

## FROM DIFFERENCE TO SIMILARITY



**T**he *Apostle of Schottenfeld*, *Little Kohn*, and *The Journey to Grosswardein* not only provide insight into how Viennese Jews culturally processed time and space. In this chapter, I demonstrate how these texts also highlight the possibility of a peaceful coexistence between Jews and non-Jews in the particular image of Jewishness that they cultivate. In doing so, my investigation uncovers how these three texts evince significant overlap with the other *Völkssänger* pieces that I have explored in the previous chapters. Through an analysis of these three works, I draw conclusions about the Jewish *Völkssänger* milieu in general.

In addition to this aspect, I discuss some of the implications of the concept of “inclusive” Jewish difference. Specifically, I explore the question whether we must understand inclusiveness and difference to be mutually exclusive. Can Jewishness in fact maintain its distinctiveness when associated with qualities that potentially also characterize non-Jews?

### The Struggle against Antisemitism

In one way or another, all three *Völkssänger* plays depict the antisemitism prevalent in Vienna at the time. While Albert Hirsch’s stage work deals with concrete anti-Jewish ascriptions, *Little Kohn* deals with widespread stereotypes. Both plays aim to expose how antisemitic views are baseless and have nothing to do with fact. *The Journey to Grosswardein* once again makes it clear that the attempts to escape these prejudices—that is, in its depiction of Zionism—do not represent a realistic solution. In the following section, I focus on a few select details from each work to demonstrate how all three portray anti-Jewish prejudices and their impact.

### *Language as an Indication of Jewishness*

In *The Apostle of Schottenfeld*, Mr. and Mrs. Goldmann correspond to a large extent to the image that many Viennese non-Jews had of Jews who lived in Vienna, as well as to the prevailing view within Judaism regarding “assimilated” Jews. We see this image exemplified in the play’s satirical depiction of Mr. and Mrs. Goldmann’s efforts to adapt to their non-Jewish social environment. In doing so, they and their daughter appear to ignore religious characteristics of Jewishness, viewing them as unimportant. This attitude is particularly clear in their disregard of religious dietary laws. When Esther comes home from Father Lorenz, she finds her mother in the kitchen preparing *Grammelknödel* (dumplings made with pork fat).<sup>1</sup> Esther calls them *Griebenknödel* (another word for dumplings prepared with pork fat), but her mother corrects her because she thinks *Grammeln* (pork cracklings) is the more appropriate term. The ensuing debate between mother and daughter thus zeroes in on the socially accepted name of the dish, rather than the question of whether *Grammeln* or *Griebeln* are compatible with a Jewish religious way of life. The Goldmann family members are still noticeably uncertain about their new lifestyle and look for guidance in everyday life. The use of language seems to be suited to them. It contains codes that help to hide their Jewishness. The debate between mother and daughter becomes comical, thus provoking the opposite of the intended effect, when Mr. Goldmann interferes in the situation. He asserts that neither the word *Grammeln* nor *Griebeln* is important, because they aren’t called *Knödel*, but rather *kneydlekh*.

*Kneydlekh* is the plural form of the word *kneydl* (dumpling) in Yiddish. Mr. Goldmann’s use of the term reveals his familiarity with the Yiddish language, thus allowing us to draw conclusions about his Jewishness. Although he endeavors to conceal any hint of Jewishness, he is obviously not immune to linguistic lapses that expose it. In this scene, Hirsch evokes a socially widespread idea regarding Jews. According to the stereotype, Jews attempt to keep their “origin” a secret, only to be undermined mainly by linguistic slippages that give them away.<sup>2</sup> Whether it be their intonation, syntactical particularities, or the use of specific terms that mark them as Jewish, Jews are ostensibly unable to conceal their ethnic background. *The Apostle of Schottenfeld* also depicts this aspect in the scene in which Father Lorenz visits the Goldmanns in their home. As a gesture of hospitality, they offer him a garnished pig’s head as a meal.<sup>3</sup> No other moment in the play better expresses the family’s endeavor to camouflage their Jewishness. On the other hand, Mrs. Goldmann is so surprised by the priest’s visit that she briefly loses her composure and exclaims “Shema Yisrael.” Despite all their attempts at assimilation, a single impulse is sufficient for calling attention to their connection to Jewish culture.

