

## EIDOLA OR EIDECHSEN? KAFKA ASKS BROD ASKS KRAUS ASKS HEINE A JEWISH QUESTION

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“Die davonschlüpfende Eidechse schien uns wirklich, das feste Sperrfort ein Spaß.”  
— Max Brod (“Warnungszeichen...” 5)

In a diary entry written some time between 26 March and 27 May 1911, Franz Kafka appears to take his friend Max Brod’s new novel *Die Jüdinnen* to task for failing to offer or even conjecture about a possible solution to the Jewish Question. Whether Kafka’s never-published delineation of the novel’s faults was a parody of its anticipated (or already published) critique by members of the Prague Zionist Student group, an expression of solidarity with that judgment, or followed some other rationale altogether, remains an open question among scholars. More perplexing, however, is his portended corrective (Bruce 30-33; Liska 16-20)—or rather the analogy that Kafka employs to support his belief in the necessary interpellation of a non-Jewish observer into the novel’s *mise-en-scène*. He invokes as example and counterexample two different encounters with lizards (*Eidechsen*) in Italy. After delineating the saurian-shadowed solution to what Kafka perceives as a major flaw in Brod’s novel, this article moves past the resort to anti-Jewish stereotypes as explanation for the source or motivation of Kafka’s analogy in order to explore other possible conditions, not just for its emergence in his *Tagebücher* but also for its specific placement in Brod’s edition of the *Tagebücher*. This article first seeks in Kafka’s and Brod’s *Tagebücher* and writings for other encounters with Italian lizards. It then turns to a pack of rival male writers ramming one another, contemporaneous with Kafka’s unfinished critique of *Die Jüdinnen*; this contestation among literati involved the Jewish Prague Circle and Karl Kraus. The fallout from this face-off finds yet other “*Eidechsen*” encounters, like “uns auf einem Fußweg in Italien” in Kafka’s *Tagebücher*, that no less analogically figure *Judentum*: in the opening chapters of Heinrich Heine’s *Die Stadt Lucca*.

### *Exemplary Eidechsen*

Despite Brod’s efforts to depict a panoramic view of Jewish diversity in *Die Jüdinnen*, including the use of third-person rather than first-person narration, Kafka suggests that had the novel included a non-Jewish observer, one with whom Gentile readers could identify, its prospective audience would have been better able to apprehend a self-confident Jewishness drawn up “in seiner ganzen Länge.” To exemplify the desired result had Brod adopted such a narrative strategy, Kafka employs a seemingly offensive *eidolon*, an “*Eidechse*.” Seeing through the eyes of a Gentile protagonist, Brod’s readers, with exceptional and unending delight, would have been moved to acknowledge the novel’s Jewish characters: “So freut uns auf einem Fußweg in Italien das Aufzucken der Eidechsen vor unsern Schritten ungemein immerfort möchten wir uns bücken.” Instead, as the novel stands, they only see a bunch of Jews. The individuality of its characters, the variations among them, will strike readers as merely epiphenomenal: Brod’s motley crew is just a jumble. Against his friend’s aesthetic indifferentism, Kafka asserts the necessity of difference—not an in-itself [holistic] difference but a difference in relation—by which an exemplary singularity (i.e., a hybrid of Jew and individual) and not merely the rule-confirming exception (e.g., Nathan the Wise) emerges. Kafka then renders his claim more graphic when he contrasts the unexpected lizard encounter to seeing lizards “bei einem Händler zu Hunderten in den großen Flaschen durcheinanderkriechen in denen man sonst Gurken einzulegen pflegt.” Visitors to this exhibited conglomeration of creatures, so crammed together, cannot distinguish where one begins and another ends and therefore cannot distinguish one from the other (“so wissen wir uns nicht einzurichten”; *Tagebücher* 1:160-61).

Locating these lizard analogies in the occasional derogatory stereotyping of Jewish practices or body parts through reptilian associations in anti-Jewish and antisemitic discourse (Bruce 31-32; Butler) is at best insufficient in determining either the source or motive for their use.<sup>1</sup> The trail of *Eidechsen* will lead from Italian spas in 1909 through *Kaffeehäuser* during Spring and Summer 1911 to a conjunction of Kafka with another Jewish-identified author, with whom he has rarely been conjoined in the critical literature: Heinrich Heine.<sup>2</sup>

## Eyeing Eidechsen

While Kafka's diary entries prior to the end of May 1911 do not record any saurian sightings, Brod's 1937 Kafka biography begins its account of the September 1909 holiday that Brod, his brother Otto, and Kafka enjoyed in the Italian resort of Riva by noting: "als ich nach dem Krieg wieder nach Riva kam ... sah [ich] nicht mehr die funkelnden Eidechsen über die Gartenwege schlüpfen, die den Übergang von der autobefahrenen staubigen Straße zum kühlen Frieden des Bades gebildet haben" (*Kafka* 126). Over a decade earlier Brod had evoked Riva-dwelling lizards in two *Prager Tageblatt* articles, "Warnungszeichen des Krieges" (17 August 1924) and "Nachruf auf eine Badeanstalt" (1 August 1926); although Brod employs first-person plural in both articles, in neither does he mention his traveling companion Franz Kafka, then just recently deceased.

