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## “O My Daughter!”: “Die schöne Jüdin” and “Der neue Jude” in Hermann Sinsheimer’s *Maria Nunnez*

In the Preface to the English language version of his *Shylock: The History of a Character* (1946), Hermann Sinsheimer, former editor of the *Feuilleton* of the *Berliner Tageblatt* (1930–1933) and of *Simpli-cissimus* (1923–1929) describes his motivations for writing the text,

So I left Germany in spirit. I no longer looked on the enemy, but on the victims. Outwardly I continued to live in the German air and in the atmosphere of Nazism, but the whole of my inward life was absorbed by Judaism and, more particularly, Zionism. Was it escapism? I think not. I believe it was a final homecoming. No longer a Rhineland or a German Jew, I had become but one of those European Jews now again victimised as so often before.<sup>1</sup>

In this Preface, Sinsheimer relates his struggle with his German-Jewish identity as he lived and worked in Berlin between 1933 and 1938. Before 1933, Sinsheimer was engaged in a wide variety of cultural projects, writing theater and film critique, novels and a monograph on the works of Heinrich Mann. Sinsheimer also produced a short-lived political magazine, *Der Wagenlenker*, and directed the Munich *Kammerspiel* for one season in 1916–17. In the *Shylock* Preface Sinsheimer tells the reader that, until 1933, he had considered himself “brought up as a German and a Jew (not as a Jew and a German)” (18–19). But, as he elaborates in a section of his autobiography entitled “Wege ins Freie,” after the National Socialist rise to

power forced him from the *Berliner Tageblatt*, he turned to Zionism and became immersed in the work of the Berlin Jewish *Kulturbund*.<sup>2</sup> Sinsheimer describes that during this time he experienced a radical split between his outer “German” identity and his inner “Jewish self,” an identity crisis reflected in his literary and critical production.<sup>3</sup> In addition to writing numerous pieces for Jewish newspapers between 1933 and 1938, Sinsheimer also researched and wrote his *Shylock: Die Geschichte einer Figur* and published three historical novels: *Maria Nunnez: Eine jüdische Überlieferung* (1934), *Rabbi, Golem und Kaiser* (1935) and *Die Abenteurer der Grazia Mendez*, the last third of which appeared in serial in the *Jüdische Rundschau* in 1936.<sup>4</sup> Each of these novels focuses on a Jewish figure whose faith provides a kind of numinous power that allows the combating of oppression but wins the admiration of non-Jews.

Sinsheimer’s story clearly belongs to what Wolfgang Benz has termed the “Exil der kleinen Leute.” Despite his considerable contributions to cultural life in Germany, for example his work as an editor and his prolific body of writings on Jewish and non-Jewish themes, Sinsheimer remains virtually unknown. When his name is recognized on either side of the Atlantic, it is usually solely for his work on *Shylock*.<sup>5</sup> In this essay I will examine *Maria Nunnez*, in which Sinsheimer adds fictional flesh to the bare bones of Jewish historical record. In a 1683 account, the Dutch historian

Daniel Levi De Barrios recounted that in 1597 the beautiful Maria Nuñez set sail with four relatives from Lisbon to Amsterdam, but was intercepted by an English ship. The ship's noble captain fell in love with Maria, but following a brief imprisonment in the Tower, Maria, after meeting Elizabeth I, was freed by the monarch to travel with her companions on to Amsterdam. Following this plot outline, Sinsheimer embellishes key scenes and key characters, especially Maria and her uncle Tirado and the Jewish poet, Belmonte.<sup>6</sup>

The novel focuses upon characters undergoing crises of identity; Maria's disguise as a boy during the voyage and the *Marrano* identity of all the Jews in the novel create tensions between inner and outer identities that act as metaphors for the crisis of German-Jewish identity faced by German Jews in the 1930s.<sup>7</sup> Maria, a young woman disguised as a young man, is doubly disguised through her *Marrana* identity—outwardly Catholic, inwardly Jewish. These two layers of “transvestism,” however, do more than simply parallel each other. Within nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses about “Jewishness,” gender and transgendering do not simply mirror the uneasy relationship between Jewish and national identities, but are implicated in the gendering of “Jewishness” itself. Through his use of the figure of the *schöne Jüdin* and his references to the New Jew, Sinsheimer wrestles with the way in which antisemitic discourses have configured male and female Jews within intersecting discourses of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality.<sup>8</sup> In reaction to antisemitic discourses that present hyperfeminized, sensualized Jewish women and ineffectual, emasculated Jewish men, Sinsheimer attempts to define a “masculine Jewishness” in his novel by presenting Jews who are brave, strong, and absolutely devoted to a Judaism that they have sensed intuitively despite being ostensibly Catholic. Sinsheimer's novel counters antisemitic stereotypes of emasculated Jewish men

and the beautiful Jewesses who abandon them by presenting both his male and female Jewish characters as empowered and masculinized by their commitment to Judaism and Jewry. Indeed, Sinsheimer figures Maria's proto-Zionist yearnings as masculine by literally clothing her as a man.

In *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, Marjorie Garber demonstrates the ways in which transvestism functions to question the hegemony of cultural categories and to point to places of crisis within them by generating a category of uncertainty, the place of the “third” (11). As I will argue, despite his emphasis on the masculine, Sinsheimer's manipulations with gender and the place of the “third” created by his main character's identity “crossings” are a means of discussing a complex crisis of German-Jewish identity. Sinsheimer ultimately responds to this crisis with a masculinizing Zionism, but the novel's cross-dressing also points to the ambiguities and tensions of the most fraught place of the “third” in Sinsheimer's novel, German-Jewish identity. As I will show, the conflict between national and Jewish identities is the central crisis in the novel and one that Sinsheimer subtly explores through characters who vary in gender, age and experience.<sup>9</sup>

### Sinsheimer's New Jew

In June 1936 Sinsheimer contributed a pair of articles to the *Israelitisches Familienblatt*: “Rückkehr zum Judentum” und “Treue zum Judentum,” in which he urges readers to take an active, Zionist approach towards Judaism.<sup>10</sup> Sinsheimer's zeal for a “return” to Judaism and Jewry reflects his own new and passionate commitment to Zionism. In “Treue zum Judentum” he writes,

Der Neu-Jude in Deutschland also braucht die jüdische Gemeinschaft und

die jüdische Umwelt.[...] Er muß sich selbst und ganz an das Judentum hingeben. Er muß begeisterungs- und eifervoller Jude werden. Er muß lernen, lernen, lernen, wieder ein Jude zu sein. Dies aber verlangt, daß er viele und liebe Erinnerungen aufgibt und sein Gedächtnis und Gemüt für neue Inhalte öffnet, für die großen jüdischen Inhalte einer tausendjährigen Vergangenheit. (119)

