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‘Nicht jüdeln’: Jews and Habsburg Loyalty in Franz Theodor Csokor’s *Dritter November 1918*

Lisa Silverman

History Department, College of Letters & Science, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201, USA; silverld@uwm.edu

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Abstract: This article argues that Franz Theodor Csokor’s three-act drama, *Dritter November 1918: Ende der Armee Österreich-Ungarns* (Third of November 1918: End of the Army in Austria-Hungary) reveals how Jewish difference played an important—if often unrecognized—role in the shaping the terms of Austrian patriotism in the years leading up to 1938. Portrayals of Habsburg loyalty as “Jewish” or “not Jewish” helped articulate how nostalgia for Austria-Hungary would figure in a new sense of Austrianness, a project that took on even more urgency under the authoritarian censors of the *Ständestaat*. While the play’s portrayal of a Jewish doctor as level-headed, peace-loving, and caring countered some egregious antisemitic stereotypes about disloyal and sexually perverted Jews, it also suggested that Jews were overly rational, lacking in emotional depth, and, ultimately, unable to embody a new Catholic, spiritual, Austrian patriotic ideal. Considered in its broader political context, and along with Csokor’s earlier unpublished drama *Gesetz*, the play reveals how labelling Habsburg loyalty as Jewish helped to clarify and critique the nature of what it meant to be Austrian under an authoritarian regime that promoted a pro-Catholic, anti-Nazi vision of Austrian patriotism. It also offers a prime example of how even *anti*-antisemitic authors like Csokor perpetuated negative stereotypes about Jews, even as they aimed to present them in a more positive light.

Keywords: Ständestaat; Austrian Jews; Jewish difference; antisemitism; Austria-Hungary; Franz Theodor Csokor; Empire

1. Introduction

The loyalty of Austrian Jews to the Habsburg Monarchy is well-known, verified not only by countless diary entries, memoirs, and newspaper articles, but by a legendary scene in Franz Theodor Csokor’s three-act drama, *Dritter November 1918: Ende der Armee Österreich-Ungarns* (Third of November 1918: End of the Army in Austria-Hungary) [1]. Written during the winter of 1935, published in 1936, and first staged at Vienna’s Burgtheater from March 10 to December 11, 1937, this play cannot be separated from its 1930s Austrofascist context. Yet few references to its best-known scene, which features a Jewish army doctor, mention this critical political backdrop or the nuances of the doctor’s character and role. A re-reading of *Dritter November* that takes these elements into account suggests there is much more to the doctor’s depiction of Jewish Habsburg loyalty than initially meets the eye. Considered in its broader political context, the play reveals how labelling Habsburg loyalty as Jewish helped to clarify and critique the nature of what it meant to be Austrian under an authoritarian regime that promoted a pro-Catholic, anti-Nazi vision of Austrian patriotism. It also offers a prime example of how even *anti*-antisemitic authors like Csokor perpetuated negative stereotypes about Jews, even as they aimed to present them in a more positive light.

Historians generally agree as to why Jews were so devoted to Austria-Hungary: after emancipation in 1867, the political structure of the state, as well as its multiplicity of nations, languages, and religions, allowed Austrian Jews to situate themselves as equal subjects among all others¹ [2]. Marsha L. Rozenblit's research shows how, before World War I, Austrian Jews self-identified comfortably on a number of levels within that variegated and unique system, easily fashioning themselves as proud members of a German *Kulturnation* and maintaining their status as loyal citizens of the dual monarchy. Choosing to self-identify as Jewish caused little conflict with either of these allegiances, given the diversity of the population [3]. It is little wonder that many Jews considered the state—personified by Emperor Franz Joseph—to be an important source of stability and protection against the violent pogroms and restrictive edicts faced by Eastern European Jews. Supporting and participating in the Austrian war effort during World War I allowed Jews to display their loyalty [4], which in turn helped thwart antisemitic accusations of disloyalty by German nationalists and Catholic conservatives. [5]. Indeed, in the decades before the collapse of Austria-Hungary, only two other groups, army officers and bureaucrats, came close to Jews in considering “Austrianness” so central to their self-understandings ([6], pp. 19–20, 44).

It thus comes as little surprise that after the Emperor's death and the dissolution of the dual monarchy, many Austrian Jews deeply mourned both the man and the state. Jews who would later become die-hard socialists and Zionists, or found other ways to avoid association with an old, inefficient, and authoritarian state system, admitted that their families continued to venerate the Emperor as a representative of a state that provided them with political and social stability. To name only one of countless examples, Marie Langer recalls how the Emperor's death was on par with the death of God. Others note the continued domestic presence of Austria-Hungary in books, photographs, and cake boxes that bore the official seal of approval from the “kaiserliche und königliche Doppelmonarchie” (Imperial and Royal Dual Monarchy) [7].

