5. The "Jewess Question"[1]. The Figure of the *"Beautiful Jewess"* between (Self-)Orientalism and Antisemitism

The first three chapters focused on "effeminization" as a central discursive tool for othering the male Jew at the beginning of the twenties century. Mainly chapter four moreover analyzes the influence of a masculinist homophobic antisemitism in selected works of Jewish scholars, in particular that of Sigmund Freud, and asks how he reacted to and in what ways he internalized and resisted antisemitic attributions.

As already said in the introduction the "femininity puzzle" of the book's title unfolds in two ways: it firstly analyzes the role of effeminization of the male Jew and his "modern queer sexualization" (Boyarin 1997) in racialized discourse and it secondly pays attention to the transgressive and liminal forms of femininity that were attributed to Jewish women, especially in their allosemitic orientalization as "Beautiful Jewess" in 19th century arts, opera and literature. Especially in French literature and nineteenth century art, the figure of the Jewess was "ubiquitously conflated with the Oriental woman, and recognized by her stylized sensual beauty: her large dark eyes, abundant hair and languid expression" (Valman 2007: 4). Ingres, who was famous for his *Grande Odalisque* (1814) and his orientalist depictions of the Harem did also produce an orientalized image of the rich Parisian Jewess. As suggested by Carol Ockman (1995: 67) his portrait of the *Baronne de Rothschild* (1848) uses "orientalist" and "ethnic stereotyping" (ibid.) to refer to her Jewish femininity.

Ockman also discusses the enthusiastic description of the portrait by the art critic Gustave Geofroy to underline her analysis. He wrote:

1 Cit. Valman 2007: 1.

The artist's model, seated on a divan, faces front, as if she were engaged in an attentive little chat, with knees crossed, the left hand lightly supporting her chin, the right arm thrown across her body with abandon, and holding a closed fan. […] Two large eyebrows a *l"orientale* are outlined on her forehead […] and, in like manner, her eyes sparkle with life and wit. (Geofroy 1848: 447, quoted from Tinterow 1999: 425)

Fig. 7: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: Portrait of the Baronne de Rothschild (1848), Private Collection.

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Focussing on the similar pictorial representation of women in classical orientalist paintings, Ockman especially mentions the description of the exuberant delicacy of her dress, the eyes and eyebrows a *l'orientale* and the "sensuality" (ibid. 77) to emphasize her thesis that the artist and the viewer as well as many French authors from Balsac via Flaubert to Huysmans were using the same coded language to create the Jewess as a "femme Orientale" (Ockman 1995: 68-69, see also Fournier 2011).

This chapter will again follow an allosemitic (Bauman 1998: 143-156) approach to embrace the ambivalence and instability of the figure of the "Beautiful Jewess" in German literature. European orientalism had different societal and cultural frames in France and the UK, which were the main objects of investigation in Said's book *Orientalism*, it was an explicit political-colonial setting and colonial discourse. According to Said's widely criticised thesis (overview, cf. Polaschegg 2005 and Riegert 2009), Germany as a country without many colonies, did not play an important role in the scholarly and political enactment of orientalism. Referring back to the prestigious German orientalist and Biblical scholarship (Erwin 1981-82: 108-9, Lewis 1993), but also to processes of internal orientalization as tools of Germany's "colonial fantasies" and minority politics (Zantop 1997), this chapter explores discourses on the "Orient" as a prominent way to discursively construct the Jewess as Internal Other, but also her self-empowering role in German-Jewish self-orientalization. During the 19th century, self-orientalization became a tool in the hands of Jewish artists for negotiating the emancipation of women and Jews. Moving beyond Said's dictum that orientalism is "a strange, secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism" (Said 1978: 27-28), in this chapter I investigate the plural history of topical discourses, hybrid figures and recurrent narratives, symbolizing internal religious and cultural differences. Building on different discursive junctures between Jewishness and women (femaleness) the chapter analyses the "Beautiful Jewess" as an exemplary liminal figure, torn between different cultures and religions.

Historically, Jews have often been regarded "concurrently as occidental *and* oriental" (Kalmar/Penslar 2005: xii) in the Western world. The liminal position of the Jews in European imagination is all the more relevant when it comes to the gendered dimension of orientalist discourse. Starting from the presupposition of her situatedness on a cultural frontier, the chapter concentrates on the depiction of the "Beautiful Jewess" in literature. It analyses how literature explores the ambivalences of the stereotype and opens up third spaces of reflection. Narrative and scenic discourses on the orient are analyzed as a

multilayered and ambivalent ensemble of relational references. A special focus lies on the role of gender in the representation of the Jews as "internal Orientals" (Aschheim [2010] 2017: 13).

