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Between Two Worlds: August Auerbach's American Correspondence to His Father, Berthold Auerbach

Berthold Auerbach (1812-82), the popular German-Jewish author of the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, spent much of his literary and editorial career advocating the causes of German unification and civil rights for Jews.¹ He believed that Jews were German and dedicated himself to fulfilling this utopian vision. He could only imagine a united nation state that gave Jews equal rights without demanding conversion. With the founding of the Second Reich, Berthold's dreams were crushed. In the summer of 1873, two years after German unification, Berthold wrote to his cousin Jakob from his hometown of Nordstetten in the Black Forest:

Gestorben! Ausgewandert! hört man hier ständig, wenn man nach dem und jenem fragt. Zu der Amerikasucht ist nun die Freizügigkeit im Lande gekommen, und es ist wie in einer Gesellschaft: wenn Einer zum Fortgehen aufsteht, stehen die Anderen auch auf und haben keine Ruhe mehr. Drüben in Schwandorf steht die Synagoge verödet und der jüdische Kirchhof verlassen, es sind keine Juden mehr da. Ich sehe es kommen, vielleicht schon in einem Jahrzehnt, daß es auch in Nordstetten so ist.²

Berthold's account illustrates the tension between the notions of German nationalism and Jewish culture that unification failed to resolve. The deserted Jewish synagogue and cemetery are potent images of the abandonment of Jewish culture in Germany. The fact that all of Berthold's siblings who resided in Nordstetten were now dead—"gestorben"—simply magnified for him the loss of Jewish population. If death was an unavoidable contributing factor to this loss, emigration—"ausgewandert"—was an avoidable calamity that had also lured many of Berthold's relatives away from Germany and was threatening to do so once again.³ Instead of celebrating the birth of Jewish equality, Berthold mourned its death.

When Berthold wrote this prophetic letter, his twenty-five-year-old son August was just setting out on his first and only trip to the United States. August sailed for the United States on 16 August 1873 and returned to Germany at the end of the following September. He spent the majority of his time traveling among the large eastern cities

of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. The last month was spent traveling in the Midwest (including the cities of Chicago, Cincinnati, and Quincy, IL). In some respects, August's year-long stay was like those of many other visitors. He visited relatives, toured various cities, and explored employment possibilities. In other respects, however, his trip was unique. As the son of a famous author, he gained entrée into social circles closed to common travelers and also represented his father in a translation deal. The letters August wrote home not only chronicle his trip but also provide an exceptional opportunity to examine the subject of generational conflict.⁴ The United States became the nexus of his search for identity as both the son of a famous author and a Jew. This article analyzes August's letters, which illustrate this specific father-son conflict as a matter of textual authority. Moreover, they play out August's struggle for identity as a German Jew and expose his ambivalence as a critical component of his relationship with his father. Read as a single narrative, August's letters show his difficulty in creating a self-image that was in some way independent of his father and his father's reputation as author, literary authority on America, and Jew.

Berthold based his reputation on his *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*. The village tales were well received when they were first published collectively in 1843,⁵ and Berthold periodically satisfied the public's desire for new tales for the remainder of his career, including four collections in the next thirty years.⁶ One constant aspect of many of these tales—and of his works in general—is his preoccupation with the United States. Because the stories are set in the Black Forest, specifically in Berthold's hometown of Nordstetten, the theme of America is usually dealt with in terms of emigration, with villagers leaving or wanting to leave for various reasons: in some cases they are shunned by fellow villagers (*Florian und Crescenz*, 1843; *Luzifer* 1847), or have financial problems (*Erdmüte*, 1853; *Ein eigen Haus*, 1853); in others the emigrants return to Germany (*Ein eigen Haus*, 1853; *Barfußle*, 1856). These stories reflect the reality of Berthold's own experiences; his younger brother, Julius, and several other family members emigrated throughout the years. Avraham Barkai has shown that the Auerbach family was no exception. He estimates the Jewish proportion of German immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century to be three to four times its percentage of the German population at large.⁷ If one considers that German immigration to the United States alone ran yearly totals over 100,000 in the late 1860s and early 1870s, with 149,671 immigrants in 1873, the numbers are remarkable.⁸

It is no wonder, then, that the topic of emigration permeated Berthold's fiction. Rarely, though, does the action in his fiction physically move to the United States. Rather, portrayals of America are related through newspaper articles, learned texts, personal accounts, and letters.⁹ There is good reason for this restricted narrative perspective: Berthold never once set foot in the United States. Although Berthold's knowledge of the United States was varied and well-informed, August's trip provided him a rare opportunity to experience the United States on the most intimate level outside of being there himself. Unfortunately, the question of Berthold's opinions on August's trip and various undertakings can no longer be answered directly. The standard sources for Berthold's biography do not refer to August's trip other than to record his

departure.¹⁰ Thus, the letters August wrote to Berthold become key to understanding the significance of the trip for both father and son.

The main topics of August's letters are the simultaneous German and North American publications of Berthold's latest novel, *Waldfried*,¹¹ his apprenticeship as a bookseller, his encounter with his American relatives, and the possibility of his settling permanently in the United States. These issues are all inexorably linked to August's relationship with his father, which had deteriorated in the summer of 1873. In two of his letters home, he mentions their last meeting before the trip in Tarasp, Switzerland, before his departure. In the first, August tells of the travails (Qualen) of that meeting:

[W]enn ich oft an die Zukunft denke, nach meiner Rückkehr, erfüllt mich bange Sorge, dass trotz des klaren Erkennens u. des aufrichtigen Strebens von beiden Seiten unser Verhältniss doch wieder getrübt werden könne, und dass die Gespenster der Tarasp-Qualen wie sie mir über's Meer gefolgt sind u. mich in meinen Träumen plagen, nochmals Fleisch u. Blut annehmen u. unter neuen Gestalten neu aufleben möchten. . . . [M]it der einzig wahren Liebe, dem amor intellektualis—u. wenn mein Verstand scharf genug ist, mich zur Liebe zu zwingen, so muss er mir gar manchmal auch den allerdings unwillkommenen Dienst erweisen, mich glauben zu machen, dass Du nicht unfehlbar bist. (3-16 April 1874)

In the second letter, he divulges the source the source of his anguish:

Du sagtest mir einmal in Tarasp, daß mein Urtheil über die Dinge nur ein oberflächliches sei. Nun denn – wenn ich Dir nach meinen Begriffen eingehend über meinen Eindruck berichtete, fürchte ich, daß ich nur das Dilemma vor mir habe – Dir entweder zu beweisen, daß Du kein richtiges Urtheil über mich hast, oder was sowohl schlimmer als vielleicht wahrscheinlicher ist, daß Du leider! Recht hast. (12 June 1874)

Berthold's low opinion of August's judgement, as August laments, forced him to view his trip as a means to prove his father wrong.

