

## FIGURES OF LOVE IN LATER ROMANTIC ANTISEMITISM

*Achim von Arnim*

The defeat and occupation of Prussia by Napoleonic troops in 1806 gave a new impetus to German nationalism, which had initially drawn on ideas of collective self-determination by Kant and Herder but now increasingly incorporated anti-French and anti-Jewish elements. Rising antisemitism explains, among other things, why Prussia's military defeat spelled the end of most of the Berlin salons hosted by Jewish women. While the salon of Rahel Varnhagen and other Jewish *salonnières* fell out of favor, the younger generation of German Romantics began to frequent the salons of mostly noble Gentile women. Varnhagen writes in early 1808: "At my 'tea table' . . . I sit with nothing but dictionaries; I serve tea no oftener than every week or ten days, when Schack, who has *not* deserted me, asks for some. That is how much everything has changed! Never have I been so alone."<sup>1</sup> Yet it is at this moment, when Christian-Jewish social interaction is once again on the decline, that interfaith love affairs become a popular literary theme in younger authors such as Achim von Arnim. While Enlightenment thinkers tended to deflect attention from interfaith love and marriage, and while early Romantic writers avoided explicit references to Jews and Judaism, later Romantic authors place Christian-Jewish love stories at the center of several texts that reflect on the changing position of Jews in

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1. Quoted in Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 176; Varnhagen's emphasis.

German culture and society—and that are undeniably antisemitic.<sup>2</sup> What does the peculiar use of figures of love in these texts tell us about the form and function of Romantic antisemitism?

Although few dispute that anti-Jewish attitudes were prevalent among the younger generation of German Romantics, scholars have found it difficult to determine the scope and the character of their antisemitism. This difficulty arises because the hallmarks of Romantic antisemitism are inconsistency and ambivalence, a simultaneous fascination with and rejection of Jews and Judaism. Nothing illustrates this better than the life and work of Achim von Arnim. Arnim had attended the same Jewish salons he condemned during the dinners of the Christian-German Table Society (Christlich-Deutsche Tischgesellschaft), of which he was a cofounder and which excluded Jews from membership. He scorned both Orthodox and assimilated Jews but appreciated some elements of Jewish culture and religion, especially its mystical strands. His literary references to the Kabbalah have been read as a sign of syncretistic openness to different religious traditions.<sup>3</sup>

Arnim's contradictory attitude toward Jews and Judaism emerges most clearly in a series of writings he completed in 1811, just before the promulgation of the 1812 Prussian emancipation edict, which he opposed. In the prose fragment "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday" ("Die Versöhnung in der Sommerfrische"), Arnim advocates a model of gradual emancipation in which the granting of political rights to the Jews would only follow their religious conversion and cultural assimilation. In line with earlier Enlightenment thinking, he supports the social integration of the Jews on the condition that they adapt to the economic, cultural, and religious norms of their Christian surroundings. His drama *Halle and Jerusalem*, in which the only positive Jewish character has successfully overcome his Judaism, further illustrates this presumed necessity of radical Jewish transformation. At the same time, Arnim expresses paranoid anxieties about the actual success of assimilation, especially in his notorious speech "On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness" ("Über die Kennzeichen des Judenthums"), which he delivered at the Table Society in the spring of 1811. The speech attempts to restore to Jews a

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2. It is customary to distinguish between three phases of German Romanticism: *Frühromantik* (ca. 1795–1804), *Jüngere Romantik* or *Heidelberger Romantik* (ca. 1804–15), and *Spätromantik* (ca. 1815–48). Although this chapter is primarily concerned with the second phase, its arguments also apply to the third phase, and I therefore speak more broadly about "later"—i.e., post-1806—Romanticism. On the relationship between Romantic antisemitism and German nationalism, see also Marco Puschner, *Antisemitismus im Kontext der Politischen Romantik: Konstruktionen des "Deutschen" und des "Jüdischen" bei Arnim, Brentano und Saul Ascher* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008).

3. See, for instance, Gunnar Och, "'Gewisse Zauberbilder der jüdischen Kabbala'—Zur Aneignung kabbalistischer Stoffe bei Achim von Arnim und Clemens Brentano," in *Kabbala und die Literatur der Romantik: Zwischen Magie und Trope*, ed. Eveline Goodman-Thau, Gert Mattenklott, and Christoph Schulte (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1999), 179–95; and Detlef Kremer, "Kabbalistische Signaturen: Sprachmagie als Brennpunkt romantischer Imagination bei E. T. A. Hoffmann und Achim von Arnim," *ibid.*, 197–221.

visibility that he believed had disappeared because of their alleged “rare skill of hiding,”<sup>4</sup> which involved only superficial rather than essential changes.

One way of explaining these contradictions is in terms of a clash between different belief systems that Arnim espouses simultaneously. On the one hand, the notion of Jewish mutability informed both Christian calls for conversion and the Enlightenment idea of human perfectibility, with its corollary belief that Jews are especially in need of improvement. On the other hand, this model of transformation conflicts with a historically new sense of Jewish physical, and therefore immutable, difference. Indeed, scholars tend to regard later Romantic antisemitism as a transitional phenomenon on the route from traditional Christian anti-Judaism to modern antisemitism or, alternatively, from the eighteenth-century beginnings of Jewish emancipation to the nineteenth-century backlash against it. Modern antisemitism is here defined as (1) an expression of the socioeconomic fears caused by modernization, (2) a corollary of political ideologies, especially nationalism, that seek to unify populations, (3) a racial ideology that posits the existence of indelible physical differences between “Jews” and “Aryans,” and (4) a hostility directed against assimilated Jews, whose claims of a German identity it denies. Measured by these standards, later Romantic antisemitism is often found to be almost but “not yet” fully modern. There is some consensus among scholars that despite its modern economic and political motivations, later Romantic antisemitism is not a full-fledged racial ideology and does not legitimize anti-Jewish violence.<sup>5</sup>

The attempt to situate Arnim’s view of Jews and Judaism on a linear trajectory toward the rise of modern antisemitism and sort out its elements accordingly is problematic for several reasons. It not only promotes a sense of historical determinism but also obscures insights into how the heterogeneous elements effectively worked together. In this chapter, I draw on psychoanalytically inflected theories of ideology to offer a new explanation of the apparent inconsistencies of Arnim’s antisemitism. Slavoj Žižek’s concept of the “social fantasy” and Homi Bhabha’s notion of “colonial mimicry” both stipulate that ideologies can incorporate a great

4. Achim von Arnim, “Über die Kennzeichen des Judentums,” in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. Roswitha Burwick et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker, 1989–94), 6:362–87; here 363. All further citations of this speech refer to this edition and will be included parenthetically in the text.

