

Revisiting Social and Racist Prejudice in Imperial Germany after the Goldhagen Controversy: Anti-Emancipatory Tendencies in Heinrich Mann's *Der Untertan*

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I.

In light of ongoing discussion as to the validity of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's assertion of the "long-incubating, pervasive [...] eliminationist antisemitism of German culture" (419), it may be useful to reassert alternative models of anti-Semitism's character and its purchase in German society. Such models which have been marginalized by the academic and popular attention has been lavished on Goldhagen's best-selling study, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*.¹ For Goldhagen, by the time of the Third Reich anti-Semitism resided with "hurricane-force potential [...] in the heart of German political culture, in German society itself" (428), thus making available a pliable and even "willing" population of executors of Hitler's murderous scheme for European Jewry. One alternative to Goldhagen's model is proposed in Shulamit Volkov's article "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," a discussion of "anti-emancipatory" (34) tendencies which locates anti-Semitism within a complex, or "cultural code" (34), composed of mutually reinforcing social and racist prejudice.²

To be clear, Goldhagen does set forth a "cultural cognitive model" (91; cf. 34-48) for explaining the mentality and actions of Germans. However, for all that he insists on the suffusion of the constitutive elements of this common German cognitive model with anti-Semitism, for him this is a unidirectional process. What is lacking is an allowance for the reciprocal influence and mutual reinforcement of social and racist prejudice, and here Volkov's contribution is a useful remedy. At an early stage in his project, Goldhagen describes just such a dynamic, but he immedi-

ately sets about limiting its scope and implications. He does this firstly and most generally by foregoing investigation of many areas and themes that would add to this dimension and more fully illustrate the complexities. In "The Goldhagen Controversy: One Nation, One People, One Theory?" historian Fritz Stern points to just some of these areas, noting "the still sharp antagonisms between Protestants and Catholics, or the intense class conflict that Germans called the 'social question' and that weighed on them far more than the 'Jewish question' did" (131).³ In a corollary to this, Goldhagen insists from the outset that the "social and psychological functions that Jew-hatred, once ensconced, comes to play in people's mental economies" can really only offer an auxiliary and clearly subordinate explanation for the fundamental and basically sufficient role played by "the definition of the moral order as a Christian one, with Jews as its sworn enemies" (43).

In my conclusion I explore this critical enterprise further. For the present, it is more fitting to emphasize that the impulse to broaden and enliven the context of German anti-Semitism is fed by some of Goldhagen's own theoretical assertions, which I intend to follow:⁴

Because antisemitism springs from the bosom of the culture of the antisemites and not from the character of Jews' actions, it is not surprising that the nature of antisemitism in a given society tends to be in harmony with the cultural models that guide contemporary understanding of the social world. (39-40)

Consequently,

it becomes difficult for non-Jews to alter the conception of Jews without altering a wide-ranging and integrated symbol structure, including important cognitive models, upon which people's understanding of society and morality rest. (38)

In light of these cues from Goldhagen's own "recasting" of the "framework for analysis" (Ch. 1), it appears that he initially trots out but then sends back to pasture perspectives that would bear us away from the rather restrictive tendencies of his explanatory model. Contrary to Goldhagen's view, I propose that at least for the decades of the Empire, and very pos-

sibly into the subsequent years, anti-Semitism should be viewed not so much as the "*dominant cognitive thread*" (47, emphasis in original), but rather as an indispensable one among many such threads that are related in a dynamic fashion.

In setting up such a contrast, it is helpful to build on Volkov's earlier contribution. In that article she presents a brief survey of approaches to the historiography of anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany, and she identifies important changes in emphasis and interpretation. While accepting the conclusion that the "decline of the parliamentary antisemitic political parties" appeared to be an established fact by the early 1890s, she maintains that anti-Semitism per se had not changed, merely the form it took had changed: "Antisemitism had spread from the 'sincere' groups to other organizations and it was no less significant or potent for that change of face" ("Antisemitism" 28). Although divested of that immediate institutional environment, anti-Semitism persisted and came to pervade German society on a more general symbolic level, feeding upon and reinforcing the related elements within an anti-emancipatory complex. In the course of this development, Volkov suggests that German "society underwent a process of cultural polarization," with a broadly construed anti-Semitism characterizing the culture of the majority of Germans, and a web of values and norms tied to "emancipation" setting its imprint on the other ("Antisemitism" 34).

This stands in stark contrast to Goldhagen's outlook, as Volkov spells out the implication: "antisemitism was neither identical with the overall 'Germanic culture' of the *Reich*, nor was it merely an element within it" ("Antisemitism" 34). Rather, by the late 1890s, it had become an integral part of a "cultural code" that communicated and was embedded in espousal of certain conservative, "anti-egalitarian" social, political, and moral values ("Antisemitism" 33-35). The broadly anti-emancipatory norms and values identified by Volkov did not necessarily rest upon a conscious or rigorous framework. Indeed, her suggestion that they were all the more pernicious when operating at a casual or submerged level is perhaps illustrated by the rule of thumb of Mann's protagonist, "nicht in auffälliger Weise hinter der Mehrheit zurückzubleiben" (298).

