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The female Jewish Figure as Key Element to Understanding the Tradition of Jud Süß

Introduction

"Der Mann ist der Intendant, die Frau der Regisseur des Lebens". This quote stems from the novel *Michael* (1929), written by the infamous Nazi-propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. 11 years later Veit Harlan's anti-Semitic propaganda movie *Jud Süß* was released in which Goebbels also had big influence on the production. The main character and parts of the story are based on real events, the women in the movie, however, are not. Combining the addition of female figures to the movie with Goebbel's quote suggests that the different female characters provide more than a mere dramatic effect for the audience.

There is, in fact, an entire Jud Süß tradition. Between 1827 and 1977 alone, there were about 100-200 different texts, radio shows, operas, plays, movies, etc. that retold the story of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer (Chase 724). 1738 Oppenheimer was publicly executed by the court and citizens of Württemberg. Oppenheimer, better known by the name he was given by the citizens during his trial - Jud Süß, was the Jewish financial adviser for the Duke of Württemberg, Karl Alexander (Tegel 1). Due to confessional and political tensions people begrudged Oppenheimer for his success and wealth. Enviousness and anti-Jewish resentment were the consequences that ultimately lead to his judicial murder. This fate provides the basis for the mentioned long literary and cinematic Jud Süß tradition.

The first author¹ to write about and whose work appeared under the title *Jud Süß* was Wilhelm Hauff in 1827, who published his novella in *Cotta's Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*. What is striking in this novella is that there also is a main female character that is not historically confirmed. Another well known novel following this tradition is Lion Feuchtwanger's *Jud Süß* (1925). Here, too, the author added a woman to the story.

This paper focuses on the depiction and function of these female characters as they are represented through the content, because their roles change drastically over time and within the different works. It is striking that Süß is always linked to a specific woman. In Hauff's novella Süß has a close relationship to his sister Lea, in Feuchtwanger's novel he has a daughter (Naemi), and in Veit Harlan's movie, he has a rather negative connection to a Christian woman called Dorothea, who replaces the role of the female Jewish figure. In the course of the movie Süß forces her to agree to having sexual intercourse with him which causes her to drown herself.

The salient point is that all of the three women are additions of the authors - the historic Oppenheimer did not have a female companion. Dorothea Hollstein, also noticed the different (non-) Jewish female figures while comparing the three works in her article "Dreimal 'Jud Süß' -- Zeugnisse 'schmächlicher Barbarei'". She, however, focused on the figure of Jud Süß rather than the women's function. Another author, whom this paper consults is Jefferson Chase and his article "The Wandering Court Jew and the Hand of God: Wilhelm Hauff's *Jud Süß* as Historical Fiction." He recognized Lea's function in Hauff's novella and analyzed her character in great detail. Since he only analyzes Hauff's *Jud Süß*, he does not talk about Naemi or Dorothea in the other two works that are of interest in this analysis. Yet, the article identifies the different male and female Jewish stereotypes that are employed in the novella.

In this paper, I want to combine the work that has already been done and also contribute

1 Süß' first (very brief) literary appearance, in fact, was in 1781 in Friedrich Schiller's *Die Räuber*. (See Tegel 61).

my own readings and interpretations of the different female characters. I argue, that the three women not only indicate the different takes on the Jud Süß legend, but that they are also a key element to the different story lines. They allow to track different and changing beliefs, moral values, and problems of the Württemberg/German society, and the ways they dealt with these issues over time. The three works are based on the same historical person and events, but they not only tell the story differently, they also have different characters, motifs and ideas of Jewishness - to a great extent presented through the female (non-) Jewish figures.

Therefore, this paper analyzes the function of the women's roles, as well as their representation within the works as they seem to mirror Jud Süß' personality and make him readable, respectable, or hated to ranging degrees. By this means, not only Süß becomes readable, but also the intention and greater theme behind the single works as the depiction of Süß and the female figures mirror the authors' and society's mindsets. In other words, the female characters tell the reader *how* to read Jud Süß - the character and also as the works themselves. Further, the paper investigates the importance of Lea and Naemi being Jewish, and respectively why Harlan decided to break with this tradition and to let Dorothea be Christian instead.

The paper's findings will show that Hauff's novella allows for a Jewish woman who constitutes a counterbalance to the negative and stereotypical main character because the novella simply reflects its time's anti-Jewish resentments, and uses them to promote a "proto-nationalistic identity" (Chase 739) and a "new and improved" (Chase 736) Württemberg. Feuchtwanger's novel needs a Jewess because he advocates the idea that Christians and Jews can coexist in peace. Naemi represents all the good attributes that Süß had to forget in order to pursue his career (Hollstein 44). Harlan's movie, however, propagates anti-Semitism, and hence, there is no room for a positively connotated Jewess. This paper's ultimate claim is that it is not only the Jud Süß tradition that provides the ideal starting point to look for strategies of the "parallel

construction of minority and majority identity, the evolution of stereotypes over time, and the relation of both to standards and coherence for literary and historical narratives" in Germany but in particular the role of the (non-) Jewess in this tradition (Chase 725). This approach not only allows for a new way of reading the different works, but it also complicates the stories and invites to reinterpret them.

