

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book grew out of my curiosity about a figure of speech. During years of studying and teaching German Jewish culture, I came to wonder why so many scholars characterized German-Jewish relations from the Enlightenment to the Holocaust as an (unhappy) “love affair.” Is it reasonable to compare a complex historical process of social, cultural, and political integration with love, I asked? Does this trope not risk identifying the individual with the group, suggesting that emotions drive history, and downplaying questions of power and inequality? As I came to discover, however, critics draw on a long history of viewing German-Jewish cultural relations through the lens of a love affair. And so my misgivings gave way to appreciation. I wrote this book to illustrate how literary love stories comment on social processes; how the rhetoric of love underscores political demands; how philosophies of love generate new models of pluralist communities.

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A note on quotations and translations: I quote in English throughout the book. For quotations from literary texts, I often provide the page number for the German original as well. I have used published translations whenever possible. All other translations are mine.

MIXED FEELINGS

