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Studien und Quellen zur deutsch-jüdischen Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte

Herausgegeben von Hans Otto Horch

in Verbindung mit Itta Shedletzky



# **The Jewish Reception of Heinrich Heine**

Edited by Mark H. Gelber

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David S. Galton  
*in memoriam*

for the encouragement and love  
he radiated to family and friends



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## Introduction

In April, 1990, the Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics, Ben-Gurion University (Beersheva, Israel), together with the Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem, and the Goethe Institute, Tel Aviv, sponsored a three-day conference on the "Jewish Reception of Heinrich Heine." This volume contains most of the lectures, many substantially revised, which were presented at the sessions, together with a few others, which could not be delivered at that time.

The gathering in Beersheva provided an opportunity to utilize the methodological guidelines and insights of reception aesthetics within a very specific framework, that is, to investigate the particular Jewish reception of Heinrich Heine. By emphasizing the role of readers situated in history, the conditions of reading among a delimited readership, and reader-response in its various forms, the notion of Jewish reception itself becomes as much a topic of debate, as the complicated reception history of Heine. Thus, in addition to helping to fill a particular literary-historical gap, the very topic lends itself to a highly self-conscious critical discussion.

The essays contained in this volume have different objectives, all falling within the purview of reception. Many focus on the reception of Heine by specific Jewish readers, who, more often than not, appear as major figures in their own right in Western literary or cultural history. The essays on Sigmund Freud (Gilman), Karl Kraus (Lensing), Else Lasker-Schüler (Shedletzky), Lion Feuchtwanger (Koepke), and Max Brod (Pazi) fall into this category, as does Karl Marx (Schlesier), despite his very problematical status as a "Jewish reader." However, since the reception history naturally touches upon marginal, often forgotten, figures, consideration of these cases very often provides striking insights into the widespread importance of Heine for the careers of numerous aspiring poets and writers. The essays on Aron Bernstein (Schoeps), on somewhat less well-known 19th century German-Jewish writers (Kahn, Hook), as well as the one on Fritz Heymann (Kruse) pertain here. Another object of concern is the Jewish participation or contribution to reception history in different national literatures, some more dominant, as the American example shows (Sammons), and others on the periphery of Western literary history, as the Croatian model indicates

(Stančić). The relative international stature of these respective literatures is neutral as to the prominence of Heine as an abiding factor in its individual development. Related perhaps is the reception within particular Jewish ideological streams, as seen in the Zionist reception (Gelber). The specific receptions in Yiddish (Liptzin) and Hebrew literatures (Bar-Yosef) are of special interest within the overall Jewish reception; however, it is fair to say that the related essays in this volume serve to indicate that much more remains to be done in these areas. National literary traditions develop in conjunction with international cultural trends, and the interdependence of specific reception histories emerges as a clear concept, when the findings of different essays are considered carefully and measured against one another.

Furthermore, the question concerning the extent to which Heine's implied reader would be a Jewish reader is addressed, albeit indirectly, in several of the contributions (Gilman, Shedletzky, Gelber). In a way, that question inevitably brings discussion back to the very works of Heine, a very desirable trend according to Jeffrey Sammons, if, as he puts it, the "current exhaustion" of Heine studies is to yield eventually to new, energetic interpretive approaches. In the appendix, an "Intervention" to the Beersheva Heine Conference, written by the French-Jewish poet Alain Suied, may be found. This poetical meditation is but one more reception of Heine; yet, as we have come to understand, all of the contributions in this collection must also be viewed in this light.

What emerged in Beersheva, I believe, was the prospect of continuing, diverse Jewish receptions (of Heine and of other literary figures), many of which share more in common with contemporaneous non-Jewish readings than with other Jewish readings. To some extent, this may be the result of the existence of highly diverse Jewish readerships in different languages, often sharing many of the same social and cultural characteristics of non-Jewish readerships in whose midst Jews reside. Perhaps, though, this is also a result of the complex personality of Heine, and the broad range and numerous kinds of writings he authored. Heine's conversion, his Jewish interests and acculturation, his wavering political associations, his exile and problematical relationship with the state authorities, and his late return to Jewish themes are complicating factors in this discussion. To some degree, a consideration of the Jewish reception of Heine indicates that underlying all reception studies is a sense that readings of literary texts are transitory, if momentarily significant, experiences, among peoples, communities, and individuals. Also, the same readers respond differently over time to what they have read, and the attempt to hint at a more or less uniform "national" reading of certain writers is bound to meet certain resistance.

In a curious way, many of the reception studies found in this volume indicate that the reception of Heine in literary history is as much as, if not

more of, an emotional response to the person of Heine than a reasoned appreciation of particular poems or literary works. Heine became a symbol of diverse cultural options for European Jewry, and he, together with his works, was often embraced or rejected on the basis of strong emotional responses among readers to aspects of his personality or controversial moments in his career.

