

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE RELIGIOUS *BILDUNGSBÜRGERTUM* IN THE QUEEN CITY:
RACE AND CULTURAL POLITICS IN CINCINNATI'S GERMAN DENOMINATIONAL
NEWSPAPERS, 1830-1862

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For Alex, who gave me the courage to begin,
and Paul, who was with me at the end

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No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of a continent, a part of the main...

-- John Donne, "Meditation XVII," *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*

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Definition of Terms

Assimilation vs. Acculturation

For this project, these two terms are understood to be two different processes.

Assimilation was described by Robert Park and other sociologists of the 1920s and 1930s as a linear process that takes three generations to complete. First, immigrants arrive in America and they maintain their ethnic identity. Next, their children begin to take on some of the cultural habits (clothes, food, holidays, language, religion) of Americans, but they also retain some of their parents' ethnic identity. Finally, the immigrants' grandchildren have adopted all of the American customs—they are fully assimilated Americans. Scholars have been refining this three-stage model of linear assimilation in many ways: by describing a nonlinear path, by rejecting the 3-generation rule, and (especially in light of transnationalism) by thinking about contact and exchange of cultural habits and resistance to full assimilation, as well as describing types of assimilation (political, economic, structural, etc.) rather than full assimilation.

Acculturation can be thought of as a cultural type of assimilation, in which people adopt enough of the cultural habits of the receiving nation to be recognized as belonging to that nation.

I mean something entirely different for this project when I describe the Germans' understanding of acculturation. I start from the definition of "culture" that is given below. For the *Bildungsbürgertum*, culture was an unchangeable part of a human being, meaning that culture could not be adapted or adopted. Acculturation could not mean what Parks described; by changing one's clothing and eating habits, by celebrating different holidays and learning a new language, one changes only exterior elements. For the German Romantics, when the imperialists conquered indigenous people and prevented them from expressing their culture, the imperialists weren't just asking them to adopt new habits—they were forcing the indigenous

people to experience a kind of cognitive dissonance and a breakdown necessarily occurred. Because the Germans believed that humans act according to an internal drive that is unique to every culture, when a people is prevented from acting according to its cultural essence or nature and forced to act in an unnatural way, the cultural essence or *Volkgeist* of the people is destroyed and replaced by something imposed on them externally. The indigenous people could never recover their cultural essence, and as a result, the indigenous people could not progress any further in their development as a *Volk*. That *Volk* was considered to be corrupted. There is no concept of assimilation or intersectionality for the *Bildungsbürgertum*.

So there is a tension in this project between the Anglo-Americans' encouragement of the immigrants to acculturate (adopt American cultural habits so that they "fit in") and the staunch resistance of the *Bildungsbürger* to acculturation because they will lose their German essence or *Volkgeist*—they will no longer be German. The Germans were not worried about having to change their habits; they believed acculturation would destroy their nature.

Bildung

Bildung is a philosophical concept that originated in Germany in response to Enlightenment thought. It has gone through several distinct phases of development, and in the early-nineteenth century it was adapted by German Romantics to describe a program of cultural progress. Wilhelm von Humboldt reformed the German educational system using the tenets of *Bildung* when he created programs to train a new middle class of civil servants, or *Bildungsbürgertum*. Individual members of this class were called *Bildungsbürger*.

Bildung was also used to create a *Volk* identity for the German-speaking people, who lacked a national identity before 1871. By claiming that there was a German "spirit" or essence—that there existed a German *Volkgeist*—the German intellectuals encouraged all

Germans to self-reflect on that *Volksgeist* and to create cultural artifacts that embody a uniquely German spirit. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the goal or *Bildungsideal* was to culturally progress by engaging in activities such as producing art, writing literature, and recovering ethnic history.

Biological Determinism

This term has been popularized through the work of Stephen Jay Gould. It is succinctly defined by the *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism* as “the notion that there is a simple relationship between inherent (genetic) features of human beings and their position in society...especially the socially subordinated...suggesting that their disadvantages do not result from social structure, but instead that the social structure results from the inherited superior attributes of the socially advantaged versus the inherited inferiorities of the socially subordinated.”¹

Civilizing Mission and Conversion

The term “civilizing mission” was initially used by scholars in the 1990s to refer to the social agenda of late-nineteenth century colonialists and imperialists, which corresponded with the heyday of Christian foreign missions, although initially the term was not employed in a religious context. Rather, these imperialists are described as being on a mission to civilize the non-Westernized peoples of the world. Carey A. Watt explains, “In the nineteenth- and twentieth-century era of imperialism the civilizing mission was an ever-shifting set of ideas and practices that was used to justify and legitimize the establishment and continuation of overseas colonies, both to subject peoples and to citizens or subjects in the homeland.”² Subsequent

¹ Joseph L. Graves, “Biological Determinism,” in *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, ed. Patrick L. Mason (Farmington, MI: Gale, 2013).

² Carey A. Watt, “The Relevance and Complexity of Civilizing Missions c. 1800-2010,” in *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia*, ed. Carey A. Watt and Michael Mann (New York: Anthem, 2011), 1; On the civilizing mission and religious imperialism in the

research has led to an expanded use of the term that includes cases from the early-nineteenth century to today, and the term has been applied to such diverse events as Britain's colonization of India and NATO's intervention in Afghanistan. In the nineteenth century, Watt generalizes, "the civilizing mission was about morally and materially 'uplifting', 'improving' and later 'developing' the supposedly 'backward' or 'rude' people...to make them more civilized and more modern." In contemporary contexts, the civilizing mission's ideal has shifted from the moral and social uplift of human beings to economic development and institution building.

One fundamental task of these civilizing missions during the antebellum era was to differentiate the Western imperialists from the indigenous people and assign them a place on a scale of civilization that comprises the world's populations. The imperialists deem this assessment a necessary precursor to designing a plan for civilizing the indigenous people.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the British and Anglo-Americans generally agreed on the following hierarchy:

At the pinnacle of civilisation was urban, western Europe, placed there by its commercial, civic and domestic successes and values, happily unhindered by its neighbouring peasant, Catholic and orthodox populations. India was characterised as an ancient civilisation reduced by idolatrous religion to a nation of human sacrifice and widow-burning. The idol worship, promiscuous sexuality and homosexual practices of the South Pacific were mitigated by the absence of

nineteenth century, see John L. Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 163–97; Kenneth Pomeranz, "Empire & 'Civilizing' Missions, Past and Present," *Daedalus*, no. 134 (2005): 34–45; Jana Tschurenay, "Incorporation and Differentiation: Popular Education and the Imperial Civilizing Mission in Early Nineteenth Century India," in *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia*, ed. Carey A. Watt and Michael Mann (New York: Anthem, 2011), 93–124; Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts," *Representations*, no. 37 (Winter 1992): 1–26; Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," in *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*, ed. Prasenjit Duara (New York: Routledge, 2004), 78–100.

corruption by slavery and apparent openness to Western ideas and influence. Fewer peoples were lower than Africans in this scale of civilisation, their ‘barbarism’ tragically reinforced by slavery and by their blackness which was long associated with disadvantage and degradation.³

By identifying the indigenous peoples’ deficits instead of finding commonality with Western Europeans, the imperialists maintained a clear delineation between themselves and their subject people. They declared that Western European modes of living were the ideal social organization (“civilized”) and all others fell short of the ideal (“uncivilized”).

“Civilizing mission” has also taken on a specific connotation within the field of Religious Studies, especially where Christian missionary activity has been analyzed as a kind of religious imperialism. Susan Neylan explains, “As scholars have recently begun to understand, conversion to Christianity is a multifaceted transformation; simultaneously, it can mean a ‘colonial’ transformation in its broadest sense and, when rejected or avoided, a counter-hegemonic resistance to imperialism.”⁴ In the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, the missionaries’ “civilizing mission” included a three-phase plan to *convert* indigenous peoples to Christianity, *socialize* them to Western European mores, and *educate* them.

For Protestants, “conversion” refers to the “spiritual or moral change which accompanies the turning of a sinner from his [or her] sins to God.”⁵ The term connotes an individual’s initial recognition of spiritual truth, and is distinguished from the prolonged process of Christianization or purification, in which the individual is perfected and draws ever closer to God. In terms of the Catholic civilizing mission, in the context of this paper, “conversion” will refer to being

³ Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The “Heathens” at Home and Overseas* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 14.

⁴ Susan Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 21.

⁵ Neylan, 21.

christened or baptized, as it is associated with the sacrament of baptism. Conversion was not a salient ritual for Reformed Jews at this time, although Wise expected that non-Jews would eventually recognize the verity of the Jewish scriptures and become Jewish.

Civilization

In the antebellum era, the use of the term “civilization” was undergoing a transition. George Stocking notes, “As it emerged in the later 18c, the idea of ‘civilization’ was seen as the destined goal of all [hu]mankind, and was in fact often used to account for apparent racial differences. But in the 19c more and more [people] saw civilization as the peculiar achievement of certain ‘races.’”⁶ Both aspects of the term are apparent in my research and will be recognized in this dissertation. Because Anglo-Americans describe human difference as biological determinism (consistent with what Stocking calls “racial difference”), I see their use of “civilization” as consistent with Stocking’s shifting definition.

The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* framed civilization as the goal of all humankind but did not associate civilization with race and did not create hierarchies of people groups. The goal of becoming civilized is termed “*gebildet*” and means that a people or *Volk* has developed their cultural elements (language, history, literature, religion, art) to the highest form of expression. All *Völker* were presumed able to become *gebildet*, but by the 1860s, several *Bildungsbürger* began to question whether particular *Völker* would achieve civilization.

Culture

“Culture” is currently associated with ethnicity, but the German Romantics did not associate the term with either ethnicity or nationality. For them, as George Stocking notes,

⁶ George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 36.

“culture” referred to “the varied ‘inward’ moral and aesthetic manifestations of the human spirit.”⁷ These manifestations include speaking one’s mother tongue and producing works of history, literature, art, and religious thought. For the Germans, culture was part of one’s inner being and was an unchangeable part of one’s makeup. In comparison, Anglo-Americans in the mid- to late-nineteenth century associated “culture” with social behavior, and the term “inevitably had a mixed biocultural character...culture was simply a way of specifying the cumulative hierarchical aspect of human racial differences.”⁸ E.B. Tylor explained that this kind of culture included “knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”⁹ Thus, the German Romantics said that cultural productions emanated from an inner essence that was unique for each *Volk*, whereas Anglo-Americans thought that culture was imposed on individuals by external social forces and could be altered by adopting different practices.

Germany

The German nation-state was established in 1871. Before then, the German lands were a collection of states and lands, including Prussia and Austria, that were loosely coalesced by a common language. Although this dissertation is concerned with German-speaking immigrants in America before 1871, for convenience I refer to their homeland as “Germany.”

Heathen

In the antebellum era, “heathen” was a label applied by Christians to people groups who were not Christians. Western European Christians also used the term in a derogatory manner to

⁷ George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 20.

⁸ Stocking, 106.

⁹ Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1871), 1, <https://books.google.com/books?id=AucLAAAIAAJ>.

distinguish themselves from people groups who had not been socialized according to Western European mores. Close synonyms for “heathen,” which include “barbarian,” “primitive,” “crude,” and “uncivilized,” carry similarly negative connotations. While the term “heathen” may be used by some primary sources which are quoted in this dissertation, I will use the term “non-European,” “unconverted people,” or “indigenous people” to refer to people who were not of Western European descent and not Christians or Jews. I will use the term “heathenism” as a short-hand term for “the condition of being unconverted to Christianity or Judaism.”

Race

This dissertation approaches race theory from an anthropological perspective, contrasting the conception of race as biologically determined with a cultural explanation for human variation. During the antebellum era in America, the foundations of the American and British Schools of anthropology developed along biological lines, as did German philosophical work by Immanuel Kant and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. However, a group of German intellectuals rejected the idea that there were races of humans and they built on Johann Gottfried Herder’s work of explaining human variation through unalterable cultural differences.

Introduction

The Religious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Cincinnati

*Die Geburtsaristokratie des Adels haben wir in Amerika abgeschafft
und rühmen uns dessen Europa gegenüber.
Aber die Geburtsaristokratie der Farbe ist im freien Amerika eingeführt,
während man in Europa das Verurteil gegen den schwarzen Mann nicht kennt.*¹

In America we abolished the birth aristocracy of the nobility,
Of which we boast in Europe.
But the birth aristocracy of color was introduced in free America,
While in Europe one knows nothing of the prejudice against the black man.

This observation could have been made by any number of radical German American editors as a critique of slavery in the so-called “land of liberty” at the mid-nineteenth century. Instead, it was penned by the editor of a denominational newspaper that was published in the intellectually progressive frontier city of Cincinnati, Ohio. He could have followed Harriet Beecher Stowe’s example by writing of his experience living with blacks in a free state that bordered the South, in a city that was an entrepôt between New Orleans and New York City. Rather, this quote is part of a larger piece on the potential of African cultures to develop their innate spirit or *Volkgeist*, based on the biblical story of Philip and the eunuch (Acts 8:26-40).

Fueling the editor’s critique of American racialism was his pride at being part of the newly emerging middle-class of German civil servants, which was challenging birth aristocracy and the system of inherited social status. As Prussia reformed its universities and inspired this new class of students with the ideals of German Romanticism, the State’s workers embarked on a lifelong process of self-improvement and social attainment. In his newspaper, the editor interwove liberal Christian theology with the philosophical concept of *Bildung* to explore human

¹ “Bilder aus der Apostelgeschichte: Der Kämmerer aus Mohrenland,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, August 4, 1853.

diversity and cultural progress. He was one of four voices comprising a public sphere in Cincinnati that was initially very insular and localized, but which expanded to include German Americans and Germans on the European continent in the following decade. This small group of theologically diverse clergy in Cincinnati rejected the Anglo-American racialist rhetoric of biological inferiority and instead analyzed human diversity through the lens of *Bildung* in their denominational newspapers.

In the early nineteenth century, in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and as a backlash to what was interpreted as French and British colonialist aggression, German intellectuals attempted to craft a unique identity or *Deutschtum* that would coalesce the German-speaking people into a distinct *Volk*. The university system was reformed to produce a new *Bildungsbürgertum*, or educated middle class, which would lead the masses in the cultural politics of asserting German exceptionalism, in anticipation of the formation of the German nation-state. Key to this transition was *Bildung*, a philosophy that linked human progress to cultural diversity in the German Romantic period. German universities educated students in an understanding of human diversity that followed Johann Gottfried Herder's cultural divisions of humankind (instead of Immanuel Kant's biological schema), which celebrated cultural diversity and glorified the new German *Volk* identity. Using the concept of *Bildung*, universities animated a new class of civil servants with visions of cultural progress.

The university reforms also trained a new generation of clergy, as a secular degree now became a prerequisite for Christian and Jewish ordination. In the 1830s-1850s several of the clergy immigrated to Cincinnati and established religious communities and published denominational newspapers. I refer to this group as the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, and they represented German Methodism, German Catholicism, Reform Judaism, and German

Evangelical Protestantism (GEP). Their publications are distinct from the secular German-language dailies of the city because the former are filled with the language of *Bildung*—a word that is absent from the daily papers. While the German dailies’ editors touted cultural exceptionalism, they did not theorize *Bildung* or explicitly discuss cultural progress. When the *Cincinnati Volksblatt* used the term “*Volk*,” it was in the sense of “the common, everyday person”—in other words, based on class, not culture.² In contrast, the religious *Bildungsbürger* wrote extensively about cultural progress in terms of the human *Volk* and they viewed the German people as a distinct *Volk* that was improving. Similarly, when the *Cincinnati Volksfreund* ran an article on Alexander von Humboldt and *Jugendbildung* (the *Bildung* of the youth), the editor spoke of public education, whereas the denominational papers discussed Humboldt’s contribution in the broader sense of progress and development.³

Moreover, when compared to Anglo-American denominational publications, Cincinnati’s German denominational newspapers are distinctive in their application of *Bildung* to religious matters. The German editors enfold the ideas about progress that are inherent to *Bildung* with theological concepts such as providentialism and millennialism. In fact, when compared to Anglo-American newspapers in general, the four German denominational papers contain a unique view of human diversity. Anglo-American papers of the antebellum era interpret human diversity as racial difference that is biologically determined and they couple race with formal politics. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* linked human diversity with cultural difference in articles about human progress and they did not editorialize formal politics. The results of the

² For example, see “Die Bourgeoisie bei der Spaltung zwischen Volk und König in Preußen,” *Cincinnati Volksblatt*, January 15, 1849.

³ “Alexander v. Humboldt über Jugendbildung,” *Cincinnati Volksfreund*, October 20, 1859.

two analyses are vastly different. Anglo-Americans created a hierarchy of human races that is justified by heredity, associating immutable, internal characteristics with biological features. The German clergy invoked *Bildung* to create encyclopedic compendiums of cultural knowledge to assess the development of each *Volk* (cultural group), but in the antebellum era, they refrained from creating a hierarchy of cultures.

This dissertation starts from this point of convergence and builds on Susanne Zantop's foundational work by exploring the transatlantic formation of German identity in the newspapers written by Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum*. Zantop asserts that long before the formation of the German nation-state, German intellectuals fantasized about their potential for becoming the ideal colonialist nation. Their writings "provided an arena for creating an imaginary community and constructing a national identity in opposition to the perceived racial, sexual, ethnic, or national characteristics of others, Europeans and non-Europeans alike."⁴ German intellectuals re-wrote the sagas of their heroes and critiqued France and England as corrupt imperialists, creating their own "'Germanic' national characteristics [that] could be contrasted with those of other Europeans, with whom Germany competed for moral, economic, or political supremacy." Zantop provides the starting point for understanding a group of German editors who lived among nonwhites but rarely commented on racial issues. Instead of viewing America as an ideal laboratory for testing theories about racial difference, Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* used information about the worlds' cultures to theorize the biblical End Times and craft a religious teleology for *Bildung* that predicted German cultural supremacy. Using Zantop to read the four denominational newspapers through the lens of *Bildung* provides

⁴ Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 7.

an analysis at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and religion that shows an alternate way of understanding the Othering of nonwhite, non-European, non-Judeo-Christian peoples.

After translating hundreds of articles in the denominational newspapers that these clergy edited and published in Cincinnati, Ohio from the 1830s to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, I discovered three key ingredients that contributed to the editors' views on human difference. Their experiences in the university system, the philosophical concept of *Bildung*, and the political events in the German lands during the first half of the nineteenth century combined to produce a unique perspective among Americans in the Antebellum period. These aspects became key to my understanding of the racialist perspective in the clergy's denominational newspapers, and *Bildung* became the lens through which I examine the relationship among race, religion, and ethnicity. I realized that it was impossible to separate race from German philosophy. And it is in the telling of their stories that I describe their understanding of human variation as a kind of cultural politics, which they justified using philosophy and theology.

All four of these men were invigorated by the secular education they received in the newly reformed German university system in the early 19-century, which fused a narrative of human progress with cultural exceptionalism. This narrative of progress is known as *Bildung*, a concept that was key to German Romanticism in the early-nineteenth century and was developed by Johann Gottfried Herder, Georg Forster, Friedrich Schlegel, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Friedrich Schelling. In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and until the German nation-state was established in 1871, the quest to understand the sources of human difference was driven in part by the desire to create a Teutonic identity, or *Deutschtum*, that was distinct from the French and British. Thus, *Bildung* was a framework for asserting the cultural diversity of humanity and the continual striving for perfection within each culture.

The university reforms were implemented to create a new middle-class of civil servants who were educated in a German national identity based on *Bildung* that was crafted to surpass that of France and England. This class of civil servants has been referred to in scholarship as the *Bildungsbürgertum*. One minor result of the educational reforms was that a secular university degree became a prerequisite for the ordination of Christian and Jewish clergy. I refer to the four clergy in Cincinnati as the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, in order to distinguish them from the secular *Bildungsbürger* who also immigrated to America and published newspapers during this period, such as the socialist 48ers and the Freethinkers.

In this project I spend a lot of time contrasting how this German philosophy and its applications to ideas about humanity differ from intellectual thought in America, in order to add nuance to our knowledge of extant debates about human capacity. While many intellectuals in Europe and America explored physical differences among humans and then associated phenotypic markers with flawed characters and limited capabilities, the men in my study took a different approach. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* incorporated the teachings of Herder into their exegetical work, specifically regarding the biblical origin stories, spiritual perfection, and the End Times.

Instead of focusing on differences in appearance and behavior that correspond to limited human capabilities, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* saw an arc of human development and cultural progress toward perfection that began when God scattered his people at the Tower of Babel, as described in Genesis 11. According to the editors' readings of Genesis, humans were divided into distinct populations, which were each given unique languages and new homelands. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* asserted that additionally, each people group or *Volk* was given a unique cultural spirit or *Volkgeist* that resided in individual members and cohered them around

a distinct identity. Since then, every *Volk* had been progressing toward the common goal of individual, social, and human perfection.

The German Romantic vision of perfection distinctly informs the exegetical work of the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, which described perfection as a process of refining the expression of each *Volk*'s culture—by following the *Volkgeist* to produce cultural products such as historical writings, literature, and art using one's native language and cultural experiences. Perfection culminated in being re-united with God, and it presumed that all of humanity agreed about who that God was. Following this Romantic vision, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* initially expected that every *Volk* would eventually be perfected, or *gebildet*.

But as the antebellum era neared an end, missionaries reported on certain *Völker* who refused to convert to Christianity or who had lost their Jewish distinctiveness, while other *Völker* resisted acculturation to Western European social norms. The inhumane treatment of indigenous peoples by the imperialistic nations of France, Spain and England came to a head in uprisings and slave revolts. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* spoke out against the imperialists, calling them degenerating *Völker* who were incapable of perfection. At mid-century some of the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* began to doubt the capability of American Indians, Africans, and some Asians to reach their perfected states, since the development of their cultural products seemed to have stalled at the beginning stages of religious conversion and social education. By the Civil War, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* linked perfection exclusively with the German *Volk*, and each of the four clergy thought that only his particular religious denomination would be perfected and receive God's eternal blessings.

My project argues that underlying the clergy's interest in human progress was a kind of racialist theology in which they emphasized cultural difference so that they could assert German

exceptionalism. The influence of German Orientalism in the university system trained them to create a cultural Other that encompassed every *Volk* that was not German, and they set that Other in opposition to and in subordination to the German *Volk*. Thus, instead of using the nuanced differences among groups of humans to create a racial hierarchy, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* of Cincinnati separated humans into two groups (German and non-German) and interpreted eschatological scripture such that all non-Germans would be prohibited from entering the Kingdom of God and receiving God's eternal blessings. Furthermore, the German clergy applied a second layer of Othering over their own *Volk* based on theology, as each clergy argued from Scripture that within the German people, only one denomination would remain in the End Times. Overall, this project demonstrates that denominational affiliation produced variations in how religious, German American intellectuals understood human difference and crafted theological arguments that justified the cultural Othering of non-Germans.

Racialist Rhetoric in Cincinnati

In the 1820s–1850s, German immigrants altered their traditional settlement pattern by flocking to the frontier city of Cincinnati, forming the largest non-English speaking population in the city. In 1825 there were approximately fifty German-born heads of household living in the city. By the 1890 federal census, fully half the city claimed a German heritage, suggesting the importance of non-Anglo-American cultural influence on the development of the Queen City. Whereas German immigrants in the eighteenth century settled in rural areas of the East Coast, in the nineteenth century the newcomers inhabited the recently opened land in the American West as both farmers and city dwellers. Even as late as the 1850s, most German immigrants came from rural areas and worked in agriculture. Nevertheless, during the antebellum era Cincinnati

received droves of Germans, who were eager to join the American opportunism at the expanding border and benefit from the fast-paced growth of the Queen City.⁵

During its nineteenth-century heyday, Cincinnati was a major transportation hub connecting the Mississippi River to the Hudson River via the Erie Canal and was a premier developer of steamboat technology. In the antebellum era, Cincinnati was the early publishing center of the West, as well as a nexus of intellectual efflorescence, as it was the westernmost stop on the lecture circuit traveled by East Coast thinkers. The city was also situated on the Ohio River, which formed a natural boundary between the North and the South, between the free state of Ohio and the slave state of Kentucky. Ohio was admitted to the Union in 1803 as a free state, but legislators immediately enacted “black laws” to expel or severely restrict the activities of black men and women living within the state’s borders.⁶

Cincinnati’s native son, Dr. Daniel Drake, was a nationally known medical doctor who established the University of Cincinnati and its medical college. He was a prolific author, as well as a local power broker, whose racist rhetoric set the agenda for the city’s early development. According to Drake,

⁵ Harvey Hall, *The Cincinnati City Directory for 1825* (Galveston: The Frontier Press, 1988); Corinna A. Hörst, ““More than Ordinary...”—The Female Migration Experience and German Immigrant Women in Nineteenth Century Cincinnati” (Dissertation, Oxford, OH, Miami University, 1998), ProQuest.

⁶ Daniel Aaron, *Cincinnati: Queen City of the West, 1819-1838* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992); Caleb Atwater, *A History of the State of Ohio, Natural and Civil, Second* (Cincinnati: Glezen & Shepard, 1838), <https://books.google.com/books?id=IS0WAAAAYAAJ>; Clara Longworth Chambrun, *Cincinnati: Story of the Queen City* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1939); Benjamin Drake, *Tales and Sketches, from the Queen City* (Cincinnati: E. Morgan and Co., 1838); Walter Glazer, *Cincinnati in 1840: The Social and Functional Organization of an Urban Community During the Pre-Civil War Period* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999); Charles Frederic Goss, *Cincinnati: The Queen City, 1788-1912*, vol. 1 (Chicago and Cincinnati: S. J. Clarke, 1912).

When Ireland sends her peasantry, we acquire operatives on our canals and railroads...and, in a certain sense, such immigrants may be said to be needed—they are at least useful. When Germany sends her hordes, a portion of them improve our gardens, farms, and vineyards, while others introduce and practice in our cities a variety of useful arts...but the negro immigrant confers none of these benefits; his skill is in general limited to the cultivation of tobacco, cotton, rice, and sugar—none of which belong to the agriculture of the North. There is not, then, allow me to repeat, any economical, social, political, physiological, or religious advantage in his admission among us; and such admission, if insisted upon, must be placed on other grounds than our own benefit...We hold them, indeed, at arm's-length from us, and, according to the instinct, feeling, and opinion of an immense majority of our people, they are, and should be kept, a distinct and subordinate *caste*.⁷

Drake had a functional outlook on non-whites and non-native-born persons living in America that reflected the latest thought in America and England regarding natural history and early cultural anthropology. Drake and other influential Ohioans in the antebellum era tolerated Irish and German laborers who helped develop the frontier and who were considered more civilized than blacks, American Indians, and Asians. Notably, by the 1830s the Indians had been removed from the state and Asian immigrants only settled the state at the end of the century. From a racist perspective such as Drake's, the presence of free blacks posed the primary social danger to the future success of Cincinnati.

Not surprisingly, the relationship between white Ohioans and free and enslaved blacks was contentious throughout the antebellum era. Black men could be seen all along the waterfront district, as they usually held jobs associated with river commerce. Free black Cincinnatians and enslaved blacks from steamboats conducted business as roustabouts, porters, drayman, stewards, and waiters. They frequented brothels, bars, and accommodations in a section of the city originally known as Little Africa, which gradually absorbed new immigrants

⁷ Daniel Drake, *Dr. Daniel Drake's Letters on Slavery to Dr. John C. Warren, of Boston. Reprinted from the National Intelligencer, Washington, April 3, 5 and 7, 1851* (New York: Schuman's, 1940), 31–34.

(especially Irish and Germans), minorities, and poor people in general. By the 1840s there was a German pocket of this waterfront district known as Over-the-Rhine, but the area had become a somewhat racially integrated region located in the least desirable area of the city. As the city enlarged in the antebellum era and wealthy whites moved up to the hilly periphery, blacks clustered around the edge of Cincinnati. The vocations available to blacks expanded to include the skills needed by a growing population of black residents, including barbers, construction workers, and schoolteachers. In 1836 there were enough black Christians in the city to support a Baptist church and an African Methodist Episcopal church.⁸

White Cincinnatians responded to the presence of blacks in a variety of ways. There was an abolitionist press in the city in the 1830s (the *Philanthropist*), as well as an Anti-Slavery Society; however, this was countered by an Anti-Abolition Committee. Race-based riots occurred several times in nineteenth-century Cincinnati, and anti-abolitionists from Kentucky regularly crossed the river to stir up trouble in the city. Southern slave catchers searched Cincinnati for runaway slaves who escaped by foot or by jumping off a steamboat, but the city was also an active stop on the Underground Railroad, with white and black Christians aiding slaves who swam across the Ohio River. There was also a longstanding Colonization Society in the city, as well as the Ladies' Liberia Association of Cincinnati that was formed in 1839 and

⁸ William Cheek and Aimee Lee Cheek, "Culture and Kinship: John Mercer Langston in Cincinnati: 1840-1843," *Queen City Heritage* 47, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 3-22; Richard C. Wade, "The Negro in Cincinnati, 1800-1830," *The Journal of Negro History* 39, no. 1 (January 1954): 43-57, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2715644>; Horton James Oliver, *Free People of Color* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1993); Henry Louis Taylor, *Race and the City: Work, Community, and Protest in Cincinnati, 1820-1970* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Nikki Marie Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom: Cincinnati's Black Community, 1802-1868* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005); Peter M. Harsham, "A Community Portrait: Over-the-Rhine, 1860," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 40, no. 1 (n.d.): 63-72; Michael D. Morgan, *Over-the-Rhine: When Beer Was King* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010).

whose founding secretary was Catherine E. Beecher (Harriet Beecher Stowe's sister).⁹

Antislavery advocates—students and faculty—from Lane Seminary were forced to leave the city because of their attempts to racially integrate the school; however, in 1850 Cincinnati's evangelicals successfully held a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention.

Despite being a free state, Ohioans had challenged the blacks' presence in their state since achieving statehood, and racial issues were complicated by Ohio being a border state on the western edge of the American frontier. Cincinnati's proximity to the river and its economic dependence on slave states whose steamboats passed through the harbor meant that race issues could never be resolved before the Emancipation proclamation in 1863. The constant flow of every type of American through the city, bringing ideas about race and progress that spanned the gamut of popular discourse, engendered a public sphere of open—but at times, violent—debate.¹⁰ In Kristen Anderson's study of Germans in the slave state of Missouri, white Anglo-Americans pressured German immigrants to actively support a proslavery position, in solidarity with the other whites in the state.¹¹ But in Cincinnati, white residents contested racial issues like

⁹ "Circular of the Ladies' Association of Cincinnati," *African Repository and Colonial Journal* 16, no. 13 (July 1, 1840): 202.

¹⁰ *Narrative of the Late Riotous Proceedings Against the Liberty of the Press* (Cincinnati: The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, 1836), <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abesoasat.html>; Gary R. Matthews, *More American than Southern: Kentucky, Slavery, and the War for an American Ideology, 1821-1861* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014); John Craig Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (University of Virginia Press, 2007); Luke E. Harlow, *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2000); Erik Andrew Stumpf, "The Second Land Debate: Voices from the Wilderness Surge across the Nation" (Masters thesis, Iowa State University, 2012); *The Cincinnati Directory Advertiser for the Years 1836-7* (Cincinnati: J. H. Woodruff, 1836).

¹¹ Kristen Layne Anderson, *Abolitionizing Missouri: German Immigrants and Racial Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America* (LSU Press, 2016).

abolition, slavery, and colonization. Hence the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* was able to hold a unique view of human diversity and progress that followed a distinctly German intellectual path.

Some scholars of modern race theory locate “the first scientific theory of the philosophical account of race” in Immanuel Kant’s writings at the end of the eighteenth century,¹² while others caution against anachronistically referring to “the classifications of [Carl] Linnaeus, [Comte de] Buffon, Kant and [Johann Friedrich] Blumenbach as *racial* classifications.”¹³ Scholars of scientific racism follow Kant to Blumenbach because, as Sarah Eigen and Mark Larrimore note, “Kant’s view of race might never have affected anyone had it not made a convert of Blumenbach.”¹⁴ Kant and other German intellectuals arguably made

¹² J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 81; Robert Bernasconi, “Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism,” in *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays*, ed. Julie K. Ward and Tommy L. Lott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 145–66; Robert Wald Sussman, *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Renato G. Mazzolini, “Skin Color and the Origin of Physical Anthropology (1640-1850),” in *Reproduction, Race, and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences*, ed. Susanne Lettow (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 131–61; Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, eds., *The German Invention of Race* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Mark Larrimore, “Sublime Waste: Kant on the Destiny of the Races,” in *Civilization and Oppression*, ed. Catherine Wilson (Calgary, Alberta, Canada: University of Calgary Press, 1999), 99–126.

¹³ Michael Banton, “The Classification of Races in Europe and North America: 1700-1850,” *International Social Science Journal* 39, no. 111 (3/87): 46. Banton argues that to call their work “racial classification” is to anachronistically describe their work; rather, “they sought to know God through nature and they were constrained in their speculations by the power of organized religion.” See also Mikkelsen, 4, “Kant clearly did not, therefore, understand what he was doing in terms of the full range of issues that presently comprise the philosophy of biology. For Kant, race theory seems instead to have been little more than a minor, but nevertheless vexing, problem within a model of scientific investigation known since the mid-eighteenth century as natural history, which he champions.” Turda and Quine, *Historicizing Race*, 6, “the conditions for race and racism to emerge lay not so much in pronouncements of different biological and physical facts such as the colour of the skin, but often in claims of superior cultural and historical achievements.”

¹⁴ Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, “Introduction: The German Invention of Race,” in *The German Invention of Race*, ed. Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 4. See Appendix 1 for a summary of German racial discourse.

foundational and lasting contributions to contemporary discourses on race that link internal characteristics to physical appearance (biological determinism), but Kant's conception was not the only authoritative model in Germany. Long before the human genome was discovered and sequenced, before heredity was explained by genetic replication, Kant theorized the existence of germs or *Keime* that contain physical variants and are passed from parents to children. Kant described a model in which humans are divided into distinct races that are identifiable by phenotypic traits like skin color. Herder (Kant's student) and Georg Forster rejected Kant's claim that human races exist; instead, Herder theorized that human variation results from cultural differences among people groups. In the nineteenth century, the American and British Schools of anthropology built on Kant's and Blumenbach's work on racial variation, while Herder's emphasis on cultural difference was incorporated into the German education system through the philosophical concept of *Bildung*.

Several members of the clergy who were trained in the rhetoric of *Bildung* immigrated to Cincinnati during the American antebellum era and produced German-language, denominational newspapers that engage in a racialized discourse that is distinct in its invocation of *Bildung*. I document how a group of German theologians in America turned to culture as their racial analytic. I then note how they theorized human progress in terms of cultural attainment, not biological determinism. From this viewpoint, it becomes possible to establish the presence of a racial discourse in the denominational newspapers in Cincinnati's German community that does not follow the typical Anglo-American pattern of situating racial discourse in political contexts, but rather couches race in the cultural politics of *Bildung*.

These two approaches to human variation produced unique discourses that took place in two separate public spheres and did not overlap. These German clergy-editors did not critique or

contribute to Anglo-American discussions about biological determinism; instead, they categorized humans according to cultural groupings. Anglo-American intellectuals constructed a racial hierarchy based on human capabilities that were constrained by physical traits, but the German clergy-editors refrained from making claims about restricted capacities—they catalogued the progress of human cultures without making normative claims. The stakes were different for these two racial discourses, as well. Anglo-American missionaries and religious intellectuals used racial difference to justify religious imperialism, in which unconverted peoples were described as inferior to Christians and Jews and indigenous peoples were in need of acculturation to Western European standards. Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* declared the cultural supremacy of the German *Volk* and encouraged immigrants to resist acculturation, which resulted in the loss (or degeneration) of German culture. Anglo-Americans debated the implications of chattel slavery and the potential for freed blacks and Indians to threaten social order in America, while the Germans were concerned with creating a national identity and restoring the human race to its biblical form.