The *"Beautiful Jewess"* as European Fantasy

The figure of the "Beautiful Jewess" became a literary preoccupation in nineteenth-century Europe. These literary constructions functioned as the gendered and emotional embodiment of the "Jewish Question" (cf. Valman 2007). Following approaches of postcolonial and gender studies, the chapter investigates the extent to which the "Beautiful Jewess" can be analyzed as a "figure of the third" (Holz 2005; Eßlinger et al. 2010), i.e. as a paradox figure of a non-identity, a marker of borderlines and as a placeholder for hybrid knowledge. Since the Enlightenment period, the "Jewish Question" referred to the debate on whether the Jewish religious minority could be integrated as equal to the Christian majority and how the Jews assimilated as citizens in the modern nation-states. The "Jewish Question" became a litmus test for Enlightenment ideals of emancipation and demonstrated the ambivalence of modern European universalism. At the latest since the nation-building process in the nineteenth century, Jewish identity has posed "a number of insurmountable difficulties" (Mufti 2007: 41). According to Susannah Heschel, the German discourse on the "Jewish Question" can be interpreted as a "proto-colonist enterprise" (Heschel 1999, 62-63). Her analysis is concentrated on the intertwinement of "identities of colonizer and colonized" (64). Susanne Zantop (1997) also demonstrates that the absence of colonies did minimize neither Germany's influence on orientalist discourse nor the bearing that colonial discourse had on German constructions of national identity. Focussing on the case study of Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791), Jonathan Hess (2012) points out that influential German orientalists and Protestant theologians were responsible for the anti-Judaic orientalization of contemporary Jews. "Such attitudes," however, as Steven E. Aschheim (2017: 13) argues, "were not limited to overt Jew-haters." Thus Herder called the Jews "the Asiatics of Europe," Voltaire designated the ancient Jews as "vagrant Arabs infested with leprosy," and even the champion of Jewish rights, Christian Wilhelm Dohm, spoke of Jews as "Asiatic refugees."

Despite these trends within the debate on the "Jewish Question" in the European national-building processes, Kalmar and Penslar warn of the con-

sequences to equate colonialism with antisemitism when it comes to the study of orientalism: "Orientalism is an instance of colonial discourse, but it is also more than that. This holds true for Orientalism in general and certainly for Orientalism where it concerns the Jews" (Kalmar and Penslar 2005: xviii). Especially the nineteenth century witnessed a plurality of romantic-poetic idealizations of the "Orient" and moreover poetic and scholarly self-orientalisations of the Jews (see Wittler 2015: 63-81). In her ground-breaking book, *Der andere Orientalismus* (2005), Andrea Polaschegg "highlighted the weakness of Said's homogenizing conception and advanced in its stead a pluralistic, relational, and dialectic conception of oriental and colonial discourses" (Brunotte, Ludewig, Stähler 2015: 7). Focussing on case studies of poetic and literary orientalization, this chapter follows Victor Turner's approach to the liminal space "betwixt and between" (Turner 1967), Bauman's (1991) and Klaus Holz' (2005) ambivalent "figure of the third" as well as Homi Bhabha's assumption of a "third" or "hybrid space" of relational identity constructions (Bhabha 1994). In his essay on stereotypes and colonial discourse Bhabha states that even a stereotype is not a fixed image, which is entirely knowable, but a figure that is overdetermined, opague, and ambivalent:

> Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always "in place", already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated … as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual license of the African that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved. It is this process of *ambivalence*, central to the stereotype that my essay explores as it constructs a theory of colonial discourse. (Bhabha in Newton 1997: 293-301, 293)

As already mentioned the chapter investigates the extent to which the "Beautiful Jewess" functions as a "figure of the third" (Eßlinger et al. 2010, Holz 2005). To go beyond the fixed dichotomy of anti-Jewish and philosemitic discourse, Zygmunt Bauman's term "allosemtism" (Bauman 1998: 143-156) is preferable. A guiding question will be the following: how does the metaphorical language of literature make use of the ambivalence of the orientalist and the antisemitic stereotypes to open up new spaces of reflection? Following my own research (Brunotte 2015) as well as Valman's, and Sicher's approaches, the chapter asks how narrative figurations – especially the Jewish daughter and her father – of cultural and religious differences are gendered (Valman 2007; Sicher 2017). It will show in particular the intertwinement of idealized and demonized femi-

ninity and orientalization within literary constructions of the "Beautiful Jewess".