A compelling illustration of much that Volkov's alternative theoretical and historical treatment entails is to be found in Heinrich Mann's novel, *Der Untertan*, conceived and written in the gathering shadow cast by the conflicts within and between the European nations that would issue in

the First World War. Conversely, indicators of the fruitfulness of viewing *Der Untertan* through the lens of Volkov's article are, for one, the absence of any mention of that novel in Robertson's recent survey, *The Jewish Question' in German Literature* [. . .]. For another, the fact that in a suggestive recent schematic survey of the German novel, which includes a chapter on *Der Untertan*, Alfred D. White does not acknowledge the specific, central relevance of anti-Semitism for that work, as racism and anti-Semitism are marginal to the analysis.⁵ Finally, Reinhold Alter's insightful article, "Heinrich Manns Untertan—Prüfstein für die 'Kaiserreich-Debatte'?" does not address the question of anti-Semitism except by citing it and "virulenter Antimarxismus" as examples of "aggressiver Feindbilder" (374).

II.

Heinrich Mann's *Der Untertan* portrays a world skewed by satirical distortions. But it is also a world in which the various social, cultural, and political attitudes and practices that are rendered to such biting effect can be understood as interconnected parts of a larger web. The historiography on Imperial Germany has undergone major revisions in recent years.⁶ The socio-political order of the Wilhelmine period after 1890—presided over by the monarchy, officialdom, and their conservative allies—is now seen as less efficacious at setting its own imprint on events and mentalities or at least limiting the scope and impact of unsanctioned ways of thinking and acting. These interpretations have achieved wide academic acceptance, with the result that one may feel uncertain how to treat a work such as *Der Untertan*. It is hard to deny that the liberal-democratic political sympathies of the author generate a vindictive portrayal of bourgeois hypocrisy in late-nineteenth-century Germany. However, one may still ask, does the book shed light on a set of interconnected attitudes and practices that, although not often treated as a complex, may yet be relevant to continuing efforts of historical interpretation? Drawing on Volkov's suggestive concept of "antisemitism as a cultural code," this paper argues that Mann's provocative novel remains a useful and illuminating document of that time. Indeed, as Helmut Peitsch explains in his introduction to the authoritative English edition, *The Loyal Subject*, in his earlier journalistic writings Mann also espoused anti-Semitic views, and Mann later "stated it a requirement for the satirist to have once been involved in what he is later criticizing" (ix). Perhaps the self-critical awareness thus engendered tempers the por-

trait of his protagonist, who exhibits instances of ambivalence and, most infrequently and fleetingly, even human decency. Nevertheless, as the following will demonstrate, hard-nosed and hypocritical self-interest lead the list of characteristics that predominate in the Wilhelmine milieu that Mann depicts.

The main targets of Mann's unrelenting attack are the bourgeoisie, the institutions of the state, and the chauvinist ideology of the German Empire. It comes as no surprise, then, that serial publication was curtailed in late August 1914, delaying the appearance of the complete book until the breakdown of Wilhelmine regimentation in 1918 (Bertl 131-32; cf. Rumold 170-71). The narrative follows the ruthless rise of the protagonist, Diederich Hessling, from his childhood presumably in the 1870s to the centenary commemoration of Emperor Wilhelm I in 1897. These were years of dynamic social and economic change. The established conservative forces of which the bourgeois Hessling is a willing, upward-striving instrument have preserved a fragile hegemony by the book's close. As the 1890s appear to be the crucial years of this consolidation, that period is the chronological focus in what follows, whereas the thematic focus will be the social and racist prejudices exhibited by Mann's protagonist.

If one were to attempt to sum up the mind-set of Dr. Hessling, it would be difficult to find a better term than "anti-emancipatory." The multiple, interconnected meanings of this term are stressed by Volkov, and drawing upon her categories ("Antisemitism" 31, 33-34) we can clearly identify an anti-emancipatory attitude in Hessling's dealings with various social groups: in his defiance and vilification of working-class organization in party, associations and clubs, that is, his anti-socialism; in his programmatic rejection of and personal efforts to suppress women's self-determination, that is, his anti-feminism; and in his distress with regard to the prospect of Jewish assimilation into German society, that is, his anti-Semitism.⁷

In examining the main aspects of Hessling's anti-emancipatory bent, we begin with the question of socialism. It should be noted that Heinrich Mann was by no means uncritical of social democracy, which he considered to be guilty of parliamentary and political opportunism, and his portrayal of the party reflects that view. As a key to Hessling's perceptions, however, the name of the most prominent and threatening working-class character in the novel is very revealing. For a factory owner like

Hessling, a worker by the name of Napoleon Fischer surely conjures up visions of a populous class perverted by foreign ideas and swelling in revolutionary intent until the moment should arrive to topple the existing order. This particular Napoleon, moreover, is a skilled worker qualified to operate and maintain the key machinery of the Hessling paper manufactory, and in an industrializing, increasingly competitive economy he is thus an indispensable actor who can command higher wages and perhaps insist on other accommodations. In this respect he is a typical member of the SPD, a party that consisted mainly of skilled factory workers and journeymen (Nolan 352), and he is a union man. Hessling's obvious anxiety with regard to Napoleon is at times strangely ambivalent, and one might wonder whether Mann is also poking fun at the personage standing behind the autocratic Hessling, Emperor Wilhelm II, who was notoriously inconsistent and volatile, alternately excoriating as unpatriotic those Germans, especially among the working classes, who would not demonstrate obeisance, and then appealing in loftier tones for loyalty to fatherland and throne. The insecurity and tension of Hessling's relationship to Napoleon is evident in his first encounter with the black-bearded machinist, during which "Diederich zuckte zusammen, fast hätte er dem Arbeiter Platz gemacht. Dafür rannte er ihn mit der Schulter beiseite, bevor der Mann ausweichen konnte" (110).