August's first letter home exposes his tendency throughout to assert himself as an authority on America. He writes it from the home of Berthold's younger brother, Julius, who emigrated to the United States over thirty years earlier. Uncle Julius's home on Long Island quickly turns into a refuge for August, while Uncle Julius himself becomes the intermediary between father and son. Here August settles in to perfect his English (14 September 1873). In the meantime, he becomes better acquainted with Julius, the quintessential self-made man. Julius left Germany in despair, with his hopes of a medical career hanging in the balance. He later established himself on Long Island as a physician, married, raised a family (two surviving children), and ran a thriving medical practice and the farm on which he lived (14 September 1873). August closes this letter with an odd postscript: "Ocean Point liegt auf Long Island d.h. der langen Insel, die Du auf der Karte bei New York sich vor dem

Continente hin erstreckend finden kannst" (14 September 1873). It seems unlikely, since Berthold had remained in some contact with Julius and had spent the better part of his career integrating the topic of the United States into his fiction and non-fiction, that he would not have known the approximate location of Long Island if not the exact location of his brother's residence. August perceives his personal experience as a means to propose himself as an authority on the subject, someone whose opinions and advice are indispensable, even to his father.

With Julius's help, August takes steps in the course of the correspondence to establish this authority. In essence, he appropriates the world Berthold had created in his texts. Soon after the first letter, August writes from New York:

Ich kann Dich versichern[,] lieber Vater[,] Deine Anschauungen von Amerika sind einestheils nicht grossartig genug, auf der andern Seite aber auch nicht richtig; Onkel Julius sagt dasselbe. ich bitte Dich recht dringend—Du weisst, dass ich das nur ungern u. in Deinem eigensten Interesse sage—nimm dich recht in Acht mit der Schilderung von amerikanischen Verhältnissen in Deinen Büchern u. mit den amerikanischen Bücher-Verhältnissen. Auch Onkel Julius sagt, im "Landhaus a[m]R[hein]" [1869] verlörest du den Boden unter den Füßen, sowie Du den amerikanischen Boden betrittst. (4 October 1873)

Twice August invokes his uncle's name to lend credence to his assertions that Berthold's depictions are "nicht richtig." Nothing, as August intimates here—not even Berthold's years of research and personal correspondence with friends in the United States—can replace actual experience. Less than two weeks later August repeats this plea almost verbatim: "Ich bitte Dich recht dringend, sei recht vorsichtig mit Deinen amerikanischen Schilderungen" (23 October 1873).

Although August validates his experience in the United States over that of Berthold's fiction, he nonetheless relies on Berthold's fiction for his own accounts in his letters. In the New Year's letter, for instance, August describes one of the men he just met:

Sylvester war ich bei Frl. Koch. Ausser mir waren nur noch zwei Herren da: ein jüngerer, hannoverschen Baron, jetzt Musiklehrer hier, u. ein älterer, von altem braunschweigischem Adel, früher deutscher Major. Ich ging noch von 1-2 mit ihm auf seine Stube u. er erzählte mir seine Schicksale. Er war ein reicher Plantagen- u. Sklavenbesitzer im Süden, verlor im Kriege die letzteren, was ihn die ersteren auch bald verlieren machte. Alles was er dagegen eintauchte war der Generalstiel; ist deutscher Aristokrat geblieben u. amerikanischer geworden, wie ja alle früheren Sklavenbesitzer Aristokraten sind (cfr. Landh. a. R.), schreibt jetzt geographische Bücher, augenblicklich eins das in 150,000 Exemplaren gedruckt u. dann durchs ganze Land colportirt wird. (1 January 1874)

August has actually met a man who corresponds to Berthold's fictional Sonnenkamp in *Das Landhaus am Rhein*. Like his real-life counterpart, Sonnenkamp made his fortune as a slaveholder in the South and during the course of the novel is attempting to buy his own aristocratic title. Unlike the man August meets, Sonnenkamp dies during the Civil War, brought down by one of his former slaves.¹³ One can view this episode in different ways. Perhaps August was attempting to link his own experiences to his father's fiction in order to authenticate Berthold's image of the United States or to find common areas of discussion. In his personal review of *Waldfried*, which Berthold expressly requested, August praises his father's "correct" depiction of America: "die großartig richtige Anschauung von Amerika (wie charakteristisch für deine Entwicklung der Weg von der Rolle Amerika's im [Viereckig oder die amerikanische Kiste, 1853] bis zur Auffassung Ludwig's [in *Waldfried*]) u.s.w." (12 June 74). In any case, August insinuates himself as the authority on America against whom Berthold's opinions and works must now be measured.

Indeed, August becomes a storyteller himself. He begins to write early on about his experiences as well as the differences in lifestyle he encounters between the United States and Germany. One example is when August describes his fear of the elevated railway in New York City:

[I]n der neunten Avenue geht von der 34. Strasse bis ganz an's Ende der untern City eine ungefähr halb-haushohe "Elevated Railroad" frei auf eisernen Pfeilern über das geschäftige Strassentreiben; im Anfang sah es mir zu gefährlich aus, nach 8 Tagen entschloss ich mich endlich einmal u. nun bin ich's schon ganz gewohnt u. fahre also täglich in ungefähr 12 Minuten mit der Eisenbahn herauf u. herunter. Die Station oben ist gleich an der Ecke, hier unten habe ich noch 5 Minuten zu gehen.