Wilhelm Hauff's "Jud Süss" (1827): German-Jewish Identity Struggles

Sander Gilman claims that "The Jew was always defined as a masculine category" (1998: 67) in European antisemitic discourse; "the Jewish body served as a model for the body of the alien. This fantastic body of the Jew was marked by its ugliness, his visible and invisible otherness" (1999: 3-4). Yet, as Barbara Hahn has argued on the basis of Bernard Picart's *Céremonies et costumes religieuses* (1727–1743), Jewish women were seldomly as clearly marked as Jewish men were (Hahn 2005: 33). Along with the emancipation of the Jews – yet in the early nineteenth century at the latest – however, the Jewish woman, as the "Beautiful Jewess" became a literary, artistic, and theatrical figure in Europe. This figure, which expanded into the European imagination, also got a seismographic function. Eric Fournier (2011: 9) notes her allosemitic quality:

> More than other representations of the Jewish world, this ambivalent figure of the Other did in fact appear with an intensified plasticity, which was capable of expressing, in frenetic manner, the entire range of judgements and opinions about Judaism, from philosemitism to Antisemitism.

French artists and authors were prominent in Europe not only for their creation of the oriental Odalisque, but also of the "Beautiful Jewess". The most famous example, and paradigmatic for this time, was Formenthal Halévy's and Eugène Scribe's Opera *La Juive* from 1835, whose central character is the Jewish daughter Rachel. In her story all the key motifs relevant to the tragic liminal position of the young Jewish woman are present: the recurring narrative of the miserable daughter of an often "tyrannical", traditional Jewish father who has fallen in love with a Christian man, her martyrdom and her uncertain identity. The inherent ambiguity of the "Beautiful Jewess" in this case is even more striking: Rachel believes herself to be a Jewish woman but is in reality a Christian and the daughter of the very Cardinal, who condemns her to death at an Inquisition trial. All these motifs reveal and exaggerate her tragic *liminal* character. As Nadia Valman claims: "The tragic force of *La Juive* turns on the fact that the truth of Rachel's self is invisible… even to her… Unlike the figure of the Jew, whose physique is indelibly marked by the sign

of his religious and racial difference, the body of the Jewess is unreadable" (Valman 2007: 3). Shifting the focus to the figure of the female Jew allows for breaking with fixed images and accounts in antisemitic discourse. The objects of investigation, literature and the arts support this purpose by opening up imaginary third spaces of reflection. I begin *in medias res* with an example from German literature: Wilhelm Hauff's novella *Jud Süß* (literally "Süss the Jew"), published in 1827. Though rarely read today, the novella is a watershed work in German cultural history. It established the story of Josef Süss-Oppenheimer, a financial advisor under Duke Karl Alexander of Württemberg in the early eighteenth century, as a literary subject. As Jefferson Case states:

> In course of the next 150 years, some 100 to 200 literary and artistic works up to Veit Harlan's notorious Nazi film, were to retell the tale of Süss-Oppenheimer's mercurial rise from Heidelberg ghetto and spectacular 1738 execution, after a notoriously unfair trial, for the crime of high treason. Hauff's novella prefigures both the would-be philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic treatments of the Süss-Oppenheimer's story and, as such, rehearses the entangled logic of emancipation and chauvinism so prominent in German nineteenth century. (1998: 724)

As an example of my thesis, I shall analyze the Carnival scene in the novel. Lea, the much younger sister of the Court Jew and financial manager Joseph Süß-Oppenheimer, and her lover the young Gustav Lanbek, enter the ballroom separately. The subtle colour resemblance of their oriental costumes and masks is the only clue to their relation. Not recognizing Gustav in costume, several young men ask him tauntingly: "Do you only have your "Allah" as your battle cry, or do you know any other little slogans?" (Hauff [1827] 6). When Gustav removes the Saracen mask, "the readers and his surrounding friends bear witness to a cultural metamorphosis" (Polaschegg, 2005: 170):

> Blond ringlets crept out from under the turban and artlessly framed his unpowdered brow. A bold arched nose and dark, eyes gave his face an expression of enterprising force and a profound seriousness that stood in startling contrast to his hair's softness and gentle hue. (Hauff, translation into English by Krobb 1993: 267)