The Historical Figure of Jud Süß

Jud Süß was indeed a real historic person who lived from 1698 to 1738 in Württemberg, Germany. His real name was Joseph Ben Issachar Süßkind Oppenheimer, and he was born into a respected Jewish merchant family. Not much is known about him, especially not about his alleged crimes. The records of his case were kept secret until 1918. Wilhelm Hauff, therefore, was not able to look into these records and to base his novella on archival documents. As Tegel explains, he got his knowledge from "broadsides, chronicles and newspapers" as well as from questioning "his grandfather and other elderly Württembergers whose parents and grandparents had provided them with eyewitness accounts" (66). Even today these records, which are located in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, have not been fully analyzed - there is no official, fully disclosed assessment of the historical person Jud Süß. What can be said, however, is that he was accused of countless crimes, such as treason, larceny, desecration of the Protestant religion, sexual contact with Christian women, and even rape of a 14 year old girl. Although this list is long and far from being complete, there was no evidence found for his guilt. In fact, there was evidence that the rape, for example, has never occurred. The girl's virginity had been ascertained. Nonetheless, Jud Süß was executed based on these accusations, which were all based on old anti-Jewish stereotypes and prejudices. Jud Süß also had co-defendants, other advisers that worked for the Duke, that were accused of harming the citizen of Württemberg in one way or the

other. Only Hauff mentions this fact in his novella, however, only very briefly: „'Er mußte', sagen sie, 'nicht sowohl für seine eigenen schweren Verbrechen als für die Schandthaten und Pläne mächtiger Männer am Galgen sterben.' Verwandtschaften, Ansehen, heimliche Versprechungen retteten die andern [...]" (46).

Considering now the three *Jud Süß* works, it becomes obvious that they are less than loosely based on the historical person and events. What made this theme so interesting for people over the years is the social rise of a "ghetto-Jew" who, despite social restrictions, made it all the way to becoming the financial adviser of a Duke - a textbook example for the idea of the *Court Jew*, which will be examined later in this paper. Notably, the only characters in all three works that are somewhat based on historical persons are Jud Süß, Röder, the Duke's war comrade and officer, and the Duke himself (Chase 728). In other words, all the other main characters, such as Lea and Gustav in Hauff's novella, Feuchtwanger's Naemi, and Dorothea and Faber in Harlan's movie are completely fictional. As indicated before, the focus here will lie on the female characters: Lea, Naemi, and Dorothea. What is their function? How do the works, their frameworks, and intentions become readable through the female characters? And how and to what extent do they affect the different story lines?

The Jewess as Key Element

This section takes a closer look at the female figures in the three works, and analyzes the way they are introduced, characterized and connected to the character of Jud Süß.

In the chronologically seen first work, Hauff's novella, there is the figure of Lea. She is introduced as a "schlanke, zartgebaute Dame, die, in ein mit Gold und Steinen überladenes orientalisches Kostüm gekleidet, aller Augen auf sich zog" (Hauff 2). The first scene takes place at a masquerade ball that is being held in honor of Jew Süß' 40th birthday. Lea's first appearance

is linked to Jud Süß, as she is described as the woman led by him into the ballroom, suggesting their close relation, and also emphasizing her oriental appearance, identifying her as the *other*. The bystanders, seeing her for the first time, are fascinated by her beauty.

Jud Süß, on the other hand, is introduced to the reader as the financial adviser who has just been granted immunity from criminal prosecution for everything he has done and will still be doing in the name of Karl Alexander, the Duke of Württemberg. At the same time he is set into contrast to the Protestant citizens of Württemberg and is identified as an outsider, who, however, rules over them. The text reads: "Männer, die ihn im stillen haßten und öffentlich verehren mußten, hüllten sich zähneknirschend in ihre Dominos [...] sie berechneten nicht, daß die hohen Eintrittsgelder nur eine neue indirekte Steuer waren, die sie dem Juden entrichteten" (Hauff 1/2). The people of Württemberg do not like nor do they trust Süß. He is also linked to money, as he is the financial adviser - but in particular he is associated with financial exploitation of the citizens. Lea, on the other hand, has a positive and fascinating effect on the bystanders, and her appearance, unlike Süß', reveals her foreign- and otherness.