Advocating a turn away from an assimilationist embrace of German culture and a turn toward Zionism, Sinsheimer creates a program for Jewish renewal. The feverish study he emphasizes reflects his own plunge into Jewish learning and the historically-based criticism and fiction he produced in the 1930s and 1940s. Sinsheimer's belief that many "liebe Erinnerungen" must be sacrificed in the name of *Judentum* reflects the sense of loss he later so directly conveys in his *Shylock* Preface.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to presenting views directly influenced by personal experiences, Sinsheimer's reference to a New Jew echoes Max Nordau's famous call for a reinvigorated *Muskeljudentum* at the Second Zionist Congress in 1898.<sup>12</sup> Nordau's concept of the New Jew responds to an entire constellation of prejudices against the male Jew, who was depicted as a cowardly weakling, incapable of physical activities such as farming or military service.<sup>13</sup> As Sander Gilman has shown, the modern stereotype of the male Jew tended to feminize him. Jewish men were thought, for example, to suffer more frequently from hysteria, a "feminine" disorder; they were also figured as emasculated through circumcision.<sup>14</sup> But as Gilman demonstrates, the male Jew was also often characterized as a type of "third sex," neither masculine nor feminine.<sup>15</sup> Christina von Braun has discussed how antisemitic representations presented the male Jew as simultaneously "lüstern," "geil," and "unmännlich" (9).<sup>16</sup> The stereotypical view that Jewish men lacked virility reached a peak in the late nineteenth cen-

tury, as John M. Hoberman explains in his discussion of the milieu that fostered the writings of Otto Weininger, whose widely read *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) linked a feminine and Jewish inferiority that he opposes to a superior masculinity.<sup>17</sup>

The masculine and masculinist thrust of Nordau's model is not lost on Sinsheimer, who continues with a discussion of what he views as the New Jewish and how the *Kulturbund* should help create it:

Ein Beispiel für viele: in den letzten drei Jahren haben wir in Vorträgen, Artikeln, Gedichten und Romanen genug und übergenug und — immer wieder von der Rahel, der Henriette Herz und der Dorothea Schlegel e tutti quanti gehört und gelesen. Wir mußten viele neue Hoch- oder Volksschulkurse in "solcher Kultur" durchmachen. Weghören oder wegsehen half nichts. Wir sollten noch einmal (zum letzten Male?) stolz gemacht werden auf jene Frauen und auch auf Männer, die doch nichts anderes waren als die Wegbahner für die Flucht aus dem Judentum. Wir wollen die historischen Meriten jener Inhaber und Inhaberinnen der berüchtigten oder auch berühmten "bureaux d'esprit" gewiß nicht verkleinern. Aber sie sind heute so unzeitgemäß wie nur möglich, denn sie tragen (und dies wohl auch mit dem Willen ihrer heutigen Herolde!) dazu bei, die ganz andern Probleme der Juden von heute künstlich zu beschwichtigen oder gar unsichtbar zu machen. (120)

Implying that assimilation has feminized Jewry, Sinsheimer appeals to his audience of Jewish men and women, asking them to embrace a masculinized model of *Judentum*. For him, the German-Jewish turn away from Judaism is embodied in the famous *Salon Jüdinnen* of the late eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> By polarizing the Zionist term New Jew with the assimilationist world of the *Salon Jüdin*, Sinsheimer effectively genders assimilation as feminine, as opposed to a masculine and masculinizing Zionism. We are further alerted that

Sinsheimer is referring to issues of gender by his use of both the masculine and feminine plurals (“Inhaber” and “Inhaberen”), which is atypical of his writings.

Sinsheimer ends “Rückkehr zum Judentum” with a statement that further stresses the masculine. “Köpfe” he writes, “hat das Judentum von jeher genug gehabt — heute braucht es Herzen, tapfere männliche Herzen, die in allem Jüdischen so kompromißlos sind wie dieses selbst seit Jahrtausenden” (118). Aligning the head with the intellect, assimilation and the feminine, Sinsheimer deems the heart and spirit as brave, masculine and Zionist.<sup>19</sup> In Sinsheimer’s post-1933 corpus, power, strength and commitment to the Jewish religion and people are gendered masculine and even his fictional female Jewish characters become masculinized when they adhere to their Jewish faith.

In his male characters, Sinsheimer attempts to provide models of strong, masculine (even hypermasculine) Jews along the lines of Nordau’s New Jew—men who are as capable of bravery and physical prowess as their non-Jewish counterparts. Sinsheimer’s opening description of Maria’s father emphasizes his strength; Sinsheimer’s portrait of Tirado emphasizes his adventure-some nature. In order to establish Tirado’s masculinity, Sinsheimer pairs Tirado with other characters in the novel. A resemblance is stressed between Tirado and the English Duke and is made explicit as an expression not only of Tirado’s masculinity, but his humanity:

Der Herzog nämlich, ein Mann von etwa fünfundzwanzig Jahren, sah Jakob Tirado ähnlich wie ein jüngerer Bruder dem älteren. Tirado sah wenig portugiesisch oder jüdisch aus, er sah eben aus wie ein Mensch, der zwei Jahrzehnte seines Lebens und länger auf dem Wasser und unterm freien Himmel zugebracht hatte, nicht nur die Tage, sondern auch viele Nächte, kurzum: er sah aus wie ein Seemann. (72)

Sharing a common bond of the sea, Tirado and the Duke represent two separate, proud lineages (*Stamm*), the English and the Jewish.<sup>20</sup> Sinsheimer portrays the two as sharing many a mug of English beer together, and his lingering, humorous portrayals of Tirado’s fondness for drink seem an attempt to establish the character as a hard-living, hard-drinking sailor, “ein wetterfester Kerl.”<sup>21</sup>

The strength and daring of Tirado’s *Marrano* crew are also emphasized. His first mate is “Mitte der zwanzig und stark wie Simson” (50). Maria’s brother, Manuel, and the poet Belmonte also toil, scaling the masts as boldly as the rest. The Jewish crew attempts to defend itself against the much greater English force and finally, even as Maria’s beauty dazzles the English populace, so are they impressed with the strength of one of the crew: “Josephs Sohn, der Athlet, zeigte seine erstaunlichen Körperkräfte, er hob zentnerschwere Eisenstücke und gab so ein Bild auch von der äußeren Kraft, die im Volke Israel wohnte” (208). These portrayals of Jewish bravery and physical prowess, part of what Sinsheimer calls his “freie Erzählung” of Maria’s story, are very often presented through the eyes of non-Jewish characters, who seem to serve as putative impartial witnesses to Jewish virtues, further evidence against antisemitic stereotypes.

Sinsheimer is drawn to strong Jewish female characters, who, through their absolute commitment to Judaism, act as leaders and examples for other Jews in times of oppression. Paula Hyman notes that viewing Jewish women as being responsible for the transmission of Jewish religion and culture was not atypical; within many German-Jewish discussions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, women were represented as responsible for (and thereby also limited to) maintaining Jewish homes and traditions, even as men encountered the gentile world.<sup>22</sup> If the *Salon Jüdin* is a female intellectual moving in aristocratic gentile circles, Sinsheimer’s

ideal Jewish woman is the opposite of these female vanguards of assimilation: Jewish to her core in the midst of non-Jewish environments that both threaten and entice. To create a model of the idealized Jewish woman in *Maria Nunnez*, Sinsheimer re-appropriates the *schöne Jüdin*, a figure that Florian Krobb notes encompasses the historical *Salon Jüdinnen*; Sinsheimer transforms the *schöne Jüdin* from a figure who represents an abandonment of Jewish tradition into a positive symbol of the Jewish *Volk*.<sup>23</sup>