Although these two discourses followed two distinct lines of intellectual thought concerning human diversity, they share a place within the historiography of race theory and are rooted in German debates at the turn of the nineteenth century. Both were a form of racialist rhetoric in that they divided humans into groups that were distinct and unchangeable, rather than approaching race as a socially constructed paradigm. Little is known about German American immigrants making a philosophical argument for cultural exceptionalism, and the presence of this racialist rhetoric in ethnic denominational newspapers is even more notable.

On the Role of Newspapers in Immigrant Acculturation

If Cincinnati was an intellectual and commercial jewel on the frontier, its moral condition was somewhat in question. Lyman Beecher's speech, *A Plea for the West*, represents the East Coast intellectuals' fear that the American frontier was filled with amoral, lawless, uneducated masses who needed to be civilized through Protestantism. Participating in American religious institutions has long been recognized as a pathway to achieving acculturation.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century, the immigrants who adopted a form of American Protestantism were most readily accepted by native-born Americans. Even immigrants who were not previously religious often became involved in religious institutions after they arrived in America as a marker of their national identity. R. Stephen Warner also points out that Americans are more likely to participate in organized religion when the church helps them acquire something that is difficult to obtain, such as a cultural identity.¹⁶ However, as Robert Park explains, "The Church has proved an effective medium for either the assimilation of peoples or their isolation, according to the purposes of the clergy."¹⁷ Clergy-editors used their newspapers to shape communities of

¹⁵ There are many sources for a discussion on the influence of religious institutions on immigrants, as well as the influence of immigrants and migrants on American religious institutions. For example, see Richard Alba, Albert J. Raboteau, and Josh DeWind, eds., *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Wendy Cadge and Elaine Howard Ecklund, "Immigration and Religion," *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 359–79, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737767>; Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Carolyn Chen, *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Peggy Levitt, *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape* (New York: The New Press, 2007).

¹⁶ Warner, "Religion and Migration in the United States," 126.

¹⁷ Robert E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1922), 52.

readers in accordance with their vision for those communities, and as Brown observes, “they strengthened the collective identities of members...subsequent generations of readers and publishers have continued to imagine themselves in relation to their textual communities.”¹⁸

American national identity was hardly stable during the antebellum period, nor were ethnic identities well-formed; hence, acculturation was hardly a clearly defined process. When waves of European immigration challenged the status quo, race and ethnicity were still developing as categories for cataloging humans. As Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, and Rudolph J. Vecoli observe, during this period “the need to define whiteness, Indianness, and blackness lent new weight to such classifications, and Americans were not isolated from the currents of romantic nationalism flowing from Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic Europe.”¹⁹ Race theory was still in the early stages of development within the nascent field of anthropology (ethnology). Furthermore, “immigrant groups themselves were by no means homogeneous...Internal debates and struggles over the nature of the group’s emerging ethnicity were inevitable.” The transatlantic flow of ideology created an on-going process of identity formation that was even more fraught for German speakers, who had no nation-state to politically cohere them. Immigrants from the diverse German-speaking states and principalities brought with them religious (and other) prejudices that were well-established in their home regions, and before 1871 even the definition of “German”—which was prerequisite for creating a “German American” identity—was highly contested.

¹⁸ Candy Gunther Brown, “Religious Periodicals and Their Textual Communities,” in *A History of the Book in America*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al., vol. 3 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 278.

¹⁹ Kathleen Neils Conzen et al., “The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1 (1992): 5, 8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27501011>.

The majority of nineteenth-century German immigrants negotiated an American identity that retained only a limited amount of cultural distinctiveness, and they often adopted a form of American Protestantism. But there were exceptions. Forty-Eighters famously rejected traditional religion and were known as Rationalists, a form of Freethought. Their belief system is exemplified by Dr. Samuel Ludvigh's "Alliance for Enlightenment and Social Reform" in Baltimore, whose creed included "a belief in a God, the perfection of his creation, the immortality of the soul, that true religion is to do good to one's fellowmen, that Christ was a mortal, and that priestcraft is the curse of mankind; and a disbelief in miracles and prophecies."²⁰ German Freethought presses in Cincinnati included Eduard Mühl's *Lichtfreund* (1840) and Georg Walker's *Hochwächter* (1845-1849).²¹ While some German immigrants were eager to Americanize, others acculturated much more slowly, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Ethnic newspapers and the denominational press were especially influential in effecting the acculturation of immigrants in the antebellum era. The religious press created communities of widely dispersed readers and cohered them around a common set of theological teachings, linking American values with biblical precepts.²² Jay Dolan explains that "Family, church, newspapers, and books were important educative agencies. They helped shape a culture and

²⁰ Quoted in Albert Post, *Popular Freethought in America, 1825-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 120.

²¹ Post, 72; Siegmar Muehl, "Eduard Mühl: Cincinnati's Radical German-American Newspaper Man, 1840-1843," *Queen City Heritage* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 3-12. Freethinkers had published a newspaper (*The Western Tiller*) in Cincinnati as early as 1827 that was "opposed to bigotry, fanaticism, priesthood and hypocrisy," but this English-language press was edited by a non-German named James W. Gazley (Post, 65). Mühl was a preacher at the Universalist church and in 1841 became editor of the *Cincinnati Volksblatt*.

²² Paul C. Gutjahr, "Diversification in American Religious Publishing," in *A History of the Book in America*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al., vol. 3, 5 vols. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 194-203; Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789-1880* (Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press, 2004).

provided a means for one generation to educate the next...Such an informal configuration of education raised the level of general intelligence and established a distinctive American ethos.”²³

Dolan writes specifically in reference to the Catholic Church, but his remarks also apply to immigrant churches in general, including the German Catholics.

Ethnic newspapers (including German-language papers) were usually so effective at acculturating immigrants that they were in print for only a short time. First generation immigrants, including newspaper editors, typically emphasized the importance of retaining the language and customs of the homeland, but this gradually diminished as children and grandchildren became acculturated. As Henry John Groen notes, “During the latter part of the 1830’s and throughout the 1840’s the German-American newspapers took upon themselves the task of making loyal American citizens out of the constantly arriving contingents from across the ocean.”²⁴ The editors typically explained American culture to the new immigrants and expected them build upon their German cultural heritage, using it “as a basis for further cultural attainment.” Alison Efford has identified a German-language public sphere in which American citizenship was debated by Germans throughout the Ohio, Missouri, and Wisconsin, but Cincinnati’s *Bildungsbürger* did not participate in these sustained debates.²⁵

John Nerone offers a more nuanced description of the German American press, one in which the press maintained a “dialectic between separateness and assimilation in nonmainstream

²³ Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 260; John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholicism*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

²⁴ Henry John Groen, “A Note on the German-American Newspapers of Cincinnati before 1860,” *Monatshefte Für Deutschen Unterricht* 37, no. 4/5 (1945): 69–70, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30198975>; Carl Wittke, *The German Language Press in America* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1957).

²⁵ Alison Clark Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 11–12.

media.”²⁶ On the one hand, by “adopting forms and rhetoric from the mainstream partisan press, German papers provided immigrants a gateway to American institutions” and eventually the immigrants began reading Anglo-American publications, making the German-language papers obsolete. On the other hand, Nerone explains that “foreign-language papers also retarded assimilation by maintaining ties with the mother country, and in fact they circulated abroad and facilitated both remigration and the construction of overseas national identities.” Although newspapers did often encourage acculturation, an ethnic denominational press can also retard the acculturation process, if its editor has a preservationist, rather than assimilationist, vision for his congregation.

Despite the possibility of antiassimilationist, religious German immigrants in the antebellum era, few scholars have documented their presence. Instead, scholarship on that time period is extensively focused on the Forty-Eighters, who are stereotypically described as political refugees and radical atheists who vociferously advocated for social change in America, adapting their vision for mid-century Europe to their adopted homeland. Bruce Levine summarizes, “Between 1840 and 1860, at least a million and a half Germans (most of them from the crisis-ridden Southwest) departed for the United States to escape the social and political ills of their homeland.”²⁷ Scholars such as those in Charlotte L. Brancaforte’s edited volume *The German*

²⁶ John Nerone, “Newspapers and the Public Sphere,” in *A History of the Book in America*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al., vol. 3 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 237; Barbara Lang, *The Process of Immigration in German-American Literature from 1850 to 1900: A Change in Ethnic Self-Definition* (W. Fink, 1988).

²⁷ Bruce Levine, “The Migration of Ideology and the Contested Meaning of Freedom: German Americans in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *The Migration of Ideology and the Contested Meaning of Freedom*, German Historical Institute Occasional Paper 7 (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1992), 9; Christian B. Keller, “Forty-Eighters,” in *Germany and The Americas: Culture, Politics, and History*, ed. Thomas Adam (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005). Levine’s work that deals specifically with the Forty-Eighters is more nuanced.

Forty-Eighters in the United States complicates our understanding of the motivations and goals of the men and women in this segment of immigrants.²⁸ We learned that Forty-Eighters could take a range of political positions (democrat, socialist, communist) and started a variety of *Vereine* or social groups, such as the Turners. They also resisted American cultural traditions that they attributed to Puritanism, such as temperance and sabbath laws.²⁹ Other scholars describe the Forty-Eighters as opposed to slavery and even as abolitionists.³⁰ Helmut Keil affirmed that “racism...was not automatically adopted by immigrants,” and that German immigrants’ racism toward African Americans seems to be most prevalent after the Civil War, suggesting that Forty-Eighters were not racists in Germany; they adopted racist attitudes from American culture.³¹

Similarly, scholarship on the German press in America is weighted heavily toward what is commonly referred to as the radical press. This press is associated initially with political refugees who fled Germany in the 1830s (called *Dreissigers*) and grew under the leadership of the Forty-Eighters until it reached its apex in 1870-1910 as the social democratic press that

²⁸ Charlotte L. Brancaforte, ed., *The German Forty-Eighters in the United States*, vol. 1, *German Life and Civilization* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

²⁹ For more on the nuances of 48ers and politics, see also Wolfgang Johannes Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner, *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective* (Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin, 2004); Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

³⁰ Mischa Honeck, *We Are the Revolutionists: German-Speaking Immigrants and American Abolitionists after 1848* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Mischa Honeck, “An Unexpected Alliance: August Willich, Peter H. Clark, and the Abolitionist Movement in Cincinnati,” in *Germans and African Americans*, ed. Larry A. Greene and Anke Ortlepp (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 17–36; Anderson, *Abolitionizing Missouri*; Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era*.

³¹ Hartmut Keil, “German Immigrants and African-Americans in Mid-Nineteenth Century America,” in *Enemy Images in American History*, ed. Ragnhild Fiebig-von Hase and Ursula Lehmkuhl (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1997), 138.

included “anarchist, socialist, and trade-union papers.”³² Within the historiography of the radical German press, there is a strong tradition of bimodal analysis in which the press either advocates for a kind of melting pot assimilation or a preservationist resistance that is rooted in “a sentimental longing for a world that beyond their reach.” The German press in America supposedly reached its intellectual peak with the arrival of Forty-Eighter editors, whose linguistic, grammatic, and literary skills far surpassed the acculturated German American editors.³³ More recent work on transatlantic exchanges of ideology is moving this scholarship to nuanced understandings of immigrants’ relations to both their homeland and their adopted home, but it is concerned with the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.³⁴

While the fruitful work on the Forty-Eighters adds complexity to our understanding of the German immigrants’ experience as early as the mid-nineteenth century, there is a lacuna in the earlier decades of the antebellum era and a gap in the knowledge about religious, antiassimilationist German editors. This project addresses both of those concerns and builds on the work of two historians in particular. First, Reinhard R. Doerries points to a “lack of religious cohesion among the Germans” in the antebellum era, which he attributes to the immigrants being divided “by regional origin and culture, ...by church membership, and often by what can only be

³² Hartmut Keil, “A Profile of Editors of the German-American Radical Press, 1850-1910,” in *The German-American Radical Press: The Shaping of a Left Political Culture, 1850-1940*, ed. Elliott Shore, Ken Fones-Wolf, and James P. Danky (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 2–5.

³³ Wittke, *The German Language Press in America*; Keil, “A Profile of Editors of the German-American Radical Press, 1850-1910.”

³⁴ Christiane Harzig, “Gender, Transatlantic Space, and the Presence of German-Speaking People in North America,” in *Traveling Between Worlds: German-American Encounters*, ed. Thomas Adam and Ruth V. Gross (Arlington, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 146–82; James Neal Primm, *Germans for a Free Missouri: Translations from the St. Louis Radical Press, 1857-1862* (University of Missouri Press, 1983); Groen, “A Note on the German-American Newspapers of Cincinnati before 1860.”

called rigid social or class differences.”³⁵ Starting with Doerries’ assumption that there were more differences than similarities among the religious Germans, this project investigates four theologically disparate denominations and identifies a common denominator in their newspapers’ use of *Bildung* to frame theological and racial discourses and to assert German exceptionalism.

Additionally, Joseph Michael White explores religious Germans in Cincinnati and he identifies “three distinct subcultures...who were in contact with a church: the German Protestants adhering to congregations that had been founded upon local popular initiative without assistance from an outside church or synod; the Germans belonging to German-speaking congregations affiliated with and founded by American Protestant denominations; and German Roman Catholics.”³⁶ The German immigrants who joined Baptist, Methodist, Reformed, and Presbyterian churches abandoned the religious traditions that they had known in the homeland, which White describes as “a rationalist, humanist approach that provided social services, rather than doctrinal oversight.” These immigrants acculturated into American culture and embraced “Anglo-American standards of religious life and behavior,” which included a “demanding creed” and a “Sabbatarian ethic.”³⁷ In contrast, White demonstrates that German Catholics and independent Protestants resisted acculturation by refusing to join American Christian institutions.

White’s assessment of religious German immigrants helps to shed light on the previously unexplored linkage between denominational affiliation and resistance to acculturation, but it needs two revisions. White includes German Methodists in the group that acculturated because

³⁵ Reinhard R. Doerries, “Immigrants and the Church: German Americans in Comparative Perspective,” in *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner (Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2004), 4–5.

³⁶ Joseph Michael White, “Religion and Community: Cincinnati Germans, 1814 - 1870” (Dissertation, Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame, 1980), 3–4, ProQuest.

³⁷ White, 4, 363.

he understands them to be German-speaking members of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). This dissertation reveals that German Methodism was not the same as its parent and that the German Methodists strategically located Methodism within German Lutheranism, rather than British Protestantism. Thus, there were three denominations of German Christians who resisted acculturation in the antebellum period of Cincinnati's history: Roman Catholics, German Methodists, and the independent congregations known as German Evangelical Protestants.

In addition, I add one non-Christian group to White's schema: the German Reform Jews. Scholars of American history frame Reform Judaism as a religious program to acculturate Jewish immigrants, usually to minimize anti-Semitism and to secure the immigrants' social and economic success in America. Jacob Rader Marcus claims that Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of Reform Judaism in America, quickly assimilated because he "was never subject to a systematic public school education, escaped the German political influence, and had the courage to break completely with his Germanic loyalties."³⁸ Marcus states that Wise was "very anxious for all Jews to be thoroughly Americanized" and offers as evidence Wise's 1872 pronouncement, "We are first Americans and then Israelites." Alan I. Marcus describes Reform Judaism as an attempt to "adapt the form, and ultimately, the laws of the Mosaic religion to make them appear seemly and in concert with mid-nineteenth century American life."³⁹ David Ellenson claims that Western European Jews were "anxious to divest themselves of ethnic particularism... Thus the German Jews who immigrated to the United States prior to 1881 brought views of a non-particularistic, universal, and rational religion with them to a country that, it was hoped, was

³⁸ Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise* (Cincinnati, 1931), 8, 12, 21, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015062320117>.

³⁹ Alan I. Marcus, "Am I My Brother's Keeper: Reform Judaism in the American West, Cincinnati, 1840-1879," *Queen City Heritage* 44, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 3. Also Sarna, *American Judaism*.

prepared to advance them into positions of prestige and status.”⁴⁰ Sydney Ahlstrom describes Wise’s efforts as “chiefly designed to increase the social mobility of American Jews,” and he concludes that by the 1880s, “Reform Judaism had almost come to *be* American Judaism.”⁴¹

This project contests the periodization of Wise’s Americanization by arguing that before the Civil War, Wise actually resisted acculturation. Indeed, Marcus points out elsewhere that at the beginning of the nineteenth century “a measure of acculturation was inevitably the norm even in the most traditionalist circles” of American Jews.⁴² Rather than being specific to Reform Judaism, acculturation was a general concern for most American Jews. Furthermore, Reform was never merely a means to acculturation; rather, Reform was linked with political emancipation and the identity of all Jewish people, not just those in America. Nineteenth-century Jews were eager to receive the full rights of citizenship through emancipation and many leaders of Judaism throughout America and Western Europe thought it advantageous to demonstrate the Jewish people’s readiness for citizenship through their ability to conform to cultural norms. But the decision to reform Jews went beyond the desire to update the aesthetics of Jewish rituals or modify the tenets of Judaism. Reform Judaism originated in the German states and was brought to America by the first generation of university-educated rabbis who were trained to value German cultural exceptionalism. These liberal rabbis modernized Judaism within the context of the German intellectuals’ emphasis on a new cultural identity, which was

⁴⁰ David Ellenson, *After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2004), 32–33.

⁴¹ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, Second (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 579, 581.

⁴² Jacob Rader Marcus, *The American Jew, 1585-1990: A History* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1995), 88.

tied to an emerging nationalism and emphasized the language, literature, and history of the German *Volk*.

Moreover, Reform Judaism was neither an American innovation nor a product of the nineteenth century. These two points are largely absent from the above scholarship, yet they are integral to the argument that Wise used his paper to encourage Jews to resist acculturation. The nineteenth century offered several opportunities for this oppressed group to achieve the full rights of citizenship in political states through emancipation, but the intellectual roots of Reform Judaism predate that period. Rather, the Enlightenment provided the impetus to conceive of Judaism in rational, modern terms, and the German philosophical movements that developed in the nineteenth century stimulated the German Jews' "deep and natural interest in the metaphysical, in the burgeoning art of music, language, and in the breadth, depth, and richness of German *Kultur*."⁴³ During Wise's youth, the historians Rotteck and Schlosser exerted "the greatest [intellectual] influence through South Germany." They wrote "the bibles of German liberalism," whose ideas built on "Rousseau, the American and French Revolutions, and Kant for its political ideals and its moral judgements."⁴⁴ In the first half of the nineteenth century liberal Jews debated the boundaries of their political and religious affiliations, as well as the relevant markers of Jewish progress in the post-Enlightenment industrial age, through the lens of German culture. For all of these reasons, Wise and other German Reform rabbis who immigrated to America belong in White's category with the three Christian denominations that resisted acculturation.

⁴³ James G. Heller, *Isaac M. Wise: His Life, Work and Thought* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1965), 27.

⁴⁴ Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise*, 5.

When Cincinnati's religious Germans are examined as a whole during the antebellum period, it becomes apparent that there existed a cleavage between those who more readily adopted American religious culture and others who resisted acculturation. The four denominations I associate with the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* fall into the latter group.⁴⁵ In all four cases, the religious leaders looked to Germany for religious and cultural authority. They remained indebted to German philosophical and theological teachings and they resisted acculturation before the American Civil War. Unlike other newspapers published in the city, their pages were full of the philosophical language of *Bildung*, the philosophical concept that was meant to cohere German-speakers around a newly developing ethnic identity.

On *Bildung* and Religion

While the four clergy-editors produced newspapers that all engaged with the concept of *Bildung*, when they applied the concepts of *Bildung* to human diversity, their theological differences produced a variety of ideas about the goal of the process. This is not surprising because the philosophical concept of *Bildung* is adaptable, not rigid. *Bildung* is an ideology that has existed for centuries in Germany and has gone through several distinct stages, but during the first half of the nineteenth century, it was steeped in German Romanticism. Astounding changes in German society occurred during the nineteenth century and the ideology that cohered its citizens evolved with those changes. The *Bildungsideal* (goal or ideal for human progress) envisioned by the German Romantics and implemented by the *Bildungsbürger* in the first half of the century was challenged by the failed revolution of 1848 and was vastly different by the end

⁴⁵ I do not mean that the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* remained as they were in Germany, but rather, they crafted their ethnic identity in a way that allowed them to participate in the process of *Bildung* as members of the German *Volk*. For more on this type of ethnic identity formation, see Conzen et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," 8.

of the century, when the German nation-state was in place. Thus, periodization is important when analyzing racialist rhetoric in Cincinnati's newspapers.

The term *Bildung* underwent major definitional changes as the ideology shifted, but scholars attempt to simplify the translation of the term, which has such a long history attached to it, presumably to make it less cumbersome. Unfortunately, this shorthand elides the periodization of the philosophy and ignores the component of traditional religion. Perry Myers translates *Bildung* as "self-formation," David Sorkin prefers "harmony of personality," Rebekka Horlacher defines it as "education," and George L. Mosse associates the word with "notions of character formation and moral education."⁴⁶ Willi Goetschel and Nils Roemer translate *Bildung* as "formation, education, and self-making."⁴⁷ Henry M. Pachter prefers the term "cultural education."⁴⁸ Jonathan Sarna chooses "self-cultivation" and Helmut Walser Smith uses "cultivation" which he associates with Herder.⁴⁹

All of these definitions imply that *Bildung* is an individual endeavor to educate and improve the self, and none of the definitions alludes to a religious (or even moral) aspect of *Bildung*. Historian Douglas T. McGetchin offers an especially rich description of *Bildung* during

⁴⁶ Perry Myers, *The Double-Edged Sword: The Cult of Bildung, Its Downfall and Reconstitution in Fin-de-Siecle Germany (Rudolf Steiner and Max Weber, vol. 2, German Linguistic and Cultural Studies (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2004), 15; David Sorkin, Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840, Originally published New York: Oxford University Press, 1987 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 16; Rebekka Horlacher, The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History (Routledge, 2016); George Mosse, German Jews Beyond Judaism (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), 3.*

⁴⁷ Willi Goetschel and Nils Roemer, "Secularization Theories and Their Discontents," *Germanic Review* 90, no. 1 (2015): 3.

⁴⁸ Henry M. Pachter, *Modern Germany: A Social, Cultural, and Political History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), 7.

⁴⁹ Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 79; Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 57.

the antebellum era: “Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated middle class) in Germany increasingly advocated the use of literature to create a social movement that promoted an organically cultivated, spiritually pure, inwardly enriching intellectual education, or *Bildung*, to counter the artificial, contrived *Kultur* of an aristocracy dominated culturally by the French.”⁵⁰ But what does McGetchin mean by “spiritually pure”?

A few English-language sources associate traditional religion with nineteenth-century applications of *Bildung*, but most scholarship describes a secularization of *Bildung* that culminated at the end of the century. Goetschel and Roemer point out that Goethe employs *Bildung* “as a social, political, and theological-political critique of modernity” in his *Bildungsroman*, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-1796), which he wrote in response to contemporaries who were already predicting the secularization of religion.⁵¹ Sorkin claims that by the turn of the eighteenth century, *Bildung* has lost its moral component. But especially at mid-century, the Forty-Eighters largely abandoned traditional religion, and Christian perspectives on life were losing favor with liberal intellectuals, who preferred the epistemology of natural history and science. For Pachter, this marks a turning point when liberal Germans

⁵⁰ Douglas T. McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, and Orientalism: Ancient India’s Rebirth in Modern Germany* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), 70. There is some debate over the use this term for Catholics before the year 1900. For assent, see Christopher Dowe, Helmut Berding, Jürgen Kocka, et. al., *Auch Bildungsbürger: Katholische Studierende und Akademiker im Kaiserreich*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006. Others in agreement include Helmut W. Smith, Olaf Blaschke, and Tim Blanning (*The Pursuit of Glory: The Five Revolutions that Made Modern Europe: 1648-1815 (The Penguin History of Europe)*, Penguin, 2008). Also see Oded Heilbrunner (*From Popular Liberalism to National Socialism: Religion, Culture and Politics in South-western Germany, 1860s-1930s*, New York: Routledge, 2016, <https://books.google.com/books?id=jAkkDwAAQBAJ>), who agrees that even “Old Catholics” fit in the category of educated bourgeoisie. Dissenters include Benjamin Ziemann (University of Sheffield) in his review of Dowe’s book in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (June 2008), 453-55.

⁵¹ Goetschel and Roemer, “Secularization Theories and Their Discontents,” 2.

abandoned the cultural education of *Bildung* and embraced industrialization, urbanization, and modernization.

Several scholars couple *Bildung* with secularizing movements, as when Conzen describes *Bildung* as an impulse that enlivened the popularity of *Vereine*, which “offered a way for individuals set free from the world of tradition and committed to a humanistic belief in progress and a cultivated life—*Bildung*—to join with likeminded others.”⁵² H. Glenn Penny refers to *Bildung* as “self-edification,” based on Alexander von Humboldt’s usage, which links *Bildung* to “a corresponding desire to gain and demonstrate a sense of worldliness.”⁵³ Reinhard Mehring states, “*Bildung* is the individual acquisition of an orienting knowledge.”⁵⁴ Liebersohn identifies an ideological shift at the turn of the nineteenth century in which “*Bildung*, or education, was undergoing a transformation in meaning from book learning to encounter with the world.”⁵⁵

The small amount of significant English-language scholarship on the religious aspects of *Bildung* include a monograph by Myers that focuses on Christianity and a body of work on the influence of *Bildung* on Judaism. Myers discusses the *Bildungsideal*, or ideal formation, of German subjects, which encompassed all areas of human development: “economic success, but also with social worth, taste, and even religious salvation.”⁵⁶ For Myers, the religious

⁵² Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade,” in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 49.

⁵³ H. Glenn Penny, *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians Since 1800* (UNC Press Books, 2013), 33.

⁵⁴ Reinhard Mehring, “A Humanist Program in Exile: Thomas Mann in Philosophical Correspondence with His Contemporaries,” in *Exile, Science and Bildung: The Contested Legacies of German Émigré Intellectuals* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 47.

⁵⁵ Harry. Liebersohn, *Aristocratic Encounters: European Travelers and North American Indians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 135.

⁵⁶ Myers, *The Double-Edged Sword: The Cult of Bildung, Its Downfall and Reconstitution in Fin-de-Siecle Germany* (Rudolf Steiner and Max Weber, 2:14).

component of *Bildung* at mid-century looks to the Protestant Reformation (Lutheranism and Pietism) and emphasizes spiritual unity, which operates at two levels of human organization. Individuals enjoyed spiritual unity with God, and individuals had a responsibility to sustain spiritual with their community by acting in moral ways. As religious authority gave way to scientific modes of interpreting the world, spiritual unity took on secular meanings.

Mosse writes on Jewish intellectuals who incorporated *Bildung* into Judaism. As early as 1846, Ludwig Auerbach “called for religion to become *Bildung*.”⁵⁷ Mosse associates this call with Jewish emancipation, which occurred when *Bildung* was still a cultural endeavor, and so Jews participated in the *Bildungsideal* to become acculturated members of the bourgeoisie. Specifically in the early-nineteenth century, Sorkin describes how David Fränkel revised Moses Mendelssohn’s version of *Bildung* to inspire Jewish regeneration and aid assimilation. Marion A. Kaplan describes *Bildung* during this period as a secular product of the German State that “appealed to Jews because it could transcend differences of religion or nationality through the development of the individual personality.”⁵⁸ Hence, emancipated Jews could acculturate into German society and become *Bildungsbürger* without relinquishing their religion. Sarna also suggests that *Bildung* was influential for German-Jewish Orthodox rabbis in America such as Samson Raphael Hirsch and the newspaper editor Isaac Leeser, who “sought to reconcile traditional Judaism and aesthetics.”⁵⁹

It is understandable that English-language scholarship regards *Bildung* as a secular ideology focused on self-improvement and education. After all, *Bildung* was institutionalized in

⁵⁷ Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism*, 4.

⁵⁸ Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 8.

⁵⁹ Sarna, *American Judaism*, 79.

Germany during the early-nineteenth century, when American intellectuals traveled from the East Coast to Germany to study the new university system. They brought back ideas for how to adapt *Bildung* in the American context, and this forms the basis for English-language scholarship today. However, this conceptualization fails to fully account for the German intellectuals' intentions and their cultural applications. Horlacher, who focuses on how American educators adapted *Bildung*, offers the most cogent distinction between the conceptualizations of *Bildung* in America versus Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century. She notes,

As *Bildung* travels into the social spaces of the United States, its translation is not merely a copy of German sensibilities; it is re-imagined in the formation of the republic in the late 18c and in the 19th and early 20th centuries in cultural narratives of the nation, the formation of the social sciences, and the Progressive schools and pedagogy. While the word *Bildung* was not used in the United States, principles of the educated subject were connected with political theories of the republican citizen used to solve the social challenges given emphasis in American Progressivism...*Bildung* had a different trajectory in Germany. It became the core concept in the educational theory developed in German universities. The concept gave value to an internal harmony and totality of personality that rejected liberal notions of democracy and pluralism. *Bildung* was inscribed in discourses advocating the unity of the German *Volk*, whereby local history and geography (*Heimatkunde*) were to become the central school subjects in elementary schooling.⁶⁰

Horlacher's clear distinction between the transatlantic applications of *Bildung* is instructive but not sufficiently nuanced. In particular, her claim that the concept of *Bildung* rejected the notion of pluralism is directly contradicted in the case of Cincinnati's clergy under study, who advocated for cultural heterogeneity, rather than acculturation. In addition, while Horlacher expands the breadth of *Bildung*'s applications to individuals and the German *Volk*, in Cincinnati the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* encouraged the cultural development of every *Volk* and also described the ultimate development of humankind. Thus, the four clergy-editors used their

⁶⁰ Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History*, ix–x.

newspapers to prescribe the development of their readership at the individual, ethnic, and human levels. Finally, in the denominational papers in Cincinnati, the themes of civilization, progress, and education are entangled with traditional religion in ways that have not been recognized.

I concur with Horlacher's concerns about the loss of the German meaning of *Bildung*, and I am additionally concerned about accurately translating the term itself. Relying on the pervasive translation of *Bildung* as merely "education" elides the cultural aspects of *Bildung*, which include language, history, literature, and religion. In fact, Cincinnati's Jewish and Catholic *Bildungsbürger* described two distinct processes—*Erziehung* (education) and *Bildung*—indicating that the latter was something altogether different from a traditional understanding of education.⁶¹ Furthermore, in light of the Cincinnati newspapers, it would be short-sighted to generalize *Bildung* as an activity engaged in by individuals who only wanted to improve themselves or by secular Germans who had no use for traditional religion. As these newspapers reveal, in the mid-nineteenth century *Bildung* was an ideology that could incorporate the concepts of heathenism, civilization, and cultural progress into an ideal where humanity is unified under a single religious system, while retaining cultural heterogeneity.

A better definition of *Bildung* during this time period is needed to convey the full conception of cultural progress that was envisioned by the Germans. Rabbi Max Lilienthal translated *Bildung* as "enlightenment" in his 1855 English-language response to *Der Wahrheitsfreund*'s initial article on *Erziehung* versus *Bildung*, but that term is even more difficult to periodize. Therefore, I offer a more apt translation of *Bildung* in the first half of the

⁶¹ "Erziehung und Bildung des Menschen (Part I)," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, January 6, 1853; Max Lilienthal, "Protestantism Backwards--Judaism Onwards," *The Israelite*, November 21, 1856.

nineteenth century as “cultural progress toward the complete perfection of individuals, *Völker*, and humanity,” where “culture” includes history, language, literature, art, and religion.

Chapter Overview

In order to demonstrate that *Bildung* permeates the German clergy’s perspectives on the human race in distinct ways that are informed by theology, each chapter addresses a different aspect of the cultural politics of *Bildung*. Chapter one introduces the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* and demonstrates how each clergy-editor had been educated in the rhetoric of cultural progress and German exceptionalism. As members of the intellectual elite, each editor used his newspaper to prevent his readership from acculturating into American society and to guide them in fully developing their German *Volkgeist*.

Chapter two differentiates between the Anglo-American view of race as biologically determined (following the American and British schools of anthropology) and the German Romantics’ view of human variation as culturally contingent, which was derived from Herder’s philosophy. In order to appreciate the significant differences in these racial discourses, the chapter describes the American convention of linking race with formal politics in the party press or the penny press. This is followed by a discussion of the potential reasons that the four German editors decoupled race from formal politics in their denominational papers, making it difficult to recognize a racialist rhetoric in their papers. The chapter concludes by laying the intellectual groundwork for identifying a racialist discourse in the cultural politics of *Bildung*.

Chapter three reveals that the Anglo-Americans’ and Germans’ religious agenda to missionize the world differed in the antebellum era because the programs had different goals. On the one hand, the Anglo-Americans followed the British convention of embarking on a civilizing mission to convert indigenous people, teach them to read the Bible, and socialize them

as Western European Christians, which the missionaries believed was God's ideal. On the other hand, the Germans converted indigenous peoples and educated them so that the peoples could listen to their inner *Volkgeist* (the spirit or essence of the *Volk*) and develop their cultures (literature, history, art, etc.). Because imperialists' civilizing mission acculturated indigenous people to Western European norms, the German clergy declared that the imperialists were destroying indigenous cultures, so the peoples could no longer progress. Of all the most-developed (Western European) cultures, only the German *Volk* remained in a pure state because they had abstained from the immoral actions of the imperialists.

Chapter four reveals that the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* did not create a human hierarchy based on cultural progress, in contradistinction to Anglo-Americans. Instead, they used the ethnological data gleaned from missionary reports to interpret scriptural passages on the End Times, monitoring human progress toward an eschatological teleology of *Bildung*. Only those cultures that become *gebildet* (fully developed) would participate in God's coming kingdom, at which time all humans would be cohered by a single theological system. As the only civilized European culture that has not been sullied by imperialism, the Germans would be the only culture surviving the End Times.

Chapter five considers the implications of the cultural politics of *Bildung* in the antebellum era. Given that each editor believed his German denomination was the epitome of cultural attainment but not yet fully developed, the pressure to lead his readership to become *gebildet* was tremendous. As each member of the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* contemplated the coming of God's kingdom, they educated their readers in the proper theology and praxis that would ensure the German *Volk*'s cultural development, and they worked out the practical means of achieving the teleological goal of *Bildung*. Furthermore, because they used *Bildung* to

critique the imperialist nations, the clergy-editors participated in the creation of a German national identity by theorizing the ideal human culture and circulated their thoughts in newspapers that were distributed in Europe and America. By applying the philosophical concept of *Bildung* to the successes and failures of the imperialist missionaries, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* offered a perspective on how to become the ideal European colonialists in the future.

Project Significance

This dissertation has multidisciplinary implications in the areas of German Studies and German American Studies, Immigration Studies, intellectual history, the history of the book, race theory, and of course, American religious history. While being firmly situated in the area of religious studies, this project emphasizes the interconnectedness of ethnicity, philosophy, race, and religion, placing them in an American context at a time when German intellectuals' experience with nonwhite people was largely theoretical. The dissertation interrogates archives of newspapers, the print medium which forms the public sphere in which racialist discourse was traditionally disseminated to the American populace. The four German denominational newspapers published in Cincinnati, Ohio between 1830 and 1862—*Der Wahrheitsfreund*, *Der Christliche Apologete*, *Die Protestantische Zeitblätter*, and *The Israelite*—were published by the German Catholics, the German Methodists, the German Evangelical Protestants, and the Reform Jews, respectively.⁶²

⁶² There is one more denominational newspaper that could have been included: *Die Deborah*. This German-language paper was started by Isaac Mayer Wise to speak to his German Jews—particularly the women—but he very quickly handed over editorship to another *Bildungsbürger* in Cincinnati, Rabbi Max Lilienthal. The paper's articles do not actually speak to women; it reads as a German-language companion to *The Israelite*, in that it contains dense theological treatises on Reform Judaism with almost nothing on race or politics. I chose to use *The Israelite* for this project because Wise is much more prolific than Lilienthal, he is using the

I see the major significance of this project as the recovery of the religious applications of *Bildung* in the first half of the nineteenth century and its transatlantic reception, which offers new insight into claims of German exceptionalism in America. The German Catholics, German Methodists, German Evangelical Protestants, and Reform Jews resisted acculturation in antebellum America because they believed that cultural degeneration—not perfection—was the result of adopting another *Volk*'s culture. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* warned its readers that acculturation had eternal consequences.