Lion Feuchtwanger once said about Hauff's novella that it is "ein schwaches Werk", and that the character of Jud Süß "hinter einer etwas rührseligen Liebesgeschichte zurück(tritt)." He further added that the novella is not "frei von antisemitischen Zügen" (Small 89). The first statement might be questionable, the other two claims hold true. Although the novella is named after Jud Süß, who is undoubtedly one of the main characters, the actual story seems to revolve around the romantic relationship between his sister Lea, and Councilor Lanbek's son Gustav. Neither Lea nor Gustav are based on historical characters.

Naemi, in Feuchtwanger's novel is also described as "nach fremder Sitte gekleidet" and beautiful (Feuchtwanger 111). A novice master randomly finds her house in the woods, and the text reads: "und darin lag, sich dehnend und verträumt, ein Mädchen, nach fremder Sitte

gekleidet, mattweißes Gesicht unter blauschwarzem Haar. [...] In Zukunft aber schlich sich in seine Vorstellungen vom himmlischen Jerusalem das Bild des Mädchens" (Feuchtwanger 111). Although her appearance is similarly introduced to Lea's, her relationship to Jud Süß, her father, is not. She lives with her uncle, hidden from society. Neither the Duke nor the citizens of Württemberg know that Süß has a daughter.

Lea and Naemi match the stereotype of the *Beautiful Jewess*. The beautiful Jewess was a positive connotated idea of nineteenth-century romantic European literature. The opera *La Juive* (1835) by Fromental Halévy is perhaps the most famous example for this stereotype. This might also be the reason for the existence of the alternative expression *Belle Juive*. Lea and Naemi are depicted as unattainable, yet desirable and sexual attractive. Both women are easily identified as oriental or other. The Jewess stands for "the ultimate image of womanhood, for the source of love and therefore of life" (Bitton 64). This image also resembles the Christian Mary-image, which ultimately might cause her to have such a sympathetic effect on the Christian reader (Bitton 65). Naemi, unlike Lea, however, is not so closely associated with Jud Süß, at least not from the public's perspective in the novel. They are not introduced together but separately, already suggesting that there might be a different dynamic in the novel than in Hauff's novella. The portrayal of Jud Süß, in the beginning, seems similar, in fact even in Harlan's movie. Süß is the Duke's financial adviser and he is ruthlessly exploiting the citizens of Württemberg in order to increase his own wealth and power. Though, in Feuchtwanger's novel, Süß dies a heroic death. At some point in the novel, the Duke learns about Naemi and ambushes her in order to rape her. While trying to escape, she jumps from the roof of her house and dies. Süß is devastated, after all, he truly loved her, always tried to protect her and to keep her away from his bad lifestyle and the court life.

This, in fact resembles the caring relationship Süß and his sister Lea have in Hauff's

novella. After her death he changes his life and plans to cause the Duke's downfall by telling the parliament about the coup d'etat the Duke had planned. The Duke dies before he can be arrested, and Jud Süß, through the Duke's death, loses his protection. He offers himself as the scapegoat for everything that has gone wrong in Württemberg. The court and the citizens of Württemberg then hang him, although he could have saved his life by converting to Christianity. Naemi's function in this novel is, as Dorothea Hollstein puts it: "das bessere Ich Oppenheimers [zu verkörpern], sie spricht Seiten in ihm an, die er um der Karriere willen vergessen muß" (Hollstein 44). It is not a coincidence that, over the course of the novella, it comes to light that Süß' father was a Christian aristocrat. Süß, therefore, always had the chance to identify himself (through his father) as a Christian instead of a Jew. Through this crucial information the alleged borders between the racial ideas of Jewishness and Christianness blur. Naemi's function, therefore, is to represent the good character traits of a man in general, not of a Jewish or a Christian man. Through her death it becomes clear that being a good or bad person is not determined by race or religion but that it is a choice to live a moral life or not - one that everyone has to struggle with.

Lea's function in Hauff's novella is not identified as easily, mainly because she represents more than the stereotype of the *Beautiful Jewess*. During a secret meeting at the masquerade ball between Lea and Gustav Lanbek, the reader witnesses their affection for each other but also Lea's concerns regarding her brother's status in Württembergian society:

Gustav, ich beschwöre Sie, was ist mit meinem Bruder vorgefallen? Die Menschen flüstern allenthalben seinen Namen; ich weiß nicht, was sie sagen, aber ich denke es ist nichts Gutes; hat er Streit gehabt? Ach, ich weiß wohl, diese Menschen hassen unser Volk. (Hauff 8)