### Die schöne Jüdin

Scholars analyzing antisemitism and representations of Jews have often noticed the relative invisibility of Jewish women; most stereotypes of Jews seem to focus on the Jewish man.<sup>24</sup> An important exception is the figure of *schöne Jüdin*, also known as *la belle juive* or the beautiful Jewess. Jean-Paul Sartre's now classic analysis pinpoints the sado-masochistic eroticism so often present in this figure:

Il y a dans les mots "une belle juive" une signification sexuelle très particulière et fort différente de celle qu'on trouvera par exemple dans ceux de "belle Roumaine," "belle Grecque" ou "belle Américaine." C'est qu'ils ont comme un fumet de viol et de massacres. La belle juive, c'est celle que les Cosaques du tsar traînent par les cheveux dans les rues de son villages en flammes; [...] Il n'en faut pas plus, je crois, pour marquer la valeur de symbole sexuel que prend la Juive dans le folklore.<sup>25</sup>

Sartre's beautiful Jewess, dragged by soldiers through her ravished village, brings together the sexual and political elements of this stereotype: the Jewish woman as pathetic yet desirable victim. The sexual attractiveness of the *schöne Jüdin* can only be understood within the context of the violent domination and destruction of

her fellow Jews. In her analysis of French *fin-de-siècle* portraits of Jewish women, Carol Ockman notes that the figure of *la belle juive* comes to symbolize the Western masculine sexual domination of the "Orient," merging the stereotype of the sensual Jewess with the also eroticized figure of the "oriental" beauty.<sup>26</sup>

The *schöne Jüdin* figure also encompasses some variations. Charlene Lea breaks down this type into *la belle juive* and *la juive fatale*.<sup>27</sup> The latter of these traditions seems to derive from medieval ballads, such as the English "The Jew's Daughter," in which a Jewish girl uses an apple to entice a Christian lad into her home, where she then stabs him to death.<sup>28</sup> Rather than acting as a passive victim to rapacious non-Jews like *la belle juive*, *la juive fatale* embodies dangerous sensuality, and is linked to figures such as Salome and also to the nineteenth-century actress Sarah Bernhardt, who portrayed Salome in Oscar Wilde's version of her story.<sup>29</sup> As Sander Gilman has shown, this figure of the lethal Jewess was associated with the black arts, as in Grillparzer's *Jüdin von Toledo*, and later with the threat of syphilis.<sup>30</sup> The variation of the *schöne Jüdin* on which Sinsheimer draws is that of the figure's less threatening form, one which often tends to meet a selfless, tragic end. Scholars have traced this figure of the *schöne Jüdin* back to famous ancient Hebrew beauties such as Rachel, Leah and Esther, and to the medieval figures for the Church and the Synagogue, Ecclesia and Synagoga.<sup>31</sup> This type of *schöne Jüdin* finds its most famous early modern examples in Abigail and Jessica, the Jewish daughters in the early modern English plays, Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>32</sup> Both of these characters ultimately betray their fathers for Christian lovers, beginning the classic pairing of the withered old Jew and his "delectable daughter" so famously elaborated through the characters of Issac of York and his beau-

tiful daughter Rebecca in Sir Walter Scott's widely popular *Ivanhoe*.<sup>33</sup>

The myth of the beautiful Jewess, Luce Klein asserts, is not the creation of a philosemitism directed at Jewish women, but is rather a figure created to insult further and humiliate the Jewish male, foregrounding his foibles through comparison. In this constellation of the old man, the Jewish daughter and the Christian lover, the old Jew, locked outside the heterosexual matrix of masculine and feminine mutual attraction, is still eagerly desirous, but his desire is warped into perversion, focused on a misplaced object, such as his ducats. Sinsheimer creates Maria Nunnez in direct opposition to the powerful stereotype of the *schöne Jüdin* dominated and often lured to her doom by love for a Christian and in opposition to how this stereotype reflects upon views of Jewish men. All the Jewish characters on board the ship, in fact, are consumed by a love for Judaism and Jewry that transcends worldly desires and keeps them focused on the goals of freedom to practice Judaism and to live openly as Jews.

### **Maria Nunnez: Remaking the *Schöne Jüdin***

Sinsheimer opens the novel with descriptions of Maria's family, which has been converted to Catholicism for generations and is both wealthy and important to the Lisbon *Marrano* community. Sinsheimer emphasizes the strength of Maria's father, Gasper Lopez Homen, and his commitment to his *Vaterland* (5). While Maria's father heads the household of secret Jews, it is Maria's mother, Mayor, who imparts a passionate feeling for her Jewish ancestry to Maria. Sinsheimer creates an association between masculinity and (proto-)Zionist strength through his physical description of Mayor and her "unweiblich hohe und gewölbte Stirn" (8). Sinsheimer further emphasizes her rather masculine ap-

pearance by noting that she is taller than her husband. Mayor allows their home to be a center where secret Jews, and indeed all in need, can come for help. The Jewish tradition passed on within the household is one more of feeling than exactness; knowledge of Jewish rituals has been lost to the family, but a sense of Jewishness, which seems to remain inside them as a kindled essence, has not.<sup>34</sup>

Maria shores up a large measure of this Jewish feeling within the classic exterior of the *schöne Jüdin*, with her dark hair, pale skin and striking lips, eyes and figure:

Sie war ein zartes Kind und wurde ein überzartes Mädchen. Ihr Körper war schmal und zierlich, ohne schwächig zu sein, ihr dunkles Haar glühte von Schwärze, ihr Gesicht war blaß und klein, es schien nur aus Augen und Lippen zu bestehen. Schon frühzeitig bekam ihr Blick etwas Fernsichtiges, und ihre Lippen, die einen etwas zu großen Mund bildeten, waren leicht geöffnet, als ob sie immer bereit wären, einen Ruf oder Schrei von sich zu geben. Dieses unablässig Sprechende ihrer Augen und Lippen gaben dem Gesicht und der ganzen Erscheinung den Ausdruck geistiger Bereitschaft, innerer Erwecktheit und eines Wissens, das ihren Jahren vorangeeilt schien. (13)<sup>35</sup>

As Jonathan Skolnik notes, an earlier novelization of Maria's story, Philippon's *Jakob Tirado*, portrays Maria as a "blue-eyed beauty" (13). Sinsheimer, in contrast, emphasizes Maria's dark features, and his frequent use of the word "schöne" resonates with the *schöne Jüdin* trope. He is evoking the classic description of the *schöne Jüdin* only to subvert its often antisemitic overtones. Within Sinsheimer's opening description of Maria we see indications that this *schöne Jüdin* will not fit the typical pattern. Maria appears ever ready to call out—and she will speak out boldly, if in measured tones—in defense of her Jewish faith. The otherworldliness of

her commitment to her Jewishness sets the cast of her beauty, in contrast to the "oriental" sensuality often ascribed to the *schöne Jüdin*. Maria is, in fact, so consumed with a Jewish future that she fills each family meal with talk of it; it is her idea to leave Portugal and set off for Amsterdam.

Maria learns of Amsterdam through the visit of a Dutch trader. In this first encounter between Maria and a gentile man, Sinsheimer sets up the typical mechanics of the seduction of the *schöne Jüdin* only to foil these expectations. Just as we witness Tirado's manliness through the eyes of the Duke, we see the powerful effects of Maria's beauty through the eyes of Maurits Vandelee. Maurits is visiting Maria's family, employing his famous charm to woo trade to Amsterdam:

Der Gast brachte der Frau des Hauses ein zierliches Geschenk mit, eine Bernstein-gemme, auf der, als Relief gearbeitet, ein kräftiger Hund ein zartes Reh schlägt [...] Er hob die heranspringende kleine Justa wie etwas Federleichtes bis zur Decke. Dann trat Maria ein.