5. See Gisela Henckmann, “Das Problem des ‘Antisemitismus’ bei Achim von Arnim,” *Aurora* 46 (1986): 48–69; Heinz Härtl, “Romantischer Antisemitismus: Arnim und die Tischgesellschaft,” *Weimarer Beiträge* 33, no. 7 (1987): 1159–73; Rainer Erb and Werner Bergmann, *Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation: Der Widerstand gegen die Integration der Juden in Deutschland 1780–1860* (Berlin: Metropol, 1989); Wolfgang Frühwald, “Antijudaismus in der Zeit der deutschen Romantik,” in *Conditio Judaica: Judentum, Antisemitismus und deutschsprachige Literatur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, pt. 2, ed. Hans Otto Horch and Horst Denkler (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1989), 72–91; Peter Philipp Riedl, “. . . das ist ein ewig Schachern und Zänken . . .”: Achim von Arnims Haltung zu den Juden in den Majorats-Herren und anderen Schriften,” *Aurora* 54 (1994): 72–105. More recently, Wolf-Daniel Hartwich has argued in *Romantischer Antisemitismus* that Arnim’s anti-Jewish images are just as cruel as those of racial antisemites (185) but remain firmly lodged in a framework that is “transformatory” rather than “exterminatory” (26).

deal of inconsistency and ambivalence without losing their effectiveness. These post-Freudian theories shed new light on Arnim precisely because ambiguity and ambivalence proliferate in his writings around the motif of interreligious love. As I will show, romantic attachments are the means by which Arnim figures the possibilities and the limits of Christian-Jewish rapprochement. I will also argue that interfaith love stories fulfill a distinct function in Arnim's political thought, which combines German nationalism with a critique of rising industrial capitalism. Arnim wrote several texts that either stage the emergence of a German community that excludes Jews or depict the corrosion of such a community through French occupation and rising industrial capitalism. These texts include the openly antisemitic speech "On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness," the unpublished prose fragment "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday," and the complex novella *Gentry by Entailment* (*Die Majorats-Herren*). In each of these texts, the dramatization of failing Christian-Jewish love affairs serves to gloss over the tensions that trouble Arnim's visions of social harmony and political unity.

### "On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness"

Slavoj Žižek's theory of ideology shares with other projection theories the conviction that "the Jew" of the antisemites is an imaginary construct that serves to mitigate the internal conflicts of Christian communities. Yet he goes beyond the classic projection theory in claiming that not only the scapegoat but also society itself is imaginary.<sup>6</sup> According to Žižek, the antisemitic image of "the Jew" both embodies and disavows the structural impossibility of society and masks the contradictions in the holistic images that hold a particular society together. This idea has a particular bearing on Romantic nationalism and its vision of the yet-to-be-established national community. It explains, for instance, why antisemitism played such a crucial role during the formative phase of the Christian-German Table Society, when its rules of sociability were still in the process of being defined. The Table Society was to be a countermodel to the early Romantic salons, many of which had been hosted by educated Jewish women and, as we saw in the last chapter, functioned as sites of Christian-Jewish rapprochement. In addition, the Table Society was to serve as a model for the future German nation.<sup>7</sup> Yet as such it was riddled by tensions. There

6. For a classic projection theory of antisemitism, see Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). Langmuir distinguishes between anti-Judaism, which in all its faulty overgeneralizations is rooted in a real religious conflict, and antisemitism, which lacks all foundation in reality and is based on pure fantasy. According to Langmuir, antisemitism thus defined arose during the Middle Ages, when Christians first launched blood libels and other fantastic accusations against the Jews to contain the internal conflicts of their own communities.

7. See Susanna Moßmann, "Das Fremde ausscheiden: Antisemitismus und Nationalbewußtsein bei Ludwig Achim von Arnim und in der 'Christlich-deutschen Tischgesellschaft,'" in *Machtphantasie Deutschland: Nationalismus, Männlichkeit und Fremdenhaß im Vaterlandsdiskurs deutscher Schriftsteller des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Hans Peter Herrmann, Hans-Martin Blitz, and Susanne Moßmann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 123–59; here 144.

was, for instance, significant confusion among participants about the relationship between Prussian patriotism and German nationalism and about the dominant role of Protestantism within the future German nation. In his “Founding Song of the German Table Society” (“Stiftungslied der deutschen Tisch-Gesellschaft”), Arnim glorifies the beginnings of the Prussian state but is quite vague about its connection to the Reformation. He makes sure that the attribute “Christian” does not become too narrowly defined as Protestant, presumably because he perceives the necessity of unifying all German states in the fight against Napoleon.<sup>8</sup> Yet the tension between German nationalism and Prussian patriotism persists.

In Arnim’s work, the figure of the Jew comes to mask this and other tensions inherent in his attempt to define and perform a German national community. As Žižek argues, ideology operates not only by abstracting historically contingent predicaments into eternal conditions but also through the opposite gesture, that is, by transforming a structural impasse into an empirical obstacle.<sup>9</sup> This is perhaps nowhere clearer than in Arnim’s notorious speech “On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness.” The overt purpose of the speech is to provide a rationale for the exclusion of Jews from the Christian-German Table Society; yet in so doing it first creates the Jew as a distinct and recognizable figure.<sup>10</sup> Arnim is mainly concerned with two purportedly Jewish traits: “secrecy” (*Heimlichkeit*), which allows Jews to infiltrate Christian spheres from which they are excluded, and “curiosity” (*Neugierde*), which makes them want to trespass into such spheres to begin with. Arnim’s focus on these two traits reflects the historical moment of his writing, that is, the first phase of the acculturation process in which Jews adapted to the language, clothes, and customs of their Christian surroundings. His characterization of Jews as outwardly malleable and inwardly obdurate shows how this process gave rise to a new set of anti-Jewish stereotypes as well as a desire to restore visibility to the Jews. Arnim states that the “peculiarities” of Jews are “still by no means scientifically defined” (363) and goes on to provide a comprehensive catalogue of purported Jewish characteristics using pseudoscientific methods of observation and experiment.

“On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness” produces the figure of the Jew in a scene that conjures an alternative to biological procreation in general and to interreligious sex in particular. This occurs when Arnim shifts from observation

8. See Stefan Nienhaus, *Geschichte der deutschen Tischgesellschaft* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003), 12–13. The poem is in Arnim, *Werke*, 5:761–63.