Secondarily, the project provides nuanced attention to the diversity of German immigrants in the antebellum era. The comparative nature of this project—examining Catholic, Jewish, and conservative and liberal Protestant newspapers—broadens the typical focus on Lutherans or non-religious immigrants, such as socialist 48ers and Freethinkers, and it expands our knowledge of the ethnic and denominational presses. Furthermore, the theological justification for German exceptionalism that was founded on *Bildung* was disseminated to German Americans through the denominational press in Cincinnati, whose newspapers were distributed throughout America and Germany. While the editors agreed on the theological stakes for German cultural progress, their biblical justifications for that progress varied according to doctrinal differences.

As is common with dissertation projects, this one has diverged somewhat from my original plan. In my future work, I hope to apply this foundational work to two topics that I originally intended to cover in the dissertation: an explanation of how the religious

language of *Bildung* to found a cosmopolitan religious movement (culturally diverse but religiously Jewish)—applying the *Bildungsideal* to non-German *Volk*, and Lilienthal's voice is included as a contributing editor to *The Israelite*. Also, most of the articles on *Bildung* are in *The Israelite*, not *Die Deborah*. In my opinion, *Die Deborah* addresses religion very much more than any other topic.

Bildungsbürgertum used *Bildung* and theological arguments to justify slavery, and a discussion of why the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* generally agreed that the American Civil War was not a racially-motivated event. Even when the inevitability of the American Civil War loomed and President Lincoln freed the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation, three of the four editors still believed that Anglo-Americans overstated the importance of race in national affairs; only the German Evangelical Protestant editor saw race as the mitigating factor in the Civil War. The others believed that disagreements about political unity (republicanism), religious unity (anti-sectarianism), and, ultimately, the unity of the human race were at the heart of the Civil War. The Thirty Years War, which was much analyzed in the 1830s to the 1860s as the Germans' civil war, had failed to produce a German nation. If America succumbed to Civil War, these editors feared that German political unification and the perfection of German cultural progress were doomed, as well.

Chapter 1

Guarding the German *Volk* Against American Acculturation

In the nineteenth century, antiassimilationist leaders in the German American community were concerned about the loss of language and other expressions of German culture as immigrants adopted American societal norms. In the context of *Bildung*, language was just one of a number of elements comprising each *Volk*'s unique culture, along with religion, history, literature, and art. The Germans leaders' concern about assimilating should not be misunderstood as merely negotiating cultural change; much more was at stake than cultural identity. German Romantics correlated the loss of cultural distinctiveness in any of these areas with the corruption of the *Volk*, meaning that when German immigrants acculturated, they became less German. This argument was based on the cultural and religious exceptionalism of the German *Volk* and was perpetuated through the ideology of *Bildung*. For the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Cincinnati, speaking the German language, practicing German religion, and reading German-language periodicals developed the German *Volkgeist* and protected the laity against the degenerating influence of American culture.

The three Christian editors in Cincinnati linked the German language to German religion and declared an inseparable bond between the two using the language of cultural identity. They used their periodicals to unify new communities of religious German immigrants and to resist acculturation in America in order to retain their *Deutschtum* and to prevent cultural degeneration. In particular, the Catholic editors declared that the use of the German language and participation in German religion prevented the degeneration of culture. Therefore, they created an autonomous German national parish in Cincinnati. The German Methodists created a distinct form of Methodism that drew on the German Protestant Reformation and required the clergy to

retain German cultural norms in order to be effective evangelizers. They resisted acculturation at the expense of ecclesiastical authority in the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). The German Evangelical Protestant (GEP) editor emphasized the exclusive use of the German language and declared complete independence from every cultural authority in America because the German *Volkgeist* was immutable. He created a church that was autonomous from every American religious institution, where German immigrants would forever embody the *Deutschtum* with which they were born.

The Jewish editor differs from the Christian editors in that he was trying to create a common identity for all of the world's Jews, who were living in diaspora and had already acculturated in many different countries. As a result, language was not a primary identifier of culture for him, unlike the Christian editors. He wrote primarily in the English language, in order to speak to the largest possible number of Jews and to establish his vision in America. Incorporating the vision of liberal rabbis in Germany, his newspaper attempted to modernize Jewish customs and update Judaism's medieval liturgy, and he envisioned a *Judentum* that combined a German intellectual identity with Reform Judaism.

As members of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, the four editors saw themselves as the intellectual and cultural guardians of their *Volk* in America. They encouraged their readers to resist acculturation through strict adherence to German religion, which for the Christians also included German-language forms of worship. Although the clergy-editors had all been trained in the concept of *Bildung* and discouraged acculturation in their newspapers, they offered ways to resist acculturation that varied with the theological tenets and religious needs of their denominations. This chapter examines four antiassimilationist immigrant editors and reveals

how they created a religious, German public sphere to theorize the role of religion in maintaining cultural purity.

German Catholic Exceptionalism

Many scholars explain that the immigrants' emphasis on German culture within the Roman Catholic Church was based on the belief "that perpetuation of German language and culture went hand in hand with preservation of Catholic faith."¹ This claim is often linked to Henni's much-quoted principle that "Language saves Faith." As the quote is usually interpreted, immigrant Catholics arriving in America were marginally committed to the Church, and holding religious services in their native language strengthened their devotion by invoking nostalgia for their cultural heritage, which included the Catholic Church. The goal of the Church in America, according to the prevalent narrative, was to change nominal Catholics from Europe into practicing American believers. So priests should speak in German to the immigrants only until they had adjusted to their new surroundings.

According to Peter F. Williams, this unusual proportion of Germans and Irish "thereby gave to Cincinnati Catholicism a flavor distinct from that of many other Midwestern cities."²

The German Catholics far outnumbered the Irish Catholics (and all other ethnicities of Catholic

¹ James Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 194; Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815 - 1865* (New Brunswick, NJ: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 7–8; Pellegrino Stagni, *View From Rome: Archbishop Stagni's 1915 Reports on the Ontario Bilingual Schools Question* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 58; Jeffrey M. Burns, Ellen Skerrett, and Joseph M. White, eds., *Keeping Faith: European and Asian Catholic Immigrants* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), 2; William G. Ross, *Forging New Freedoms: Nativism, Education, and the Constitution, 1917-1927* (U of Nebraska Press, 1994), 14. Ross also notes this principle was invoked to found the parochial school system.

² Peter W. Williams, "German American Catholicism in Cincinnati," *Queen City Heritage*, Fall 1984, 21; White, "Religion and Community," 169. In comparison, there were reportedly 4,544 English-speaking Catholics in Cincinnati that same year.

immigrants) in the city of Cincinnati during the antebellum period. German Catholics also accounted for a large proportion of the Germans in the city. Their predominance peaked in the 1840s, when “about three-quarters of Cincinnati’s Germans are thought to have been Catholic,” or about 8,800 members, dropping to about sixty percent by the 1870s. But the unique instantiation of the Catholic Church that Williams rightly discerns was not due to the assimilative influence of the Germans on the local Church. The German Catholics preferred to worship exclusively with other German immigrants in the German national parish, indicating that they were unwilling to acculturate. Reinterpreting extant scholarship through the lens of antiassimilationism reveals an alternative conclusion—that German Catholic priests’ actions and words in the denominational organ led the laity to resist acculturation into the American Catholic Church. For them, religion and language were not just ways to ease the immigrants through the acculturation process. Religion and language were markers of cultural exceptionalism that had to be retained in order for the German *Volk* to progress.

Founding an Autonomous National Parish

Initially Cincinnati was part of the Bardstown, Kentucky diocese, which comprised the whole western frontier under the direction of Bishop Benedict Flaget. Father Edward Fenwick, a Dominican priest from Maryland, was assigned as itinerant priest for an area that included all of Ohio and provisionally “the Michigan and north western territories.”³ The first Roman Catholic congregation in Cincinnati was founded in 1817, and two years later Christ Church was erected just outside the city, in Northern Liberties, for its 100 members. This wooden structure, known as Christ Church, was led by Father (later bishop) Fenwick, a Dominican priest from

³ *The Cincinnati Directory for the Year 1829* (Cincinnati: Robinson and Fairbank, 1829), 136.

Maryland.⁴ In the 1820s Cincinnati was still rugged and hard to access from the developed centers of the East Coast, making it difficult to procure priests. When the Irish Dominicans William Vincent Harrold and John A. Ryan were ordered by Rome to support Fenwick's work in the frontier city, the priests "lodged a formal complaint with Secretary of State Henry Clay," saying that the assignment "violated their civil rights."⁵ They were eventually reassigned to Ireland. As the Catholic population expanded, Cincinnati was designated a separate diocese, and Fenwick was elevated to bishop in 1821. Many priests were assigned to Fenwick's diocese directly from Europe, and the establishment of parishes on the frontier "as hoped for and expected...induced a rapid settlement of the faithful here."⁶

The German Catholics arrived in the Cincinnati area as early as 1819, but they did not join Christ Church because of the language barrier: they lacked a knowledge of English and Latin. According to one itinerant priest in the 1830s, the German Catholic immigrants "sing very well, but almost all in German, except the Kyrie, Gloria and Credo in Latin."⁷ In the absence of a German-speaking priest, the immigrants joined Protestant churches who offered services in German or abstained from institutional practice altogether. Fenwick petitioned European authorities for the appointment of a German-speaking priest, and in 1824 Frederick Rese from Hanover was assigned to Cincinnati. He soon returned to Europe to raise funds for his work among the Germans and established the Leopoldine Foundation in Vienna "to supply both material aid and missionary volunteers for the propagation of the faith" in the Cincinnati

⁴ *The Cincinnati Directory* (Cincinnati: Oliver Farnsworth, 1819), 34–35; "History & Traditions," Cincinnati Cathedral, accessed November 5, 2017, <http://cincinnati-cathedral.com/about-history/>.

⁵ Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History*, 96.

⁶ *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, vol. 25 (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, 1914), 199.

⁷ Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History*, 111.

diocese.⁸ This financial support supplemented the subsidies Fenwick was already receiving from French Catholics through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

During Rese's absence, Fenwick appointed two newly-arrived Swiss Franciscans as itinerant priests in the diocese: Martin Kundig and John Martin Henni.⁹ Under their leadership the German Catholic laity raised the funds to build a German church; however, Fenwick spent the money on other projects. Bishop Fenwick died in 1832 and was replaced by John D. Purcell, an Irishman trained by the Sulpicians, who was quick to "establish a good rapport with the German Catholics." Purcell recognized the need for a German parish in Cincinnati and obtained land, and the Germans pledged additional money so that the construction could begin immediately.¹⁰ Holy Trinity Church was completed in 1834 and was "the first national parish for Germans in what was then the American West."¹¹ The 3,000-member parish was briefly headed by the Lorraine-born Henry Damian Juncker, who was quickly replaced with Henni. Eleven more German parishes were added in the 1840s and 1850s, and priests from Austria and Bohemia, including the first Franciscans in the city, arrived from Europe to lead these new parishes. When Henni became the Bishop of Milwaukee in 1844, his assistant the Bavarian Franciscan Francis L. Huber took over the Holy Trinity congregation. From the perspective of the Irish bishops in America and several Catholic orders in Europe, Cincinnati was an important mission to the German immigrants in the American West and the German parishes were provided with German-speaking priests.

⁸ Williams, "German American Catholicism in Cincinnati," 24.

⁹ When Rese returned in 1829, instead of being re-instated at Holy Trinity, he commenced work among the American Indians in Michigan and was subsequently named Bishop of Detroit.

¹⁰ Roger Antonio Fortin, *Faith and Action: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821-1996* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 80.

¹¹ Williams, "German American Catholicism in Cincinnati," 24.

The presence of Irish and German Catholic immigrants in the city resulted in a bimodal system for diocesan oversight. Although the two groups professed the Roman Catholic faith, their cultural backgrounds produced two different kinds of Christian devotion, and they developed separate institutional structures. This occurred because Bishop Purcell, like other Irish American bishops, supported the national parish system, but moreover, he granted the German priests much autonomy in the administration of their national parish without forcing them to acculturate into the Anglo-American Catholic Church. The national parish was a Continental European convention that was adopted in America in the nineteenth century to encourage ethnic diversity and preserve local customs, including language. On the Continent, the Catholic Church in Germany had developed in significantly different ways from the Irish Catholic Church, due to the Napoleonic Wars, a renewal of devotionalism, and a strong association with German nationalism. According to Jay Dolan, German Catholic immigrants arriving in America as early as 1808 “sought to establish their own brand of religion [whose] link with the fatherland was especially strong...An increasing sense of nationalism reinforced the distinctiveness of German Catholicism, and later immigrants reflected this loyalty to a specific religious heritage.”¹² The German national parish sustained ethnic customs by allowing parishioners to “hear sermons in their mother tongue, go to confession as they had learned to confess from early childhood, and take an active part in parish life through their beloved societies.”¹³ When Purcell traveled to Europe on a fund-raising mission in 1838, he appointed both an Irish (Edward Collins) and a German (Henni) vicar-general to oversee the Cincinnati diocese, providing for oversight of two distinct national parishes.

¹² Dolan, *The Immigrant Church*, 69; Fortin, *Faith and Action*, 185.

¹³ Dolan, *The Immigrant Church*, 70.

American bishops expressed concerns that the national parish system produced isolationism among the immigrants, and the bishops argued for varying levels of acculturation. When Vatican officials established the national parish system, they set a precedent regarding language, whereby immigrants were not allowed to attend other immigrant groups' parishes. Germans were allowed to join English-speaking Catholic Churches, but according to ecclesiastical law, the reverse was not allowed.¹⁴ Even though Purcell never learned the German language and might have advocated for a more acculturated, English-language church in Cincinnati, instead he "recognized that preserving the German language was a means of preserving their Catholic faith" and he did not "push for full assimilation."¹⁵

Throughout his tenure as bishop and (in 1850) archbishop, Purcell valued certain cultural traits of his German constituency. When his French bishop in Cleveland tried to force the Germans there to acculturate and the Germans revolted, Purcell chose to quell the unrest in the diocese by replacing the bishop instead of reprimanding the Germans. In Cincinnati, Purcell chided his Irish membership in the English-language *Catholic Telegraph* for their laxity in tithing and he praised the Germans' frugality, saying that it allowed them to pay off their debts and still contribute to the Church.¹⁶ In the area of alcohol consumption, a persistent problem for the Irish contingent, the Archbishop "was careful to respect German folk mores" by not subjecting that portion of the diocese to his abstinence campaign.¹⁷ Whereas the Irish were

¹⁴ Fortin, *Faith and Action*, 185.

¹⁵ Fortin, 94.

¹⁶ See *Catholic Telegraph*, 12/19/1840, 10/4/1849, 9/6/1856, 7/11/1857, 2/20/1858, quoted in Fortin, 95, fn44. The *Catholic Telegraph* was published in Cincinnati and was edited by Bishop Purcell's brother, Edward Purcell, for forty years. The (Arch)bishop sometimes published anonymously in the newspaper.

¹⁷ Williams, "German American Catholicism in Cincinnati," 25.

widely known for their excessive drinking, smoking, swearing, and lewd behavior, the Germans were generally perceived as self-controlled, even if they sometimes drank too much at picnics.

Purcell advised a balance between acculturation and the retention of positive characteristics of ethnic identity in his administration of the parish system, though he did not advocate ethnic isolationism. He despaired that even in 1852 there were German priests who were unable to hear a confession in English and he admonished them to “think not only of preserving [their faith] but of propagating the faith” to English-speaking Americans.¹⁸ Overall, Purcell advocated a more passive approach with the Germans and “was content to follow the advice of and leave the direction of the German Catholic community to its clerical and lay leaders.”¹⁹

Purcell’s hands-off approach resulted in two separate models of church governance in Cincinnati, producing further opportunities for the Germans to retain their cultural practices. The Irish tradition of governance was a “hierarchical model, which meant clerical supremacy in church affairs...The Irish tradition of the authoritarian clergy and a deferential laity had become the normative model in the United States.” The German tradition was a parish with lay trustees who shared governance with the clergy. Both systems persisted in Cincinnati until the early twentieth century, and every German parish in Cincinnati followed the lay trustee system.²⁰ The lay trustees formed a powerful leadership that established twelve parish churches (each with its own school) before German clergy were assigned to them, and the lay trustees paid for the buildings that were built on bishop-owned land. Able to govern themselves in the diocese, the

¹⁸ See *Catholic Telegraph* 7/17/1852, 8/21/1852, 10/2/1852, 10/14/1854, 10/21/1854. Quoted in Fortin, *Faith and Action*, 96.

¹⁹ White, “Religion and Community,” 180.

²⁰ Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 286–87. Dolan notes that both Purcell and his successor, William Henry Elder, supported the system and codified it in 1851.

Germans developed a “self-consciously strong and vigorous German Catholicism with deep cultural roots,” which was sustained at least through the end of the nineteenth century by a German seminary, German-language parochial schools, benevolent societies, orphanages and hospitals, and publications.²¹

German Language and Religion Prevent Cultural Degeneration

The parish system afforded the Cincinnati Germans a strong measure of autonomy and allowed them to resist acculturation into American society and the Anglo-American Catholic Church. The clergy maintained a rhetoric of German exceptionalism that exceeded linguistic pride and nostalgic preferences for Old World customs. On the one hand, Henni was a man who could preach in both German and English, supported bi-lingual schools, encouraged his parishioners to “study English and adjust themselves to their new home,” and offered English classes at Holy Trinity for German adults of any denomination.²² Yet he also founded a seminary to prepare priests to minister in the German language, established a German-language newspaper, and described Americans as being a dangerous influence on the German people. Americans were “generally courteous and hospitable,” yet they were also puritanical bigots and Protestants “motivated by self interest.”²³ Henni said that Lutheranism “was only an empty shell after immigrants had assimilated the new language and customs,” and he predicted that this degenerating trend would continue for all religions in America until, eventually, “the State would assume the function of the Church.” Henni’s solution was the establishment of the “Catholic Church...[with] its unity of belief and worship, its schools, its sisterhoods, and its teachers and

²¹ Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History*, 194.

²² Peter Leo Johnson, *Crosier on the Frontier: A Life of John Martin Henni, Archbishop of Milwaukee* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1959), 44.

²³ Johnson, 32.

priests to establish its place in American society.” Catholicism was Henni’s answer to America’s degenerating society, in particular the German Catholicism that was propagated by the German institutions he established in America.²⁴

In 1837 Henni established a weekly newspaper called *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, the first German Catholic newspaper in America. He formed the idea for a German-language paper during his 1835 European fundraising trip, when he “sought advice from the editor of *Der Sion* in Augsburg, and from priests throughout America who were laboring in German parishes.” The paper funded the newly created St. Aloysius Orphan Society for German boys, who were prohibited from St. Peter’s Orphan Asylum, an institution begun by the Sisters of Charity in 1829 and affiliated with the Irish Catholics’ St. Peter’s Church. According to a prospectus published by Henni in the English-language *Catholic Telegraph*, this new publication was necessary to reach German Catholics in their native language and would have two departments. The Religious Department would “contain clear and lucid expositions of the Roman Catholic doctrine...to be practiced and perpetuated to the end of time.”²⁵ The Secular Department would “comprise a faithful synopsis of the principal and most interesting events whether foreign or domestic...and particular attention will be paid to the progress of events in France, Germany and Switzerland.” In the prospectus published in the German-language paper, *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, Henni additionally revealed that the paper would specifically provide “a simple and German account of the whole extent of Christian teaching.” Furthermore, Henni promoted his German newspaper as the singular authoritative source of religious instruction in America:

It may be rightly stated that *Der Wahrheitsfreund* is an instructive guest in the circle of any family that wants to progress in *Bildung* and morality. *Der*

²⁴ Johnson, 32–33.

²⁵ John H. Lamott, *History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: Mountell Press, 1921), 297, 301; Johnson, *Crosier on the Frontier*, 45.

Wahrheitsfreund should therein be seen as worthy of testing and received well by all people (Catholics, at least), because it is the only Catholic messenger in all of America that dares to appear in print to the would-be Germans (*sei-Teutschen*), and indeed has no other [material] interest than to instruct, to edify, and to help the orphans.²⁶

The newspaper was published to promote German Catholic perspectives on life in America and the German-speaking states, and Henni thought that every German family—not just Catholic households—would benefit from this German portrayal. The Anglo-American *Catholic Telegraph* was insufficient for German Catholic immigrants' instruction, and a German-language denominational newspaper was vital to these immigrants' cultural progress.

Although there were several editors of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* during the antebellum period and they hailed from a variety of European locales, they all shared a Germanic background and spoke the German language. Furthermore, although they generally were not educated in the German university system, they were introduced to German Romanticism and *Bildung* at gymnasiums, and they were educated professionals who were members of the middle class or *bourgeoisie*. Unlike the general Catholic laity, who “were admittedly lower-class foreign-born laborers with little formal education,” the immigrant priests and editors of the antebellum period “possessed a relatively high degree of education, published erudite commentary on religious and social topics, and had significance over the larger U.S. Catholic community.”²⁷

²⁶ “Prospectus,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, July 26, 1838. “...eine einfache und deutsche Darstellung über den ganzen Umfang der christlichen Lehre.” “[*Der Wahrheitsfreund*] darf mit Recht als lehrreicher Gast dem Kreise einer jeglichen Familie, der er noch um Bildung und um moralischen Bestand zu tun, sich nahen;--ja der Wahrheits-Freund sollte darum schon bei Allen, (Katholiken wenigstens) einer Prüfung und gütiger Aufnahme werth sein, weil er in ganz Amerika als der einzige Katholische Bote unter sei-Deutschen aufzutreten wagt, und wahrlich—kein anderes Interesse kennt, als zu belehren, zu erbauen, und Waisen zu helfen.” The newspaper was edited by several priests during the antebellum period, and this dissertation will demonstrate that German exceptionalism was expressed throughout the period.

²⁷ Lorien Foote and Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, *So Conceived and So Dedicated: Intellectual Life in the Civil War-Era North* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 219.

Henni attended the gymnasium at St. Gall and the theological seminary at Lucerne (both in Switzerland) and he received his doctorate at the Sapienza University in Rome. When Henni was made the Bishop of Milwaukee in 1843, the ownership and publication of the paper passed to Hermann Lehmann. John James Maximilian Oertel assumed editorship through 1846. Oertel was a Lutheran minister who was trained at the University of Erlangen and immigrated to America as a missionary for the irenic Protestant movement in Prussia. He converted to Catholicism in 1840 and was ordained in the United States. When he left Cincinnati for Baltimore in 1846, he founded and edited the *Kirchenzeitung*, which became “the most prominent German Catholic publication in the United States.”²⁸ Anton Boeckling replaced Oertel and served as editor until 1850. Lehmann and Boeckling unsuccessfully tried to found a daily version of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, and when it failed in 1850, Boeckling moved to Missouri, where he became the editor of two other Catholic newspapers. In 1850 Lehmann sold *Der Wahrheitsfreund* to Joseph Anton Hemann, who retained ownership until the Civil War. Hemann had attended the prestigious Carolinum Gymnasium in Osnabrück and Xavier University in Cincinnati, then known as the Athenaeum, which was established in 1831 by Bishop Fenwick and administered by the Jesuits beginning in 1840.²⁹ Also, in 1850 Hemann established the German secular daily, the *Cincinnati Daily Volksblatt*, “one of the principal German daily newspapers of the country.”³⁰ Although he was no longer the owner, Lehmann

²⁸ John Gilmary Shea, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (New York: John G. Shea, 1890), 521–22; Thomas Meehan, “John James Maximilian Oertel,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1911), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11215a.htm>.

²⁹ Armin Tenner, *Cincinnati Sonst und Jetzt* (Cincinnati: Mecklenburg & Rosenthal, 1878), 53–55.

³⁰ “Joseph Anthony Hemann,” in *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Ohio of the Nineteenth Century* (Cincinnati: Galaxy Publishing, 1876).

published both papers for Hemann. Professor J. Probst (of the bishop's seminary in Cleveland) filled in as editor of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* until Rev. Peter Kroeger, the pastor of St. Mary's and St. Paul's churches, assumed the position for four years. Boeckling resumed editorship in 1854 and remained for three more years. In 1857 Franz Xavier Brandecker became the next editor, a position he retained through the Civil War.³¹

Even though most of the priests were educated outside of the State-sponsored university system, the editors all espoused a German exceptionalism that linked religion and culture. These Catholic priests and editors claimed that there was a

close bond which existed in the German soul between the practice of his faith and these traditional customs which were deeply rooted in the centuries-old Catholic culture of the German fatherland... German Catholics, both in Germany and the United States who were judged to be hyphenated Germans because of their allegiance to Rome, realized they would be open to cynical attack if they should diminish their efforts to preserve *das Deutschtum* in the new world. For these reasons leading German Catholic missionaries spoke out for the preservation of German culture, customs, and language under the slogan of 'Language Saves Faith.'³²

Like Wise and the Protestant pastors, these highly educated and experienced Catholic editors consistently used the newspaper to discourage their readers from acculturating and they promoted a religious *Deutschtum* that was exclusively Catholic and German-speaking.

³¹ Eugene P. Willging and Herta Hatzfeld, *Catholic Serials of the Nineteenth Century in the United States*, 2 12 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1966); Eugene P. Willging and Herta Hatzfeld, *Catholic Serials of the Nineteenth Century in the United States*, 2 9 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965); "Joseph Anthony Hemann"; Tenner, *Cincinnati Sonst und Jetzt; Der Deutsche Pionier: Erinnerungen Aus Dem Pionierleben Der Deutschen in Amerika*, vol. 10 (Cincinnati: Deutsche Pionier-Verein, 1878), <https://books.google.com/books?id=E4EOAQAAMAAJ>; John Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County: From the Earliest Periods to the Present Day*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: L.H. Everts, 1883).

³² Colman James Barry, *The Catholic Church and German Americans* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), 9–10 n 11.

As Joseph Michael White notes, “German Catholic loyalty to religious practice was not solely an abstract devotion to religious faith that respected German language and culture...the German Catholic parishes as a whole promoted an exclusivity that belies the attribute of Catholicism as a universal religion.”³³ More significantly, *Der Wahrheitsfreund* promoted German Catholic exclusivity. The ecclesiastical autonomy in Cincinnati’s parish system allowed the German priests to perpetuate an ethnic exceptionalism that they brought from Germany and which became calcified over time in the national parish in America. Henni’s slogan became a rallying cry among German missionaries at the midcentury and was echoed by German priests throughout the Ohio Valley, including Juncker, Henni, Father Leo Meyer of Dayton’s Emmanuel Church in the 1850s, and Father Anthony Walburg of St. Augustine Church in the 1870s-1890s.

This conception of the German *Volk* as a special people originated in the German lands and was brought with the immigrants, along with their religious preferences. For example, King Ludwig I of Bavaria “advised the first group of German school sisters sent out through his munificence in June, 1847: ‘I shall not forget you, but stay German, German! Do not become English.’”³⁴ Historian Colman J. Barry, O.S.B., quotes Reverend Albert Hammenstede, O.S.B., who said that all Germans immigrating in the 1860s had been raised in the preceding decades “on the tradition that ‘there is no better or higher culture than German, and the practice of religion by a German must be the best in the world.’ German priests understood this...Furthermore...when [a German] came to a strange land the only real authority for him

³³ White, “Religion and Community,” 188–89.

³⁴ Colman James Barry, *The Catholic Church and German Americans* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), 11; Anton H. Walburg, “The Thread of Americanization of the Immigrant, from The Question of Nationality in Its Relation to the Catholic Church in the United States, 1889,” in *American Catholic Thought on Social Questions*, ed. Aaron I. Abell (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 41.

naturally was German authority.”³⁵ A Redemptorist with the *Ludwig Missionsverein* traveled to America in 1845 to survey the condition of German Catholicism being supported by his society and he reported,

The problem is for the Germans to preserve German, and this can only come about if they are snatched from the pernicious influence of American morals and habits of life through religious unity under the direction of German priests...where there is no German priest, the German parents preserve only very poorly those good civil and religious qualities which, in a more pious German fatherland, they sucked in with their mothers’ milk.³⁶

German Catholics were told they possessed a unique and exceptional *Volk* heritage that was passed on through the generations by German parents, was best sustained in the German lands, and was nurtured by German priests.

As late as 1889 Father Walburg, the first Cincinnati-born German to be ordained a priest in the diocese, used Henni’s slogan to counter nativist attacks and assert German Catholic supremacy. Walburg argued that “the preservation of the language and traditions of the German people was instrumental for the maintenance of the older and truer ways, including the integrity of Catholic faith itself. Americanization...would rather undermine it and lead to its ultimate betrayal and abandonment.”³⁷ American cultural influences were destroying both the Catholic Church and German culture, which was problematic because Walburg believed that Germany was the source of the highest attainment of both the Roman Catholic Church and cultural development. Acculturation diluted the German perfection of religion, language, and culture because accommodations to the American way of life meant the loss and replacement of German beliefs and rituals. According to Walburg,

³⁵ Barry, *The Catholic Church and German Americans*, 9, note 10.

³⁶ Barry, 10, note 11.

³⁷ Williams, “German American Catholicism in Cincinnati,” 27.

Denationalization is demoralization. It degrades and debases human nature. A foreigner who loses his nationality is in danger of losing his faith and character...Like as the Indians in coming in contact with the whites adopted the vices rather than the virtues of the latter, so the effort to Americanize the foreigner will prove deteriorating...the most noisy, disorderly, unruly class are the native, would-be American, Germans, and often, for that matter, too, the young Catholic Germans. A man, in giving up his nationality, shows a lack of character. No educated German of any standing will deny his nationality...The Church has made marvelous progress in this country. This has, however, not been brought about by Americanizing the heterogeneous elements of our incoming population, but by sustaining and keeping alive the languages and the nationalities of the foreign elements.³⁸

These quotes indicate that priests who were born in several areas of German-speaking lands in the first half of the nineteenth century and served in American Catholic churches taught their congregants for decades that there was something essentially German and exceptionally beneficial to being raised Catholic in German lands, steeped in German culture, and speaking the German language. The first German Catholics in 1820s Cincinnati had signaled their participation in this ideology by eschewing the Anglo-American Catholic Church, and Henni propagated the ideology in his newspaper, which promoted *Bildung* and morality.

This cultural exceptionalism could not flourish in America among the English-speaking descendants of Great Britain, who were part of an inferior culture and were a “pernicious influence.” German immigrants could not resist the cultural degradation present in America unless they were in a German Catholic environment and under the tutelage of a priest from Germany, speaking their native language. The danger of corruption and loss of *volkisch* attainment was even higher in America, where immigrants from many inferior cultures mingled promiscuously and German Catholics were attacked by nativists. The immigrants were counseled by their priests in Germany and in America to retain their *Deutschtum* because it was

³⁸ Walburg, “The Threat of Americanization,” 44–45.

the most developed *Volk* culture in the world. In this regard, the German Catholics looked to Germany for more than just religious authority; Germany was the cultural gold standard for their community in Cincinnati.

When this ethnic exceptionalism is coupled with an emphasis on religious practice and language, the Germans' slogan, "Language saves Faith," is more than what historian Jay Dolan terms a steadfast resistance to "any attempts to weaken their attachment to German language and culture."³⁹ Instead, the slogan was a rallying cry from the 1820s through the 1890s for religious leaders who believed they were members of the most advanced *Volk* in the world. It was used to prevent cultural degeneration among their *Volk* who had immigrated to America. The German Catholic clergy staunchly resisted acculturation by institutionalizing German religious and cultural systems in Cincinnati's diocese because they believed that German Catholicism was the highest expression of human civilization to date.

German Culture and Methodist Evangelism

Historians unanimously write about German Methodism in positive terms, as a progressive acculturation of an immigrant group via American religion. Historian Paul F. Douglass describes German Methodism and American culture as co-constitutive entities. For him, "German Methodism was an important agency of Americanization" but it also "was a part of America. It helped to make American culture." John L. Neulsen, who wrote the introduction to Douglass's book, agrees: "The history of German Methodism in America was to represent in American Methodism, and thus in American Protestantism, the best parts of German religious life."⁴⁰ For Neulsen, the German Methodists built "their own organization to be sure; but that

³⁹ Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 94.

⁴⁰ John L. Neulsen, "Introduction," in *The Story of German Methodism: Biography of an Immigrant Soul* (Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1939), xiv.

was done in order to increase their efficiency...not heedlessly and foolishly flinging away the inheritance of centuries of providential dealings with their nation, but preserving the best traits, accommodating them to the new conditions.”⁴¹ However, American Methodist leaders living in the antebellum period did not recognize the contributions of German culture to their church as a positive aspect of immigration, and they preferred to create an American church using the English language and Anglo-American religious customs. Among those cultural markers which the German Methodists did have to “fling away” were a centuries long tradition of confirming fourteen-year-old children, which was “an almost universal practice in Germany and a deeply ingrained tradition with most German immigrant families.” In addition they observed American Sabbath laws that precluded drinking in beer gardens and renounced the “sinfulness of most worldly pleasures,” such as card playing and the theater, which were part of German culture.⁴²

Carl Frederick Wittke portrays the founder of German Methodism, William Nast, as a German who “made significant contributions to his church” but was “almost equally concerned with the problem of making his fellow German immigrants into good American citizens, and he believed that a German-speaking church, based on the Methodist way of life, would not only save souls but also produce good Americans.”⁴³ This argument parallels the Catholic scholars’ interpretations of Henni’s slogan, “Language saves Faith.” In both cases, foreign language is a temporary means of communicating religious truths, but once those truths were firmly rooted, the use of one’s native language should be exchanged for English. Wittke describes the German Methodists as always being in the process of acculturating when he asserts that “in every

⁴¹ Neulsen, xvii.

⁴² Carl Frederick Wittke, *William Nast, Patriarch of German Methodism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959), 67–68, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001594033>.

⁴³ Wittke, v.

discussion of the language question throughout the nineteenth century,” the German Methodists were divided on whether to pass on their native language to their progeny or if the retention of their language would “isolate the German group, to its disadvantage, from American Methodism.”⁴⁴ Wittke keeps the argument within the realm of families of German American converts, however, and fails to acknowledge the professional need to perpetuate that language in order to be successful missionaries. The pastors used their language in service to German Methodism but it cost them acceptance by the Anglo-American Methodist clergy.

White argues that the German Methodists had acculturated too much to even be thought of as Germans in America. According to White, German-speaking Americans who joined Methodist (and other American Protestant) churches “abandoned the religious traditions that they had known in the homeland and embraced Anglo-American standards of religious life and behavior.” White asserts that because they were not members of traditionally German churches, the German Methodists had “separated from the basic social and religious assumptions of the greater part of the local Germans, [and] these Germans cannot be considered part of the authentic immigrant experience of recreating the way of life that had been known in the homeland.”⁴⁵ However, a close examination of Nast’s paper reveals that before the Civil War, Nast encouraged his pastors to resist acculturation in order to be effective evangelists.

Rebranding Methodism as a German Innovation

Even before the War of 1812 had settled the Indian disputes in the area, the MEC dispatched itinerant pastors to the Ohio frontier. Ten founding members arrived in 1804 to form the first Methodist Episcopal Society in Cincinnati. Seven years later the society was

⁴⁴ Wittke, 74–75.

⁴⁵ White, “Religion and Community,” 4.

incorporated, and within fifteen years of its founding, the first Methodist Church in Cincinnati topped 700 members and had outgrown its meeting place.⁴⁶ By 1819 there was already one church solidly rooted in “a capacious stone building” on Fifth Street, another was “nearly finished” at Fourth and Plum Streets, and a third congregation met on Vine Street.⁴⁷ Methodism continued to grow at an outstanding pace, and in 1836 there were five Methodist Episcopal churches and two Methodist Protestant churches, all of them holding services in the English language and ministering to the Anglo-American population.⁴⁸

Having firmly established their presence on the frontier among the Anglo-Americans, in the 1830s the Methodists turned their attention to the Germans in their midst. Both the MEC leaders and missionaries on the frontier expressed elevated concerns about a rapidly expanding German immigrant population that was not hearing the gospel message because of the language barrier. With no Methodist ministers who spoke German, yet firmly believing that Providence had created for them a domestic mission field that spoke little or no English, the MEC put out a call for action.