This passage is interesting for two reasons. It depicts Lea as rather naive and unpolitical. She does not know why the citizens of Württemberg talk about Süß and bear a grudge against him. She only sees him as her beloved brother. She further draws a line based on heritage between her

and her brother and the citizens of Württemberg by juxtaposing herself and her brother ("unser Volk") in opposition to "diese Menschen". Gustav, as well, makes this distinction: „du gleichst der Zauberin Armida, und so denke ich mir die Töchter deines Stammes, als ihr noch Kanaan bewohntet. So war Rebekka und die Tochter Jephthas“ (Hauff 9). Here, and also later in the text, Gustav, in addition, brings the element of witchcraft in and associates it with Lea and female Jews in general. Armida is a character in the epic poem "Jerusalem Delivered" (1581) by Torquato Tasso. She is a Saracen magician who falls in love with a Christian crusader and then puts him under her spell takes him to a magic island. When he, however, realizes that he has been enchanted and that he needs to continue fighting the Muslims, Armida is heartbroken and, later on, tries to kill herself. The knight comes back to save her, and also convinces her to become Christian. This can be interpreted as a foretaste of what is to come in the novella. It further does not seem to be a coincidence either that Gustav also compares Lea with Rebekka. Rebekka can be seen as the female equivalent to Abraham, representing motifs such as setting out into the unknown, believing in God's guidance, and, especially, leaving for a new country (at the time Jewish people were in exile after leaving Egypt). And indeed, the reader learns that Lea left the Jewish ghetto in Frankfurt in order to live with her brother in the Christian city of Stuttgart - allowing for a connecting to the idea of the *Wandering Jew*.

The stereotype of the *Wandering Jew* (also *Eternal Jew*) goes back to a legend about a Jewish man named Ahasverus who taunted Jesus on the way to his crucifixion, and was then cursed by Jesus. He had to wander the world without hope to rest or settle somewhere until the day Jesus would return: "Warlich ich sage euch es stehen allhie etliche die werden den Todt nicht schmecken / biß daß sie deß Menschen Sohn kommen sehen inn sein Reich" (Anonymous). In Hauff's novella this idea is represented through the collective homelessness of the Jewish characters. The text reveals that Lea lives a socially very isolated life, and that she is not happy

in Stuttgart. However, she describes her life in the ghetto very positively:

In Frankfurt hatte ich meine Gespielinnen, hatte meine eigene Welt, wollte nichts von der übrigen. Ich dachte nicht nach über unsere Verhältnisse, es kränkte mich nicht, daß uns die Christen nicht achteten, ich saß in meinem Stübchen unter Freunden und wollte nichts von allem, was draußen war (Hauff 10).

Through this text passage it becomes clear that it was a harmful and unreasonable decision to leave the ghetto, and her "own people" to live in a Christian society. The ending and Lea's tragic fate strongly suggest that neither the obvious evil male Jew, and more importantly, nor the beautiful, sympathetic and humanized Jewess have a place in the Christian society of Württemberg. As Lea is often depicted as a member of the Jewish people or even as a form of representative, these conclusions have to be applied to all Jews. Lea, herself, for example says "diese Menschen hassen unser Volk"- they do not hate her brother or isolate her as individuals, but as representatives of otherness, of the Jewish people as a whole. Even Gustav shares this opinion and realizes that his feelings for Lea are not reasonable: "er schauderte über dem Fluch, der einen heimatlosen Menschenstamm bis ins tausendste Glied verfolgte und jeden mit ins Verderben zu ziehen schien, der sich auch den Edelsten unter ihnen auf die natürlichste Weise näherte" (Hauff 31/32).

To come back to Gustav comparing Lea to Rebekka, there is actually more to say. In fact, the tragic love story in the novella as well as the figure of Lea are adapted from Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820). Jefferson Chase states in his article that Lea is based on Rebecca from *Ivanhoe*, and that the "Lea-Gustav plot strand was the stock literary one of forbidden love" (Chase 728). Rebecca, as well as Lea, is portrayed as a beautiful and noble Jewess. She also is the daughter of a moneylender and merchant, and she, as well, falls in love with the Christian hero of the story, named Ivanhoe. Unlike Lea, however, she realizes the impossibility of her love, and ultimately leaves the country where she finds a happy ending (Tegel 65). The said love story turns into a

tragic story when Süß imprisons Gustav after an incident at the ball. Knowing about Gustav's and Lea's feelings for each other, Süß tries to blackmail Gustav into marrying Lea. Through this relationship Süß would be connected to one of the most respected local families, and, at the same time, one of Süß' mightiest opponents, Gustav's patriotic father, would be eliminated. If his family, on the other hand, was connected to the infamous Jud Süß, people would treat him as a traitor who deserted to the enemy. For these exact same reasons Gustav refuses to marry Lea and starts to distance himself from her, which ultimately leads to Lea's suicide. Gustav, nevertheless, loves Lea, but he is too patriotic and too loyal towards his father and country to bring disgrace on his family - he puts reasoning before instinct, whereas Lea can be said to do the opposite.

