

Anti-Semitism in German 'Volk' Culture: Propaganda through the Pen and Screen

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The Germanic term 'Volk' carries a significantly more dynamic meaning than its English translation to 'folk' or 'people'. The term 'Volk' originates from the word "Volkskunde" which in the late 18th and early 19th century referred to the academic study of collective German history. Originating in the era of Romanticism, Volk became the German collective mindset in the 19th and 20th centuries. In order to overcome political disunity regarding modernity, Germans strove towards creating a singular, mystical identity. Modernity paradoxically became a rejection of modernity. The popular focus of academic study known as the 'Volkskunde' originally had a complete absence of bigotry. However, it would gradually involve into a catalyst of nationalistic propaganda which masked a blatant and sinister political agenda. As the 19th century progressed, Germans interpreted the Volk as a rallying point, which enabled them to see themselves as a superior native race and set themselves apart from other peoples. Consequently, given that the other major population group at this time in Germany was the Jews, they became associated with the antithesis of 'Volkish' values.

These propagandistic aspects of Volk ideologies allowed Germans to see the Jews as the biological and social 'other'. The 'otherness' of the Jews is constantly presented through both physical and psychological stereotypes, and they were seen as personally embodying the concepts which Volk culture had formed in opposition to. The intimate association of anti-Semitism with 'Volkish' ideals started in the era of Romanticism in the early 19th century and lasted through the Third Reich and World War II. It was consistently present in not only the public establishments, such as government and educational institutions, but also was a constant thematic element in works of art of all genres, including literature, musical compositions, theatre-opera, and film.

Once Volk ideologies had gained respectability in mainstream German culture it became easy for them to cross over into the political sphere. This essay will trace the origins of the Volk, how the Volk ideologies achieved respectability among the German masses, as well as reveal through art, the dichotomies that encompassed anti-Semitic tendencies of the populace. The perfect example of how the dynamics of the Volk ideologies had spread is evident in one of the most popular German Volk stories of all time, *Jud Süß*. The true story of how a 17th century lower class Jewish merchant rose to the highest echelons of the German government only to eventually be executed for the high crime of treason was retold in Wilhelm Hauff's 1827 novel as well as Veit Harlan's 1941 film. Both works are totemic of the Volk ideologies of the particular time in which they were released. I will attempt to trace the developments of Volk ideologies during this time period; and show how a desire to search for national unity and commonality turned into bigotry and the megalomania of national superiority. The German attitudes towards Judaism developed from ambivalence, to dissociation, and finally to blatant hatred. For Germans anti-Semitism would become the means for individual salvation as well as collective national redemption. The development of Volk ideology is revealed through analysis of these two iconic texts. A major cause in the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust was the social concept of the Volk being developed and accepted on a mainstream scale, with the delivery of this propaganda being successful through several generations of German art.

The Historiography of the Holocaust Studies and the Development of the Volkskunde

The historiography of the European Holocaust has been a fiercely contested area of study for decades. However, the consensus is that one should begin at Saul Friedlander's *Nazi Germany and the Jews Volume I*. This work, which received upon its 1998 publication widespread critical acclaim, was referred to by the Los Angeles Times as the "definitive work" on this area of study. Friedlander makes the goal of his study clear from the beginning, which is to reveal "an account in which Nazi

policies are indeed the central element, but in which the surrounding world and the victims' attitudes, reactions, and fate are no less an integral part of this unfolding history."¹ However, prior to Friedlander's publication, though there were a few notable works focused on the historiography that had achieved success within the academic community, others included arguments that were often polarized or lopsided.

George L. Mosse's *The Crisis of German Ideology* exemplifies one of these pioneering texts. Mosse focuses on two ideologies, Marxism and National Socialism. He intentionally sets these apart from the beginning. However, the bulk of his argument traces how the ideas of National Socialism were deeply embedded within Germans several generations before Hitler's rise to power. These ideas included Germanic Christianity, nature mysticism, theosophy, sun worship, and racial hegemony. Mosse's underlying thesis is that these anti-democratic and anti-liberal ideologies gave Germans the hope that they could achieve sociopolitical and historical salvation. Early on, he mentions that this set of ideas has been termed "Volkish", which "signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental 'essence'", and was born from German romanticism in the late eighteenth century.² This increasingly resulted in the German perception of the Jews to be in contrast with themselves, who "living in dark, mist-shrouded forests, are deep, mysterious profound," and constantly "strive toward the sun."³ He also emphasizes that the perversion of Volkish ideals began with a very small group of German idealists and infiltrated secular education systems to become accepted by the mainstream.⁴

Another installment of acclaimed non-fiction Holocaust academic literature was Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. This book deals

¹ Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews Volume I*. (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 1-2

² George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. (New York: H. Fertig, 1998), 4.

³ Mosse, 5.

⁴ Mosse, 110.

with ordinary Germans who were in Order Police, one of the units primarily responsible for the mass murder of Jews in Poland and Eastern Europe. Browning's main argument is that conditioning and group loyalty were more important than ideological conviction. Even though Browning's thesis was in direct contrast to Mosse's, it nevertheless received critical acclaim from Mosse himself, who described *Ordinary Men* as "a truly pioneer study of how it was possible for ordinary middle-aged men to become mass murderers, personally shooting thousands of men, women, and children. Convincing, fluently written, and difficult to put down, it should be read by all interested in our common future." This book would also gain the respect of Friedlander, who described it as "remarkable" and "an important contribution to the understanding of one of the most incomprehensible aspects of the 'Final Solution': the psychological adaptation of the perpetrators."

Prior to this publication, scholarly works on the Holocaust tended to have arguments that could best be described as superficial and lopsided. In the 1980's, for example, the two most prominent publications on the subject were Lucy Dawidowicz's *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* and Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Hilberg focused exclusively on the Nazi political system, while Dawidowicz concentrated entirely on the history of the victims. Browning paved the way for a new approach to Holocaust studies. But more importantly arguments would be made which blended together the assertions of Hilberg and Dawidowicz. This allowed the issue to be acknowledged as being a multi-dimensional one with incredibly deep complexities that could never be addressed with one-sided arguments.

This did not mean the controversy that inevitably came with the subject went away. The response to Browning came from Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in 1997 with *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. In this study, Golden completely disregards the psychological argument regarding the conditioning of the Germans. Instead, Goldhagen asserts that ordinary Germans were primed from the beginning to be experimentalist anti-Semites and that the Nazis

simply unshackled their murderous will. He asserts that the perpetrators of the Holocaust were merely innately driven by anti-Semitism and their own convictions. Therefore having judged the mass annihilation of the Jews to be a moral obligation, clearly “did not want to say ‘no’.”⁵ Another controversial aspect of this publication was Goldhagen’s unsupported assertions that the perpetrators “along the way overwhelmingly cited sheer physical revulsion against what they were doing as the prime motive but did not express any ethical or political principles behind this revulsion.”⁶ Goldhagen encountered fierce criticism from historians, who interpreted his arguments as not only being shock value with little substance and backing, but also unoriginal.