Indeed, many, if not most, of the best-known interwar Austrian writers who idealized the dual monarchy were either Jews or came from Jewish families, though many arrived belatedly at their sense of nostalgia for Austria-Hungary [8]. As Malachi Hacoheh has pointed out, the portrayals of the dual monarchy by the best-known Jewish writers, like Joseph Roth, Franz Werfel, and Stefan Zweig, reflect a sense of loss only after their hopes for the politics and culture of the First Republic were shattered. As he notes, “Ihre Nostalgie brachte Verzweiflung zum Ausdruck” (Theirs was a nostalgia borne out of despair) ([9], p. 309). But if this interwar nostalgia was more uneven than it is typically portrayed, many Austrians nevertheless strongly associated a longing for Austria-Hungary with Jews.

As I have argued elsewhere, during the interwar period, the disarray of their world forced all Austrians to shape new self-understandings. After the breakup of Austria-Hungary, Jews in particular found their formerly stable sense of self-identification shaken to the core, especially since so many of them had considered themselves incomparably Austrian. An intense, if vexed, investment in culture served as an important means of constructing their new self-understandings as Austrians. Yet even as Jews became leaders of political movements and rose to the forefront of social and cultural programs, Austrians fell back upon an age-old hierarchical paradigm of Jewish difference—coding “Jewish” as negative and “non-Jewish” as positive—to interpret, clarify, and critique the terms of the country's altered political, social, and economic circumstances. As Austrians re-conceptualized themselves along new national, provincial, and urban lines, their self-understandings increasingly relied upon the rejuvenation of longstanding stereotypes about the “Jew” as the ultimate Other against whom they defined themselves ([7], pp. 4–11). Labeling cities, wealth, sexual perversity, crime, and various

¹ I use the terms “dual monarchy,” “Austria-Hungary,” and “Habsburg monarchy” to refer to the “kaiserliche und königliche (k. u. k.) Doppelmonarchie” (Imperial and Royal Dual Monarchy), the official name of the two sovereign halves into which the Austrian Empire was divided in 1867. After 1867 the term “Austrian Empire” refers only to that part of the monarchy excluding Hungary and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

other phenomena as Jewish became a means to articulate a wholesome, pure, rural, Catholic vision of Austria.

But while the new Austria disavowed the idea of “Jewish,” it nevertheless provided a platform for Jews and their friends to shape mainstream culture ([7], pp. 5–6). However, circumstances changed for all creators of culture after 1934, when nationalist Austrofascist leaders not only clamped down on political activity, but also undermined public culture and creativity through censorship. Although writers and artists could no longer freely express their critiques and concerns, the authoritarian state’s clampdown on the Nazis, which included banning open displays of violent antisemitism, did make many, including Csokor, feel more secure. While *Ständestaat* leaders sought to cement a conception of Austria as Catholic, their desire to distance themselves from Nazi Germany left them reluctant to discriminate openly against Jews. They did, however, tolerate milder forms of antisemitism, which became more prevalent after Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss outlawed the Socialist Party in 1934, cementing the rule of Austrofascism [10,11].

For Csokor, a non-Jew who was by all accounts sympathetic to Jews and critical of antisemitic violence, figuring Habsburg loyalty as Jewish was an ingenious way to articulate broader anxieties about contemporary political circumstances. In fashioning the character of the caring, patriotic Jewish doctor, he certainly aimed to push back against Nazi antisemitism. But his support for the new anti-Nazi, pro-Catholic, nostalgic Austrian patriotism also explains why his depiction of the doctor also ironically reinforced a number of stereotypical attitudes about Jews. Csokor’s depiction of the doctor as superficial, cosmopolitan, overly rational, and lacking in spiritual depth highlights the irony that, in interwar Austria, even explicitly *anti*-antisemitic authors ended up reinforcing negative attitudes about Jews.

2. From Coffeehouse to Dissecting Room: Jews, Doctors, and the Shape of Habsburg Loyalty

Csokor’s three-act drama takes place in a Carinthian Alpine hotel on the border between what would become Slovenia and Austria. The hotel has been turned into a convalescent home for a diverse group of imperial soldiers: Hungarian, Bohemian, Polish, Italian, and two different strands of Carinthian, ethnic Slovene (from *Krain* [Carniola]) and ethnic German. Other characters include a train engineer from Vienna, a cook, a Jewish doctor named Grün, and a nurse, Christina, who is the only female character. The setting is early November 1918, and the group is so isolated that they don’t learn about the November 3 armistice until an officer brings them the news a day later.