Shortly thereafter, Lea removes her mask in the presence of her lover and her maid. Yet, instead of the woman undergoing a metamorphosis, the costume itself transforms. As Krobb argues, "Already at the beginning she is introduced as an Oriental woman. […] in contrast to the other costumes, which are cos-

tumes, the foreign dress underlines her real self" (Krobb 1993: 127). Her lover now gazes upon a second orientalist image, which, through allusions to the Hebrew Bible, is introduced to the viewer and the reader as an expression of cultural authenticity. The other differences, however, emphasise the attractiveness of an erotically charged, exotically pagan yet idealized femininity:

> One could say her face was the culmination of oriental features. That symmetry in its delicate features, those wonderfully dark eyes shaded by long silken lashes; those boldly arched, shining black eyebrows, and those dark curls that fell about her pale brow with such pleasing contrast; and the meeting point of these features: tender red lips further accented by dainty white teeth; the turban, wound about her curls, the rich pearls gracing her neck, the charming and yet so modest costume of a Turkish lady—these produced, together with those features, such an illusion that the young man believed he was seeing one of those marvellous inventions described by Tasso, as painted by the fantasy that seizes the traveller on her return. "Truly!" he cried. "You resemble Armida the sorceress, and that is just how I would imagine the daughters of your tribe when you still lived in Canaan. Rebecca and Jephthah's daughter were just so". "How many times have I said this?" remarked Sara, the maid. "When I look upon my child, my Lea in her splendour; pocket hoops and crinoline, high heels and all the articles of fashion do not suit her nearly as much as this folk costume" (Hauff [1827] 1905: 56).

With her fascinating, exotic beauty and idealized femininity, Lea embodies different cultures and religions, bringing together the Hebraic figures of the biblical past with the German-Jewish present. The diversity of biblical and pagan references that contributes here to orientalizing the young Jewess is, first of all, connected to her Muslim-Turkish costume. The narrative description further alludes to the poetic form of the *Song of Songs* from the Hebrew Bible. As a Protestant theologian, Wilhelm Hauff certainly knew the *Song of Songs* very well. As Andrea Polaschegg demonstrates, it was in German Protestant theology and in line with its new historical-critical hermeneutic methods that the Hebrew Bible underwent a tripartite process of transformation: it was historicized, the Hebrew language was given a poetological quality, and, last but not least, the book was orientalized (see Polaschegg: 166). In his novella, Hauff follows the erotic-poetic line of the *Song of Songs* when describing Lea's physical beauty. He presents her features one by one: Lea's eyes, her hair, dark eyebrows, red lips – everything, except for her modestly veiled breasts, merges into the orientalized "costume of a Turkish lady" (Polaschegg 2005: 170).

Most relevant for the narrative process of her orientalization are the strong allusions to simultaneously Hebraic and orientalist female figures from the biblical past: first to Jacob's mother Rebecca, and then to the tragic daughter of the Ammonite Jephthah. Even in her idealization, however, the "magic" effect Lea has on her admirer "indicates her basic foreignness: she presents the ultimate expression of the Orient […]". The unhealthy strangeness of Gustav's attraction to the "Beautiful Jewess" is re-emphasized on several occasions in the story, for example, when Hauff writes of the "magic spell that has been preserved through the daughters of Israel since the days of Rachel" (Hauff [1827] 1905:97, cited in Case 1998: 731).

In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978: 27-28) stated that there is a similarity between orientalism and antisemitism and wrote: "I have found myself writing the history of a strange secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism. That anti-Semitism, and as I have discussed it in its Islamic branch Orientalism resemble each other is a historical, cultural, and political truth." Even if this equation is too narrow, it broadens the scope of Said's *Orientalism* and includes the power relations and knowledge production from Europe's internal colonial frontier. However, according to Said, Germany, a country with late and few colonies did not play an important role in the scholarly and political enactment of orientalism. Germany's influential oriental scholarship and its *Colonial Fantasies* (Zantop 1997) contradict this thesis. The orientalization of the Jews, which includes their idealization as well as their antisemitic degradation, started with the historization of Ancient Israel in biblical studies. In the course of this transference of the Ancient Jews and Old Israel to the "Orient", German literature and public media also established a discursive orientalization of contemporary German Jews (cf. Polaschegg 2005: 168). The orientalization of the "Beautiful Jewess" has multiple allosemitic layers. As apparent in the example of Hauff's Lea, there is a strong dimension of idealization in her description; a tragic dimension completes the picture. Hauff also attaches some uncanny, foreign oriental allusions to Lea by connecting her to Armida, a Syrian sorceress in Torquato Tasso's epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered* from 1575. "She was one of the most well-known oriental female figures in German literature, music and the arts in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Germany" (Polaschegg 2005: 171). Her fame was even increasing due to Willibald Gluck's opera *Armide* (1686). Armida's story sounds like an early model of the later trope of the "Beautiful Jewess". Torquato Tasso's epic takes place at the time of the Crusades and the fight against Islam for a Christian Jerusalem. The Saracen sorceress intends to stop the Christian army by killing