9. See Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (New York: Verso, 2000), 100–101.

10. Apparently Arnim initially advocated the inclusion of baptized Jews in the Table Society but was voted down by the majority of its members. In a speech from January 18, 1815, he argues that such an inclusion can help recent converts overcome their Judaism more completely. See Jürgen Knaack, *Achim von Arnim—Nicht nur Poet: Die politischen Anschauungen Arnims in ihrer Entwicklung* (Darmstadt: Thesen, 1976), 135. Arnim’s speech has sometimes been read as a sign that his antisemitism was more tempered than that of most members of the Table Society. I argue that it is precisely this demand for total Jewish transformation, against which all actual Jewish assimilation is measured and judged insufficient, that makes Arnim’s antisemitism so pernicious.

to experiment, or from the description of Jewish characteristics to the creation of conditions meant to produce such characteristics. He proposes a chemical experiment—meant to be humorous, but actually extremely gruesome—that would decompose a Jew into his elemental parts, among them “4 parts of Christian blood, secretly gained through sinful mixing” (383). He then describes how he would construct a new body by exchanging those parts for equal parts of money, creating a Jew who is at least momentarily clearly identifiable as a Jew. This reconstruction is an act of purification, a separation of Jewish and Christian blood that undoes imagined sexual relations between Christians and Jews. The stylistic changes in this passage show that it is also a form of discursive production. Arnim begins his description of the experiment in the subjunctive and the style of a recipe—“Take [*man nehme*] this or another Jew” (382)—but ends it in the past indicative and the form of a report—“The Jew was reconstructed just as fast as he had been dismantled” (383). The experiment’s transformation from a hypothetical to an actual event indicates that Arnim’s speech performs rather than merely describes the production of the pure Jew.<sup>11</sup>

The Jewishness of the newly constructed Jew manifests itself in his propensity for witticism and irony when the narrator engages him in a conversation about the battle at Jena (“das große Landesunglück,” 383) and the death of the queen. The first reference is to the 1806 battle against Napoleon that ended in a devastating defeat of the Prussian army. The second reference is to the popular queen Luise, who in 1810 unexpectedly died at the age of thirty-four and was greatly mourned throughout Prussia. The cult of Luise, which had begun during early Romanticism and was carried on by Arnim and others, was central to Prussian patriotism and its idea of a loving bond between ruler and subjects.<sup>12</sup> The cult even intensified after Luise’s death, when a public emphasis on the king’s feelings of grief drew ruler and subjects closer together. All Prussians were meant to identify with the mourning king and act like members of an organic community rather than subjects of an absolute state. The Jew in Arnim’s speech slights the symbols of Prussian unity by making fun of the military defeat and commenting that the queen “was a woman like all others” and that he himself “had also lost one” (383). In other words, the pure Jew from which “4 parts” of Christian blood have been extracted is unable to participate in the Prussian community of love.

11. On Arnim’s attempt to counter the figure of the “secret Jew” through the production of the “pure Jew,” see also Birgit R. Erdle, “Über die Kennzeichen des Judenthums: Die Rhetorik der Unterscheidung in einem phantasmatischen Text von Achim von Arnim,” *German Life and Letters* 49, no. 2 (April 1996): 147–58; here 154.

12. On this political program of love, see Wolf Kittler, *Die Geburt des Partisanen aus dem Geist der Poesie: Heinrich von Kleist und die Strategie der Befreiungskriege* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1987), 162–75; and Nienhaus, *Geschichte der deutschen Tischgesellschaft*, 105–8. One of the events frequently recorded in history books is the personal interview Napoleon held with the pregnant queen after the defeat, which, however, did little to change the emperor’s harsh policy toward Prussia.

One of the most striking features of Arnim's speech is that it openly admits its own failure. If Arnim sets out to establish clearly distinguishable signs of Jewishness, he constantly defeats his own purpose by revealing similarities rather than differences between Jews and Christians. He takes note, for instance, of the special affinity between Jews and Christian scholars. Even more importantly, Arnim concedes that Jewish identity might be a mere product of Christian projection and that he is unable to come up with a list of truly reliable markers of Jewishness. In the end he can only express his wish for the discovery of such markers and call into question the existence of commonalities among all Jews: "But what can Spinoza, Mendelssohn, and my noble Jewish friends have in common with Judas Iscariot?" (387). To be sure, the notion of the exceptional Jew is a known antisemitic tactic that typically serves to highlight the deficiencies of the average Jew. But this takes nothing away from the fact that Arnim is remarkably open about the ultimate foundering of his "scientific" project.

To understand the logic behind this self-avowed failure we may return to Arnim's imaginary production of the "pure" Jew. Arnim notes that the reconstructed Jew's cheerfulness would make him a valuable addition to the Table Society were his jokes not so misguided: "He would serve as great entertainment for the cheerful company at table, if only his jokes did not mostly hit the wrong spot, like a friendly squeeze in the place one has been bled" (384). Again, this is an interesting criticism because it suggests that Jews are providing critique through irony, locating weak spots and highlighting their existence in jocular ways that might come uncomfortably close to later Romantic ironic texts.<sup>13</sup> At this point Arnim quickly shifts to yet another stock idea of medieval antisemitism, the idea of a peculiar Jewish stench or *foetor judaicus*. He proposes various experiments to identify the sources and the exact chemical composition of this odor. However, rather than producing the desired formula of Jewish difference, Arnim's ruminations on the theme lead to another striking admission of the projective character of antisemitism: "I am firmly convinced that if a Christian cannot stand the smell of roses, then all Jews smell of roses to him" (385). This sentence highlights the futility of Arnim's attempt to isolate and name Jewish characteristics; it suggests that no Jewish essence exists, that "the Jew" simply is whatever the Christian dislikes. Why does this open acknowledgment of an ideological gesture not affect Arnim's overall ideological message?