After they learn the war has ended, the men’s friendships and bonds of solidarity break down in conflicts stemming from long-submerged petty nationalism and ethnic fervor. The highest-ranking officer, Colonel von Radosin, who has just led the men in a giddy toast praising army unity and the fatherland’s transcendence of nationality, despairs at the willingness of the soldiers to abandon their duties and loyalty. Overcome, he leaves the room and commits suicide, as indicated by a shot offstage. The next day, the soldiers bury the Colonel and make plans to disperse to their respective homelands, now that Austria-Hungary no longer exists. The play ends with the two soldiers from Carinthia, the only ones who remain, poised to violently defend their homelands from one another since the province itself is on the verge of breaking apart. In the final scene, one opens fire from the hotel, indicating the start of the provincial defensive operation.

The play’s oft-cited display of Jewish Habsburg loyalty occurs in the first scene of Act III, the final act, which opens with the soldiers gathered around the Colonel’s open grave. They all wish to pay their final respects to their former leader, but their newly surfaced national loyalties color even this display of honor. The captain shovels dirt into the grave first, calling out “Earth from Hungary.” He is followed by the Polish first lieutenant, who proclaims “Earth from Poland,” and so it continues, as the men respectively toss dirt from Carinthia, Carniola, Bohemia, and Trient (Trento). Then it is Grün’s turn. He shovels “Earth from Austria,” underscoring the fact that he, as a Jew, is the only one left to proclaim loyalty to Austria-Hungary instead of its successor states, and thus cementing the reputation of Jews as the only remaining Habsburg loyalists [12].

Historians and critics typically use this scene to illustrate the widespread perception of Jews as the most loyal citizens of Austria-Hungary, and the citizens who most mourned its loss ([7], p. 184, n. 21; [9], p. 314; [13,14]). But examining the scene in the context of Csokor's depiction of Grün's Jewishness offers a more nuanced understanding of that final shovelful of dirt. We first encounter Grün in Act I, when Kaminski, the Polish lieutenant, enters the dining hall complaining to the porter and cook about his ill health and homesickness. Just after Kaminski blesses Poland and crosses himself, Grün, described as small, red-haired, and nearsighted, rushes in demanding "einen Braunen, passiert, mit Schlag" (a light coffee, strained, with whipped cream), a "resches Kipferl" (crispy croissant), an American cigar, three lumps of sugar, and the daily newspapers from France, England, and Italy, extravagant requests more appropriate to a Viennese café (a decidedly Jewish-coded space) than an isolated mountain convalescent home ([1], p. 18). But the scene also reveals Grün's positive attributes. He thoughtfully asks the porter to make sure to put the lounge chairs on the balcony in case of sunny weather, as it will help the men with bad lungs. When Kaminski playfully greets Grün as "Dr. Jod" (in German, *jod* means iodine, a medication the doctor might have prescribed, and *jud* means Jew), Grün gently acknowledges the pun and lightly corrects him: " 'Jud' heißt, Kaminski! Genierst euch nur nicht, ihr denkt es euch sowieso!" (The word is Jew, Kaminski! Just don't be embarrassed; you're thinking it anyway) ([1], p. 19). Subtly pointing out the antisemitism, he shows himself to be both amiable and aware.

The next scene offers Grün another opportunity to show his awareness of the underlying antisemitism among his colleagues, as well as his refusal to take it seriously. When the other soldiers enter the room, singing, laughing, and boasting to one another about their prowess with women, the Hungarian captain says "Doctor, there is a joke I heard in Budapest—" but Grün immediately cuts him off, saying "I already know it—there's a sword, from which a Jew is hanging. Who is it? The regimental doctor!" to which everyone laughs ([1], p. 20). As in the previous instance, nobody utters an actual slur against Jews. Rather, Grün anticipates, verbalizes, and then dismisses their insults. In the next act, Grün displays his peaceful nature when he stops the Colonel from hitting one of the officers just after they learn of the demise of Austria-Hungary. In these and several other interactions, the play sympathetically portrays Grün as a kind, caring, cool-headed figure.

However, another seemingly positive trait, his loyalty to the dual monarchy, which in theory should mark Grün as a true Austrian, in fact registers him as a negative Jewish "Other." Significantly, three characters in the play represent Austria-Hungary. Colonel Radosin explicitly expresses his highly romanticized, heartfelt loyalty to the dual monarchy. The nurse, Christina, leaves the convalescent home in Act I to search for medicine and reappears at the end of Act III, calling out "Peace! Peace!" ([12], p. 68). In doing so, she becomes the ideal manifestation of Austrian nationalism, displaying her deep loyalty through her dismayed reaction to the Colonel's death, her rejection of the German Carinthian's vision of a violent, nationalist world, and her intense Catholicism ([14], pp. 45–46). It is Christina, not Grün, who proclaims her devotion to the Emperor, linking it to her Christianity: "The Emperor was like my father there. His picture hung in all the halls and rooms right next to the crucifix. Both my parents had died for him. I was his child and his empire was my home" ([12], p. 70). Her Christian iteration of Habsburg loyalty, symbolized in her name, is cemented toward the end of the play when she aligns the Colonel with his emperor and Jesus, insisting that he is not really dead in spirit: "The Colonel will never die—he will come again" ([12], pp. 71, 77).