its leader Rinaldo. Yet, instead of doing him to death, she falls in love with him. Her love transforms her into a frontier or borderline figure (*Grenzfigur*) between cultures and religions. In the end, the Saracens lose the battle. In some versions of the story, Armida converts to Christianity. In every version, Armida, like Lea, is left behind alone at the end. Whereas Lea in the novella appears mainly as either a "naively innocent child or a tragic heroine nobly accepting her terrible fate," her comparison with the Syrian sorceress indicates her basic – oriental – foreignness (Case 1998: 731).

Hauff's Lea is further marked as a "Beautiful Jewess" through the intertextual realm of cultural associations invoked by the name "Rebecca." This name links her instantly with the well-known "Beautiful Jewess" of the early nineteenth century, the character of Rebecca from Sir Walter Scott's bestselling historical novel *Ivanhoe*, published in 1819. Like Lea, the English Jewess Rebecca falls in love with a Christian man, and both figures represent the young Jewess' struggling between two religions and cultures. In Hauff's novella her tragic destiny is connected to that of her older brother, Joseph Süß-Oppenheimer.

Like Scott's novel, Hauff's novella makes use of historical events from the past; especially the story of Süß-Oppenheimer, who left the Heidelberg ghetto, became the financial advisor of duke Karl Alexander of Württemberg and was executed after an unfair trial in 1738. Hauff's fictionalization strategies, however, start already with the transformation of the name Süss-Oppenheimer into the antisemitically connoted name "Jud Süß". Throughout the whole novel Hauff evinces an ambivalent attitude concerning the "Jewish Question", wavering between the rhetoric of antisemitism and that of tolerance. This becomes particularly evident when you analyze his use of the Antisemitic stereotype of the Court Jew (see Case 1998: 738-9). In the background of the novella a nationalist theme is at work. The novella describes the Court Jew Oppenheimer as the driving force behind the Catholic Duke's plans to drive the Protestant citizens of their power. Jud Süß becomes a scapegoat to solve internal tensions between a Protestant citizenry and a Catholic aristocratic ruler. Süß-Oppenheimer's accusation, trial and his execution made a new national unity possible. Against this backdrop, his much younger sister Lea, the passive victim, emerges as a martyr and tragic heroine. Her former lover, who now suddenly shows himself to be her brother's chief persecutor, rejects her and acknowledged the necessity of Jewish-Gentile apartheid. In his thoughts Lea is included in the general antisemitic prejudices concerning the "children of Abraham". She becomes a part of "the collectivized *Ahasverus* myth, the idea that the Jews as a people, because of some innate predatory

viciousness, are fated to eternal homelessness" (Case 1998: 733). In the end she becomes a societal outcast and commits suicide.

The *"Beautiful Jewess"* as Mediating Figure

Florian Krobb considers the literary motif of the "Beautiful Jewess" to be a "pan-European phenomenon," in the characterization of which there is not always a clear-cut distinction between "the Jewish and the feminine" (Krobb 1993: 192).· He also states that, in contrast to the Jewish man, the Jewish woman in (German-language) literature before the fin de siècle embodied not so much a negative difference, but functioned instead as an ambivalent mediating figure (Krobb 1993: 192; cf. Ludewig in Brunotte, Ludewig, 2015: 221-229 und Frübis 2018: 61-72). For Efraim Sicher "the Jew's daughter in its different variants and versions is a paradigm of conversion narratives […], but the pattern holds long after the religious faith that motivated it has evaporated." (Sicher 2017: 2) As Nadia Valman has shown, using Sir Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* as her starting point, this is even truer for Victorian (British) literature, in which the Jewess was not entirely Other:

> In protestant English culture, the Jewess was never so entirely Other, but closely connected to internal identity debates. That is already visible in Scott's Jewish heroine Rebecca of York. (…) Walter Scott's novel is considered as an Enlightenment historical narrative that seeks to explain the inauguration of the English nation in the Middle Ages as a rational rejection of superstitious hostility to racial and religious differences. Scott's argument for tolerance is focused through his representation of the Beautiful and heroic Jewess Rebecca. (Valman 2007: 10-11)

The story of the historical novel *Ivanhoe* takes place in the twelfth century, shortly after the Crusades in England. The knight Ivanhoe manages to successfully reconcile his Saxon heritage with the Norman Conquest. Admittedly, Rebecca's foreign beauty is as orientalized as Lea's, and her father is rich and lends money, but the story develops the "Jewish Question" differently from Hauff's Jud Süß. However, in contrast to Hauff's characterization of Lea, Rebecca is described as a strong and ethical character, and Isaac, her father, is not depicted as a villain. Moreover, the tension between the Jewish minority and the Christian majority culture is embodied by two men: Rebecca's Jewish father and the Christian Ivanhoe, the man she secretly loves. On the other

hand, Rebecca's tragic liminal position between the Jewish religion and community and her love for the Christian knight is emphasized in the form of an inner struggle. Rebecca is depicted as a pious woman with a voice and will of her own.

In her orientalized beauty as well as her Jewish patriotism, Rebecca is presented as an idealized Jewess with higher spiritual qualities *and* as a woman of dangerous femininity. She risks her life to save the wounded Ivanhoe, and calls for peace and tolerance between the struggling parties. Scott uses narrative focalization to differentiate within the discourse on the Jews: through the eyes of the tyrannically depicted Norman nobility, her foreign, exotic beauty and her passion are demonized. She is almost raped and even accused of being a witch, but at the end Ivanhoe recues her. However, in Scott's novel, too, the Jewess remains ambivalent; she represents the ethos of enlightened tolerance and feminine tenderness, but she is also described as possessing a dangerously foreign beauty. At the end of the novel, Rebecca is invited to become a citizen of the new nation, but she refuses to renounce her Judaism. Rebecca rejects a possible conversion to Christianity and sacrifices instead her love to let the Ivanhoe enter into a strategic political marriage. Yet, as Valman (2007: 21) has emphasized:

> The principle for which Rebecca sacrifices Ivanhoe is ambiguous: she exhibits devotion not only to *his* greater destiny but also to the Jewish religion that prevents *her* participation in Christian social life. The philosophical and political problem of the "Jewish question" that this poses, for the novel, remains unresolved at its close.

This contrasts with Hauff's novella, since, in the end, Rebecca and her father are allowed to go into exile in Spain. As these two interconnected literary case studies show, in the nineteenth-century European cultural imagination, the "Beautiful Jewess" was a figure of the third; that is, a marker of borderlines, unsolved differences and tensions, and a placeholder for hybrid knowledge. In her often tragic destiny, torn between religions and cultures, secularism and traditional faith, she is an affective embodiment of the "Jewish Question." It was not only the literary figure of the Jewess, however, that recurred in novels, as well as in operas and in theatre plays all over Europe again and again, but also a specific narrative constellation. Andrea Polaschegg maintains:

> Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is the character constellation of a Jewish daughter with oriental signature, torn between an often

> patriarchal Jewish father on the one hand, and a Christian-European knight on the other hand, that became the most successfully dramatized minimal-narrative nucleus of an often tragic story. (Polaschegg 2005: 173)

In this context, gender becomes relevant as a "useful category of historical analysis" (Scott 1986: 1053) and "the primary way of signifying relationships of power" (1069). Broader tensions of cultural and religious difference are "revealed in gendered representations" (Valman 2007: 7, cf. Sicher 2017). In the repeated master narrative, the "Beautiful Jewess" is the daughter (or in the exceptional case of Lea, the very much younger sister) of an often Antisemitically caricatured Jewish father, who functions as a compendium of all the negative prejudices against Jewish religion and culture. The complex ambivalence of "semitic discourse" (Cheyette 1993:8) is "most fully revealed in the opposite between 'Jew' and 'Jewess'" (Valman 2007:4). Characterized by her attractiveness and martyrdom the Jewess functions as a *pathos formula* of the cultural-political conflict of religious intolerance and Jewish emancipation, arousing empathy and even compassion in the reader and audience. Her story can end in conversion to Christianity, in total assimilation into a secular majority culture, in martyrdom or even suicide.