Reverend (later Bishop) Thomas A. Morris was the editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, the regional edition of the MEC’s official organ, which was published in Cincinnati. In March 1833 Morris published a letter to the editor from a Methodist of Pennsylvania German heritage who was studying to become a minister and who felt a call to abandon his study of the Greek and Latin languages for German. From the writer’s perspective, the Anglo-Protestant churches were uninterested in converting the Germans, which meant that “the Papists are laying

⁴⁶ *The Cincinnati Directory*, 40. The ministers in this period included, in chronological order, Joseph Zesline, Ludwig Heinrich Meyer, Rev. Hauser, H. W. Lauer, Wilhelm Moellmann, Franz Moritz Raschig, and August Kroell, until his death in 1874.

⁴⁷ *The Cincinnati Directory*, 35.

⁴⁸ *The Cincinnati Directory Advertiser for the Years 1836-7*, 242–43.

a foundation deep and broad enough to secure and perpetuate a general influence over them and their children, by simply providing for them the means of religious worship (such as it is) in their own language.”⁴⁹ In August Morris printed a response from a similarly concerned minister in Missouri who noted that many of the German immigrants in his area were “Protestants, and all are sheep without a shepherd. They cannot understand our preaching, nor do they like to attend our meetings; but any thing in German will call their attention.”⁵⁰ Morris responded, “We have waited long enough, too long, for Providence to do the work without any co-operation on the part of the Church...there are, doubtless, a few ministers of our order who can speak [German] with sufficient plainness to be understood; and if the work be only commenced in good earnest, the Lord will raise up young Germans to carry it on with success.”⁵¹ Although the Methodists were powerful players among the English-speaking churches of the West, they were late-comers among the Germans. While the MEC scrambled to provide German language skills for new preachers, Morris called for existing Methodist ministers of German heritage to dust off the seldom-used language of their childhood and enter a newly emerging, domestic missions field. That call was answered a mere two months later, at the Ohio conference in October 1835, by William (Wilhelm) Nast.

William Nast was born in 1807 in the city of Stuttgart in Württemberg to an educated family of scholars and Evangelical Lutheran clergy, and from a young age his family expected him to follow in that tradition. He entered the Blaubeuren seminary in the cohort of David

⁴⁹ Adam Miller, *Origins and Progress of the German Missions in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati: J. F. Wright and L. Swormstedt, 1843), 17. The author of the letter was presumably Adam Miller, who later became a missionary to the Germans and composed this book.

⁵⁰ Miller, 19.

⁵¹ Miller, 20.

Friedrich Strauss, but unlike Strauss, Nast quickly became disillusioned with the Rationalist teachings of his professors and the institutionalization of the State Church. Continuing on to the University of Tübingen with Strauss, Nast lasted two more years and then withdrew from the university after having completed his philosophy examinations, choosing to not continue on to the course in theology that would allow him to emerge with a pastoral assignment. Looking for a new start, Nast emigrated to America, where he met Adam Miller, the young man who had pledged to the editor of the *Advocate* to study German instead of Greek and Latin. To facilitate his language study, Miller convinced Nast to join him on his circuit preaching through Virginia that winter. Nast tutored Miller in High German and translated the Methodist *Articles of Religion* and the *General Rules of the Discipline* into German for Miller's use among the immigrants.⁵² As a result of his assistance in Miller's evangelistic work, Nast was converted to Methodism. At the Church Conference in October 1835 William Nast was received as a missionary to the Germans in Ohio and was posted to Cincinnati after a year of itinerancy.

Nast's Cincinnati mission had a slow and rocky start for three years. German immigrants were not only unfamiliar with the gospel message, but they were also unacquainted with the Methodist style of preaching. In addition, Nast later recalled how he had to "overcome an embarrassment about preaching in the German language... 'for I was converted in English,'" was an introvert, a poor singer, and "lacked many of the qualities of the rough and ready evangelist who could make an immediately popular appeal."⁵³ Nast found his German clerical training to

⁵² Paul F. Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism: Biography of an Immigrant Soul* (Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1939), 19. It turns out that Miller had learned Pennsylvania Dutch as a boy, a dialect that was not understood by the German immigrants.

⁵³ Wittke, *William Nast, Patriarch of German Methodism*, 43.

be incompatible with Methodist preaching; similarly, German immigrants had difficulty relating to Methodism.

Unable to coax the Germans to attend church meetings, Nast went door-to-door, evangelizing the Germans in their homes. On Sunday mornings he preached at Methodist churches in Cincinnati, and he held Sunday School in the afternoon, often outdoors or in a schoolhouse. During these years the Germans slowly warmed to the gospel message and the church grew by single digits, reaching thirty members by that autumn. Many of these converts later admitted that “they received their first serious impressions [of Methodism] while standing at the door of the church, or outside the windows, fearing to go into the house while brother Nast was preaching.”⁵⁴ If Germans were going to convert to Methodism, it would not be according to Anglo-American methods.

At last, during the Lenten season of 1838, Nast and Miller held the first German Methodist communion service, or love feast. At the annual fall Conference, Nast received permission to publish a German-language Methodist newspaper, and he was appointed as the full-time editor of *Der Christliche Apologete*. According to Paul F. Douglass, “The work among the German Methodists began in earnest in the fall of 1838...Rarely if ever has the history of a publication been so closely related to the development of a movement.”⁵⁵ The MEC, which funded the publication through the Methodist Book Concern, understood the newspaper to “furnish us with ample materials for a detailed report of all the German Missions in the west...Through this medium, and from other authentic sources, we learn, in general, that the work of God is spreading among the Germans beyond the most sanguine expectation of its

⁵⁴ Miller, *Origins and Progress of the German Missions*, 31.

⁵⁵ Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism*, 33.

friends.”⁵⁶ However, since the MEC leaders could not read German, they would have been surprised to discover that Nast’s paper was not chiefly a missions paper.

In the first issue, Nast announced that the paper’s “chief function was to act as the ‘defender of evangelical truth’ and to be an instrument of conversion,” which comported with the MEC’s vision of German Methodism as a domestic mission and was reflected in the English translation of the title, the “Christian Apologist.”⁵⁷ However, according to the masthead, the newspaper was “a family paper dedicated to religious and general instruction.”⁵⁸ Religious instruction was just one element of the broader education Nast provided. In order to make Anglo-American Methodism palatable to German immigrants, Nast appealed to German cultural identity. Six months into publication, Nast further revealed to his readers, “our primary wish is that the *Apologete* is as useful, instructive, and interesting as possible.”⁵⁹ This vision of the paper as a weekly cultural periodical continued at least through 1860, when he enlarged its content to include “material that is entertaining, spiritually renewing (*den Geist erholenden*), delightful, and able to develop taste (*den Geschmack bildenden*) in a form that is attractive from a Christian point of view.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1844), 35–36.

⁵⁷ Wittke, *The German Language Press in America*, 182. The masthead proclaimed it was “a family paper devoted to religion and general instruction.”

⁵⁸ “Ein der Religion und allgemeiner Belehrung gewidetes Familienblatt”

⁵⁹ William Nast, “Der Apologete,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, November 29, 1844. Nast declared that “*unser vorzüglichster Wunsch ist, den Apologeten so nützlich, lehrreich und interessant zu sehen, wie möglich.*”

⁶⁰ William Nast, “Noch ein Wort des Editors,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, December 20, 1860. “*Ein neues Interesse, hoffen wir, wird dem Apologeten dadurch gegeben werden, dass wir unsern Lesern sogenannten unterhaltenden, den Geist erholenden und ergötzend und den Geschmack bildenden Stoff mittheilen werden in der Form reizender, von christlichem Standpunkt.*”

Nast envisioned his paper as an extension of the pulpit that delivered religious truth through a different medium to Germans who were already Methodists, as well as potential converts. As a religious journal, the *Apologete* should build up (*erbauen*) the laity using “proper and pleasant speech, given with zest (*Würze*) and anointing, with the Spirit and life.”⁶¹ Nast admitted that this was a high expectation for the poorly educated preachers who contributed articles from the mission field. As the editor of the paper, Nast believed his advanced intellectual achievements gave him the authority to arbitrate between the things of the world and the things of God. He explained in 1844, “Understanding the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages may be good for an editor...but it is not necessary for those who want to send in a piece for the *Apologete*. The main thing is that an article is clearly and well written so that the unlearned can understand it; then the educated person will certainly understand it, as well.”⁶² Those believers who had the “lesser gifts” needed to share them by contributing articles in the *Apologete*, and those with the “greater gifts”—people like Nast who taught the word of God and edited the newspaper—provided oversight.⁶³ Instead of translating and reprinting articles from

⁶¹ Nast. “...sollten sich auszeichnen durch richtige und angenehme Sprache sowohl, als durch besondere Würze und Salbung, Geist und Leben.”

⁶² Nast, “Der Apologete.” “Lateinische, griechische und hebräische Sprachen zu verstehen mag wohl gut seyn für einen Editor, wir haben nichts dagegen, aber es ist nicht nothwendig für einen Jeden, welcher ein Stück für den Apologeten einsenden will; die Hauptsache ist: dass ein Artikel deutlich und gut geschrieben ist, so dass es der Ungelehrte verstehen kann, dann wird es der Gelehrte gewiss auch verstehen.”

⁶³ Nast, “Der Apologete.” “...wenn wir nur dem Reiche Christi mit unsern geringen Gaben dienen könnten, sind wir durch Gottes Gnade bereit, uns zu opfern bei Tag oder bei der Nacht; und wir machen die obigen Bemerkungen nur, weil wir das allgemeine Wohl des Kirches Gottes, und besonders unserer Lese rim Auge haben und glauben, dass wir bessern und mannigfaltigen Gaben unserer Brüder dazu beitragen können...Obgleich es recht ist, hohe Gaben hoch zu schätzen, ja, wie selbst Gottes Wort Lehrer: dass durch Demut Einer den Andern höher achte, den sich selbst, so sind diess doch keine hinreichende Ursachen, sich gänzlich zurückzuziehen wegen geringeren Gaben, und Niemand, der getreu ist, braucht sich zu schten, weil ihm sein Meister nicht mehr Gaben geschenkt hat.”

the Western Christian Advocate, Nast supplemented his own writing with articles solicited from German-speaking clergy and readers.

In 1860 he reiterated his call for readers to submit articles to the *Apologist*, but stipulated that “our valued correspondents must leave it up to the editor whether he considers their products worthy of publication...Our motto is improvement.”⁶⁴ In this regard, his role as editor was to determine if the articles written by missionaries, pastors, and readers met the intellectual and spiritual needs of the laity. Correspondents should submit articles to the clergy-editor, who would determine if they were spirit-filled and worthy of publication because “the authority must lie somewhere; the [untrained] individual cannot properly assess his own submission.” As a member of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, Nast was responsible for sustaining and developing German culture in America.

As the editor of what was partially a missions publication for German immigrants, Nast was particularly concerned with converting Lutherans, whom he thought lacked piety and who followed religious regulations but did not have a heart religion. He was also interested in converting Germans who thought they were too rational to need religion. Nast made a cultural appeal to these German immigrants, who were often more concerned with the propriety of choosing the right denomination or migrating to the right state upon their arrival in America. Nast answered, “I would rather live in any of our states than lose my nationality. And I would rather belong to any denomination than lose my Christian identity. (By this I mean every one of the denominations that agrees with the essentials of our holy religion.)”⁶⁵ Using philology, Nast

⁶⁴ Nast, “Noch ein Wort des Editors.” “*Ohne Zweifel fehlen wir Editoren mannigfach, wie andere Menschenkinder; aber irgendwo muss die Autorität liegen, der Einzelne kann nicht Richter in seiner eigenen Sache seyn.*”

⁶⁵ William Nast, “Ein Wort,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, August 18, 1848. “*Ich würde Lieber in irgend einem unserer Staaten leben, als meine Nationalität verlieren. Und ich wollte*

pointed out that even in America these immigrants were living in a nation with German roots, when he explained that “America” derived from the ancient German word *Amelrich*, which predated the Italian word *Amerigo*.⁶⁶

According to a personal testimony by a man named Matthias Wey, Nast framed the conversion from German Lutheranism to German Methodism as a shift from keeping “human commandments and outward ceremonies” to a “true heart religion.”⁶⁷ Instead of converting to a completely strange evangelical religion, German converts receive a “new name” from Christ as they adopt a more authentic form of German Christianity. A few years later, when it was time for readers to renew their subscriptions, Nast informed his readers and the agents who sold subscriptions in the missions field that unlike the English-language Methodist paper, the articles in his newspaper “are written just for the German peoples’ needs.”⁶⁸ *Der Christliche Apologete*

Lieber zu irgend einer Benennung gehören, als meinen Christen Namen verlieren. Ich meine hiemit jede der Benennungen, welche das Wesentliche unserer heiligen Religion festhält.”

⁶⁶ William Nast, “Der Name ‘Amerika,’” *Der Christliche Apologete*, 1844. “Wenigen userer Leser Durfte es bekannt seyn, dass der Name ‘Amerika’ ursprünglich ein deutscher ist. Nach den Forschungen Dr. Roths in Munchen, ist das Wort Amerigo, von dem der Name der neuen Welt abgeleitet ist, nichts anderes als die italienische Form für das altdeutsche ‘Amelrich ‘...’”

⁶⁷ Matthias Wey, “Ursache, warum ich nicht mehr zur Lutherischen, sondern zur Methodistenkirche gehöre,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, May 8, 1846. “Darum bin ich ans der Lutherische Kirche ausgetreten, weil ich das Zutrauen zu den Luterischen Predigen verloren hatte. Das Privatgespräch und das Predigen stimmte nicht mit einander überein. Der allmächtiger Gott möge sich erbarmen über die Hirten, die das Volk trösten in seinen Sünden, und nur Unglück anrichten; die sich immer brüsten mit Menschen-Geboten und äussern Ceremonien, aber von wahrer Herzens-Religion nichts wissen wollen. Wie kann es aber anders seyn? Unser Heiland sagt: ‘Ich will ihnen einen neuen Namen geben, und den kennet Niemand, als der ihn empfängt.’”

⁶⁸ William Nast, “An unsere werthen Leser und Agenten,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, December 22, 1853. “Sagt den leuten, dass die Lesematerie, welche sie im Apologete jährlich bekommen, zehnmal mehr in Buchform kosten würde, und dass, was der Apologete enthält, gerade für ihre Bedürfnisse geschrieben ist.”

reminded the immigrants that first and foremost, they were German descendants of pious Christians.

The newspaper contained theological articles to teach converts the tenets of their new faith, along with editorials, human-interest stories, and serialized novels that were all intended to preserve German culture, rather than to Americanize the immigrants. According to one visitor to the editorial office, Nast's "books, his papers, his assistant, and his very stove and table, all seem to be German." Historian Carl Wittke notes that "Nast never ceased to think of himself as a German intellectual" and that Nast was "especially concerned about well-educated Germans who were eager to preserve German culture in America but opposed all organized religion."⁶⁹ Nast's success was largely due to his own brand of Methodism mixed with "the Reformed Lutheran theology so dominant in the state church in Germany and thereby influential with his German Methodist readership."⁷⁰ German Methodism appealed to the immigrants because in the pulpit and in the *Apologete*, Nast espoused an amalgam of German culture, evangelicalism, and German Lutheranism, not Anglo-American Methodism.

By 1844 Nast's initial efforts in Ohio were rewarded as German immigrants responded positively to the Gospel, and the MEC started to consider a mission to Germany. By 1840 there were 10,000 German Methodist members in America, and that number doubled two decades later.⁷¹ Unlike its Anglo-American parent church, however, German Methodism was never a substantial presence among the overall German population in America., and membership was especially low in Cincinnati. Two additional churches were founded in Cincinnati to

⁶⁹ Wittke, *William Nast, Patriarch of German Methodism*, 83–84.

⁷⁰ W. Harrison Daniel, "Wilhelm Nast (1807-1899): Founder of German-Speaking Methodism in America and Architect of the Methodist Episcopal Church Mission in Europe," *Methodist History* 39, no. 3 (April 2001): 158.

⁷¹ Wittke, *William Nast, Patriarch of German Methodism*, 48.

accommodate the growth of the denomination, but in 1850 there were still less than 500 members total.⁷² By the end of the antebellum period, the mission had expanded considerably to approximately 26,000 national members, due to the large number of missionary pastors, but this was a small percentage of German Americans.⁷³ In Cincinnati there were only 554 members and 727 Sunday School students.⁷⁴ In addition, the Germans were a muted voice within the English-speaking Annual Conference, lacking both the means to speak before the assembly and the autonomy needed for unconstrained growth. Even after thirty years, many of the pastors could hardly understand English.

Nast encouraged the German districts to “become integrated, but separate Conferences within American Methodism,” so that they could encourage each other in their unique mission for the national church and he petitioned the MEC for more autonomy.⁷⁵ By 1844 the MEC allowed the Germans to form German-speaking, local districts, but he was unable to create a broader institutional presence for his German clergy. The Conferences remained under the control of the English-speaking Anglo-Americans in the antebellum era.

Even in 1862 many of the German itinerant preachers, who were moving westward with the expansion of the frontier and the migration of German immigrants, still had such a poor command of the English language that “they could not even follow the proceedings of the

⁷² White, “Religion and Community,” 128. See 146-150 on why White thinks these numbers were so low, an argument that evangelical churches in America were too far removed from German church experiences, too American, and that the German pastors of American evangelical churches did too little to adapt the church to German norms.

⁷³ Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism*, 76. The Church peaked in 1915 with 644 preachers in ten Conferences, totaling about 63,200 members in America. Worldwide, its membership reached about 120,000 congregants. By 1939 the German-speaking Methodist Conferences had merged with the English-speaking ones.

⁷⁴ White, “Religion and Community,” 130.

⁷⁵ Daniel, “Wilhelm Nast (1807-1899): Founder of German-Speaking Methodism in America and Architect of the Methodist Episcopal Church Mission in Europe,” 157.

Annual Conferences.”⁷⁶ In an attempt to regain control over the dissent that had been growing for years, the local English-speaking bishop dissolved the German-speaking districts in Cincinnati and Indiana. He assigned them to English-speaking districts and Conferences, thereby removing all of the autonomy previously enjoyed by the local German pastors and forcing them to integrate into the Anglo-American church. The German pastors revolted and began agitating for separate, German-language districts *and* Conferences, claiming that the English-language Conference structure failed to meet the needs of the German mission. For three years the German-speakers petitioned for autonomy, based on the existence of “all kinds of peculiar problems which did not concern the English-speaking brethren and which they did not understand.” The MEC leaders in Ohio were forced to admit that, regarding the Germans’ missions in Germany and Russia, “we cannot understand the idiosyncrasies of a foreign people as they themselves do, and hence we cannot determine the qualifications of pastors and evangelists for them with any considerable accuracy.”⁷⁷ Despite concerns among the English-speaking bishops that creating separate, language-based conferences would result in the loss of denominational unity, German Conferences were created in 1864 in America. The German Methodists retained a distinct identity within the Church until the Interwar Period, when their mission was finally deemed complete and they became subsumed within the MEC.

Acculturation and Conversion in the MEC

For the first thirty years of the German mission’s existence under Nast’s leadership, language continued to be an indicator of acculturation, and the lack of English language skills proscribed the Germans’ activities. This was in accordance with a precedent set by American

⁷⁶ Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism*, 75. The author does not elaborate on the nature of these peculiar needs.

⁷⁷ Douglass, 78.

Methodism's founder. Francis Asbury had been interested in converting German immigrants as early as 1790, when he took German translators with him on a tour through America. Instead of establishing German-language churches immediately, however, Asbury "resisted sanctioning separate work among the German immigrants. He hoped in vain that they would simply join the English-speaking Methodists, thereby avoiding the need for separate services and churches."⁷⁸

In 1810 Pastor Dreisbach, a leader in the Evangelical Association, offered to form a coalition with Asbury in which "if you will give us German circuits, districts and conferences, we are willing to make your church ours, be one people with you, and have one and the same church government." Asbury rejected the German preacher's offer, responding, "This cannot be—it would not be expedient."⁷⁹ Asbury was not willing to obtain German evangelizers at the cost of sharing church governance with them. Asbury's counter proposal was that Dreisbach join the Methodist Church, learn English, and preach in both languages, so that "there would be less danger of [his] becoming self-conceited, and falling away" from the faith.⁸⁰ As long as Germans worked in the German mission, the immigrant pastors were susceptible to reverting to their corrupted, conceited culture.

During the antebellum period, Anglo-American MEC leaders continued to value German language only for evangelizing immigrants. True members of the MEC spoke English and were acculturated. MEC leaders in Ohio were sympathetic to the language issue and said, "there are some who say that it is one of the great trusts of Methodism to Americanize the Germans...we feel assured that in its very best sense the truly converted Germans are already Americanized,

⁷⁸ Daniel, "Wilhelm Nast (1807-1899): Founder of German-Speaking Methodism in America and Architect of the Methodist Episcopal Church Mission in Europe," 155.

⁷⁹ Paul F. Blankenship, "Bishop Asbury and the Germans," *Methodist History* IV, no. 3 (April 1966): 6.

⁸⁰ Blankenship, 5.

whether they speak the English language or not.”⁸¹ The English language and American Methodism were linked as guaranteed modes of acculturating the German immigrants. According to the Ohio leadership, either one could precede the other, but when immigrants accepted the predominant language and the religion of the frontier, they were Americanized. And yet, by simply dividing residents into Americans and Germans, the Ohio leadership made no place for their German American missionaries who straddled two cultures in their evangelizing work. The German Methodist missionaries occupied a middle ground. While German language skills were necessary for making contact with the immigrant and communicating the gospel, American Methodists assumed that the converts’ native language would give way to English as a sign of the completion of the conversion to Americanism and Methodism. Given the choice between retaining their language and culture, which enabled them to evangelize, and becoming acculturated by only speaking English, which prevented them from effectively evangelizing, the German missionaries resisted acculturation

On the one hand, this conflict was a kind of linguistic imperialism by the MEC, in which the English language conquered all other tongues in America and broke down cultural ties that otherwise prevented immigrants from becoming loyal citizens. On the other hand, this insistence on English in the Church obscures a power struggle between the two groups. American Methodists had allowed the converted Germans to preach the Gospel to immigrants, instead of learning the German language themselves.⁸² As a result, the Anglo-Americans had lost control

⁸¹ Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism*, 79.

⁸² John R. Sinnema, “German Methodism in Ohio,” *Queen City Heritage*, Spring 1983, 40. Other early ministers include Peter Schmucker, George Danker, and Ludwig Nippert (converted from Lutheranism); John Zwahlen and Engelhardt Riemenschneider (converted from the Reformed Church); Franz Neulsen, John Hoppen, and George Breunig (converted from Roman Catholicism); Ludwig Sigismund Jacoby (converted from Judaism to Lutheranism to Methodism).

of a domestic branch of their missions work. Meanwhile, the Germans had been very successful in planting Methodism on German soil, as evidenced by the existence of clergy, converts, an Annual Conference, a literary institute, and a publishing house. The Germans worked autonomously in their homeland to spread Methodism, yet in America they were mistrusted and restricted from fully participating in church polity.

By the start of the Civil War, German Methodism had become so established in America that institutionally, it was comparable to American Methodism, albeit on a smaller scale. MEC leadership remarked,

They have now their ecclesiastical and education institutions in their own language, and not unfrequently disparage our brethren by invidious comparisons, and more than insinuate their incapacity to manage for themselves, and imagine that it is sufficiently demonstrated by a reference to the pupilage in which their English-speaking brethren persist in holding them. It is impossible that this should not be a very serious embarrassment [to us].⁸³

The German Methodists felt they had proved themselves and had outgrown the strictures initially placed on them by the MEC hierarchy, and they were becoming outspoken about the ecclesiastical imbalance. Moreover, they had single-handedly established the domestic and foreign missions to the German people, and they wanted institutional changes that allowed them to administer the missions themselves. In this atmosphere, there was a developing tension between the need to speak German fluently in order to spread the gospel among a seemingly endless tide of German immigrants and the suspicion that the Germans were spreading a countercultural message of Teutonic supremacy that undermined Anglo-American authority in the Church. The fact that the Germans felt they deserved special accommodations to complete their work indicates that they continued to resist acculturation into American Methodism. The

⁸³ Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism*, 78.

German Methodists chafed under the restrictions of an Anglo-American hierarchy, yet they refused to meet the assimilative requirements that would give them the institutional access they requested. They were unable to procure the resources they needed to do their missions work because they were unwilling to relinquish their German identity.

From the perspective of the Anglo-American hierarchy, the German preachers were successful evangelizers, but they were still considered part of the immigrant group being evangelized by Methodists. At that time, the MEC's domestic missions in America included "the German and Indian Missions, the missions among the coloured people in the south, and those portions of the regular itinerant work which are in part sustained by the funds of the Missionary Society."⁸⁴ These missions existed to spread the gospel to unreached, uncivilized people groups. As long as the German mission was still in operation, the German people had not been fully converted to Methodism, and not fully civilized. Until the German Methodists spoke English and accepted American religious customs, they were not American Methodists and did not qualify for equal status within the Church leadership.

The conflict between these two groups within the MEC reveals the intentionality of the Germans to resist acculturation. The MEC continually constrained the activities of the German clergy because they had not acculturated enough to be recognized by the church leaders as American Methodists. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Germans resisted church authorities' demands because acculturating would render their mission ineffective. During the antebellum period, the German Methodists retained a strict focus on evangelizing Germans both in America and in Europe, a task that required the pastors to remain culturally relevant to the

⁸⁴ *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report*, 35. The foreign missions department included Liberia, Oregon, and South American Missions, as well as Texas.

potential converts, who were suspicious of Anglo-American religion in general, and especially the evangelical preaching of the gospel. It was only in 1858 that German Methodist ministerial students, who were trained at Baldwin University, received instruction in both German and English. By choosing to retain their German culture over full ecclesiastical participation, the German Methodists remained on the periphery of the Anglo-American church.

German Irenicism and the Freedom to Innovate

The German Evangelical Protestant Church (GEP) was founded in Germany, so unlike the German Methodist pastor, this editor did not have to establish his denomination's German cultural roots. But as an independent congregation without any form of ecclesiastical oversight, the editor had to create an identity for his church in America that anchored the members to Germany. Under the auspices of religious freedom in America, he constructed an intellectual space in which religious tolerance and theological innovation remained tethered to the *Uniert* movement in Prussia. And by mandating the exclusive use of the German language within the church walls in perpetuity, he created a linguistic bond among German immigrants who had distinct cultural differences. These Protestants enjoyed the political benefits of American republicanism from within an irenic community that was bound together by their commitment to a German form of liberal Christianity.

Cultural Unity in Theological Diversity

In 1782 a group of Lutheran and Reformed immigrants from Germany arrived in Pennsylvania, settled in the Ohio Valley near Pittsburgh, and wanted to establish their respective churches, but they were unable to financially support two pastors. Instead, they requested a single pastor from the eastern part of the state, and the Reformed Synod in Reading sent a minister who was shared by four congregations in the area. The Pittsburgh group initially

comprised forty-two men (and their families) who agreed to share a log cabin church and hold four separate services. They were united by their Germanic heritage but divided by theology, as the roster included Lutherans, Reformed, and unaffiliated believers. “After much to-ing and fro-ing over the years, the congregations finally became one in 1812, identifying themselves as the German Evangelical Protestant Church and reasserting their commitment to freedom of conviction and the right of personal interpretation.”⁸⁵ This was the first Evangelical Protestant church in America or Europe.

Two years after the formation of Pittsburgh’s German Evangelical Protestant congregation, a similar situation occurred in Cincinnati, with a new group of German immigrants. In the year 1813, there were four thousand residents of Cincinnati, according to the Town Council’s census—far too few to be picky about a pastor’s affiliation. Thus, a congregation of recent immigrants from the German states used a schoolhouse as the meeting place for “both Protestants and Catholics, who found the church an independent haven for religious liberals.”⁸⁶ Officially the church was listed in the City Directory as “The German Christian Society,” since it was a conglomeration of German-speaking Lutherans, Calvinists, Evangelical Protestants, and Catholics.⁸⁷ There was turn-over among the ministers, and eventually the groups divided into their own congregations, as they were able to secure separate

⁸⁵ “Cultural Heritage,” Smithfield United Church of Christ, 2013, <https://www.smithfieldchurch.org/cultural-heritage>; “German Evangelical Protestant Church--Pittsburgh, PA,” Waymarking.com, April 26, 2008, http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM3NWK_German_Evangelical_Protestant_Church_Pittsburgh_PA; Charles William. Hanks, *The Evangelical Protestant Movement* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Educators Pub. Co., 1955), 1.

⁸⁶ “Our History,” St. John’s Unitarian Universalist Church, 2017, <http://stjohnsuu.org/about-us/our-history/>.

⁸⁷ *The Cincinnati Directory*, 41; Debbie Combs, “Early St. John’s, A Period of Change and Challenge,” 2017, <http://stjohnsuu.org/about-us/our-history/>; Hanks, *The Evangelical Protestant Movement*, 1.

buildings and ministers. In 1822 when only two denominations were represented in the Society, the church was incorporated and renamed the German Lutheran and Reformed Church. In 1833 another split occurred when a Reverend Hauser finally led some German Evangelical Protestants to form their own congregation.

Ministerial leadership continued to change through 1841 at the original church. A Lutheran church was spawned in 1838 then some members left to form new German Evangelical Protestant churches for a variety of reasons. Finally, with the installation of Reverend August Kroell, “a liberal-minded graduate of the rationalist University of Giessen,” the original church attained stability and changed its name one last time to *St. Johannes-Kirche* (German St. John’s Church) in 1841, a name which endured until Kroell’s death in 1874.⁸⁸ By this time, the initial conglomeration of German Protestants meeting in the frontier schoolhouse had expanded to one Lutheran church that joined the Missouri Synod, one German Evangelical Protestant congregation that joined the St. Louis-based synod known as the *Kirchenverein des Westens*, and a total of eight “independent German Protestant congregations of the union tradition,” which developed in Germany.⁸⁹ Although these eight congregations were independent, they were not numerically small; together with the German Catholics, they accounted for about ninety-three percent of the Germans affiliated with a church in Cincinnati.⁹⁰

The historian for St. John’s Church commented in 2008 that it was “quite a remarkable stand for a church in that day” to form a congregation that “welcomed diversity of opinion, valued religious freedom, and respected the right of individual conviction and personal

⁸⁸ Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *Cincinnati’s German Heritage* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1994), 54.

⁸⁹ Burns, Skerrett, and White, *Keeping Faith*, 8; Hugo G. Eisenlohr, *History of St. John’s Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio*, 1934, 4.

⁹⁰ White, “Religion and Community,” 4.

conscience.”⁹¹ Perhaps it was a creative arrangement for American churches at the time, but there was a precedent for this model under development in Germany. Although the German Evangelical Protestant Church (GEPC) was first institutionally established in America, the movement to unite the Lutheran and Reformed Churches was rooted in the irenic desire of King Friedrich Wilhelm III (1797 – 1840) to unite the Protestant churches in Prussia into a single body. The Lutheran and Reformed Churches had been rivals since the Protestant Reformation, and their refusal to find common theological ground extended back to the Colloquy of Marburg, when Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli failed to agree on common language regarding the Lord’s Supper. Had they been successful, the Protestants would have united against the Holy Roman Empire and toppled the political supremacy of the Hapsburgs.

In the nineteenth century, theological dogmatism continued to threaten political unification, this time in the new Prussian state. While the Lutheran and Reformed Churches were united against the rise in rationalism within the Protestant Church in Germany, their creeds and liturgies were distinct enough to prevent them from merging and strengthening their assault on heresy. The possibility of forming a union was discussed for three decades and “was especially advocated by such men as Schleiermacher.”⁹² King Wilhelm intended to politically solidify the region by legislating a liturgical system that would henceforth be followed by all Protestants, effectively making him the head of both the Protestant church and the Prussian state. And so in 1817 he established the German Evangelical Protestant Church, more commonly known in Germany as the *Unierte Kirchen* or *Kirchenverein*. This move was not supported by

⁹¹ “German Evangelical Protestant Church--Pittsburgh, PA.”

⁹² Carl E. Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier: A Study in the Rise of Religion among the Germans of the West, Based on the History of the Evangelischer Kirchenverein Des Westens, 1840-1866* (St. Louis: Eden, 1939), 10.

many of the churches; regardless, King Wilhelm instituted a regime of persecution against the dissenting pastors in order to achieve his political goal.

By 1834 the attempt had failed: King Wilhelm was unable to legislate the dissolution of doctrinal differences. Instead, confessional Lutheranism was strengthened by the persecution, and rationalism took hold in the *Unierte Kirchen* among intellectuals. David Friedrich Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* was one product of the German Evangelical Protestant movement, and F. C. Baur, Albrecht Ritschl, and Count Gotha (creator of the *Protestantenverein* in Germany) were all associated with the movement. Instead of uniting the Protestants, Wilhelm's program effectively created a third Protestant church, sparked controversy among the denominations that resulted in even more internal schisms, and made America an attractive destination for German Protestants.

Although Wilhelm's plan was to create an irenic form of German Protestantism, when he disbursed with the divisive creeds, he also removed the structures that organized the denominations around a common theology. Without any creeds, the individual congregations determined their own belief system within the broad umbrella of Protestantism, creating a diversity of congregations that operated independently of one another. Diversity and independence became watchwords for these liberal thinking congregations, and the rejection of hierarchical or even synodic organization has resulted in this *Unierte Kirchen* sometimes being referred to in America as a movement, rather than a Church.

In the Cincinnati congregations, the theological diversity of the early congregants no doubt caused some rifts, as the original situation in the schoolhouse was an economic necessity, rather than an indication of religious tolerance. In addition, there was a language barrier due to dialect differences associated with the regional variation of the denominations. Lutherans from the northern part of Germany spoke a Low German dialect, while the Reformed, or Calvinist,

constituency spoke a High German dialect from the south. In addition, within a single denomination in Germany, churches “developed according to the dictates of local needs and customs as well as political decision,” and intellectual differences existed among the universities in which the clergy were trained.⁹³ This regional differentiation meant that “Germans did not think of themselves as possessing an abstract set of qualities that could be labeled German. Instead they considered themselves Saxons, or Hannoverians, or Wuertembergers, or most likely identified themselves with even smaller local places such as towns or villages.” Differentiation among these Germans was a source of national pride, and it was worth forming an independent congregation to maintain one’s *Deutschtum*. Thus, when Rev. Kroell assumed leadership and named the congregation the German St. John’s Church, the remaining parishioners declared themselves to be an independent Protestant church with no formal denominational affiliation and no ecclesiastical body governing them. As Kroell announced in his newspaper, the members were part of the German Evangelical Protestant movement. The spawning of independent congregations in the past or the future was not troublesome or necessarily unexpected because they were all united by their commitment to German irenicism.

Cultural Distinctiveness Through Religious Autonomy

In 1849 Kroell established his organ, the Cincinnati *Protestantische Zeitblätter*. According to the masthead, this was “A weekly paper for the instruction and building up of thinking Christians,” and the motto was John 8:32, “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”⁹⁴ The paper interpreted the words of Christ for liberal German immigrants, in

⁹³ White, “Religion and Community,” 60–61.

⁹⁴ White, 86; Eisenlohr, *History of St. John’s Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio*, 5. “*Eine Wochenschrift zur Belehrung und Erbauung denkender Christen.*” According to Eisenlohr, there was a brief period when pastors of four of the independent GEP churches were contributing editors. This seems to have coincided with a joint publishing effort to produce a

order to instruct and edify them. These immigrants wrote to Kroell and asked for advice on which local, English-language papers they should read, because “in order to Americanize as quickly as possible, as soon as the Germans were proficient in English they wanted to subscribe to an English newspaper.”⁹⁵ There were three papers favored by the Cincinnati Germans, but Kroell cautioned against them all. Neither the *Enquirer*, which “deals in the wampum of the Miami Indian chiefs,” nor the *Columbian*, which “is at best like a tired watchman who looks for a dry goods box on which to rest,” provided the proper German perspective on American events. But the worst of the three was the *Times*, which appeared to be friendly to the Germans but was actually “a nativist boa constrictor that devoured foreigners.” The naïve German immigrants were unable to discern the truth about the invisible grip (*unsichtbaren Grippen*) of this paper. Kroell warned his readers that “such a geyser of fanatical nonsense is gobbled up by Germans...who kiss the Nativists’ whip with which they will be flogged.” German immigrants should stick to German-language newspapers like the *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, where Kroell could educate them with the truth and protect them from predatory Americans. Instead of becoming Americanized by reading Anglo-American papers, Kroell advocated resisting acculturation by reading the German perspective on the American situation, as interpreted by the German university-trained clergy like himself.

catechism and a hymnal under the auspices of a *Protestantische Bund*, which every GEP church historian distinguishes from a synod. See Eisenlohr, 6.