For his part, Kafka does make several brief lizard references subsequent to his 1909 vacation and 1911 diary entry. In a 1920<sup>3</sup> fragment posthumously published as the parable "Der Bau einer Stadt," the narrator is solicited by a group of young people; "wie Eidechsen schwangen sich ihre Körper zwischen den Rissen des Felsens hinauf" (100-2) to reach the treeless summit where they would found their city.<sup>4</sup> More relevant are the two brief references to *Eidechsen* Kafka jots in his diary of his late-summer 1911 travels with Brod to *Oberitalien* and Lake Lugano. On 1 September Kafka notes "Kitzelnder Anblick der Eidechsenbewegung an einer Mauer" (*Freundschaft* 1:154); the next day he jots down "Herzklopfen der Eidechsen" (1:155).

By contrast Brod's diary entries of the trip are swarming with lizards. Brod first notes *Eidechsen* in the 31 August entry of his journal of their trip (*Freundschaft* 1:86). The *Eidechsen* return in the next day's entry (1 September): "Eidechsen: schnelle Bewegung, dann plötzliches Erstarren in der Sonne—kein langsamer Schritt" (1:90). They play an even more prominent role in the entry for the day after (2 September): "Das Geräusch der Eidechsen, die aus ihrer Ruhe gestört plötzlich davonrascheln, gleicht dem, wenn man Streichhölzer anreibt. Wenn sie sitzen, Kopf erhoben, Beine gespreizt, zittert ihre Brust. Herzklopfen.... Libellen rasten auf meiner Haut—Ihr Flug ähnlich dem Laufen der Eidechse, rasch—erstart" (1:91).

When Brod returns to this encounter with dragonflies in a sonnet that he dedicates to Kafka, "Lugano-See" (1912), the aside about the similarity between the flight of the insects and the movements of *Eidechsen* is absent. In the poem the dragonflies assume a role not granted them in his diary account: observer. They observe Brod and Kafka dangling their feet in the lake, but mistake the friends for rocks or flowers (*Freundschaft* 1:219). By contrast, in the diary entry Brod describes the foot-bathing pair as hidden by the overgrowth from the eyes of passers-by. Moreover, the two friends are themselves positioned as observers; they take those driving past for "italienischen Burschen" (1:91). Since a couple days before Brod had observed that there was something Jewish about foot-bathing ("*Fußbad hat doch etwas Jüdisches*"; 1:87), it may be significant that Brod and Kafka themselves avoid ethnic identification in the poem.

## Editing Eidechsen

Clearly "*Eidechsen*" fascinate Brod, are connected to his friendship with Kafka, and may have some relationship with Jewish identification. This suggests that Kafka invoked the lizard because of its resonance to this constellation.<sup>5</sup> The textual history of Kafka's diary critique of Brod's novel adds an additional complexity, however, to the meanings and implications of his curious analogy. Kafka's preserved *Tagebücher* and notebooks actually contain three attempts to comment on Brod's *Jüdinnen*, only two of which appear in Brod's edition of the *Tagebücher*. Those two begin with similar remarks on the depiction of the Jewish Question and its possible solution in Western European literature in general and on how Brod had weakened his novel's narrative by evoking the former without addressing the latter. Kafka implies that this fault was easily avoidable since a remedy seemed to lie so close at hand in Prague Zionism. But where one of his critical efforts ceases at that point, the other continues with the delineation of other faults in Brod's work and includes Kafka's counternarratives of lizard encounter.

The shorter of these two efforts, which the editors of the critical edition take to have been written first (*Tagebücher* 3:93-94), appears in the first notebook (*Heft A; Tagebücher* 1:36). The longer appears in

the second (*Heft B*; 1:159-61). When Brod prepared his original edition of the *Tagebücher*, he placed the longer version under the rubric “26. März.” As published, that day’s entry begins with a few comments on a Rudolf Steiner lecture Kafka attended and a notation of having earlier gone to lectures by Adolf Loos and Karl Kraus. The conclusion of Kafka’s Brod critique is immediately followed by a new calendrical rubric, “28. März.” Grouped under this date are some observations about Steiner and theosophy and an account of “Mein Besuch bei Dr. Steiner.” Appended at the end of the Steiner commentaries is the shorter critique. The next entry is dated “27. Mai” and bears the text of a postcard Kafka was sending (or had sent) to Brod on the occasion of his same-date birthday.