Friedlander timed the release of his now-renowned publication perfectly. In *Nazi Germany and the Jews Volume I*, Friedlander directly criticizes Goldhagen for the reasons mentioned above. In addition to providing thorough evidence, which includes individual first person accounts from the victims as well as the perpetrators, Friedlander does not make sweeping shock-value conclusions. Friedlander consistently argues that Goldhagen’s approach to study is dangerous, reductive, and simply weak. Goldhagen’s thesis, which claims the cause of the Holocaust is “eliminationist anti-Semitism” directly opposes Friedlander’s argument that the roots of genocide lay in “redemptive anti-Semitism”. Like Mosse, Friedlander doesn’t just superficially describe what Hitler’s anti-Semitism did and what the intentions behind it were. He states that “earlier reductive interpretations” had focused solely “on the role (and responsibility) of the supreme leader.”⁷ Friedlander describes this redemptive anti-Semitism argument as the opposite of Goldhagen’s broad “ordinary racial anti-Semitism” argument. In redemptive anti-Semitism “the struggle against the Jews is the dominant aspect of a worldview in which the other racist themes are but secondary

⁵ Daniel Goldhagen. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. (New York: Vintage, 1997), 16.

⁶ Goldhagen, 74.

⁷ Friedlander, 14.

appendages.”⁸ This book provides a balanced argument about the incredibly complex subject it discusses and thus became the standard text about German anti-Semitism.

The term Volk was originally coined from the term “Volkskunde” (“folk studies” or “folklore”), which developed as a result of the German’s newly discovered desire to understand people who didn’t have a public voice in the past. In the late 18th century, Germany was fragmented into several different states. People held a natural curiosity about the culture of other states and began to travel and record their findings in travelogues.⁹ The earliest of these travelogues comes from Josef Moller, a Prague scholar who in 1788 wrote a “...list of several aids for a pragmatic study of the state, folk, and country of Bohemia.”¹⁰ A German theologian by the name of Wölfling released another notable piece of early Volkskunde literature in 1796, in which he gave a detailed account that had “...virtually nothing that was not described by him, which he would not have described”¹¹. Wölfling, who wrote anonymously in *Letters of a traveling Frenchman about the Germans*, searched for a “national physiognomy”, a “national sensitivity” and an explanation to the “general character of the German nation” by examining the societal background. This included how the “characteristic traits of individual provinces are presented together with considerations about the influence of the governments on the customs of the citizenry”¹². These works focus on explaining the differences between the different regions of Germany. The only aim is to find a collective national commonality. Sentiments of racist, anti-Semitic, or nationalistic propaganda are not evident during the initial developments of the Volk ideologies.

⁸ Friedlander, 87.

⁹ Wolfgang Jacobeit. "Concerning the Traditional Understanding of "Folk Culture" in the German Democratic Republic. A Scholarly-Historical Retrospective." *Asian Folklore Studies* 50, no. 1 (1991): 70.

¹⁰ Josef Mader, cited in Jacobeit, 70

¹¹ Jacobeit, 70.

¹² Jacobeit, 70.

Volkskunde developed into an accepted political science throughout early decades of the 19th century.¹³ Two of the most well-known figures of this movement were called the Brothers Grimm.¹⁴ These German brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, developed the study of language which is known today as linguistics. They were driven by the growing movement of national unification and desire to understand the fellow individual. A letter written by Jacob Grimm reveals how he wanted to accomplish a “fraternization of Germans in various states who would then work on one and the same great work” ...and a “vita populi.”¹⁵ The methodologies Grimm used and the subjects he studied were typical of the early years of the Volkskunde, as he wrote, “Special attention should be devoted to the way and method in which the folk carries water and loads throughout the various provinces; is this on the head, the back, or the arm? How do they behave while talking and sitting, while eating and drinking-e.g., how do they position their arms and legs.”¹⁶ The study of the Volk originated out of the German collective desire to deeply understand the intricate nuances of their fellow countrymen. It however resulted in something much more sinister.

Previous German authors such as Goethe and Herder wrote in the early years of Volkskunde about a general dissatisfaction with modernity, specifically with urbanization, industrialization, and capitalism. Herder wrote that the general concern of society was the usefulness of the individual under the growing economic trends of capitalism and trade.¹⁷ As a result of the rapid growth of urbanization and industrialization, the conversion of manual labor to mechanized labor seemed unstoppable. Goethe wrote in *Poetry and Truth* of his experience visiting a textile manufacturer whose factory had become mechanized, saying “When one walks between the

¹³ Jacobeit, 72-76.

¹⁴ Jacobeit, 74 –75 Jacobeit refers to these brothers as men as “often” being called the “fathers” of Volkskunde in academia, of which doing so, Jacobeit asserts, is unfair

¹⁵ Jacobeit, 74-75.

¹⁶ Jacobeit, 75.

¹⁷ Jacobeit, 72.

numerous spindles and weavers' stools in a large factory, one feels with all this whirring and rattling, with all this mechanism so confusing to the eye and the senses, with an incomprehensible view of a place that is so busy in so many ways to do all that is necessary to make a piece of clothing ...one's own jacket...that one is wearing...suffers."¹⁸ Though on one hand the development of the terms Volk and Volkskunde began to unite the different provinces of Germany into a singular, national identity, many negative aspects were revealed.

These studies then caused scholars to examine their history in order to find out the causes of their collective discontents. Jacobeit writes of this change in the Volkskunde/Volk, which was originally "...supposed to contribute to a harmonization of these vast social contracts and it is supposed to point out the illusionary values from the various strata of the past" and had been gradually infected by the "...indoctrination (under the cloak of so-called spiritual Volk culture) with nationalistic embellishment, and directed consciously towards societal contrasts, are those uniquely created 'village histories' of Germanophilia, Frankophobia, and anti-Semitism that were produced in large numbers."¹⁹ George Mosse wrote prominently of the Volk driven nationalist movement in the early to mid-19th century, referring to the movement as Germans creating "an indivisible whole."²⁰ Hitler, who eventually translated the dynamic elements of the "Volkish" movements into his political power, simply had to draw upon the deep-seated beliefs of the masses which had been boiling internally for the last 150 years. For the German citizenry, embracing this belief was the only path to collective salvation. Mosse referred the Third Reich as "...not a culmination of history", though "not an accident of history."²¹ The propaganda of Hitler contained elements of redemptive anti-Semitism that would be found in many works of art including several adaptations of *Jud Suss*.