One high point of the Heine conference in Beersheva was the awarding of the Ben-Gurion Medal by Professor Haim Elata, President of Ben-Gurion University, to Professor Sol Liptzin for his life-long contributions to Jewish scholarship. Sol Liptzin announced at the conference, that is, shortly before his 89th birthday, that his lecture on "Heine and the Yiddish Poets," which brought together two of his long-term scholarly interests in a provocative manner, would be the last public lecture of his career. As this volume goes to press, Sol Liptzin has just celebrated his 90th birthday. Also, I would like to add that Professor Lothar Kahn, who won an American Council of Learned Societies' grant to enable him to participate in the Heine conference in Israel, died unexpectedly in January, 1990, before the meeting. His colleague and close friend, Donald D. Hook, has reconstructed and revised Lothar Kahn's lecture for inclusion in this volume, for which I thank him sincerely.

I would like to thank Shlomo Maier, director of the Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem, Jürgen Keil, director of the Goethe Institute, Tel Aviv, and Professor Ya'akov Blidstein, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ben-Gurion University, as well as the Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics, BGU for their financial support of the Heine conference in Beersheva in 1990. I am also grateful to my colleagues, Gerda Elata, Michel Elial, Haim Finkelstein, Efraim Sicher, and Georges Slama, for their advice and participation. I am thankful to my assistant, Hana Chone, as well as to the students in my seminar on problems in reception aesthetics, who were helpful in diverse ways, in addition to contributing to the discussions.

Very special thanks are due to Suzi Ganot, administrative assistant and secretary, Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics, BGU, for her devoted assistance over an extended time, in terms of organizing the conference, assuring its success, and preparing the texts of the lectures for publication.

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Mark H. Gelber  
Beersheva/Omer

Jeffrey L. Sammons

## **The Exhaustion of Current Heine Studies: Some Observations, Partly Speculative**

The underlying premise of what follows here is that contemporary Heine studies have reached a relatively static state; that, despite the large amount of material that continues to appear without intermission, the view of him that has sustained the Heine industry has become exhausted in its possibilities, and that the topic will gradually become moribund unless there are initiatives from new perspectives, which, of course, are always possible.

It might fairly be asked how one can know such a thing, and in fact I make the assertion with some diffidence. Not too many months ago, I was telling students that the Berlin Wall looked like a permanent installation for the foreseeable future and that no one could imagine a plausible scenario for the reunification of Germany. Like most others interested in these matters, I have since given up prophecy. The historical moment in which one is most directly engaged is often the one most difficult to perceive accurately. But, I think there are a number of signs that allow the reasonable conclusion that Heine studies are in fact becoming exhausted.

One of these, which ought to strike any constant reader of the material, is its repetitiousness, the relatively frozen canonical view of Heine, the absence of any serious dissent to now conventional opinion. Another sign is the appearance of large, summarizing, conclusive overviews, traces, perhaps, of the flight of the owl of Minerva at dusk. We have at long last a usable modern biography in German, Wolfgang Hädecke's.<sup>1</sup> Another example is the 1987 *Heine-Handbuch* of Gerhard Höhn, in which the author himself argues that the time is appropriate for an overview.<sup>2</sup> This is an immensely useful work, a first resource for anyone seriously concerned with Heine, though in its judgments it is a syncretic compendium of mainstream opinion and therefore further evidence that Heine has been stabilized into a classic. A third example, from the previous year, Stefan Bodo Würffel's *Der produktive Widerspruch*, makes a promising beginning by attempting to acknowledge all of Heine's conflicting voices but still appears as a continuation of current trends; its obedient discipleship to the Frankfurt School and especially to

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Hädecke, *Heinrich Heine: Eine Biographie* (Munich: Hanser, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard Höhn, *Heine-Handbuch: Zeit, Person, Werk* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1987).

Adorno may also be a sign of its lurking obsolescence.<sup>3</sup> There are symptoms as well in the central scholarly organ, the *Heine-Jahrbuch*. Of the eight major articles in the 1988 volume, only two are by German scholars. It is, of course, true that Heine has always been an international subject, but one of the characteristics of the modern phase of scholarship has been the recovery of initiative by the Germans; except for the still ceaseless flow of dissertations, there are some indications that he has become less interesting to German scholars other than those directly associated with the Düsseldorf institute and its publishing enterprises. In the 1989 *Jahrbuch*, studies of reception and peripheral associations greatly outweigh new perspectives on the author himself. I hope I may be forgiven for suggesting that an increased proportion of reception studies is a hint that scholars are running out of original ideas about the writer in his own right.

More global signs of exhaustion are, on the one hand, phenomena of decadence in Heine studies, and, on the other, a certain amount of floundering in search of alternative perspectives that has so far remained ineffectual. As decadent, that is, as a kind of self-consuming final phase, I would categorize the application of a post-modern style of discourse to a conventional pattern of opinion. By post-modern I mean the privileging of the critic and the critic's discourse over the author and the author's discourse in a way that dispenses with any methodological discipline in the analysis or even apprehension of the text and its context. The most prominent exemplars of this development have been Dolf Oehler and Klaus Briegleb. Oehler has taken Heine's irony as a warrant to turn any utterance that does not fit his idea of what the author should have meant into its opposite, in order to maintain the construct of an unambiguously radical revolutionary totally committed to communism.<sup>4</sup> Here is a characteristic example of his form of argument: When Heine in the French preface to *Lutezia* predicts that the communists would destroy art and poesy, he does not mean the communists; he means the bourgeoisie. That is the joke on the bourgeois reader.<sup>5</sup> Briegleb's, to me, increasingly unintelligible writing applies an exceptionally self-indulgent and fustian style, as though he were composing a modernistic literary work with Heine's texts as his resources, to the most conventional notions of a revolutionary vision superior to that of all his contemporaries except, of course, Marx, thus im-