There are more than simple editorial differences over which version came first. The shorter did indeed appear on the page following the 28 March Steiner material in the first notebook (*A*). An undated fragment, next in a series of prose exercises that Kafka had written between November 1910 and early January 1911 (in *Heft B*; 1:112-19, 122-24, 125-26, 128-30, 141, 143) and then had recommenced between 19 February and 28 March 1911 (in *A*; 30), follows the shorter critique (36). Kafka may have written the fragment here because of its resonances with his account of the Steiner visit that preceded the shorter critique. Brod, however, only includes that fragment’s virtual reproduction, which subsequently appeared in *Heft A* amid a series of somewhat discrete comments written between entries dated 20 and 24 August 1911 (38), and inserts it with the rest of that series in his edition’s entry dated “20. August.” While his decision is justifiable chronologically, a comment on the time that had passed since he had last made an entry in the notebook, bearing the date “15. August” (also included in Brod’s edition) and preceding the “20. August” entry, is written on the sheet (37) that separates the fragment’s two versions. Hence Brod as editor chose to sacrifice possible contextual insight into the significance of a text by eliding its original iteration.

The longer version (in *Heft B*) does follow the brief report of the Steiner lecture (bearing the date 26. März) and the mention of the earlier talks (159), and it is succeeded by the birthday-postcard text; however, the last is left undated in this notebook (161). On that notebook’s next page (162) a virtual reproduction of the longer analysis of *Die Jüdinnen* begins but is interrupted in the middle of the second sentence of the second paragraph. That text was not included in Brod’s edition of the *Tagebücher*.

#### *Brod’s Encounters with Another Beast: die Fackelkraus*<sup>6</sup>

So what may have motivated Brod’s editorial decisions? Kafka’s list of recently attended lectures that preceded the leaping-lizard critique in Brod’s edition, in particular the reference to Karl Kraus’s lecture, may offer a clue. On 15 March at Prague’s Zentral-Saal and with Kafka in attendance, Kraus lectured on “Heine und die Folgen” (Heine and the Consequences), an indictment of contemporary Germanophone feuilletonism and feuilletonists and their supposed sources in the Jewish-identified writer Heine and his work. Kraus’s denunciation provoked years of controversy and internecine polemic in Germanophone literary circles over Heine, Kraus, and several of the writers that Kraus wished to tar with Heine’s “eau de cologne.”<sup>7</sup> It also had almost immediate collateral effects on Brod and the circle of Prague Jewish literati.

In the first issue of Kraus’s journal *Die Fackel* to appear after his Prague visit (no. 319-20, 31 March/1 April) not only did Kraus reprint the relevant sections from the *Prager Tageblatt*’s very favorable report (64-65) and the enthusiastic review from the Czech semimonthly *Novina* (24 March) of his Prague condemnation of the “saloppe journalistische Prosa,” “schäbige Polemik,” and “posiert übertünchten Banalitäten” of Heine and his contemporary imitators (65), but he also launched his first of a series of attacks on the critic Alfred Kerr.

Kraus begins his attack on Kerr as an identifiably Jewish writer (and so-called moral exemplar) by asserting, *pace* Kerr’s once and future defenders, that his rival exemplifies the Heine-imitating feuilletonist Kraus had denounced and derided in “Heine und die Folgen” (Esterhammer 285-87). The immediate catalyst for Kraus’s fusillade was a campaign by Kerr in the journal *Pan* to humiliate publicly the chief of Berlin’s police, Traugott von Jagow. Kraus aptly entitled his anti-panegyric, “Der kleine Pan ist tot”—alluding not only to that journal’s suspension of publication, but also to Plutarch’s first-century, second-hand report of the sorrowing wail “Der große Pan ist tot” that Heine had famously recited in what had been

a principal focus of Kraus's excoriation of him, Heine's infamous memorial to the critic Ludwig Börne (*Ludwig Börne* 45-46). "Der kleine Pan" was itself quickly panned in a rival journal, *Die Aktion* (10. April) by its editor Franz Pfemfert. Pfemfert conjoined his reproof, the anti-eulogy "Der kleine Kraus ist tot," with a personal call to all Germanophone writers to join in the defense of Kerr's work against Kraus's aspersions. The first series of solicited Kerr homages, including contributions by Frank Wedekind, Erich Mühsam, and Kurt Hiller, appeared in the 27 April issue of *Die Aktion*. Kraus struck back with a second round of reproaches directed at Kerr in the next issue of *Die Fackel*: "Der kleine Pan röchelt noch." Also in that 29 April issue, several poems ("Die vielen Dinge," "Kindersonntagsausflug," and "Der schöne strahlende Mensch") by a junior member of the Prague circle, a writer for whom Brod saw himself as presumptive mentor, Franz Werfel, appeared for the first time.