¹⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, cited in Jacobeit, 72.

¹⁹ Jacobeit, 79.

²⁰ Mosse, 35.

²¹ Mosse, 14.

One of the earliest Volk scholars who became associated with the nationalistic aspects of the movement was Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, who in his works consistently presents the idea of the German land and language being fundamentally linked.²² His methods of collecting information, such as walking the countryside, keeping a travelogue, talking to many residents of different socio-economic strata were identical to those used during the early years of Volkskunde.²³ What differentiated him from the previous generation of scholars were his views on how urbanization and capitalism connected with the Jews. Statements such as, “the organic nature of the Volk can only be attained if fused with the native landscape”, “urban centers are the cause of unrest”, “for many Volkish thinkers, only nature was genuine”, “working class were the most respectable Volk”, and most notably “Berlin is the domain of the Jews” guaranteed him attention.²⁴ He was still popular in his time, with Jacobeit having referred to him and his school of thought as an “aid in what stirred the 1848 revolution.”²⁵ Riehl’s reactionary style would become common in the works of journalism of the era, but would also be emulated by a diverse set of voices crossing all economic and social barriers.

Art is and has often been used as a tool to express social commentary. Goethe set a precedent for the German population to study themselves by showing an interest in the “folk” of all social strata, not just those in power. Goethe, wrote in 1796 that the “Volk is of enormous interest” to him. He also summarized the growing desire for the creation of an art that would define the next 100 years of German popular culture in his 1833 work *Maxims and reflections on art*, in which he stated that “[w]e know of no world except in relationship to man; we want no art that is not a reflection of

²² Mosse, 19.

²³ Mosse, 20.

²⁴ Mosse, 21.

²⁵ Jacobeit, 79.

this relationship.”²⁶ Hauff’s novel, one of the first popular forms of art containing themes of the redemptive Volk ideologies had been published 6 years prior to Goethe’s statement.

Wilhelm Hauff’s *Jud Süß*

At the age of 25, Wilhelm Hauff published the novel *Jud Süß*. The story, which focuses on the life of the Jewish banker Josef Suss-Oppenheimer, who served in the 1730’s as the financial advisor to the Duke Karl Alexander of Wurttemberg, is considered a “watershed work in German history” by Jefferson Chase, because it “prefigured both the world-be philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic treatments of the Suss-Oppenheimer story and, as such, rehearses the entangled logic of emancipation and chauvinism so prominent in the German nineteenth century.”²⁷ The story of Suss and his rise from poverty to become the second-most powerful man in the state of Wurttemberg only to be executed shortly after the death of Karl Alexander in 1737 would become the topic of many social debates in the following centuries, as well as one of the first pieces of evidence of the increasing anti-Semitism in Volk art.

The watershed element that Chase refers to, between the philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic treatments of the story, is linked to two of the most well-known adaptations created a century after the publication of Hauff’s novel. The philo-Semitic treatment being German-Jewish author Lion Feuchtwanger’s 1925 novel *Jud Süß*, and the blatantly anti-Semitic treatment being Veit Harlan’s film of the same title released 15 years later. Hauff essentially blends both of these attitudes into his narrative through what Chase refers to as a “disjuncture” between the “discours” and the “histoire”. In other words, Hauff’s passionate rhetoric of tolerance is juxtaposed against a plot in which the removal of the corrupt financial minister, and in turn, the removal of the Jews as a people from the native land, is an absolute necessity to ensure the survival of the Volk, no matter how unpleasant the

²⁶ Goethe, cited in Jacobeit, 71.

²⁷ Jefferson S. Chase, "The Wandering Court Jew and the Hand of God: Wilhelm Hauff's "Jud Süß" as Historical Fiction." *The Modern Language Review* 93, no. 3 (1998): 724.

process might be.²⁸ In Hauff's narrative, the underlying values of Romantic nationalism combined with an innate, though ultimately dangerous, desire to tolerate the Jewish "other" serve as a social commentary on the essence of the Volk ideologies. Even though Jewish characters are not always presented as obvious enemies, ultimately the act of realizing the otherness of the Jew is redemptive, foreshadowing a future national conflict of real consequence.

The first scene of Hauff's novel takes place after Suss has already gained power. The audience never finds out how Suss actually gained power, only that the Duke "...has been driven by an agenda of military matters, allowing Jews to seize the reins of power."²⁹ The narrator lets the reader know in the first paragraph that there is an "...endemic of misery and poverty" that has infected Württemberg as the "...direct result of systematic and calculated interventions of an all-powerful minister."³⁰ The first scene takes place at a masquerade ball thrown by Suss to honor himself on the occasion of his birthday. At this event he holds card games for the apparent purpose of "fund raising."³¹ It is in this first scene of the masquerade ball where three anti-Semitic stereotypes that would become constants in Volk narratives are evident. First, the scene reveals the stereotype that Jews were fueled by sexual lust, whereas the pure Aryan German race acted only on pure love, as revealed in a dialogue between three unnamed guests who discuss the rumors that Suss "...has many mistresses of many daughters of fathers."³²

Second, the "masking" stereotype of the Court Jew carrying on constant deception is alluded to in the first physical descriptions of Suss. In the following scene, Gustav "the Mighty", the son of the leader of the legislative council, Lanbek, observes Suss playing at the card table, "[Gustav] admitted that the fact of [Suss] is formed by natural beauty, and he even has got something

²⁸ Chase, 725.

²⁹ Wilhelm Hauff, *Jud Suss*. (London: P. Reclam, 1917), 1.

³⁰ Hauff, 1.

³¹ Hauff, 2.

³² Hauff, 3.

imposing, but hostile, repulsive wrinkles lay there between his eyebrows where the forehead wanted to join his well-shaped nose, and the mustache on his upper lip could not hide one resentful expression around the mouth, and the man had a truly horrible hoarse, forced laugh, which the Jewish minister accompanied.”³³ The stereotypical Court Jew, according to Chase, has the “positive attributes” necessary to “penetrate the highest echelons of Gentile society” while simultaneously presenting an external image of someone who is “ambitious and resentful.”³⁴ This image of Suss is vastly different from the Suss that would be created in Harlan’s film over 100 years later. Unlike Harlan’s film, which would not give Suss a single redeeming quality, Hauff’s narrative presents Suss character in an envious light. Even though this Jewish character is driven by ambition, lust, and revenge, he also has an overpowering aura of respectability, an essential characteristic for political advancement. This is an acknowledgement of competence from Hauff, as even though the hero of his text is ultimately able to see the inherent danger of the Jewish “other”, the bulk of the story revolves around Gustav’s emotionally taxing struggle to recognize these dangers.