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Bodo Würffel, *Der produktive Widerspruch: Heinrich Heines negative Dialektik* (Bern: Francke, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> Dolf Oehler, *Pariser Bilder 1 (1830-1848): Antibourgeoise Ästhetik bei Baudelaire, Daumier und Heine* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979); "Letzte Worte -- Die Lektion aus der Matratzengruft," in Oehler, *Ein Höllensturz der Alten Welt: Zur Selbsterforschung der Moderne nach dem Juni 1848* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 239-67, among other publications.

<sup>5</sup> Dolf Oehler, "Heines Genauigkeit. Und zwei komplementäre Stereotypen über das Wesen der proletarischen Massen," *Diskussion Deutsch* 8 (1977), 258.

plying that Heine is a topic that no longer requires any inquiry but merely the rhetorical embellishment of what has been established. In his last book, Heine appears as a Wandering (literally, in German, "Eternal") Jew, ultimately disinherited, who labored under a psyche distorted by his repressive mother and, as an "Eulenspiegel and flâneur," with sarcasm and irony acted out his disappointment at the failed revolution and his anarchistic, destructive rage toward the bourgeoisie and the liberal fools, ultimately sacrificing himself in martyrdom as a sign of his own and of Jewish obsolescence in the face of the true revolutionary utopia. Briegleb has become such an obscure writer that it is not easy to make out what he means by the image of the Wandering Jew, but one wonders whether it is an opportune allusion at this point in history.<sup>6</sup>

On another periphery, possibly a symptom of an emerging vacuum at the center, has been a renewed interest in Heine by religious partisans, more commonly Christian than Jewish. There has been a surprising amount of this, ranging from the outright forgery by evangelicals of a poem in which Heine is alleged to have made an act of contrition<sup>7</sup> to serious, more or less well informed studies by religious liberals.<sup>8</sup> None of this has been very helpful or illuminating, as I do not believe that Heine can be credibly made into a paradigmatic figure for any form of Christian purpose, no matter how modern in spirit. More promising at first sight is the emergence of psychoanalytic inquiries. It is remarkable that there has not been more of this, although to engage in such a pursuit requires a recognition, not very prominent in contemporary Heine studies, that he was a complex personality with a

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<sup>6</sup> Klaus Briegleb, *Opfer Heine? Versuche über Schriftzüge der Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986). Although it has been my practice for nearly thirty years to read everything of scholarly significance about Heine, no matter how trying, I must confess that I gave up my attempt to read this book all the way through. Briegleb develops the allusion to the Wandering Jew also in "'Paris, den....' H. Heines Tagesberichte. Eine Skizze," *Der Deutschunterricht* 40 (1988), 39-50.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Walter, "Hat sich Heine am Ende seines Lebens bekehrt? Religionskritik und Altersreligiosität bei Heinrich Heine," *Factum* 9 (Sept., 1987), 35-46; 10 (Oct., 1987), 28-37. Although Walter's orthodoxy estranges him from Heine altogether, it at least enables him to see that the Christianizing claims are fraudulent.

<sup>8</sup> In recent years: Ferdinand Schlingensiefen, *Heinrich Heine als Theologe: Ein Textbuch* (Munich: Kaiser, 1981); Leo F. J. Meulenberg, "'Mein armer Vetter, der du die Welt erlösen gewollt': Die Gestalt Jesu im religiösen Werdegang von Heinrich Heine," *Kerygma und Dogma* 32 (1986), 71-98; Karl-Josef Kuschel, "Religion im Werk von Heinrich Heine," *Poet und Prophet: Heinrich Heines Dichtung und Religionskritik* (Stuttgart-Hohenheim: Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart, 1987), 33-71; Johann M. Schmidt, "'Streitaxt der Reformation' -- 'Hausapotheke der Menschheit,' Heinrich Heines Bibel," *Evangelische Theologie* 47 (1987), 369-86. For Judaizing examples see Heinz F. Tengler, "The Role of Judaism in Heine's Life and Work: Continuity in Change," *Acta Germanica* 17 (1984), 53-68, and Heinz R. Kuehn, "Rediscovering Heinrich Heine," *Sewanee Review* 97 (1989), 123-38.