Two days later a piece by Brod was published; it was his contribution to *Die Aktion*'s Kerr *Rundfrage*. Of all of the contributors to the series—which continued into July—Brod alone<sup>8</sup> referred to Kraus by name, calling him a "mittelmäßiger Kopf." Kraus responded in kind and certainly not kinder. In the 2 June entry to his anti-Kerr polemic, "Der kleine Pan stinkt schon," Kraus contemptuously dismissed Brod's writing (specifically passages from *Die Jüdinnen*), Brod's name-calling, as well as Brod's pathetic efforts to get his writing published in *Die Fackel*, and combined them with mocking plays on Brod's own name. Brod responded in *Die Aktion* (3 July) with an article vilifying Kraus and bearing that contested label: "Ein mittelmässiger Kopf." Pfemfert placed Brod's retort after the last of this series of responses to his Kerr *Rundfrage*. The final shot in this particular exchange came from Kraus in the 8 July issue of *Die Fackel* (35-36); it followed the last attack on Kerr: "Der kleine Pan stinkt noch." Adding injury to insult, Kraus not only ridicules Brod through more plays on his name,<sup>9</sup> but he immediately followed his mockery of Brod with the publication of Werfel's poem, "Nächtliche Kahnfahrt."

This poem had arisen out of an excursion Werfel had taken with Brod (and Kafka). Brod mentions it just prior to the evocation of Riva's lizards in the Kafka biography. Indeed, Brod portentously opens his own autobiography, *Streitbares Leben*, by depicting the scene that occasioned the poem as foreshadowing his subsequent conflicted relationship with Werfel: on a day when they had gone swimming together, Werfel developed a severe sunburn that led his mother the next day to reprimand Brod even more severely (29-30).<sup>10</sup> Brod asserts their irreconcilable break occurred a bit later when the younger poet invited and hosted Kraus for his "ersten" lectures in Prague (98). Brod may well have been errantly referring to some of Kraus's Prague lectures that were subsequent (in March 1912, January, March, and April 1913) to the 15 March 1911 (and still earlier 12 December 1910) lecture as "ersten." Yet in the absence of any chronological references aside from those to Kraus's apparent tactical use of Werfel's poetry in the Spring and Summer 1911 *Aktion-Fackel* polemical exchanges,<sup>11</sup> Brod guilefully implies that Werfel played a treacherous<sup>12</sup> role in Kraus's 1911 visit to Prague (98). In fact, Werfel was in Hamburg at the time; he only made initial contact with Kraus in April when *Fackel*'s editor wrote of his intention to publish several of his poems.<sup>13</sup>

#### *A Flock of Literary Foils: Goethe, Heine, Kraus, Werfel, Kafka, and Brod*

I've situated Kafka's diary entry amid the literary-political interplay of Brod, Kafka, Kraus, and Werfel because this scene suggests that the *Eidechsen* that startled Kafka on a footpath in Italy may have along the way darted out of some other crevices in addition to any found in Riva: specifically literary-political ones. There are two significant earlier encounters with *Eidechsen* in Italy by era-defining German authors: Goethe and Heine. The first appears in Goethe's diary and subsequent account of his Italian trip. From his seat in the postal coach on his way from Bolzano/Bozen to Trento/Trient, Goethe records "Über Mauern wirft sich der Attich lebhaft herüber. Efeu wächst in starken Stämmen die Felsen hinauf und verbreitet sich weit über sie; die Eidechse schlüpft durch die Zwischenräume, auch alles, was hin und her wandelt, erinnert einen an die liebsten Kunstbilder" (26). During the spring of 1911 Kafka was engrossed in Goethe's diaries, and both he and Brod set up Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, its style and method, as a foil for their own planned travel diaries and expected prose reworking of their upcoming trip to northeastern Italy. And following the trip Kafka (in a 29.9.11 diary entry) contrasts Goethe's travel observations with those Kafka's contemporaries would have made: Goethe writes from the perspective of a slow postal coach, adopting "Ein ruhiges förmlich landschaftliches Denken.... Augenblicksbeobachtungen gibt es daher wenige" (*Tagebücher* 42-43). Goethe's few flash portraits occur indoors, "wo bestimmte Menschen

”—as opposed to *Eidechsen*—“gleich grenzenlos einem vor den Augen aufbrausen” (43).

By referencing *Italienische Reise*, Kafka and Brod were following a long tradition of Italian travel writing produced in the wake of Goethe's own. Perhaps the most famous of these appeared in the third and fourth parts of Heine's *Reisebilder*, which were explicitly written over and against Goethe's work (see *Nordsee* 220-21). In the opening chapters of *Die Stadt Lucca* that begins the fourth part, Heine recounts his own encounter with lizards. Would Kafka have been familiar with this passage?

