eleven remaining chapters are based on documented cases of denunciation by women in Nazi Germany. These case studies are based on historical documents, but rather than presenting documentary material directly, Schubert incorporates documented facts into narrative form, filling in the gaps when necessary. The result is a narrative that is a blend of fact and fiction. Schubert, however, details her work process so that the reader can discern where the factual basis ends and Schubert's speculation begins.

In the preface to the Luchterhand edition, Helga Schubert states two goals: 1) to subvert what she perceives as a one-dimensional heroization of women (*Frauenveredelung*), which fails to acknowledge female destructive potential; 2) to better understand the behavior of citizens in a totalitarian state. By focusing on denunciation by women in Nazi Germany, Schubert addresses both goals.

Regarding the second goal—understanding the effects of the totalitarian state—Schubert suggests that the historical setting serves as vehicle for criticism of the GDR. When she began the project in 198 she felt it necessary to offer an "encoded message" rather than direct criticism.¹ Accordingly, the work implies parallels between structure of power and betrayal in the Third Reich and in the GDR.