Maurits verstummte. Er war von diesem von innen heraus brennenden Gesicht betroffen und von seiner Schönheit bedrückt. (34)

Maria's entrance, dramatized by Sinsheimer's sentence rhythm, leaves Maurits dumbstruck. Unlike the predatory hunting dog depicted on his gift, Maurits stands transfixed before a girl earlier also described as "zart." Sinsheimer emphasizes that Maria's startling beauty comes from the otherworldly preoccupations of her inner life, precisely from her commitment to Judaism. Maurits becomes infatuated with Maria, but his passion is cooled by her uncle Tirado, whose tactful but pointed reminder that Maurits is a married man provides the first example of the novel's male *Bund* shielding Maria from non-Jewish admirers (106).

Maurits's ethnic difference from Maria is accentuated by Maria's perception of him as a "man of the North," an attribute that will take on a truly seductive cast when applied to the dashing young English Duke.<sup>36</sup> And as will occur in Maria's romance with the Duke, Maria needs no outside help to remain true to her ideals. When asked by her family if she is in love, she responds passionately, "ja, ich habe mich heute verliebt. Aber nicht in diesen Mann, sondern in viel mehr, als er ist, in die Gewißheit und Zuversicht, die er aus seinem Land mitgebracht hat, in das Licht und in die Freiheit seiner Heimat" (41). Maria, having already rejected a dozen suitors in Lisbon, vows to emigrate to Amsterdam, where she can enjoy religious freedom.

Maria's encounter with the English Duke, foreshadowed by Maurits's infatuation, takes on a decidedly more serious cast. The Duke's vessel takes over the Jewish ship, and Maria and the Duke are immediately drawn to each other. For Maria, the Duke represents a confused mixture of masculine attraction. He reminds her of her uncle Tirado, but also embodies the same lure of the Nordic that Maria sensed in Maurits. In the face of her attraction to the Duke, Maria feels compelled to pray, retreating to the make-shift altar constructed by the Jews on the ship:

Sie empfand aber auch aus der Distanz seine männliche Schönheit, seine jugendliche Sicherheit. Er erschien ihr anders als alle jungen Männer, die sie zu Hause kennengelernt hatte. Auch anders als jener Maurits Vandeelen, dessen Bild ihr inzwischen entschwunden war und sich nun seltsam in die Gestalt des Engländers einmischte. Der Mann aus dem Norden, wie sie ihn bei sich nannte, zog sie geheimnisvoll an und hielt sie ebenso geheimnisvoll von sich fern. Etwas Magisches stand zwischen ihr und ihm. Maria hätte beten mögen. (79)

For Maria the Duke represents a type of



mysterious promise akin to the secret and mythic lure of Judaism.<sup>37</sup> Her meditations fill her with a desire to appear before the young sailor and to share her Jewish feeling, even though he scarcely understands a word of Portuguese (80). In a type of double unmasking, she, still dressed as a boy, also desires to reveal herself to him as a woman. When she finally steels herself to speak to the Duke, Sinsheimer puns, “Maria ermannte sich” (82). The Duke is also instantly attracted to Maria. His internal description of her is that of the classic *schöne Jüdin*: “Das schwarze Haar, das bleiche Gesicht, die roten Lippen — sie drängten sich ihm zusammen zu einem zarten Bild, zum Gesicht eines Mädchens, wie er es noch nie gesehen zu haben glaubte, zu etwas Neuem, vor dem er erschüttert stand” (83–84). This description is, however, the *schöne Jüdin* with a twist, since Maria is dressed as a boy. Sinsheimer immediately defuses the homoerotic possibilities of the scene as the Duke realizes almost instantly that the “Knabe” before him is really a woman.

The Duke brings the group to England, placing them in comfortable quarters in the Tower. His passion for Maria and the rumors of a wonderfully beautiful Portuguese Jewess bantered about London lead Elizabeth I herself to decide to see her. Before this meeting, however, Maria wrestles with the conflict posed by her desire for the Duke and her commitment to Judaism. After falling into a fever, she awakens to find renewed commitment to her faith. It is clear to Maria and to the Duke that she loves him, but her commitment to Judaism proves stronger. At the moment of her difficult decision, Sinsheimer repeats the classic description of her features: “Maria aber, von der Aufregung des Verzichts und Abschieds wieder ins Fieber gestürzt, lag mit geschlossenen Augen da — das Gesicht ein weiß glühendes Bild, die Lippen blutleer und das Haar von lodender Schwärze” (171). Her usually red lips drawn from fever and emotion and her attachments free from her Christian lover, Maria’s features

still resemble those of the classic *schöne Jüdin*, even as her story defies the *schöne Jüdin* plot by having her choose Judaism over marriage to a Christian.

Sinsheimer describes Maria’s inner struggle as one between the world of her childhood on the one hand, when her Jewish heritage was mother’s milk, and the weakness of her womanhood on the other, when she is subject to the sexual attraction of the Duke. As Tirado and Belmonte speak of Amsterdam:

Maria aber war ihre dankbarste Zuhörerin. Das Kindliche ihrer jungen unerfahrenen Jahre brach in ihr auf. Es war, als ob das bittere Frauenschicksal, das ihr beschieden gewesen war, ihr Frauliches ganz aufgezehrt und sie wieder in ihre Kindheit zurückgeführt hätte. Es war, als ob ihre frauliche Schwäche verbraucht und wieder ersetzt worden wäre durch die kindliche Kraft, an das Unwahrscheinliche und Märchenhafte zu glauben. (189)

Sinsheimer paints Maria’s inner triumph over her “frauliche Schwäche” as a reversion to her childhood immersion in the Jewish—to a purer time free of sexual attraction—a time that, in contrast to her womanly adulthood, seems figured as beyond gender. This inner struggle is also literally enacted as one between masculine and feminine elements through her cross-dressing, which functions as more than simply a plot-device or nod to Shakespeare, but rather is central to the novel’s engagement of Jewish identity, both in terms of how Jewishness is gendered and in the relationship between Jews and their non-Jewish surroundings.

### Crossings

Sinsheimer seems aware of the significance of Maria’s cross-dressing when at the novel’s end, he stages the objections of an imagined audience of “gelernten und gelehrten Historikers” who question accus-

ingly: "Wie willkürlich hast du diese Maranenschiff bemannt und wie willkürlich bist du mit Stand und Charakter von Mann und Frau verfahren?" (226). These lines frame Sinsheimer's "free" retelling of Maria's story in gendered terms. The question of how Sinsheimer has "manned" his ship and mixed the proper roles of men and women seems to refer directly to Sinsheimer's emphasis on Maria's cross-dressing, which as Jonathan Skolnik notes, does not appear in other imaginative retellings of the historical record.<sup>38</sup>

Maria is given a variety of costume changes in the novel; when she leaves Lisbon she disguises herself as a boy, presumably to protect her virtue (the other, older woman on board does not cross-dress). She is in women's clothes for the scenes with Elizabeth I and finally returns to masculine garb when she reboards the ship and continues her journey (192). In this way Sinsheimer further plays with the *schöne Jüdin* tradition, since one of this type's most famous examples is Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, who disguises herself as a boy in order to elope with Lorenzo. Maria's disguise, in contrast, facilitates an embrace rather than an abandonment of Judaism.

