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Klaus Hödl. *Wiener Juden - jüdische Wiener: Identität, Gedächtnis und Performanz im 19. Jahrhundert.* Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006. 198 S. EUR 22.90, cloth, ISBN 978-3-7065-4215-9.

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Klaus Hödl's book on Jewish mentalities in Vienna in the nineteenth century is divided into three parts: in the first part, Hödl presents a new methodology for the study of Jewish Vienna, drawn largely from the fields of cultural and postcolonial studies, with some qualifications. In the second part, he focuses on the founding of the Jewish Museum and other concrete examples to support his theory. In the third part, he explores the emergence of the new Jewish identity, or novel views of Jewish identity, that reconciled the city's eastern and western Jewish citizens. With this approach, Hödl challenges the established school of historiography around this topic. His exploration of Jewish consciousness within larger society is subtle and commendable for its direct focus on the indisputably core problem of the history of Jewish Vienna, namely, the loci of experience, identity, and awareness of the Jewish minority alongside majority peoples. At the same time, however, Hödl critically denies the historiography's polarization of majority and minority: he insists that both demographic groups responded similarly to a larger social context and that they interacted with each other in fluid ways that belied such strict categorizations.

Like changing non-Jewish identities, new visions of Jewishness were a product of a modernization; at heart, this work is really a contemplation of that process. The thematic crux of Hödl's book is the bridging of dichotomies, which resulted in unprecedented, modern forms of identity and behavior. Repeatedly, Hödl isolates oppositional polarities and seeks the social and political realities beneath them, behind them, or in opposition to them. Thus, he begins by challenging historians' split vision of majority and minority, and proceeds to question similar boundaries drawn between liberalism versus popular politics and antisemitism, elites and masses, city core and rowdy peripheral suburb, and east and west. He also reevaluates binary academic categories that cultural studies scholars project onto their subject matter. Thus, he discusses text and performance, which typically contrast "fixed order and verbally determined subversity" (p. 50), or "writing and speech" (pp. 52, 55). For cultural historians, these terms translate into the distinction between elite liberal politics that rest on legal and constitutional texts on the one hand, and the oral culture of mass politics and potential universal suffrage on the other.

Hence, in his first section, Hödl walks a fine line between a number of binaries. He relies on the dynamics of interaction and social activity, referring to identity in society as a constantly changing set of negotiated responses only briefly encapsulated in myths, images, or symbols. This difficult position flies in the face of received wisdom, which, in Hödl's view, derives from a hindsight colored by the Holocaust. He presents a picture of Jewish and non-Jewish exchange, through

"cultural transfer," "borderland[s]," and other "ideas like liminality, positioning [and] mapping" (pp. 9, 25-26, 28, 54). Identity here is encompassed in the "form of a ***performative*** act"; performance, in turn, is an "allegorization of subjectivity" that exists only in a particular moment and belongs to a known place (p. 42).

Part of this exchange involved the transition, according to the author, from the text-based culture of the nineteenth century, to the performance-driven culture of the twentieth. Yet, Hödl qualifies the contrast between text and performance with his analysis of antisemitism. According to him, text and performance overlapped, as did constitutional legalism and the rampant spread of antisemitism. He sees Karl Lueger's use of antisemitism as part of the rise of performance in politics, although Joseph Samuel Bloch, who simultaneously combatted antisemitism, also resorted to "performative" tactics. Hödl argues that Lueger disliked performance in private, and was in his individual personal relations not an antisemite. Thus, antisemitism was publicly "instrumentalized ... as [a] code for non-Jewish communal formation and thereby only indirectly affected Jews. It was in this sense often a strategy that should have mobilized combatants to the realization of specific political beliefs and less a program for the social exclusion of Jews" (pp. 21-22, 64-65). It was a tool to win votes or sway debates in the parliament; but hatred of the Jews, according to Hödl, did not alter the fact that Jews and non-Jews continued to interact, conduct business, and support each other's charitable interests in private. On this score, he quarrels with Marsha Rozenblit's findings on Jewish immigrants' exclusive urban settlement patterns. For him, "something new that reflected the plural ambitions, boundaries and positioning of ... part of Viennese Jewry" emerged, as exemplified by Christian influences on the styling of the Mariahilf synagogue (p. 26). And Jews and non-Jews alike are depicted here as having been subject to both the "oral" theatrics of mass politics and textual traditions.