Other letters portray the cityscape of New York City (23 October 1873), the beautiful New Jersey countryside and autumnal weather (30 October 1873), the odd American jury system (30 October 1873), election day (4 November 1873), and the types of housing in Philadelphia (4 January 1874). If readers of the correspondence are disappointed in the relative lack of travelogue August provides, there are ample reasons why. For one, he keeps a diary during his travels.¹⁴ Also, he plans soon after his arrival to "record" his impressions (*fixieren*), to "process" them (*verarbeiten*), in order to share them with his father after his return to Germany:

Ich glaube, lieber Vater, ich werde, solange ich hier bin, dir wenig über meine Eindrücke hier berichten; ich muss dieselben gehörig verarbeiten, fixire mir sie aber hier u. verspreche mir einen grossen Genuss für Tage nach meiner Rückkehr, wenn ich Dir dieselben mittheile. (23 October 1873)

Five months later, August is still hopeful his trip will provide him and his father points of connection, with August regaling Berthold with stories of America:

Ach lieber Vater! Wie viel werde ich Dir zu erzählen haben, wenn ich zurückkomme. Die erste Zeit wollen wir täglich regelmässig für eine Stunde in Begleitung einer ausgezeichneten Cigarre nach Amerika auswandern—ohne Seekrankheit, ein nicht zu verachtender Vortheil; vor Allem aber wollen wir uns recht gut vertragen. (29 March 1874)

Another significant reason for August's limited narratives is his father's reproach of the idea. When August learns that the centennial of the United States is to be mentioned in Berthold's upcoming novel *Waldfried*, he comments:

Ich würde Dir meine Ansicht über die Gründe, weswegen das [Centennial] so gekommen ist [es wird nicht international, sondern nur national]—u. diese Gründe sind sehr charakteristisch—auseinandersetzen, wenn du nicht einmal vor mehreren Monaten einen allerdings ebenso schwachen als schüchternen Versuch, zu Dir über sog. Allgemein-Interessantes zu reden, zurückgewiesen hättest.¹⁵

August's narratives are experiential in nature and differ in that way from his father's fiction. Consequently, the one observable commonality between father and son—the writing about America—serves not to bring them together but instead to alienate them from one another.

This clash between August's and Berthold's perceptions of authority is evident not only in the textual arena but also in the publishing one. The first signs of August's ambition to become Berthold's American representative appear soon after his arrival.¹⁶ While August makes the rounds of the New York booksellers, he encounters competition in this regard:

Eben habe ich mich bei Steiger eingeführt u. erfahre zu meinem Entsetzen dort, dass ein Herr Jacobi, Kleiderjude aus Californien, mit oder ohne Dein Wissen eine höllische Geschichte angefangen hat. Du wirst durch Kapp Steigers Brief erhalten u. wahrscheinlich schon beantwortet haben. Ich beschwöre Dich dringend u. herzlich: glaube mir oder bilde Dir wenigstens ein, dass Du die amerikanischen Verhältnisse überhaupt u. die buchhändlerischen ganz speziell höchst unvollkommen kennst; lass Dich nicht durch vermeintlichen Familienpflichten dazu verführen, . . . Mache Dir auch gefl. klar, dass es, seitdem ich Buchhändler bin[,] Deine Pflicht wäre—wenigstens nach meiner Ansicht—derartige Sachen nicht mit Umgehung meiner Persönlichkeit, wodurch ich vor Steiger u. den Andern wie ein Schuljunge dastehe, sondern nur durch mich zu arrangieren. (25 September 73)

August is less concerned with Jacobi's exact proposal for Berthold's works than he is embarrassed that Berthold has apparently entered negotiations without him, thereby

frustrating his own wish to become involved in his father's dealings.¹⁷ This incident introduces the question that consumes August's letters for the coming months: who will supervise the American translation of *Waldfried*.¹⁸ When August suggests to his father that he should be careful with his depictions of the United States, he also brings up the notion of his editing his father's work:

Ich bitte Dich recht dringend, sei recht vorsichtig mit Deinen amerikanischen Schilderungen, vielleicht: sende mir dieselben zur Nachsicht, bevor du drucken lässt. Wenn Du Dir im Allgemeinen so Viel von Deinem neuen Buche [*Waldfried*] versprichst, so ist es doppelt wichtig, auch in dieser Beziehung diesmal recht correct zu sein. (23 October 1873)

Once again, August links Berthold's depictions of the United States to his authority on the matter, thereby appropriating his father's fiction. He reminds Berthold that he has the requisite experience to determine whether or not his portrayals of the United States are accurate and asks his permission to edit pertinent sections of *Waldfried*. During the course of having the manuscript of *Waldfried* translated, August asks Berthold if he has corrected "Bunker Hill" to "Bull Run" (2 February 1874). When he receives the part of the manuscript in question, he expresses his disappointment that the mistake went uncorrected: "es durchfährt mich wie ein kalter Blitzstrahl" (29 March 1874). August imposes his editorial expertise, annoyed that Berthold has allowed this mistake to stand ("Aber ärgern thut's mich doch!").