In *Jud Süß* it is Gustav (and also his father) who realizes that the close contact, especially the love for Lea is harmful for his family and for his country. Their love has to be seen in a political context, rather than a personal. While Lea is a sympathetic and tragic character - a beautiful Jewess, Jud Süß is depicted in a very negative stereotypical way, presenting "a new conglomerate image" of the Jew - the image of the *Wandering Court Jew* (Chase 727).

The term *Court Jew* describes a negative stereotype, applied to a Jew "having mastered Gentile language, appearance, and customs, insinuates himself into power and secretly runs the government" (Chase 729). And indeed, Süß is depicted as a "Iago-like strategist", who, coming from a Jewish ghetto, becomes the Duke's financial adviser (Chase 729). Interestingly, the Duke himself never appears in the novella. One reason for his absence is certainly the danger of possible censorship at Hauff's time. The second reason is that his absence allows Hauff to depict Süß as the one in control over Württemberg. And as his conviction proves, people accused him of harming Württemberg and abusing his power in order to increase his own wealth and power.

Lea, the beautiful and good sister, on the other hand, seems to counterbalance this negative and stereotypical figure of Jud Süß (Small 90). She is the tragic heroine in the novella,

and unlike her brother she is not interested in wealth or property, as she refuses her brother's estate after his death. Her function in fitting the stereotype of the *Beautiful Jewess*, as Jud Süß says himself, is to clear the name Süß after he has stained it - or in other words, her function is to "humanize" Jews (Tegel 66). Süß keeps her at home, telling her she "dürfe nicht auch verloren gehen; ich [Lea] solle unablässig zu dem Gott unserer Väter beten, daß er mich fromm und rein erhalte, auf daß meine Seele ein reines Opfer werde für *seine Seele*" (Hauff 10/11). He also advocates the strict separation between Jews and Christians. Being aware that he crossed this border himself, he needs Lea as a "sacrifice", someone who can make up for his deeds. This is quite remarkable especially since Hauff's novella is often read as anti-Semitic. Feuchtwanger described the work as "naively antisemitic" (qtd. in Tegel 64) and Chase writes: "*Jud Süß* can be seen to serve the pernicious function of advancing an essentially anti-Semitic narrative of history under the cover of the ideal of a general brotherhood of man" (727). Against the backdrop of Lea's positive depiction, these readings become more complex than this.

Another important detail worth mentioning is that in Hauff's time, due to the existing stereotypes it was difficult, if possible at all, to portray a male Jewish figure as positive. Nathan in Gotthold Ephraim's play *Nathan der Weise* (1779) might be an exception. This Jewish figure is the embodiment of tolerance and human kindness. However, the play also uses Nathan to promote the idea of an "universalische Menschheitsreligion" and to suggest the renunciation of Judaism (Fischer 69, 66). In other words, it is only possible to depict the male Jewish figure positively because it distances itself in a way from Judaism. The only possibility, therefore, to have a positive connotated Jewish figure was to make the figure female - to have a Jewess.

According to Tegel "Female [...] proved easier since females were excluded from the public sphere, enabling the author to humanize the Jew without entering dangerous territory" (Tegel 65). Having identified Lea's positive and "Jew-humanizing" depiction and the alleged

impossibility of representing a positive Jewish man, it is obvious that this novella was not written in order to demonize Jews in general, although it undeniably makes use of negative stereotypes.

Now, focusing on Lea and reading the novella filtered through her figure, what can be said about Hauff's *Jud Süß*? Despite the title it is Lea's and Gustav's failed relationship that is the focus of attention. Jud Süß is a relatively one-dimensional character who matches the current typical stereotypes about Jews - he is the embodiment of the *Wandering Court Jew*. Externally he is assimilated to the citizens of Württemberg, but after all, he is not a native, is easily identified as such, and he morally and financially exploits the people of Württemberg. He seems to be the opposite of Gustav who is a patriotic native, and willing to renounce his personal happiness - the possible relationship with Lea - in order to serve Württemberg and its citizens.