Oriental Fantasies and Jewish Self-Orientalization

The "Beautiful Jewess", as I have argued, was often merged with other fantasies generated by nineteenth-century orientalism. "Indeed, just as the scholarly apparatus of orientalism helped to naturalize Christian domination of colonized peoples, it equally provided a means of knowledge and power over Semites at home" (Valman 2007: 4). To describe these discursive strategies of "othering" the European Jews, Steven Asheim (Aschheim 2018: 13) coined the term the "internal Orientals". According to Kalmar and Penslar in their book *Orientalism and the Jews* (2005: xiii):

> Orientalism has always been not only about Muslims but also about the Jew. We believe that the Western image of the Muslim Orient has been formed, and continues to be formed in inextricable conjunction with Western perceptions of the Jewish people. […] It had been based on the Christian West's attempts to understand and manage its relation with both of its monotheistic Others, Muslims and Jews.

With the early nineteenth century, orientalism included the Muslim – mostly the Saracen and later Ottoman world – and the Jews, both seen as "Semitic." Ancient Israel and its Biblical religion were depicted as oriental and Biblical allusions played a significant role for the "othering" of contemporary Jewry in Europe. In the Carnival scene from Wilhelm Hauff's novel the author simultaneously employs and comments on a then-widespread ethnic stereotype in European music, literature, and painting. The physical beauty and sensuality of the Jewish woman, and sometimes even her clothing, were almost always described using orientalizing tropes and characteristics. As shown in this chapter, this often blurred the lines between the European Jewess as oriental and the depiction of oriental Jewesses. Probably the most famous examples in French orientalist painting is Eugène Delacroix's "Jewess from Tangier".

Fig. 8: Eugène Delacroix: Jewess from Tangier (1835).

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As was demonstrated in this chapter the depiction of the Jewess and the role of oriental tropes were different in German and even more in English culture and literature, where the "Jewess was never so entirely Other" (Valman 2007. 4). In contrast to the visual stereotype, which was often fixed, in literature, the "Beautiful Jewess" got an individual character and a life story. As an often tragic heroine she was a "figure of the third." With the emancipation of the Jews, the "Beautiful Jewess" became a literary, artistic and theatrical figure in Europe. In his book *La Belle Juive* from 2011, Éric Fournier emphasizes the seismographic effect of this cultural invention. The figure of the "Beautiful Jewess", he states, "was capable of expressing the ambivalences around the "Jewish Question", that means the entire range of judgments and opinions about Judaism, from philo-Semitism to anti-Semitism" (Fournier 2011: 9). Around 1800, moreover, the famous Berlin Salonière, beautiful and highly educated women like Henriette Herz or Dorothea Schlegel, became the most famous "Beautiful Jewesses" in Prussia. "Even since they flourished […], the Berlin Jewish Salons have been discussed as a symbolic space of the peaceful co-existence of enlightened individuals and, indeed, for a "Jewish-German" understanding" (Lund 2015: 33-62, 33). However, they were depicted to have an "Egyptian style" (54), even if most of them were converted to Christianity. As I have shortly mentioned before within the vast variety of European depictions of the figure of the "Beautiful Jewess" one aspect particularly remains striking: the literary trope sometimes blurs the clear-cut distinctions between "the Jewish and the feminine" (Krobb 1993: 192). The fascinating ambivalence of the figure raises the question of precisely how her Jewishness and her femininity work together in each case. As I (Brunotte 2015: 204) have argued in my previous work on the subject: "To describe the double difference of the imaginary Jewess, a *tertium comparationis* of her femininity and her Jewishness must be found. Her ambivalent orientalization served this purpose". (Brunotte 2015: 204). In the French colonial setting the Jews have always played an essential role in orientalist discourse,

> the "Beautiful Jewess" inscribes herself forcefully into the invention of the Orient (…) both as a discursive matrix and through a feeling of foreignness. (…) In the middle of this long list of exotic beauties – the Turkish, Egyptian, Greek, Moorish, Armenian, Abyssinian, and Coptic – the Jewess appears as the most troubling of all (Fournier 2011: 27).