In this context, language reveals itself to be a telltale medium. “Jewish” speech seemingly cannot be eradicated, in spite of all efforts to the contrary. The treach-

erous nature of language is also the message of a popular antisemitic short story written by the German psychiatrist and author Oskar Panizza (1853–1921), published in 1893 under the title “The Operated Jew.”<sup>4</sup> In it, the main protagonist, Itzig Faitel Stern, undergoes surgery and blood transfusion to discard his externally recognizable Jewish nature. He also converts to Protestantism. His life after the operation, especially his professional career, is as a result crowned with success. Ultimately, he even wins the heart of a “blonde German woman.” During the wedding, however, Itzig Faitel Stern’s latent Jewishness returns with a vengeance. His concealed Jewish identity resurfaces above all in how he speaks. In a state of exasperation, his “high-pitched, tinny voice” returns and he shouts, “Kéllnererera! . . . Kéllnererera! – Champágnrerera! – What’s it called? – Shall I have nothing to drink? – Am I not as good and worthwhile as you all!”<sup>5</sup> The wedding guests are deeply disturbed by the revelation of Stern’s Jewishness and hastily abandon the festivities. Only a few remaining people witness Itzig Faitel Stern’s entire transformation back into a “Jew.” The groom’s metamorphosis is not just linguistic, but his pre-op “Jewish” physical characteristics also return in full force. His blond hair begins to curl and turn blue-black, his limbs regain their previous crookedness, and in the end, he even releases the *foetor judaicus*, the dreaded “Jewish stench.” But the central distinguishing feature that betrays his Jewishness in the first place is his idiosyncratic use of language.

Although Hirsch’s portrayal of Jewish linguistic particularity and its function as an urgent feature of Jewishness repeats a well-known anti-Jewish stereotype, he does not, however, leave it at that. As has been the case in most of the farces I have discussed thus far, Hirsch’s depiction of language as an inclusive characteristic for the determination of being Jewish, which does not establish an unchanging difference between Jews and non-Jews, also in turn problematizes the role of language as an essential criterion of distinguishing between Jews and non-Jews. We can see this in *The Apostle of Schottenfeld* in the conversation between Bruno and Father Lorenz. When Bruno tells him that he is destitute, he uses the term *stier* (broke). Since Father Lorenz is unfamiliar with this word, Bruno attempts to explain it by saying, “Because I’m in *Dalles* [poverty].”<sup>6</sup> This phrase is equally incomprehensible to the priest. Bruno adds that people say *stier* in Schottenfeld and *Dalles* in Leopoldstadt. The Jews of the Leopoldstadt therefore have a distinct mode of expression; they are at least partially linguistically different from the rest of Viennese society. At the same time, there are also distinctions among non-Jews. Bruno’s use of the word *stier* points to a sociolect partly unknown to Father Lorenz. Even different non-Jewish groups in Vienna do not always seem to understand each other. In this context, language does not indicate any ethnic affiliation, but possesses a social potential for distinction. In Hirsch’s farce, a Jew explains to a Catholic priest the meaning of a term used in his own parish. If the use of language marks a gap between people, then this gulf is, in this case, more

pronounced between the Catholic priest and his parishioners than between Jews and non-Jews.

### ***“Jewish” Physical Characteristics***

As I have illustrated in my analysis of the example provided by Oskar Panizza’s protagonist Itzig Faitel Stern, antisemitic stereotypes prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century portrayed Jews as having not only specific linguistic patterns but also a peculiar physical constitution, above all a peculiar physiognomy. We also see an evocation of this stereotype in *The Apostle of Schottenfeld* when Esther and Bruno visit Father Lorenz. He immediately suspects Bruno of being Jewish. The decisive factor for him is Bruno’s nose. We see the notion of a “Jewish” nose at work not only in Hirsch’s “Old Viennese” play, but, as I mentioned in chapter 2, in a variety of Jewish popular-cultural stage works.

Language and noses seem to be the two most important differences between Jews and non-Jews in Jewish *Volkssänger* burlesque plays. And this is no accident. The stereotype that a particular nose shape is an indisputable indicator of Jewishness has been in circulation since the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>7</sup> From the end of the eighteenth century on, the “Jewish” nose has been described and discussed in anthropological terms. Anti-Jewish thinkers believed that they had scientifically proven the existence of the “Jewish” nose.<sup>8</sup> Soon after scientific (or pseudo-scientific) discourse began to view the “hooked” nose as an essential aspect of Jewishness, it became associated with a particularly Jewish way of speaking.<sup>9</sup> In light of these anti-Jewish stereotypes, Jews seemed to distinguish themselves first and foremost through the shape of their noses and linguistic patterns.<sup>10</sup>

Just as contemporary prejudicial thinking connected the ostensible particularity of Jewish speech with questionable morality, so too was the “Jewish” nose seen not merely as an indication of Jewishness but also as a sign of a defective ethical disposition.<sup>11</sup> We see these assumptions in a conversation between Esther, Bruno, and Father Lorenz. When Esther claims that Bruno is “a good young man,” the priest asserts, “But he has a suspicious face [*Fason*].”<sup>12</sup> Bruno’s face, with his “Jewish” nose, thus makes him suspect and allows Father Lorenz to cast doubt on Esther’s characterization. A person with a nose like Bruno’s, according to this antisemitic line of thinking, is usually a dangerous type.