August's letters are replete with requests to represent Berthold in the *Waldfried* translation and not—under any circumstances—to allow anyone else to do so. A typical letter reads: "Lieber Vater. Schicke mir ungesäumt das Manuscript u. laß keinen andern Menschen auf Gottes Erdboden in dieser Angelegenheit handeln ausser mir!"¹⁹ In one letter, August comments on Berthold's unwillingness to have his son assume the responsibility:

Trotz Deines zwar nicht ausdrücklich, jedoch indirekt deutlich genug ausgesprochenen Verlangens: "dass ich mich nicht um Sachen bekümmere, die mich nichts angehen," halte ich es doch für eine höhere Pflicht, noch einmal—allerdings, wenn ohne Erfolg, zum letztenmale—auf die Uebersetzungsfrage Deines neuen Romans zurückzukommen. (17 November 1873)

Eventually August is able to convince Berthold to allow him to oversee the translation and publication of *Waldfried*, but the episode has angered August, as he vividly lays out in one letter as the "große Sache." After August lists the financial and literary advantages Berthold would have enjoyed through his representation, he lists the positive and negative effects the entire affair has had for him professionally:

a.) positiver Nutzen: ich hätte dadurch für diese Specialität mir einen guten Namen gemacht, die besten Verbindungen hier anknüpfen können u. für

mein eigenes zu gründendes Geschäft bereits das wohlverdiente Vertrauen in mein Geschick als Kapital einzuwerfen gehabt; so werde ich nun . . . ich kann das Dir wie mir wohl verhehlen—

b.) direkten Schaden haben: man weiss ich bin Dein Sohn; man weiss ich bin Buchhändler; man wundert sich allgemein, dass Du mir die Sache nicht in die Hand gibst, man wird sich noch mehr wundern, wenn man erst sieht, wie erbärmlich die ganze Geschichte in's Leben treten wird, denn man wird mir natürlich nicht glauben können, dass ich dabei gar nicht mit gespielt habe; während ich sonst wenigstens *tabula rasa* gehabt hätte, werde ich nun bei meinen geschäftlichen Transactionen gegen ein unverdientes übles Vorurtheil zu kämpfen haben u.s.w. (28 December 1873)

Even Uncle Julius writes to Berthold in support of August's accomplishments and to admonish his brother for not having given August freer reign in handling the arrangement: "Es ist wirklich wunderbar, wie schnell er die ganze Sache richtig gefasst u. hättest du seinem Rathe unbedingt gefolgt, u. ihm die ganze Geschichte freier übergeben, wäre es pecuniär gut abgelaufen" (7 February 1874). Finally, Berthold himself sends complimentary words:

Gestern habe ich Deinen liebenswürdigen Brief . . . bekommen. Die Zufriedenheit mit mir, die Du darin ausdrückst, berührt mich eigentlich wehmüthig, denn ich empfinde etwas wie Reue über meine letzten Briefe. So Recht ich auch materiell habe, so wäre es doch wohl meine Pflicht gewesen, dies nicht so gerade heraus zu sagen. (10 February 1874)

The *Waldfried* translation symbolizes August's quest to become a reputable bookseller, and his letters tell the story of an apprentice bookseller actively seeking out the best masters in his field and obtaining excellent work experience. Surely the Auerbach name (and letters of introduction) provided August better access to booksellers and publishing houses, but he demonstrates with the *Waldfried* translation that he used his connections well to learn about the American book trade. The notable publishers (Frederick Leypoldt of *Publishers' Weekly*, Henry Holt of Boston, Henry C. Lea of Philadelphia, James Russell Lowell of *The Atlantic Monthly*) August meets and/or works for are surpassed in reputation only by the politicians and men of letters with whom he became acquainted: President Ulysses S. Grant, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.²⁰ In the end, however, August's achievements do not convince Berthold that he is capable of managing his father's affairs in the United States, and August's castigation of his father's actions bear witness to their continuing discord:

Hast Du nicht die Verpflichtung, wenigstens solange ich in diesem Lande bin, alles Derartige nur durch mich zu machen? Habe ich Dich etwa nicht gut vertreten? Frage 'mal sowohl Lexow als Holt—ob sie nicht allen Re-

spekt vor meiner Geschäftsgewandheit haben u. ob ich nicht mehr erlangt habe, als irgend ein Anderer hätte erreichen können. . . . Ich weiss nicht, soll ich sagen: Ich fürchte oder ich hoffe, dass ich da nach meiner Rückkehr gar mächtig zu kämpfen haben werde. (30 June 1874)

As late as July, August is still admonishing his father to seek his counsel before entering in any new arrangement concerning the United States: "Ich bitte Dich, wiederholt, aber zum letztenmal, nichts mehr für Amerika ohne mich anzufangen" (10 July 1874).

August's and Berthold's complex relationship as well as August's efforts to build a career were heavily influenced by his conflicted self-image which finds expression in his letters. After ten months in the United States, August sent his father a copy of a notice from the *American Booksellers Guide*.²¹

Auerbach's son is described by Mrs. Ames as tall, graceful and handsome, a pure Saxon, with a wealth of blonde hair and a depth of blue eyes sufficient to turn any American maiden's head. He is described by Mr. Holt, in whose office he has spent many hours, as of medium height, rather stout, well knit, a pure Hebrew, with black eyes and short black hair. (15 June 1874)

The disparity between the two descriptions, culminating in the Saxon/Hebrew dichotomy, accurately captures August's dilemma. He could have, if he had wanted to, negotiated the fluid nature of identity while in America. To a certain degree, August could more easily maintain he was a German and a Jew while in the United States. In his study, "Jewish Race and German Soul in Nineteenth-century America," Stanley Nadel outlines the extent to which German-American Jews participated in the German-American community as a whole and writes: "In nineteenth-century America, the German-American and German-Jewish communities were overlapping and inextricable entities."²² "Beyond *Kultur* and the German language," Nadel emphasizes, "the German Jews were also tied to their German heritage as participants in and vociferous defenders of the German immigrants' popular culture" (310). This description calls to mind one of the central issues of Berthold's own self-image, his desire to be viewed as both Jew and German. Shortly after the publication of the first *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, Berthold wrote to his friend, Ferdinand Freiligrath:

Ich muß Dir auch noch sagen, daß es mir besondere Freude macht, daß es mir, einem Juden, gelungen ist, etwas aus dem Innersten des deutschen Volksgeistes zu offenbaren. Du weißt, lieber Freund, was ich vom Judentum halte, aber jede innere und äußere Gehässigkeit gegen die Juden tut mir in tiefster Seele weh. Es ist mir daher besonders lieb, Dir sag' ich es frei, daß die Gehässigkeit die Juden nicht mehr so leicht Fremde heißen kann. Ich glaube, ich bin ein Deutscher, ich glaube es bewiesen zu haben, wer mich einen Fremden heißt, mordert mich zehnfach. Ich komme oft auf dieses Thema, aber Du weißt nicht, l. Freiligrath, was ein Judenkind auf der Welt zu dulden hat; auch ich habe viel, viel geduldet. . . . (qtd. in Bettelheim, 161)

Berthold felt that with his collection of stories he had proven that a Jew could also be a German. The difference between Berthold's letter to Freiligrath and the descriptions of August is that the dual identity is placed upon August. That he could be perceived as both "Saxon" and "Hebrew" suggests perhaps that he could assume different identities in the United States. Now August stood on the brink of realizing his father's dream—but in a different country.