Here Žižek's concept of social fantasy proves helpful. Žižek emphasizes that ideology operates not only through the construction of knowledge but also through the manipulation of affects and fantasies. Ideology critique therefore needs to be composed of two different strategies: a symptomatic reading that reveals the mechanisms of condensation and displacement by which antisemites blame social

13. See also Günter Oesterle, "Juden, Philister und romantische Intellektuelle: Überlegungen zum Antisemitismus in der Romantik," *Athenäum* 2 (1992): 55–91. Oesterle points out that Arnim and Brentano attempt to fend off the reproach that Romantics are close to the Jews.

conflicts on Jews; and a second procedure that “aims at the kernel of *enjoyment*, at articulating the way in which—beyond the field of meaning but at the same time internal to it—an ideology implies, manipulates, produces a pre-ideological enjoyment structured in fantasy.”<sup>14</sup> A symptomatic reading explores the gaps, fissures, and inconsistencies of an ideological proposition in order to elicit its truth—namely, the motives behind its symptomatic distortions. Fantasies are resistant to such interpretive procedures because they do not so much cloud people’s thoughts as structure their affective engagement with reality. This is why they can be fully cognizant of their ideological biases and still function in the reality these biases help create. Žižek cites contemporary cynicism as an example of how the open avowal of ideological delusion might render ideology only more effective: it does not matter that we know what we are doing as long as we are still doing it.<sup>15</sup> What is necessary is to thwart the enjoyment procured by the image of the Jew, who both embodies and denies the impossibility of a social identity. “Fantasy is basically a scenario filling out the empty space of a fundamental impossibility, a screen masking a void. . . . As such, fantasy is not to be interpreted, only ‘traversed’: all we have to do is experience how there is nothing ‘behind’ it, and how fantasy masks precisely this ‘nothing.’”<sup>16</sup>

Such an exposure of a void emphatically fails to happen in Arnim’s “On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness.” To traverse the social fantasy would mean to confront the deadlock of social identity, in this case, of a Prussian patriotism that is both part of and at odds with German nationalism. It would mean to ask why one needs the Jews in order to uphold the possibility of a nonantagonistic society. It would require a space and a medium in which the answer to this question could register and transform actual behavior. In Arnim, however, the recognition of ideological delusion leads only to a further proliferation of antisemitic images. The sadistic laughter his speech was apt to provoke evinces its reliance on fantasy and enjoyment.<sup>17</sup> The rhythm of the text captures its logic of avoidance. Each time Arnim arrives at an insight that threatens to undermine his argument about the existence of immutable Jewish characteristics—such as his recognition of Jewish-Romantic affinities, of bilateral assimilation, of projection mechanisms—he quickly drops the subject and produces an even more grotesque anti-Jewish accusation. His cascade of antisemitic invectives even includes a version of what Nietzsche calls the metaphysical gesture par excellence, the transformation of multiple and contingent *Schulden* (debts) into a single and necessary *Schuld* (guilt).<sup>18</sup> Arnim repeatedly notes

14. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso Books, 1998), 125.

15. See Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, esp. 28–30.

16. Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 126.

17. In recent years, scholars have persuasively rejected earlier attempts to downplay the speech’s antisemitism by emphasizing its private and satirical character. Oesterle argues that the speech’s humor proceeds from fantasies of extinction to actual annihilation to pure cynicism. See Oesterle, “Juden, Philister und romantische Intellektuelle,” 63.

18. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 39–41.

that the financial debts of Christians to Jews are at the root of anti-Jewish hostilities. These include his own anti-Jewish resentments as well as the pogroms of the past: "How many thousands have had to atone, purportedly for their crimes, but in reality to erase the dues in the book of debt in which the Christians owed them too much" (385–86).<sup>19</sup> Whereas this statement seems to imply a fault on the part of the Christians, Arnim proceeds to describe the alleged Jewish machinations that force Christians into debts. In shifting the emphasis back from Christian *Schulden* to Jewish *Schuld*, he effectively retracts his earlier insights into the displacement mechanisms that fuel the persecution of Jews.

### The Quest for a German Community: "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday"

If the antisemitism of "On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness" is all too obvious, things are more complicated in Arnim's literary texts, some of which feature quite sympathetic Jews who seem to deserve the love they receive from Christians. The prose fragment "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday," probably written during the spring and summer of 1811, includes a remarkably empathetic portrayal of a Jew who attempts but ultimately fails to integrate into Christian society.<sup>20</sup> The text stages a temporary reconciliation between Christians and Jews by means of a Christian-Jewish love affair, as opposed to the deliberate undoing of such affairs in Arnim's "On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness." The idea of love as a bridge between different cultures, religions, and nations is also evident in the text's original purpose. Arnim wrote "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday" as a frame narrative for his 1912 novella collection, which contains among others *Isabella of Egypt* (*Isabella von Ägypten*) and *Maria Melück Blainville*. These novellas feature exotic strangers who at least some of the time appear superior to Christians. It has been argued that Arnim's fascination with such strangers and their eroticism counteracts his nationalism. In Arnim's life and literature, the erotic charge of the "dark" Southern world leads to a cultural and religious exogamy that thwarts any attempt to draw clear lines between national or ethnic groups.<sup>21</sup> However, I will

19. See also the "Herr von Falkenstein" episode in the poem in the middle part of the speech (372).

20. The text, which Arnim never published, has sometimes been read as his attempt to work through the so-called Itzig affair. Moritz Itzig, the nephew of a Jewish *salonnière*, challenged Arnim to a duel after Arnim had shown up without invitation and behaved inappropriately at a soiree hosted by his aunt. Arnim rejected the challenge because of Itzig's Jewishness, whereupon Itzig attacked him physically in a bathhouse and later received a relatively light sentence at court. These events left Arnim profoundly shaken and seem to have alternately tempered and exacerbated his antisemitism.

21. See Hildegard Baumgart, "Arnim's 'Judengeschichte': Eine biographische Rekonstruktion," in *Arnim und die Berliner Romantik: Kunst, Literatur und Politik*, ed. Walter Pape (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001), 71–94; here 88. For a more critical view, see Sara Friedrichsmeyer, "Romantic Nationalism: Achim von Arnim's Gypsy Princess Isabella," in *Gender and Germanness: Cultural Productions of Nation*, ed. Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 51–65; and Dorothea E. von Mücke, *The Seduction of the Occult and the Rise of the Fantastic Tale* (Stanford,

argue that “Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday” still uses the figure of the Jew to disavow the tensions inherent in a vision of social harmony. The interreligious love affair serves primarily to deflect attention from the text’s rather troubled effort to picture the emergence of a broader German alliance against Napoleon.

Set in Tyrol during the Napoleonic wars, “Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday” centers on the figure of a Jew who comes to fill the voids left by war. Raphael Rabuni buys the house of a nobleman who fell on the battlefield, and gains the love of the Christian girl Therese, whose fiancé, Joseph, is thought to have suffered the same death. The narrator, a non-Tyrolean who comes for a visit, appeases Therese’s brother-in-law Sebastian, who until then has been strongly opposed to her attachment, and brings about a temporary reconciliation: “We drank the wine and toasted to eternal reconciliation, to a happy outcome, where human wisdom is silent due to God’s mercy, and finally to a brotherly feeling [*brüderliches Du und Du*] among all of us and to an enjoyable communal life in the summer holiday.”<sup>22</sup> Things begin to unravel quickly, however, when Joseph unexpectedly returns with a Bavarian enemy turned friend. Meanwhile, another young soldier and potential suitor of Therese named Artur kills Raphael out of a misguided sense of military honor. In the end the text becomes increasingly disjointed and cryptic; it comes across as a somewhat strained attempt to conjure a harmonious society that includes both Tyroleans and non-Tyroleans but excludes Jews.