The salient point is that Gustav does not reject Lea because of her personality but because of her Jewishness. This Jewishness is not to be seen in a strictly religious sense (neither Jud Süß nor Lea are ever shown exercising any religious rituals) but in a general sense of *otherness* as a "Volk". Lea, after all, has a non-European, oriental appearance, lives isolated from the society, and is blind to the damage her brother causes the citizens of Württemberg. Therefore, in Gustav's eyes, and in particular in his father's, Lea presents no less of a threat to Württemberg than Jud Süß does. He does not only reject her, and therefore Jewishness as a Christian, "but as a family member, patriot, and representative citizen" (Chase 734). Portraying Lea in such a positive and sympathetic way relocates the reader into the same situation Gustav finds himself in. Despite the compassion one might feel for Lea, one has to realize that the only way to protect Württemberg and its citizens is to abandon her. She never gives up her familiar feelings for her brother, even after realizing what all he is (allegedly) responsible for. Instead, at the end of the novella, she begs Gustav to ignore an important piece of evidence in order to spare Süß' life - showing once more that she, too, is a threat to the order of the Württemberg society. "The exclusion of the Jew

and the Jewishness allows a temporarily stable image of native society to coalesce, whereby the rift between princes and populace can be seen as the result of foreign treachery" (Chase 736). This becomes only visible by focusing on Lea. Jewish stereotypes are not longer based solely on religious differences, they become politically motivated. Male Jewish figures, including all negative stereotypes, were already well known to the readers in the 19th century.

The Jud Süß figure, therefore, is not a novelty, and neither are the reasons given to hate this character. The alleged necessity of abandoning Lea, however, makes the reader realize that outsiders and foreign influences not only do not have a place in the Württemberg society but that they are harmful. Considering the course of history in the early 19th century, in particular the French occupation led by Napoleon, this message is not too surprising. In order to avoid being ruled by someone else again, who does not only have the country's and people's welfare in mind it was crucial to work towards an own unified identity, and, at the same time, to fight off any form of foreign threat - even if this threat is a beautiful, sympathetic Jewess. The novella, as Chase puts it, is a "textbook example of compensatory stereotyping" (Chase 737).

In conclusion, Hauff is not only rewriting history, using well known stereotypes, such as the *Wandering Jew*, the *Court Jew*, and the *Beautiful Jewess*, but he is also changing the context in which the true events and these stereotypes have to be seen. Through the figure of Lea it becomes clear that this novella is not about promoting negative stereotypes about Jewish people per se but that the content is much more complex. The focus shifts from the negative Jewish figure(s) in particular to the potential danger of foreign and outside-threats in general. Although the depiction of the Jewish characters in *Jud Süß* is mostly negative - ultimately even Lea's - it seems as they are only used as placeholders, as the novella can be read in the context of the French occupation as well. And, most importantly, the theme of the forbidden love between Gustav and Lea advocates the idea that "in moments of epochal crisis individual feelings must be

sacrificed for the public welfare" (Chase 737). This way of reading the novella, through the figure of Lea, allows for an interpretation that would not be possible otherwise. Only by bringing her into play, Jew Süß' character becomes readable in a broader context, exceeding the stereotypical, demonizing interpretation of the Duke's financial adviser. Lea allows for an interpretation that includes and considers the historical context, that advocates unification among the Württemberg citizens and that pays tribute to the creation of a common (Württemberg) identity, even though, and that remains true, Jewish characters and Jewishness are only being used to portray a generic foreign threat to the country.

Yet, there is still Harlan's movie and the missing beautiful Jewess. After all that has been said so far about the figure of the Jewess, it is obvious that its depiction and function is too positive to be part of an anti-Semitic propaganda movie. Veit Harlan himself claims that the movie is based on Hauff's novella, and still, Jud Süß does not have a sister in the movie (Small 89, Friedman 122). Instead, there is Dorothea Sturm, the female main character. She, however, is Christian rather than Jewish, and engaged/ later married to Faber, a Gustav-like character. Dorothea, Lea, and Naemi have in common that they are depicted as beautiful young women who are gentle and innocent. Yet, Dorothea is missing the foreign element, she matches the Aryan ideal of a blonde, German woman (although the actress was actually of Swedish origin), who represents family, domesticity, and comfort, she stands for "bourgeois Gemütlichkeit" (Friedman 132). Her character, although resembling Lea and Naemi, serves the purpose of illustrating Jud Süß' wickedness and his destructive influence not only on the society of Württemberg but on the "Aryan race."

Jud Süß matches all negative stereotypes right from the beginning of the movie. He is the embodiment of the *Wandering Jew* and the *Court Jew*, and he is also depicted as greedy and lecherous, especially towards reputable Aryan women such as Dorothea. The Duke sends a

messenger to Jud Süß into the Jewish ghetto since he needs money for his excessive life style. Already here, Jud Süß is depicted as rich, but striving for social power as well. He bargains his way into Stuttgart and into becoming the Duke's financial adviser. On the way from the ghetto to Stuttgart he meets Dorothea, who does not recognize him as being Jewish and offers him a ride since his horse carriage rolled over on the way. She does not recognize him as a "Jew" because he changed his appearance drastically. When he is depicted in the ghetto for the first time, he wears a caftan, a hat, he has a beard and curly, dark hair. In short, he looks like a stereotypical Eastern European Jew. However, his appearance changes as soon as he receives permission to go to Stuttgart. He cuts his beard and hair and he changes his clothing, abandoning the Jewish caftan. Combined with his missing Jewish "dialect", he resembles a non-Jewish German.