When Maria dons masculine clothing she is expressing her own will, her own desire to remain Jewish. When she must appear before Elizabeth, she chooses a simple grey dress, her choice making a powerful statement about her commitment to Judaism, even as she bows herself to Elizabeth's non-Jewish will, a will elsewhere characterized by Sinsheimer as specifically masculine in character.<sup>39</sup>

Maria wählte ein einfaches graues Kleid heraus, in dem sie aussah wie eine Nonne. Um so strahlender leuchtete darüber ihr bleiches Gesicht und ihr schwarzes Haar, um so glühender streuten ihre Augen das Licht aus. Sie stellte dar, was sie wirklich war: eine Gefangene, in der die Freiheit lebte, ein Flüchtling, in der das Ziel lebendig war. (193)

Sinsheimer emphasizes once again Maria's inner glow: beneath this habit-like dress beats the heart of a Jew. Although Sinsheimer refers once again to the dark hair and fair skin of the *schöne Jüdin*, he also once more strips away the stereotypical sensuality of the *schöne Jüdin* through Maria's choice of clothing. Maria's severe dress emphasizes her captive status and the masquerade of Catholicism under which she has lived. Sinsheimer emphasizes that her costume cannot suppress her inner spirituality, her Jewish essence, just as her *Marrana* existence could not. Maria's costume also clearly alludes to another famous Elizabethan *schöne Jüdin*, Marlowe's Abigail, who first takes the veil to aid her father, Barabas, but then ultimately reenters the nunnery to protest his cruelty. In contrast to Abigail, Maria never acts as a pawn, and her formal religious conversion is to Judaism.

Elizabeth I is at first incensed over the rejection of a noble Englishman by a young Jewess, but her meeting with Maria reverses her prejudices against Jews to such an extent that she is moved to call Maria her friend. In yet another alteration of the *schöne Jüdin* plot, the purity and beauty of a Jewess move a famous and ruthless non-Jewish monarch to such words as "große kleine Israelitin, ich bewundere dich, ich liebe dich" (202). Maria is elevated to legendary status as she rides through the streets of London with Elizabeth in her coach. The word "schöne" appears in the parade scene so often as to become a tag to Maria's name—not as the label of a sensual object of Christian desire, but as the stuff of proud Jewish legend.

When Elizabeth decides to parade through London with Maria at her side, she has Maria clothed in a resplendent dress of bright red silk with a pale yellow ruff. Maria rides through the streets of London in a somnambulant haze, as though this final descent into feminine finery and display represents a suspension of her conscious desires, which are focused on religious free-

dom (212). Like the stereotypical *schöne Jüdin*, indeed like the *Salon Jüdin* criticized by Sinsheimer, Maria appears in the company of Christian royalty, but here without assimilation and conversion. This ride, in fact, makes possible Maria's safe passage to Amsterdam. When Maria reboards her ship, resuming her quest for Jewish freedom, she is once more clad as a man, a change of costume that reflects her clear focus on religious freedom.

Maria's cross-dressing literalizes Sinsheimer's gendering of Jewish essence and Jewish strength as masculine. We have seen this masculinizing of the strong Jewish woman in Sinsheimer's description of Maria's mother and we find it as well in his depiction of Gracia Mendez, another historic *Marrana* who is presented in *Maria Nunnez* as an idealized role model for Maria and her mother. In Sinsheimer's retelling of Gracia's story, *Die Abenteuer der Gracia Mendez*, Gracia's family is persecuted by the Inquisition and as a result of a midnight rush to safe haven, the pregnant Gracia miscarries. The miscarriage leaves her unable to have more children, and from that moment she becomes devoted to a different kind of "motherhood," a total commitment to the larger goals of *Judentum*, even at the expense of her own family. This goal is attributed to her "stark" nature, which is almost manly. On the eve of Gracia's long-awaited emigration, Reyna, Gracia's envious younger sister, attempts to taunt her with an accusation of manliness:

"Was verstehst du von Männern? Du bist ja fast selbst einer!"

Die Schwester bewahrte ihre Fassung:  
"Du willst mich beschimpfen, Kleines,  
aber du lobst mich."<sup>40</sup>

Throughout the novel, Gracia is depicted as always devoted to the goal of emigration and religious freedom, but she is prevented from realizing her goals by her highly assimilated husband, who feels

bound to his country, his business and the persecuted community of secret Jews in Portugal. She is portrayed as ultimately stronger than him and more committed to her faith. Finally, after her husband's slow decline and death, she embraces the role of both mother and father, taking Reyna's insult as praise.

Through these novels Sinsheimer builds an *Überlieferung* of strong Jewish women, a kind of masculinized matriarchy, with Maria learning of the female role model, Gracia, through stories told by her mother.<sup>41</sup> Sinsheimer titles his novel *Maria Nunnez: Eine jüdische Überlieferung*, implying not only that the novel will tell Maria's story, but that Maria herself is a story, a model for others. And unlike the typical *schöne Jüdin*, who often has no mother and only an ineffectual father, Maria learns much from her mother and is surrounded by Jewish men deeply concerned about her fate. The family with which Tirado mans his ship includes an older couple, Joseph and his wife, and a father and two sons with names that invoke the origins of the Israelites: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This community bands together to discuss and aid in Maria's fate, and is comprised not only of old men, like Abraham, but of brave and athletic young men as well.

When he employs the figure of the *schöne Jüdin*, Sinsheimer is doing more than simply inverting the trope of the daughter and her ducats by placing her into the hands of Jewish rather than non-Jewish men. By depicting Maria's inner struggle to fully embrace Judaism as a struggle with her feminine side, Sinsheimer is attempting to reappropriate the masculine, realigning it with the Jewish. At the same time Sinsheimer shows both men and women as sources of spiritual strength, drawing upon an essentialized vision of Jewish identity that manifests itself through men and women.

Marjorie Garber has argued that one of "the most consistent and effective func-

tions of the transvestite in culture” is to mark what she calls a “category crisis” (16). Garber defines “category crisis” as:

[a] failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another: black/white, Jew/Christian, noble/bourgeois, master/servant, master/slave. The binarism male/female, one apparent ground of distinction (in contemporary eyes, at least) between “this” and “that,” “him” and “me,” is itself put in question or under erasure in transvestism, and a transvestite figure, or a transvestite mode, will always function as a sign of overdetermination—a mechanism of displacement from one blurred boundary to another. (16)

Cross-dressing, in Garber’s analysis, opens a “space of possibility,” calling into question the boundaries between binaries, and questioning cultural categories and indeed the nature of the “category” itself. Garber continues by arguing that “the apparently spontaneous or unexpected or supplementary presence of a transvestite figure in a text” in which gender does not appear to be the central focus, is a sign of another type of category crisis: “an irresolvable conflict or epistemological crux that destabilizes comfortable binarity, and displaces the resulting discomfort onto a figure that already inhabits, indeed incarnates, the margin” (16–17). In *Maria Nunnez*, I would argue, Maria’s “crossings”—her disguise as a man and her *Marrana* identity—point to the category crisis of German-Jewish identity in the 1930s, which is the most striking instance of Garber’s “third” in the novel, even though this category is never explicitly mentioned.