But *Volkssänger* plays, especially Hirsch’s *The Apostle of Schottenfeld*, strip the nose of its essentialist function, just as they do with language. We see this clearly in Bruno’s response to Father Lorenz’s statement about his “suspicious *Fason*.” Bruno states, “I apologize, sir, it is true, I am a bit of a Jew, but Esther told me back there that you are a gracious lord and benefactor(!), who makes no distinction between humans . . . and as far as my nose is concerned, I will now grow a mustache just like Kaiser Wilhelm II so that my nose disappears a bit.”<sup>13</sup> The

nose can therefore be concealed, thus losing its status as a “Jewish” characteristic. Unlike the physical idiosyncrasies of Oskar Panizza’s character Itzig Faitel Stern, Hirsch’s farce does not indelibly inscribe the nose’s function as a marker of difference onto the body. A simple mustache, which both Jews and non-Jews can grow, is enough to obscure Jewishness. Hirsch thus dismantles its link to nose shape.

By taking up the tropes of language and the nose in *The Apostle of Schottenfeld*, Hirsch thematizes two ostensible characteristics of Jewishness that also appear in the majority of Jewish *Volkssänger* plays. Similar to the authors of these works, Hirsch also invalidates them as indelible markers of an individual’s Jewishness. In this sense, Hirsch had much in common with his fellow Jewish colleagues. The frequency with which these farces treat the topic of “Jewish” speech and the “Jewish” nose also reinforces the fact that these stereotypes were prevalent in fin-de-siècle Vienna.

### ***Blurring the Lines between Reality and Fiction***

The central question that I pose in light of my analysis of “Jewish” speech and the “Jewish” nose relates to how these features operated to stigmatize Jews and therefore how they have functioned as components of antisemitic discourse in general. In *Little Kohn*, one condition essential for the perpetuation of these stereotypes is the construction of reality based on assumptions and rumors. Judgments about fellow human beings, in this instance about Jews, are based not on verifiable facts, but on hints and credulity, and in part also on preconceptions. We see the impact of assumptions and rumors in the play’s first scene when characters speculate the reason behind Kohn’s rendezvous with Marie in the hotel. Although many of the plot’s details suggest an intimate meeting, this cannot be proven. While Kohn could have done what others have accused him of, they cannot substantiate their suspicions. The boundary between truth and mere insinuations proves to be fluid.

The relationship between reality and assumptions remains an important theme throughout the play. We also see this reflected in Kohn’s relationship with the Spitzer family women. Although it seems clear at the beginning that Kohn is sexually hyperactive, doubts regarding the veracity of this assertion arise over the course of the plot. It becomes increasingly clear that he only reluctantly yields to the expectations that Spitzer’s daughters ascribe to him. Kohn has no real interest in engaging in a liaison with or even marrying them. It seems he merely surrenders to their desire for courtship, as if they impose the role of the lady’s man on him. Nonetheless, he maintains the status of unbridled womanizer. What distinguishes him from his fellow characters are their projections—the characteristics that they attribute to him. Kohn does not reveal his real identity, his actual desires and aspirations, to the other persons in the play.

The contrast between conjecture and verifiable reality seems to disappear altogether in an attempt to identify Kohn as a victim of suicide. Although the clothes that the police officer presents to Mr. Spitzer and his daughters seem to constitute indisputable evidence of Kohn's suicide, this assumption turns out to be incorrect. A similarly confusing situation, though in reverse, was Jellinek's actual suicide several months before the production of *Little Kohn* (see chapter 1). Although all the evidence seemed to point to the fact that he had actually committed suicide, the police assumed that Jellinek was intent on pulling the wool over everyone's eyes. This conjecture prevailed over existing facts. The rumors that fueled the Jellinek case and turned it into a veritable scandal also shape the interpretation of Kohn. They construct a villain that does not exist. The play illustrates how antisemitic projections usually operate.

## A Response to Antisemitism

Vienna can be described as the cradle of political Zionism. The city served as the movement's center at least in its early years. Not only did Theodor Herzl reside there, but the primary newspaper of the Zionist movement *Die Welt* (The world) was also published in the Habsburg capital. In addition, the Zionist organization's central office, which directed the Zionist agenda on an international level, was located in the city until 1905.<sup>14</sup> One and a half decades before the publication of Herzl's *The Jewish State* (1896), the Akademischer Verein Kadimah was founded in Vienna, the first Jewish-national student association in western and central Europe.