At this point, he already met several stereotypes, yet he also addresses the one of the homeless *Wandering Jew*. Dorothea asks him where all he has been already, he answers with a list of European cities. When she asks further, where he felt at home, he responds with "zu Hause? Überall!" Dorothea is visibly surprised and requests to know if he does not have a homeland, his answer is: "Doch. Die Welt." While confirming the stereotype of the homeless and nationless *Wandering Jew*, he also gazes lustfully at Dorothea, giving a foretaste of what to come - her rape. Although she constitutes an ideal projection screen for the negative Jewish stereotypes, her "only diegetic significance stems from her role as the object of the Jew's licentious lust" (Schulte-Sasse 28). And indeed, towards the end of the movie, Jud Süß imprisons Dorothea's father and Faber as they are the Duke's (and his) opponents. In her despair, Dorothea visits Jud Süß and begs him to set Faber and her father free. Süß, however, is only willing to do so if Dorothea agrees to having sexual intercourse with Süß. She denies, and Süß signals the guards to torture Faber. Screams of pain become audible and Dorothea finally gives her consent. Süß keeps his word and sets the two men free - just so they can find Dorothea's

dead body in the river Neckar. This suicide constitutes one of the few parallels to Hauff's novella - Lea also allegedly drowned herself in the river, however, for different reasons.

One other interesting parallel that can be found is the name Rebekka. The name's literal meaning is "tied up", "secured" or "connected". Gustav compares Lea with Rebekka, which, as explained earlier, can be seen as a reference to Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* or to the biblical Rebecca - a strong Abraham-like character. Harlan, also decided to name one character in the movie Rebekka, in fact, the only Jewish woman that appears throughout the entire movie, even though for only a few seconds. She appears in the ghetto scene at the very beginning. She leans out of the window next to the old man who is talking to the butcher. She does not say anything, but she is depicted as a "'wanton'-looking young woman with long black hair hanging loose on her shoulders, [...] chewing on weed" (Schulte-Sasse 34). The old man tells her to get dressed - a comment referring to her exhibitionism. She is to be seen as a counter-example to Dorothea and her virtue - adding the aspect of moral evil to the already "known" economic evil embodied by the Jews (Schulte-Sasse 34). Through this short scene the so positive connotated Rebekka-figure is not only devalued but replaced with what Klaus Theweleit, a German sociologist, described as the "red whore". It is the idea of women's sexuality as a threat - associated with "filth, the loss of boundaries, violence, castration, and communism" (Gallagher 56).

The most revealing aspect of the movie, however, is that the figure of the *Beautiful Jewess* is left out. This conscious exclusion suggests that the positive image of the Jewess was seen as a threat to the anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda. After all, the movie *Jud Süß* was supposed to "set the mood for the extermination of the Jews" (Friedman 120). Movies made and released by the Nazis, in fact, never had a female Jewish main character. There is only one exception, *Robert and Bertram* (1939), a comedy, which had two female Jewish characters in it. This movie and its production, however, unfolded the difficulties of portraying a young woman in such a

negative way, without arousing the viewer's compassion and pity (Hollstein 44). After this movie the Nazis decided to completely leave Jewish women out of their movies in order to not jeopardize their anti-Semitic intention.

In summary, the subject matter of the Jewess in Harlan's movie is more complex than in Hauff's novella or in Feuchtwanger's novel, since (1) the figure of the *Beautiful Jewess* was left out, (2) the figure was "replaced" by a Christian woman, and (3) the only portrayed Jewess represents the idea of the *Red Whore*. On the other hand, the function of these characters is more easily revealed, since the Nazis' intention is so well known and also so obvious. Hauff and Feuchtwanger use the Jewess-figure in order to symbolize and emphasize the positive attributes of the Jud Süß character. Both women, Lea and Naemi are naive, childlike, beautiful, virtuous and very sympathetic. For this kind of figure, there is, of course, no room in a movie that is intended to cause (even more) hatred towards Jewish people, and "set the mood for the extermination." Rebekka, the "red whore" in the movie, is an attempt to even eliminate the possibly positive associations the viewer might already have regarding Jewish women. Solely negating all positive aspects, is, however not enough - negative attributes and connotations have to be found and introduced as well. Exactly this is Dorothea's role. Instead of emphasizing Süß' positive side, she allows for a portrayal of his figure meeting all possible negative stereotypes. By bringing Dorothea into play, Württemberg (and in fact, the entire "Aryan race") is not only threatened by the *Wandering Court Jew*, its society is also vulnerable as Süß invades the private life as well. He chases the virtuous Dorothea who represents family, domesticity, and *gemütlichkeit*, and who is also engaged and later married to Faber, a loyal, patriotic, young man. Ultimately he uses her innocence and naivete to rape her - resulting in her suicide. Dorothea's function is to develop the idea of the "Jew infiltrating Aryan society for power and money" further and to allow for his identification as "a social problem that must be solved" (Small 96).