number of peculiarities and several highly neurotic, if not to say, pathological characteristics. Unfortunately, the three major studies we now have tend to highly divergent if not contradictory results. Manfred Schneider's stimulating psychosocial inquiry into Heine's generation of dissidents found the problem in his relationship to his mother and the limits on her love in the interests of preparing the son for a capitalist society;<sup>9</sup> Franz Futterknecht finds the mother boundlessly loving and adoring and locates the problem in disillusion with the weak father, resulting in a narcissistic, emotionally arrested self in the son;<sup>10</sup> and Irene Guy, as far as I am able to follow her, applies a semiotic psychoanalysis derived from Julia Kristeva and sees the pathology emerging at the collapse of his health and the 1848 Revolution, causing him to regress into castration anxieties and fears of the "phallic" mother.<sup>11</sup> These results are useful for reminding us that psychoanalysis is not an Archimedean point outside of literary criticism from which firm scientific results can be obtained. But, while it is difficult to penetrate the psychological disposition of a person of the past, especially one so systematically veiled as Heine's, so that it would therefore seem appropriate to make minimal claims, these initiatives are promising. I believe that an unprejudiced inquiry, not bedevilled by semiotics or preoccupied with the bugaboo of "capitalism," could come to some conclusions about subliminal stresses in his relationship with his mother, their distortive effect upon his erotic constitution and on his relations to others generally, and their coding in the love poetry and elsewhere. But we are not at that point yet.

In fairness, it should not be so surprising if Heine studies have reached a boundary. The current phase of scholarship has been going on for about a quarter of a century. It has been a period of great intensity; Heine has been, at least at intervals, the liveliest topic in German literary study. It is probable that during this time more has been learned about him that was not previously known or clearly understood than about any other German writer of the past. Apart from the large body of informational, interpretive, analytic, or ideological discourse about him that has accumulated in thousands of books and articles, enduring resources for the long-term future have been completed or are nearing completion. The Düsseldorf critical edition, which in its com-

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<sup>9</sup> Manfred Schneider, "Die Angst des Revolutionärs vor der Revolution: Zur Genese und Struktur des politischen Diskurses bei Heine," *Heine-Jahrbuch* 19 (1980), 9-48; "... Die Liebe für schöne Frauen und die Liebe für die Französische Revolution...." Anmerkungen zum romantischen Spracherwerb und zur Ikonographie des politischen Diskurses bei Heine," in Sebastian Goeppert (Ed.), *Perspektiven psychoanalytischer Literaturkritik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1978), 158-93; *Die kranke schöne Seele der Revolution: Heine, Börne, das "Junge Deutschland," Marx und Engels* (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Franz Futterknecht, *Heinrich Heine: Ein Versuch* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> Irene Guy, *Sexualität im Gedicht: Heinrich Heines Spätlyrik* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1984).



mentaries contains a vast proportion of the new knowledge about Heine, is progressing at such an encouraging pace that, contrary to earlier expectations, it may actually be completed in this century.<sup>12</sup> Heine's letters have been re-edited, and the letters to him edited for the first time, in the East German edition; when and if the remainder of that indifferently produced edition shall be completed is unimportant.<sup>13</sup> Heine's conversations and the recollections of others concerning him have been capably and usefully re-edited.<sup>14</sup> The task of maintaining comprehensive bibliography has been carried on in East Germany, latterly with assistance from the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup> From East Germany has also come one of the most useful of tools for the Heine scholar, the day-to-day chronicle of his life.<sup>16</sup> It would seem to be in the nature of things that such an intensive enterprise would at some point run out of steam, that its premises would become exhausted, that scholars would begin to turn their attention elsewhere, that the changing times would suggest changing priorities. But, if this is the case, then the current phase of Heine studies is on the verge of becoming a chapter of reception -- a particularly voluminous one, to be sure. Thus, like all aspects of reception history, it begins to invite retrospective investigation, and here it seems to me that there are some matters that ought to disturb us or at least induce some earnest reconsideration.

Now it may be known to one or another of you that I have been saying something like this for a number of years and am now in serious danger of repeating myself;<sup>17</sup> indeed, some degree of repetition will be unavoidable. More seriously, the question is bound to arise: Who am I to pass such

<sup>12</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke* (Manfred Windfuhr et al., Eds.), (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1973- ).

<sup>13</sup> *Heinrich Heine Sakulärausgabe*, Ed. Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris (Berlin and Paris: Akademie-Verlag and Editions du CNRS, 1970- ). The correspondence is contained in volumes 20-27 with their corresponding commentary volumes and volumes 20-27 R, the index.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Werner (Ed.), *Begegnungen mit Heine*, in *Fortführung von H. H. Houbens "Gespräche mit Heine"* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1973).

<sup>15</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm von Eberhard Galley, *Heine Bibliographie* (Weimar: Arion Verlag, 1960); Siegfried Seifert, *Heine-Bibliographie 1954-1964* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1968); Siegfried Seifert and Albina A. Volgina, *Heine-Bibliographie 1965-1982* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1986).

<sup>16</sup> Fritz Mende, *Heinrich Heine: Chronik seines Lebens und Werkes*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1981).