Raphael’s unhappy love and ultimate death do not come as a surprise to the reader. His short and skinny build, nervous mind and fragile health, which contrast with Joseph’s tall stature and unbridled physical power, made him a rather unsatisfying substitute all along. After Joseph’s return, Raphael retrospectively appears to have been a foreign intruder in the life of Therese, who “had completely returned to her national nature [*vaterländische Natur*], so much so that she barely thought about his foreign influence any longer” (596). The text leaves little doubt that in marrying Joseph, Therese returns to her true home and origins. Her shifting attachments illustrate the biblical maxim quoted in the text—“What God wants and what he has joined together let no man put asunder” (596)—as well as Arnim’s inverted version of it—“Let no man bind together what Heaven has separated, Jews and Christians” (587). Arnim evidently seeks to underscore this point by emphasizing Raphael’s inability to assimilate to his Christian environment, at

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Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003). Von Mücke shows that in both *Isabella of Egypt* and “Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday” sexuality becomes part of a “semiotics of blood” that serves to differentiate between ethnic groups and create a sense of cohesion within each group (202). More recently, Martha Helfer has offered a compelling reading of *Isabella of Egypt* that focuses on the ambiguous status of “Jewishness” in the text. Helfer shows that the text tropes its gypsy heroine in various ways as Jewish and never fully effaces the signs of Jewishness, not even from its concluding vision of a unified Germany. See Helfer, *The Word Unheard*, 57–77.

22. Achim von Arnim, “Die Versöhnung in der Sommerfrische,” in *Werke*, 3:541–609; here 579. All further citations of “Die Versöhnung in der Sommerfrische” refer to this edition and will be included parenthetically in the text.

least during his life. Although Raphael makes an earnest attempt to become completely Christian, he harbors lingering doubts about the Christian gospel. In the insert “Conversation about the Naturalization of the Jews” (“Gespräch über die Einbürgerung der Juden”), he criticizes the superficiality of most Jewish conversions and at the same time admits his own inability to fully embrace the Christian faith. Only after his death and the *Nottaufe* (emergency baptism, 599) that precedes it does Raphael’s face display the signs of redemption through faith for which he has been longing. Raphael’s failure to find social integration through love differs from the failure depicted in Veit’s *Florentin*. While Florentin is just as unable to secure himself a place in society as Raphael, he is neither clearly marked as a Jew nor does he become a carrier of negativity in the way Raphael does.

The failure of interreligious love in “Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday” is significant because it provides a foil against which the German-German reconciliation can take shape. For Therese’s fiancé, Joseph, returns to his hometown together with Max, a Bavarian soldier who saved his life. The scene in which Max and Joseph almost die together as enemies and reemerge as friends recalls Arnim’s cherished idea of a profound crisis that leads to renewal.<sup>23</sup> It also alludes to the ways that the Napoleonic wars antagonized the German-speaking countries. A military ally of Napoleon, Bavaria acquired Tyrol in 1805. In 1809 Tyroleans rose against Bavarian rule in a famous revolt that was quelled after some months. When Bavaria finally began to shift alliances and pull its troops out of Tyrol in 1813, Arnim hailed the liberation of Tyrol in a newspaper article: “Which country is worthier of being returned to its beloved old lord and its old, free constitution than this one, which was the first among the German peoples to serve as a bloody example of the strength which loyalty and faith provide? It has shown that peoples cannot be exchanged and delivered like merchandise, and that whoever wants to possess them against their will wants to destroy them.”<sup>24</sup> In his article Arnim minimizes the historical conflict between Tyrol and Bavaria, which calls into question his idea of a united German front against France, by casting Bavaria as a victim rather than an ally of Napoleon. “Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday” gives further evidence of the contradictions that trouble Arnim’s ideas of German and Tyrolean identity. The problem is not (or not only) that war has torn apart the social fabric of the region but rather that Arnim’s vision of social harmony is contradictory to begin with. He conceives of Tyrol as both an autonomous region—“a distinct, immutable people that is grounded in itself” (603)—and part of a broader German alliance against Napoleon. He pictures Tyrolean society as both closed and open, both static and dynamic.

23. On Arnim’s concept of crisis, see also Bruce Duncan, “Die Versöhnung in der Sommerfrische: Eine ungedruckte Erzählung Achim von Arnims,” *Aurora* 40 (1980): 100–146; here 144.

24. Arnim, *Werke*, 6:422.

The narrator's development throughout the text illustrates these contradictions and gestures toward their resolution. Indeed, the narrator's integration into Tyrolean society gives the text a performative dimension. Just as Arnim's speech at the Christian-German Table Society produces the distinctions it ostensibly describes, "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday" attempts to perform the social integration it conjures. Originally a Protestant from a big city, the narrator assimilates to the rural culture of Tyrol and later converts to Catholicism. In the end he seems fully integrated into his new environment while also completely faithful to his former life and self: "I am now Catholic and married to Antonie. I work my field like my neighbor, I dress and speak like a Tyrolean—and feel that I did not change, that I am still the same person. It is only that the external circumstances afford me the calm that I missed in our people and that is the condition for all progress in our internal betterment" (607). One may of course argue that there is no contradiction here because the narrator sees Protestantism and Catholicism as continuous, just as he deems Tyrol and Bavaria natural allies. Indeed, Raphael himself expresses this view that Christian religious differences are not truly detrimental to the "shared national spirit"—which nevertheless "expresses itself most magnificently in the creation of a new shared faith, through free choice and without external force" (559). Yet in "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday," the emergence of a shared religion is neither spontaneous nor free from coercion. The idea of freely arising uniformity is undermined both by the biblical expulsion imagery at the text's beginning and by the necessity that propels the narrator's initial adoption of Tyrolean dress and language: he needs to replace his torn clothes and make himself understood during his erratic wanderings.