In contrast to the Colonel's emotion and Christina's anti-nationalist, Christian patriotism, Grün's loyalty is coded as distinctly Jewish: light, overly rational, and therefore superficial. At the funeral, as the soldiers mourn the Colonel, Grün lectures an uninterested audience on when and why the colors of the Austrian flag changed from black and yellow to red and white ([12], p. 59). Later, as the men muse about the thousand-year-old Empire and the *Pallawatsch* (chaos) that helped bring about its demise, Grün defends it not with heartfelt poetic lamentations, but by pedantically asserting that this same tendency toward *Pallawatsch* helped the empire defend itself against Turks, the Reformation, and even Napoleon, who could not overcome it. And when the soldiers carve up the map of Austria-Hungary

and its surroundings, lamenting the loss of Bohemia and Moravia, Galicia, Croatia, and so forth, Grün simply asks “And what’s going on in Vienna?” Suggesting that his true loyalty lies with the city evokes another stereotypically negative Jewish trait ([12], pp. 51–62).

Like Christina, Grün wants peace, but his peace stems from the head, not the heart, as when he claims, “only by using their minds will people have peace again!” ([12], p. 65). In fact, the most emotional response Grün can muster for his country comes when he unexpectedly bursts out, “The dead man outside was right! There was really more to us than a nation. There was a spirit in us, a spirit that hasn’t even reached other people. And now that it’s gone, you’ve been running around with your nation like sheep in a storm. And you’ll follow every muttonhead that jumps off a cliff yet!” ([12], p. 65). He is certainly the voice of reason, critiquing the mindless and potentially dangerous allure of national sentiment, but he can’t articulate what the Empire offered in comparison to nations, beyond alluding to a vague sense of *Geist* (spirit)—a catchphrase of the interwar Austrian Social Democratic party, which German nationalists mocked for promoting secular intellectualism as a unifying force ([5], pp. 46–47). His assertion thus becomes the perfect set-up for Ludoltz, the antisemitic German-Carinthian soldier, who menacingly replies, “Doctor, we’ll dispense with this kind of spirit—and particularly with your kind of spirit! Your spirit is just wind from the desert. It entices but doesn’t satisfy” ([12], p. 56).

To be sure, this exchange exposes the officer’s antisemitism, as part of the play’s overall critique of destructive nationalisms. But in making this point, Csokor does little to counter the notion that the connection between Jews and the Habsburg Empire is unemotional, rational, linked to the secular Austrian Socialists, and thus not as deep as the heartfelt, emotional loyalties of others, like Christina. Seen in that light, the well-known scene actually tells us more about the stakes of portraying Jewish Habsburg loyalty in the late interwar period than it does about the actual attachment of Jews to the dual monarchy. It is notably not Grün but the others who decide to throw the earth in the grave and proudly call out their national loyalties. Grün is inside the house, tending to his sick patient, Kaminski. Grün tries to make sure Kaminski doesn’t get worse by going outside to throw dirt in the grave, leading the weakened Polish officer over to the window and cautioning him to be careful as he throws his dirt from there. While the other officers solemnly continue to bury their leader, Grün leads Kaminski back to bed, arranges his pillows, and begins to discuss their upcoming trip to Poland. He is somewhat taken aback when the Italian, the last soldier to throw in his shovelful of earth, notices that someone is missing and hands him the shovel through the window. Embarrassed at this unexpected gesture, Grün hesitates before throwing in the dirt, finally stammering: “Earth from—earth from—Austria!” ([12], p. 60). His distance and hesitation reflect the ambivalence that tempers his loyalty: he doesn’t want to admit that the Colonel is dead, think about the demise of Austria-Hungary and its consequences, abandon his post for an emotional scene, or face the future without a firm spirit or belief.