Although Hessling feels forced to make accommodations with Napoleon based on his self-interest and his sense of anxiety, this does not supplant Hessling's underlying conviction that he is dealing with an inferior breed. Indeed, in that first encounter his latent fears and prejudices, including an irrational hatred towards non-Germanic peoples, come to the fore:

Ein animalischer Haß stieg in Diederich herauf, der Haß senes blonden Fleisches gegen den mageren Schwarzen, den Menschen von einer anderen Rasse, die er gern für niedriger gehalten hätte und die ihm unheimlich schien. (111)

Hessling's racism has its underpinning in popular social Darwinism. One result of this is a remarkable manifestation—for which there is a parallel in the passages that deal with the converted Jew Jadassohn—namely, the perceived physical transformation that accompanies Hessling's moments of uncertainty and related aggression, in the course of which Napoleon takes on a subhuman pose with dragging arms and hunched back. A litany

of features of supposed racial inferiority—"die krummen, mageren Beine des Menschen, seine knöchigen Schulter [. . .] seine starke Kiefer, [. . .] [die] Ausdünstung [des schwarzen Kerls]" (114)—culminates in Hessling's remark: "Gleich wird er auf allen vieren laufen und Nüsse fressen. Dem Affen werden wir ein Bein stellen, verlassen Sie sich darauf!" (114). Despite signs of ambivalence, then, there are moments of uncompromising hatred, and the fierce potential of such an orientation is clear enough when Hessling crows over the gratuitous gunning down of a disgruntled young worker whom Hessling has only just dismissed on the grounds of prurient indiscipline, a far cry from the liberal Lauer's profit-sharing schemes (138-45).

Racism informed by the widespread purchase of social Darwinist modes of thinking links Hessling's anti-socialism and anti-Semitism. Social Darwinist ideas are especially compelling in Mann's rendering for the way in which they facilitate a cross-fertilization of often-vague social and cultural anxieties with the hard realities of bourgeois economic competition as well as class antagonisms. Indeed, Hessling's liberal, part-Jewish, and at moments effeminate generational counterpart, Wolfgang Buck, son of a preeminent notable, is impelled in his dealings with Hessling and the socio-political order Hessling represents to discern a new type of man, as White suggests (74), citing Wolfgang's oration at the trial of an uncle accused by Hessling of defaming the Emperor:

Dann kann es geschehen, daß über das Land sich ein neuer Typus verbreitet, der in Härte und Unterdrückung nicht den traurigen Durchgang zu menschlicheren Zuständen sieht, sondern den Sinn des Lebens selbst. (240)

When Hessling broods over his hatred of Buck, "der Feind, der Antipode" (237), he is reacting to a range of grievances, among them Buck's liberalism, his Jewishness, and his impugning of Hessling's character and social standing. In an earlier episode, in addition to Hessling's perception of traces of effeminacy and disturbing racial difference, it is Buck's "sogenannte feine Bildung" and his upstart social mobility, the way in which this "Judenbengel [. . .] sich aufspielt," that incite Hessling's wrath (82-83).

Hessling acquires his anti-Semitism indirectly, just as he acquires his nationalism and militarism. That is, it is a means to self-advancement in a society that esteems and rewards such racist and chauvinistic behavior.

A formative experience as a schoolboy involves an unusually humiliating variation on the customary mistreatment of Jews in school, "wie es üblich und geboten war" (15), in which Hessling subjects the single Jew in his class to a painful mock crucifixion: "[es] geschah, daß Diederich jede Rücksicht vergaß, sich blindlings betätigte und zum siegestrunkenen Unterdrücker ward" (15). That act earns him the open approval of his classmates and even his masters, and thus it also gives a taste of the social and even material benefits that could result, since "er bekam es leichter seitdem" (15), and his professors were "voll verlegenen Wohlwollens" (15). Indeed, it is implied that his matriculation to the highest class, which assures him of access to university, can hardly be accounted for by his academic achievement (17). Mann's portrayal of Hessling's acquisition of anti-Semitism, and the other contexts of anti-Semitic sentiment that are pursued below, offer an interesting literary corroboration of Volkov's suggestion that anti-Semitism in this period was merely one manifestation—though by no means innocuous—of a wider set of mutually reinforcing reactionary or anti-emancipatory views, "a fitting element in a complex and many-sided culture" ("Antisemitism" 32), and it is worth considering the ways in which such views may have been reinforced by the dictates of self-advancement. For instance, it is surely no coincidence that the early 1890s were marked by a cyclical downturn in the economy.⁸

During his first encounter with Herr Assessor Jadassohn of the Public Prosecutor's Office, Hessling is loath to show respect to a gentleman whose appearance is conceived as conforming to a common Jewish stereotype. As with the socialist machinist, Hessling's anxiety and animosity towards Jadassohn crystallize around a set of alleged racial characteristics, which leads to the following episode: "Dabei betrachtete er schreckerfüllt die ungeheuren, roten und weit abstehenden Ohren" (123). The ears become a grotesque gauge of Hessling's state of anti-Semitic perplexity, for they are taken synecdochically to betray the person's entire character: "seine ganze Miene, sogar die Ohren sahen perfid aus" (170).⁹ When conflict and distrust undermine Hessling and Jadassohn's collaborations, Hessling concludes, "Wirklich national empfinden kann man eben doch nicht mit solchen Ohren" (171-72). With but a little imagination even the name Jadassohn can be seen as an indictment of that person's traitorous and immoral character, for the similarity to 'Judassohn' or son of Judas is surely not coincidental. The extremes of this animosity based on racist, social, religious, and even sexual anxieties are apparent at the

moment during court proceedings when Jadassohn, "drohend aufgerichtet," is illuminated from behind like some vengeful fallen angel, whereupon his prominent ears "blutig leuchteten, und seine Miene heischte von Diederich eine so leichenhafte Gefügigkeit [. . .]" (214).