Despite Maria’s role as the title character of the novel, crucial questions of Jewish identity are played out through Sinsheimer’s male Jewish characters as they wrestle with the conflict between their Jewish and national identities. Their

struggle is a reflection of the vexed identity of the “German Jew” that Sinsheimer explores explicitly in his *Shylock* Preface and his autobiography. Numerous texts, such as Jakob Wasserman’s *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude* (1921), had explored the “category crises” in German-Jewish identity, which was also continually a focus of discussion within the 1930s Jewish *Kulturbund*.

As Skolnik notes, the metaphorical resonances of Sinsheimer’s work were noticed by contemporary reviewers of the novel such as Albert Vigoleis Thelen.<sup>41</sup> That Sinsheimer sees the *Marrano* experience as a model through which to discuss the German-Jewish experience is also evident in his “Rückkehr zum Judentum” in which he describes the situation of Iberian Jews, faced with the choice of baptism or exile. These Jews, Sinsheimer writes, often were forced to choose baptism, yet remained true to Judaism. Sinsheimer follows this description with a discussion of the choices facing German Jews. Presenting the *Glaubenstreue* of the Iberian Jews as a model for his readers, Sinsheimer advocates an “unbedingte Treue zum Judentum als Volk” (121). For Sinsheimer, the *Marranos* provide a type of counter-model to the assimilationist German-Jew. Since we find Sinsheimer in his “Rückkehr zum Judentum” portraying assimilation as a feminizing of Jewry, it is then small wonder that his *Marrano* characters, male and female, are masculinized by their *Glaubenstreue*.

That the conflict between national and Jewish identity is so key to the novel is clear in its opening descriptions of Maria’s father, Gaspar Lopez Homem, and his relationship to Jewry and to Portugal. Homem is fully devoted to his business, which he runs in the precarious times of the feuds between England and the Iberian states. Even more important to Homem than his business is Portugal. He is “ein leidenschaftlicher Portugiese” devoted to his “*Vaterland*” all the more in times of crisis

(7).<sup>42</sup> But he is also of Jewish “Abstammung” (5). These multiple identities weigh open Homem:

Er verbiß sich in seine Geschäfte und in dieses Portugal, das ihm nicht nur seinen rechnenden Kopf, sondern auch sein jüdisch fühlendes Herz schwer machte. Er wollte in der Treue zu seinem Handelshaus und zu den Traditionen seiner Väter fest bleiben — koste es, was es wolle. Kaufmann sein, Jude sein, Portugiese sein, das verflocht sich ihm zu einem immer unlösbarer werdenden Knoten, in den sein ganzes Sein eingebunden schien. (8)

Sinsheimer’s description must have carried resonances for a German-Jewish audience in 1934; this opening background immediately alerts his readers that it is this conundrum of identities, this German-Jewish place of the “third” that it is at issue.

And this crisis between national and Jewish identities is, in the context of the novel, explicitly a male one and indeed centered around the experience of older men. Maria experiences her identity crisis primarily as a conflict between her devotion to Judaism and a devotion to the Duke. Sinsheimer describes Maria’s homesickness as she longs for family, but not for the Portuguese *Vaterland*. Gracia Mendez likewise feels torn between her family duties and her commitment to *Judentum*, but national identity does not concern her. Maria’s brother, a young man, is moved in the novel’s action to declare, “Wir sind keine Christen. Juden, Juden, Juden sind wir!” (37). But through the more mature character of Tirado, Sinsheimer describes another type of identity crisis, that between career identity (merchant, seaman, physician), national identity (Portuguese, Dutch, English) and religious identity (Jew, secret Jew, Christian).

Setting the stage with Maria’s father, Sinsheimer uses her uncle Tirado as the character through which the “Knoten” of

German-Jewish identity are discussed. While Maria begins the novel committed to Judaism, has this commitment tested through the romance with the Duke and ultimately embraces her faith all the more fervently, Tirado begins as an adventurer who is more sailor than Jew or Portuguese. It is through aiding Maria in fulfilling her dream that Tirado undergoes a transformation, embracing Judaism completely, spending twenty years in the Amsterdam community and eventually dying in Jerusalem. Maria acts a model of devotion for Tirado and Tirado finds an “anti-model” for Jewish identity in Roderigo Lopez, Elizabeth’s Jewish physician. Just as Sinsheimer pairs Tirado with the Duke, using the Englishman as a point of comparison for Tirado’s masculinity and strength, Lopez acts as a negative foil. Lopez, attending the feverish Maria in the London Tower, suggests that Tirado and his party remain in England, where they can prosper financially, but Tirado rejects this idea vigorously, since it would mean giving up their goal of religious freedom. Just as Tirado had once seen himself first and foremost as a sailor, Lopez sees himself as a doctor, neither English, Portuguese, Jewish or Christian. To Tirado such indeterminacy has become unforgivable. Lopez, who attempts to turn the Queen against the group, is described by Tirado as “ein armer unglücklicher Teufel, der keinen Boden unter den Füßen und keinen Himmel über dem Kopf habe” (163). Tirado fiercely advocates striving for a stable identity: “Denn wer zu nichts wirklich und ganz gehöre, der gehöre eben ins Nichts.” Lopez’s lack of commitment presents the negative side of the potential that is the power of the “third.” The dark possibilities of the indeterminacy created by the “third” are literally enacted through Lopez’s character. Charged with treason and executed (as this historical figure actually was in 1594), Lopez suffers the terrifying fate of the Elizabethan traitor: his body is dismembered and ripped apart in a punishment

that mirrors Tirado's view of his spiritual state.<sup>43</sup>

Lopez's fate and Tirado's reaction to it illustrate the threatening and terrifying aspect of the "third" that lurks beneath the earnest bombast of Sinsheimer's descriptions of his Jewish characters' commitment to their faith and his playful turns with Maria's gendered identity. Garber rightly describes the "third" as a realm of possibility and ambiguous potential, but within the context of 1930s Berlin, this realm was lethally circumscribed.<sup>44</sup> In *Maria Nunnez*, Sinsheimer reaches into the maelstrom of German-Jewish identity and attempts to extract a stable, empowered Jewish essence—a strategy he sees as key to Jewish emotional survival in the face of brutal and murderous antisemitism.

## Notes

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and institutions for their generous assistance.

<sup>1</sup>Hermann Sinsheimer was born in Freinsheim in 1883 and died in London in August 1950. *Shylock: die Geschichte einer Figur* was written between 1936 and 1937 in Berlin and had been successfully submitted to the National Socialist censors, but it did not see publication. In 1938 Sinsheimer emigrated to London, translating his book into English during the Second World War. It first appeared in English: *Shylock: The History of a Character or the Myth of the Jew* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1947). I cite the American edition: *Shylock: The History of a Character* (New York: The Citadel P, 1963). The German version remained unpublished until 1960: *Shylock. Die Geschichte einer Figur* (Munich: Ner-Talmid-Verlag). For an analysis of Sinsheimer's Shylock book, see "Sinsheimer's Shylock," the coda to my doctoral dissertation, "After Eden, Out of Zion: Defining the Christian in Early English Literature," U of California: Berkeley, 1996, 275–90. There I use Sinsheimer's work to examine how a modern Jewish writer engages and reinvents the Pauline paradigms of "the Jewish" and "the feminine" that I trace in medieval and early modern texts, including Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>2</sup>Hermann Sinsheimer, *Gelebt im Paradies: Erinnerungen und Begegnungen* (Munich: Richard Pflaum, 1953), 279–83.