⁹⁵ “Englische Zeitungen,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, March 29, 1855. “...um sich möglichst schnell zu amerikanisieren, halten die Deutschen, sobald sie emigermassen [sic] der englischen Sprache mächtig sind, eine englische Zeitung.” The *Times* was a “nativistische Boa Constrictor, die die Foreigners verschlingt.” “...solcher Geiser des fanatischen Nichtswisserthums wird selbst von Deutschend verschlungen, von Deutschen...die die nativistische Knute küssen, mit der sie geißelt werden.”

Kroell was not against settling into life in America, but he warned his readers against acculturating when he reprinted an article from the “N.Y. Abbzg” that rejected nativists’ demands that German immigrants acculturate. The editor pointed out that aliens living in Germany are not required to “Germanize” (*Germanisire*) because “one knows that all that is good and worthy of German nationality cannot be endangered by those ‘strangers.’”⁹⁶ America was still defining itself as a young nation, so its identity was unstable and subject to the influence of other cultures. Then the editor distinguished between “acculturating” and “Americanizing.” German immigrants could consider themselves Americanized “if, after a few years’ residence, we had acquired sufficient knowledge of the country’s institutions to exert our political rights with confidence and conviction, when we fostered a warm attachment to the republican institutions, and are ready to make this our homeland.” A well-established nation’s cultural identity was immutable, despite the influx of immigrants, and each immigrant group could retain its cultural distinctiveness because the nation was cohered by a population that was committed to the social and political well-being of the country. In the editors’ opinion, the nativist uproar in America was due to the country’s “still unfinished, unstable nationality, whose character was still unknown.” While America was admittedly a young nation, the editors seem to ignore the fact that there was no German nation at that time. Instead, they imply that the German cultural

⁹⁶ “Amerikanisirt euch!” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, February 22, 1855. “Wir waren immer der Meinung, dass wir amerikanisirt seien, wenn wir nach einem Aufenthalte von einigen Jahren eine hinlängliche Kenntniss der Landeseinrichtungen erlangt hätten, um mit Verwusstsein und Ueberzeugung von den politischen Rechten Gebrauch machen zu können; wenn wir eine warme Anhänglichkeit an die republikanischen Institutionen hegten und bereit wären, dieses Land auf immer zu unserer Heimath geltend zu machen...Nur eine noch unfertige, schwankende Nationalität, deren Character noch nicht feststeht, wie die amerikanische, sucht sich in lacherlichem Bettelstolze zu etwas Rechtem aufzublähen und ihre Lückenhaftigkeit dadurch zu verbergen.”

identity had been solidified, even without a political state, yet American culture had not had sufficient time to form, despite the political founding of the United States.

Kroell also distinguished his paper from other American religious newspapers, which considered it part of their religious duty to support and sustain political parties, and which “place religion in the background and emphasize material interests like striving after money.”⁹⁷ Kroell declared that his paper would not be like those papers: “It will be an organ of the united or Evangelical Protestant Church.” The churches belonging to this movement considered themselves “evangelical” because they did not have a common creed and they rejected any form of dogma. The pastors were given individual authority to interpret the scriptures, which they did by following their “Christian consciences,” as informed by the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸ If there was an overarching biblical principle that guided the Church, it was Jesus’s summation of the gospel message in Matthew 22:37-39. Hence, David F. Strauss, F. C. Baur, Albrecht Ritschl, and Kroell could develop distinct religious thought and remain in the denomination without causing rifts because liberal-minded diversity was a valued hallmark of the movement.

The clergy preached a kind of liberal, rational gospel in which “miracles, grace, and a bodily resurrection among other attributes, were not worthy of the serious attention of enlightened people. Christianity instead had to be made reasonable...What remained was a practical guide...emphasizing virtuous living and social duties,” as well as performing rituals at life events such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals.⁹⁹ During the antebellum period, there were

⁹⁷ “An die geehrten Leser der Zeitblätter,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, October 13, 1853. “Die Religion ganz in den Hintergrund getreten, und das materielle Interesse, das Streben nach Geld, vorherrschend ist.” “Es sei ein Organ der vereinigten oder evangelish-protestantischen Kirche.”

⁹⁸ Hanks, *The Evangelical Protestant Movement*, 26.

⁹⁹ White, “Religion and Community,” 65, 362.

no works on exegesis and there was no ecclesiastical authority conferred to founders of the movement. Clergy were elected by the laity and chosen from the local area, since no institutional structure existed from which one could request a pastor. Nor did a Church constitution or statement of faith exist—the churches that adhered most closely to the German model “declined union with synods and preached against the arrogation of power, either lay or clerical.”¹⁰⁰ They rejected the traits of Lutheranism, the Reformed Church, and Catholicism that the German ministers found to be abhorrent, and the resulting Church was a collection of independent Protestant congregations that encouraged liberal thought and valued the theological freedom to innovate. In the wake of King Wilhelm’s oppressive regime, “large numbers of free churches were founded by German settlers determined to control their own congregations” in America.¹⁰¹

Despite all this diversity, however, several ideas also united the independent congregations that loosely formed the GEPC in America, and especially in Cincinnati. Throughout this entire period, every minister in Cincinnati was born in German-speaking lands, and the services were exclusively performed in the German language.¹⁰² According to the constitution followed by St. John’s, “for all coming times the German language *only* shall be used. And to make this more binding, there was printed with this constitution a resolution passed by the congregation, which declared that paragraph 2, relating to the language to be used, can

¹⁰⁰ Hanks, *The Evangelical Protestant Movement*, 28. There were allegiances formed by some congregations in the American West, and one congregation in Cincinnati (Zion Evangelical) joined the St. Louis-led Synod—that congregation is not part of this study, as it was organized around a separate, St. Louis-based newspaper.

¹⁰¹ Hanks, 22.

¹⁰² Debbie Combs, “A Timeline for St. John’s,” accessed October 27, 2017, <http://stjohnsuu.org/about-us/our-history/>.

never be altered or repealed.”¹⁰³ Also, there was a strong association with the Church in the fatherland. When Reverend Franz Moritz Raschig (1839-1841) arrived in the city, he discovered that “the majority of his members were ‘*uniert*’ (conformed to the union principle in Prussia)” and he pastored the church “on the basis of both the Heidelberg Catechism and the Augsburg Confession, the points of difference between the two being ‘left to every one’s own election.’”¹⁰⁴ In this Church, German immigrants found a form of worship where they could experience “an extension of German life and culture” without the fractious emphasis on doctrinal differences that characterized the religious experience in traditional German or American Protestantism.¹⁰⁵

Lest this be mistaken for an allegiance among first-generation immigrants to a common cultural heritage, however, it is important to remember that before 1871, the German states were highly fragmented and culturally distinct. The founding of Prussia in 1840 unified a substantial portion of the northern region of the German states, but it was a freshly crafted, political event for these immigrants; theology, language, and social customs were still thought to be important aspects of one’s identity. Whereas Americans indiscriminately applied the generic label “German” to this diverse group, the immigrants themselves retained their identification with the specific region from which they originated: Prussian, Hessian, Bavarian, etc. Instead of eliding cultural and doctrinal differences or assimilating into extant American Protestant denominations, the GEPC celebrated diversity and allowed the congregants to retain the portions of German culture that were important to them, namely a specific German dialect, regional pride, and liberal German religious thought.

¹⁰³ Eisenlohr, *History of St. John’s Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Carl E. Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier*; Combs, “Early St. John’s, A Period of Change and Challenge”; Combs, “A Timeline for St. John’s.”

¹⁰⁵ “History of the Evangelical Protestant Church in North America,” General Conference of Evangelical Protestant Churches, accessed November 3, 2017, <http://gcepc.us/history.html>.

Furthermore, these GEP congregations saw themselves as the branch of the *Unierte* movement in Germany that was able to flourish in the less restrictive political atmosphere of the United States. The immigrant clergy propagated developments from the *Unierte Kirchen* in Germany by disseminating “an annual volume *Predigt der Gegenwart* in which were published the works of liberal German churchmen abroad [and] which attempted to give a common literary basis of liberal-minded church-folk.”¹⁰⁶ This American movement was ideologically grounded in liberal German thought that was rejected by the orthodox Lutheran and Reformed ministers in Prussia. Progressive German ministers transported the movement to America, where it was founded by men who were “ill-content with ecclesiastical authoritarians, and expressive of social and religious democracy in a land adapted for this ecclesiastical pioneering.”¹⁰⁷ In the antebellum period, this loose association of GEPCs saw America as a fertile host for their movement, but they intentionally maintained a strong tie to the *Unierte* movement in Germany and retained regional expressions of German culture. The independent-thinking and –operating congregations found unity in an ideal form of Protestantism that was located ideologically in the German Protestant Reformation and in the creation of the Prussian State, two defining moments in German ecclesiastical history.

German Reforms and Jewish Intellectualism

Historian Simon Noveck claims that “It was Isaac Mayer Wise...who made Reform Judaism the dominant religious organization in American Jewish life until World War I.”¹⁰⁸ Marcus gives

¹⁰⁶ Hanko, *The Evangelical Protestant Movement*, 20–21.

¹⁰⁷ Hanko, 26.

¹⁰⁸ Simon Noveck, “Editor’s Introduction: Beginnings of American Reform Judaism,” in *Great Jewish Personalities in Modern Times*, ed. Simon Noveck, The B’nai B’rith Great Books (Clinton, MA: Colonial Press, 1960), 102. Noveck’s social history argues specifically that Wise’s forceful personality and his institutions created the Reform movement in America, but my focus is on Wise’s instantiation of a German system of worship and theological reforms prior

Wise less credit than Noveck does when he avers that Wise was “no innovative religious reformer,” but rather a minor player and one of several men who created American Reform Judaism.¹⁰⁹ However, if Wise is viewed as an immigrant Jew who resisted acculturation by transplanting German religious ideals, then both views of Wise are accurate. David Ellenson notes that for the Jews immigrating in the antebellum era, “as regards religious matters, they merely transplanted the expression of Judaism as they had known it at home, and continued here the local German or Polish customs.”¹¹⁰ One could say that Wise, too, followed the typical path, but his liberal education and experiences with the early reform movement in Germany meant that what he “had known at home” was very different from the more representative Jewish immigrant who was raised in a traditional synagogue. Wise’s greatest achievement in the antebellum period was taking the theories proposed by German reformers and implementing them in the American context—in a political situation where religious innovation was permissible and in those congregations with a receptive laity.

The establishment of the Jewish community in Cincinnati is the typical antebellum-era, frontier-city story of Jewish immigrants’ “arrival at the East coast and dispersion across the nation, many starting as peddlers, settling in cities and small towns as shop keepers.”¹¹¹ Joseph Jonas is credited as being the first Jew to settle in Cincinnati in 1819, having immigrated from England two years earlier. Jewish peddlers continued to trickle into Cincinnati, and by 1825 there were twenty English families that “occupy a part of a private dwelling for divine worship.”

to the Civil War. In later years Wise’s influence was seen in the establishment of the Hebrew Union College, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

¹⁰⁹ Marcus, *The American Jew*, 111.

¹¹⁰ Ellenson, *After Emancipation*, 20–21.

¹¹¹ Sarna, *American Judaism*, 69.

Four years later a Jewish congregation was established: the Holy Congregation of B'nai Israel (KKBI).¹¹² This congregation comprised approximately 100 English Jews, with a few Germans and Dutch. There were no rabbis in the United States before the 1840s; the laity controlled the congregations. In 1836 they dedicated a newly constructed building, and Jonas was listed as the Senior Warden, the highest position of authority, in “the first synagogue west of the Allegheny Mountains.”¹¹³ In 1840 Cincinnati was also the largest Jewish community in the West, with estimates of between 1,000-1,500 Jews, and the city “became a major distribution center for Jewish wholesalers and manufacturers supplying Jewish peddlers and retailers throughout the South and West.” This number doubled to 3,000 Jews in 1850 and doubled again by 1860. The Jewish population in Cincinnati grew over the decades and accounted for approximately five percent of the city’s overall population in 1860.¹¹⁴

Although Jews from England established Judaism in the city, their influence waned with the influx of Jews from German-speaking lands, largely due to the chain migration of entire villages from Bavaria, Western Prussia, and Posen. Polish Jews arrived in Cincinnati in the 1830s, and the English congregation at KKBI accommodated the new immigrants and shifted to the Polish *minhag*. The German Jews arrived *en masse* starting in 1840. They initially joined KKBI, but the Germans were “dissatisfied with the ultra-orthodox ritual of the English

¹¹² Hall, *The Cincinnati City Directory for 1825*, 77; *The Cincinnati Directory for the Year 1829*, 186.

¹¹³ *The Cincinnati Directory Advertiser for the Years 1836-7*, 243; Ann Deborah Michael, “The Origins of the Jewish Community of Cincinnati, 1817-1860,” *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 30, no. 3 (n.d.): 158.

¹¹⁴ Stephen G. Mostov, “A ‘Jerusalem’ on the Ohio: The Social and Economic History of Cincinnati’s Jewish Community, 1840-1875” (Dissertation, Waltham, MA, Brandeis University, 1981), 8–9, ProQuest.

congregation” and resented the “patronizing attitude of their older English coreligionists.”¹¹⁵ The congregation split and formed the new Holy Congregation of Bene Yeshurun (KKBY), which followed the German minhag (*Minhag Ashkenaz*) and offered sermons in German. Although German immigrants joined both congregations over the ensuing three decades, KKBY was “the community’s major German congregation,” with a large Bavarian contingent and a membership that was ninety-two percent German-born, “a much larger proportion [of Germans] than joined KKBI.”¹¹⁶ Throughout the antebellum era, KKBI retained a more Orthodox worship style, whereas KKBY became known as the seat of Reform Judaism in America, under the leadership of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, “the most distinguished organizer and leader of American Reform Jewry.”¹¹⁷

Reforming Judaism with German Ideology

Wise was born during the birth pangs of the Jewish Reform movement in 1819 in Steingrub, a Jewish village of no more than forty Jews located at a crossroads of Germany and Bohemia. Wise began his rabbinic training in 1835 at yeshivas in Prague and Jenikau in Bohemia, where rabbis recognized his intelligence and offered him instruction in mathematics, the German language, and other topics which were seldom accessible to Jews in Bohemia. Through the influence of a local rabbi’s university-educated sons, Wise read “the German poets, Goethe, Schiller, Herder... and at once became absorbed in the best German literature of the

¹¹⁵ Barnett R. Brickner, “The Jewish Community of Cincinnati, Historical and Descriptive” (Dissertation, Cincinnati, University of Cincinnati, 1933), 39, ProQuest.

¹¹⁶ Mostov, “A ‘Jerusalem’ on the Ohio,” 147. By 1860 there were three other German and Polish synagogues in the city, but KKBI and KKBY were each significantly larger than any of these.

¹¹⁷ Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise*, 3.

day.”¹¹⁸ An 1837 Vienna edict required all rabbis to take courses “in the philosophical sciences and the laws of nature at a National University,” as a prerequisite to ordination.¹¹⁹ Only those who could afford to attend a gymnasium and a university were allowed to become rabbis.

Despite Wise’s limited financial means, he passed the gymnasium exams through self-study, and then cobbled together a degree from the Universities of Prague and Vienna, and then he passed his rabbinic examination at the Beth Din in Prague in 1842.

Under this new educational system, coursework in rabbinic studies was supplemented with mathematics, biblical criticism, and the writings of German philosophers, including Goethe, Schiller and Herder. The newly trained liberal rabbis embraced this secular, cultural training, much to the chagrin of traditional rabbis, and they advocated reforms to Judaism based on their university training. The reformers claimed that “the commandments of Judaism were embedded in culture and reflected the various times and places in which they were promulgated,” and therefore were not authoritative and unchangeable, but needed to be updated periodically.¹²⁰ This position was vehemently opposed by the orthodox establishment, such as the well-known and outspoken Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Chajes. Some reformers took radical positions, such as the rabbis in the Frankfurt *Reformverein*, who declared that circumcision was no longer necessary for Jews. Invoking an argument from biblical criticism, they claimed that only Abraham’s family had to be circumcised because Leviticus 12:3—long cited as a divine command that Moses and all Jews henceforth should be circumcised—was a “later addition to the biblical text”

¹¹⁸ David Philipson and Louis Grossman, eds., *Selected Writings of Isaac M. Wise, with a Biography* (Cincinnati: Robert Clark & Co, 1900), 7; Max B. May, *Isaac Mayer Wise: The Founder of American Judaism, A Biography* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916), 29, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hx3ast>.

¹¹⁹ May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, 5.

¹²⁰ Ellenson, *After Emancipation*, 167.

and therefore not binding.¹²¹ Few German reformers were willing to go this far, but their university training gave all of them the tools to offer rational, liberal arguments for their theological innovations.

In 1889 Wise reflected on the intellectuals who had influenced him during his university days: “[Solomon] Rappaport taught us the method of research, [Michael] Sachs gave us the rules of pulpit oratory, and [Gabriel] Riesser made us feel free, and [Samuel] Hirsch led us to think free (in *Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden*).” Riesser visited Cincinnati in 1856, when Wise was installed at KKBV, and afterwards Wise referred to him as,

The mighty champion of emancipation of the German Jews, and vice-president of the Parliament of Frankfurt in 1848...It was from the journal edited by this man that I learned in 1831 in a distant village of Bohemia, that the Jew also had inborn human rights that must be respected by every honourable man...Severely as I was scolded by my aged Talmud teacher whenever I read a German book or magazine, yet I managed to procure every leaflet that bore the name of Gabriel Riesser.¹²²

The writings of German Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals fascinated Wise during his formative years, and he defied his orthodox Bohemian teachers by steeping himself in the writings of liberal Germans.

In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, liberal German rabbis began to discuss reforms to orthodox Judaism that were particularly suited for their culture, as “the idea of a single Ashkenazi Jewish community residing in the heart of Europe, united by common religious practices and customs, began to give way to a new concept—the notion of Jews as either French or German citizens of the Jewish faith.”¹²³ The nascent impulse toward Reform is attributed to

¹²¹ Ellenson, 161–62.

¹²² Wise, *Reminiscences*, 337–38, quoted in May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, 33, 36.

¹²³ Michael Brenner, “Introduction,” in *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 2.

Israel Jacobsen, a Westphalian who “in 1810, at his own expense, built a small synagogue, which he called a ‘temple,’ where he introduced a trained choir, hymns in German, and strict decorum,” regular sermons in the vernacular, and children’s confirmation.¹²⁴ When Napoleon was defeated and political lines were redrawn, Jacobsen re-established a home synagogue in Berlin until 1823, when the Prussian king Frederick Wilhelm III declared that Jewish services must be “conducted in accordance with the traditional ritual.”¹²⁵ Another reform temple was established in 1818 in Hamburg, that added an organ and removed the cantillation of the Torah. It was in this temple that the first Reform prayer book was used, “in which some of the Hebrew prayers were replaced by German selections, while prayers for the return to Zion, for the coming of a personal Messiah, and for the restoration of the sacrificial cult were modified or eliminated.” Thus the earliest attempts at reforming Judaism occurred at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Berlin and Hamburg, when Jewish emancipation failed and as Germans began to think of themselves as a distinct people group, or *Volk*.

Many of the reforms to the rites of worship would pervade, but at this point they were still experimental and localized. Two events pushed this period of experimentation into an impulse to systematize the reform of Judaism: the State’s intervention in the process of rabbinic ordination and the rise of German nationalism. The defeat of Napoleon and the concomitant rejection of the French Enlightenment sparked an interest in defining a German national consciousness which “glorified the German state and culture.” In an effort to downplay the diversity of the German-speaking states and principalities, intellectuals searched for evidence of

¹²⁴ Simon Noveck, “Editor’s Introduction: Emergence of Modern Orthodoxy,” in *Great Jewish Personalities in Modern Times*, ed. Simon Noveck, The B’nai B’rith Great Books (Clinton: MA: Colonial Press, 1960), 61.

¹²⁵ Noveck, 62.

a common German heritage and attempts to politically unify the area began in earnest. Jewish Reform leaders in the period from 1815 to 1848 “toned down the national or ethnic elements of Judaism and other characteristics which separated the Jew from the non-Jew.”¹²⁶ Conscious attempts to mimic the worship style of Protestants, the reading of German idealist philosophy, and the Romantic emphasis on the history of the German *Volk* all influenced the creation of Reform thought. These ideas became concretized over the course of three rabbinic conferences between 1844 and 1846 in the cities of Braunschweig, Frankfurt, and Breslau, and the rabbis who formed this liberal movement occupied positions that ranged from traditional to moderate to radical Reform.

The convening rabbis were not malcontent orthodox rabbis with only yeshiva ordinations; instead, they were a new generation of secular university graduates.¹²⁷ They were “dissatisfied with piecemeal practical reforms and sought to revise the Prayerbook according to theologically consistent principles in addition to contemporary aesthetic sensibilities,” thus laying the foundation for the Reform movement to spread throughout Germany, which it did very slowly.¹²⁸ This attempt to liberalize Judaism was resisted by the orthodox status quo and served to calcify Orthodox Judaism against the Reform movement in Germany. Reform Judaism did not even begin to take hold outside the above-mentioned urban strongholds, despite the

¹²⁶ Noveck, 62–63.

¹²⁷ “Abraham Geiger,” in *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed December 22, 2017, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org; “David Einhorn Papers,” American Jewish Archives, accessed December 22, 2017, collections.americanjewisharchives.org; “Gabriel Riesser,” in *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed December 22, 2017, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org; “Samuel Adler,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, accessed December 22, 2017, www.jewishencyclopedia.com; “Samuel Raphael Hirsch,” in *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed December 22, 2017, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org.

¹²⁸ Eric L. Friedland, “*Were Our Mouths Filled with Song*”: *Studies in Liberal Jewish Liturgy* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997), 10; Ellenson, *After Emancipation*, 159–60.

availability of Reform writings, until the 1850s, and even then, progress was exceedingly slow. The “basic conservatism of German Jewry...even among non-orthodox Jews” prevented the liberal Jews from even producing a widely accepted reform of the prayer book until 1929.¹²⁹ In the interim, German Reform rabbis took the ideas to America and began to implement them.

Wise was invigorated by the possibilities of reforming Judaism in 1844 when he attended the rabbinical conference of Reform leaders at Frankfort. Here he was introduced to such future leaders as Abraham Geiger, Samuel Adler, and David Einhorn, and to the ideas of Gabriel Riesser and Samuel Hirsch. Most of the reforms discussed at this conference would become part of Wise’s plans for his American congregations: praying in the vernacular instead of Hebrew, the use of organ music, no longer paying a tribute for the honor of reading the Torah portion, and omitting prayers for the return to Palestine. Ludwig Philippson, the editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* “and one of the most influential and far-seeing of the ‘reformers,’” also called for a Reform seminary.¹³⁰ This became a high priority for the German reformers, and Geiger, Philippson, Leopold Stein, and Samuel Holdheim were immediately appointed to a committee to oversee the creation of the seminary.

Wise was sympathetic to reforming Judaism when he accepted his first position as rabbi in the Bohemian town of Radnitz. His attempts to dislodge some of the orthodoxy in the synagogue were rejected, and the town officials rebuked him for marrying Jews in violation of the law limiting the number of Jewish families. In May 1846 Wise resigned his position and decided to immigrate to America, where the church and the State were legally separate entities, he did not head directly to the port city of Bremen. Before departing he traveled for several

¹²⁹ Mostov, “A ‘Jerusalem’ on the Ohio,” 30.

¹³⁰ Heller, *Isaac M. Wise*, 85.

weeks throughout Germany to meet with the leaders of the reform movement. His detour included Berthold Auerbach in Leipsic, Geiger in Breslau, Philippon in Magdeburg, Stein in Frankfurt, and Sachs in Berlin. This was the culmination of a three-year interaction with the German reformers. As was a kind of finishing school, it provided Wise with an education in the teachings of the reformers' ideas for modernizing Judaism and gave him a vision for the future of Judaism.

Wise accepted a position as rabbi of Beth El in Albany in 1846 and immediately implemented reforms, including establishing a mixed gender choir and prohibiting the sale of *mitzvot*.¹³¹ He also revised the prayer book, removing sections that he felt lacked liturgical meaning, doubtless based on his edits to the Radnitz *Siddur*, which had resulted in his censure by the orthodox rabbinate. Two years later, he instituted more reforms: confirmation for boys and girls, and singing English and German hymns during the service. The following year, in 1849, Wise's congregation procured its first organ.¹³² These were largely aesthetic changes, and all were proposed by the early reformers in Germany with whom Wise spoke before he immigrated.

Three years later the KKBY congregation in Cincinnati sent Wise an unsolicited letter that offered him a lifelong position as their leader, based on his growing reputation as a Reform rabbi, which he accepted. Upon his arrival at KKBY in 1854, "reforms commenced on a comprehensive and systematic scale," following the same general pattern as in Albany, with similar aesthetic changes and alterations to the liturgy.¹³³ Cincinnati's congregation was eager to adopt reforms. The congregation was growing, and only a year after Wise's arrival, additional seating and a choir gallery were built, and an organ was purchased. According to the

¹³¹ The auctioning off of privileges like reading the Torah portion.

¹³² May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, 86; Heller, *Isaac M. Wise*, 90.

¹³³ Brickner, "The Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 46.

congregation's historian, "there were only two nays recorded against the resolution" to make these substantial changes.¹³⁴ Wise had finally found a congregation ready to implement the German reformers' vision for modernizing Judaism. By the end of the century, Wise had instantiated in Cincinnati the three requisite components of Judaism according to the Frankfurt reformers: modern synagogues, seminaries, and newspapers.

Reforming *Judentum*, not Acculturating

In 1848 Wise considered returning to Europe "to aid in the establishment of a European republic [and because] he was not altogether happy in America." As Wise recalled, when he first heard of the outbreak of revolutions in Europe, "I felt patriotic for the first time. Back to the old home! I informed the *parnass*...of my intention to resign." Although he ultimately decided to remain in America for family reasons, he remembered, "I could not relinquish the thought of taking part in the re-birth of Europe."¹³⁵ It was only when the revolutions failed to create the political environment needed for Reform to flourish in Europe that Wise adopted America as the new locus of Reform.

But Wise's nostalgia for Europe was not a sign of his allegiance to Germany. As Jacob Rader Marcus states, "The early Wise was not a nationalist; he was a cosmopolitan...he once said, 'The world is our country.'"¹³⁶ In this, Wise differs from the other three editors. He was not a German citizen, and because the Jews in Germany had severely circumscribed rights, Wise had little respect for "the barbarians" who were in political control. In terms of his ethnic identity, Wise claimed "I had never had a fatherland...[but] I had a mother tongue; viz., German.

¹³⁴ Isaac M. Wise Temple, *The History of the K. K. Bene Yeshurun, of Cincinnati, Ohio, from the Date of Its Organization* (Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing, 1892), <https://archive.org/details/historyofkkbeney00isaaiala>.

¹³⁵ Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise*, 11; Wise, *Reminiscences*, 82.

¹³⁶ Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise*, 10–11.

It and German learning attached me to Germany.”¹³⁷ His editorial emphasis was not on resisting acculturation to retain German cultural mores; instead, he embraced German intellectual ideology as the means for ameliorating the condition of the whole Jewish *Volk*.

When Wise arrived in Albany, New York in 1846 to take up his first post as a rabbi in America, he observed that Judaism was “in a chaotic condition,” where “two-thirds of all the Israelites of Albany and of America before 1848 were uneducated and uncultured.”¹³⁸ Specifically, the Jews had “little secular culture...[and] their religious life was an intolerable imitation of that which existed in the old Ghettos of Europe,” the product of what Wise termed “their narrow European environment.” Wise’s initial assessment of the German Jews in Albany was that “the people lack culture; they do not possess a true appreciation of the conditions among which they live.” However, Wise was not suggesting that the Jews needed to acculturate to American standards; nor was he claiming that the Jews had degenerated culturally in the American environment. Instead, he perceived that because the Jewish people had been sequestered in ghettos, they had also been isolated from European civilization and thus, were generally uncultured people.

When scholars of American religious history write about Reform introducing decorum into a chaotic style Jewish worship, they make comparisons to the orderliness of a Protestant service, but Wise attributes the bedlam to something much more serious than a lack of organization or structure. Under the European system, Jews lived in ethnically distinct synagogue villages or ghettos and followed a single *minhag*. However, in American cities, the

¹³⁷ Wise, *Reminiscences*, 83–84.

¹³⁸ May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, v, 54, 86.

synagogues lacked ethnic uniformity. This became apparent to Wise in mid-nineteenth century American synagogues, which contained Jewish immigrants from many countries and cultures.

Hence arose a Babel-like confusion. Blows passed in a certain synagogue in New York at the service on the eve of the Day of Atonement (Kol. Nidre) because one party insisted that at the close of the services a certain hymn, Adon Olam, be sung first, and then the conventional concluding hymn, the Yigdal, while others insisted on the opposite. Rudeness goes hand in hand with ignorance. A fight at the congregational meeting, the escape of the president by a window...lengthy and unprofitable altercations in place of debates, such things were common occurrences not only in Albany but everywhere.¹³⁹

Wise bemoans the lack of a unifying culture among the Jewish people and an ignorance of European socialization, which are due to deficient education and stagnant religious progress. With no experience living freely in cosmopolitan cities, isolationism had produced a provincial view of the world that threatened the Jews' ability to not only prove their readiness for citizenship, but also their sense of identity as a Jewish *Volk*. In contrast to these immigrant Jews, Wise's secular education had given him the advantages of German culture, a thing which was not previously available to Jews before emancipation. Wise matured at the cusp of social change and was given the opportunity to come out of the ghetto and receive the same cultural education as German citizens, in addition to receiving a traditional yeshiva education.

Wise recognized that the German intellectual culture was the most advanced Western civilization at the time, and he aspired to build on that foundation to create an even more progressive, cosmopolitan, Jewish culture through Reform Judaism. After two years of struggling to find intellectual camaraderie amidst the Jewish bumpkins in western New York, "the immigration of 1848 brought many cultured Germans to Albany, and Wise soon succeeded in organizing a German literary society which gave him much pleasure."¹⁴⁰ As Wise recalled,

¹³⁹ Wise, *Reminiscences*, 71–72, Quoted in May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, 60.

¹⁴⁰ May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, 85.

the society was a place where “cultured people were to meet. German life and thought were in a sorry plight in America at that time. The Germans spoke and wrote a wretched jargon composed of German-English phrases and words.”¹⁴¹ He proudly added that his “German literary society of Albany was founded long before German societies for the cultivation of German literature and the German language became general.” The Anglo-American societies which were doubtless in place in the city did not interest him. Instead of acculturating, he needed the company of enlightened Germans to enjoy proper culture.

Debates over reforming the Siddur reveal the gulf between the mid-nineteenth century state of Jewish culture and Wise’s ideal. In 1857 Wise instituted the use of a new prayer book, *Minhag America*, a Reform version that he had been writing for almost a decade. Since that time “several Reform prayer-books appeared in Europe,” and German Rabbis David Einhorn and Leo Merzbacher produced prayer books in America.¹⁴² Increasingly heated debates among American Jews over potential reforms took place in synagogues and in *The Occident*, Isaac Leeser’s monthly Jewish newspaper published in Philadelphia that represented the traditional or orthodox viewpoint. When orthodox Jewish leaders like Leeser complained about Wise’s presumption in proposing a new prayer book, Wise responded that rabbis with his type of German university training were qualified to make such modifications because they were enlightened or *gebildet*.

Wise contended that before the arrival of the German Reformers,

Any man who thought he could read Hebrew, sing a song, or read somebody’s prayers or sermons, if he could not earn a living by any other means, thought himself called to be a Jewish minister. These very men gradually considered themselves capable also of ruling the Jewish press... Learning and knowledge were obnoxious to them. Liberal exposition of religious questions was considered heresy and infidelity. They had nothing to boast upon, and they rode upon the

¹⁴¹ Wise, *Reminiscences*, 106–7.

¹⁴² Sefton D. Temkin, *Isaac Mayer Wise, Shaping American Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 149.

hobby horse of orthodoxy...Mr. Leeser's ignorance in Jewish matters is no secret, he does not deny it. [In addition,] the editor of the Asmonean can not even read Hebrew.¹⁴³

Wise updated the prayer book to reflect nineteenth-century intellectual understanding of the world as a rational and civilized place because Judaism had progressed far beyond the medieval knowledge reflected in the old-fashioned, outmoded prayer books being used. Jews' lack of modern education, ignorance of Jewish history, and dearth of both a national literature and apologetic literature inhibited the progress of the Jewish people. In America where Reform was allowed to reach its full potential without interference by the political state, this new prayer book was an indicator of Jewish achievement. Full of optimism for the future, Wise crowed, "The Declaration of Independence, the American Constitution, and the political system that flourished under their rays represented the ultimate fulfilment of what had begun under Moses and called for the recasting of the ephemeral elements in the Judaism that had come down from the past."¹⁴⁴

In 1854 Wise founded *The Israelite*, which eventually became the organ for Reform Judaism in America. In this weekly newspaper Wise mounted his campaign to unify all Jews in diaspora under a single banner. According to the masthead, this English-language newspaper was "devoted to the Religion, History and Literature of the Israelites," and included the injunction from Genesis 1:3 (in Hebrew), "Let there be light." Most German Jews in America could not read English at this time, but Wise's intended audience was all American Jews, the majority of whom did read English.¹⁴⁵ Wise's paper was a direct competitor with *The Occident*

¹⁴³ Isaac Mayer Wise, "The Country Is Safe," *The Israelite*, August 28, 1857, quoted in Temkin, 153-55.

¹⁴⁴ Temkin, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, 157.

¹⁴⁵ For religious services, Wise advocated using Hebrew, which he identified as the language of the Jews. Wise also launched a German-language supplement to the *Israelite* in 1855 called *Die Deborah*. According to Wise, the paper was "for the instruction and the intellectual entertainment of the ladies...[and is] the connecting link in the chain of Judaism

and *The Asmonean*, English-language newspapers that supported the orthodox position. Wise had written for these papers before arriving in Cincinnati, but his attempts to stir up interest in unifying American Jews through Reform Judaism failed miserably. In 1851 Wise declared that he would no longer write for American Jewish journals because the editors attacked his views as a reformer. Leeser responded by warning his readers about the “breach which German reformers have produced in four congregations in this country” by introducing a sect of Judaism that he described as anti-American and anti-Semitic.¹⁴⁶ Three years later Wise was finally in a position to publish his own periodical to uplift the Jews and spread the message of German liberal Judaism. Instead of being primarily a vehicle for American acculturation, during the antebellum period Wise promoted Reform Judaism as the ultimate expression of authentic Jewishness, which he framed in terms of German understandings of cultural identity and *volkisch* progress.

Wise’s formulation for the ideal Jewish *Volk* linked the best of the three cultures—modernized Judaism with German cultural progress and American political attainment—and dispensed with the worst. Jewish culture was at an all-time low, being stuck in medieval formulations of piety. The political situation in Germany, with its monarchical system and oppression of the Jews, was deplorable. American morals “were poisoned by centralization of power, church influence in politics, high tariffs...corruption in office...and the ignorance of

between America and Germany; she will give important service to those who do not read English and she will be welcome to everybody who venerates Judaism and loves his mother tongue” (*The Israelite*, “German Israelites!,” March 2, 1855). According to Heller, it was written in “simpler and more popular style than the *Israelite*” (Heller, *Isaac M. Wise*, 272. Wise “wrote his more intimate articles” for the German paper and “sometimes like to call it his ‘waste-basket’” for reasons not explained (Heller, 665; Knox, 83). This was just a short-term, side project for Wise, however. In 1859 Rabbi Max Lilienthal took over editorship of *Die Deborah* while Wise continued editing *The Israelite*, which he considered the “main arm of Judaism in America” (Heller, 325).