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey L. Sammons, "Problems of Heine Reception: Some Considerations," *Monatshefte* 73 (1981), 383-91; Sammons, "Heinrich Heine: Reception in the World's Strangeness," in Joseph P. Strelka (Ed.), *Literary Theory and Criticism: Festschrift Presented to René Wellek in Honor of his Eightieth Birthday*, (Bern, Frankfurt a. Main, and New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 1245-64; both reprinted in Sammons, *Imagination and History: Selected Papers on Nineteenth-Century German Literature* (New York, Bern, Frankfurt am Main, and Paris: Peter Lang, 1988), 55-95.

judgments, to distribute censure? I am a stranger to the culture, a native of a faraway land with a very different set of social and historical determinants of consciousness, with the consequence that my very relationship to the literary text is, as the Germans say, "von Haus aus" differently purposed and organized. I am aware that what I have to say may seem to imply that there is a right way to view Heine, a correct interpretation free of the distortions so easily detected in the views of others, and the doubt about this is not abolished by a claim that all commentators behave as if such a correct view were achievable, no matter how aware they may be of the local and relativizing determinants of consciousness. If one is a part of reception history, as I assume I am in some way, is it possible to find also a purchase outside it?

In attempting to address this question, I find myself caught between two conflicting academic styles. One, more familiar to me from my origins, is a counsel of decorum, suggesting that one ought not to foreground one's empirical and personal self in one's academic discourse. The other is a demand that has been made insistently since the advent of the sociological and ideological-critical modes of literary study, that the scholar reflect upon the determinants of his own consciousness and understand himself as an exogenously formed rather than self-created self, his responses as conditioned rather than natural, his place in the communication system between self and text as circumscribed rather than sovereign. Even so, one might suppose that such acts of reflection are more properly carried out in private rather than in public. Be that as it may, my long-standing skeptical and distanced relationship to the contemporary epoch of Heine scholarship has necessarily been the cause of a great deal of reflection on the uncomfortable and rather peculiar role of the critic of a foreign literature.

I was therefore much interested in Hiroshi Kiba's recent reflections on the function and status of Heine scholarship in Japan.<sup>18</sup> Among its features are the fact that the bulk of Japanese Heine scholarship is written in Japanese, sometimes though not always with German abstracts, and thus is not intended to be received in German or other Western-language scholarship; its audience, therefore, is projected as primarily indigenous. This limitation seems satisfactory, insofar as it is evidently possible to employ scholarly discourse to arouse an interest in Heine among Japanese readers. In the United States it is very difficult if not impossible to do this. There is no general public readiness for an interest in German literature of the past, and Heine is no exception to this absence. Even among many comparatists, except for some theory of the high Romanticism and pieces of Goethe, literary phenomena reinvented by the French, such as Hölderlin and Nietzsche, and scraps of the Ger-

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<sup>18</sup> Hiroshi Kiba, "Forschung als Rezeption. Grundzüge der japanischen Heine-Forschung seit 1945," *Heine-Jahrbuch* 28 (1989), 31-42.

man and, more likely, "Austrian Moderne," the level of knowledge of German literature is deplorable. In the literary disciplines in the United States, there is outside the field of German, generally speaking, no interest in Heine, no apperception of his extremely lively and central role in the upheaval of German literary scholarship for the past quarter century, indeed little awareness of the upheaval itself apart from trace elements of Lukács and the Frankfurt School and of reception hermeneutics. What then is the audience for an American Heine specialist, especially at a time when German scholarship shows, for what may well be understandable reasons of current history, less and less interest in English-language contributions?

Ideally, the scholar in that situation would like to be a mediator, with a positive relationship to the foreign culture, perhaps even one that grants perceptive and evaluative priority to the indigenous interpreters of that culture. Ironically, the American Germanists of the past who did develop such a relationship to the target culture are now much criticized for their submission to and transmission of the ideology of the Reich.<sup>19</sup> Whether those American Germanists of today who have absorbed and propagated the ideas and values of the German academic community will one day be criticized for their discipleship when the modern epoch of German intellectual life comes under critical scrutiny, no one can say. In any case this is not one of the risks I run, as, especially in regard to Heine, I have been in a relatively non-participatory posture for years. However, it has been an increasingly uncomfortable posture that has made me long to resign from the Heine topic altogether, although that no longer seems feasible. While neither an apologia nor a mea culpa would be of any use here, I might remark to what degree, as the current epoch of study shows signs of becoming reception-historical, it becomes easier to see how I came to be at odds with it.

In the first instance, it may have been a category confusion to think of this epoch as having been primarily concerned with Heinrich Heine the person and the writer, and with his writings. Primarily it was, or in the course of the 1960s became, an elaborate effort of German scholars and intellectuals to create, an opposition to and repudiation of the German past, a fundamentally new cultural consciousness, relationship to tradition, and ideological orientation of intellectual work and responsibility, for which the decanonized, repudiated, exiled Heine was the vehicle. That it was an intensely German matter is shown by the fact that, although there has been a great deal of scholarship and commentary in all kinds of non-German-speaking countries, there has been virtually no participation in Austria or Switzerland. If my memory does not deceive me, among the thousands of items in the contemporary Heine bibliography, there has been only one major one from Austria, an illustrated,

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<sup>19</sup> E.g., Richard Spuler, *"Germanistik" in America: The Reception of German Classicism 1870-1905* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1982).

rather interestingly composed introductory book that went out of print almost instantaneously,<sup>20</sup> and only one major one from Switzerland, the comprehensive study by Würffel that I mentioned earlier. A possible topic for a reception study would be an effort to categorize foreign Heine commentary by the extent to which it either has remained bound to indigenous -- and that means in many cases, traditional -- generic and axiological premises or has associated itself with the German cultural revolution. In the United States, however, where we are not accustomed to fight our political and ideological battles on the ground of culture and literary scholarship, the nature of contemporary Heine study, despite an at least sporadic interest in German politics and current events, was simply not perceivable, as indeed the whole upheaval in cultural life and especially in the universities has been essentially unremarked, with the result that Americans occasionally find themselves startled or bewildered by some of its consequences, such as "anti-Americanism."