If August experienced such a reciprocative relationship, he did not express it in his letters home. Instead, his letters lay bare an unsettling aspect of his character: his contempt for Jews in general and his family members in particular. The first observable example is when he speaks about the "Kleiderjude" Jacobi in regard to his father's American publishing interests.²³ Perhaps Jacobi had initially made his money in the clothing industry or was still active in it, but his focus had now shifted to publishing. August despises this rag man because of the social class stigma attached to his previous "dirty" profession and is clearly skeptical of Jacobi's intentions, warning Berthold not to be seduced by "vermeintliche Familienpflichten" (25 September 1873). (Apparently Berthold had felt obligated to explore business opportunities with Jacobi based on a recommendation by a family member.) August eventually learns that Jacobi is not from California but Germany and tries to make certain that Berthold severs ties to him.²⁴

As much as August's disparaging remarks about Jacobi might be attributed to his desire to represent his father and to discount Jacobi's qualifications, they nonetheless illustrate how August separates "Jewishness" into acceptable and unacceptable categories, and his condescension betrays his own racial prejudices. To this end, his descriptions of Berthold's relatives (the Auerbach family sent several nephews and nieces to America) further this interpretation. To be sure, August loved Uncle Julius, who had married a Methodist and whose son was a freethinker (18 November 1873). He also delighted in visiting relatives in the Midwest, one of whom he called "ein treues Specimen der Auerbach'schen Art" (4 August 74). For the most part, however, the Auerbach relatives fared much worse. August would often visit Emanuel, an editor, and Simeon while he was in New York. His description of Emanuel differs starkly from his glorious accounts of Julius: "Emanuel ist seit vorigem Monat Redacteur einer hiesigen untergeordneten deutschen Zeitung, der New Yorker Demokrat, geworden; er ist ein sehr intelligenter Mensch wie mir scheint, aber seine Häuslichkeit ist mir zu schmutzig u. zu jüdisch" (18 November 1873). August had little regard for Emanuel, Simeon, or their brother Seligmann:

Ich glaube[,] ich habe es Dir noch nicht gesagt: ich halte diese Brüder Simeon, Emmanuel [sic] wie Seligmann für höchst gemeine Naturen, schmutzig, vor Allem *geizig*, falsch u. hinterlistig, Alles unter der Maske der grössten Biederkeit. Ich habe keine Lust u. keinen Beruf, ihnen das zu verstehen zu geben, aber Dir muss ich es sagen, wenn Du an diesen lumpigen Juden mit dem hübschen Gesicht u. der prächtigen Stimme, Simeon Auerbach, so herzliche

Briefe schreibst, wie Du es gethan hast.²⁵

A principal problem for August is the brothers' identity as "shabby Jews" ("lumpig[e] Juden"). Earlier he complained to Berthold that Seligman was neither German enough when he lived in Germany nor American enough after his time spent in the United States:

Endlich lebt, wie Du ja weisst, Seligmann Auerbach hier [Philadelphia]; ich kann mir nicht helfen, ich kann die Leute—bis jetzt wenigstens—nicht leiden. Er ist da so der richtige Typus der Leute, die nicht genug in Deutschland gelernt haben, um Deutsche geblieben zu sein, u. vom Amerikaner wiederum nur die üblen Sitten angenommen haben; so ist denn Sprache, Fühlen u. Denken ein Gemisch der verschiedenartigsten Elemente u. mir, nachdem ich bereits diverse Specimina der Art gesehen u. so bereits das individuell— u. völker-psychologische Interesse daran verloren, einfach unangenehm. (28-30 December 1873)

On some level, August understands how negative stereotypes are perpetuated by the majority, as stated in the letter below, but he nonetheless characterizes the Auerbach cousins in that same negative light:

Simeon Auerbach schränkt sein Geschäft ein, er giebt die Cigarren-Fabrikation auf, entlässt seine Arbeiter, bezieht ein kleineres Lokal u. verkauft Blätter-Tabak; ich will hoffen, dass er nicht bankerott wird wie Seligmann vor 2 Jahren. . . . Ich habe übrigens keine Lust, Simeon zu zeigen wie ich von ihm denke, schon aus Rücksicht für seine vortreffliche Frau. Sehr nahe war ich ihm nie u. ich kann mich nicht erinnern, Dir je anders berichtet zu haben. Ich werde es aber nicht mit ihm berichtet haben. Er hat n[icht] z[uletzt] davon seine Schuld, alle die unangenehmen Eigenschaften, die die Juden im Allgemeinen durch die Schuld der Nichtjuden haben. (3-16 April 1874)

Even when these relatives are successful, August remains contemptuous. At one point, Emanuel wants to be a correspondent for the German publication *Deutsche Blätter* and seeks Berthold's recommendation, causing August to write:

Ich glaube, du kannst ihn—mit aller Reserve für den Fall, dass er doch einmal dummes Zeug macht—empfehlen, denn so wenig wie er es verstanden hat sich selber individuell ein ordentlich[es] Leben zu schaffen in Familie, Haus u.s.w, so sehr versteht er es auf der andern Seite allgemeine Fragen in seinem Redaktionsbureau mit der Feder ebenso fein wie glänzend zu behandeln, ja oft zu lösen. Aber Reserve, lieber Vater. Denn so gut seine einzelnen Artikel oft sind, so schlecht ist oft seine Taktik im Allgemeinen. Auf keinen Fall kannst Du mehr thun als ihm die Thüre aufmachen—ja nicht[s] garantiren, auch nicht das Kleinste! (30 June 1874)

August rarely likens himself to these relatives and draws definite distinctions between them and himself. In disparaging his "shabby" Jewish relatives, August disassociates himself from them and moves into the secular world of his apparently assimilated uncle. One letter in particular illustrates how August views himself in this new environment:

[I]ch kenne wenig angenehmere Stunden, als die vor einer Soiree, wenn ich in Frack, weisser Halsbinde u. engen Stiefeln, den Ueberrock mit den neuen Handschuhen parat gelegt, der Dinge warte die da kommen sollen. So jetzt. Ich rauche meine Cigarre[,]. . . strecke die Beine vor's Feuer, lese den N.Y. Herald u. reisse mich nur auf ein paar Minuten aus dieser bequemen Situation, um Dir diese Expectoration mitzuthemen. Ich gehe nämlich heute zu meinem ersten amerikanischen Ball. (4 January 1874)

The man sitting before the fire is impeccably dressed, reading one of the leading newspapers in the country, anticipating the upcoming social event. August fashions an identity that is not akin to the "cheap" ("geizig") and "dirty" ("schmutzig") Auerbach cousins, Emanuel, Simeon, and Seligmann. This man seeks to belong to a culture he does not associate with his relatives nor to the dirty rag man Jacobi. He also passes himself off as someone who comfortably associates with the likes of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and President Grant. August never explicitly states that he longed to be a "pure Saxon,"²⁶ but his letters reveal that the image of the "pure Saxon" was closer to his own ideal identity of the man sitting before the fire than that of the "pure Hebrew." He explicitly seeks to shed the particular cloak of Jewishness he linked to the "Kleiderjuden" and "lumpigen Juden." Mixed into this recipe is the classic American dream of wealth and status.

The last major theme of August's letters is the prospect of his permanently settling in the United States. Several times throughout his stay, August mentions how seductive life in America is for him, remarking in March how he could easily settle down and establish a family there:

Man macht mir hier von mehreren Seiten sehr stark die Cour u. ich kann z.B., wenn ich will, ein sehr nettes gescheutes Mädchen mit 18,000\$ jährlich jetzt u. ebensoviel nach dem Tod ihrer Mutter, binnen jetzt u. 48 Stunden haben, u. manches andere Mädchen auch—aber ich will nicht. Ich muss auf meiner Hut sein, wenn bei meinem beständigen Heimweh (Verlangen nach einem Heim, wie ich Dir 'mal erklärt habe) könnte ich mich leicht von meinen gegenwärtigen Gefühlen über meine zukünftigen Bedürfnisse täuschen lassen. (29 March 1874)

Soon thereafter, he vows to return to Germany despite the temptation to remain:

[I]ch muss eine Frau u. ein Geschäft haben (chronologisch vielmehr umge-

kehrt) u. das ebensowohl je schneller desto besser als auch nicht übereilt. Es haben sich mir hier nach beiden Seiten hin manche verlockende[n] Aussichten eröffnet, ich habe soweit man überhaupt vorherbestimmen kann—vor, mit dem Einen wie mit dem Andern zu warten, bis ich nach Deutschland zurückgekehrt bin. (3-16 April 1874)

He even begs Berthold not to ask him about the girl from Philadelphia anymore, for their relationship is over (20 May 1874). Indeed, he reminds his father that he intends to establish a house “im buchhändlerischen . . . Sinne” and only afterward to establish a house “im bürgerlichen Sinne” (24 May/3 June 1874). Despite August’s intention to return to Germany, he toys with the idea of staying as late as June: “Ich weiß recht wohl, daß ich für die Zukunft ausschauen muß, da ich *vielleicht* nie ein sehr Viel verdienender Mensch werde—aber wenn ich ein Weib finde, die mir sonst paßt, so hoffe ich, daß das doch keine *Bedingung* ist!” (12 June 1874). Three days later, August reports about yet another woman who has caught his fancy: “Aber, wenn ich mich im Betreff meiner nicht irre, so komme ich ohne Frau zurück—ich darf nicht anders handeln. Der Mensch lebt um zu arbeiten d.h. die latenten Kräfte sich zu entwickeln u. nach auswärts wirken zu lassen” (15 June 1874). Ultimately, August cannot loosen his father’s hold on him:

Zwischen den Zeilen lese ich, daß du es zwar vielleicht nicht wünschest, aber doch billigen würdest, daß ich in Amerika bliebe. Dem zur Entgegnung annectire ich mir mutatis mutandis das Wort des herben, harten, in Amerika herumgeworfenen Sohnes: Ich habe Alles überlegt. Was ein Mensch in der Welt auch thue, u. sei es noch so groß u. weit wirkend—hat er nicht seine volle Pflicht gegen seine Eltern erfüllt, so ist alles Andern hinfällig. Ich bleibe bei Dir, u. dem öffentlichen Leben gehört nur so viel von meinem Dasein als Du davon entbehren kannst. D.h. in meine Lage übersetzt: Wir beide haben, zu neun Zehnteln durch meine Schuld bis jetzt noch nicht von einander gehabt was wir hätten haben können; ich speciell bin von Dir weder voll erkannt worden noch auch im Stande gewesen Dir zu zeigen wie sehr ich Dich verehere u. liebe. (24 May/3 June 1874)

August Auerbach’s correspondence with his father captures a moment in time when August literally stood between two worlds. In America, he was free to contemplate starting a “new” life, even reinventing himself in a way. Yet, the letters demonstrate that August could not escape his identity as Berthold Auerbach’s son. Even in the United States, as the *American Booksellers Guide* was quick to point out, he was “Auerbach’s son” (15 June 1874). After his return to Germany, August carried out plans to open his own bookstore in Stuttgart in 1875 (Scheuffelen, 90). In the tradition of his father, who had edited two literary calendars,²⁷ he established *Auerbach’s Deutscher Kinder-Kalender*. However, August did not go on to manage his father’s literary legacy. When Berthold was near death in February 1882, he named his friend, the writer Friedrich Spielhagen, as the editor of his “opera omnia”; Spielhagen was to

work in concert with Berthold's cousin Jakob Auerbach, Anton Bettelheim, and Berthold's younger son, Eugen, a lawyer (quoted in Bettelheim, 382).