The third anti-semitic stereotype is revealed through a conversation that Suss has during a card game after a farmer approached him with the sarcastic question, “A lot of money you have there, sir! Honest earnings?” Suss doesn’t reply to the question directly, instead he “...looked around, and tried to mask a smile. Perhaps he did this to give himself a desirable and popular reputation.” When Suss tries to call the farmer “my friend”, the farmer replies, “God protect me if I was your friend, Mr. Suss...If I were your friend, I was probably not be in this old hat. You make your friends rich indeed.” The stereotype of a capitalistic thirst which fuels the Jew is first revealed in Suss’s reply, “Now, all of Württemberg must be my friend, because I make it rich.”³⁵ Seeing personal wealth as equivalent to worth would consistently be a theme of “Jewishness” in works of

³³ Hauff, 7.

³⁴ Chase, 729.

³⁵ Hauff, 7-8.

Volk art. An example of this came a few decades later from arguably the most famous international artist of the late 19th century, the German playwright/composer Richard Wagner, who in his magnum opus entitled *The Ring of Nibelung*, created an antagonist who is totally driven by a desire to gain and regain a ring which gives limitless power to whoever holds it.³⁶

The debate between Suss and the farmer further reveals how capitalism was viewed in Volk literature, as well as how the Volk thought the Jews viewed capitalism. The farmer then replies to Suss:

“How beautiful is this gold! How much sweat poor people go to earn such a piece of gold?”

‘You are a capital fellow,’ cried Suss, very quietly playing..

‘Who is your lord?’ said the farmer.

‘A slave driver, but a noble. Do you think he flays vulgar cattle, horses, dogs and the like?’

No, he is a martinet, but he is also a card manufacturer.’

‘A card manufacturer?’ Exclaimed the farmer.

‘Yes, because all the cards in the country, you have to buy from *him*, he stamped it, but he is also a tanner.’

‘How so?’

‘Well, all tanners in the country, the hides buy from him, but he is also an embossed floor.’

‘What! An embossed floor?’

‘Yes, he makes all the money that is in the land.’

‘That’s a lie,’ said the farmer, ‘do you mean, he does everything for money, which is in the country, but that he is not a stamping floor. There is only *one* stamping stock in

³⁶ Richard Wagner, and Andrew Porter. *The Ring of the Nibelung: German Text*. (New York: Norton, 1977).

Württemberg; the country has put his signature.’

The crowd had only murmured their approval, but at the last reference to the coin they burst out laughing, and the forehead of the mighty darkened slightly, but he still continued to play quietly.

‘But why did you let the beard grow out pointed?’ The farmer went on, ‘this looks very Jewish’

‘It’s just the way fashion,’ [another farmer named] Hans replied, “since the Jews are masters of the country, and soon I will be very Jewish”³⁷

The sentiments of the farmer regarding the subjective nature of capitalism would survive all the way until the era of the Third Reich. In arguably Hitler’s most popular piece of propaganda, entitled *Mein Kampf*, he famously stated that the Jew “...begins to operate in the economy, not as a producer but as an intermediary” and that the Jew “...himself has never cultivated the soil.”³⁸ The choice that Hauff made in representing the German Volk with a farmer cannot be a mere coincidence. Farming alludes to the common thematic element in these Volkish works of art of the frustrations that reflect the culture’s sentiments towards capitalism, in which the rich could themselves not produce anything while still gaining a more substantial profit than those who are actually doing the manual labor. Farmers are hence placed in a sympathetic position to the audience.

Chase points to this scene as establishing two important symbolic dichotomies; the first being the Court Jew as “externally impressive but internally corrupt”, and the other being the opposition between the foreign Court Jew and a native figure directly associated with the soil. The setting of the masquerade ball “not only serves the important practical function of allowing

³⁷ Hauff, 8-9.

³⁸ Adolf Hitler’s, *Mein Kampf*, cited in Linda Schulte-Sasse. "The Jew as Other under National Socialism: Veit Harlan's Jud Süß." *The German Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (1988): 22-49.

politically oppressed people to speak their minds openly,” but also “has the symbolic connotation of people’s true feelings and identities being concealed under social masks.”³⁹ The first dichotomy goes back to Chase’s description of the stereotype of the Court Jew as someone who has “...mastered Gentile language, appearance and customs” and “insinuates himself into power and secretly runs the government.”⁴⁰ The use of these stereotypes are evident at this point in the story, as Suss has already mysteriously gained his power without the reader ever knowing how, and he has already abused this power.

Another important aspect of Volk culture is breaking away from the political oppressions of the former absolutist rule, which the Jews came to embody. Suss represents absolutism since at this point in the story he has been granted full immunity from criminal prosecution for any acts done in the name of the crown. He has also imposed devastating taxes on the populace which he has used in part to increase his own personal wealth.⁴¹ The military-minded Duke is indifferent to the actions of the financial advisor as long as he keeps Württemberg financially successful on paper and provides him with an army. The other aspect of this dichotomy is the separation between the foreigner and the native, which would become the defining feature of mainstream Volk ideology and one of the driving forces of anti-Semitism in Germany for the next century. In 1827 the Volk appeal had not quite reached the nationwide mainstream in Germany, with the term generally being associated with the working class and the petit bourgeois.⁴² However anti-Semitic stereotypes are clearly embedded and the Jews in general are clearly the “other” to the German natives presented in Hauff’s novel. The character of Suss is the embodiment of the “fighting modernity with modernity” dynamic. He represents the disgruntlements of the German Volk towards modernity during this era of capitalism

³⁹ Chase, 730.

⁴⁰ Chase, 729.

⁴¹ Hauff, 5.

⁴² Jacobeit, 68.

and absolutism. He could only be defeated by unity stemming from national commonality in which redemption-salvation can be achieved. Intrusions made upon the farmer symbolize the pervasion of foreign absolutism.

The plot continues with Head-Councilor Lanbek organizing a coup-d'état to oust the financial advisor. His son Gustav, however, develops a romantic relationship with Suss's sister, Lea. The relationship is at first a secret one. Suss finds out, and tries to blackmail Gustav into marrying Lea in order to align himself with one of the most powerful families in Wurttemberg. The rest of the story focuses on the struggles Gustav encounters as a result of this relationship with Lea. As the attraction becomes publicly known, Gustav has to wrestle with either losing his family as a result of the scandal that will inevitably come because Lea is a Jew, with the desire to act on his natural impulses and feelings of romantic attraction towards her. According to Chase, the prevalence of this romantic element in the plot was done for two reasons. The first is that forbidden love was a popular theme in literature at the time.⁴³ The second is the author's choice in selecting Gustav as the primary protagonist. Not only does Chase view this as an important example of Hauff fictionalizing the historical record, but it also shows that while the negative aspects of Karl Alexander's regime were displaced onto Suss as a scapegoat, the voice of healthy native Volk society is placed on Gustav.⁴⁴

The character of Lea represents, according to Chase, "Hauff's ambiguous attitudes towards Jewishness."⁴⁵ When the first physical descriptions of Lea are given, Hauff writes of a beauty that is similar to how Suss is first described by Gustav. Lea is described as having "glowing eyes" and her face is the "perfection of Oriental features with this symmetry in her finely cut features with wonderful dark eyes, shaded by long silken lashes", with her attire having the "charm" and

⁴³ Chase, 728.