That Heine scholarship has been a crucially German affair is indicated also by the fact that, like all significant German matters of the last forty years, it has a West German and an East German aspect. Recent events make one wonder whether the time has not become ripe for a critical retrospective on East German Heine discourse within the GDR itself. As I write this in the winter (1990) -- I mention this temporal circumstance for the obvious reason that events have been following upon one another with breathless rapidity and one has no idea how they will look a few weeks or months hence -- there has been no sign of such a retrospective, in fact none that I have seen of any participation of prominent humanistic academics in the spectacular public events. However, this may be owing to the slowness of scholarly publication. The first Heine commentaries in this new situation, should there be any, will be a significant sign. If they continue with the familiar themes -- the propagation of Heine in the GDR as an ally in the struggle for peace and socialism, self-praise for the millions of copies of his works that have been distributed, accusations of distortion or evasion by bourgeois scholarship -- it will bode ill for the role that scholars in the humanities intend to play in the new situation. A critical analysis of East German Heine reception from within, on the other hand, would be a timely and encouraging development.

The most basic thing one ought to observe about it in retrospect is its totally opportunistic nature. From the beginning, the propagation of Heine in the GDR was a stick with which to beat the Federal Republic. Since the revival of interest in the Federal Republic was delayed -- possibly a hangover from his silencing during the Nazi period, but just as likely, in my view, a reflex of the modernist devaluation of Heine that goes back to the time of

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<sup>20</sup> Herbert Schnierle and Christoph Wetzel et al., *Heinrich Heine*, Vol. 11 of "Die großen Klassiker; Literatur der Welt in Bildern, Texten, Daten," (Salzburg: Andreas & Andreas, 1980). The publisher failed and the entire twenty-volume series was remaindered.

Karl Kraus -- Heine became the vehicle for assertions of the ideological and, indeed, moral superiority of the GDR, of its true succession to the German humanistic tradition, and of the true succession of the capitalist-revanchist Federal Republic to the fascist Reich. The intellectual and critical level of much that was published in this phase was generally mediocre, but as a public relations device it was eminently successful, so that even the West became persuaded that Heine was nurtured in the East and suppressed in the West, and in fact this notion was one spur to the revival of Heine study in the West, at the same time as a projected collaborated critical edition fissioned into an Eastern and Western version.

All of this is well known; what has been less noticed is that once the center of gravity of Heine study had, in the course of the 1970s, shifted to the West, notably to Düsseldorf and, in no small degree, Paris, the East German interest faded away. An original monograph on Heine has not been published there in more than twenty years. There is a single serious Heine scholar working there, Fritz Mende, whose thematic studies, published in a long series over the years, generally fall into three types: semiotic or word-field studies that trace Heine's usage of terms or concepts; detailed, specifically focused reception studies; and examinations of Heine's relations with various contemporaries. These studies are learned and useful but, kept as they are within the cautious bounds of orthodox Marxism, not very adventurous.<sup>21</sup> The real touchstone of the situation is the once much-touted critical edition. Poorly bound and printed on paper that does not look promising for the future, with typographical errors that constantly generate errata lists, it offers a commentary reduced to the barest positivism and evading all difficulties. Since its main contribution, the correspondence volumes, have been completed, the pace has slowed noticeably, and in fact it is now clear that the rest of the edition will never hold its own next to its Düsseldorf competitor. The history of East German Heine reception is the history of a tacitly acknowledged failure of a cultural policy. It will be healthy if East German observers themselves publicly and explicitly confront this failure.<sup>22</sup>

The West German discourse has been livelier, more differentiated, and, on the whole, more sophisticated. However, owing to the circumstance I mentioned earlier, that it has not actually been Heine and his works that have been at the center of the undertaking, but the restructuring of ideological consciousness, here, too, the results, or absence of them, have been shaped by

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<sup>21</sup> Characteristic examples of these essays are collected in Fritz Mende, *Heinrich Heine: Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983).