In order to advance his personal fortunes, however, Hessling is able to suppress some of these outbreaks. Indeed, this anxious ambivalence is an important characteristic of Hessling's anti-Semitism. A superficial camaraderie arises out of his common social contacts with Jadassohn among the Neo-Teutons, a conservative student fraternity, but this endures only as long as the self-serving municipal political coalitions in which both are engaged. Furthermore, despite Jadassohn's impressive reactionary credentials—his inquisitorial stance on rooting out the liberals and socialists, his not atypical refutation of his own religious and ethnic background in condemnation of the "Philister, Nörgler und Juden" (130) who dare to criticize the Emperor, and his unselfconscious celebration of the true-born German—he remains for Hessling and others a focal point of suspicion, anxiety and animosity. Hessling and his compatriots prefer to overlook the role played by their own scramble for material, political and social advantage in giving rise to divisiveness and conflict within German society; rather, Jews such as Jadassohn and their "jüdischer Radikalismus" are blamed: "Wie untersteht sich so ein Jude, uns zu verhetzen?" (180-81; cf. 169). In a related vein, it is worth noting the impact on Hessling of anti-Semitic views expressed by the young feudal aristocrat von Barnim at a gathering of Neo-Teutons during his Berlin days:

"[W]aren sie doch das Prinzip der Unordnung und Auflösung, des Durcheinanderwerfens, der Respektlosigkeit; das Prinzip des Bösen selbst." Sein frommes Gesicht zog sich zusammen vom Haß, und Diederich fühlte mit ihm. (57)

However, a more down-to-earth reason for this animosity is provided in von Barnim's subsequent scornful reference to a certain Herr Frankfurter, who had purchased his aristocratic family estate.

Volkov's discussion of anti-Semitism can also be brought to bear on the fact that Jadassohn, while proscribed from membership in the Veterans' Association, is nevertheless in a position to introduce Hessling to its leading members (130). If the exclusion, motivated by racism, of the Jewish Public Prosecutor from the Veterans' Association can be seen by

these influential German citizens as reconcilable with his inclusion in social and administrative dealings in other settings, then their anti-Semitism is arbitrary and unprincipled, or, in a word, opportunistic (cf. Volkov, "Antisemitism" 28, 31). Finally, given the lingering suspicions regarding Jadasohn despite his national zealotry, religious conversion, fraternity swagger, and so on, there remains a fundamental doubt as to whether Jewish assimilation will ever be possible in such a society. Although the surgical alteration of his "perfidious" ears, undertaken in the imputably decadent French capital, secures him a promotion and confers upon him a new reputation for "Mäßigung" (441), even the "opfervolle[r] Entschluß" (423) of that radical step apparently fails to erase some kind of indelible marker from his identity.¹⁰ In this and other ways, Mann points to the painful and distorting repercussions of "acculturation without integration" (Robertson 285).¹¹

Hessling's attitude towards the role of women is another aspect of an anti-emancipatory complex. Names have a special function in this novel, and it is significant that the first woman with whom Hessling comes into contact as an adult, the young Fräulein Göppel, is given the name Agnes. Her unfortunate namesake was allegedly martyred in fourth-century Rome after she had emerged miraculously unscathed from forced prostitution (Thurston 133-34). Hessling also subjects Agnes Göppel to exploitation and maltreatment, and a plausible consequence for a woman of her time would have been the resort to prostitution, a fate which she is able to escape. Furthermore, it is significant that she does not, as Hessling romantically fears, succumb to despair or resort to suicide either, although his disappointment indicates that this outcome would have pleased his masculine vanity (402). Rather, she goes on to overcome severe tribulations and, in the end, she achieves her modest domestic goals. Her trajectory can be taken positively as an indication of changing social roles and relations between the sexes, and thus as a harbinger of the decline of traditional patriarchal order, the *Herr im Hause* standpoint in which female dependants and workers are similarly subordinated. At least, the fate of Agnes is a far cry from that which Theodor Fontane saw fitting for his doomed heroine in *Effi Briest*, a novel begun in 1888, in which Effi's early demise symbolizes the stiffer resistance to such forms of emancipation in the Prussia-Germany of even the recent past. Perhaps Fontane also sees Effi as a tellingly fragile symbol of a Germany less fixated on power and domination than the Germany of the era of triumphalist nationalism in

which Fontane wrote. Nevertheless, in *Der Untertan*, whereas Agnes evades a tragic fall, Kätchen Zillich, the pastor's daughter, does become a very sought-after, Berlin-trained courtesan in Hessling's provincial milieu. However, her lot should properly be understood as relating to Mann's criticism of the double moral standards of male-dominated Imperial society, and of the ineffectuality of the church. Hessling perpetuates these double standards in his own immediate family: He is quick to forget his emotional avowal, "daß ich meinem Gott für euch Rechenschaft schulde" (105), to care for his legally dependent mother and sisters as soon as his own self-advancement requires the mobilization of the family's resources, and presently he even seizes upon flattering aristocratic precedent to justify further his dishonest reversal (295-96).