Arnim's insistence on the impossibility of Jewish assimilation has to be read in this context, as a screen that masks the tensions in the narrator's own transformation. Consider the problem of language. Raphael's smooth and beautiful language—presumably High German—is the source of his uncanny power over Therese and her alienation from her country and her family. After he reads verses to her and apparently hypnotizes her, she begins to speak High German "as she never before was able to" (548). When she reunites with Joseph, however, she quickly forgets everything she read in the books with Raphael. Therese's linguistic movement between High German and Tyrolean dialect illustrates her estrangement from and reintegration into a native environment. Forgetting is impossible for the narrator, however, who speaks the Tyrolean dialect with Therese's family but has to translate his conversations into a language understood by his readers. He explicitly states that this translation requires him to sacrifice "many an ingenuousness permitted by the vernacular but not the written language" (552). In other words, writing continues to expose the narrator to others who do not belong to the community into which he seeks to integrate. Raphael comes to embody this negativity, the incompleteness of the narrator's own transformation. Through the figure of Raphael, "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday" both expresses and disavows the contradictions inherent in German Christian identity.

The unhappy Christian-Jewish love affair takes center stage in “Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday” because love and marriage are invoked as possible means of resolving the inner German conflict. Upon their return Joseph offers Max Therese’s hand in marriage as a token of his gratitude, a proposal that evokes the idea of peace established through the exogamic exchange of women. But there are two different visions of peace in the text: peace as the restoration of an original state (which is based on endogamy) and peace through the establishment of a new alliance (which requires exogamy). These two visions are mutually exclusive. In terms of the plot this means that Therese cannot marry both Max and Joseph, which is why the two men leave the decision to a roll of the dice, and the winner, Joseph, gets to marry her. This impossibility of a dual connection is, however, overlaid by the more ostensible impossibility of Christian-Jewish intermarriage. As both Joseph and the narrator acknowledge, Raphael has also the right to marry Therese, or at least to cast dice for her, since he saved her life. Raphael’s death conveniently withdraws him from the circle of male contenders and preempts any attempt on his part to defend his “right.” A symptom of the tensions that riddle Arnim’s vision of peace is the very proliferation of potential lovers in the second half of the story. There is not only Max but also Artur (Arundel), the young officer who arouses Raphael’s jealousy and whose misguided sense of military honor causes the catastrophe. In the end Artur, gone mad, still lingers around, an embodiment of competing claims to Therese—and to Tyrolean identity—that appeared to have been buried with Raphael.

### Colonial Mimicry in *Gentry by Entailment*

As we have seen, Arnim’s 1811 texts simultaneously demand a complete Jewish transformation (modeled on religious conversion) and posit its impossibility. These texts are haunted by the specter of superficial Jewish assimilation and conversions without true faith. The only successful transformation of Jews seems to occur at the time of their death. Calling any change short of death a deception, Arnim issues a contradictory injunction to the Jews: “Assimilate, but don’t assimilate!” Another way of thinking this double imperative is in terms of what the postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha calls “colonial mimicry.” Postcolonial theory can shed light on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century program of Jewish emancipation because this program was a form of internal colonization through which a previously segregated group was absorbed into the social majority.<sup>25</sup> The fact that Dorothea Veit, for instance, contemplated ending her novel *Florentin* on a colonial endeavor (in which Florentin is ambiguously positioned as a colonizer rather than a colonized) is one indication that colonialism provided a model to think through

25. See Baumann, *Modernity and Ambivalence*. For a productive use of postcolonial theory to analyze German-Jewish relations, see Hess, *Germans, Jews, and the Claims of Modernity*.

the integration of minorities. In what follows now I will argue that, seen through the lens of postcolonial theory, the tension I identified earlier in Arnim's system of thought—between modern, or racial, antisemitism and the Enlightenment belief in Jewish transformability—turns out to be constitutive of an ideological program.

Homi Bhabha shares with Slavoj Žižek the notion that ideologies operate not only by constructing knowledge but also by manipulating affects and fantasies. Both hold that ideologies can incorporate a great deal of ambivalence without losing their effectiveness. Bhabha indeed suggests that ambivalence is a quintessential colonial gesture by which the colonized other is split into an object of desire and an object of derision. He points to texts by colonial administrators who propose a limited—and emphatically only a limited—assimilation of the colonized to the colonizers as the most effective way to keep them under control. Mimicry thus understood is a form of imitation that flaunts the parts at the expense of the whole and the surface at the expense of the interior. Bhabha's most intriguing suggestion is that the efficacy of colonial mimicry hinges upon the production of constant slippages. The administrators' demand for colonial mimicry expresses "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*."<sup>26</sup> To maintain this sense of difference, the fact that imitation is "not quite" like the original has to remain tangible, as does the discrepancy between colonial ideology and colonial politics. The proposal of a Christian missionary to partially reform and partially accept local practices, for instance, is clearly at odds with the missionary ideal of complete conversion but for this very reason well suited to keep the natives in a subservient position. Colonial mimicry thus understood stabilizes existing power relations.<sup>27</sup>

In what follows now, I argue that the notion of colonial mimicry is useful for thinking through one of Arnim's aesthetically and politically most complex texts, *Gentry by Entailment*. In contrast to the previously analyzed works, this 1819 novella does not perform the future national community but tells a story of historical decline. Set in a German city just before the French Revolution, the text relates the return of the possessor of an entailed estate to his long-neglected manor and his ill-fated love for the (supposedly) Jewish girl Esther. Esther is harassed and finally murdered by her stepmother, Vashti, who is depicted in the worst antisemitic clichés as a nasty, greedy old Jewess. Through the figure of Vashti, *Gentry by Entailment* blames Jews and Judaism for the presumed ills of modernity, including industrialization, the rule of money, and the transformation of human bonds into exchange relationships. At the end of the story, the city is occupied by French troops, and Vashti emerges as a vital agent of industrialization and capitalism; she buys the entailed estate for

26. Homi K. Bhabha, "On Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 85–92; here 86 (Bhabha's emphasis).

27. It should be noted that colonial mimicry is a power strategy that can backfire. Bhabha also uses the term to describe the subversive effects of a minority's "mimicry," whose reiteration of the majority's cultural norms can change the terms in which these norms are articulated.

a cheap price and establishes an ammonia factory on its site. The novella, which begins with a reflection on the richness of life before the French Revolution, concludes with a statement that sums up the character of the postrevolutionary epoch: "And credit came to take the place of feudal right."<sup>28</sup> While this plot summary captures the fusion of anticapitalism and antisemitism in later Romanticism, it obscures the degree of ambiguity that marks the text's historical narrative and its representation of Jewish difference—and that is part and parcel of colonial mimicry.