Much of what Hödl discusses in the second section of his book regarding the Jewish Museum and the cultural and social exchange between Jews and non-Jews might well be interpreted by historians merely as symptoms of assimilation, or of less intense acculturation. For Hödl, the issues driving his alternate interpretation are liminality, cultural transfer, and performance. But ultimately, these ideas imply agency. Jews in assimilation or acculturation narratives are depicted as supplicants or "outsiders," reacting to non-Jewish culture and absorbing its precepts in a way that does not see them as participants, or "co-founders of the society" (pp. 10, 30, 71). Jews in Hödl's analysis engage in the same activities, but the meaning of their activities is different. He offers the Jews greater agency, a more accurately pegged place in history, as actors who had as much impact on society and politics and were as integrated as citizens as any member of the so-called dominant or majority nationalities.

Hödl traces equal Jewish agency to the founding of the Jewish Museum in 1895. He comments that the museum was established partly to diminish antisemitism by presenting artifacts from daily Jewish life that would make it more accessible to non-Jews and place it within the "collective consciousness" of the contemporary culture (pp. 10, 13). His example is the ***Gute Stube***, the Sabbath room, or front parlor in Jewish homes, a place reserved for family gatherings. A museum installation portraying a typical room of this kind appealed to liberal western Jewish nostalgia for an increasingly obsolete eastern Jewish observance and domesticity. But this introspection also served to make a private realm of Jewish daily existence tangible for non-Jews and secularized Jews, by emphasizing non-religious aspects of daily life that grew up around religious customs. The museum's exploration of Jewish identity therefore also appears as part of a general response exhibited by

all citizens to the changing conditions of modern life.

Hödl seeks more common ground in an extended discussion of the non-religious recasting of Jewish identity in terms of family and health. The dimension of health especially created a medical and quasi-scientific aspect to the apprehension of Jewish dietary and burial laws and other customs. Again, Hoedl claims these standards refer to the larger preoccupations of the new age, when both family and health were secularized and modernized by imperialists and positivists.

The third section of the book deals with the conciliation of western and eastern Jews in Vienna. Hödl describes the rift between the two branches of Austrian Jewry in the earlier part of the nineteenth century; this distinction was particularly emphasized in the early form of Jewish studies, a discipline that had its roots in the eighteenth-century Jewish enlightenment, or Haskalah. But Hödl claims that "a communal consciousness of both Jewries" gradually developed, particularly as biological categorizations of Jews as a race "strengthened the feeling of solidarity" and encouraged Jews to respond by asserting "cultural standards" (p. 10). Ghetto life and the shtetl particularly lost their negative connotations as they dovetailed with modern scientific justifications. Thus, Hödl concludes that Jewish identity was a function of cultural exchange and interaction with non-Jews, but that Jews contributed meaningfully to that process.

Hödl is right to observe the permeability between majority and minority. A demographic group that was simultaneously labeled both a minority and part of the majority because of assimilation or acculturation or because of its own independent activities defies easy definition and analysis. This quality led David Rechter to describe "the complex internal labyrinth of Viennese Jewish society" in terms of a "hybrid" between eastern and western Jewry.[1] It prompted Rozenblit to observe that the Jews played different roles in politics and society simultaneously, as she puts it, "the supranational state allowed them the luxury of separating the political, cultural, and ethnic strands in their identity ... [thereby developing] a tripartite identity in which they were Austrian by political loyalty, German (or Czech or Polish) by cultural affiliation, and Jewish in an ethnic sense."[2] Thus, historians in this field have not necessarily adhered to the rigid lines that Hödl suggests they follow.