⁴⁴ Chase, 730.

⁴⁵ Chase, 731.

“demure” “of a Turkish lady.”⁴⁶ The theme of dichotomy between exterior beauty and interior corruption is used once again as Gustav then alludes to this attraction as a “deception”, thinking he had seen “one of those wonderful phenomena as [the poet] Tasso describes how she gripped the imaginations of the travelers on their return.”⁴⁷

This initial attraction foreshadows the negative influence she will ultimately have on Gustav. Even though he is clearly moved by her physical beauty, that same beauty still clearly indicates her foreign nature. It is an unhealthy peculiarity that Gustav himself recognizes. Comparing it to the poem of Tasso, the use of the words “travelers” and “return” are the key elements in this use of symbolism. If a person returns from traveling, that usually means they are returning to a concept of home, or in German, *heimat*.⁴⁸ *Heimat* is the “...Volkish ideal as the place where one has roots and tradition with the myth of Jewish rootlessness, of itinerancy stemming from the desire for world hegemony.”⁴⁹ Gustav compares himself to a character in a poem of a traveler returning home. The “gripping of the imagination,” that occurs is recognized at this moment, likely unconsciously, as an attraction that will lead to disaster, as Lea’s beauty is more of a strange enchantment, like that of a magic spell, as Hauff writes, “Love, or even the influence of that wonderful magic that is supposed to have been received from Rachel’s days among the daughters of Israel – it drew him an irresistible something back to the side where since the dawn of the first day of March night, became darker.”⁵⁰ Even though he is heavily under this spell of “magic” and having his “imagination gripped” he knows from the very beginning, that he is a traveler who will eventually have to return home to the Volk.

⁴⁶ Hauff, 11.

⁴⁷ Hauff, 11.

⁴⁸ Schulte-Sasse, 41.

⁴⁹ Schulte-Sasse, 41.

⁵⁰ Hauff, 37.

Once their relationship runs its course, they both realize that the external societal factors are too powerful for them to be together. In one particular scene, once the relationship has already been discovered by the public, and Suss has blackmailed Gustav, Lea and Gustav are discussing what the future holds for their relationship. Leah asks him, “I do not even know how to understand you...especially now that we can talk about hindrance, you’re so scared, almost dumb, instead of coming into the house with us, you order me to meet secretly in the garden, I do not know, in front of whom you fear so much, even if you stand in such a relationship?” Gustav, who at this point is only called his last name by Hauff, ‘Lanbek’, replies by asking what exactly the relationship is. Leah then replies, “Well how do you ask yet so strange! My brother said to you, in case I wanted that the Duke would abolish this obstacle based on religion between us. I’m just glad you’re not Catholic, as it would not be possible but you have not a Protestant ecclesiastical leader who are really as good as we Jewish heretics.”⁵¹

Chase calls this scene the moment where the “...mask slips from the Beautiful Jewess’s face.”⁵² Lea, at this moment, reveals a similarity between her and Suss, which is that they both see the native society and religion as a form of hindrance.⁵³ For Suss this hindrance serves as a blockade from the total domination of him and his Jewish race, while for Lea the hindrance is on her happiness of being with Gustav. Even as a Jew without the blatantly evil intentions of Suss, Hauff reveals from the sarcasm of the last lines that her character ultimately does not care about the native German customs. Therefore it is essentially an act of recognition and justification of the total difference between her Jewish race and the native Germans.

As the protagonist, Gustav is the character through which Hauff can essentially give the perspective and voice of the Volk. In the next scene, he returns home to his father and two sisters,

⁵¹ Hauff, 38.

⁵² Chase, 732.

⁵³ Chase, 732.

who voice Gustav's personal pressures which further reveal the Volk dichotomy between the foreigner and the native. His father does not call Gustav by his name the entire scene, and has been made physically ill by this entire affair. In a moment when his "anger overcame his physical weakness", he says "That's the boy...that has brought the house and your father, our good name, and you, innocent children, with misery, shame, and disgrace...The Judas, the patricide...because today he has hit the nail in my coffin."⁵⁴ His sister, Hedwig, immediately voices the Volkish stereotypes of the superior Aryan race as being "calm" and "sensible". She tells Gustav that it is his "duty as an honest man" to not engage in the relationship anymore. Both of the sisters argue of his "duty", or obligation to his own family and country, and therefore include a warning to the consequences of trusting the Jew in the proposed alliance. The Volk dichotomies influence in this scene is evident in Gustav's struggle with the foreign 'Other'. Should Gustav cave in to his sexual urges, personifying the perceived lust of the Jew? Or should he return home out of duty to his native family? Will he venture on the path of private desires or public duty?

At this point Gustav's father promises to forgive him as long as he ends the affair. After he reluctantly promises to end it, he feels a "long and infinite sadness" when he thinks about Lea, whom he now views through the Volk-Jew dichotomy as "the unfortunate creature". The dichotomy of the Jew versus the native German is evident when Gustav further reflects, as Hauff writes, "Because he shared all of the strict religious beliefs of his time, he shuddered at a curse that followed a homeless man's tribe to a thousand generations, and they seemed to pull everyone in their ruin, who also approached the noblest of them in the most natural way...he gained some consolation by subordinating his own destiny a higher dispensation."⁵⁵ According to Chase, Hauff uses the stereotype of the wandering Jew "...specifically to tip the balance between Gustav's

⁵⁴ Hauff, 40.

⁵⁵ Hauff, 43.

conflicting desires and loyalties, his fear of shaming his family and his humane impulses, so that the protagonist can arrive at what is, from the perspective from the native community, the proper action against a serious threat”...and to show that the “...collective homelessness of the Jews provides a potential explanation for the crooked financial advisor’s unethical and destructive behavior.”⁵⁶ Like the image of the Court Jew, the Wandering Jew would also become a prominent symbol in German art.