To begin with, there is a pervasive ambiguity regarding the cause and the character of historical change. On the one hand, Arnim explains the downfall of the old regime in terms of its own immanent failings. The decline of the entailed estate reflects the flaws of this legal institution, which stipulates that the entire estate is bequeathed to the oldest son at the expense of the younger children.<sup>29</sup> The tenant, an exponent of the old order who could be read as a representative of the Romantic artist, contributes to his own and his beloved's death through his passivity and inability to act. These inner deficiencies of the people and institutions of the ancient regime furnish proof of the narrator's initial suggestion that this regime was prone to "wanton self-destruction" (5/107). On the other hand, Arnim uses antisemitic projection mechanisms to explain the rise of capitalism and the attendant social malaise. The tenant, a dreamy man who is engaged in abstract studies and paralyzed by the specters of the past, is (in an allusion to the Christian fascination with the Kabbalah) immediately attracted to the books of Jewish legends he encounters in his cousin's house. This cousin, a former lieutenant who in his money-oriented pragmatism is the exact opposite of the otherworldly tenant, sends out "trained decoy pigeons" (7/110: *Raubtauben*) to steal other people's pigeons and learns Hebrew to outsmart the Jews in business. His house is located right next to the Jewish Alley, a metonymy that emphasizes the connection between Jews and a money-grubbing mentality. Judaism thus becomes associated with extreme spiritualism and extreme materialism alike. To the extent that it is represented as external to Christianity, both spatially and ideologically, Judaism functions as a screen onto which the failings of the old society are projected. The novella's use of Jewish symbolism to depict the ancient regime invites the conclusion that the regime's flaws were due to Jewish influence to begin with.

The novella figures the doom of the old order through the impossible love story between the manor's tenant and the beautiful Esther, who later turns out to be a Christian adopted at birth by a Jew. The tenant's inability to express his love for Esther and rescue her from her stepmother epitomizes the old regime's lack of

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28. Achim von Arnim, *Gentry by Entailment*, trans. Alan Brown (London: Atlas Press, 1990), 42. For the original German, see Arnim, *Werke*, 4:147. Further citations from these editions will be included parenthetically in the text, with the page number in the English translation followed by the page number in the German edition in italics, as here (42/147).

29. On Arnim's critique of this institution, see Riedl, "'... das ist ein ewig Schachern und Zänken . . .'"

vitality and its inability to reproduce itself. This is only one of many instances of failing heterosexual love in Arnim, whose work is replete with crises of marriage and procreation. He generally depicts the family as an institution of trade rather than of procreation; children are being exchanged all the time.<sup>30</sup> The significance of parental failure in *Gentry by Entailment* emerges most clearly when read against the backdrop of the text that first introduced this character constellation into German literature: Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, which Arnim explicitly references in *Gentry by Entailment* and which I discussed in the first chapter of this book. A comparison between the two literary accounts of adoptive fatherhood and (presumed) interreligious love reveals the distance between Enlightenment calls for emancipation and later Romantic antisemitism. While Recha's adoption is an act of compassion that demonstrates Nathan's ability to control his emotions through reason (he receives Recha just after his own family has perished in a pogrom), Esther's adoption is an economic transaction by which her surrogate father acquires the capital that forms the basis of his successful business. And whereas *Nathan the Wise* creates hope for a better understanding between the different religions in the future, *Gentry by Entailment* ends with the bleak prospect of the total victory of an exploitative capitalism denounced as Jewish.

Arnim's representation of adoptive fatherhood reflects an essentialist conception of Jews and Judaism. While in both Arnim and Lessing the adoptive father attempts to shape the personality of the daughter according to the ideals of the time, the Jewish father in *Gentry by Entailment* has much less influence on the character formation of his adoptive daughter than does Nathan in *Nathan the Wise*. Recha, who was raised without superficial book knowledge, embodies the intuitive reason and virtue cherished by the enlightened Nathan; in that sense she remains her father's true daughter even after the revelation of her Christian origins. Esther has grown into an educated salon hostess who charms her environment with wit and beauty, yet her manners appear superficial accomplishments at best and psychopathological symptoms at worst. Each night Esther hears a pistol shot that makes her get up and sing, dance, and entertain imaginary guests as if she were a true salon hostess. In so doing she tries to make up for the loss of her active social life after her father's death, but she also acts out another kind of grief. Her fits began about a year ago, after she and a Christian soldier had fallen in love with each other and been harassed by both Jews and Christians—the imaginary shots Esther has been hearing since then echo the shot by which her Christian lover committed suicide. The fact that the reader never sees her act as a Jewish *salonnière* except during these theatrical performances born out of grief casts doubt on the transformative effect of her father's education. Whereas the adoptive father's pedagogy makes a real difference in *Nathan*, it is a mere polishing of manners in *Gentry by Entailment*,

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30. See Volker Hoffmann, "Künstliche Zeugung und Zeugung von Kunst im Erzählwerk Achim von Arnims." *Aurora* 46 (1986): 158–67.

and a maddening one at that. The stark contrast between the humble, compassionate Esther and her heartless, greedy stepmother, Vashti, further emphasizes the adopted girl's separateness from her Jewish surroundings. The figure of Esther thus illustrates the ineffectiveness of adoptive fatherhood, as an act of artificial production that is ultimately not productive at all.

The notion of a profound psychological difference between Jews and Christians that cannot be erased by pedagogical or other "civilizing" measures marks Arnim's antisemitism as modern. However, a closer analysis of *Gentry by Entailment* reveals once more the difficulty of placing Arnim on a linear trajectory from traditional anti-Judaism to modern, or racial, antisemitism. For instance, although Arnim posits the existence of indelible mental and psychological differences between Jews and Christians, he does not unequivocally locate them on the physical body. The depiction of Vashti as "a hideous Jewess with a nose like an eagle, eyes like almandite, skin like smoked goose-breast and a belly like a burgomaster's" (19/122) is a caricature rather than a realistic portrait. More precisely, Arnim's depiction of Vashti combines features of the caricature, which fixates physical features by exaggerating them, and of the grotesque, which transcends the realm of reality toward the improbable.<sup>31</sup> In the quote above the grotesque comparisons undermine the mimetic character of Vashti's portrayal. Allegorical accessories such as Vashti's black head scarf, which the tenant mistakes for a raven, further detach physical surface from psychical interior rather than produce the alignment of physique and character so crucial in racial antisemitism.<sup>32</sup>

The lack of concrete and realistic physical detail is particularly conspicuous in the portrayal of Esther, who is shown to be largely a product of the tenant's projections. Initially the reader learns nothing about her looks except that she reminds the tenant "in every feature and movement" (10/113) of his late mother. Even when the narrator describes her in greater detail, he focuses on aspects that obscure rather than reveal the contours of her face. These details include a paleness that covers her face "like a noxious spring mist" (20/123) and the ways that her eyes are narrowed, "as flowers towards evening draw their petals closer about the sun of their calyx" (20/123). The reader is unable to get a clear picture of Esther in part because s/he perceives her mostly through the perspective of the tenant, whose impressions of Esther are predominantly aural. When he first witnesses Esther's daily "salon" performance, he listens to her without seeing her clearly. Even when he stands

31. On the genres of the caricature and the grotesque and their function in the novella, see Günter Oesterle, "Illegitime Kreuzungen": Zur Ikonität und Temporalität des Grotesken in Achim von Arnim's *Die Majoratsherren*," *Études Germaniques* 43, no. 1 (March 1988): 25–51.