<sup>22</sup> Walter Reese, *Zur Geschichte der sozialistischen Heine-Rezeption in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, and Cirencester: Peter D. Lang, 1979) is a critique from the Left, from the perspective of Western Neo-Marxism. Something less sectarian is needed.

anterior purpose. Since reception is our subject here, I might begin by addressing that aspect. Heine is an outstanding test case for reception studies because his reception has been exceptionally extensive, varied, and often disputatious. In the awareness of the world at large he consistently ranked second only to Goethe among German-language writers in the past, though I am by no means sure that this continues to be so in our time. This reception, to be sure, was to a very large extent one of the early poetry, often as carried by its musical settings, and some of the *Reisebilder*, along with a body of aphorisms and anecdotes, many of them spurious, that is, a reception of Heine as the poet of sentiment and wit, just those aspects of him that have been of least interest to modern German studies, so that we already witness an estrangement between those studies and the broader reception. This, in turn, shows that reception study, while perhaps an interesting and worthwhile endeavor in itself, does not inform current interpretation, no matter what the theorists may say. Nevertheless, there has been no shortage of reception studies; even to list them cursorily would lead too far afield. We have had accounts, in varying degrees of detail, of Heine among the French and the English, the Danes, the Swedes, and the Rumanians, the Cubans, the Peruvians, and the Mexicans, etc. etc. What we have not seen in this quarter century of intensive research is a systematic and thorough study of the German reception, and this absence is both symptomatic of and perfectly consistent with the superintending purpose -- what I believe is now called the "Erkenntnisinteresse" -- of the whole enterprise.

For what we have had so far has not been so much concerned to recover the full history of German reception, but rather to arraign the German bourgeoisie of a repressive, reactionary, and anti-Semitic hostility to Heine as an illustrative segment of the prehistory of fascism, seen as the consequence of bourgeois ideology and capitalism<sup>23</sup> and thus also tacitly to certify the modern phase of Heine as uniquely appreciative and adequate to its object as well as ideologically redemptive. In the compendia of anti-Heineana there has been what has seemed to me a perhaps understandable but nevertheless inordinate stress on anti-Semitic extremists like Adolf Bartels. Several years ago I asked publicly: "Can it really be true that no one in Bartels's time stated publicly that he was a hysterical and also boorish crank?"<sup>24</sup> Only just recently have I encountered an answer to this question: in 1906 Alfred Kerr wrote that, in comparison to Bartels, Wolfgang Menzel was a "giant"; and he called Bartels a "sickly epigone" full of "feeble hysteria" and "flabby

<sup>23</sup> See especially Karl Hotz (Ed.), *Heinrich Heine: Wirkungsgeschichte als Wirkungskritik. Materialien zur Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte Heines* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1975); and Karl Theodor Kleinknecht (Ed.), *Heine in Deutschland* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1976).

<sup>24</sup> Sammons, *Imagination and History*, 57-58.

paltriness."<sup>25</sup>

This quotation appeared in an essay on the history of the Hamburg Heine monument. Everyone who is even a little acquainted with the history of Heine's reputation knows something about the succession of disputes concerning the erection of a monument to him in Germany. The issue is constantly adduced as a particularly conspicuous example of the rejection of one of the most famous of German authors by his own nation. However, as I realized when I was trying to piece together the background of the Lorelei Fountain in New York City, there has never been a scholarly, historical study of the monument disputes. The item I cited is part of what seems to be, at long last, such a study, and it is perhaps significant that its author is not a literary scholar from the community of Heine experts but an art historian. Now it must be logically apparent to anyone that in order for the monument disputes to have occurred in the first place, there must have been substantial and articulate support for Heine. There can be no doubt that the discouraging resolution of these disputes and the primitive effects that accompanied them belong to the pre-history of fascism in Germany. But at the same time, the reception history becomes unintelligible if it is not recognized that from the appearance of Strodtmann's biography in 1867 until a period beginning sometime before World War I and continuing to the 1920s, when his standing was indeed diminishing ominously, Heine had many readers and admirers and was the object of a lively epoch of scholarly and philological study that, after all, laid the groundwork for everything we are able to do today.

Of the history of this we have learned nothing in the modern phase. As far as Heine scholarship is concerned, names such as Adolf Strodtmann, Gustav Karpeles, Paul Holzhausen, H. H. Houben, Ernst Elster, Ewald Boucke, Jonas Fränkel, Helene Herrmann, Max Wolff, and even the otherwise unforgotten Oskar Walzel, along with many others, are just items in an antiquarian bibliography. For an examination of this broad fabric of Heine reception would lead to a much more complex picture than that of the modern resurrection of one who once was lost but now is found. Nor has there been a clear focus on the modern decline of Heine's reputation beginning in the first decade of this century. It is true that a good deal has been written about Karl Kraus's attack on Heine of 1910.<sup>26</sup> But much of it has been rather convoluted

<sup>25</sup> Dietrich Schubert, "Jetzt wohin? Das 'deutsche Gedächtnis' für Heinrich Heine," *Heine-Jahrbuch* 28 (1989), 46.