The pages of *Der Untertan* are full of nationalist slogans and avowals of conservative unity in the face of the "Red Peril" and other threats to the Imperial order. Despite this, there is a surprising lack of patriotic cohesion and steadfastness when matters of individual material interest and self-advancement become involved. In his economic history of modern Germany, Werner Sombart diagnosed a disappearance of political ideals in the last years of the nineteenth century (qtd. in Golo Mann 546-47). In making this diagnosis, he effectively disregards the prodigious number of nationalist phrases, which he sees as contrived to camouflage a prevailing inner void. In the absence of ideals, the struggle for material advantage dominates social action, and the role of politics becomes instrumental or perfunctory. Hessling is caught in such empty posturing when challenged by Governor von Wulckow to elaborate on his plans if he were to achieve political office: "Was dann?" fragte Wulckow. Diederich wußte es nicht" (292).

The emblematic instance of such complicities is the Gausenfeld affair, in which the dovetailing of political and pecuniary interests on the parts of Hessling, von Wulckow, and others is glaringly evident: as one commentator has observed, "patriotic phrases are a front for self-enrichment" (White 76). A third party to these dealings, Napoleon Fischer, breaks that mould somewhat by effectively disavowing the material interests of a worker injured on the job in order to achieve a political aim (a seat in the Reichstag as well as "Agitationsstoff" with which to discredit "die ersten Kreisen") (266-69). The principal elements of the multifaceted, convoluted affair are as follows. From Hessling's first glimmer of von Wulckow's crucial role in achieving his ambitions (244), he seeks political influence as

a platform from which to bluster about Emperor and Fatherland, but primarily as a way of expanding his business and sidelining competitors. Chief among these is the Gausenfeld works, and since the trial Hessling's position has been eroded, in part because the Jewish department store owner Cohn has been driven by his sympathies for Hessling's opponent at that time to give galling preference for the Christmas catalogs to Gausenfeld (182). The details of the ensuing trading of political influence for economic gain are worked out through innuendo and at times a more forthright articulation of quid pro quo (e.g. 282-94). At any early stage of this aligning of interests, Hessling is assured of election to the Municipal Council, whereas von Wolckow gains allies in defeating the Liberals' recently created labor exchange service, which has drawn the Junker's ire by bleeding his estate of agricultural workers and also providing a dangerous impetus for a "Koalition der Landarbeiter" (288-89). As the affair approaches its climax, in frank dialog von Wolckow informs Hessling of the award of a patriotic medal from the Imperial government, and he offers Hessling government contracts and preferences of which the mere mention will drive the rival in Gausenfeld into his arms. In addition, von Wolckow accedes to Hessling's complicity in the political goals of the Social Democrat Napoleon, gaining in return guarantees to carry out plans for the construction of a patriotic monument to Emperor Wilhelm I (331-39), support in the municipal council to secure acceptance of financial burdens associated with construction of a railway spur to the town (403-15), and a tidy pecuniary windfall arising from construction of the patriotic monument (458-60). Murky stock-market machinations generate additional spoils for those involved in the affair (425-26).

In a similar vein, Hessling's plans after taking over the family business reflect the degradation and distortion of national principles, problematic enough by their own lights, to biting satirical effect: "Man mußte konkurrenzfähig werden. Der Platz an der Sonne!" (107). This is a clear, if unobtrusive, reference to Chancellor von Bülow's speech in the Reichstag in December 1897, in which he celebrated the Empire's recent colonial acquisition in China as the inauguration of a far-flung *Weltpolitik* and announced the desire of the German nation to take its rightful "place in the sun." The many instances in *Der Untertan* of the mystical alignment of Hessling, the semi-official denizen, with imperial power are exemplified by his anticipation of Bülow's historic rhetoric. It is worth noting that Hessling represents an ambiguous relationship to power, as he is at times

little more than an impressionable appendage of that power, whereas in the case relating to *Weltpolitik* and elsewhere Hessling appears in the vanguard of policy and agenda-setting. This suggests that Mann does not offer the untenable caricature that political culture in Imperial Germany is shaped only by manipulation from above, but rather that politics and political culture are also susceptible to impulses arising from a mobilization at the grass-roots level.¹² But mostly, by permitting Hessling to appropriate the grand allusion to "a place in the sun" within the vulgar context of bourgeois economic competition, Mann reveals the hollowness of Hessling's nationalist rhetoric and discredits his motivations as opportunistic and basically dishonest.