Zionism also found relatively large support among Viennese Jews. Although Zionists did not gain a seat until after World War I on the board of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien (the Vienna Jewish Community), the official representational body of the Jews in Vienna, Zionist lists were able to win around one-third of the votes cast before 1914 at the biennial polls, despite the restrictive electoral system that excluded many Jews from voting because of a lack of taxation.<sup>15</sup> But before Theodor Herzl gained a certain amount of prominence, the situation looked different. Until the late 1890s, adherents of Zionism were mainly confined to the student milieu. The Kadimah as well as figures such as Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937) were unable to persuade the rest of Vienna's Jews of the validity of emigrating to Palestine and thus giving up life in the Habsburg capital in exchange for life in impoverished and economically underdeveloped regions.<sup>16</sup> We see this hesitation with respect to Zionism reflected in the *Volkssänger* play *The Journey to Grosswardein*. The historical background informing this play's plot structure includes this hesitation, even hostile attitude, toward Zionist endeavors.

### ***Aspects of Anti-Zionist Pastiche***

In Josef Armin's farce, Grosswardein stands in for Palestine, which provides in Zionist ideology a refuge for Jews who encounter hostility in their surroundings and fear for their physical safety and mental health. Lipperl and Maxi are two Jewish characters who no longer wish to tolerate the violence and psychological pressure that they confront in their everyday lives in Vienna and therefore seek a new way of life. In this sense, their willingness to travel to Grosswardein by train seems to correspond to the desire many Jews had when planning to leave for Palestine. However, in the play, there are no rabid antisemites making life difficult for Lipperl and Maxi. Rather, the source of their dissatisfaction is their quarrelsome wives. Armin's farce thus takes the theme of hostile conditions in the Diaspora, one of the primary concerns among Zionist supporters and a principal reason contributing to their advocating leaving Europe, and detaches it from anti-Jewish peculiarity, thus rendering it humorous. *The Journey to Grosswardein* questions whether the reason that the Zionists give for building their own community in Palestine is really as serious as they claim.

Armin's choice of Grosswardein (Oradea in present-day Romania) as a metaphor for Palestine is no coincidence. Located in the Hungarian half of the Habsburg monarchy, the town was considered a largely Jewish center due to the ethnic composition of its population. It had around fifty thousand inhabitants at the turn of the century, 70 percent of whom were Jewish.<sup>17</sup> Grosswardein was thus a fitting choice to symbolize the site of Jewish settlement, an analogue to the concept of Palestine so integral to Zionist ideology.

We should note that in Armin's farce a song about Grosswardein evokes in the character Fritz Engländer a desire to visit the city. In fact, at the turn of the century, there was a hugely popular song called "Nach Grosswardein" (To Grosswardein). Hungarian Jewish composer Hermann Rosenzweig wrote the music.<sup>18</sup> The cover of the song sheet, which sold numerous copies, depicts four Hasidic Jews dancing against a silhouette of Grosswardein. The image thus creates an iconographic association between Judaism and this geographic location, emphasizing its significance as a Jewish city. In this context, we also identify an additional reference to Zionism: the outline of Grosswardein depicted on the song sheet imbues the site with a Middle Eastern character. With vaguely recognizable mosques illustrated in the background, the image evokes an "Oriental" atmosphere.<sup>19</sup> This portrayal of Grosswardein is thus more reminiscent of Palestine and the landscape of the eastern Mediterranean than the landscape of Transylvania, where it was actually located.

In this sense, the image on the song sheet links the "Jewish city" of Grosswardein with Palestine. Within this context, it comes as no surprise that Josef Armin chose Grosswardein as the focal point for his anti-Zionist satire. There are two additional reasons why Armin may have specifically chosen Grosswardein:

First, it held a firm place in the mental cartography of Viennese Jews. Several different *Volkssänger* plays reference the location. For example, in Caprice's 1913 farce *Ein Schmoch*, Grosswardein is the young couple's honeymoon destination, where they visit relatives.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the play *The Woman with the Mask* (discussed previously), performed in 1909 by Ludwig Kirnbauer's singspiel hall, takes place entirely in this city.

Another reason Armin may have chosen this location for his play is that the theme of the futile attempt to travel to Grosswardein seems to have been a topos among the Viennese *Volkssänger*. The town makes an appearance in "Das jüdische Schaffnerlied" (The Jewish conductor's song), composed by Carl Lorens and performed by Adolphi, the son of Albert Hirsch. The text of the song is about a Jewish boy from the Galician town of Tarnow, whom his father sends to Grosswardein to find work. The boy, however, takes the wrong train and arrives at the Vienna North Station. At first, he wants to return to Tarnow, but then he stays in Vienna, earning his money as a peddler and even attaining prosperity.<sup>21</sup> Grosswardein is the destination to which the boy wants to travel but cannot ultimately reach. And Vienna seems to be a better alternative. The boy from Tarnow quickly adapts to his new fate and manages to lead a contented life.