Csokor was certainly not an antisemite, and it is neither accurate nor helpful to characterize his portrayal of Grün as “antisemitic” along the lines of the prejudices against Jews that were used to justify acts of violence during this period ([7], pp. 20–28). Rather, his depiction of Grün reflects the passive, more subtle, negative attitude toward Jews that formed a fundamental part of the Catholic, authoritarian *Ständestaat*. By 1936, the waves of antisemitism that flourished from 1919–23 and 1930–33 had subsided, but there was still plenty of latent antisemitism and not much sympathy for Jews in an authoritarian Austrian state that was otherwise staunchly anti-Nazi. As Bruce Pauley notes, after 1934 Jews were gradually eased out of Austrian cultural life, including sports, film, and even newspapers, where they could still write articles, but mainly on non-political subjects ([10], p. 270). In 1936, when three Jewish Austrian swimmers informed the Federation of Austrian Swimming Clubs that they would be boycotting the Olympic Games in Berlin due to discrimination against German Jews under Hitler, the Austrian authorities responded by banning them from further competitions in Austria and stripping them of their athletic achievements on behalf of the state [15].

In the face of this lack of empathy, Csokor's portrayal of Grün shows that he is a humanist sympathetic to Jews ([16]; cf. [17]). Indeed, Csokor strongly opposed Hitler and the Nazis. When he was a university student in 1905, he noted in his diary the demonstrations and violence of Nationalist right wing students, and witnessed the persecution of Jews firsthand ([18], p. 56). In Vienna, he mingled with Jews in the circle of writers and artists that surrounded Jewish salonnière Eugenie Schwarzwald ([18], p. 211). Despite the great acclaim he achieved with the success of *Dritter November*, for which he received the highly regarded Grillparzer Prize and the *Burgtheaterring*, he left Austria on March 20, 1938, after trying to help colleagues also obtain visas to emigrate ([12], p. 10). Writer Robert Neumann, whose books were burned by the Nazis in May 1933, recalls that Csokor was among the few Austrian members of the P.E.N writers club who protested the book burning; others refused to risk spoiling lucrative careers in Nazi Germany [19]. Csokor spent the war years in self-imposed exile in Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Italy before returning to Vienna in 1946. His close friends included the Jewish writer Egon Friedell, who committed suicide in 1938, Carl Zuckmayer, who fled the Nazis in 1938, and the anti-fascist writers Ferdinand Bruckner and Ödon von Horváth [20].

Author Hilde Spiel, who spent World War II in exile in London, described Csokor as a man of strong ethics and deep faith who always followed his conscience [21]. Indeed, as Spiel's eulogy shows, when he is remembered, if he is remembered at all, it is less for his actual writings, and more for his reputation as a good person and a humanist ([20], p. 90). The fact remains, however, that despite his noble intentions, Csokor deployed negative stereotypes of Jews in *Dritter November* to make his point about the ideal shape of Austrian patriotism. Indeed, Csokor's diary entries and early works suggest he cultivated these negative views, which were prevalent in Central European culture, from an early age. For example, he notes in his diary that he spent the summer of 1905 with Ella Lederer, "die schöne Jüdin" (the beautiful Jewess), who despite being the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, left him cold ([18], pp. 44, 66).

Medicine, another key element of Grün's character, was a specific locus for both Csokor's own ambivalent feelings and his stereotypes of Jews, suggesting that thinking about the material world as "Jewish" and the spiritual one as "Christian" helped him make sense of an internal conflict. Csokor studied philosophy at the University of Vienna, but in 1905 he also registered for a number of courses in medicine, most likely to placate his father, a successful veterinarian. A Jewish professor, Dr. Emil Zuckerkandl, taught his anatomy class, perhaps anchoring a concrete connection between Jews and medicine. In his diary, Csokor laments his preferences for writing over medicine and the spiritual over the material world. Harald Klauhs argues that even at this early stage, Csokor viewed medicine—and, by extension, doctors—as lacking in soul and spirit due to their focus on the body ([18], p. 46). Klauhs also notes that from 1905 to 1911 Csokor was only registered in the faculty of philosophy, not medicine). Csokor wrote about this tension in his early poem "Ballade von der Wasserleiche," in which the narrator blames the suicide of a medical student on unhappiness in love caused by his singular focus on medicine—an early indication of his belief that the field of medicine was "without soul" ([18], p. 47).

Gesetz, an unpublished play written in 1921 and revised in 1922, similarly illuminates Csokor's early preoccupation with the distinctly unspiritual, bodily nature of the medical profession, as well as his association between this quality in doctors and Jews. The play features a doctor who refuses his daughter's hand in marriage to a suitor whom he accuses of being motivated by lust. The doctor claims to have suppressed his own sexual urges in order to become an upstanding family man, and through his medical research, he has come to believe that the mind can overcome the urges of the body. When his daughter, wife, and son realize they will never convince him that the couple's love is pure, the daughter leaves home. The doctor declares his daughter "spiritually dead," and a short while later, her suitor returns to announce that she has actually died. While the cause of her death remains unclear, the suitor notes that as she lay dying, she uttered her father's name, thus implicating him in her death. Although clearly upset at this news, the father exclaims only that "Gericht hat gewaltet!" (Court has

prevailed!) and “Gesetz hat Gesiegt!” (Law has won!), as if her death has satisfied some unwritten laws of justice. ([22], p. 49)