Admittedly, there are few direct references to Heine in Kafka's letters or *Tagebücher* (see Born) and perhaps even fewer in the critical Kafka literature and none to this particular scene; however, in his biographies of Heine and Kafka as well as in his own autobiography, Brod repeatedly contrasts Heine with Kafka while comparing Heine with Werfel. Also curious is how, in his Heine biography, Brod never mentions any of Kraus's still (in)famous anti-Heine polemics that appeared around the time of Kafka's diary entry. The only direct reference to Kraus situates him as the parentheses-enclosed example of the “jüdischen Künstler..., der persönlich diese [jüdische] Gemeinschaft gar nicht oder nur nebenbei gekannt hat,” a Jewish artist who is nonetheless the object of the community's “tiefe liebevolle Hinneigung” (330). Here Brod situates Kraus's relationship to the Jewish people in a way that echoes an earlier characterization of Heine in the text, a characterization that led to the invocation of the not previously mentioned Kafka. Heine, Brod writes, “zeigt sich ... an der Oberfläche oft als Spötter, Zerstörer jüdischer Werte, als indifferent”; the fact remained that “in [dem jüdischen Volk ist] eine große Heine-Liebe nicht erlischt” (217-18). Appearances aside, Brod sees Heine, unlike Kraus, as at heart (“zutiefst”) an “Aufrüttler, Erwecker” of Jewry (217). Brod then makes a remarkable leap: “In der Art nun wie hier in [Kafkas] ‘Josefine’ das vielfach verschnörkelte Mißverständnis and oft gereizte Verhältnis zwischen dem Volk und seinem großen Repräsenten, seinem verwöhnten Star Josefine, gezeichnet ist, scheint mir diese Novelle Kafkas die beste Heine-Biographie darzustellen” (218). Brod goes on to identify—here implicitly, elsewhere explicitly—Heine's acute, albeit encrypted, discernment of the state of *Judentum* in his time with Kafka's own historically specific observations: “Wie Kafka überhaupt in seinen Werken, in geheimer Chiffreschrift, alles Wesentliche über das Judentum unserer Zeit, seinen Verfall und seine Erneuerung, niedergelegt hat” (218). When Brod returns three years later to “Josefine” in the biography of his friend, Kafka is characterized as “das Beispiel des Gegentyps” (235n) to Josefine—and hence by implication to Heine, who, aside from a brief mention late in Brod's narrative, amid its account of Kafka's death, is otherwise absent.

Kafka's second mention in the Heine biography coincides with Werfel's only appearance in the work. Brod cites Werfel as the author of a verse that exemplifies the universal quality that made Heine an exemplary representative and representer of the diasporic Jew: “Fremde sind wir auf der Erde alle — und es stirbt, womit wir uns verbinden” (270). Such recognition of the Everyman (“Mensch schlechthin”) in the Diaspora Jew also explains the “universale Wirkung” that Kafka's central characters K. and the surveyor have on his readership (270-71; cf. 343). Throughout the work Brod implicitly contrasts what he characterizes as Heine's mendacity with Kafka's truthfulness.

Werfel, who as already noted plays a significant role in Brod's autobiography, is also identified in that memoir with Heine. Brod notes that Werfel's inability to restrain his quick wit *bzw.* his incomprehension that it could offend reminded him of Heine's similar flaws (*Streitbares* 36-37). He also parallels Werfel's brief commercial apprenticeship in Hamburg with Heine's similarly against-the-grain and hence unsuccessful venture in the Hansestadt into the world of business (40). He also lists Werfel with Heine in the gallery of authors Kraus subjected to unworthy attacks (86).

### *Luccan Lizards*

While Heine is clearly entangled with the characterizations of Kafka, Kraus, and Werfel in Brod's writings from at least 1911 on, why would Heine's encounter with lizards, specifically those in the opening chapters of *Die Stadt Lucca*, have left its trace on Brod's editorial decisions and, perhaps, on Kafka's own image selection? It may well be because these signifying *Eidechsen* secrete numerous allusions to *Judentum*.

Heine met these *Eidechsen*—“mit ihren klugen Schwänzchen und spitzfündigen Äuglein”— while clambering along among the *Felsen* of the Apennines. He calls them “ein ironisches Geschlecht ... [sie] betören gern die anderen Tiere.” He asks himself (and his readers): “Sind es etwa verzauberte Priesterfamilien, gleich denen des alten Ägyptens, die ebenfalls naturbelauschend in labyrinthischen Felsengrotten wohnten?” (478). The invocation of Egypt is not too surprising; on almost every occasion that Heine mentions Egypt in his corpus it is associated with reptiles: lizards, crocodiles, snakes. And on most of those occasions, the invocation of that land of reptiles is also connected to a discussion of *Judentum*. For example, later in *Die Stadt Lucca* Heine speaks of an unnamed *Volk* “aus Ägypten, dem Vaterland der Krokodile und des Priestertums.... Seine Mumien sind noch so unzerstörbar wie sonst, und eben so unverwüstlich ist jene Volkmumie, die über die Erde wandelt, eingewickelt in ihren uralten Buchstabenwindeln” (515); admittedly these mummies are swaddled in letters and not hieroglyphs.