32. The fact that Vashti's Jewishness manifests itself primarily in her language, including her "Hebrew abuse" and "most distorted Yiddish" (20/122), might be taken as a sign of the culturalist understanding of "race" that controlled most German thinking about the subject during the first half of the nineteenth century. However, I argue that the vagueness of physical characteristics in *Die Majoratsherren* has the specific narrative function of creating ambiguous identities.

next to Esther and beholds her body and face, it is her voice that attracts his attention and confirms his impression of her resemblance to his mother. The tenant in fact actively produces the image of Esther and her sphere, for instance, by visualizing her verbal fantasies. While Esther knows that she speaks “to the empty air” (23/126) and opens the door to a “Nothing” (23/127), the tenant appears to actually see the guests as soon as her voice animates them. This is so because the two are sympathetically linked through their exchange at birth, but also because the tenant is generally capable of visualizing the immaterial.<sup>33</sup> His fantasies are the stuff of which Esther is made.

The vagueness in the depiction of Esther’s physical appearance is crucial for the story because it allows her to function both as the tenant’s mother surrogate and as a stereotypical “beautiful Jewess.” A well-known example of the beautiful Jewess in literature is Rebecca in Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, which was published in 1819, the same year as *Gentry by Entailment*.<sup>34</sup> The ambiguous invocation of this literary stereotype allows Arnim to explain the tenant’s death as the result of either an incestuous attachment to his mother or an erotic infatuation with a beautiful stranger. Esther’s double role as mother surrogate and exotic stranger is made possible by a proliferation of doubles, inversions, and permutations that undermines the clear-cut dichotomy between Jews and Christians. One instance of inversion occurs when the tenant asks his cousin about Esther’s identity and learns that she is a “Schicksa” (*Schickselchen*; 10/113). The German word *Schicksa* derives from the Yiddish *shikse* and originally from the Hebrew *shikutz*, or “detested thing.” It referred mainly to idols before it became first the derogatory Jewish term for Christian women still known today, and then the derogatory Christian term for Jewish women used in *Gentry by Entailment*. The novella also inverts the biblical opposition between Esther and Vashti. In the biblical book of Esther, both Esther and Vashti are the wives of the Persian king Ahasuerus, but it is Esther who is Jewish, and Vashti who is non-Jewish.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the text includes a poem that features an actual “beautiful Jewess,” thus further conflating the literary stereotype and the figure of Esther. This poem recounts the fate of the beautiful daughter of a nasty old Jewess—a relationship that recalls that between Esther and Vashti in the novella. The poem’s description of the daughter’s suicide in the ocean as a form of baptism alludes to the idea implied in the literary stereotype of the “beautiful Jewess” of a special affinity of Jewish women to Christianity. Since the daughter

33. See also Heinrich Henel, “Arnim’s *Majoratsherren*,” in *Romantikforschung seit 1945*, ed. Klaus Peter et al. (Königstein: Athenäum, Hain, Scriptor, Hanstein, 1980), 145–67; here 151.

34. For examples of this stereotype in German literature, see Florian Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin: Jüdische Frauengestalten in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993).

35. Esther became the wife of the Persian king Ahasuerus after his first wife, Vashti, had refused to appear in front of him. The temporal sequence, too, is inverted in Arnim’s novella, which has Vashti join Esther’s adoptive father after the death of his first wife.

in the poem is for all we know her mother's biological daughter, her doubling of Esther only further confounds the reader's sense of who or what is a "real" Jew.

If Arnim's reinterpretation of the idea of adoptive fatherhood aims at establishing clear boundaries between Jews and Christians, his literary play with doubles, inversions, and permutations constantly blurs these boundaries. Just as in "On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness," this de-essentializing of identity undermines any attempt to define Jews and Judaism in racial terms. However, the ambiguity Arnim creates around the question of who is truly Jewish does not diminish the novella's antisemitism. Rather, this ambiguity becomes part and parcel of colonial mimicry, or an ideological program in which total assimilation is simultaneously demanded and declared impossible. The figure of Esther in *Gentry by Entailment* provides a salient example of the slippages produced by colonial mimicry. This figure allows Arnim to play with the tantalizing image of the "beautiful Jewess" while positing the existence of indelible differences between Jews and Christians. Whether we identify Esther as a Christian who becomes partially Jewish or, as suggested by the poem, as a Jew who attempts to become a Christian (and can do so only by dying), she is the site where the limits of assimilation are constantly being tested and reinforced—all the while the very possibility of these two different readings destabilizes the notion of a clearly defined religious-ethnic identity that gave rise to the demand for assimilation in the first place.

Reading Arnim with Žižek and Bhabha suggests that this ambiguity, which expresses a *psychical* ambivalence about the process of modernization, ultimately enhances the *political* efficacy of antisemitism. Žižek's and Bhabha's insight that ideology is bound up with affect helps explain the proliferation of Christian-Jewish love stories at this juncture in history. At a moment when Jewish acculturation and German nationalism emerge simultaneously, literary representations of interreligious love serve to reimagine the interplay between difference and similarity. As I have shown, even the blatantly antisemitic "On the Distinguishing Signs of Jewishness" includes a fantasy of interreligious sex to gloss over the impasses in its argument about immutable Jewish difference. In "Reconciliation in the Summer Holiday" and *Gentry by Entailment*, the Christian-Jewish love story allows for an even fuller expression of ambivalence and uncertainty. In each of the cases, the love relationship reveals the internal contradictions of an ideology without weakening its power. For all their ambiguities, Arnim's love stories leave little doubt that Christian-Jewish love either does not exist or leads nowhere. Arnim's dismissal of love as a means of integration forms a contrast to the open-ended love stories in Veit's *Florentin* or in Lessing's plays. As I have shown in the previous two chapters, Florentin's hope for a fatherland founded on love is suspended rather than abrogated. In Lessing, interreligious love emerges as a possibility that is relegated to an open-ended future (in *Die Juden*) or an inaccessible past (in *Nathan der Weise*), thereby transmuting from a private affair into a metaphor for social relations. In Arnim, this process of metaphorization comes to a decided standstill.