The scene of Gustav’s reflection and subsequent justification is an example in which Hauff presents both the philo and anti-Semitic ideas of the Volk culture. Even though there is an obvious underlying desire for tolerance and assimilation, the loyalty to the native German’s is presented as the chief moral duty. The dichotomy makes Gustav’s decision inevitable, as Chase puts it, “Gustav’s action is the only one that will leave his conscience at rest, that will expiate the sin of his attraction to the foreign object of desire. ‘Everyone’ who comes into contact with the Jews is dragged down, subjected to their own tragic destiny. If Gustav’s people and Lea’s are incompatible on such an absolute, essential, cosmic level, separation cannot be avoided.”⁵⁶

Lea’s character is a quintessential tragic figure. Once the Duke suddenly dies from a stroke, both Suss and Lea are left defenseless against an angry mob. Suss is executed by “the hand of God” further indicating the “higher order” inevitability of duty, and Lea commits suicide.⁵⁷ The execution scene also foreshadows the nationalistic political agenda of later Volk narratives. The essence of this was that brutal violence could be justified as long as it was done in the name of the German crown. Chase refers to this concept as a “*sine qua non*”.⁵⁸ This dangerous propaganda would permeate the German masses throughout the century to Third Reich, when this same violence, driven by Volk

⁵⁶ Chase, 734.

⁵⁶ Chase, 733.

⁵⁷ Hauff, 47.

⁵⁸ “What is necessary” Chase, 737.

ideologies, was presented as a duty. Hauff presents this duty as an unpleasant yet necessary ugliness amongst the German people.

Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß*

The main difference between Hauff's novel and Harlan's film adaptation is in the issue of genre; essentially, the novel is a tragedy and the film is a horror. A tragedy often involves a villain, or any force working against the objectives of the protagonist, who often has no genuine intentions of directly harming the protagonist. The villain in a tragedy often has the ability to change or improve. Hauff's novel is a tragedy because of Lea's role in the development of Gustav's character, and the centrality of their relationship to the plot. Horror, on the other hand, involves a villain that is essentially not a social being. The entire purpose of the horror villain's existence in a plot is to harm those working against him. The villain is an alien force in the style of a typical slasher-genre antagonist. For this archetype, there is not a shred of hope for redemption and the protagonists realize that one of their objectives in the plot are to stop the villain. The manner in which Suss's character operates in Harlan's film makes him even more frightening than a Freddy Krueger, Jason Voorhees, or Michael Myers. For one, those "slashers" are created for popcorn entertainment purposes where the filmmakers' goal is to create the most visually creative way for the killer to attack the victim. In these types of films all of the other characters realize the killer is evil and must be stopped. In Harlan's film, the horror lies in the antagonist's ability to brainwash the most powerful character in this story, the Duke. The audience sees before their eyes this Jew who rises out of nowhere, disrupting the status quo and stealthily decaying the moral and social codes of the nation.

Whereas the novel focused on Gustav, the film's plot revolves almost entirely around the actions of Suss.

By the time Hauff's novel was adapted to the screen 113 years later, the mainstream Volk ideology in Germany was exclusively anti-Semitic, especially in the context of 1940. As previously mentioned, the Volk was a common symbol of propaganda used by the Nazi's, and the "...recycling of nationalistic myths that were a seminal part of conservative movements in Germany from the late nineteenth century was a significant component of Nazi film policy."⁵⁹ As Hitler famously stated in *Mein Kampf*, "every Court has its Court Jews, like the monsters are called, who torment the dear Volk to desperation."⁶⁰ The film was commissioned by one of the highest members in the Nazi political hierarchy, Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels.⁶¹ Even though the Volkish idea of a perceived duty to eliminate the Jewish 'other' from the native land was over a hundred years old, this Romanticist nationalism remained a common social ideal. This film was commissioned and thought up by people who likely knew that the extermination of the European Jewry was coming. Anti-Semitism had rarely been directly preached in films up to this point. Instead, it was alluded to through subtle hints.⁶² Likely because of the writers' and artists' concerns that they would be viewed as pursuing a political agenda, direct or outspoken anti-Semitism in Volk art had for the most part been a nonfactor, though it was seen through subtleties in Hauff's novel in 1827 and Wagner's opera in 1871. At this point, however, anti-Semitism had been fully integrated into Volk ideology.

The nationalistic and anti-Semitic elements in the film are blatant. Every point in the plot of Wilhelm Hauff's novel that could be interpreted as having a sympathetic narrative toward the Jews is omitted in the film adaptation. The characters of Lea and Gustav are nonexistent. Instead, the head

⁵⁹ Schulte-Sasse p. 23

⁶⁰ Schulte-Sasse, 36.

⁶¹ Schulte-Sasse, 22.

⁶² David Welch. *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations*. London: Croom Helm, 1983 p.40

of the legislative council is named Sturm and has a daughter named Dorothea. The man who Dorothea marries, Faber, a young man of the council, embodies a stereotypical Aryan of the Volk. Even though the actions and dialogue of Harlan's Suss are more or less the same as Hauff's Suss, the plot of the film revolves around Suss. Whereas in Hauff's novel, the political dynamics of Suss's rule essentially takes a backseat, it is the primary focus of Harlan's film. Even in scenes in which he is not physically present; his actions are indirectly involved or alluded to in the course of the screenplay. Every anti-Semitic stereotype that had been conjured up to a mainstream artistic scale through Volk ideology is present in Veit Harlan's *Jud Suss*. These stereotypes include the Court Jew, the Wandering Jew, ambitious, materialistic, lustful, chauvinistic, clever, driven by revenge, scheming, commonly uses flattery or gallantry, etc. The function of Harlan's Suss is to initiate the complete destruction of the political and economic structures of the German Volk, as well as the social-family dynamics symbolized by Dorothea.

All of Suss's values and characteristics were associated with the aristocracy by Volk culture, which directly correlate to the perceived "Jewish" values. Conversely, Volkish ideals were opposite of those held by the aristocracy. Their values stressed qualities such as love, fidelity, honesty, humanity, virtue, women being domestic, straightforward language, forgiveness, trusting, genuineness, and dedication to the native home, community, and country.⁶³ Another link seen in Suss's character which reveals his 'otherness' is his repeated use of French dialect throughout the film. In addition to this fulfilling the Jewish-aristocratic stereotypes of gallant mannerisms and a courtly appearance, the dichotomy between the native and the foreign 'other' is evident as, "[f]rom the eighteenth century on, the use of French especially on the part of the aristocratic literary figures

⁶³ Schulte-Sasse p.24

was a sign that the figure was internationally rather than nationally oriented, i.e., lacked a 'heart' for Germany."⁶⁴