¹⁴⁶ May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*, 118–19.

science and literature.” True culture, “that thing which the Germans call Bildung, real and thorough culture, is at a considerable discount here.”¹⁴⁷ In Wise’s solution, Reform Judaism would provide religious uplift, American citizenship would provide political liberty, and German culture—by which he meant an education in one’s history, language, and literature—would socialize the American Jews. Religious reform was not sufficient to acculturate the Jews; it was just one part of Wise’s prescription for the full and complete civilization of the Jewish people.

Wise was Bohemian, not German, but his German university training and the influence of liberal German Reform Jews convinced him that German cultural exceptionalism and Jewish religious exceptionalism were the ideal combination for Reform Jewish identity. Wise founded his base for Jewish religious exceptionalism and German cultural superiority in America, the place where political progress offered Jews the freedom to express their religion without interference from the State. During the antebellum period, Wise used his newspaper to encourage Jews to resist American acculturation. Instead, he promoted a cultural identity that built on European, and particularly German, modes of civilization. And he became a national leader of a sect of Judaism that strictly adhered to the ideas of German reformers. During this period, Wise’s national loyalty lay neither with Germany, Bohemia, or America, but rather with an imagined community of the Jewish *Volk* in diaspora, whose identity was rooted in Germanic *Judentum*.

Conclusion

These four editors from diverse Christian and Jewish denominations understood America to be a place in which they could each create a community where distinct and exclusive combinations of German culture and religion could be transplanted. Using their denominational

¹⁴⁷ Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise*, 13–14.

newspapers to promote particular varieties of *Deutschtum* or German *Judentum*, each editor envisioned his *Volk* flourishing and progressing without interference by the State. For the GEPs, only a religion made possible by the Protestant Reformation, born on German soil, and created after centuries of attempts to achieve irenic harmony would suffice. For the Catholics, theirs was a universal religion that had adherents throughout Western civilization; yet German Catholicism was exceptional because of the parish system, the involvement of the trustees, and the cultural advantage that could only be gained through a German heritage. For the German Methodists, religion in Germany had become a rational endeavor devoid of all forms of pietism, but evangelicalism offered a way to reinvigorate German culture by enlivening its Lutheran roots. For the Reform Jews, Judaism was ready to be modernized by implementing changes to rituals and theology that were born in the German universities, but America was the only place where Jews had both the political and religious freedoms necessary to make those changes.

Rather than encouraging assimilation in their newspapers, the leaders of these four denominations created distinct religio-ethnic identities for their local immigrant congregations. Each editor crafted his own vision of German cultural and denominational identity for the immigrant community in Cincinnati, looking to the current conditions in Germany for his ultimate authority. The editors demanded varying types and amounts of autonomy from American religious hierarchies that were already in place, which was articulated and reinforced in their weekly denominational newspapers. And the editors expressed their reticence to acculturate to American society by holding the immigrants to a European standard: the Christian denominations saw the German *Volk* as the most developed form of European civilization, while the Jewish *Volk* were encouraged to achieve a cosmopolitan, European type of civilization.

These varying assertions of *Deutschtum* created distinct communities based on each group's model for religious, German American citizens, which was articulated and reinforced in their weekly denominational newspapers. The ideological basis for these communities was instilled in the editors through their German education, when they were indoctrinated by German philosophers and prepared by the State to be the new middle class, or *Bildungsbürgertum*. Because of their elite education, they saw themselves as the cultural and intellectual guardians of the German immigrants during the antebellum period, and they established newspapers and religious institutions to maintain and protect their German identities in America.

Because each editor was also the leader of a community that made exclusive claims to religious truth, these men formed a religious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Cincinnati that promoted four variations of German identity based on denominational affiliation. While they agreed that the German intellectual tradition had produced the most advanced *Volk* in the world, they disagreed on the religious aspects of that cultural supremacy. The editors each perceived their *Volk* as a religious people, and the stakes were high for maintaining the religious standard that had been set in Germany. This was not merely the importation of German religious prejudice to American soil. These idealistic men effected the transatlantic migration of German intellectualism and cultural supremacy to a place where the State could not interfere in the further progress of what each believed to be the highest form of religion in the world. That progress would only be hindered by acculturation, since the gold standard existed on the European continent. The move to America was a practical one for each of these editors, who encouraged their laity to maintain their German identities and to continue their cultural progress under the tutelage of the intellectual elite by reading denominational newspapers. But why did the editor-clergy resist acculturation in an era when other German American leaders suggested a balance between

German and American culture that allowed immigrants to become upwardly mobile? The next chapter examines this question from the perspective of their university training in what it meant to be part of the German *Volk*.

Chapter 2

Bringing the Racialized Discourse of *Bildung* to America

At the end of the eighteenth century, an intellectual feud broke out between Professor Immanuel Kant and his graduate student, Johann Gottfried Herder, over the source of human diversity. Kant theorized that biological differences among humans result in distinct races. Herder countered that there is no such thing as race, only cultural difference. Thus, by the early-nineteenth century Germany, two distinct conceptions of human diversity had developed: one based on biological difference that followed Kant and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach and another that was situated in cultural development and followed Herder. German intellectuals continued to develop these two ideas into the nineteenth century as they linked human variation to ethnicity, nation, and progress, building on the work of Kant, Herder, Georg Forster, Friedrich Schlegel, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Friedrich Schelling. In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and until the German nation-state was established in 1871, the quest to understand the source of human difference was driven in part by the desire to create a Teutonic identity, or *Deutschtum*, that was distinct from French and British identities.

By the 1830s American intellectuals' understanding of human diversity was informed by the American and British schools of anthropology, which expanded on biological conceptions of racial difference. This occurred during a time when many American intellectuals tried to align new scientific discoveries with biblical exegesis, and they scoured the scriptures for evidence that God had created biologically distinct groups of humans. Monogenists argued that God created a single human race that later diversified. They assumed that the *Urvolk* (Adam and Eve) were white-skinned and they looked for the introduction of nonwhite peoples to the human population, speculating about curses on the Canaanites or Noah's son, Ham. Polygenists

proposed that God had created multiple races of people that corresponded to black, white, red, and yellow skin colors.

In Germany, Herder's students looked for evidence of cultural diversity, and their line of inquiry differed markedly from British and American thought. Instead of starting at the Garden of Eden, these German thinkers worked backwards from the 1800s. They constructed a genealogy of cultural groups using language and customs, and they tried to locate the descendants of the *Urvolk* within it. When the German university system was reformed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this intellectual quest became part of the new curriculum when the study of the humanities was elevated to a doctoral degree and the fields of *Ethnographie* (ethnography) and *Völkerkunde* (ethnology) became the cornerstone of the Germans' pursuit of human origins.¹ Some Germans continued to look for biological determinants to explain human difference, but Herder's cultural theories were used to expand the German educational system and shaped the German school of anthropology, which became known as German Orientalism.

George Stocking warns against making too sharp a distinction between biological and cultural definitions of race at the mid-nineteenth century, as it was "far from necessarily the case" that intellectuals took "a rigidly biological approach" to race.² But he admits that German anthropology went in a noticeably different direction than the American and British Schools, and the British approach to the cultural study of race was distinctly different from Herder's approach.

¹ John Gascoigne, "The German Enlightenment and the Pacific," in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 144; Han F. Vermeulen, "The German Invention of *Völkerkunde*: Ethnological Discourse in Europe and Asian, 1740-1798," in *The German Invention of Race*, ed. Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 123–45.

² Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 63.

James Cowles Prichard, the preeminent British scholar and ethnologist who died in 1849, is remembered for his interest in how culture diffused as peoples migrated across the earth. For Prichard and his contemporaries, diffusion was “the process of adopting or borrowing by one culture from another various devices, implements, institutions, and beliefs.”³ Culture was always in flux, always changing and adapting and appropriating new elements as people came into contact with each other. In contrast, German intellectuals described a *Volk*’s culture as static and unchangeable and impermeable because it was an essential part (essence) of every individual who belonged to a particular people group.

This difference is significant to how each group of intellectuals described the cultural changes that occurred during periods of large-scale immigration. For Prichard, there would be no way to prevent cultural exchange when immigrants moved to America, for example, implying that American culture was evolving with the introduction of each new immigrant group.

Alternately, the *Bildungsbürgertum* denied the possibility of cultural exchange. Acculturation meant denying and ignoring one’s cultural essence and adopting a foreign mode of existence. To the Germans’ way of thinking about culture, acculturation was the opposite of progress—it was a degeneration because as a *Volk* abandoned its unique expression of culture, that *Volkgeist* became extinct. There was no way to partially assimilate or to selectively adopt pieces of another culture.

Stocking also explains that “the central concern of Prichard’s historical inquiry was not development but derivation, not progress but origin—conceived in terms of source rather than

³ Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 17.

causal process.”⁴ Herein lies an important distinction between the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*’s exploration of culture and the British School. *Bildung* has always been conceptualized as a process in which humans develop and progress toward an ideal state. In the first half of the nineteenth century, that ideal state (*Bildungsideal*) was the perfection of a people’s cultural expressions, like language, literature, and art. One progressed to the state of perfection by training one’s mind and self-reflecting on one’s cultural spirit (*Volkgeist*), which suggests that each *Volk* underwent a unique, causal process of constantly refining and improving culture, rather than thinking of culture as being derived from a common human origin. In contrast, Prichard’s focus was finding the common origin, which Bronislaw Malinowski describes as “tracing back any and every manifestation of human life to its simplest forms.”⁵ While Prichard tried to unwind the myriad manipulations of human culture back to the original culture of the first human pair (Adam and Eve), the *Bildungsbürgertum* sought to identify a unique set of cultures still in existence on the earth that had remained unchanged since the Flood, when people repopulated the earth and God ordained multiple languages and cultures.

The American school of anthropology was not institutionalized until the 1880s, but it developed out of the work of early anthropologists in the antebellum era, of whom the most influential Americans were Samuel Morton, Josiah Nott, and Louis Agassiz. The American school conceived of race using scientific methods that emphasized racial inferiority based on biological differences.⁶ It was only at the turn of the twentieth century that the American school

⁴ Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 51. There was also “a type of Christian racialist view of culture” that developed from social Darwinism, but that is not applicable to antebellum American or pre-1860 German thought (106-7).

⁵ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 16.

⁶ Audrey Smedley represents the newer scholarship on American conceptions of race, which points out that race is a culturally constructed means of creating a power dynamic between humans. She argues that “it is useful to ignore actual phenotypic or biological differences if we

adopted a cultural understanding of human variation, under the influence of Franz Boas. Lee D. Baker explains that Boas “guided [the anthropology of race] to a consensus that African Americans, Native Americans, and other people of color were not racially inferior and possessed unique and historically specific cultures...[that] were particular to geographic areas, local histories, and traditions. Furthermore, one could not project a value of higher or lower on these cultures—cultures were relative.”⁷ Boas and other American intellectuals at the time, like sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois, are credited with the cultural turn in American conceptions of race at a much later date than the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Cincinnati.⁸ For all of these reasons, I will hereafter abbreviate the differences between the American and the *Bildungsbürgertum* by generalizing that the American conceptions of human difference were based on biological determinants, while Cincinnati’s religious *Bildungsbürgertum* conceived of human difference as having cultural origins.

Although these two distinct inquiries into the sources of human variation developed in Germany and America, they were brought into contact by the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* who

want to understand how the ideology of race functions in American society. Yet clearly physical variations had something to do with the origin and persistence of race categorization. Perhaps the best way of expressing this connection is to state that race originated as the imposition of an arbitrary value system on the facts of biological (phenotypic) variations in the human species. It was the cultural invention of arbitrary meanings applied to what appeared to be natural divisions. The meanings had social value, but no intrinsic relation to the biological diversity itself.” I understand Smedley to mean that at mid-nineteenth century, people who were culturally American imposed a hegemonic system on (in this case) nonwhite people who were falsely described as being biologically inferior. Smedley’s conception of race as culturally constructed is distinct from the nineteenth-century *Bildungsbürgertum*, who said that culture is essential, not constructed. Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 20-21.

⁷ Lee D. Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 100.

⁸ See Vernon J. Williams, Jr., *Rethinking Race: Franz Boas and His Contemporaries* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996).

immigrated to Cincinnati in the antebellum era. Evidence of these two lines of inquiry are recorded in the city's newspapers, which were an important medium for spreading ideology and shaping public opinion. In antebellum America, biological explanations of race were ubiquitous in the public sphere—especially in newspapers—and were most often expressed in connection with political issues such as slavery legislation and mudslinging during the campaign cycles. The penny press also reinforced racial differences with its use of color-coded language and racial slurs. In the denominational press of Cincinnati's *Bildungsbürgertum*—which avoided political commentary for religious and cultural reasons—human difference was expressed in an unusual way. Instead of constructing racial categories based on biological difference, they used the language of cultural progress, which was expressed using German philosophy, religion, and anthropology. Rather than disseminating their racial discourse through newspaper articles on formal politics, they embedded their discourse in the cultural politics of *Bildung*. In order to appreciate the significant differences in the ways Anglo-Americans and some German immigrants theorized and disseminated their racial discourses, this chapter first establishes the dissemination of racist rhetoric in the Anglo-American press. This is followed by a discussion of why the four German editors decoupled formal politics from religion in their denominational papers and re-coupled religion with culture.

Biological Race in Antebellum American Thought

In the 1830s and 1840s, comparative anatomy offered scientific evidence of physical differences among humans and raised the possibility of multiple races of humans, instead of a single race descended from Adam and Eve. Largely due to the discoveries of phrenologists, the brain was newly thought to be resistant to environmental influences and so biological difference became associated with inherited physical limitations.

Also during this period, the definition of culture as “people groups” shifted, and the earlier usage of descriptors such as “savage, “barbarous,” and “uncivilized” to describe indigenous peoples also changed. George Stocking summarizes, “Along with ‘primitive’ and ‘lower,’ these terms were now applied to ‘races’ rather than ‘nations’ or ‘peoples,’ and the imputation of inferiority...was now in most cases...a raciocultural hierarchy in terms of which civilized men, the highest products of social evolution, were large-brained white men; and only large-brained white men, the highest products of organic evolution, were fully civilized.”⁹ Natural scientists and intellectuals interested in understanding human variation now began to group people according to physiological traits, rather than cultural attributes. This distinction was significant to the development of the field of physical anthropology. The American school of anthropology emerged under the leadership of Morton, Nott, George Glidden, and Agassiz, who offered an explanation of human diversity merging religion and science through polygenesis, phenotypic traits, behavior, and ethnology.

American anthropologists differed from the British in that they rejected Darwin’s theory that the human race was physically evolving. Instead, Americans asserted that biological differences among the human races were fixed and had been since ancient times—perhaps even since the repopulation of the earth after the Flood—as were variations in skin color. Early American anthropologists also used biological difference to compare human populations. Morton linked behavioral characteristics to biological differences when he claimed in 1839 that Indians behaved differently from Europeans because of physical differences in their brains. In

⁹ Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution*, 122–23; See also Eric L. Goldstein, “‘Different Blood Flows in Our Veins’: Race and Jewish Self-Definition in the Late Nineteenth Century America,” *American Jewish History* 85, no. 1 (March 1997): 36, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23885595>; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

1854 Nott and Glidden claimed, “It is the primitive organization of races, their mental *instincts*, which determine their characteristics and destinies, and makes certain races more likely to be the conquered rather than the conquerors.”¹⁰ Not all Americans agreed with polygenist theologians and anthropologists like Morton and Nott—for example, monogenists were engaged in the same intellectual inquiry but thought all humans descended somehow from the original human pair. But both groups agreed on the fixity of the races.

White Americans’ support of the scientific principle of the “innate inferiority of blacks and native Americans” had already begun to “acquire widespread acceptance by the 1830s.”¹¹ During the transitional decades of the antebellum era, racial discourse in America shifted from culture (nation or people group) to biology, and from a narrative of progress to one of fixed hierarchy. New fields of study were also emerging in the antebellum era, and before mid-century, theology and natural science were not distinct areas of inquiry. University degrees conveyed a kind of intellectual authority that allowed theologians to dabble in natural science and offered biblical evidence to support or refute new scientific theories about human diversity. And as religious intellectuals’ and theologians’ perceptions of human race changed, they developed new means of evangelizing non-Christians. Whereas in the eighteenth century, missionaries civilized indigenous peoples by converting them to Christianity, this approach changed during the course of the antebellum era. As Chris Beneke summarizes, “Where talk of

¹⁰ Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., *Exodus!: Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 67.

¹¹ Stephen Jay Gould, “American Polygeny and Craniometry Before Darwin: Blacks and Indians as Separate, Inferior Species,” in *The “Racial” Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future*, ed. Sarah Harding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 85; See also Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999); Peter N. Peregrine, “Racial Hierarchy,” in *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, ed. Patrick L. Mason (Farmington, MI: Gale, 2013).

barbarism and heathenism had once sufficed—each remedied by ‘civilization’ and Christian conversion—Americans began describing Native Americans and African Americans in the unalterable categories of anatomic difference.”¹² Curtis J. Evans notes that the commonly held belief that blacks were inferior to whites created a tension that “became more acute when the advocates of monogenesis and polygenesis concentrated [their] attention on whether Africans and Europeans were of the same species.”¹³ During the antebellum era, as scientific discoveries challenged religious tradition, the quest to find the source of human diversity fascinated a variety of intellectuals who specialized in religious exegesis, comparative anatomy, and ethnology.

Although most of the recent scholarship on this period emphasizes biological attributes other than skin color, Renato G. Mazzolini asserts,

From a historical point of view, it should be stressed that the idea that each human variety could somehow be identified by skin color became an integral part of all subsequent classifications of the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, like those devised by [Johann Friedrich] Blumenbach, [Julien-Joseph] Virey, [Georges] Cuvier, [William] Lawrence, [James Cowles] Prichard, [Jean Baptiste] Bory de Saint-Vincent, and [Pierre Paul] Broc.¹⁴

In antebellum America, discourses about race were founded on biological definitions that also associated normative claims with skin color. American theologians speculated about the religious basis for skin color variation, and their theories shifted over time. During the colonial period, Americans “generally thought of the Negro as internally a similar physiological being to

¹² Chris Beneke, *Beyond Toleration: The Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 201.

¹³ Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18.

¹⁴ Mazzolini, “Skin Color and the Origin of Physical Anthropology (1640-1850),” 144–45.

the white man,” but with skin color variations that had occurred due to the African climate.¹⁵ Biblical evidence from Jeremiah 13:23 was frequently cited to support the climatic theory, in an attempt to identify the natural laws put in place by the Christian God who created the world. By the end of the eighteenth century, Americans made explicit links between the biological adaptation to climate and God’s providence, claiming that nonwhite skin was a sign of God’s punishment of the descendants of a sinner. Although there were problems with climate theory (such as the persistent darkness of slaves’ skin color despite being relocated to the cooler climate in North America), the connection between skin color and moral character remained in place through the Civil War period.

By the early-nineteenth century, a plethora of theories about Africans’ skin color existed, including heathenism, a failure to become civilized, the suspicion that black slaves descended from the chimpanzees native to western Africa, a perceived “potent sexuality” of Africans, and physiological differences beneath the skin—particularly in the “blood, brains, and semen.”¹⁶ Significant changes in racial theory took place in the first half of the nineteenth century in America as science challenged biblical exegesis. Theologians lost their authority to speak on scientific subjects with the rise of biblical criticism and as scientists were trained in non-religious fields.

By the mid-nineteenth century in Europe and America, among most scholars and bourgeois intellectuals, the use of skin color as the sole means to explain human difference was gradually replaced by more scientific methods that were based on measurable physical

¹⁵ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 20; See also Banton, “The Classification of Races in Europe and North America: 1700-1850.”

¹⁶ Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, 20–33, 259.

characteristics. In the new system, this data was easily comparable and was used to create “a sense of a hierarchical progression in the scale of beings.”¹⁷ Color prejudice remained, but biological determinism became the new mode of explaining human difference for both scientists and theologians. In summary, racial discourse during the antebellum era shifted from an emphasis on the unity of the human race to diversity, from monogenesis to polygenesis, and from skin color as an external marker to a signifier of internal differences.

Race, Religion, and Politics in Anglo-American Newspapers

While American intellectuals attempted to locate the source of human diversity in religion and science, the popular newspapers of the antebellum era presumed the existence of racial difference and reinforced a hierarchy of races by using skin color, religion, and science to denigrate nonwhite people. Articles on phrenology and other scientific breakthroughs peppered the pages, and polygenist religious perspectives by men such as Agassiz, Morton, and Nott were widely quoted and influential to American popular understandings of race.¹⁸ There was also a proliferation of news about people who were identified as “whites,” “the yellow devil” “the redskin,” “blacks,” and “mulattos.” On the one hand, the articles implicitly referenced the hierarchy of human races based on Blumenbach’s five categories of Caucasian, Mongolian, Malayan, Ethiopian, and American Indian, and expanded on them using ethnographical data from missionaries, naturalists, and travelers. On the other hand, the newspapers evidenced Carl Linnaeus’s four varieties of human types that associated skin color with race, including

¹⁷ Mazzolini, “Skin Color and the Origin of Physical Anthropology (1640-1850),” 144–45.

¹⁸ Graves, “Biological Determinism.”

“Americanus” with “reddish skin,” “Asiaticus” with “sallow skin,” “Africanus” with “black skin,” and “Europaeus” with “white [skin].”¹⁹

When two new types of press were created in the antebellum era—the political press and the penny press—their editors used racialist terms within their discourses to comment on political issues, defame public figures, and belittle nonwhite people. The American press was saturated with the racialist rhetoric of biological determinism, and the discourse was blatantly obvious. Anglo-American newspapers frequently mixed phenotypic, scientific, and ethnographic terms within the same article. For example, with respect to Indians, articles often specified a tribal designation and linked color-coded terms such as “redskin,” “red devil,” or “red men” with characteristics such as “savage,” “crazed,” “murderous,” “lazy,” “war-loving,” “drunkard,” and “bloody-minded.”

The racialist rhetoric was consistent across geographic regions but the East Coast papers followed the lead of the frontier papers regarding American Indians. By the 1820s and 1830s, East Coast papers only carried coverage that was reprinted from newspapers in the West and South, where the remaining Indians lived. Frontier newspapers covered skirmishes and wars with the Indians, which were occurring in their backyards, and they regularly used racial slurs that invoked both skin color and biological determinism. During the negotiation of the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1851, for example, Cincinnati’s *Weekly Herald* escalated its stereotypical language from the “noble red man” to “the murdering redskin” and warned its readers that “your

¹⁹ Quoted in John P. Jackson, Jr. and Nadine M. Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, Science and Society (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 16; Henry Krusiewicz, “Culture,” in *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, ed. Patrick L. Mason (Farmington, MI: Gale, 2013).

neighbors and friends are being murdered by these red devils.”²⁰ Both the frontier papers and the East Coast papers that reprinted their articles “invariably reinforced historic stereotypes of both the Noble Indian and the Ruthless Savage,” and they associated nonwhite skin color with the violent Indian tribes.²¹

The use of color-coded racialist language was hardly limited to articles about Indians. In 1831 William Lloyd Garrison published a letter to the editor in his abolitionist paper, the *Liberator*, that offered a presumably typical glimpse of life in a slave state: “I saw a mulatto with a newspaper in his hand, surrounded by a score of colored men, who were listening, open mouthed, to a very inflammatory article the yellow man was reading...I afterwards learned that the paper was published in New York, and addressed to blacks.”²² Here “mulatto” is conflated with the color yellow instead of a shade of brown but refers to people of African descent, not Asians. The audience is a group of “colored” or “black” men. None of the people in this article is identified as a Negro or African—they are distinguished from one another by skin color. In addition to other racial stereotypes, color was an important index to racial discourse about people of African descent in the antebellum era newspapers.

Few scholars who study race address the prevalence of color-coded language in antebellum society; the topic is mostly limited to whiteness studies, but even among those scholars, the emphasis is on the bimodal system that emerged as a justification for slavery. As Ariela J. Gross explains, “In the antebellum era, American law was lurching toward two binary categories of race: a ‘blackness’ that was identical with absolute chattel slavery and a ‘whiteness’

²⁰ Hugh J. Reilly, *The Frontier Newspapers and the Coverage of the Plains Indian Wars* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 33.

²¹ Juan Gonzalez and Joseph Torres, *News for All the People* (London: Verso, 2011), 96.

²² Quoted in Gonzalez and Torres, 111.

that served to mobilize poor and non-slaveholding whites on the side of wealthy planters and slaveholders.”²³ Once blackness was linked with slavery and with the social dangers of emancipation, whiteness scholars note that color was no longer a necessary delimiter of racial hierarchy in America. For instance, German immigrants in St. Louis adopted the Anglo-Americans’ position on slavery through what Kristen Anderson terms “‘lessons’ in whiteness, in which the native-born white Americans explained and demonstrated the cultural norms of their society for these newcomers. Perhaps the most direct—if unintentional lesson—consisted of simply demonstrating the benefits of whiteness.”²⁴ As David Roediger notes, the use of racial slurs reinforced “a sense of whiteness among antebellum workers, who profited from racism in part because it enabled them to displace anxieties within the white population onto Blacks...it took place largely within the context of working class formation and addressed the specific anxieties of those caught up in that process.”²⁵ From the perspective of these scholars, color-coded language was invoked by whites, including immigrants and the working class, to assert their dominant position in American society, and while some racial slurs were directed toward Indians, in the antebellum era a two-color racial system emerged.

It may be that *intellectuals* engaged in a two-color depiction of American society, but the prevalence of words such as “black,” “red,” and many shades of “brown”—not just black and

²³ Ariela J. Gross, *What Blood Won't Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 20.

²⁴ Kristen Anderson, “Lessons in Whiteness: German Immigrants and Racial Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America,” in *Cross-Cultural History and the Domestication of Otherness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 175.

²⁵ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 104; See also Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1990); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812*.

white—in the newspapers demonstrates that color was an important delimiter for the *populace* and was prevalent in the vernacular. Thus the use of color-coded language in newspapers has historical importance as a means of identifying racialized discourse in newspapers. Due to an increase in literacy between the years 1800 and 1833, half of all Americans subscribed to newspapers. In the antebellum era, the commercial press reported on political issues that were of importance to merchants and traders (such as the national bank), but two new types of press emerged which appealed to the populace: the party press and the penny press. These presses used racialized terms to influence popular opinion, and Mark Noll notes that this was particularly evident in the reporting on election results and debates over “whether and how to use national power to shape social and cultural norms.”²⁶

Editors of the party press used their papers as organs of their own political parties by endorsing candidates, printing political speeches, and printing “primarily political news and interpretation, including abuse hurled at opponents,” for which they were rewarded through the patronage system.²⁷ As Chris Danielson notes, “the role of race in U.S. political campaigns is as old as U.S. politics itself,” and race became a significant aspect of the political press, as well as the regular press.²⁸ Prior to the 1830s, the “most powerful opponents of slavery...used the pages of regular newspapers to express their ideas.”²⁹ This changed with the expansion of the newspaper market in the antebellum era, when the party press used race to slander political

²⁶ Mark A. Noll, *God and Race in American Politics: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 14, 23. By “politics,” I understand Noll to mean “formal politics,” since his evidence includes voting patterns, party allegiance, and elections.

²⁷ David W. Bulla, “Party Press Era,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., December 29, 2015), www.britannica.com.

²⁸ Chris Danielson, *The Color of Politics: Racism in the American Political Arena Today* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2013), 36.

²⁹ Carol Sue Humphrey, *The Press of the Young Republic, 1783-1833*, *The History of American Journalism 2* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 144.

opponents and when special interest papers (including the abolitionist press, the black press, and the Indian press) emerged in the 1820s to assert an antislavery political position and to challenge the white status quo. Legislation regarding the expansion of slavery into new American territories, the Fugitive Slave Act, and analyses of slave uprisings and rebellions filled the pages of the Anglo-American public sphere. In addition to continual coverage of issues related to slavery, newspapers across the nation called for the federal government to get rid of the “red population,” noted the passage of Jackson’s Indian Removal Act in 1830, and tracked the progress of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in consolidating the Indians.

Race was also injected into the world of white politics when “political opportunists stoked the fires of racial fear and anxiety to burn their opponents” or insinuated allegations of interracial sex. Danielson recounts two of the earliest instances of racial politics in the national forum:

In the 1828 presidential election, Charles Hammond, the editor of the *Cincinnati Gazette* and a supporter of incumbent John Quincy Adams, published editorials accusing Adams’s opponent Andrew Jackson of being of a mixed-race background. This alleged parentage came from his mother, whom Hammond slandered as a common prostitute who ‘married a MULATTO MAN, with whom she had several children, of which number General JACKSON is one!!!’ A Kentucky newspaper levied similar insults against Jackson’s wife, comparing her to a ‘dirty, black wench’ for cohabitating with Jackson before her divorce from her first husband was finalized.³⁰

The political mud slinging in these articles conjoined immoral sexual behavior (“prostitute,” “cohabiting”), the mixing of races (offspring produced from the white Jackson with his black wife), and color-coded language (“mulatto,” “black”) in just a few lines in order to discredit a presidential candidate. In the party press, racial discourse was used to disparage political

³⁰ Danielson, *The Color of Politics: Racism in the American Political Arena Today*, 36–37.

candidates at the local, state, and national levels in order to discredit the opposing political party and to sway voters.

At the same time the party press emerged, the penny press also made its entrance. The first penny press newspaper was the *Sun*, published in 1833 in New York City by Benjamin H. Day, and it sparked “a communications revolution by making newspapers accessible for the first time to the mass urban workers.”³¹ Unlike the traditional subscription-based papers, whose income came from advertisers, political supporters, and yearly subscribers, the penny press was sold by the issue, often by newsboys on street corners, for cash in hand. The *Sun* was affordable and easily available, but its “most important innovation was its coverage of everyday New York.”³² Day’s model for what would become the penny press was to provide an unprecedented amount of local news, rather than commercial or political coverage, in an “entertaining way” using narrative sketches and anecdotes, as well as “fake stories” that would generate continued interest in his paper.³³ This press also did its reporting “in a language which echoed the informal elements of the vernacular: colloquial and personalized.”³⁴ Soon thereafter there were penny presses operating in all the major cities on the northeast coast.

If the penny press was egalitarian in its distribution of the news and its desire to represent the common man, penny press editors were hardly humble representatives of the masses. They were “brash” men who asserted “that they themselves were the new and necessary men, the heroic interpreters of the new urban culture.”³⁵ They imagined themselves as middle men who

³¹ Gonzalez and Torres, *News for All the People*, 50.

³² Hans Bergman, *God in the Street: New York Writing from the Penny Press to Melville* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 21.

³³ Martin Conboy, *The Press and Popular Culture* (London: Sage, 2002), 45–46.

³⁴ Clint C. Wilson II, *Wither the Black Press? Glorious Past, Uncertain Future* (Xlibris, 2014), 39–41, <https://books.google.com/books?id=kK7lAgAAQBAJ>.

³⁵ Bergman, *God in the Street*, 19.

provided a persuasive commentary on popular culture with which to consolidate the masses around a particular rhetoric. The prevalence of a racialized discourse in the penny press should not be surprising, and this press was “a key instrument in the spread of racism among America’s white working class.”³⁶ This is significant because, while the penny press “did not destroy the commercial press...[it] did displace the commercial-partisan press of the 1830s as the model of a daily newspaper.” According to Juan Gonzalez and Joseph Torres, “Whether the news concerned African slavery, Indian removal or the acquisition of more swaths of Mexico’s land, both the penny press and old-line newspapers spoke only to white Americans...[and] attempts at more nuanced accounts of Indians remained rare.” The penny press presented the views of the outspoken white editors who used the language of the man on the street to discuss issues present in popular culture, which included racial stereotypes. “Exploiting racial fears...served as a tool by which powerful groups in society could stir up public support for projects of territorial and imperial expansion.”³⁷ These editors had discovered that sensationalism and race sold papers and influenced popular opinion on political matters.

Two years after the *Sun*’s debut, James Gordon Bennett established a rival penny press called the *Morning Herald*. This paper combined “business, news, crime and sport,” and while it was innovative in its serious reporting on the sport of racing, for example, it was “lacking in any analytical solution to the issues raised” in articles on economics or politics.³⁸ Because the articles were written in the vernacular, it would have been hard for any reader to misconstrue Bennett’s intent. For example, in 1841 he offered an “anonymous” report on the annual meeting

³⁶ Gonzalez and Torres, *News for All the People*, 50, 57, 3.

³⁷ James W. Carey, “The Dark Continent of American Journalism,” in *James Carey: A Critical Reader*, ed. Eve Stryker Munson and Catherine A. Warren (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 158–59.

³⁸ Conboy, *The Press and Popular Culture*, 47.

of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, whose members included the abolitionists Arthur and Lewis Tappan and Theodore Weld. According to Bennett's informant,

When the services commenced last evening, there were in the gallery on the right of the desk, two gentlemen of color, and one in whose composition milk and molasses seems to have been used in about equal portions—seven or eight sisters varying in hue from jet black to brunette—and one picaninny, so black that he looked as if he might have been dipped twice after the color was set. On the left of the desk was a very rum lot of yellow girls, a handsome yellow boy, and three or four greasy wenches, big enough to yield half a barrel of oil a piece. In the body of the church was a big black booby, towards whom the eyes of many of the ladies were directed, as if wondering what the devil he had to do there. Lewis Tappan was running about, eyeing the colored brethren and sister, and thinking, apparently, what a fine chance to raise wool.³⁹

Under the guise of reporting on the newly formed antislavery society, the author used color-coded language and the jargon of the day to speak to the common class of reader. Referring to a skin color that would result from mixing milk and molasses, or to the color of a barrel of oil, or to grease, Bennett invited his readers to imagine racially stereotyped men and women by referring to household or working trade items. He employed a variety of colors, including jet black, brunette, milky brown, and yellow to contrast with Tappan's implicitly understood whiteness. Words in the vernacular such as "picaninny," "black booby," "rum lot," and "wool" reinforced slurs used in the common parlance. Bennett offered a mild political commentary on the antislavery movement by suggesting that the white leader had assembled a black consortium for dubious purposes and was unable to control his undisciplined and chaotic flock. The editor's intent was undoubtedly to provide levity, which he achieved by using racialized language to disparage free blacks in New York and make a mockery of the antislavery movement.

³⁹ Quoted in David A. Copeland, ed., *The Antebellum Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1820 to 1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 118.

Thus by midcentury, race and politics were closely associated in the most popular types of newspapers—the party press and the penny press. Racialized language that included slurs and color-coded adjectives were used by the editors to craft a discourse that asserted a normative social hierarchy. Across America, printing the moral and theological justifications used by antislavery proponents came to be thought of as dangerous to the public welfare. Editorializing on these issues was relocated from the secular press to denominational publications.⁴⁰ According to Candy Gunther Brown, editors of religious newspapers viewed their publications “as an extension of their ministerial duties...[They] presented themselves as religious expects” and gave advice and correction to readers on a variety of moral topics that included theological perspectives on political issues like abolition and civilizing the slaves and Indians.⁴¹ Controversial issues that contained political, racial, and moral elements were more safely interpreted by the religious press. Editors of denominational newspapers, who were usually also members of the clergy, exerted their religious authority through both the press and the pulpit in religious and political—and thus potentially racial—matters.

These presses were well-established on the East Coast, and as the nation expanded westward, newspapers were quickly added in the frontier regions. Cincinnati’s early establishment as the printing center of the West meant that its newspaper industry was similarly well-developed by the 1830s. The city supported about thirty English-language penny papers and quite a few party presses, and Cincinnati’s editors engaged in a racialized discourse that followed the model of frontier papers and continued the stereotypes established by East Coast papers. There was also an active alternative press in Cincinnati. James G. Birney was the

⁴⁰ Nerone, “Newspapers and the Public Sphere,” 53–56; Copeland, *The Antebellum Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1820 to 1860*, 7.

⁴¹ Brown, *The Word in the World*, 182.

editor of an abolitionist paper, *The Philanthropist* (1836-1843). As early as 1844, there was a black newspaper called the *Disfranchised American*.⁴² Many congregations published weekly denominational papers. And of course, there was an ethnic press.