Josef Armin's play is not the only text in which Grosswardein serves as a symbol of an unattainable Palestine. Armin, however, expands this theme into a biting satire of Zionist aspirations. Not unlike "The Jewish Conductor's Song," *The Journey to Grosswardein* suggests that Jews who flee difficult situations at home do not succeed in finding better conditions abroad. We see this portrayed in Armin's play when Lipperl and Maxi's wives also try to board the train to Grosswardein. This turn of events further suggests that the individuals responsible for the negative and oppressive living conditions in Vienna will only follow the tormented Jews to their place of refuge. Emigration is therefore not a solution to the problems that Jews face.

Emigration's failure to provide a real solution to antisemitism also seems to be the significance of the scene in which Fritz Engländer follows his friends to the train station. As it turns out, he is actually an Austrian, whose surname just happens to be *Engländer* (Englishman). We also learn that he is a member of a fraternity, an institution that formed the radical spearhead of antisemitism in Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century. Had Engländer as fraternity brother joined Lipperl and Maxi, then a potential antisemite might have accompanied the Jews on their journey to escape such problems. Again, it seems that emigration to Palestine is a fruitless enterprise.

We identify another aspect of the play's humorous critique of Zionist ideology when Lebele courts Rosl. The Zionist movement, especially the Viennese Kadimah, strove to create a social environment that prevented "Jewish" assimilation.<sup>22</sup> Interdenominational marriages were considered one of the most important aspects of assimilation. But Lebele, who grew up in Grosswardein, the meta-



phorical Palestine, proclaims that he has fallen in love with a *shiksa* (non-Jewish woman). In addition, no comprehensible motive seems to underpin Lebele's affection for Rosl. In Vienna, many Jews married non-Jews for social advancement.<sup>23</sup> Non-Jewish women often belonged to a higher social class, into which Jews could marry. Although Jewish religious authorities did not accept and certainly did not legitimize such marriages, this pattern of behavior was to a certain extent understandable. In Armin's play, however, Rosl is a simpleminded peasant woman. Her family name, Teppenhuber, suggests such a social background. Thus, conditions in Grosswardein not only seem to perpetuate assimilation, but they are even more pronounced here than in Vienna. Grosswardein (i.e., Palestine) thus aggravates the conditions that Zionists cautioned against and equated with the Diaspora.

The exaggeration of certain core elements of Zionism for the purpose of humorous effect indicates that *The Journey to Grosswardein* functions as an anti-Zionist piece. It shows that Zionism does not represent a reasonable escape from the antisemitism that Jews faced in Vienna.

## Articulating Jewishness

None of these *Volkssänger* plays that I have analyzed defines Jewishness in terms of religion. Nonetheless, it is impossible to pin Jewishness down precisely, because it can and will always change. I argue that Jewishness does not have a fixed definition. Context thus determines Jewishness. The only consistent characteristic is that Jewishness distinguishes Jews from non-Jews. These "Jewish" farces represent Jewishness as an inclusive difference.

Although Jewishness as a category varies, the features employed to articulate it remain largely constant. I have identified four primary features that tend to indicate what or who is Jewish. Within the context of these four features, I also discuss the notion of difference as well as a conceptual alternative to it.

### *Inclusivity, Individuality, Interactionality, Performance*

Both *The Apostle of Schottenfeld* and *A Tale from Yesteryear* conclude with noteworthy statements. *The Apostle of Schottenfeld* ends with "Father Lorenz does not only pray for Christians, but also for Jews, if they are decent humans [*Menschen*]." The final line in *A Tale from Yesteryear* is "Whether a Jew or Christ / As long as he is human [*ein Mensch*]." The concept of a human (or person) is central to the two pieces. However, the term does not remain a neutral category; it is laden with significance. For Hirsch, a human (*ein Mensch*) is "decent," as *The Apostle of Schottenfeld* suggests, when he or she is characterized by certain ethical qualities. This particular understanding of "human" probably originated in Yid-

dish language culture. In Yiddish, a *mentsh* (not just a human, but a good person) is distinguished by generosity and integrity. A *mentsh* thus serves as a role model in his particular social environment.<sup>24</sup>

According to this understanding, both Jews and non-Jews can be a *mentsh*. *Mentshlikhkeyt* (Yiddish for the quality of being a good, decent person) is therefore an inclusive characteristic. Rather than being innate, this quality is reflected in a certain commitment to fellow human beings. It is made tangible through performance. *Mentshlikhkeyt* does not characterize a collective whole, but distinguishes individuals based on generous activities. *Mentshlikhkeyt* therefore varies on an individual basis. In Hirsch's plays, *mentshlikhkeyt* manifests itself specifically in charity, interactively in exchanges between Jews and non-Jews.