Perhaps Mann also seeks in this way to link the launching of German world politics in the years 1895 to 1897-98 with the ultimate demise of the Imperial order.¹³ That demise is clearly foreshadowed by the violent storm that ruins the commemorative celebrations surrounding the unveiling of the monument to Emperor Wilhelm I, in which Hessling plays a central role. The monument has a further significance as a symbol of the victory of the conservative nationalist ideology over the liberal alternative, which here assumes the guise of a children's asylum,¹⁴ for the allocation of government funds rendered all the more scarce by the anticipated appropriations for naval construction. This victory is highlighted by the death of Old Buck, one of the last surviving revolutionary fighters of '48, symbolizing the eclipse of notables' control of municipal and provincial politics (*Honoratiorenpolitik*). Thus, writing in a satirical mode, Mann offers a kind of anti-*Bildungsroman*¹⁵ and shows that the rise of Hessling's fortunes, and his farcical advances in the sphere of municipal politics, are in fact indicators of German decline. In his hypocritical pursuit of material and social advantage, as in his espousal of anti-emancipatory views, Diederich Hessling deserves recognition as a fitting exponent of his Wilhelmine milieu.¹⁶

III.

This revisiting of Volkov's article and Mann's novel goes against the grain of two recent historiographical revisions. On the one hand, this paper points to features of Wilhelmine society that tend to efface the image of a society in step, in terms of social and political modernization, with its neighbors west of the Rhine and, in particular, across the Channel. In the

absence of a comparative perspective, however, I would propose this as a cautious corrective relative to Goldhagen's embrace of a German *Sonderweg* and his thesis of a "*sui generis*" German culture (419), although even Volkov in her decidedly less monolithic explanatory model discerns a "unique German culture emerging in the 1890s" ("Antisemitism" 31). Aspects of that culture—or to follow Volkov, the antagonistic cultural fronts—have been explored here, but they would admittedly merit a more comprehensive analysis as well as exploration of the wider European comparative dimension.

On the other hand (and more to the point), there is the seismic impact of Goldhagen's enterprise. If the challenge presented by Goldhagen is not to languish either in avid (popular) acceptance or in unreceptive admonishment, alternative models or explanations of anti-Semitism need to be taken in hand which are better able to withstand at least three areas of criticism: first, diachronic scrutiny, which I hope to have demonstrated with regard to the years of the German Empire, and which Stern has suggested also pertains to Goldhagen's treatment of the watershed years of the First World War (131, cf. Goldhagen 81-82), and at all events there is the implicit question of the character and durability of specific historical formations of anti-Semitism; second, with regard to the early 1940s (including the aftermath of war), the need to consider in a more forthright manner the evidence of murderous anti-Semitism elsewhere in Europe; and third, the need to set forth in a less selective and predetermined way the manner and the context in which the Nazi regime manufactured widely varying degrees of consent throughout the years of power.¹⁷ Redressing this last imbalance would require, among other things, exploring factors that do not necessarily allow for the definitive interpretation to which Goldhagen is inclined. Here I am referring, for example, to studies on euthanasia and "medicine against the useless" (Friedlander, Burleigh, Aly); and also to Wolfgang Sofsky's account of the genesis and "order" of the concentration camp, with its emphasis on the incomprehensibly vicious and murderous behavior towards German Social Democrats and Communists, the first victims of the Nazi regime in 1933 and 1934.¹⁹ In a similar vein, it would be necessary to accommodate research which suggests, according to Christl Wickert, that many denunciations on the part of ordinary citizens to Nazi authorities regarding anti-State and "racial" infractions involved "accusers and accused [. . .] from the same personal and professional cir-

cumstances," that they arguably "stemmed from personal conflicts," and that as such they "were not evidence that the population really adhered to Nazi anti-Semitism, [but rather that] accusers used anti-Semitism to their own advantage" (283-84).²⁰

In different ways, these three areas of concern are ones upon which the combined perspectives of Volkov and Mann may have an indirect bearing. The embeddedness of anti-Semitism in a complex of anti-emancipatory attitudes, and the diffuse manner in which these attitudes were acquired and became socially and politically efficacious, arguably shifts the emphasis of explanation away from anti-Semitism as construed by Goldhagen. I have already pointed to the explanatory tension that follows from Goldhagen's assertions along the lines that "to abandon anti-Semitism would necessitate a discomforting reconceptualization of the social order" (43). What is more, the dynamism *implied* in that way of understanding anti-Semitism comports better with Goldhagen's forceful insistence that anti-Semitism does not actually disappear when it is not in flagrant evidence, but rather that it remains present and is only less manifest at such times (43-44).²¹

Despite the apparent tenacity of anti-Semitism raised to a "cultural axiom" (419), for the period after 1945 Goldhagen registers its dissipation, although the immediate postwar years saw a lingering widespread "profound" anti-Semitism (419).²² Thus, if the Nazi interregnum did not provide for the expurgation of the "hallucinatory," "demonizing" world view that according to Goldhagen dominated and defined German culture, post-war reeducation and the cessation of the anti-Semitic tenor in the German "public conversation" (606) helped establish a basis for a new political culture. However, offering a further inadvertent indication of the fruitfulness of Volkov's approach, Goldhagen also muses that "the Nazified view of Jews, because it was so at odds with reality, was also fragile; its hallucinatory components were difficult to maintain without institutional reinforcement" (606). Indeed, precisely this kind of reasoning points back to the mutual reinforcement that Volkov discerns, although her analysis admittedly focuses on an earlier period. Therefore, as intriguing as Goldhagen's explanations may be, questions remain regarding continuity, radicalization, and finally the dissipation of anti-Semitism, and such incongruities suggest that Goldhagen may ultimately insist on too static a model. Indeed, although he takes to task unspecified scholars in the thrall of "transhistorical and invariant psychological propensities," such as the

"slavish following of narrow 'self-interest'" (13), Goldhagen's maneuvering particularly on the question of continuity, but also on the question of what actually constitutes a monocausal explanation (416-20), does not always preserve him from a similar charge (cf. Stern 129).