Heine provides additional indices that led to his speculation of the lizards’ Egyptian origin: “Auf ihren Köpfchen, Leibchen und Schwänzchen blühen so wunderbare Zeichenbilder, wie auf ägyptischen Hieroglyphenmützen und Hierophantenröcken” (478). There is, however, a possibly telling failure to maintain parallel structure in this description. While the signs on the lizards’ heads pair off with those on the Egyptians’ caps, and those on their bodies with the Egyptians’ garments, there is no mention of an analogical complement to their inscribed tails.

The missing complement to the tail—the circumcised penis that identifies Egyptian priests and male Jews—or rather, what it indexes, may be alluded to in Heine’s next chapter when he engages one particular old lizard, “meinem hieroglyphenhäutigen Naturphilosophen” (479) in philosophic conversation. In response to the lizard’s request for his judgment of Schelling and Hegel, Heine responds: “Im Grunde lehren sie eine und diesselbe Lehre, die Ihnen wohlbekannte Identitätsphilosophie, nur in der Darstellungsart unterscheiden sie sich.” That is, they differ in how they represent and signify that philosophy. Traditionally, the opening dialogue between lizard and poet has been read as a moment in Heine’s reception of Schelling (Käfer 100-10); however, the invocation as well as the claimed substantial identity and formal difference of the identity philosophies of Schelling and Hegel point to a third unnamed philosopher, the Jewish-identified Baruch Spinoza (also see Pabel 209-15). It parallels Heine’s later discussion in *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* and *Die romantische Schule* of Spinoza’s pantheistic theory, in itself (*Zur Geschichte* 563-64; 565: “den ewigen Parallelismus [der] neueren Naturphilosophie”) and as the *fons et origo* of both Hegel’s and Schelling’s theories. Heine presents Schelling insisting that his philosophy differs from Spinoza’s “wie die ausgebildeten griechischen Statuen von den starrägyptischen Originalen.” Whereas Schelling originally had equated the *Starrheit* of Spinoza’s philosophy with that of Pygmalion’s *Bildsäule*, Heine’s paraphrastic quotation relocated Spinoza’s originality from Cyprus to the land from which, Heine repeatedly states, the Jews came: Egypt.<sup>14</sup> Heine then retorts Schelling’s self-aggrandizing comparison with Spinoza: “dennoch muß ich aufs bestimmteste erklären, daß sich Herr Schelling, in seiner früheren Periode, wo er noch ein Philosoph war, nicht im Geringsten von Spinoza unterschied” (565, cf. 630-32). In *Die romantische Schule* Heine mediates Hegel’s and Schelling’s rival claims for originality by stating that: “Alle unsere heutigen Philosophen, vielleicht oft ohne es zu wissen, sehen sie durch die Brillen, die Baruch Spinoza geschliffen hat” (434).

When Heine informs his inquisitor about the crowds that gather to hear those two philosophers, the lizard mockingly declaims: “kein Mensch denkt, kein Philosoph denkt, weder Schelling noch Hegel denkt, und was gar ihre Philosophie betrifft, so ist sie eitel Luft und Wasser, wie die Wolken des Himmels.” “[E]s gibt nur eine einzige wahre Philosophie,” the lizard asserts, precluding any ground for comparison and with all finality, “und diese steht, in ewigen Hieroglyphen, auf meinem eigenen Schwanze.” At this point Heine’s companion turns his back on him, “und indem er langsam fortschwänzelte, sah ich darauf die wunderlichsten Charaktere, die sich in bunter Bedeutsamkeit bis über den ganzen Schwanz hinabzogen” (*Stadt* 480). Perhaps what the missing Egyptian complement to the lizard’s hieroglyph-inscribed tail alludes to is the “Egypt”-originating, Jewish-identified Spinoza.

“My dear Herr Hyacinth”

Among other works suggested as source for Heine’s references to Egypt, hieroglyphs, and their interpretation—as well as voluble and wise lizards—is Novalis’s *Die Lehrlinge zu Saïs* and its “Märchen