Upon his death, Berthold was buried in his hometown of Nordstetten. His biographer, Anton Bettelheim, describes his tombstone:

Noch ehe das Jahr um war, deckte ein grauer Granitwürfel die letzte Ruhestätte des Dichters. Sie trägt—in bezeichnendem Unterschied zu den sonst durchaus mit rein hebräischen oder zweisprachigen, hebräischen und deutschen Inschriften versehenen Grabsteinen seiner Nordstetter Angehörigen—nur den deutschen Namen BERTHOLD AUERBACH: Er wollte neben seinen Eltern und Geschwistern begraben sein, in schwäbischer Erde, im Heimatdorf, als Deutscher. Seine Enkel sind, wie die Nachkommen Moses Mendelssohn[s], Christen geworden. (Bettelheim, 386)

Finally in death, Berthold came as close to being recognized as both “a German” (“ein Deutscher”) and a Jew: “Um ein Uhr mittags setzte sich der Zug nach dem jüdischen Friedhof in Bewegung” (Bettelheim, 383). The German name carved in stone marks a permanent authority that is ultimately just a chimera; Berthold remains a Jew. August failed to shape an identity independent of his father, an identity that called for an erasure of Jewishness. Torn between two worlds, he emulated his father by publishing a calendar but could not realize the independence he had sought on his American journey. However dissatisfied, August remained a Jew in Germany. The next generation, however, buried its Jewish history in German soil. Bearing a German name in a Jewish cemetery, Berthold's tombstone comes to represent the transition he began, the transformation his son August struggled with, and the assimilation his converted grandchildren completed.

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Notes

¹ Leading up to unification in 1871, civil rights for Jews were established in 1861 in Württemberg and Bavaria, 1862 in Baden, and 1869 in the North German Confederation. See Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (München: C.H. Beck, 1983), 251. Recent studies on Berthold Auerbach's contribution to German-Jewish literary history include Helen Ferstenberg, “German-Jewish Creative Identity in the Age of Lessing and Beyond: Berthold Auerbach's *Dichter und Kaufmann*,” *Focus on Literatur* 5.1 (1998): 1-11; Jonathan Skolnik, “Writing Jewish History between Gutzkow and Goethe: Auerbach's *Spinoza* and the Birth of Modern Jewish Historical Fiction,” *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* 19.2 (1999): 101-25.

²Berthold Auerbach, *Briefe an seinen Freund, Jakob Auerbach: Ein literarisches Denkmal*, ed. Jakob Auerbach, 2 vols. (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten und Loening, 1884), 5 August 1873. All subsequent references will be cited by date.

³One reason to emigrate was the renewed attacks against Jews throughout Europe. In a letter to his cousin Jakob, Berthold expressed his contempt of recent events: Was sagst du zu dem Krawall in Stuttgart? Es sind Eruptionen der gereizten und mit Revolutionsstoff gefütterten Arbeiter und vielleicht auch Frühlingsschläge. Aber dieses Losgehen gegen jüdische Kleiderhändler! Da arbeiten wir jahraus, jahrein an Humanisierung, und dann kommen solche Pöbeleien zu Tag (27 March 1873). Less than a month later, Berthold writes again to Jakob: In russischen Zeitungen sind Judenverfolgungen zu Ostern angesagt, und nach der Allgemeinen Zeitung schiebt jetzt der Papst den Juden alle Schuld an den kirchlichen Conflicten zu, und die klerikalen Zeitungen sagen, die Juden müssen wieder in das Ghetto. Alles Blut könnte einem zu Gift und Galle werden, wenn man denkt, was das treibt, das sich Religion der Liebe nennt (11 April 1873).

⁴Fifty-four letters from August to Berthold written between September 1873 and September 1874 are located in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, Germany. All future citations refer to this collection and are cited by date. Some letters were written over the course of several days but are cited by the first date of the particular letter as they are catalogued in Marbach. Because of their frank content, August asked his father never to show the letters to anyone and even to lock them away if he were going to keep them (31 October 1873), but fortunately Berthold kept them.

⁵See J.E. Braun, "Ein Phänomen in der neuesten Literatur," *Europa: Chronik der gebildeten Welt* 1 (1843): 127-34.

⁶The original collection from 1843 as well as the sequels which appeared in 1849, 1852, and 1854 were published by Bassermann in Mannheim. The collection from 1876, titled *Nach dreißig Jahren: Neue Dorfgeschichten*, was published by Cotta in Stuttgart.

⁷Avraham Barkai, "German-Jewish Migrations in the Nineteenth Century, 1830-1910," *Central European Jews in America, 1840/1880: Migration and Advancement*, ed. Jeffrey S. Gurock, *American Jewish History* 2 (1985; reprint New York: Routledge, 1998), 43.

⁸In 1873 Germans comprised 33 percent of all immigrants and 38 percent of all Europeans to the United States. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: US Bureau of the Census, 1975), 1: 106. For further information on the reasons for German emigration, see Christine Hansen, "Die deutsche Auswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert—ein Mittel zur Lösung sozialer und sozialpolitischer Probleme?," *Deutsche Amerikaauswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert: Sozialgeschichtliche Beiträge*, ed. Günter Moltmann, *Amerikastudien* 44 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1976), 9-61, esp. 11. For German population statistics see Peter Marschall, "The Age of Demographic Transition: Mortality and Fertility," *Population, Labour and Migration in 19th- and 20th-Century Germany*, ed. Klaus J. Bade, *German Historical Perspectives* 1 (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1987), 15-33.