During the eighteenth century, France was also the symbol of the political absolutism of the Enlightenment Era.⁶⁵ About an hour and three minutes into the film, there is a scene that takes place within the Duke's castle while an angry mob of citizens gather outside chanting the word "Sturm". This chant is referring to the false imprisonment of Sturm based on trickery used by Suss's Jewish assistant. In the trick, the assistant uses deductive logic to essentially put words in Sturm's mouth, further implementing the Volkish stereotype of Jews as "clever and sly but not wise." As Suss and the Duke watch from inside the castle, Suss suggests that the Duke completely abolish the council, making him the sovereign leader, similar to what Suss said was done by "the Sun King" of Versailles. Absolutism and centralism were consistently rejected in German Volk stories. Another element of the anti-Volk revealed through Suss's actions is through his rationalism, as "[t]he construction of a political 'machine' is also typical of rationalist philosophy, where the metaphor of the machine is one of the most frequent in describing the function of politics."⁶⁶ As a result, Suss's plan is essentially to protect his own personal rule, "...and in no way pays homage to national allegiance or patriotism, and thus... clashes drastically with the Volkish ideal of nation or homeland."⁶⁷

Harlan's film contains an element of symbolism in every scene. The locations and the characters involved in each scene are all strategically placed in a particular order. The first scene shows a portrait of the Duke Karl Alexander's father. A majestic radiance of light continually illuminates both the father's portrait and the face of the son as he is being sworn in as Duke. In this

⁶⁴ Schulte-Sasse p.25

⁶⁵ Schulte-Sasse p.25

⁶⁶ Schulte-Sasse p.26

⁶⁷ Schulte-Sasse p.26

scene the Duke is presented as a patriarchal figure, referring to the citizens as “subjects.” Yet, it is in the tone of protective nature rather than oppressive, as the subjects are referred to in plural possession. As he is sworn in, the Volk ideologies of the land, people, and government stand out, as he says “...the vale of this blessed land has passed into my hands. At this time, I wish to commit my people by oath. As a sign of my view, I place my hand upon the constitution of land.” He then swears to protect “...our subjects’ well-being with the utmost demotion”, and to “...uphold the constitution and be true to the constitution, together with the council”. The last two promises he makes are Volkish in nature, referring to the lack of absolutist rule that is running the government without the influence of the foreigner. The word Volk is then directly used, likely as a form of Nazi propaganda, as in the year the story was supposed to take place, the term Volk didn’t exist. The Duke’s last oath is his promise to “...ensure that our rule shall in all manner and true form, adhere for honesty and faith of our Volk”. This would allow the exclusively German audience viewing the film at the time to fully embrace the Duke’s character.

The order in which scenes are selected follows a consistent mathematical pattern. After every scene in which the public or, political realm is shown, the next scene almost always one takes place in the domestic, private sphere, usually involving Dorothea. After the Duke is sworn in, the screen flashes to a scene at the home of Dorothea, singing a song with her husband. The lyrics emphasize the Volk value of fidelity: “All of my thoughts, they are with you, you, my one, and only, never leave me, for you, you, you to be thinking , that would be my greatest wish, I wish to never leave you.” The very next scene shows the Duke being carried through the streets for his parade. He goes up to the balcony of his palace, and exclaims to the crowd, “Württemberg, the most blessed land among the Germans!” The vibe can only be described as pleasant, peaceful, and unharmed by any outside influence.

The screen does a slow fade out. The film is pitch-black for a split second (to symbolize the closeness of the danger awaiting them) before showing the next setting of the Jewish neighborhood in Frankfurt. The music score becomes suspenseful. This same technique is used at the scene when the Jews are granted access into Stuttgart after Suss gains power. The people in this ghetto aren't necessarily living in poverty yet they are somehow crammed together. An unkempt appearance is a common feature.

The Duke's representative who desires to buy jewels knocks on the door of Suss's store. When Suss's Jewish assistant answers the door, the camera adopts the technique of Chiaroscuro; the assistant's body is shown in shadows, with fragments of his face catching the light, reminiscent of Brando in the cave scene of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. This could symbolize madness, evil, or maybe the mystery of the 'other'. It could also represent a perception of a natural underlying hostility amongst the Jews which further reveals these Volkish ideologies. Even though the assistant acknowledges that Suss is expecting the guest, the forced wideness of the assistant's eyes creates either the expression of having just seen a ghost, or rather a sinister countenance which would immediately alert the audience of his malicious character. When the assistant invites him in, the strangeness of the "other" is evident— instead of turning around, and holding the door open, he slowly backpedals into the pitch black interior, with the only distinguishable feature of this shot being his eyes brightly glowing in the dark. The scene then turns to a young Jewish woman and her father looking out of their window discussing with another local on the street what the people were doing looking for Suss. The image of the young Jewish woman, 'Rebecca' stands out. She is nearly identical to the description of Lea given by Gustav at the end of Wilhelm's novel, a beauty that stands out but who still has a clear aura of danger.

A meeting then occurs between the representative and Suss. The first lines that are spoken by Suss are "I think Württemberg is rich", to which the representative replies, "Württemberg is rich,

but not its Duke”, following with the line foreshadowing Suss’s plans for utter destruction, “Well, I’ll see.” Here the audience sees Suss’s capitalist implications. Harlan’s goal in the first 15 minutes alone is to paint Suss as an entirely unsympathetic character. As soon as the Duke’s assistant leaves Suss’s house, Suss’s true intentions are further revealed when he says to his assistant, “I shall open the door for all [Jews]! You’ll wear velvet and silks, tomorrow or the day after. The day will surely come” The impeccable timing of the delivery of these lines— the very moment Suss’s assistant walks the Duke’s representative out the front door—uses the Jewish “masking” stereotype while simultaneously implying materialistic traits. Suss meanwhile carries on the public façade that he is a man in service to the state of Germany by bringing the Duke his desired jewels, though in actuality he is looking out for his own “other” people regardless of what happens to the native Volk. The audience immediately knows that this man can only be interpreted as a poison to the state. His actions are blatantly not in the Duke’s and his subjects’ best interests.

The next shot is of Suss riding by horse on his way to meet with the Duke in Stuttgart. This scene includes the first interaction between Suss and Dorothea. With the music score adopting a frantic tone, Suss’s carriage rapidly glides past Dorothea’s carriage. Meanwhile, the horses in Dorothea’s carriage are traveling at a slow and steady speed. Because Suss is trying to travel at such a high speed, his carriage runs off the road and tips over during the attempt to pass Dorothea’s carriage. This is Harlan’s attempt to show the fundamental difference between the lifestyles of the Jewish “other” compared to the native German bourgeois. The speed of Suss’s carriage is symbolic of the Jew’s intense ambition of capital venture in the service of the rapidly advancing aristocratic capitalism, compared to the slow, relaxed, peaceful speed of Dorothea’s bourgeois carriage. When Dorothea sees that Suss’s carriage goes off the road, her expression becomes frightened. She pulls over to see if anyone is hurt, just as any caring woman of Germany would do. Suss, with his polite charm, asks her to give him a ride. The infection of the “pure” domestic by the Jew has now begun.