Moreover, Hödl's book is not a conventional, empirical, fact-driven history; it does, however, rely on well-worn examples from the historiography. These include the Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus; Bloch's and Lueger's participation in late-nineteenth-century public life; eastern Jewish immigration to the capital; and the ritual murder accusation. Despite his critique of historical methods and call for a new approach, many of Hödl's basic assumptions do not depart significantly from conclusions already reached by historians such as Robert Wistrich or Jacques Kornberg. In other words, the proposed methodology implicitly rests heavily on the findings of the very scholars Hödl seeks to challenge. Furthermore, Hödl absorbs assumptions from the earlier historiography that are not supported by a reexamination of historical details. For example, he states that anti-Jewish sentiment bridged differences, creating a "cement" for the diverse non-Jewish population in Vienna. But evidence is available to suggest that antisemitism did not function reliably in this manner, as was apparent when the Czechs in Vienna broke with the Christian Socials during the 1895 elections over the issue of antisemitism.[3]

Hödl additionally appeals to cultural examples to explain history, such as Klimt's scandal-ridden 1894 commission for paintings at the University of Vienna; the contributions of Jewish artists to the Jewish Museum; or folklore about the eastern Jewish way of life. He discusses antisemitism in parliamentary debates with reference to scenes from Arthur Schnitzler's novel, *Der Weg ins Freie*

(1908). The latter conveys the impression that parliament was both a "stage" where antisemitism was used for dramatic effect, and a forum for displays of genuine anti-Jewish conviction. Hödl acknowledges the latter but stresses the former. He takes House theatrics as means to ends, measuring them in terms of their rhetorical value, and he highlights the working cooperation between Jews and non-Jews in parliament. To do so belies the real danger that existed when legislators trod this troubled path. Hödl's methodology offers a valuable alternate perspective of social, political, and cultural phenomena. But it ought to be used with, and tested against, historical documents that fit less comfortably with the core expectations of cultural studies.

Hödl declares that his investigation of the interaction between Jews and non-Jews in no way diminishes the evil meaning or ugly effects of contemporary antisemitism. That said, his conclusions qualify our stark view of the difficult period at the end of the nineteenth century, and could help to answer the question of what made antisemitism work and why it existed on its deepest levels. Thus, his results and approach here might have profitably been pushed further in this regard.

Finally, Hödl's approach opens up a notable area that he does not fully explore. Lurking beneath much of his analysis is a tension between individual and corporate identities and the corresponding oscillation between Viennese private and public life. For example, he refers in passing to newcomers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, whose extreme individual loneliness in the metropolis was eased only by ideological and cultural moves to submerge individual identity within corporate entities or movements. He mentions Jewish butchers, who voted for an antisemitic leader of their professional association because he appealed to their professional interests as private individuals. Hödl does not further investigate these issues, which actually lie beneath his discussion on the bridging of dichotomies. He declares that boundaries between Jews and non-Jews "were not clearly determined and were ever newly decided" (p. 19). However, it seems that these boundaries, while shifting, were also compartmentalized and allowed for paradoxes. Hödl points to a "consensual," "subcutaneous" antisemitism as well as vicious outright anti-Jewish attacks simmering alongside free, peaceful, and sociable interaction between Jews and non-Jews, including members of Lueger's electorate, "in the individual sphere" (pp. 19-21). This result is significant, and the question remains as to which activities, elements of identity, values, and concepts were relegated, even fleetingly, to the private sphere of individual interaction, and which to public corporate interaction, and why, when, and how. The answers to how that "compartmentalization" worked could explain much contradictory historical evidence in late imperial Austrian history (p. 24).

Notes

[1]. David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), 4, 6-7.

[2]. Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-4.

[3]. "Die Czechen beim 'Goldenen Luchsen,'" *Österreichische Wochenschrift*, August 23, 1895, 618.

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