Despite being the capital city of a free state from which the Indians had long been removed, racialized rhetoric was an integral part of the city's presses. In Cincinnati, where the Ohio River connected the North and the South, steamboats transported enslaved blacks through the free state and fugitive slaves swam across the liquid border to underground railroad stations on the shore. Ohio may have been a free state, but upon achieving statehood, white leaders enacted laws that highly discouraged black settlement. Cincinnati's citizens had held strong opinions about race since the city's founding. This racial tension was evident in the presses. There were several incidents of violence against the abolitionist press between 1836 and 1846 in Cincinnati, which are well-documented.⁴³ In addition, all types of newspapers were involved in debates about racialized political issues including slavery, abolition, and colonization. The newspapers "complained continually that the local colored community harbored runaways and even accused Cincinnatians of kidnapping them from ships passing down the Ohio."⁴⁴ With a

⁴² Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 132.

⁴³ For example, see Goss, *Cincinnati: The Queen City, 1788-1912*; Glazer, *Cincinnati in 1840: The Social and Functional Organization of an Urban Community During the Pre-Civil War Period*; Aaron, *Cincinnati: Queen City of the West, 1819-1838*; Stanley C. Harrold, Jr., "The Perspective of a Cincinnati Abolitionist: Gamaliel Birney on Social Reform in America," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 35, no. 3 (n.d.): 173-90; Harlow, *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880*; D. Laurence Rogers, *Apostles of Equality: The Birneys, the Republicans, and the Civil War* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011); Ann Hagedorn, *Beyond the River: The Untold Story of the Heroes of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002); Kathleen Reynolds, "On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Abolitionism in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1831-1861" (Masters, Southeast Missouri State University, 2013); Hyun Hur, "Radical Antislavery and Personal Liberty in Antebellum Ohio, 1803-1857" (Dissertation, Madison, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012).

⁴⁴ Wade, "The Negro in Cincinnati, 1800-1830," 44.

well-organized branch of the American Colonization Society in the city, which was supported by many of the elites and a number of local churches, many newspapers “carried long articles on possible homesites for the blacks, and editorials expounded its program.”⁴⁵ Cincinnati’s commercial economy depended on both the North and the South, and this border city became a nexus for debates about race-based issues that inflamed regional conflicts in America, including slavery, abolition, and colonization, and those debates filled the pages of the city’s mainstream and alternative presses.

From this overview of the antebellum press, we see how closely race, religion, and politics were linked in American newspapers. Racial groupings, hierarchies, racial slurs, and color-coded language signaled the presence of a racialized discourse that was present in articles ostensibly disseminating news about political, legal, and national, state, and local events. Each editor, with his own moral and political preferences, controlled the amount and severity of the racialized discourse in his own paper. Readers could respond to the editor, but the editor was the final arbiter who chose which letters to print and which to omit. Editors perpetuated racial stereotypes without directly discussing racial theory and they gave the illusion of representing the populace by using racialized vernacular. The public sphere was shaped by editors who asserted their own religious, political and racist views by crafting a discourse that relied on biological determinism to reinforce a particular social hierarchy in America.

Searching for a Racist Rhetoric in the German Denominational Press

Cincinnati residents supported a prolific ethnic press during the antebellum era. In 1850, four of the city’s ten dailies were published in German, and there were four German-language,

⁴⁵ Wade, 54.

denominational papers.⁴⁶ Ethnic newspapers typically existed to aid the social assimilation of immigrants, while providing a hyphenated cultural identity. By “adopting forms and rhetoric from the mainstream partisan press, German papers provided immigrants a gateway to American institutions. Success in this mission meant the papers would obsolesce, feeding their readers into the mainstream-press system.”⁴⁷ German American editors continued to print their papers in the mother tongue to encourage ethnic affiliation as the immigrants acculturated. In fact, mimicking the Anglo-American partisan press was characteristic of the German party press in Cincinnati.

The *Cincinnati Volksblatt* (1836-1919) was a party paper for the Democrats with liberal views that was filled with political news and advertisements, like a typical Anglo-American paper. Representative articles include the “*Schwarze Convention*” (Blacks’ Convention), “*Sklavenfang*” (A Slave Catch), and “*Praktische Amalgamation*” (Practical Amalgamation), which involved a girl and a “*Mulatten Barbier*” (mulatto barber).⁴⁸ In a quick survey, the *Volksblatt*’s editor used color-coded language to describe race-based events and commented on racial mixing, as well as slavery. Similarly, the *Cincinnati Volksfreund* (1850-1908) was a Democratic Party paper that was filled with racialized political news, such as two-weeks’ coverage of the Harpers Ferry raid (with detailed transcripts of the proceedings), news about fugitive slaves, local crimes committed by blacks, “*Der Amalgamation die Racen in Amerika*” (The Amalgamation of Races in America), and a serialized novel called *Ein weißer Indianer* (A White Indian).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Harsham, “A Community Portrait: Over-the-Rhine, 1860,” 69.

⁴⁷ Nerone, “Newspapers and the Public Sphere,” 236.

⁴⁸ “Schwarze Convention,” *Cincinnati Volksblatt*, April 17, 1846; “Sklavenfang,” *Cincinnati Volksblatt*, March 31, 1846; “Praktische Amalgamation,” *Cincinnati Volksblatt*, January 27, 1846.

⁴⁹ “Der Sklave John Taylor,” *Cincinnati Volksfreund*, November 1, 1859; “Das Resultat der Negerschlägerei in Sycamorestraße,” *Cincinnati Volksfreund*, October 23, 1859; “Die

Editors of the German American party press followed the convention of linking race and politics, yet the German clergy-editors did not. As we saw in the previous chapter, the German-language denominational press discouraged acculturation and it also remained distinct from the Anglo-American press with respect to its engagement with racialized issues. In the antebellum era the German denominational newspapers in Cincinnati are notable exceptions to the Anglo-American press and the German-language, ethnic press. The German denominational press differed from the others because the editors did not link race and politics in the typical manner in their papers. Although each newspaper informed its readers of political events, before the Civil War the editors almost entirely refrained from offering any commentary on or editorialization of American politics, and they did not offer theological perspectives on these events. Additionally, the editors mostly abstained from using color-coded language and racial slurs in the vernacular. As a result, the textual pointers to racial discourse that exist in Anglo-American papers are absent in Cincinnati's German denominational press. If one reads the religious *Bildungsbürgertum's* newspapers alongside the Anglo-American or German secular papers, the German clergy seem to ignore race altogether.

An initial evaluation of the German denominational papers reveals headline coverage of many of the same political articles as in the Anglo-American press. Upon closer examination of the content of the articles, however, significant differences emerge. The German articles comprised reprints of presidential speeches, summaries of legislation in Congress, and military strategy in geo-political events such as the Mexican-American War. They provided almost no

Amalgamation der Racen in Amerika," *Cincinnati Volksfreund*, October 23, 1859; "Ein weißer Indianer," *Cincinnati Volksfreund*, November 27, 1859. Coverage of the Harper Ferry raid began on October 18, 1859 and continued almost daily through November 1, and the editor referenced the incident again on September 23, 1862.

commentary on political elections, rarely backed particular parties or candidates, abstained from political mud-slinging, and merely reprinted presidential speeches or summarized both sides of the debates before Congress. The editors informed their readers of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Fugitive Slave Law without contextualizing the legislation in any broader issues, including race. Until the outbreak of the Civil War, there were very few articles concerning slavery in America. The papers reported on the slave trade, slave ships, and slaves in foreign countries, but they did not address slavery in the United States, nor did they report on blacks living in or passing through Cincinnati. The use of political events to address racial issues was absent from the German denominational press.

A comparison of the German Methodist paper with its supposed English-language equivalent, the *Western Christian Advocate*, is instructive here. The *Christian Advocate* was the organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) and was published by the Methodist Book Concern in various cities across the United States.⁵⁰ Each city's paper was edited locally and distributed regionally, so each reflected the regional bias of the MEC church. The *Western Christian Advocate*, which was published in Cincinnati, interpreted the news with a Midwestern cultural perspective and the MEC's theological lens; in other words, it was aligned with the antislavery, northern church after the MEC split from the MEC-South in 1844. Together, the *Advocates* created a Methodist public sphere, and the editors bantered amongst themselves. The *Zion's Herald*, published in Boston, was also part of the *Christian Advocate* family, but it was known for its brash tone and uncharacteristically liberal theology.

⁵⁰ Walter Sutton, *The Western Book Trade: Cincinnati as a Nineteenth-Century Publishing and Book-Trade Center, Containing a Directory of Cincinnati Publishers, Booksellers, and Members of Allied Trades, 1796-1880 and a Bibliography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1961).

The *Western Christian Advocate* was well-known for its stand against slavery, as it published numerous editorials on slavery and abolition, and it was a vocal proponent of colonization. The paper participated in a public sphere that included local and national papers that were denominational and secular, especially over the topic of slavery. For example, when the Ohio Conference of the MEC held its annual meeting, James Birney's abolitionist paper the *Philanthropist* reprinted the "Report of the Committee on Abolition and Colonization." In a three-part exposé, Birney lambasted the paper and the Methodists for being "Pro-Slavery Ecclesiastics" who were hiding behind ambiguous language and falsely claiming to uphold the church's anti-slavery position.⁵¹ Five years later the *Philanthropist* accused the Western Methodists of being hypocrites because "70,000 slaves are members at this moment of the Methodist church" and yet "one half the Methodist church actually sustains the system which is grinding the poor wretches to powder, and the other half with few exceptions connives at it."⁵² The *Philanthropist* continued to take issue with the *Advocate* and in 1842 the editor declared, "There is no way in which an apologist for slavery shows more frequently his friendship for the slaveholder, and hostility to the abolitionist, than in lauding the efforts of the former, in behalf of the religious instruction of the slaves, however partial and inconclusive; and disparaging the labors of the latter for the complete overthrow of a system, which must forever prevent any general elevation of the colored race."⁵³ From across town, Birney harshly criticized the English-language local edition of the MEC paper for its position on slavery, which seemingly aligned with his own anti-slavery rhetoric but diverged on the finer points of abolition.

⁵¹ "Pro-Slavery Ecclesiastics," *Philanthropist*, July 1, 1836, American Periodicals.

⁵² "Methodists--Western Christian Advocate," *Philanthropist*, September 22, 1841, American Periodicals.

⁵³ "Western Christian Advocate," *Philanthropist*, March 22, 1843, American Periodicals.

When the *Philanthropist* merged with Cincinnati's *Weekly Herald* under editor G. Bailey and moved to New York, where it continued as the *National Era*, the paper continued to harangue the Methodist paper. The *National Era* said of itself, "This paper...maintains its course with unabated vigor. It attacks slavery in all its aspects to great advantage...Its principal strength consists in rejection the Garrisonian theories, as well as most of the ultra sentiments of the Abolition party which repudiates Garrison."⁵⁴ Bailey accused Cincinnati's *Advocate* of viewing "the Anti-Slavery enterprise from a position very different from what [the editor] occupied twelve years ago...[when] it was opposed to the agitation of the question of slavery, because it disturbed the harmony of the church." Furthermore, Bailey criticized the Cincinnati editor for not aligning with the Pittsburgh and New York editors on the subject of slavery. Even the Methodists' own *Zion's Herald*, which also represented the northern Methodist church, regularly took issue at its sister publication. When the *Western Christian Advocate* printed a favorable book review of "Dr. W. A. Smith's book on Slavery," *Zion's Herald* balked, saying, "Now, if such abstractions as these can justify the system of American slavery, then there is no system of inquiry under the sun which can not be shown to be right, *per se*."⁵⁵ The *Western Christian Advocate* was renowned as a Methodist mouthpiece for race-related issues and it debated the limits of slavery with secular and denominational presses. Throughout the antebellum era, this MEC organ heavily editorialized the moral, political, and racial aspects of slavery for its readers and took issue with its sister publications.

⁵⁴ "The Western Christian Advocate," *National Era*, December 1, 1847, American Periodicals.

⁵⁵ "The Western Christian Advocate," *Zion's Herald*, June 10, 1857, American Periodicals.

Given the Methodist Church's latitude in discussing race-related issues like slavery, abolition, and colonization and for engaging in a lively—even contentious—denominational debates that were local and national, it is notable that the German Methodists did not participate. Furthermore, the Anglo-American secular press created a public sphere for airing racial concerns and debating the implications of race in American society, but the German denominational press did not engage with that press, either. The German clergy-editors hotly debated theological and ethnic matters like nativism, acculturation, and public schools with the ethnic press in St. Louis and New York, but not racialized issues.⁵⁶ Despite the heated debates in the city's English-language press and German-language secular press over a multitude of racial issues and the occurrence of several race riots, the four papers edited by the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* were remarkably silent on topics that incensed Anglo-Americans and German Americans across the nation and in their city.

Is it possible that this subset of the German immigrants was uninterested in joining the American conversation about race, or is it more likely that they used different editorial indices to racial issues? The remainder of this chapter establishes that the editors modeled their papers on an ideal for the press that avoided political rhetoric and was based on their cultural understanding of human variation, which stemmed from their university training. By reading the newspapers through the lens of *Bildung*, we can identify a racist rhetoric based on cultural, rather than biological, difference.

⁵⁶ The notable exception is *Der Wahrheitsfreund* during the 1850s when it disparaged German-language papers like New York's *Staatszeitung* for taking a political stance with abolitionists, but the editor repeatedly emphasized that this was because of the abolitionists' association with nativism—which they described as an ethnic matter—not slavery.

Decoupling Religion and Politics

Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* unilaterally refrained from debating political issues in their newspapers, but this is not an altogether unexpected discovery. Carl Wittke explains that German American denominational papers "were not newspapers primarily concerned with reporting the events of the day, and they rarely carried editorials on public questions. They made little effort to influence readers in the field of politics, and some excluded partisan discussion as a matter of principle."⁵⁷ So the means used to identify racist rhetoric in papers published in America—reading commentaries on political issues—is of no help. Readers cannot find the markers of biological determinism that pervade the other presses in the city. It is only when one looks in articles on cultural progress, rather than formal politics, that a racist rhetoric steeped in the language of *Bildung* and the development of the *Volkgeist* emerges. The clergy gave a variety of reasons for refraining from editorializing about politics, all of which are based on the education they received regarding the *Bildungsideal*, or ideal state of humanity, which had little to do with political organization and everything to do with cultural production.

Rabbi Wise took an extreme position, even for the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, when he declared that *The Israelite* was not a political paper, and he explicitly differentiated himself from the Anglo-American press. At the conclusion of the 1856 presidential election, Wise summarized his position on the relation between religion and politics:

We studiously abstained from attempting to influence any one of our readers in favor of this or that party, not because we did not take a deep interest in our country's future welfare, but simply for the following reasons: The entire and complete separation of Church and State appears so desirable a policy to us, that we abhor the interference of religious ministers in political affairs...If we had not been prejudiced before, against priestly politicians, the political campaign just passed would forever caution us against their interference in state affairs. Almost

⁵⁷ Carl Frederick Wittke, *The German-Language Press in America* (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), 169.

two-thirds of all men wearing white neck-kerchiefs turned political stump speakers and electioneering agents.⁵⁸

Wise believed that the clergy lost credibility when they strayed from religious matters and prophesied political outcomes. And he feared that commenting on political matters was an infringement on the separation of church and State, which he viewed as the most important guarantor of the freedom to practice Judaism as he saw fit.

The only form of political reporting offered by Wise, and this was consistently present in his paper, covered legislation throughout the world that affected the status of the civil emancipation of Jews. For example, in 1856 he reported, “The steamer ‘Atlantic’ brought the gratifying news that a bill altering the oath administered to members of Parliament, so that Jews can be qualified, has been passed by the House of Commons.”⁵⁹ But Wise considered this religious news, not political news, which he noted in a reference to Ezekiel 33:1-9. Wise said, “We will be the faithful watchman against any encroachment upon [the American Jews’ rights]...we may say it to our own satisfaction, that in this respect we kept our readers fully informed of every important movement.”⁶⁰ Overall, Wise avoided reporting on Indian wars, fugitive slaves, legislation before Congress, and presidential addresses. Rabbi Max Lilienthal defended Wise’s choice to avoid all American news saying, “Jewish News are either of a political, religious or congregational nature. Politically, thank God, there cannot happen anything extraordinary to our coreligionists in this our blessed country.”⁶¹ Because of the Constitutional right to practice religion without interference from the State, Jews in America had full political emancipation, and that was the rabbis’ only political concern.

⁵⁸ Isaac Mayer Wise, “A Review of the Campaign,” *The Israelite*, November 21, 1856.

⁵⁹ Wise.

⁶⁰ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Political News,” *The Israelite*, July 4, 1856.

⁶¹ Max Lilienthal, “American News,” *The Israelite*, November 16, 1855.

At the outbreak of the American Civil War, when other editors relaxed their prohibition of political news coverage, Wise announced that he would continue to abstain from political commentary. As he explained, “Hitherto we sometimes thought fit to say something on public affairs and it was our ardent hope to assist those who wished to prevent civil war, but we wasted our words...should we choose side with one of the parties? We can not, not only because we abhor the idea of war, but also we have dear friends and near relations, beloved brethren and kinsmen in either section of the country...Therefore silence must henceforth be our policy.”⁶² When Wise had ventured into political commentary in the past, he was not able to persuade his readers to follow his advice. His sphere of influence was religious issues, not politics. And the religious issue that most concerned him before the Civil War was creating an irenic form of Judaism (Reform) that would unite all Jews. When the Civil War divided American Jews politically and geographically, he felt he would only cause additional religious division within the Reform movement by choosing sides in the Civil War. Having obtained the political freedom to practice Reform Judaism in America, Wise strove for religious unity within his denomination through the avoidance of political commentary in his newspaper.

August Kroell’s *Protestantische Zeitblätter* was at the opposite end of the spectrum of opinion about whether political news was appropriate content for a religious newspaper. The German Evangelical Protestant editor ran political articles whenever he was particularly interested in an issue—which was usually when the issue affected German Americans, such as nativism or temperance—but coverage before 1861 was uneven, at best. There were no articles on any political issue from 1853 until 1855, when Kroell began following the up-coming presidential election. This corresponded with an enlarged format for the paper, perhaps

⁶² Isaac Mayer Wise, “Silence Our Policy,” *The Israelite*, 1860.

suggesting that he had prioritized other news above politics until he had the space for it, but Kroell did not even announce the results of the election in 1856. In fact, after 1855 there were no political editorials except those that warned readers about the activities of the nativists until 1861, when he closely monitored the impending Civil War.

In 1855 Kroell created a department called “*Amerikanische Rundschau*” (American Review). This column contained political news at the state and national levels and included summaries of Congressional legislation, presidential speeches, court proceedings, and political party news, often laced with implicit editorial comment. In a representative article, Kroell states, “The domestic news from Congress is very meager. The Know-Nothings incur damage punch-for-punch and their highly touted invincibility melts like snow before the sun...Also, in Wisconsin the Antislavery Party won a double victory. First the Freesoiler Durkee was elected to the US Senate and then Booth and Rycraft, who were incriminated because of their opposition to the Fugitive Slave Bill, were acquitted by the Supreme Court of Wisconsin.”⁶³ Kroell expressed pleasure at the waning success of the Know Nothing (American) Party and at the legal victory of members of the Antislavery or Republican Party, but he was not their mouthpiece.

Kroell reported on the slave trade in foreign countries like Cuba but he did not editorialize on slavery in the United States; however, he kept his readers informed about what he thought were significant events. For instance, in 1855 a highly publicized trial reached the

⁶³ “*Amerikanische Rundschau*,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, January 23, 1855. “*Die einheimischen Neuigkeiten sind ausser den Congress-verhandlungen diesmal sehr mager ausgefallen. – Die Know Nothings erleiden Schlag für Schlag und ihre viel gepriesene Unbesieglichkeit zerschmilzt wie Schnee vor der Sonne...Auch in Wisconsin hat die Anti-Slavereipartei einen Doppelsieg errungen. Einmal wurde der Freesoiler Durkee in den Vereinigte Staaten Senat gewählt und dann wurden Both und Rycraft, welche wegen Widerstand gegen das Slavereiflüchtlingsgesetz angeklagt sind, von der Supreme Court Wisconsins freigesprochen.*”

Superior Court of Cincinnati that tested the Fugitive Slave Law. Steamboats that stopped in Cincinnati that often transported slave owners and their slaves. At issue in this case was whether slaves who disembarked and set foot on the free state of Ohio were thereby freed. The case was adjudicated by Bellamy Storer, and Salmon P. Chase and the German J. B. Stallo were among the attorneys defending the slaves, who were eventually returned to their owner, a Reverend Harle.⁶⁴ According to Kroell, “The slave case, which Judge Storer handled last week and this week, stirred up something interesting...The right to transport slave property over free land and to land on free coastlines was thoroughly investigated and argued with great shrewdness and juridical erudition. If, however, the slaves wish to remain with their master, the law will regard them as property again. Harle is a Baptist preacher.”⁶⁵ This case received national attention, yet this was the only one of the German denominational papers to mention the trial. Kroell refrained from discussing slavery, race, theology, and the Fugitive Slave Act in his very brief summary of the case, but he noted that Baptists owned slaves, presumably to make a religious slur and possibly to signal his distaste for owning slaves.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Salmon P. Chase, “To J. T. Trowbridge, Esq.,” in *The Salmon P. Chase Papers: Correspondence, April 1863 - 1864*, ed. John Niven, vol. 4 (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 333–34, <https://books.google.com/books?id=y42Mk49oc2cC>.

⁶⁵ “Amerikanische Rundschau,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, February 22, 1855. “*Der Sklavenfall, welcher die letzte und diese Woche vor Richter Storer verhandelt wurde, erregte bedeutendes Interesse... Das Recht, Sklaven’Eigenthum uber freien Boden zu transportiren und an freier Küste zu landen, wurde gründlich untersucht und mit grossem Scharfsinne und juristischer Gelehrsamlen erörtert.—Wenn aber die Sklaven bei ihrem Herrn bleiben wollen, so schüsst sie das Gesetz von Neuem als Eigenthum. Der Sklavenhalter Harle ist ein Baptisten-prediger.*”

⁶⁶ “Slavery Excitement in Cincinnati,” *New York Times*, March 20, 1855, <https://www.nytimes.com>. Slavery trials in Cincinnati were the attention of a variety of presses on the East Coast. For example, the *American Phrenological Journal* of Philadelphia and New York covered a test of the Fugitive Slave Act which was tried in March 1856. See “Slave Case in Cincinnati,” *American Phrenological Journal* 23,3 (Mar 1856), 63.

According to Kroell, that case “set off another slave spectacle that should end with the liberation of sixteen slaves.”⁶⁷ The steamship *Falls City* docked in Cincinnati and “blacks and whites sneaked about and around the ship in a very suspicious manner on Sunday” but were dispersed. Later that evening “the well-known ‘Blackwell’...appeared with a habeas corpus, demanding the slaves” but the slaves were moved across the river to Covington, Kentucky before they could be handed over. As before, Kroell dispatched the facts without editorializing. He omitted the details about the notorious slave trader entering the city and attempting to capture fugitive slaves—Armstead Blackwell was part of a trio of traders (Blackwell, Murphy and Ferguson) who operated out of Lexington, Kentucky and advertised their services in local newspapers.⁶⁸ Instead of linking the incident to politics through the Antislavery Party or his perspective on the Fugitive Slave Act, Kroell merely speculates that the slaves will be freed.

Of all the German denominational papers, this was the one exception to the generalization that the Germans avoided racial slurs, but such language occurred only very occasionally and for one racial group. Kroell alternated between the terms *Indianer*, *rothaupt*, and *roten Barbaren* when referring to American Indians, probably because he thought of the

⁶⁷ “Amerikanische Rundschau,” February 22, 1855. “Bereits hat es wieder ein anderes Sklavenspektakel abgesetzt, das mit der Befreiung von 16 Sklaven endigen sollte. Der Dämpfer ‘Falls City’ langte nämlich vergangenen Samstag hier von Wheeling, VA., an. Er hatte 16 Sklaven an Bord, die auf dem Transporte nach St. Louis waren. Schwarze und Weisse schlichen sich desshalb, des Sonntags darauf in sehr verdächtiger Weise um und auf dem Schiffe herum, wurden aber von letzterem prompt vertrieben. Sonntab Abends 9 Uhr erschien der bekannte ‘Blackwell’ in Beleitung eines Deputy Sheriff mit einer Habeas Corpusakte und verlangte die Sklaven. Sie wurden aber von dem klugen Virginier an das Kentuckyuser geschafft.”

⁶⁸ *The Filson Club History Quarterly* 12 (1938), <https://books.google.com/books?id=zS0UAAAAYAAJ>; Gerald L. Smith, *Lexington, Kentucky, Black America* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2002), 12, <https://books.google.com/books?id=hX9tvFIGcVsC>.

Indians as bloodthirst aggressors, and he believed that bloodshed was prohibited by the Bible.⁶⁹

In one representative article, he reported that “stubborn redskins” (*den störischen Rothhäuten*) in Oregon were warring against “white settlers” (*die weissen Ansiedler*).⁷⁰ When reporting on other nonwhite groups, however, he usually followed the other editors’ convention of referring to blacks as *Neger* (he sometimes used *Schwarze*) and the Chinese as *Chinesischer*. At the start of the Civil War, Kroell explained why he approached political reporting in this way:

Our paper is not a political paper; above all, we are concerned with the freedom of life and faith in the field of religion...We confine ourselves to putting together the political and military events in brief review. We don’t write political editorials or party articles. But we cannot avoid giving our view of the war, its leadership, its purpose, and its results. [The paper] belongs to no party; we stand on our own two feet and look with our own eyes.⁷¹

In the many articles that mentioned the slave trade, politics, or judicial rulings, he refrained from using his paper as a mouthpiece for social commentary; however, he believed it was his duty to inform his readers of issues that might threaten their religious or civic freedom. He resisted becoming either a party paper or a penny press because he reserved the right to interpret events for himself, and he passed on that right to his readers.

The remaining two German denominational papers were situated between these two extremes. *Der Wahrheitsfreund* was a weekly newspaper that intentionally emulated the format

⁶⁹ “Die Blutgläubigen im Widerspruche mit der Bibel,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, November 20, 1862.

⁷⁰ “Amerikanische Rundschau,” January 23, 1855.

⁷¹ “Unsere politische Stellung,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, March 19, 1863. “*Unser Blatt ist kein politisches Blatt, wir haben es vor Allem mit der Freiheit des Lebens und Glaubens auf dem Felde der Religion zu thun... Doch wir beschränken uns darauf, die politischen und kriegerischen Ereignisse in einer kurzen Umschau zusammenzustellen. Politische Leitartikel oder Parteiartikel schreiben wir nicht. Dass aber unsere eigene Ansicht über den Krieg, seine Führung, seinen Zweck, seine Erfolge dabei sich geltend macht, ist gar nicht zu vermeiden. Wir sind keiner Partei je dienstbar geworden, wir stehen auf eigenen Füßen und schauen mit eigenen Augen.*”

of monthly magazines like *Harper's Weekly* by offering diverse content that entertained and instructed its readership. It was not a strictly religious paper, unlike the Protestant papers who had to delineate their sects from one another. Instead, a good Catholic paper included "literature, news, commerce [and] politics...anything just, true, beautiful, generous, or sublime...and whatever may be the best for our people (*Landleute*) or humanity."⁷² In 1852 the editor explained that this was not a political paper, but rather its purpose was, "as much as possible, to present a general knowledge of what is happening in the Catholic and the non-Catholic world and to enlighten Catholics with an interpretation of it."⁷³ The paper contained foreign and domestic news that was deemed relevant to Catholics, and although the editor promised to interpret the events for the readers, the actual commentary was usually limited to one or two sentences at the end of select articles. The paper gave a nod to the policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1850s, reprinted presidential speeches (without analysis), and summarized legislation before Congress. All of this was provided to readers so that they would be apprised of the condition of the world in which the Catholic Church existed, but the editors ensured that the paper never became a political mouthpiece.

⁷² "Was ist eine katholische Zeitung?," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, March 22, 1855. "Ein katholisches Journal is daher ein katholisches, nicht weil der Redakteur jederzeit wie ein Heiliger spricht, oder weil seine Spalten mit frommen erbaulichen Artikeln angefüllt sind, um aus den Lesern sammt und sonders Heilige zu machen, sondern weil es in jeder Frage, bei jedem auz beschrechenden Gegenstand, sei es nun Literatur, Neuigkeiten, Commerce oder Politik...Wo irgend etwas Gerechtes, Wahres und Schönes, oder Generöses, Erhabenes in der Literatur oder Politik unserer Landleute, welche mit uns im Glauben differiren, gefunden wird, und was immer zum Besten unseres Landes oder der Menschheit überhaupt gereichen mag, das werden wir anerkennen."

⁷³ "Die Katholische Presse Und Ihre Aufgabe," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, November 18, 1852. "Sie muss möglichst zur allgemeinen Kenntniss zu bringen suchen, was in der Welt Katholisches und Widerkatholisches geschieht und das Urtheil der Katholicken darüber aufklären."

Der Wahrheitsfreund's editors were adamant that no editor should presume to tell Catholics how they should vote. Individual Catholics needed to make that decision for themselves, after carefully considering the positions presented in the Catholic press. For example, leading up to the 1856 presidential election, this paper endorsed presidential candidates and parties that opposed the nativists, who were thought to be attempting to abridge the rights of Catholics in America. But even then, the editor proclaimed, "It is therefore completely wrong—utter nonsense—to say: 'I'm a Democrat and for that reason I must vote for the whole Democratic ticket,' or, 'I'm Whig, so I have to support the whole Whig ticket,' or 'I'm a Democrat, so I have to vote for a Democrat as President.' The people may select whomever they want!"⁷⁴ Like the editor of the *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, *Der Wahrheitsfreund*'s editor wanted Catholic laypeople to make their own decisions about political issues, but the people needed the editor to provide them with the details to make informed decisions.

The ideal balance for a newspaper, according to the Catholic editor, was one which truthfully informed the readers of useful news regarding topics such as politics, finance, and trade. In an overview of the Mexican press, the editor disputed the opinion of the editor of the *New York Freeman's Journal* that "the political press can save a country."⁷⁵ *Der*

⁷⁴ "Die Katholische Presse Und Ihre Aufgabe." "Es ist daher auch ganz verkehrt, ja Unsinn, zu sagen: ich bin Demokrat, darum muss ich fürs ganze demokratische Ticket, ich bin Whig, darum muss ich fürs ganze Whigticket, oder ich bin Demokrat, darum muss ich für einen Demokraten als Präsidenten stimmen, die Personen mögen beschaffen sein wie sie wollen!"

⁷⁵ "Die Presse in Mexiko," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, January 17, 1856. "Wenn die politische Presse ein Land retten kann—so sagt das 'N.Y. Freeman's Journal'—dann geht das unglückliche von Faktionen zerrissene, und von der Revolution durchwühlte Mexiko nicht zu Grunde...Dass in Mexiko erscheinende französische Blatt 'Trait d'Union' beschäftigt sich viel mit den Angelegenheiten des Landes; es ist indess nichts mehr und nichts weniger, als sein französischer Doktrinär, der mit der Revolution spielt...Die Rechte Aller werden in diesem Blatte nach Kräften und mit grossem Geschicke vertreten, ein Zeichen, dass die Herausgeber keener der modernen 'liberalen' Schulen angehören."

Wahrheitsfreund countered that the *Trait d'Union* was edited by “a French doctrinaire” who provides a lot of coverage in political affairs but merely “plays with the revolution” instead of affecting positive outcomes. While the editor of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* implied that he preferred to deliver the news with a neutral, factual tone, he nevertheless often adopted an assertive or persuasive tone in his own paper when he thought that Catholics’ civil rights were being infringed upon. A political press could not save a country, but a denominational press could.

While *Der Wahrheitsfreund* did not engage in political stumping or candidate endorsements, it did provide a regular “*Kirchlich-Politisches*” department. It functioned similarly to Wise’s updates on the political condition of Jews around the world by providing information on anti-clericalism and the limits placed on the Roman Church’s political power in places such as Belgium and Switzerland.⁷⁶ The paper’s goal for providing American secular news was “to see how these events have affected, or at least have promised to affect, the spread of Catholicism in the United States.”⁷⁷ From the editor’s perspective, “The American *Volk* is opposed to bringing religious issues into the field of politics, and yet, the sectarian spirit of Protestantism calls for a proscription against the Catholics because of their faith, even though the Catholics stood with the Democrats regarding the American principles of freedom of religious worship, separation of politics from religion, and their priests preached peace and unity.”⁷⁸ He

⁷⁶ For example, see “*Kirchlich-Politisches*,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, June 25, 1846.

⁷⁷ “*Der Katholicismus in den Ver. Staaten*,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, March 11, 1858. “*Wir Wollen nun sehen, wie diese Ereignisse die Ausbreitung des Katholizismus in der Ver. Staaten bewirkt oder wenigstens zu bewirken versprochen haben.*”

⁷⁸ “*Der Katholicismus in den Ver. Staaten.*” “*Das amerikanische Volk ist einem Hereinziehen der Fragen der Religion in das Feld der Politik entgegen, und steh! die sectirerischen Geistlichen des Protestantismus rufen nach Proscription gegen die Katholiken wegen ihres Glaubens, während die Katholiken mit den Demokraten das amerikanische Prinzip der Freiheit der Gottesverehrung, Trennung der Politik von der Religion vertheidigten und ihre Priester Frieden und Eintracht predigten.*”

understood the separation of Church and state to mean that churches should not be involved in politics, but he further suggested that if Catholics were aligned with the Democratic Party, which stood for religious freedom, then the Catholic Church in America would be safe from persecution and have no need to preach politics in his newspaper. Just as Wise noted the overwhelming number of pastors who were part of the political machine, the editor of the Catholic paper noted the hypocrisy of the Protestant editors who used their newspapers to assert a decidedly religio-political, anti-Catholic social agenda. Both editors intentionally disengaged from political commentary as a way to remain distinct from the Protestant editors.

The German Methodist paper also took a more moderate view of mixing religion and politics. Nast published updates in his “*Politisches*” (political) department on national legislation, the slave trade (outside the United States), and international wars, and he occasionally gave updates on the Bureau of Indian Affairs. News about nonwhite individuals, which was infrequent, appeared in the “*Vermischtes*” (miscellaneous) department. In terms of formal politics, he regularly reprinted presidential speeches with minimal or no commentary. Regarding presidential elections, in 1856 Nast provided information on the Democratic and Republican nominees with a neutral, informative tone. Although he never mentioned the candidates in the 1860 election, he did announce Lincoln’s victory. Through 1863, Nast published speeches given by Abraham Lincoln and by Jefferson Davis. His intent seems to have been to inform, rather than persuade, his readers.

Nast seemingly agreed with the other editors that his readers should make individual choices regarding where to cast their votes, as he provided almost no editorial commentary on political candidates. In 1847 some of his readers had apparently complained that there was too much controversy in the paper, despite his ambivalence on politics—perhaps they were referring

to theological polemics, which were frequent. Nast answered that he preferred to maintain the peace, but that “it is often the absolute duty of the preachers and other learned men, and no less the duty of the publishers of Christian periodicals, to arm themselves against the enemies of truth...Especially in our land, where religious errors of all types are so common, it is often necessary for preachers to bring the ones in error into the true light and to stop the loose flapping of their gums.”⁷⁹ However, for the next decade, Nast declined to get involved in debates about issues like slavery and the slaughtering of Indians. He engaged in only religious polemics, not political rants.

In 1856 Nast endorsed and translated an article by a Dr. Kinglsey in Illinois from the *Western Christian Advocate* entitled, “*Religion und Politik.*” The article states that there was an on-going debate about whether Christian ministers had the right to comment on political issues in the public sphere. The *Advocate* took the position that “we believe it is not within the office of the Christian preacher or the religious press to deal with political issues that are not involved in Christian morality, such as tariffs, the national bank, the distribution of public lands and the like. But to exclude questions which directly affect Christian morals from the boundaries of the priests' office and the religious press is not justified by any earthly power.”⁸⁰ Examples of issues

⁷⁹ William Nast, “Ich liebe keine Controverse,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, April 1, 1847. “Es ist aber oft absolute Pflicht der Prediger und anderer gelehrten Männer, und nicht weniger Pflicht der Herausgeber christlicher Zeitschriften, sich gegen die Feinde der Wahrheit zu wappnen... In unserem Lande besonders, wo religiöse Verirrungen aller Art so häufig sind, ist es oft nothwendig für Prediger, die Irrthümer an das Tageslicht zu bringen und den losen Mäulern den Mund zu stopfen.”