The very second after Suss asks Dorothea to take him “part of the way”, the screen flashes to a scene of the Duke’s legislative meeting. As mentioned, the previous scene that involved members of the German government was when the Duke said “My people! My land! Württemberg, the most blessed land among the Germans.” As he lectures from his palace balcony, his wife and his legislative stands directly behind him, symbolically “backing” him in support, while the crowd he is governing stand below in the streets cheering for him. In this next scene the Duke is absent from the legislative meeting, showing that Suss is initiating his Jewish permeation into the pure social and political order of German society, and effectively compromising the Duke.

The next scene is of the council complaining that the Duke is requesting that his own personal ballet and opera house be provided to him using state funds, as well as personal bodyguards even though he spends all of his time locked up in a safe fortress. The theme and imagery of the blithe German society which had been previously seen through Dorothea’s carriage is conjured up by Harlan again when Sturm delivers these next lines, “Gentlemen I agree with you that our Duke’s demands from our State Council are exorbitant.” Sturm then dramatically ratchets up the passion in his voice and expression, and Harlan gives Sturm’s character a close-up shot to symbolize the importance of the line: “I am also of the opinion that we are used to simple living, and that our constituents would not understand us if we consent to our Duke’s demands.” It is this same exorbitance that is seen as a defining characteristic of Suss in both Hauff’s novel and Harlan’s film.

In this narrative, the second the Jew crosses over into German society by meeting Dorothea, the corruption of German society begins at even the highest levels. This theme continues throughout the film, as the Duke who was initially presented as a pure, fatherly leader who would uphold the traditions of German culture like the great leaders of the past evolves slowly into an absent, incoherent, power-driven drunk. Most importantly, however, this transformation happens in direct relation to the closer Suss gets to the Duke, and how much power he is given. Harlan’s

statement is the same statement of propaganda that the Nazi's used when they would use the word "Volk". This Volk ideological statement stemmed from Hauff, but had now evolved to dramatic new heights. Over a hundred years prior to this film being released, the Volk statement in Hauff's novel functions as a warning by revealing the German's attitudes of uneasiness towards the Jewish "other". For Hauff, his personal narrative argues that peaceful tolerance and coexistence with the Jews might be something that many Germans secretly desire. This could even include having intimate relationships of love and caring with the "other". However, he warns that because of the Volkish-Romantic value of public duty to the German motherland, coexistence with the Jewish "other" is unlikely because it would threaten the strong German identity.

Harlan's statement is that not only has the Jewish "other" threatened German identity, it has already permeated and poisoned all levels of society. The failures Germany had seen during the early 20th century allowed people to make this scapegoating connection. How Dorothea's character is used is also important when determining the significance of how the Volk ideologies had changed since 1827. In Hauff's novel, Gustav's (the Volk's) suicidal love interest is Lea (the other), which allows her to function as a tragic figure and evokes sympathy from readers. Harlan replaces this tragic element with the character of Dorothea.

As Suss's cunning allows him to become the Duke's right hand man and decision maker, he infects society in every phase. The socio-political structures are ruined by Suss, who was portrayed as destroying the native traditions such as the Jews not being allowed to live in the city or adopting a system of absolute monarchy, etc. Economically, Suss makes life difficult for the common Volk by putting high taxes on goods, and even committing highway robbery, as in the scene when Suss's assistant collects a toll from a common citizen simply trying to enter the city. Another example of this is the subplot of the blacksmith, whose house gets torn down for protruding a few inches into an area where one of Suss's construction projects to repair the streets is occurring. When the

blacksmith reacts by taking a sledgehammer to Suss's carriage while defending his home and family, Suss has the blacksmith executed. But where Dorothea's character comes in is arguably the most important Volkish statement Harlan is trying to make: that the Jews corrupt the moral purity of the German bourgeois lifestyle.

One of the scenes that Harlan adapts closely from Hauff's book is the masquerade ball, particularly with the almost verbatim dialogue during the earlier poker scene. By having all the fathers bring their daughters and wives to an event like this, the already-corrupted Duke himself remarks that "Primitive natures would think this is fun, but for me it's too conservative." As the young women are lined up and separated from the older women, Suss's assistant can be seen giddily jumping in the background while he is obviously scouting the prey as he orders the massive doors to be shut, separating the young women into a private room with the only men present being Suss and the Duke. Suss then makes sexual advances on an obviously uncomfortable Dorothea. The literal "separation" of the young daughters from their parents into a room where they could not be seen is Harlan's sinister intent to portray the Jew as infecting future generations by closing them off from their tradition.

Suss obsessively pursues Dorothea throughout the film. The "scheming" stereotype of the Court Jew is used in this regard as well, as he goes far enough to even attempt a political deal with her father, Sturm, in order to gain permission to marry her. Without hesitation, Sturm rejects the offer, an action which causes him to be falsely imprisoned by Suss and his assistant's scheming and trickery. When Dorothea's husband, Faber, is sent to try to get outside military help to overthrow the Duke, he is captured. When Dorothea pleads to Suss to release her husband, Suss's actions reveal all three stereotypes. Several established stereotypes are evinced here such as scheming, lustful, and revenge-driven as Suss demands that Dorothea have sex with him in order for Faber to be released. Now the Jew is presented as a genuine sadist. The slasher-villain level of sinister is

revealed as he orders his men to torture Faber, who is in a building across the street, as he waves a handkerchief outside his window. Suss had already planned this entire operation, he knew Dorothea was going to come up to his room. He planned it so that she would hear Faber's screams of pain as he was being tortured. The stereotype of the Jew being driven by revenge is shown when Dorothea prays to the higher Christian power, to which Suss replies "...pray to your God. Go ahead and pray. But not only Christians have a god. We Jews have one, too. An avenging God An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Dorothea then submits as Harlan gives all of the imagery of rape. Suss himself did not even care that a man who was planning a coup d'état to overthrow him was captured. Or at least if he did, he viewed having sex with the man's wife as being more important.

By having Dorothea commit suicide by drowning herself because of the shame, she is allowed to replace Lea as the tragic figure. Ultimately, because Harlan's work is a horror film, the extermination of the villain is the only possible way for the protagonists to survive. When Suss is hung at the end, he claims that he was only doing what was asked of him. The character arc of Harlan's Suss is also a direct parallel to how the meanings of the Volkish ideologies dramatically changed during the previous couple centuries. Suss initially presents himself as a man in service of Germany and his Duke. Volk studies were initially created to study a history of the collective German identity. Suss then reveals another aspect of this masquerade by revealing his ambition for power and wealth. The Volk then evolved into a concept that was almost synonymous with German nationalism. Suss reveals himself as a sadistic cancer to society. The Volk concepts are eventually used for the purpose of propaganda to call for the extermination of the Jews. By comparing the two characters of Suss from Hauff to Harlan, it reveals how redemptive anti-Semitism had evolved beyond the 18th century, culminating in the Nazi era.

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