Allowing for the constructive impulses that undoubtedly arise from Goldhagen's project, if his tendentially monocausal "eliminationist" model is rolled back, a heinous but at least in some sense "positive" explanation of ordinary Germans' perpetration of the Holocaust is forfeited. However, this may have the partially beneficial effect of redirecting historical scholarship, and even the attention of an engaged public, back to the bitter and perplexing fruits of earlier explanatory efforts, and to the concomitant reappraisal of earlier phases of anti-Semitism in German culture. In effect, by reasserting perspectives such as Volkov's, or that of others who, like Stern, point to the significance for the relationship of ordinary Germans to Jewry of an attitude of "extrusion" (132) rather than "elimination," we are left with what seems a more plausibly "incontestable" (cf. Stern 129) web of anti-emancipatory tendencies, a kind of lowest common denominator for which definitive status perhaps cannot be claimed, but which accounts more fully for historical complexity. Heinrich Mann's depiction of German society, as this paper demonstrates, highlights this web and points not only to mutually reinforcing social and racist prejudice but also to the significance of opportunism and (submissive) accommodation, both in the acquisition and espousal of anti-emancipatory attitudes. These are areas that warrant renewed attention as we seek to understand the character and purchase of anti-Semitism in German society and the durability of its specific historical formations.

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Notes

* I would like to thank the journal's anonymous referee for substantive comments and suggestions that greatly helped to improve this article.

¹ For references to the ongoing discussion of Goldhagen's thesis, and for an analysis of the public reception and impact of Goldhagen's work, see Eley "Goldhagen Effect."

² See also Volkov, *Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus*, an essay compilation now available as the timely recent reissue, *Antisemitismus als kultureller Code*. It is striking that, in the wake of Goldhagen, Volkov's essays have not only been reissued in Germany, but in a way that highlights her (alternative and contrasting) approach as one dealing, like Goldhagen, with anti-Semitism as a "cultural" model.

³ Stern 131. See also Goldhagen's rather shrill and diffuse response: Goldhagen, "Germans vs. the Critics." A significant portion of this appears in the "Afterword to the Vintage Edition," in Goldhagen, *Executioners* 463-66.

⁴ However, in terms of his research into and depiction of the concrete reality of Germans' appalling actions during the Third Reich, Goldhagen certainly manages to "enliven" the historical record.

⁵ The author sums up in the following words: "[Diederich] refuses his true nature in favor of a brew of capitalism, imperialism, misunderstood idealism, sado-masochistic sex and patriarchalism." (White 73).

⁶ For an extensive bibliography as well as examples of this scholarship, see Eley, *Society*. Alter's article provides many interesting insights into the relevance of *Der Untertan* for these historiographical debates.

⁷ The categories that I emphasize here in regard to a specific framework for analysis are, of course, not exhaustive. For instance, the prevalent militarism, authoritarianism, and deeply ambivalent relationship to liberalism (thus not exactly "anti-liberalism") would also merit separate attention, but for present purposes they are treated in connection with my principal categories. However, I would like to point to Volkov's emphasis regarding the connection between anti-feminism and anti-Semitism, although this cannot be addressed specifically within the frame of the present contribution. See "Antisemitism" 34.

⁸ The impact of earlier economic crisis periods on anti-Semitic discourse and on perceptions of Jews in German society is widely documented. For some interesting observations regarding the Jewish presence in German literature, see Krobbe, esp. 5-6, 9.

⁹ I am grateful for the suggestion that the satirical exaggeration of the ears, rather than the vulgar stereotype of a distinctive proboscis, is an attempt on Mann's part to avoid a cliché; there is also the implication that, in the absence of the one absurd racist fixation, another can and probably would be fastened upon.

In addition, I am grateful to David Prickett for the suggestion that Mann's emphasis on Jadassohn's ears can be interpreted in connection to a criminological discourse on "types." This discourse had its roots in the late eighteenth century, was prominent in the late nineteenth century, and was later appropriated by the Nazis. For a detailed discussion of these ideas, including the international scope of their application, see Sekula.

¹⁰ Indeed, it is almost as if the brunt of anxiety and suspicion relative to Jadassohn that Hessling formerly exhibits (in his actions, speech and thoughts) becomes subsumed in the narrator's perspective. For instance, it is no longer the oblivious Hessling but rather the narrator who implies that Jadassohn is trading

pillow talk with Guste, Hessling's wife. Clearly, this draws on a stereotype of the Jew as devious sexual predator that Hessling himself has often appropriated: "Jadassohn lachte mit noch mehr Grund, als Diederich meinte; denn er hatte es schon längst für seine sittliche Pflicht gehalten, Frau Generaldirektor Hessling aufzuklären über diese Zusammenhänge." (Mann 451).

¹¹ David Prickett has kindly called attention to the relevance of the concept of Jewish "self-hatred" in connection with Jadassohn. Jadassohn's desperate resolve to seek surgical intervention can perhaps be paired with his efforts, described above, "to become more German than the Germans" (Robertson 286; cf. 285-345). See also Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*.