von Hyacinth und Rosenblüthe" (see Hildebrand 177-84). Heine may not only be hearing echoes of the singing lizard from Novalis's fable amid the Apennines' rocky grottoes; those of another Hyacinth too can be heard. In the *Bäder von Lucca* that precedes Heine's account of *Die Stadt Lucca*, readers are introduced to two old Hamburg acquaintances of Heine's, the parvenu convert Gumpelino and his aide Hirsch-Hyacinth, a fascinating personage who, according to Heine, "hätte vielmehr den Namen einer Feuerliiße verdient." Heine then describes a series of signifiers as the approaching Hyacinth emerges in his visual field. "Es war ein schlotternd weiter Scharlachrock, überladen mit Goldtressen, die im Sonnenglanze strahlten.... Und wirklich, als ich das bläßlich besorgliche Gesichtchen und die geschäftig zwinkernden Äuglein näher betrachtete, erkannte ich jemanden, den ich eher auf dem Berg Sinai als auf den Apenninen erwartet hätte" (*Bäder* 401). Like the soon to be encountered lizards, this no-less variegated figure too bespeaks ancient Egypt. He too is more a bearer of ciphers than letters, although in his case numbers and not hieroglyphs; yet, as he reminds the poet, numbers, like those Adamic glyphs, bridge the gap between signifier and signified: "Hätten Sie nur zuletzt 1365 statt 1364 gespielt" (423).<sup>15</sup> Heine's creditor had in the interim substituted his given name Hirsch with "Hyacinth" (a translation of the Hebrew "Hirsch"), so that no one would treat him "wie einen gewöhnlichen Lump" (429). Despite the name change Hyacinth is no convert and is a man of many Jewish-identified trades—lottery agent, chiropodist (a clipper of corns rather than either coins or foreskins), and jewelry appraiser.

Yet what may also catch the reader's eye is the subsequent reflection of the Jewish-born Hyacinth's "geschäftig zwinkernden Äuglein" in the "spitzfündigen Äuglein" of the Egypt-spawned *Eidechsen*. There is only one other figure in the *Reisebilder*'s accounts of Heine's trip to Italy whose eyes are referred to as *Äuglein*; they are borne by the "Charlottenburger Philistine", conversations with whom occupy the opening chapters of the first Italian section, *Reise von München nach Genua*. Although the individual is not explicitly identified as Jewish, the combination of cultural status (Philistine), profession (man of commerce), place of origin (Charlottenburg, which was already known in the 1820s as a residential quarter for well-to-do Jews), and pronunciation ("scheene" for "schöne", which is characteristic of a number of Yiddish and Judendeutsch dialects; see Althaus 147-55) very much suggests that he is.

Eyes also mediate an association of "Jude[n]" and "Eidechse[n]" that was contemporaneous with the *Reisebilder*. Carl Spindler, in his 1827 novel *Der Jude*, introduces his principal, and generally not unsympathetically portrayed, Jewish character Ben David with a physiognomic inventory that notes: he "war von Augen belebt, die an Lebhaftigkeit und stechender Schärfe mit denen der Eidechse wetteiferten" (1:21; cit. Gubser 131). The novel found quite a receptive audience; so much so that Heine's publisher Julius Campe, in an effort to spur him to turn out a third volume of *Reisebilder*, and hopefully even a fourth, invokes the paucity of appealing prose works currently in the market—with the noted exception of Spindler's—in a 24 June 1828 letter. After several more pleas for the rapid production of a third volume, Campe informs his correspondent, perhaps hoping that pride or jealousy might get his pen moving in the publisher's direction: "Von diesem Mann [i.e., Spindler] mögte ich etwas gutes verlegen—wie ich denn überhaupt glaube, daß er nur Gutes in die Preße schicken wird um seinen Namen zu erhalten" (*Briefe an Heine* 43). Whether Heine was familiar with *Der Jude* at the time is unknown; however, given that the novel was staged in the same century and, in part, the same location (Frankfurt) as Heine's never completed *Rabbi von Bacharach*, the writing of which he had interrupted when he began writing the first of his *Reisebilder* (*Die Harzreise*), *Der Jude* and the lizard-like eyes of Ben David may well have already come to Heine's attention.

Beyond his *Äuglein* there is another thread that situates Heine's fellow Hamburger in the constellation of Kafka and his *Eidechsen*. Heine's characterization of Hirsch-Hyacinth as an individual of impeccable honesty and forthrightness provided Kraus in his Prague *denunciato* with one of his two prime victims of Heine's hypocrisy (the second was Ludwig Börne). In Hirsch-Hyacinth's case Kraus refers to Heine's *ad hominem* (and homophobic) attack on the rival poet August von Platen, who had recently ridiculed Heine and his friend the author Karl Immermann in the play "König Ödipus." Heine entrusts the honest Hirsch-Hyacinth with the opening salvo in the assault on Platen as poet and person. Hirsch-Hyacinth thereby creates an opening for Heine, who, to fulfill his "obligation" to the reader who would want further information on Platen, begins his own offensive of critique and innuendo, of ridicule and *revanche*.