Going beyond a postcolonial reading of internal *orientalism* does also include the topic of an active Jewish self-orientalization or at least the question "in

which ways German Jews co-created German Orientalism as a contested field" (Wittler 2015:81). The Jewish response to orientalization was threefold, "first, they rejected it wholesome; second, by idealizing and romanticizing the Orient and themselves as its representatives; and third they set up traditional Jews as oriental, in contrast to modernized Jewry which was described as "Western" (Kalmar/Penslar: xix). The most well-known visual expression of a Jewish fascination with oriental style and culture – focussing on the Jewish culture in al-Andalus, was the Moorisch-style synagogues from Budapest to Berlin and its most sophisticated literary articulation (was) in Heinrich Heine's poem 'Jehuda ben Halevy', published in 1851 as part of his *Hebrew Melodies*." (Wittler 2015: 63) Mostly Bible-connected self-orientalization did also provide Jews with discursive tropes to discuss the "Jewess Question". According to Kathrin Wittler self-orientalization became a tool for negotiating the emancipation of women and Jews. Jewish authors used Biblical allusions and self-orientalization to create agency and identity building and "to find a balance between singularity and amalgamation" (ibid: 74).

Fig. 9: Eduard Bendemann: Jews Mourning in Exile (1832), Wallraf-Richartz Museum.

Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons

Focussing on Fanny Lewald's novel *Jenny* from 1843, and especially the scene of a New-Year *tableau vivant* of Eduard Bendemann's monumental painting *Captive Jews in Babylon* (1832) at a New Year's Eve party, Wittler uses the narrative and pictorial figure of the "Beautiful Jewess" to demonstrate the role of Biblical self-orientalization for the emancipation of German Jews and women:

> Choosing to address the question of female and Jewish emancipation in her novel directly, Lewald presents her novel *Jenny* as an alternative of Michael Beer's drama *Der Paria* which the fictive protagonists of the novel deem an example of allegoric Orientalism and proof of Jewish cowardice. Settling her plot in present-day Germany and directly pointing to the oriental heritage of her fictive German-Jewish characters, thus promoting a kind of genealogical Orientalism […], Lewald demonstrates her own courage as a female Jewish writer. (Wittler 2015: 80)

Wittler's study like that of Andrea Polaschegg (2005) and the case studies of my international research network RenGoo published in 2015 (Brunotte et.al 2015) highlight the weakness of Said's homogenizing conception and advances in its stead a pluralistic, relational, and dialectic conception of oriental and colonial discourse.

Concluding Remarks

The chapter has followed an intersectional and allosemitic approach to the "Beautiful Jewess" as a tragic figure that marks and transgresses cultural and religious differences. Throughout the nineteenth century this liminal figure represented the affective dynamics of the "Jewish Question." Biblical allusions, like in Fanny Lewald's *Jenny* connected her to the oriental Biblical heritage. The key narrative trope positioned her beside an antisemitic exaggerated father figure. Thus the "Jew's Daughter" (Sicher 2017) embodied an often idealized female that was "ripe for conversion" (ibid.: 1). In this chapter the different case studies "inform discourses about gender, sexuality, race, and nationhood" (Sicher 2017:2) as well as negotiations about the "Jewess question." As Valman showed for the British case, the idealized femininity, spirituality and her love for a Christian man played a significant role therein. Wittler has focused her research on the empowering role of German-Jewish self-orientalization and noted (Brunotte et. al. 2015: 10; Wittler 2015: 63-81) that "the use of Oriental

styles, characters and topoi by German Jews, commonly understood as an "internalization" of antisemitic and/or orientalist aggressions, may be acknowledged as a self-determined contribution to the contested field of Orientalism." In mainstream European discourse, the figure of the "Beautiful Jewess", however, was often enough depicted as the daughter, "prisoner" and victim of a patriarchal Jewish father and his religion. In the "minimal-narrative nucleus" (Polaschegg 2005: 173) of her tragic story, she is waiting to be "saved" by a Christian or "secularized in other words civilized" white man. This narrative trope indeed shows similarities with the colonial master narrative – Said already pointed to Lord Cromer – of the brown woman who has to be saved by white men from her brown, patriarchal oppressors (cf. Spivak 1988). Even if the colonial dimension was not always explicit in nineteenth-century European narratives of the "Beautiful Jewess", it was often implicitly present. As shown by the example of Salome (and Judith) in chapter one and six, in the second half of the nineteenth century the Jewish daughter "leaves her father behind and becomes an independent agent of vengeance, a *femme fatale* who threatens European manhood" (Sicher 2017: 16).

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