<sup>3</sup>While I would not advocate reading Sinsheimer's autobiographical writings as transparent self-reflection, I find it interesting that Sinsheimer was not alone in speaking of an inner/outer divide in Jewish identity. For example, in the April 4th, 1935 edition of the *CV Zeitung*, Albert Hirschberg argues that the only path open to German Jews is the same one open to Spanish Jews in the fifteenth century—a *Weg nach Innen*. Cited in Jacob Boas, "Germany or Diaspora: German Jewry's Shifting Perceptions in the Nazi Era (1933–1938)," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 27 (1982):113. Sinsheimer's alienation from Germany did not keep him from lecturing to German POWs in England after World War II. Some of these experiences are recorded in his letters to his second wife, Christobel, from this period and can be found in his autobiography, 302–36.

<sup>4</sup>*Maria Nunnez: Eine jüdische Überlieferung* (Berlin: Philo Verlag, 1934); *Rabbi, Golem und Kaiser* (Berlin: Philo Verlag, 1935).

An incomplete version of *Die Abenteuer der Gracia Mendez* can be found in serial form in *Jüdische Rundschau* 1936, 31 Jan.–17 Mar. 1936. I have been unable to locate or verify the existence of a complete version of *Die Abenteuer*.

<sup>5</sup>W. Benz, ed. *Das Exil der kleinen Leute. Alltägertagefahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1991). Despite his prolific writings, Sinsheimer remains virtually unknown today with the exception of some minor attention from Shakespeare critics and one commemorative anthology of selections from his writings. See Gert Weber and Rolf Paulus, eds. *Hermann Sinsheimer: Schriftsteller zwischen Heimat und Exil* (Landau/Pfalz: Pfälzische Verlagsanstalt, 1986). An important new exception to this lacuna is Jonathan Skolnik, "Dissimilation and the Historical Novel: Hermann Sinsheimer's *Maria Nunnez*," forthcoming in the *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*. Skolnik locates Sinsheimer's text within the tradition of the German-Jewish historical novel, arguing that *Maria Nunnez* is a novel of "dissimilation." I thank him for graciously allowing me to see the manuscript before publication; his analysis first drew my attention to the crucial importance of cross-dressing in the text. A complete bibliography of Sinsheimer's works has yet to be compiled. For a useful partial bibliography, see Weber and Paulus, 168–69.

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of the sources and reception of the Maria Nuñez story, see David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 101–02. Sinsheimer's strong interest in the history of the *Marranos* and expertise in early modern England are readily apparent from the history presented in his *Shylock*. For a discussion of the "Sephardic mystique" and its effects on nineteenth-century German Jewry see Ismar Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy" *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34 (1989): 47–66.

<sup>7</sup>One could alternatively use the term *converso* here, which does not carry the derogatory overtones of *Marrano*. I have chosen the latter term since it is the one used by Sinsheimer throughout his writings.

<sup>8</sup>These two figures, the *schöne Jüdin* and the New Jew, are not exactly on the same order, one being the creation of a non-Jewish Western

European literary tradition and the other a Zionist response to antisemitic stereotypes concerning Jewish men. As I hope to show, however, the New Jew is, at least in part, a response to the type of discourse in which the *schöne Jüdin* figure is embedded; in some ways it also adheres to the masculine/feminine binaries inherent in the *schöne Jüdin* model. For discussions of masculinity and of gender in early Zionist thinking see Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) esp. 99–118; Matti Bunzl, "Theodor Herzl's Zionism as Gendered Discourse," in *Theodor Herzl and the Origins of Zionism*, eds., Ritchie Robinson and Edward Timms, *Austrian Studies* 8 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997), 74–86.

<sup>9</sup>Figuring "the Jewish" as masculine or masculinizing is not, of course, a universal response to antisemitism or to ideals of manliness in the dominant Christian cultures of Western Europe. Daniel Boyarin has recently explored a long Ashkenazic tradition of *Edelkayt* and what he terms the "feminization" of the ideal Jewish male, an idealization in direct opposition to Nordau's New Jew. See *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997).

<sup>10</sup>Treue zum Judentum, "Israelitisches Familienblatt" (Berlin) 26 May 1936 and "Rückkehr zum Judentum," *Israelitisches Familienblatt* (Berlin) 4 June 1936. These two articles can also be found in Weber and Paulus, 117–21. The *Israelitisches Familienblatt* was one of three major German-Jewish newspapers. The *Jüdische Rundschau*, published by the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* (ZVfD) had a strong Zionist slant. The *CV Zeitung* was published by the *Central Verein*, the largest organization of German-Jewry, and advocated what Jacob Boas calls a "middle of the road" attitude in the first years of the Nazi regime. The *Israelitisches Familienblatt* began with a position between the previous two papers, but eventually also took on a strong Zionist cast. For background on the Jewish press in Germany between 1933–1938 see Jacob Boas, "The Shrinking World of German Jewry 1933–1938," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 31 (1986): 241–66; Herbert Freedman, *Die Jüdische Presse im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdis-

cher Verlag bei Athenäum, 1987); Volker Dahm, "Kulturelles und geistiges Leben" in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Die Juden in Deutschland 1933–1945: Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1988), 75–267.

<sup>11</sup>Sinsheimer's views are part of larger debates within the Jewish *Kulturbund* over the nature of "the Jewish" and Jewish art. See Akademie der Künste, ed., *Geschlossene Vorstellung: Der Jüdische Kulturbund in Deutschland 1933–1941* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1992); Wolfgang Benz's opening remarks to *Die Juden*; Kurt Düwell, "Jewish Cultural Centers in National Socialist Germany," in Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg, eds., *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War* (Hanover: UP of New England, 1985), 294–316.

<sup>12</sup>See Max Nordau, *Zionistische Schriften* (Köln, Jüdischer Verlag, 1909), 379–81. See also Paula Hyman's chapter "The Sexual Politics of Jewish Identity," esp. 140–46, in her *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representations of Women* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1995); George Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (New York: Brandeis UP, 1993), 161–76.

<sup>13</sup>John Hoberman notes, "The military unfitness of the Jew, derived from both physical and characterological defects, was now one element of a highly elaborated racial folklore concerning the purported deficiencies of the Jewish male." See his "Otto Weininger and the Critique of Jewish Masculinity," in Nancy A. Harrowitz and Barbara Hymans, eds., *Jews and Gender: Responses to Otto Weininger* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1995), 146. Sinsheimer has a section in his autobiography on his military service and antisemitism in the German army, 26–35.

<sup>14</sup>See Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), esp. 60–103, for detailed discussions of "Jewish hysteria" and the way in which circumcision was figured as feminizing. For a discussion of these topics and the myth of Jewish male menstruation, see Daniel Boyarin, "Freud's Baby, Fliess's Maybe: Homophobia, Anti-Semitism, and the Invention of Oedipus," *GLQ* 2 (1995): 115–47, esp. 128–34.