We find all four features—inclusivity, individuality, interactionality, performance—in *The Apostle of Schottenfeld* as well as *A Tale from Yesteryear*. Both the Jewish Isak and the non-Jewish baron demonstrate *inclusivity* in their willingness to help others. Isak does not, however, represent all Jews. Many of them want to cheat the baron by pretending to have lent him money and demanding repayment. In this sense, compassion is not a general Jewish characteristic, but an *individual* trait associated specifically with Isak. Isak actively *performs* this trait. We thus see Jewish–non-Jewish *interaction* performed mutually, in Isak's supporting the baron and the baron's supporting his erstwhile savior.

These four features of Jewishness, though they do not always appear in concert with one another, distinguish most of the other *Volkssänger* plays that I discussed in chapters 2 and 3. I have thus founded my thesis—that we should understand Jewishness as largely fluid, unrelated to religious Judaism, as the result of a close Jewish–non-Jewish togetherness, and as inclusive—on a wide range of evidence. Instead of formulating a specific definition of Jewish self-understanding (except to say that religion plays no definitive role), these plays, I have demonstrated, determine Jewishness contextually.

Given my discussion thus far, we must ask whether a concept of Jewishness as difference based on inclusive qualities that can influence the self-understanding of both Jews and non-Jews is at first glance merely a contradiction. Doesn't inclusivity mean that Jewishness loses its distinctiveness when non-Jews also adopt and demonstrate its features?

## The Concept of Similarity

My argument that Jewishness constitutes a form of difference based on inclusive qualities, which can also shape the identity of non-Jews, may seem at first glance paradoxical. But let us consider two points that disentangle this ostensible contradiction. My first point refers to the semantic field of the term “Jewishness.” One could assert that, unlike what we have seen in the *Volkssänger* farces,

Jewishness does not in fact consist of a mere handful of attitudes and behaviors. Although Albert Hirsch and his colleagues only focused on individual aspects, such as charity and linguistic patterns, this may have been the result of the discourse of the time, in which charity was generally considered important and language nationalisms had an impact on everyday life in the Habsburg capital.<sup>25</sup> But Jewishness, one could argue, is much more comprehensive and exhibits many other differences. Thus, when non-Jews assume individual traits that previously characterized Jewishness, no equality is established between Jews and non-Jews, only a partial congruence. The first point fails to consider that we can understand this congruence of individual aspects as a *similarity* between the two. Similarity between people or collectives means that there is neither total distinctness nor complete alignment between them. Similarity between Jews and non-Jews does not resolve differences between them; it indicates a gradual, rather than a fundamental, difference.

The term “similarity” refers here to a new “concept from cultural theory” that consciously diverges from the idea of binary opposites, which at least implicitly underpins scholarly work on the notion of difference.<sup>26</sup> The concepts of hybridity, dissolving borders, and alterity—concepts that have received much attention in cultural studies and postcolonial research in recent years—are all characterized by the notion of dichotomous difference.<sup>27</sup> For my purposes in this study, inclusive difference—that is, similarity—underscores a relationship between Jews and non-Jews underpinned neither by dichotomous categories nor by total equality between them. Instead, this understanding of similarity focuses on points of contact that simultaneously maintain a distinction between the two.

The second point that resolves the apparent incompatibility between inclusiveness and difference pertains to the potential consequences of any overlap of Jewish and non-Jewish self-understanding. At times, a specific Jewish distinction becomes apparent. We can better register this dialectic by using the concept of inclusive difference than by making use of the notion of similarity. For this reason, I have chosen to retain the term “inclusive difference” throughout this study.

We see inclusive difference vividly portrayed in various stage works that Albert Hirsch penned. This kind of difference appears in *The Apostle of Schottenfeld*, for example, in a scene in which Mr. Goldmann announces his willingness to donate to a fund to support the victims of the Ringtheater fire.<sup>28</sup> He identifies with a community that commemorates members who have become victims of harsh circumstances. There seems to be a consensus between non-Jews and Mr. Goldmann on this point. Nevertheless, his understanding of charity underscores his particular sense of identification with fellow Jews. In explaining his reasoning for offering his financial help, Mr. Goldmann points not to all victims’ need, but only to Jewish ones’. Mr. Goldmann is thereby committed to Jewish community solidarity.

A sense of Jewishness that emphasizes the similarity between Jews and non-Jews is also evident in the visit to the church. The attendance of Jews at a Chris-

tian church service demonstrates, I argue, at least a temporary dissolution of religious boundaries, especially with Jewish churchgoers actively participating in Mass. Isak experiences this overcoming of boundaries at Burgai's baptism in *A Tale from Yesteryear*. In her telling of the events, Gertrud emphasizes that Isak even prayed along with everyone else and in doing so was no different from the rest of the Christians present. The religious divisions between Isak and the others, however, do not disappear. Rather, these divisions express a sense of distance between them. Although Isak prays with the other baptismal guests, he does so by retreating to a corner in the back of the sacred space.<sup>29</sup> The common activity of praying thus reveals a similarity between the Jew Isak and the other non-Jewish attendees. It does not indicate equality between them, but rather reveals a Jewish–non-Jewish difference. Hirsch had similar personal experiences in reality (outside the diegetic world of his plays). When he was at the church during the consecration of the *Volkssänger* flag and stood next to Karl Lueger, he felt connected to the Viennese *Volkssänger* community. At the same time, he was aware that he could not celebrate the mayor, since Lueger was an antisemite and he himself was Jewish. The visit to the church reminded Hirsch that being Jewish can also mean a lack of belonging.<sup>30</sup>