⁹For an analysis of Berthold Auerbach's image of the United States, see Kristina R. Sasaki, "Berthold Auerbach's Image of America: Reality versus Realism" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1988).

¹⁰Besides Berthold's published correspondence to his cousin, Jakob Auerbach, see Anton Bettelheim, *Berthold Auerbach: Der Mann, sein Werk, sein Nachlaß* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1907) and Thomas Scheuffelen, *Berthold Auerbach 1812-1882, Marbacher Magazin, Sonderheft* 36 (1985).

¹¹*Waldfried* was published in 1874 by the Cotta Publishing in Germany and by Henry Holt & Co. in the United States.

¹²Julius emigrated sometime after September 1841. See Bettelheim, 142, and Berthold's letter to Jakob from 5 September 1841.

¹³Berthold Auerbach, *Das Landhaus am Rhein, Schriften, Serie 2: Romane*, vol. 9-12 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1871), 12:221-22.

¹⁴See letter of 8 June 1874. Efforts thus far to locate this diary have been unsuccessful.

¹⁵9 March 1874. August does mention the commotion surrounding the centennial in a letter from 29 March 1874: Unberechenbares Amerika! Nun [Charles] Sumner todt ist, der ein Hauptgegner der Internationalität des Centennial war, ist die Agitation dafür neu aufgeflammt; letzte Woche grosses massmeeting hier [Philadelphia], die Stadt bewilligt eine zweite Million Dollars, der Congress thut vielleicht doch noch auch etwas, u. wenn nicht allzuviel Diebe in das Finanz-Committee gewählt werden, so kann's doch noch etwas Grossartiges werden. Diese Woche wird's entscheiden; ich habe den ganzen Gang beobachtet. War interessant.

¹⁶ Since the United States had no laws concerning copyright with foreign countries, it would have been incumbent upon Berthold to protect himself from unauthorized translations. The first United States copyright law establishing copyright relations with foreign countries was not enacted until 1891. See "Circular 1a: The United States Copyright Office: A Brief History and Overview," 4 April 1996, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (<http://www.loc.gov/copyright>).

¹⁷ A subsequent letter alludes to Jacobi's plan to exploit the market in the United States for Berthold's works in German: „Lass Dich bitte ja nicht mit dem Kleiderjuden Jacobi ein; übrigens ist der deutsche Markt für Deine Romane hier nicht so gross, wie der englische“ (31 October 1873). See also the letter from 4 January 1874, in which August warns Berthold again about Jacobi: Ich hoffe, der Mann ist für Dich ein- für allemal abgethan, nicht nur in der Weise dass er Dich nicht mehr zu vertreten berechtigt ist sondern dass Du auch eben seinen früheren oder etwa noch kommenden Rathschläge völlige Nichtachtung zu Theil werden lässt, am Besten wohl ihm gar nicht mehr erlaubst, Dich mit dergleichen zu behelligen.

¹⁸ Covering the years 1817-71, *Waldfried* is a family chronicle that coincides with Germany's path to unification. Like his earlier works, Berthold weaves in the theme of America, having Waldfried's son flee to America after the failed 1848 Revolution and return years later.

¹⁹ 21 November 1873. See also the letters from 25 September, 4 October, 31 October, 4 November, 6 November, 17 November, and 22 November 1873.

²⁰ See the letters from 23 October, 18 November, 28 December 1873 and 4 January, 10 February, 20 May, 24 May, 29 May, 10 July 1874.

²¹ August gives the citation "No 6 1 Juni 74. p. 196." See the Letter from 15 June 1874.

²² Stanley Nadel, "Jewish Race and German Soul in Nineteenth-century America," *Central European Jews in America, 1840/1880: Migration and Advancement*, ed. Jeffrey S. Gurock, American Jewish History 2 (New York: Routledge, 1998), 325.

²³ See above and the letters from 25 September and 31 October 1873. "Kleiderjude" is defined as "Trödeljude, der mit alten Kleidern handelt." See „Kleiderjude," *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm (1873; reprint 1984). Peddling was one of the primary occupations for Jews when they first immigrated to the United States, and as a consequence they were instrumental in the development of the mass production of clothing in the United States. See Allan Tarshish, "The Economic Life of the American Jew," *Central European Jews in America, 1840-1880: Migration and Advancement*, American Jewish History 2 (New York: Routledge, 1998), 87-117.

²⁴ 4 January 1874, 2 February 1874. August, jokingly perhaps, is even willing to bear the costs of having Jacobi beaten up: "Sei doch gefl. so gut, Herrn Jacoby [sic] auf meine Kosten von ein paar handfesten Kerlen durchprügeln zu lassen. Lass Dich doch um Himmelswillen nie wieder mit solchen Leuten ein!" (2 February 1874).

²⁵ 29-31 March 1874. Later in the same letter, August complains about Simeon being so cheap as to hold Berthold's letters to August until he has something else to send along with them in order to save postage.

²⁶ In fact, August once criticizes the "Christian" United States: "Das Amerika ist doch ein gar wunderliches Land: Extreme beieinander überall. Wir haben heute das wärmste Frühlingswetter u. wenn es nicht Sonntag wäre würden die guten Philadelphier so hübsch spazieren gehen können. Aber christianity über Alles!" (4 January 1874).

²⁷ Berthold Auerbach, *Der Gevattersmann: Neuer Kalender für den Stadt- und Landbürger auf 1845* (Karlsruhe: Gutsch und Rupp, 1844). Published for the years 1845-47, different editions of *Der Gevattersmann* have various subtitles; Berthold Auerbach, *Berthold Auerbachs Deutscher Volkes-Kalender* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1858, 1859 and Leipzig: Keil, 1860). Also with title variations, the *Deutscher Volkes-Kalender* was published for the years 1858-69.