<sup>26</sup> See Mechthild Borries, *Ein Angriff auf Heinrich Heine: Kritische Betrachtungen zu Karl Kraus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971); Bernd Kämmerling, "Die wahre Richtung des Angriffs. Über Karl Kraus' Heine und die Folgen," *Heine-Jahrbuch* 11 (1972), 162-69; Hannelore Ederer, *Die literarische Mimesis entfremdeter Sprache: Zur sprachkritischen Literatur von Heinrich Heine bis Karl Kraus* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1979), 12-115; Uta Schaub, "Liliencron und Heine im Urteil von Karl Kraus. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der literarischen Wertung," *Heine-Jahrbuch* 18 (1979), 191-201; Jay Bodine, "Heinrich

in its apologetics, since in the contemporary epoch Kraus has been as much of a sacred cow in his own way as Heine has in his, so that painful problems are generated when they come into conflict with one another. It would be more fruitful to ask to what extent Kraus's pasquinade is only a special case of the modernist repudiation of Heine as a poet, a case of literary criticism having been overrun by popular reception, extending to Adorno's, in my view, ill-conceived Heine essay of 1956.<sup>27</sup> Of contemporary commentators, it seems to me that only Jürgen Habermas has begun to reflect on the reasons for Heine's failure to reach the public he sought to influence and to explain why, as an intellectual of more French than German type, he was resisted in all ideological camps, including the Left, though we are not yet at the point where Heine's own publicistic strategies are subject to critical analysis.<sup>28</sup>

Instead of the analytic study of the reception history, what we are getting, as it were by ostensive definition, is the verbatim reproduction of all the reception materials. The last thing I would wish to do is show any disrespect toward the editors of this project, the venerable Eberhard Galley, to whom all modern Heine study owes a great debt, or Alfred Estermann, one of today's leading researchers of the "Vormärz." But, I confess I am bewildered by this undertaking. We now have four volumes, including one split volume, totalling 2,657 pages and 1,579 items, and we are only up to 1838. Where will this end? We have not even reached the Börne controversy, so productive of public dispute. The original plan was for volume two to include the aftermath of the Börne book and volume three to carry the reception materials to Heine's death; volumes four and five were to contain the foreign-language reception.<sup>29</sup> This was obviously impossible; the question is whether the project even now is sustainable. A more serious question is whether placing this mass of material before us aids or blockades reception study. The volumes do have comprehensive introductions and some commentary, but republishing the mass of material is not a substitute, nor, I should think, a necessary prerequisite, to reception history. Furthermore, these volumes are heavy and expensive, though no doubt subsidized all the same; they burden, both in bulk and in cost, our institutional and personal libraries. I sometimes wonder whether Heine scholarship might not benefit from a little less public funding.

My own opinion is that it is not likely to get out of its present static

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Heine, Karl Kraus and 'die Folgen.' A Test Case of Literary Texts, Historical Reception and Receptive Aesthetics," *Colloquia Germanica* 17 (1984 [i.e., 1985]), 14-59.

<sup>27</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, "Die Wunde Heine," in his *Noten zur Literatur* I (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1956), 144-52.

<sup>28</sup> Jürgen Habermas, "Heinrich Heine und die Rolle der Intellektuellen in Deutschland," *Merkur* 40 (1986), 453-68.

<sup>29</sup> Eberhard Galley and Alfred Estermann (Eds.), *Heinrich Heines Werk im Urteil seiner Zeitgenossen* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, Heinrich Heine Verlag, 1981- ), 1, 16.



condition unless it is prepared to leave to one side some of the ideologically redemptive purpose that has motivated it for the last twenty-five years. I am intensely aware that my perspective in this matter is a particularly foreign one. I realize that, for historical reasons, German literary artists have been called upon to provide a redemptive vision for the nation in a way that has never been the case in my country, where we are inclined to obtain our political inspiration from figures in our political and constitutional history rather than our literary history. Even making allowances for this difference, however, one may ask whether the German tradition does not require more of poets and writers than they can effectively deliver. Do we now think that the Goethe and Raabe Societies of the past -- and their aura, which was much vaster than their membership -- were conducive to the redemption of the nation? Is it not the case, especially in regard to Raabe, that the work of interpretation and understanding has had to begin again virtually from scratch? Is it altogether welcome that the Heine Society of today, whose manifold, indeed, indispensable achievements I would in no way deprecate, often appears to seek the succession to those organizations of the past? From my foreign perspective I sometimes wonder whether the energetic public propagation of Heine -- parading drummers through the streets in memory of Le Grand and the like -- is actually advantageous to understanding. In principle it would be possible to create the illusion of a public consciousness imbued with the spirit of Heine, just as the notion that German public consciousness in the past was imbued with the spirit of Goethe or Schiller or Raabe was an illusion. In the long run, the employment of Heine as an icon for present purposes is bound to puppetize and ultimately impoverish him.

One of the ways in which this can be done and has been done to a disturbing degree is to exempt him from criticism. An enduring characteristic of the reception history of the past has been the ambivalence with which he has been regarded, even by those positively disposed toward him. Sometimes this ambivalence, this weighing of positives and negatives, has been a symptom of recalcitrant or impatient apprehension. But, often it has been a genuine worry about Heine's lack of ethical discipline, his absence of empathy, his indifference to the sensibilities of his own potential public. This judicious aspect of reception has been explicitly abolished in the contemporary phase; it has been scorned as an evasive ambivalence within the liberal bourgeois consciousness itself. While irony and ambiguity are customarily thought of as characteristic of modernity, it is curious that much contemporary scholarship has attempted to deironize and deambiguate Heine, while claiming his relevance to modernity. From time to time the absurd claim has been made that bourgeois scholars and commentators are "afraid" of Heine, an exaggerated symptom of the overinflation of the ideological efficacy of a literary figure that marks this whole episode.