“Similarity” is admittedly a vague term.<sup>31</sup> The vagueness of this term lies less in its theoretical detachment than in its everyday application and the numerous meanings resulting from its usage. Similarity constitutes more of a basic category of experience and classification with which everyone seems to be familiar than an analytical tool.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, similarity may prove to be a particularly productive concept for the field of Jewish studies. It contradicts all ideas of Jewish foreignness that have determined social interactions between Jews and non-Jews for centuries. In terms of a Jewish–non-Jewish dichotomy, these prejudicial ideas are still unfortunately widespread today. To some degree, as I demonstrated in chapter 1, they even continue to exert an influence on current historiographies that rely on the assimilationist narrative. By questioning the dependency on normative cultures and emphasizing the maintenance of difference, the concept of similarity points to the inadequacy of the assimilation and acculturation narrative.<sup>33</sup>

No other figure of argumentation opposes antisemitic thinking like the concept of similarity. We may to some degree reasonably argue that throughout history, antisemitic animosity has been all the more rabid and the insistence on an unbridgeable divide between Jews and non-Jews has been all the more vehement as the similarities between the two increasingly emerged. In this sense, there seems to be a general connection between similarity and rejection. Only a common foundation makes it possible for one to defame the other, in this case for non-Jews to radically reject Jews and even to deny them the right to exist.<sup>34</sup>

*Little Kohn* illustrates this point. On the one hand, Spitzer wants to get rid of Kohn. He endeavors, as he puts it, to “de-Kohn” (*entkohnen*) himself by eradicating any biological traces of Kohn. However, Spitzer is unsuccessful. Leopold

Kohn has impregnated Spitzer's daughter and is therefore a part of his family. This is exactly what antisemites feared the most—that Jews would implant themselves in the *Völkskörper* (body of the people) and become part of it. Eugen Dühring's *Judenfrage* serves as an example of a shoddily argued piece of propaganda that highlights this racist ideology.<sup>35</sup> In Austria, Karl Ritter von Schönerer, the leader of the German National Party, advocated the acquisition of Dühring's book by local libraries. But real life of course differed from the ideologically driven opinions that this kind of text promoted.<sup>36</sup> The social consequences that arose out of the similarity between Jews and non-Jews could not be suppressed.

It is not only Leopold Kohn's future paternity that prevents Spitzer from being able to "de-Kohn" himself. Other circumstances that point to a significant similarity between the two men also seem to make this endeavor impossible. At the beginning of the play, there is a marked polarity between Marcus Spitzer and the Jew Leopold Kohn. The banker acts condescendingly and hostile toward his bank teller. The play does not explicitly explain whether antisemitism is the motivation behind Spitzer's actions. Over the course of the plot, however, the contrast between Kohn and Spitzer decreases. Any difference begins to dissolve when Spitzer refers to himself as *meshugge* (crazy). As I have already argued, language was an important, albeit not conclusive, indication of a person's ethnic background. In this context, we could argue that Spitzer's self-description belies a sense of Jewishness.

This interpretation is reinforced when Spitzer learns that his wife sits in a train compartment with Kohn. He initially reacts to this news with dismay. His reaction is similar to when he receives word of the theft. He begins to stammer, and his syntax is strongly reminiscent of Yiddish. Language seems to expose him as a Jew. The initial Jewish–non-Jewish polarity that characterizes the relationship between Spitzer as employer and Kohn as employee becomes a constellation in which ethnic dividing lines grow indistinct. It is not clear whether the conflict between Spitzer and Kohn is an altercation between two Jews or a confrontation between a Jew and a non-Jew. Doubts about Spitzer's Jewishness persist. In the end, we see that the play emphasizes a sense of similarity between the two characters. Spitzer cannot simply dismiss the overlap between himself and his counterpart.

## Notes

1. *Grammeln* are rendered from pork fat.
2. Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 139–48.
3. Albert Hirsch, *Der Apostel vom Schottenfeld*, Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv [NÖLA in subsequent citations] (Theaterzensur), Box 21/22 (1902), 53.
4. See Sander Gilman, *Franz Kafka, the Jewish Patient* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 213–14.