When the father insists upon carrying out an autopsy to determine the cause of his daughter’s death, he finds himself questioning his reliance on mind and law over matters of the body: in this case, the heart. After physically removing the heart and laying it upon the examination table, he addresses it directly, asking “You delicate muscle, and yet so strong, how did it come to a fight between us?” (Du schwächliche Muskel, und dennoch so starr, Wie kam es zum Kampf zwischen uns?). Just before he cuts into the heart, he references *The Merchant of Venice*’s Shylock, exclaiming, “Will a pound of flesh tilt the eternal scale for me?” (Will ein Pfund Fleisch mir die Wage verkehren, die ewig ist?) (the avaricious Jewish merchant Shylock, who demanded a pound of flesh as credit for a customer’s loan, also had a daughter who betrayed him by running away to marry a man of whom he disapproved) The disembodied voice of his daughter cries “Give me my heart back!” and her father turns out the light “as if he wanted to hide his theft,” locks the door, and answers “No!” He then furiously squeezes the heart in his hands and holds it out, “as if giving in sacrifice” his own flesh and blood, asking God, “Have I fulfilled the law? Is it satisfactory?” ([22], pp. 59–62). The play ends shortly thereafter.

Although the doctor in *Gesetz* has no religious identification, Jews were certainly overrepresented as physicians in Vienna, and the Jewish implications of the Shylock comparison are undoubtedly purposeful. But by transforming the Jewish merchant into the figure of a doctor, Csokor specifically codes the material world as a Jewish one. Similarly, the doctor’s commitment to laws over emotions evokes another stereotype about Jews that is also apparent in the play’s very title: *Gesetz* means “law.” These tropes persist in Csokor’s depiction of Grün’s Jewishness. Although Grün is eager for coffee, cigars, and newspapers, the pleasures of the intellectual café, he refuses to engage in the drinking, rowdy banter, and camaraderie of the other soldiers, claiming that he needs to stay sober in order to care for them. Grün also embodies repressed sexuality in comparison to the others when he notes, “That nurse is a plucky girl! It’s quite a thing—to be alone with you men since this place has been up to its eaves in snow! The others didn’t dare to stay.” Like the doctor in *Gesetz*, Grün represses his own desires to focus on his medical duty to care for the bodies of others. To be sure, depicting a Jewish character as sexually repressed challenges antisemitic accusations of Jewish men as being perverse and over-sexed. But in countering one stereotype, it upholds another, indicating that Grün’s portrayal challenges some negative stereotypes about Jews even as it upholds others [23].

Csokor’s familiarity with the Jung-Wien writers, particularly Arthur Schnitzler, who was also caught between the world of medicine and art, provides further insight into his portrayal of Grün. In two poems from 1880, one year after he began his medical studies, Schnitzler grapples with some of the issues Csokor addressed in his own early poems. “Frühlingsnacht im Seziersaal” and “Prosektor” are both set in the autopsy room, though the latter also moves to a coffeehouse. At the start of “Prosektor,” the narrator bids farewell to his corpses and washes the blood off his hands before heading to the coffeehouse to play, drink, and kiss the girls, “Da der Mensch nur einmal lebt” (Since a person only lives once). The poem ends with an admonition to enjoy life as long as one can, to love and be happy, because it’s all the same to a dead person [24]. In *Dritter November*, Grün enters the convalescent home as if he is in a coffeehouse, aptly framed as a place where one can enjoy life’s pleasures, a contrast to the death and corpses that will surround him through the rest of the play.

Csokor was aware of Schnitzler’s plays by 1905 and perhaps even felt some rivalry ([18], p. 47). Schnitzler’s 1912 drama *Professor Bernhardi: Komödie in fünf Akten* provides another point of comparison to *Gesetz*. *Professor Bernhardi* was his only play to feature a Jewish character, also a doctor, whose loyalty to his patients at the clinic where he worked and resistance to the Catholic Church are linked to his downfall. Bernhardi refuses a priest’s request to visit a dying patient lest she suffer even more upon learning from his presence that she is to die. His clinic provides Bernhardi the chance to make up for this offense against the Catholic Church by passing over a Jewish candidate for a position in favor of a less qualified non-Jewish candidate. When Bernhardi refuses, he is forced to resign and jailed for two years, but upon his release he is fully reinstated and becomes the private physician of

Prince Konstantin. His rehabilitation suggests that antisemitism is important, but isn't all that serious; indeed, the subtitle of the play is "a comedy."