¹² See Eley, "The Wilhelmine Right," on this question. I mention Eley because, in that light, one might choose to reexamine White's claim that "the mutual quotations, misquotations and pseudo-quotations of master and man, the small-town parallels to state and court sensations, shape the story and underline the theme of the loyalist's psychology, but do nothing for sober social history." (White 72). Thus, even in such caricatures Mann's depiction has nuance.

¹³ Cf. Alter 384, where the author suggests that "the contrast between the Second French Republic of Napoleon III and the German Empire, which Mann sneaks into the speech of his protagonist at the unveiling of the monument to Emperor William I, implies that power politics contains within it the seed of its own demise."

¹⁴ As Rumold points out, however, even this symbol of a liberal social order is sullied by the self-interest of its main sponsor (174).

¹⁵ Cf. Peitsch, who suggests that "the narrator's comment at the end of Diederich's 'apprenticeship' recalls Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and so brings out that [*Der Untertan*] begins as an inverted version of the Bildungsroman" (xiii).

¹⁶ For a more critical view regarding the validity of Mann's portrayal of characteristic mentalities in the German Empire, see Nipperdey, cited in Alter 371-73.

¹⁷ For indications of the complex ramifications when dealing, for example, with denunciation and both the material and non-material considerations on the part of those who participated in the oppressive and finally genocidal apparatuses of Nazi Germany, see the recent synthesis by Robert Gellately.

¹⁸ An example of Goldhagen's proclivity for definitive explanation and the impact this has on his presentation of the institutional and developmental contexts of anti-Semitism is his treatment of the Nazis' euthanasia program: "It is highly implausible to maintain that Hitler and those who implemented the so-called Euthanasia program set out to kill, by the tens of thousands, non-Jewish Germans with mental illness but did not consider, let alone believe with religious-like certitude, that the Jews—conceived of as being far more malignant and dangerous—ought to share this fate." This seems a preemptory form of argumentation (Goldhagen 143. Cf. 162-63).

¹⁹ Stern 133-34 refers to Sofsky. These groups included, of course, non-Jewish and Jewish victims.

²⁰ However, cf. the summarizing assertion: "Denunciations with antisemitic content often veiled the real motives stemming from pure self-interest. Antisemitism was a means to other ends." (Wickert 295). I would suggest that Wickert's findings corroborate my interpretive effort by highlighting the potential connections of racist and social prejudice. To put a finer point on this, racist and social prejudice, alloyed with self-interest, were often mutually reinforcing, and therefore Wickert's (perhaps rhetorical) reference to "pure self-interest" may be misleading.

²¹ This inverted perspective is one aspect of his treatment for which Goldhagen claims originality. But it would seem that the significance of the new perspective is muted if one agrees to some extent with the criticisms either raised or referred to in this paper. In addition, Volkov's analysis points to the alternately latent and manifest nature of anti-Semitism, but the only reference I am able to find in Goldhagen's book is to her study on German artisans, Volkov, *The Rise of Popular Antimodernism*.

²² (Goldhagen, *Executioners* 419). For Goldhagen's ambiguous appraisal of anti-Semitism after 1945 and in the Federal Republic, see 442, and esp. 605-06, fn. 53.

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„hier kommt sowas nicht vor“?: Fremdbilder in Theodor Fontanes *Effi Briest*

Birte Schulz

Man kann beim Lesen von Theodor Fontanes *Effi Briest* nicht umhin festzustellen, wie präsent fremde Länder und Kulturen in diesem Roman sind. Der (angeblich) in Effis Haus spukende Chinese, der multikulturelle Charakter der Kessiner Bevölkerung und die Reisen der Innstetters nach Italien und Dänemark sind nur einige offensichtliche Beispiele dafür, wie Ausländer und Ausländisches in *Effi Briest* eingesetzt werden.

Eine der neuesten Studien zu diesem Thema ist die von Julian Preece mit dem Titel *Fear of the foreigner: Chinese, Poles and other Non-Prussians in Theodor Fontane's Effi Briest*. Ausgehend von der Feststellung, daß alle Figuren in Fontanes Roman durch ihre Volks- bzw. Religions-zugehörigkeit identifiziert werden, was „race“ zu einem sub-textuellen Thema mache, interessiert sich Preece hauptsächlich für die Problematik von nationalen Vorurteilen und die subtile Art ihrer Verwendung in *Effi Briest*. Zunächst geht Preece daran, die wichtigsten der zu Fontanes Zeit herrschenden Vorurteile zu identifizieren. So stellt er z. B. für Golchowski, den Chinesen und Crampas fest: „In the eyes of the Prussians they are all generally untrustworthy and sexually dangerous to German women“ (173). Preece argumentiert weiter, Fontane entwerfe eine Art moralische Landkarte, die das Beurteilungssystem der Preußen wiederspiegele. Auf dieser Landkarte gebe es sowohl moralisch ‚sichere‘ Gebiete („the centre“, Preußen, aber auch Skandinavien und Schottland) als auch ‚unsichere‘ („the periphery“, Osteuropa, Südeuropa, China und Afrika) (190). Der Name einer Person (als Indiz für die Volkszugehörigkeit) oder ihr aktueller Aufenthaltsort helfen laut Preece, sie innerhalb dieses Systems zu lokalisieren und damit moralisch einzuordnen.¹ Fontane stelle jedoch durch sein subtiles Spiel mit althergebrachten Vorurteilen eben dieses Klassifizierungsprinzip in Frage,²