5. <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/der-operierte-jud-227/1> (accessed 9 May 2019).
6. Hirsch, *Apostel*, 28.
7. Joel Carmichael, *The Satanizing of the Jews: Origin and Development of Mystical Anti-Semitism* (New York: Fromm, 1992), 71.
8. Klaus Hödl, *Die Pathologisierung des jüdischen Körpers: Antisemitismus, Geschlecht und Medizin im Fin de Siècle* (Vienna: Picus Verlag, 1997), 114.
9. Wachter, "Bemerkung über den Kopf der Juden," *Magazin der Gesellschaft naturforschender Freunde für die neuesten Entdeckungen in der gesamten Naturkunde*, 1812, 64–65.
10. Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 169–93.
11. For more on the connection between "Jewish" speech and the lack of moral fiber, see Gilman, *Self-Hatred*, 101–2.
12. Hirsch, *Apostel*, 29.
13. Hirsch, *Apostel*, 29f.
14. Adolf Gaisbauer, *Davidstern und Doppeladler: Zionismus und jüdischer Nationalismus in Österreich 1882–1918* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1988).
15. Harriet Pass Friedenreich, *Jewish Politics in Vienna, 1918–1938* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 72.
16. For more on the Kadimah and Palestine, see Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1990), 365. On Birnbaum, see Wistrich, *Jews of Vienna*, 381–420. See also Nathan Birnbaum, "Die Mission des Judenthumes, einst und jetzt," *Selbst-Emancipation* 7 (1890): 240.
17. Philip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56.
18. Philip V. Bohlman, "An Endgame's 'Dramatis Personae': Jewish Popular Music in the Public Spaces of the Habsburg Monarchy," in *Vienna: Jews and the City of Music 1870–1938*, ed. Leon Botstein and Werner Hanak (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: Bard College, 2004), 96.
19. Bohlman, "Jewish Popular Music," 57.
20. Caprice, *Ein Schmoch*, NÖLA (Theaterakten), Karton 8/13.
21. Bohlmann, "Jewish Popular Music," 161–64.
22. Wistrich, *Jews of Vienna*, 363.
23. Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Juden in Wien 1867–1914* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1988), 143.
24. Leo Rosten and Lawrence Bush, *The New Joys of Yiddish* (New York: Harmony, 2003).
25. David Rechter, "Ethnicity and the Politics of Welfare—The Case of Habsburg Austrian Jewry," *Yearbook of the Simon Dubnow Institute* 1 (2001): 257–76.
26. Anil Bhatti et al., "Ähnlichkeit: Ein kulturtheoretisches Paradigma," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 36, no. 1 (2011): 233–47.
27. Jürgen Osterhammel, "Ähnlichkeit—Divergenz—Konvergenz: Für eine Historiographie relationaler Prozesse," in *Ähnlichkeit: Ein kulturtheoretisches Paradigma*, ed. Anil Bhatti and Dorothee Kimmich (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2015), 79.
28. Hirsch, *Apostel*, 42.
29. Albert Hirsch, *A Gschicht' von anno dazumal*, NÖLA (Theaterzensur), Box 21/1 (1898), 7.
30. We also see a similarity between Jews and non-Jews in *Ein riskirtes Geschäff* (see chapter 3). In it, Gottfried introduces his creditor Salomon Teitelbaum to the butcher Eulalie as a good person, because he was prepared to lend money to an alcoholic and take care of his health. Eulalie respectfully refers to Salomon as "Mr. Israelite" and "Lord Jud" (Albert

Hirsch, *Ein riskirtes Geschäft*, NÖLA [Theaterzensur], Box 21/12 [1897], anno 13 and 14). While she wishes to express her appreciation for Salomon and treat him as one of her kind, she simultaneously emphasizes his Jewishness and thus his otherness. Both the abrogation of and emphasis on Jewish–non-Jewish differences are articulated in the same sentence.

31. Anil Bhatti and Dorothee Kimmich, “Einleitung,” in Bhatti and Kimmich, *Ähnlichkeit*, 10.
32. Klaus Sachs-Hombach, “Ähnlichkeit: Funktionen und Bereiche eines umstrittenen Begriffs,” in Bhatti and Kimmich, *Ähnlichkeit*, 93.
33. On this, see Albrecht Koschorke, “Ähnlichkeit: Valenzen eines post-postkolonialen Konzepts,” in Bhatti and Kimmich, *Ähnlichkeit*, 36.
34. Koschorke, “Ähnlichkeit,” 42–43.
35. Eugen Dühring, *Die Judenfrage als Frage der Racenschädlichkeit für die Existenz, Sitte und Cultur der Völker. Mit einer weltgeschichtlichen Antwort* (Karlsruhe, 1886).
36. Friedrich Polleroß, “‘Die Erinnerung tut zu weh!’ Georg Ritter von Schönerer und die Folgen,” in *Die Macht der Bilder: Antisemitische Vorurteile und Mythen*, ed. Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien (Vienna: Picus, 1995), 159–60.