Hirsch-Hyacinth is also Heine's mouthpiece for a disquisition comparing Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religions (Bäder 426-30). The corn-clipping jewelry appraiser serves as Heine's external observer of the material social order, just as the lizards serve as Heine's external observer of the material natural order. What the number-bearing Hamburger, glyph-skinned lizards, and letter-swaddled Hebrews have in common: the inscribed *Schwanz* (that is, in the case of these human animals, a circumcised penis). In contrast to those undifferentiated *Schwanz*-bearers whose origin Heine also traced to Egypt, the first two, Hirsch Hyacinth and the natural philosopher, are each a singular exemplar encountered in the Apennines, such as Kafka believed his friend Max had failed to represent, but which would suddenly rear itself up sometime in Spring 1911 in Kafka's diary. That the underlying motivation for Brod's editorial choices was his conscious recognition of a lizard-mediated Jewish-identified elective affinity between Heine's and Kafka's singular figurations is, at best, highly unlikely. Nevertheless, literary politics and *ressentiments* of the first third of the twentieth century may well have combined with Brod's obverse identification of Heine and Kafka to create the conditions for the observation of an assumed unlikely conjunction of two Jewish-identified literary luminaries.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Iris Bruce's claim that "reptile or lizard was a common anti-Semitic stereotype" (32), specific associations of *Eidechsen* with Jewish-identified individuals were rare, as is evidenced by their absence from Rainer Erb and Werner Bergmann's inventory of animal metaphors employed to dehumanize Jews in Germany between 1780 and 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Heine's name cannot be found in the "Sach- und Namenregister" to Caputo-Mayr and Herz's exhaustive bibliography of Kafka criticism between 1955 and 1997. How Brod brought the two together in his 1934 Heine biography is discussed below.

<sup>3</sup> Earlier that year, during his stay at the Pension Ottoburg in the northeastern Italian spa town of Meran/Merano, Kafka reports lizard sightings in two of his earliest preserved letters to his Czech translator, Milena Jesenská. He also mentions the "Eidechsen" in a letter written upon his arrival at the Pension (8 April) to Brod and Felix Weltsch.

<sup>4</sup> Brod suggests in his notes to his edition of Kafka *Nachlaß* (*Hochzeitsvorbereitungen*) that they figure idealistic Zionists. In a brief fragment written in March/April 1917, Kafka had also noted lizards when describing a long neglected bullfighting arena (*Nachgelassene Schriften* 1.1: 378).

<sup>5</sup> That is, more is going on than, as Kafka scholar Hartmut Binder (34-35) has recently suggested, Kafka conjuring this lizard out of his anticipation of repeating later that year the idyllic experience Brod and he had shared in lizard-infested Riva.

<sup>6</sup> In 1910 Viennese feuilletonists began to make animal-suggestive references to the "Fackelkraus" bzw. "Fackel-Kraus"; Kraus replied to this branding by larding his detractors with a range of animal figures in "Der Fackel-Kraus"; this rejoinder appeared in the same 2 June 1911 issue of *Die Fackel* as his first dismissive reproof of Brod.

<sup>7</sup> Concluding his polemic Kraus facetiously observes: "Heine war ein Moses, der mit dem Stab auf den Felsen der deutschen Sprache schlug.... das Wasser floß nicht aus dem Felsen, sondern ... Eau de cologne" (188).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Halliday 58. Responses appeared in *Die Aktion* 1.10-14, 20 (299-303 335-38, 369-71, 397-99, 430-32, 619-22). Anselm Ruest, who also participated in the Kerr *Rundfrage*, only attacked Kraus by name in a separate article "Um Heine" in the 19 June *Die Aktion*.

<sup>9</sup> And implicitly perhaps on Brod's Jewish identification: "Geist auf Brod geschmiert ist Schmalz" (36). Not all Schmalz is lard, but outside kosher circles that would be the assumption.

<sup>10</sup> Reiner Stach (51 and n. 7) mentions Brod's manipulation of Kafka's *Tagebücher* with regard to an event related to the *ménage à trois* formed by Brod, Werfel, and Kraus. Kafka noted (on 18 December 1911; *Tagebücher* 1:299) that Brod had altered a review by Kraus's friend Albert Ehrenstein of Brod's 15 December 1911 Berlin performance in which the Werfel poems he had recited that evening were far more



praised than Brod's own, which he had also read during the performance. Brod elided Kafka's comment from his edition of the *Tagebücher*.

<sup>11</sup> Brod ascribes Kraus's rationale for the placement of Werfel's work juxtaposed to Kraus's second Brod critique as: "Zum Vergleich, zur höheren Glorie Werfels."

<sup>12</sup> Brod writes that Werfel invited Kraus to Prague "ohne darauf Rücksicht zu nehmen, daß zwischen Kraus und mir offene Gegnerschaft bestand" (98); open hostilities, however, did not begin until some six weeks after the 15 March 1911 lecture.

<sup>13</sup> They would first meet in person in December of that year (Kraus, *Karl Kraus' "Literatur..."* 232-35; cf. Jungk 25-26).

<sup>14</sup> In his *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände* (1809); [Kommentar zu *Zur Geschichte*] 3:953.

<sup>15</sup> Hirsch-Hyacinth informs Heine that if he had taken ticket number "1365" instead of "1364" his lot would have been different. Later, Hirsch relates the tale of the "Nummer 1538" and how, even when he will meet his Maker, it would iconically testify to his honesty (*Ehrlichkeit*, 448-49).

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