Censored by the Austrian authorities for being too critical of society and politics, the play opened in Berlin; it was not performed in Austria until after the collapse of the Monarchy, when strict censorship rules no longer applied. While *Professor Bernhardt* depicts the political struggle between the Catholic Church and medicine, as well as the politics of a clinic founded and funded by mainly Jews but increasingly subjected to antisemitism, Csokor's *Gesetz* depicts the internal struggle between a medical man's heart and head [25]. Perhaps Schnitzler, as a Jew, did not feel he could depict his internal struggle on stage, as the dangers of career opportunism and racial discrimination would be controversial enough. As Abigail Gillman points out, Schnitzler's attempt to separate politics from his personal life is itself politically charged [26].

Along with literary representations, Csokor's portrayal of Grün also reflects the actual political dangers faced by Jewish doctors in the *Ständestaat*. Jews made up nearly 52% of the doctors in Vienna [27]. In contrast, they made up only 0.28% of the total 160,692 civil servants in Austria in 1935, and by 1937, only 154 of 22,600 municipal employees in the city of Vienna were Jews. (There were only 682 Jewish civil servants in 1935. Cf. ([10], pp. 217, 270). One of the state's thinly veiled acts of antisemitism, the firing of 56 Jewish doctors who worked in city hospitals after the Socialist uprising in Vienna in February 1934, highlights the concerns about Jewish doctors. As Bruce Pauley points out, although they were ostensibly fired as Socialists, only 58 doctors were fired in total, and of the 56 Jews, 80% were not active in Social Democratic politics, making it impossible to interpret their firing as anything but anti-Semitism ([10], p. 270). Coding Grün as a Socialist through his references to an Austrian *Geist* and his connection to Vienna, Csokor locked him in more tightly as the antithesis of Christina's Christian patriotism.

In this light, the portrayal of Grün as a good man characterized by his desire for intellectual pleasures and his duty as a medical doctor takes on new meaning. His Habsburg loyalty may be true, but it is more superficial than Christina's. As a secular doctor, he clings to both the physical body, the laws of science, and rational thought, traits Csokor had associated early on with both Jews and the medical profession. The one mention of cadavers and autopsies in *Dritter November* echoes the autopsy in *Gesetz*. Although Grün mourns the Colonel's death, when discussing it with the other soldiers, he can only offer scientific observations from his medical training rather than sharing his sadness: "All suicides have that disillusioned look. I know from post-mortems" ([12], p. 62). The sober rationality of the Jewish doctor thus serves an important dual purpose in the play: on one hand, the good doctor's positive behavior and demeanor serves strategically as a critique of the dangerous passions of the German Nationalists. But Csokor's philosemitic portrayal of his "Jewish" Habsburg loyalty likewise serves as a necessary foil for the more heartfelt, Christian terms of the nurse's patriotic fervor, helping to clarify a vision of Austrian patriotism that was both pro-Catholic and anti-Nazi.

3. *Nicht jüdeln: Staging Dritter November, 1918 at Vienna's Burgtheater in 1937*

That most artists embraced Vienna's Burgtheater as a "Baroque symbol of totality" along with an increasingly "Austrian" national orientation signaled a growing openness to Catholic culture during the interwar period [28]. But by 1937, several years into authoritarian rule, directors at the Burgtheater were expected to present theater that promoted Austrian patriotism as Catholic. Thus, it is not surprising that Herbert Wanek, who directed *Dritter November* in 1937, was impelled by the authorities to make changes to Csokor's original text to conform to the new patriotic program of the Austrofascist regime ([28], p. 180). How these changes affected the portrayal of Grün sheds additional light on how Jewish difference was used to articulate the terms of Austrian patriotism. Despite Csokor's disclaimer that the play "Must not be read or performed with an intentional opinion against any of the nations it represents; they are all shaped and felt with the same tender and painful memory that the author still feels today for all those from the community of the old Reich that has now been consigned to history," ([28], p. 207) the Burgtheater producers insisted on changing Grün's line

from “earth from Austria” to “earth from Austria-Hungary,” to ensure audiences understood that the reference was to the old, dissolved Austria. But this change was apparently not enough. After a few performances, Burgtheater director Hermann Röbbling cut Grün’s line entirely ([29]; cf. [30]).

In a letter to writer and theater manager Ferdinand Bruckner, Csokor complained bitterly about the change, explaining that it had been implemented out of fear of Nazi reprisals, even though the Nazi party was banned at the time [31]. Although Csokor did not mention it, Grün’s Jewishness was also deliberately toned down through his manner of speaking. In Waniek’s notes for the 1937 performance, the phrase “nicht jüdeln” (don’t speak like a Jew) is written on the page where Grün first enters, demanding his creamy coffee, crispy croissant, and foreign newspapers [32]. Since each of the other characters speaks in the accent of their region and ethnicity, cleansing Grün’s speech highlights how the production downplayed the doctor’s Jewishness ([12], p. 26). But in an ironic coincidence, the most antisemitic character in the play, Ludoltz, was played by the actor Fred Hennings, who had long been a member of the Nazi party ([28], p. 227, n. 185).