Conclusion

In the course of this paper it became clear what an excellent and fruitful foundation the tradition of Jud Süß provides to track different and changing beliefs, moral values, and problems of the Württemberg/German society, and the ways they dealt with these issues over time. It is, however, not the character of Jud Süß in the different literary or cinematic works who changes so drastically over time and allows for these observations, but the women he is associated with. Without Lea, Hauff's novella and his depiction of Süß would not differ too much from Harlan's movie. In the novella, Süß is also depicted as the embodiment of the *Wandering Court Jew* who insinuates himself into the Württemberg society and lives a parasite-like life, exploiting the Duke and the citizens. The figure of Lea leads the story in another direction and allows for a less anti-Semitic and more nationalistic and identity-forming interpretation. Using Lea as a medium to read the novella, the focus shifts from the particular threat to Württemberg impersonated by the "Jew" to a more general threat emanating from everything foreign (like, for example, Napoleon). This also matches the narrator's critique that only Süß was convicted:

"Er mußte", sagen sie, „nicht sowohl für seine eigenen schweren Verbrechen als für die Schandthaten und Pläne mächtiger Männer am Galgen sterben.“ Verwandtschaften, Ansehen, heimliche Versprechungen retteten die andern, den Juden – konnte und mochte niemand retten. (Hauff 46)

Jud Süß functions as a scapegoat for everything that went wrong in Württemberg. The short quote demonstrates that he is not the only one who can be held responsible. He, however, is the only one who gets convicted - simply because he is not a local but an *other*.

A similar strategy - projecting everything bad onto an outsider - can be found in Harlan's propaganda movie. As mentioned before, the movie's message is straightforward and also very apparent. Yes, after World War II, Harlan was charged with participating in the anti-Semitic movement, aiding the Nazis, and, in general, with crimes against humanity for his role as

director of *Jud Süß*. Ultimately, he, however, was not found guilty. Harlan not only argued that the Nazis controlled his work, but also, that the movie was not even anti-Semitic. He claims that "he portrayed a Jew who sacrificed his own millions to bring his fellow Jews back to Stuttgart, from which they were barred by law. This Jew [...] is engaged in a battle against anti-Semitism and is able to unleash a revolution against the anti-Semites" (Small 94). Further, Harlan maintains that "the film's effect on the viewer depends on the viewer. If the viewer is an anti-Semite, the film will be so interpreted; if not, the opposite will be true" (Small 95). It is not the place to judge Harlan's true motifs or to decide if he speaks the truth or not but the missing character of the Beautiful Jewess, the Rebekka figure and the virtuous Christian Dorothea reveal that the movie is anti-Semitic after all. And indeed, following Harlan's argumentation, only focusing on Süß and also the negative representation of the Duke in contrast, might make the claim of being anti-Semitic almost believable. Interpreting the movie by means of the (missing, replaced, and devalued) Jewess, again, leads to another conclusion. A conclusion that, considering the time and the Nazis' motifs, and also the public's immediate reactions, seems to be another, plausible explanation.²

This paper also showed that Naemi's function in Feuchtwanger's novel is to represent the good character traits of a man, regardless if he is a Jewish or a Christian man. Only by focusing on her figure it becomes clear that the novella is not exclusively about a particular Jewish man who is corrupt, greedy and ruthless because he is born this (allegedly Jewish) way but about the choice every man has to make. The Jewess ultimately allows the interpretation of the novel that a good or bad person is not determined by race or religious but by choice.

The final conclusion is that the three different works, Hauff's novel, Feuchtwanger's novella, and Harlan's movie can not only be read by means of the Jewess-figures, but that they

² According to Friedman there were "assaults on Jews immediately after the showings." (120).

are, in fact, the key elements to understanding these works. Their figures and functions provide access to the different time periods, as well as to the social convictions and religious beliefs of the Württemberg citizens and Germans. It became clear that focusing only on Jud Süß or the other male main characters does not allow for such a multi-layered and comprehensive reading.

This finding adds an entirely new perspective to the Jud Süß tradition, that might invite for a reconsideration of this tradition, and, ideally even a continuation. It, most certainly, can be applied to other literary or cinematic traditions as well, providing a new tool for interpretation.

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