<sup>15</sup>"Salome" 101. Boyarin refers to another type of third sex, "men who menstruate" 130.

<sup>16</sup>The stereotypes I am discussing here are varied, of course, and changed and developed over time. Julian Krobb points out, for example, that the myth of the *schöne Jüdin* was not prevalent in National Socialist propaganda, which tended to dehumanize both Jewish men and women. *Die schöne Jüdin. Jüdische Frauengestalten in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Tübingen: 1993), 244–47. To avoid "*Rassenschande*," for example, National Socialist censors "revised" *The Merchant of Venice* and made Jessica a Christian foundling, demonstrating how the typical intermarriage of the *schöne Jüdin* becomes impossible within the National Socialist world view. See John Gross, *Shylock: Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend* (London: Vintage, 1994), 295. The literary historical research of Sinsheimer's *Shylock: Die Geschichte einer Figur* shows, however, his awareness of the history of antisemitic stereotypes of Jews and I would argue that he is responding as much to earlier antisemitism as much as to National Socialist propaganda, which, of course, built upon these earlier discourses. For a discussion of the figure of the beautiful Jewess on the American stage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Harley Erdman, *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity, 1860–1920* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1997), 40–62.

<sup>17</sup>Hoberman 146; Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* (1903; Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1997). For an important recent discussion of Jewishness and gender of the period, see also Eric L. Santner, *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), especially Chapter Three.

<sup>18</sup>On the *Salon Jüdinnen*, see Deborah Hertz, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988). See also Hyman, 20–22, for a brief but important discussion of the *Salon Jüdinnen* and their treatment by historians.

<sup>19</sup>Here Sinsheimer seems also to be positing a model for Jewry that directly contrasts with the antisemitic stereotype of the Jewish intellectual, closely associated with the stereotype of the effete, pathological Jewish male combatted by Nordau's New Jew. Ingeborg



Nordmann traces the stereotype of the Jewish intellectual to the Dreyfus affair, showing how this stereotype was sharpened for the propaganda purposes of National Socialists. See her "Der Intellektuelle" in Julius H. Schoeps and Joachim Schlör, eds., *Antisemitismus: Vorurteile und Mythen* (Munich: Piper, 1995), 252–59.

<sup>20</sup>For a discussion of the development of the concepts *Stamm*, *Stammesbewußtsein* and their relation to a sense of Jewish *Gemeinschaft* and common destiny in German-Jewish organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996), 38–40.

<sup>21</sup>For a discussion of Weininger's use of the modern antisemitic theme of "the Jew's estrangement from alcohol," see Hoberman, 153.

<sup>22</sup>Skolnik also notes the relevance of Hyman's analysis to Sinsheimer's novel. Hyman provides an excellent look at questions of gender and assimilation both in Europe and the United States. It is not within the scope of this essay to provide a detailed look at the actual roles of women in the 1930s Jewish *Kulturbund*, but rather to present Sinsheimer's presentation of the relationship between "Jewishness" and gender, which I hope will provide impetus for further investigation in related areas. See also Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991).

<sup>23</sup>Krobb 63–65. On the use of the term "Volk" in Jewish contexts, see George Mosse, "The Influence of the *Völkisch* Idea on German Jewry," *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute* (1967): 83–114.

<sup>24</sup>See, for example, Sander Gilman's discussion of this "invisibility" of Jewish women in "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Modern Jewess," in Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb, eds., *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 97. I elide the hyphen in "antisemitism" since there is, as Gavin Langmuir argues, no such thing as "semitism." Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1990), 16.

<sup>25</sup>*Réflexions sur la question juive* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 61.

<sup>26</sup>Carol Ockman, "'Two Large Eyebrows à l'Orientale': Ethnic Stereotyping in Ingres's *Baronne de Rothschild*." *Art History* 14 (1991): 521–39.

<sup>27</sup>Charlene Lea, *Emancipation, Assimilation and Stereotype: The Image of the Jew in German and Austrian Drama 1800–1850* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978), 61–77.

<sup>28</sup>See Lionel Trilling, "The Changing Myth of the Jew," *Speaking of Literature and Society*, ed. Diana Trilling (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982), 50–77, for a discussion of the history of stereotype of the Jew in the Anglophone traditions that includes interesting references to the "Jew's Daughter" ballad tradition, which is clearly related to the centuries-old accusation of ritual murder against the Jews.

<sup>29</sup>Gilman, "Salome," 102.

<sup>30</sup>Gilman, "Salome," 104–09.

<sup>31</sup>Krobb 1–14.

<sup>32</sup>Luce Klein, *Portrait de la Juive dans la littérature française* (Paris: Editions Nizet, 1972), 15. Livia Bitton-Jackson locates the beautiful *Marrana* as the source of "the beautiful Jewess" myth, seeing the *Marrana* as the model for Marlowe's Abigail and subsequent figures. *Madonna or Courtesan: The Mystique of the Jewish Woman in Christian Literature* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982), 23. Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (first recorded performance 1592) and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1594–98?) were created during the end of the Elizabeth I's reign, when Sinsheimer sets his novel. His Shylock research shows that he would have been aware of these dates. An excellent book about Jews and representations of Jews in early modern England is James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996).

<sup>33</sup>The phrase is Hyam Maccoby's: "The Delectable Daughter," *Midstream* 24 (1970): 50–60.

<sup>34</sup>For a related discussion, see Skolnik.

<sup>35</sup>Compare with Sir Walter Scott's description of Rebecca, the "beautiful daughter of Zion," in her introductory descriptions at the tournament in his *Ivanhoe*, ed., A.W. Wilson (New York: Penguin, 1986), 82–83. For detailed discussions of similar descriptions in the German and French traditions respectively, see Krobb and Klein.

<sup>36</sup>Here we have a clear example of Sinsheimer reacting to racist discourse in Germany

in the 1930s. Through the character of Maurits, Sinsheimer also manages a subtle jab at National Socialist racism. When describing Amsterdam, Maurits tells Maria's family, "Wir züchten keine Edelfrasse, wir erziehen Bürger" (39).

<sup>37</sup>Skolnik points to Judaism's lure of the forbidden for Maria.

<sup>38</sup>As Skolnik notes, however, historians of Sinsheimer's time were aware that Maria Nuñez had disguised herself as a man for the journey.

<sup>39</sup>*Shylock: The History of a Character* 21.

<sup>40</sup>*Jüdische Rundschau*, 10 Mar. 1936.

<sup>41</sup>See Skolnik's discussion of the importance of *Überlieferung* as a concept for Sinshei-

mer. And see also a short story by Sinsheimer that places Zionist aspirations in the hands of a contemporary young girl, "Ruths Aliyah," *Jüdische Rundschau*, 31 Sept. 1936.

<sup>42</sup>See Thelen, *Die Literatur in der Fremde* (Bonn: Weidle Verlag, 1996), 52–54. Cited in Skolnik.

<sup>43</sup>See also Skolnik's discussion of Maria's father.

<sup>44</sup>Sinsheimer discusses the details of Lopez's case in relation to English literature in *Shylock: The History of a Character*, 62–67.

<sup>45</sup>For a discussion of the limitations and achievements of the *Kulturbund*, see Brenner, 215–20.