The transformation of Grün’s character drew little notice, with reviewers accepting the actor’s portrayal of the doctor or deliberately overlooking it. In a glowing article praising the play as Csokor’s masterpiece, writer Oskar Fontana omitted the Jewish doctor from the list of characters [33]. An untitled review by E.M.E. for the *Wiener Salonblatt* praises the brilliant portrayal of the Jewish doctor as a stereotypical “Ahasvergestalt” (Ahasuerus figure/wandering Jew). In his review for the *Neue Freie Presse*, Felix Salten, a Jewish writer whose own works had already been banned in Germany, mentions the Jewish doctor only briefly noting that the actor who plays him, Mr. Heim, embodies the character with tact, discretion, and clever warmth. Hans Brecka, the reviewer for the *Reichspost*, also praises Heim’s performance, but says that he “betont vorsichtig das Jüdische an dem Regimentsarzt” (carefully accentuates what is Jewish about the army doctor); given that Brecka’s reviews of plays by Jewish authors had long been characterized by antisemitism, his critique is unsurprising. Neither Salten nor Brecka mention the omission of the Austria line ([34,35]; cf. [28], pp. 59, 93). The critic for the Zionist newspaper *Die Stimme*, in contrast, complained openly about the line being first changed, then cut entirely, leaving the doctor silently shoveling earth into the grave. Despite what he felt were otherwise tactful portrayals of a Jewish character, the reviewer took both director and author to task for giving in to antisemitism and silencing Grün, especially when so many Jewish soldiers had fought and died for Austria-Hungary [29]. In sum, the changes to the play, as well as the responses of journalists, indicate how, despite the outlawing of Nazis, antisemitism still seeped into the cultural administration of the Austrofascist authorities ([10], pp. 260–73; [28], pp. 184, 186).

Csokor’s play underscores how much Jews had to lose with the demise of the dual monarchy and how they indeed mourned its loss. Immediately after the dissolution, some, such as Rabbi Joseph Samuel Bloch, a member of the *Reichsrat* and publisher of the Jewish newspaper *Österreichische Wochenschrift*, suggested that Jews were the only “unconditional Austrians” and thus should logically form the core of a new, multinational state. But Bloch’s notion that this political loyalty would translate directly and easily into a new Austrian national sensibility proved false. As the controversy surrounding removing the line about Austria from the 1937 performance makes clear, Jews went from considering themselves the most Austrian to realizing that they had become the *least* Austrian—a process that had been unfolding throughout the interwar period ([7], p. 6). The decision to omit Grün’s display of Habsburg loyalty shows just how dangerous it had become to imply that Jews were the only true Austrians, even if their loyalty was only weak, watered-down and “Jewish.” It indicates the power of Jewish difference as a means to articulate Austrian national self-understandings, not only in the interwar period, but particularly in the *Ständestaat*. Csokor’s attempt to find a place for Jews in the new Austria included countering stereotypes about them as disloyal and sexually perverted, and portraying them as level-headed, peace-loving, and caring. But that in itself entailed promoting other negative stereotypes about Jews in general, and Jewish doctors in particular, representing them as overly rational, lacking in emotional depth, and, ultimately, unable to embody a new Catholic, spiritual, Austrian patriotic ideal.

As Malachi Hacoen notes, Jews were the only group “to adopt enthusiastically the official *Staatsgedanke*, the Austrian imperial idea, the ideology of dynastic patriotism” ([9], p. 282). And in the interwar period, Jews who supported the Republic instead of mourning for Austria-Hungary also showed a strong need to hold on to a romantic idea of the old Austria. In the final years leading up to 1938, in an Austro-fascist context, Jewish difference played an important—if often unrecognized—role in shaping the terms of Austrian patriotism. In their portrayals of Habsburg loyalty, interwar Austrian writers had to know whether to portray it as “Jewish” or not in order to articulate how nostalgia for Austria-Hungary should figure in a new sense of Austrianness, a project that took on even more urgency under the Austrian authoritarian censors. The fact that this Austrofascist project for a deeply Catholic, anti-Nazi Austrian patriotism failed in March, 1938, when most Austrians welcomed Hitler and the Nazis into their country, means that it is not much more than a footnote in Austrian cultural history. But its significance for helping us understand the shape of Jewish Habsburg loyalty in the late interwar era endures.

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