⁸⁰ William Nast, “Religion und Politik,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, October 23, 1856. “Mit politischen Fragen sich abzugeben, die nicht mit der christlichen Moral verwickelt sind, wie z. B. Tariff, Nationalbank, Vertheilung der öffentlichen Ländereien und dergleichen, glauben wir, ist nicht der Beruf des christlichen Predigtamtes noch der religiösen Presse. Allein Fragen, welchen unmittelbar die christliche Moral betreffen, von den Grenzen des Prdigtamtes und der religiösen Press auszuschließen, dazu hat keine irdische Macht ein Recht.”

that some newspapers referred to as political but the *Advocate* considered moral included polygamy, the institution of slavery, and the expansion of slavery into new territories and free states. Even with this green light from the MEC to enter the public sphere and debate race-based moral and political issues, Nast abstained until the outbreak of the Civil War.

Thus, none of these denominational papers conformed to the characteristics of either the political press or the penny press, which predominated after 1830 and were highly engaged in racial and political battles in the public sphere. These German editors did not engage with the Anglo-American press on racial issues; nor did they discuss biological race amongst themselves. The editors used formal speech instead of the vernacular. They used no color-coded language, racial slurs, or stereotypes, except for the *Protestantischer Zeitblätter*'s occasional disparagement of Indians. For the most part, skin color was neither an external differentiator of inferiority nor a signifier of internal degeneration. Instead, all four papers consistently used cultural identifiers for the distinct groups of humans. Whenever possible, they used specific tribal or national identifiers, and when a more generic term was appropriate, the editors used *Indianer* and *Neger* instead of *Rothaut* and *Schwarzer*. Most importantly, they limited their commentary on politics to that which directly affected the German immigrants and they ignored local race issues.

One way to understand this unusual separation of politics and race is from the perspective of the censored press in Germany, which would have been the model for these editors prior to arriving in America. Even before the invention of the printing press, censorship and religion were linked in Germany, with "ecclesiastical authorities overseeing the production of

manuscripts and acting to prevent the dissemination of heretical writings.”⁸¹ When the printing press allowed for the printing of secular publications, censorship responsibilities were split between religious and political authorities. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as the state became more centralized and rulers “came to recognize the advantages of a unified state religion,” Catholic and Protestant authorities were tasked with maintaining religious hegemony within their respective regions, and “theology remained the central focus of censorship activity.”

During the Enlightenment in Germany, rulers perceived the need for structural changes in controlling the flow of information, and they put new policies in place to limit political expression, ostensibly because “most people were not yet enlightened, [and] they still required guidance and tutelage from the state.”⁸² By the early nineteenth century, additional policies (such as those stipulated in the Carlsbad Decrees) were enacted in various regions, as political authorities reacted to rapid population growth, urbanization, industrialization, and increased literacy rates. During this period, religion became a “target of state repression,” and all written works shorter than about 320 pages “were subject to pre-publication censorship.”⁸³ In the 1820s “liberal professors and students were harassed, dismissed, frightened into exile,” and they were arrested for disseminating reactionary ideas and materials.⁸⁴ In the pre-revolutionary era in Austria, an especially stringent form of censorship banned 5,000 books by popular authors, “including works of Rousseau, Spinoza, Goethe and Schiller, and even extended to inscriptions for gravestones, memorial cards, badges, cuff links and tobacco boxes,” and the mail was

⁸¹ Katy Heady, *Literature and Censorship in Restoration Germany: Repression and Rhetoric* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 4.

⁸² Heady, 5–6, 11.

⁸³ Robert J. Goldstein, *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1983), 95–96.

⁸⁴ Goldstein, 123.

censored in some areas.⁸⁵ By the 1840s, “press freedom had become a popular liberal cause, and the abolition of censorship was one of the chief aims of the 1848 revolutions.”⁸⁶

In actuality, the severity of censorship varied with the region and according to the human resources assigned to the task. Overseeing daily newspapers was a monumental job, as the censors had to complete their work before the editors could go to press, and hence, these censors focused their attention on specific concerns, particularly criticism of the State. Some regions required newspaper publishers to obtain permits, which were only issued to men who passed official scrutiny and whose licenses could be revoked if they printed inappropriate materials. A responsible editor provided internal monitoring of his paper’s content, and because he was constantly under threat of being jailed, he was often subjected to light monitoring by official censors. Newspapers in Germany rarely printed foreign news, since “the governments could see no reason why the public should have any.”⁸⁷ In addition, “their reportage on current events was customarily restricted to reprinting without comment government dispatches and announcements, which were naturally usually misleading and often trivial.” Nevertheless, “thousands of journalists were fined and/or jailed as a result of press repression, and thousands more censored themselves to avoid prosecution.” Reporters such as Heinrich Heine were famously good at towing the fine line between criticizing the State and offering general observations, and hence were able to write journalism that was full of double entendre that slipped past overworked state-appointed censors.

⁸⁵ Goldstein, 38.

⁸⁶ Heady, *Literature and Censorship in Restoration Germany: Repression and Rhetoric*, 6.

⁸⁷ Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Heinrich Heine: A Modern Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 174; Goldstein, *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe*, 42.

Given the American Constitution's guarantee of the right to free speech and the federal government's encouragement to use the public sphere to critique and debate the policies being formed, it seems unlikely that Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* would maintain a strict silence on political issues for fear of reprisal. Since the German editors insisted that republicanism was the model they hoped to see instantiated in the German states, it is surprising that they did not join in the fray of the American public sphere. It is true that the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* read the Anglo-American newspapers, but instead of responding to Americans, they wrote for their own *Volk* in a transatlantic, German-language public sphere in America and Germany.

This was possible because all four of the papers were distributed throughout America and in Germany before the Civil War and because newspapers from Germany were available in libraries and reading rooms in Cincinnati. Wise wrote for the Anglo-American Jewish public sphere, as there was no German-language public sphere for Jews in America. Also, his target audience was all American Jews (not just German Jews), whom he wanted to unify under the banner of Reform Judaism. Yet he brought his readers the perspectives of German intellectual Jews living in America, such as Lilienthal and Einhorn. Nast, although he published a German-language periodical, was a leader in an Anglo-American religion that as yet had no counterpart in Germany. As a result, he drew from a variety of English-language denominational works (books, newspapers, and journals), which he paraphrased in German to instruct his readers in Methodism, but he reported on European news and perspectives on America using German newspapers.⁸⁸ The latter was common among all of the newspapers except the *Protestantische*

⁸⁸ The editors often cited the papers when they reprinted or responded articles. The following is a description of the spheres of influence for each of the papers; the list is representative, not exhaustive. *Protestantische Zeitblätter: Der Wahrheitsfreund, Der*

Zeitblätter. For example, in 1840-1841 *Der Wahrheitsfreund* reported on the burning of the steamship Lexington in New York and also on abolition in Connecticut by reprinting information from the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. Nast continued to supply the Europeans' perspectives on the American condition until the start of the Civil War, but the other papers had abandoned the practice by then. Although there were vehemently expressed opinions in the German-American public sphere in cities like New York and St. Louis regarding the infringement of civil rights as pertaining to politics, race, and ethnicity, Cincinnati's editors read the discourse and sometimes reprinted articles, but they rarely offered commentary. They reserved the bulk of their commentary for religious polemics amongst themselves and polemics against German-American radicals and freethinkers.

This reticence to enter the fray regarding American politics is unusual compared to the Anglo-American press but is not unexpected for a group of highly educated German immigrants during the first half of the nineteenth century. According to Henry Pachter, Germans were

Christlichte Apologete, The Israelite, Fröhlicher Botschafter, St. Louis Lutheraner, Die Deborah, Israelitischen Volkslehrer [Frankfort], *NB Zeitung, Kölnische Zeitung, Der Pionier, The Times, The Enquirer, The Columbian, Der Anzeiger des Westens, the Alamo Express, Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung, Galvestoner Apologeten, Neukirchliche- (Swedenborgianische) Schriftauslegung, St. Louis Lutheraner. The Israelite: Allgemeine Zeitung, London Times, Christian Advocate, The Boston Traveler, The Weekly Gleaner, The Boston Journal, The Jewish Chronicle, Kerem Chemed, The Christian Register, The Daily Press, Courier and Journal, Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums, the Asmonean, Gottesfreund, San Francisco Herald, Norfolk Argus, Oester. Zeitung, Boston Times, National Zeitung, Königsberger Zeitung, the Occident, Dollar Weekly Times, Weser Zeitung, Hebrew Observer. Der Wahrheitsfreund: Augsburgener Allgemeine Zeitung, Der New Yorker Staatszeitung, Köln Zeitung, Illinois Staatszeitung, Sandusky Intelligencer, Toledo Staatszeitung, Deutsche Nationalzeitung, Wolfgang Menzel's Literaturblatt, Cincinnati Volksblatt, New York Courier, New York Freeman's Journal, Central New York Democrat, Memphis Eagle and Enquirer. Der Christliche Apologete: Allgemeine Zeitung, Berliner Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung, Fröhliches Botschafter, Hannover Gazette, Amerikan Botschafter, London Christian Examiner, London Times, London Jewish Chronicle, Cincinnati Gazette, Mississippi Gleaner, Pittsburgh Banner, Western Christian Advocate, Southern Christian Advocate, Missionary Advocate, Calwer's Missionsblatt, Methodist Quarterly Review.*

united against the French ideals of democracy, thanks to the War of Liberation in 1812, but the rise of the Prussian state and talk of revolution in the 1840s and a move to reject liberalism (which was associated with Napoleon) divided the German citizens. Some Germans embraced the efficiency and military power of Prussia, while others clung to the liberal Weimar ideals expressed in “classical German literature.” As Pachter explains,

The *Bürger* who cherished his classical *Bildung* (cultural education) had no use for nationalism, militarism, fanatics. He was urbane, cosmopolitan, and, above all, a private person minding his own business. He felt that ‘a political song is a nasty song’; he heeded Kant’s practical imperative: one must obey one’s sovereign.⁸⁹

Germans in the middle class were interested in intellectual freedom—they were not involved in politics, were not interested in discourses about political freedom, and disdained politics as a dirty business. In fact, in Germany it was only “during the period of the foundation of the Empire, from the mid-1860s to the mid-1870s [that] politics emerged as the crucial determinant of public life in the cities,” and another decade passed before German towns were politicized.⁹⁰ The four German editors in Cincinnati fall into this category, having obtained a liberal university education and immigrated before this politicization occurred.

As members of the *Bildungsbürgertum* who were taught to value German ideology, a more fruitful perspective on these editors’ lack of engagement with American politics builds on the claim that these editors encouraged their readers to resist acculturation, and even further, that they used their newspapers to “facilitate...[the] construction of overseas national identities.”⁹¹

Instead of engaging with the Anglo-American press in constructing the American public sphere

⁸⁹ Pachter, *Modern Germany: A Social, Cultural, and Political History*, 6–7.

⁹⁰ Jan Palmowski, “The Politics of the ‘Unpolitical German’: Liberalism in German Local Government, 1860-1880,” *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 3 (1999): 677–78.

⁹¹ Nerone, “Newspapers and the Public Sphere,” 236.

or with the German-American public sphere in constructing an assimilationist identity, they followed the pattern of a minority of editors who encouraged their readers to maintain their German identity. Rather than engaging with the political press, they interacted with the German religious press in America and Germany.⁹² They avoided the discussion of American events until the Civil War, when they began to develop German-American identities. Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* decoupled politics from religion by not editorializing or stumping for political parties or taking financial remuneration from political organizations. The editors informed their readers of issues that threatened the maintenance of their German identity and hence, they focused on cultural, rather than racial, dangers inherent in political issues.

Coupling Culture and Religion

To locate the roots of this alternate raciocultural discourse, one must start with Herder's teacher, Immanuel Kant. Kant's understanding of racial difference developed in conversation with writings by French, British, and German intellectuals, not in a vacuum of German thought. And his theorization of race evolved over time, as is evident in his essays about race, as well as his university lectures on anthropology and geography, but he retained a consistent focus on skin color as the physical differentiator of races. This evolution of his understanding of race as a biological construct developed "as Kant tried to accommodate new information and his own emerging critical system and philosophy of history, and worked to defend his theory against the criticisms of Herder and Forster."⁹³ Herder and the German Romantics took a dissenting

⁹² I do not dispute that newspapers played an important role in nation building. See Tucher and also Gross in Gross and Kelley on politics and newspapers in America and the role of the press in the process of nation building in America. My point is that the editors of these denominational newspapers played a role in building a *Germanic* identity for their readers in America.

⁹³ Larrimore, "Sublime Waste: Kant on the Destiny of the Races," 115.

intellectual path that produced an alternative theorization of race through the early-nineteenth century ideology of *Bildung* and cultural politics.

Kant's first work to address the variety of human races, *Von den verschiedenen Racen der Menschen* (1775), built on the work of Buffon when he identified four races: white, Negro, "Hunnish" (Mongol), and Hindu. Kant believed that the four human races were not determined by climate—humans were made such that they could adapt to any climate. Internal and external physical adaptations to particular climates were made by the people who lived there. Kant theorized that these adaptations permanently altered the iron in the blood as it reacted to "large quantities of salty acid, phosphoric acid, or volatile lye of various climates and turns their inhabitants black, red, or yellow"⁹⁴ This was an early attempt to understand human anatomy in a scientific way using biological traits.

In the first parts of his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Herder rejected Kant's definition of biological race and even "denied the existence of races altogether, pleading for an end to attempts to subdivide humanity into 'sections' on the basis of region 'or even color.'"⁹⁵ For European scholars such as Herder, "humanity could be envisaged as a set of colors which merged into each other without being necessarily arranged in a hierarchical order," and the identification of skin color was hardly scientific.⁹⁶ Instead, Herder argued for the grouping of people according to cultural groups he called "*Volk*," which were each bound by a common language and which progressed as the individuals' cultural essence (*Geist*) was awakened with the use of their mother tongue.

⁹⁴ Larrimore, 104.

⁹⁵ Larrimore, 105.

⁹⁶ Mazzolini, "Skin Color and the Origin of Physical Anthropology (1640-1850)," 145.

Kant responded to Herder in *Determination of the concept of race* (1785) by reiterating his use of skin color as the racial determiner, but he streamlined the categories to now exclusively include the “race of the *whites*, the *yellow* Indian, the negro and the *copper-red* American.” In addition, Kant “explicitly dismisses the view that the first humans were white and all other peoples descended from them.”⁹⁷ In *On the use of teleological principles in philosophy* (1788), Kant accused Herder of relying on unscientific “teleological principles” and “the notion of natural powers (*Kräfte*) without conscious purposes.” He accused Herder’s colleague, Georg Forster, of “insisting that there are no human varieties that merit distinguishing as races—let alone on the basis of color.”⁹⁸ At the root of this debate was whether biology or culture was a more empirical lens for understanding human variety.

Herder did not reject all of Kant’s ideas; he shared Kant’s interest in progress and degeneration, albeit within the category of *Volk*. Kant theorized that one’s race was diluted through miscegenation (because the racial traits were passed on through the blood), and also that miscegenation caused social degeneration. Kant thought that a race degenerated when dissimilar blood comingled and produced mixed-race offspring, which created physical and cultural mutations that were not present in the original, pure race. Herder was also interested in degeneration, but instead of focusing on interbreeding, Herder thought that *cultural* contamination caused degeneration. When describing the “essence of the uniqueness and incommensurability” of the various *Völker*, Herder often used words that he coined, which have no companion in English. Frederick M. Barnard paraphrases Herder: “We cannot, accordingly, assimilate one nation (*Volk*) to another any more than we can fully render the meaning of a word

⁹⁷ Larrimore, “Sublime Waste: Kant on the Destiny of the Races,” 106.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Larrimore, 107–10.

in one language through the vocabulary of another. Each language, each culture, in this view, expresses a particular way of seeing and feeling, a distinct perception of the world, together with a certain manner of responding to its challenges.”⁹⁹ “Assimilation” posed not only a danger for Herder’s conception of humankind, but was also a crime against humanity because when a *Volk* was forced to do something so unnatural, the spirit of the *Volk* was destroyed.

Like Kant, Herder was interested in cataloging human variation, but he balked at creating a hierarchy of humans.¹⁰⁰ Referring to the responsibility of the naturalist to observe without making moral valuations, Herder noted in *Brief zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1797), “The naturalist does not postulate an order of merit among the creatures which he observes; all are of equal value and concern. Thus also the human naturalist.”¹⁰¹ He applied this principle both to race and social position. Within a society there were “natural relations” between people, such as husband-wife and parent-child, but the concept of an absolute *Herrenvolk* (master race) or a *Favorit-Volk* was unnatural.¹⁰² Likewise, he considered the degeneration or progress of each *Volk* individually, instead of comparing their relative progress.

Because Herder saw language as the soul of the *Volk*, he claimed that “the imposition of foreign languages on subject peoples” and speaking the languages of imperialist nations instead of one’s mother tongue caused degeneration through the imposition of power on the powerless.¹⁰³ Herder implored his *Volk* to speak their mother tongue instead of French or

⁹⁹ Frederick M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 6.

¹⁰⁰ See *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1794-1781) and *Auch eine Philosophie Der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774).

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Sander L. Gilman, *On Blackness Without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982), 31.

¹⁰² Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History*, 8.

¹⁰³ Smith, *The Continuities of German History*, 58.

English. Similarly, immoral behavior at the *Volk* level caused degeneration. Nations such as France and England were degenerating because their *Volk* had become imperialists that usurped other *Völker*. In particular, Herder “condemned the destruction of Black society through the slave trade. In his view the skin color of the Europeans had come to stand for destruction and exploitation.”¹⁰⁴ The human race as a whole could not progress until the sum of its parts progressed, and each *Volk* was on a separate path to achieving its full potential.

In attempting to create a history of cultures and locate the German *Volk* within it, Herder indulged in the privileging of certain ancient languages as being more authentic, or closer to nature and their pure state, than modern European languages. He extolled the Asian Indian *Volk* as having an “ideal, childlike relationship to nature and consequently to language.”¹⁰⁵ Not surprisingly, Herder associated the roots of the Germanic language with Oriental languages, instead of French or English. However, he lamented the German *Volk*’s loss of some of its original nature through conquest by northern invaders and Charlemagne’s army. Some vestiges of the original German *Volk* could still be found in the “‘wildness’; other noble attributes they shared with the *Morgenländer* [Asian Indians]...as well as Native Americans.”¹⁰⁶ Contrary to Benedict Anderson’s description of nations or cultures as imagined communities, for Herder, *Völker* were neither imagined nor socially constructed. They were groups of people who shared innate, internal essences or souls (*Volkgeist*) that were expressed through language, literature, and other forms of culture.

¹⁰⁴ Gilman, *On Blackness Without Blacks*, 31.

¹⁰⁵ Nicholas A. Germana, “Herder’s India: The ‘Morgenland’ in Mythology and Anthropology,” in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 122.

¹⁰⁶ Germana, 130.

Kant's evolving theory about race was influential for a certain group of intellectuals, but it was not the only perspective on human diversity in Germany. In the "cultural-nationalist context of the early-nineteenth-century discussions," a search for the *Urvolk*, the *Urheimat*, and the roots of German culture drove a discourse that spread to include the university fields of orientalism, comparative philology, and eventually anthropology. During this period, "the 'natural' and 'human sciences,' for their part, were intimately linked to nationalist concerns by scientific views of the relation of *Volk*, language, and territory."¹⁰⁷ Where Kant theorized a degeneration of the white race through miscegenation, Herder described the mixing of cultures through acculturation as backward progress, due to the degeneration of the *Volk*. By shifting the emphasis from biological race to culture, Herder provided an alternate way of theorizing the Other. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, political debates considered *Grossdeutschland* versus *Kleindeutschland* plans for unifying the Germanic people, as well as the religious implications of whether Jews and Catholics were part of the German *Volk*. Cultural boundaries were drawn to exclude the French and English from the Germans' heritage.

If Kant's work on race was foundational for German thought, the work of his student was equally pervasive and lasting. According to Nicholas Germana, "There are few, if any, issues that engaged the Early Romantics that were not first dealt with by Herder. Their fascination with language, fables and folktales, mythology, and nationalism, can all be traced back to the influence of Herder."¹⁰⁸ At the end of the eighteenth century, the German intellectuals Friedrich

¹⁰⁷ Eigen and Larrimore, "Introduction," 6; Tuska Benes, *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ Germana, "Herder's India," 136.

Schlegel (1772-1829) and Novalis (1772-1801) focused their attention on the Orient as a lost locus of human literary, linguistic, and religious development. Schlegel immersed himself in the study of Sanskrit and Indian culture in a search for German linguistic and cultural roots that built on Herder's historical work. In an essay that was "wide circulated and read," Schlegel links "the German language backward through Latin and Greek to Persian and Sanskrit and suggests a common home for Japhet's sons in northern India."¹⁰⁹ Using Herder's relationship between language and culture, Johann G. Fichte (1762-1814) "further developed Herder's view on the importance of language: 'Men are formed by language far more than language is formed by men.'"¹¹⁰

Recent work on German orientalism still reflects Herder's influence two centuries later. Suzanne Marchand lists him as one of two scholars "critical to the fashioning of modern German orientalism," ranking Herder with J. D. Michaelis (1717-1791). She notes that his "writings on [the] Indian and the Islamic world would be influential for some specialists," but even more important, "Herder's work on the 'folk poetry' of the ancient Israelites would have an enormous impact on the scholarly study of the Orient, and especially of the Old Testament, right through the nineteenth century."¹¹¹ Herder's work was groundbreaking in a way that was markedly distinct from Kant, his university teacher. He "coined the term *Volk*" (as well as many other words related to cultural studies), and his "emphasis on a historical approach to culture and its development marks one of the earliest efforts in the development of anthropology as a field of

¹⁰⁹ Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2009), 64–65. See F. Schlegel's *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808).

¹¹⁰ McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, and Orientalism: Ancient India's Rebirth in Modern Germany*, 70.

¹¹¹ Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, 38, 43–44.

inquiry, and eventually as an academic discipline...an examination of language as the best way to understand the history and nature of a people, would dominate the field into the nineteenth century.”¹¹²

Eclipsing the value of Herder’s intellectual discourse was the institutionalization of his work. According to Germana, Herder’s “greatest influence was felt in German universities in the first two decades of the nineteenth century,” when four new disciplines were established as a result of his work.¹¹³ The universities’ influence is a crucial element because they were “the site of major cultural and political battles over the course of the nineteenth century, battles over control of Christian doctrine as well as over the nature of Germandom’s past and the proper behavior of citizens in the present.”¹¹⁴ They were also the site of the nationalization and institutionalization of *Bildung*.

These changes were instituted when Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) reformed the German university system and founded the University of Berlin, instating Fichte as the school’s first president. Since German universities were state-controlled, Humboldt proceeded with the support of Prussia’s ruler, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, to create a three-tiered educational system comprising the *Vorschule*, *Gymnasium*, and university. The *Gymnasium* was a kind of upper secondary school that administered comprehensive examinations for entrance to a university. At this level of education, “the curriculum would focus on language, history, and mathematics, as well as on learning how to learn. The aim in this case was to produce a student capable of acquiring knowledge independently so that the student would be prepared to move onto the next

¹¹² Germana, “Herder’s India,” 119–21.

¹¹³ Germana, 137.

¹¹⁴ Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, xxxiii.

stage.”¹¹⁵ At the university level, Humboldt elevated the humanities to a par with theology, law, and medicine by supplementing the masters degree in philosophy with a doctorate program. An avid student of Sanskrit with an interest in Indology, Humboldt established Sanskrit studies in Prussia and “strengthened the entire field of philology in Germany.”¹¹⁶ Moreover, the discussions in these fields overflowed the university’s walls, and “throughout the nineteenth century, besides the interest of professors and their students, enthusiasm for India and many of its cultural products was present in German educated society.”¹¹⁷

The reformed system of education benefitted the state by producing citizens who were qualified to enter civil service after completing their *Gymnasium* training, and the prohibitive tuition guaranteed that state officials came from the privileged class. Likewise, one’s acceptance at the *Gymnasium* was predicated on attendance at a private, expensive *Vorschule*. Thus the education reform also produced a new social class “called the *Bildungsbürgertum*, or educated middle-class, as distinct from the nobility and the mercantile bourgeoisie,” and which enjoyed distinct social advantages over those who were not *gebildet* (fully formed).¹¹⁸ Students who chose to continue their education entered the *University*, where Humboldt and Fichte institutionalized Herder’s concept of *Bildung*. At this level of education,

the main objective was to cultivate an understanding of the unity of all science and to call forth the ‘creative forces’ of the human being. The educational process, according to these principles, is basically unending, meant to continue throughout one’s life, and so no specific goal or endpoint was set by any organizational authority...All of these characteristics comprising a liberal education framed the university as an ideal place for developing the truly human

¹¹⁵ Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History*, 61.

¹¹⁶ McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, and Orientalism: Ancient India’s Rebirth in Modern Germany*, 87.

¹¹⁷ McGetchin, 19.

¹¹⁸ Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History*, 58.

being, educating and shaping his forces toward the acquisition of knowledge and carrying out of research. Such a self-directed exploration of cultural objects and the natural world is what ultimately forms the educated human being.¹¹⁹

While this idealized concept of attaining intellectual self-perfection might have been conceivable within the confines of the *University*, Herder never meant for *Bildung* to become institutionalized; nor did he envision the process as solely an individual quest. Fichte had combined his own interest in national education and love of the fatherland to support what he saw as the German state's "central goal [which] was to create the most educated citizens in the world."¹²⁰ But for Herder, *Bildung* was a process of perfection that occurred both within an individual and within a cultural group (*Volk*), such that the culture could only reach its perfect form (*Bildungsideal*) when the individuals comprising that *Volk* were also *gebildet*. Speaking one's mother tongue (in Herder's case, High German) was generative—it cultivated one's *volkisch* characteristics and caused one to respond to the environment in ways that were appropriate to one's *Volk*. For Herder, "*Bildung* could not be something imposed from the outside; it had to be aligned with the inner sense of a people."¹²¹ German Romantics developed Herder's concept of *Bildung* into the framework for cultural progress that was passed on to the *Bildungsbürgertum*.

In order to more clearly recognize the differences between race as biological determinism versus cultural politics, one further distinction between German and American intellectual movements is needed. C. Hugh Holman offers a nine-point description of Romanticism that is instructive for discriminating between German and American strains of Romanticism. Holman's characteristics include: "(1) a reliance on the emotions in lieu of the intellect; (2) a new theory

¹¹⁹ Horlacher, 61.

¹²⁰ Smith, *The Continuities of German History*, 64.

¹²¹ Smith, 57.

of nature, (3) primitivism and the idealization of rural life, (4) a sympathetic interest in the past, (5) mysticism, (6) unrestrained imagination, (7) individualism, (8) an enduring dedication to the pursuit of human rights, and (9) a strong emphasis on the idea of progress.”¹²²

Significant differences emerge between the American and German versions of Romanticism that are geographically and historically contingent. In terms of periodization, Early Romanticism in Germany dates from 1797 and the movement peaked between 1800 and 1850. American Romanticism peaked in the 1830s, situating it several decades after the beginning of the German movement, and the American form can be attributed to an adaptation of both the British and German lines of thought. The central mythic figure and political motivation for the two forms of Romanticism also differ: Andrew Jackson and the period of nation building for the Americans versus Napoleon Bonaparte and the French Revolution for the Germans. In addition, both forms of Romanticism contain similar aesthetic and literary components, but they differ particularly in terms of religion and philosophy. In America, Romanticism was especially influential in the Transcendental movement (an outgrowth of the Unitarian church), and some of Holman’s traits are evident in the evangelicalism of the early nineteenth century. In Germany, Romanticism infused all four of the traditional religions that are under study in this dissertation.

Some recent American scholarship links Romanticism to biological determinism through the concept of romantic racialism, building on the seminal work by George M. Fredrickson. Audrey Smedley argues that racial conceptions of blacks were derived from nineteenth-century conceptions of American Indians, “as what some historians have called ‘romantic racialism’ replaced images of bestiality and savagery, and blacks became the new savages. Indians were

¹²² Quoted in Gary Lamar Whitby, “The New York Penny Press and the American Romantic Movement, Volume I” (Dissertation, Iowa City, IA, University of Iowa, 1984), 65, ProQuest.

ranked higher than blacks in the ordering system. Asians, when the need arose later, were variously located, depending on who was constructing the gradations, either between whites and Indians or between Indians and blacks. In the eyes of the formulators, the ranking was based on each group's presumed capacity for civilization."¹²³ Dienke Hondius notes, "The idea of permanent racial differences provided an excuse for racial inequality and segregation; since 'race' was natural and in the blood, the idea of racial change or progress did not come up among romantic racialists."¹²⁴ Curtis J. Evans argues that the romantic racialists' conceptions of these fixed attributes "harbored an ambivalence about what the 'natural African' could contribute to the national character and what role blacks could have in the nation."¹²⁵ The romanticism of racialism in the early 1800s linked biological difference to claims that some races were inferior to others and had limited capacities for becoming civilized.

Another group of scholars shows how romantic racialism was adapted by theologians and social reformers. Ethan J. Kytte documents how the Transcendentalist Theodore Parker took ideas from German philosophers from Herder thru Schleiermacher to develop a kind of romantic racialism in America, and he links reform and abolition in the lives of five key Americans.¹²⁶ Stanley Harrold shows how American abolitionists took a mediating position between proslavery advocates and American scientists when they "embraced a racial doctrine that recognized inborn differences of character between the races while ostensibly denying black inferiority...While predicting a glorious future for Africans and African Americans as founders of a truly Christian

¹²³ Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 205.

¹²⁴ Dienke Hondius, *Blackness in Western Europe: Racial Patterns of Paternalism and Exclusion* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 43.

¹²⁵ Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion*, 12.

¹²⁶ Ethan J. Kytte, *Romantic Reformers and the Antislavery Struggle in the Civil War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 7, 50–53.

civilization, romantic racialism justified whites in assuming a paternalistic, condescending attitude toward slaves who were unlikely to struggle to free themselves.”¹²⁷ Gregory Eiselein explores the link between social reformers and romantic racist literature, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which “emphasized the ‘child’ rather than the ‘savage,’ depicting in supposedly flattering terms the childlike loyalty, spirituality, gentleness, docility, patience, forgiveness, and affection of blacks.”¹²⁸ Finally, Randi Lynn Tanglen shows how romantic racialists believed that blacks were innately Christian and launched aggressive conversion programs “to support a worldview that considered slavery morally and religiously wrong but an unfortunate means to accelerate the realization of a millennial Christian civilization through the conversion of otherwise heathen Africans on American soil.”¹²⁹

Evans rightly points out how “the romantic fascination with differences in people and nations coincided with and was influenced by large-scale immigration to the United States in the 1840s and 1850s, primarily from Ireland and Germany.” However, Frederickson noted that there was an exception to this group of German immigrants who linked race with biological determinism: those Germans who subscribed to Herder’s cultural understanding of race. According to Frederickson, “although nineteenth-century historians of the romantic nationalist school tended to emphasize the innate virtues of their own nation at the expense of others, Herder’s willingness to see the good qualities of other peoples provided an example for those Europeans and Americans who sensed some spiritual inadequacies in their own heritage and

¹²⁷ Stanley Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 48–51.

¹²⁸ Gregory Eiselein, *Literature and Humanitarian Reform in the Civil War Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 53.

¹²⁹ Randi Lynn Tanglen, “Religious Popular Culture and the Critique of Romantic Racialism in Harriet E. Wilson’s ‘Our Nig,’” in *Nineteenth-Century American Women Write Religion: Lived Theologies and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 79.

looked to peoples ‘differently constituted’ for the flowering of neglected human virtues.”¹³⁰

Cincinnati’s religious *Bildungsbürgertum* falls in this latter category because they were neither adamantly proslavery nor abolitionists, they did not denigrate blacks as either childlike or savage, and they used ethnological data to catalog the Africans’ cultures, rather than destroy or alter them.

For the Germans, Holman’s Romantic characteristics were consistent with the ideology of *Bildung* during the first half of the nineteenth century. F. Schlegel declared, “The highest good, and [the source] of everything that is useful, is culture (*Bildung*).” As Beiser explains, “Since the German word *Bildung* is virtually synonymous with education, Schlegel might as well have said that the highest good is education...It is no exaggeration to say that *Bildung*, the education of humanity, was *the* central goal, *the* highest aspiration, of the early romantics.” Schlegel led the move toward using aesthetics to rejuvenate the masses and avoid the failures of the French Revolution, but even more importantly for understanding Cincinnati’s editors, the ideal of the *Bildungsbürgertum* developed from this linkage of Romanticism with *Bildung*. The German thinkers “asserted the need for some form of elite rule, for a more educated class to direct and control the interests and energies of the people. Although they continued to affirm their republican ideals, they believed that the best state was a mixture of aristocracy, monarchy, and democracy...It had become clear that Germany could not follow the path of France.”¹³¹ Nor

¹³⁰ Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion*, 25; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 98.

¹³¹ Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 88–89; Gerhart Hoffmeister, “Preface,” in *European Romanticism: Literary Cross-Currents, Modes, and Models* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 13.

could Germany fully follow the example of the American Revolution, with its rugged individualism and British *Volk* identity.

The four German editors under study followed Herder's cultural construction of human difference, rather than the biological model preferred by Kant and American intellectuals. They built on the Early Romantic philosophers' claims that cultural progress was the highest good and the editors evaluated the world's cultures based on criteria like religious, linguistic, and literary achievements. Rather than negatively reinforcing racial stereotypes in political rhetoric, these editors usually used neutral terms that valued cultural distinctiveness. Under the rubric of *Bildung*, progress occurred at both the individual and social levels, as each culture developed to its full potential.

Zantop notes that the concept of race was well established by beginning of the nineteenth century, so it would be easy to conclude that these Cincinnati editors didn't write about biological race because there was no need.¹³² And if one looked for evidence of a racist rhetoric in the dissemination of political news—the way in which Anglo-American papers positioned their views on human variation—one might think the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* ignored the topic of race altogether. However, if one follows Herder's cultural theorization of human variation instead of the Kantian or Anglo-American biological race theories, ample evidence of a racial rhetoric is revealed in the denominational newspapers. The *Bildungsbürgertum* had been trained to identify human differences and compare the *Völker* as part of their formal education, and as will be demonstrated in the remainder of this dissertation, they disseminated the information to the German *Volk* in denominational newspapers. For as long as these German immigrant editors resisted American acculturation, they followed their

¹³² Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 5.

German training and situated their racialist discourse in the cultural politics of *Bildung*. It was only when the American Civil War erupted that the editors began applying their theorization of human cultures to their American surroundings and even adopting some biological modes of evaluating human variation.

Chapter 3

Civilizing Mission vs. Restoration of the *Urvolk*

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Charles Adams, a Methodist professor and prolific author, produced a report on the state of evangelism in the American West, and he presented his findings at the annual conference. According to Adams, Bible and tract societies and missionary efforts were effectively spreading the gospel message and were “ushering in an era of ‘righteousness, peace, and happiness’... Christianity and culture seemed to be marching together ‘onward and upward’ toward the ‘grand consummation of prophecy in a civilized, an enlightened, and a sanctified world’ and the establishment of ‘that spiritual kingdom which God has ordained shall triumph and endure.’”¹ Adams detailed how religious conversion civilized humans and prepared the earth for the return of Christ, who would set up God’s kingdom and usher in the eternal spiritual kingdom. While this news was celebrated by all the denominations in the ecumenical societies at work in America, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Cincinnati was greatly disturbed by the methods employed by imperialist nations such as France, Britain, and Spain to civilize indigenous peoples.

In the antebellum era, this civilizing mission had three components. Missionaries evangelized indigenous peoples, replacing their religions with Christianity, or rarely, Judaism. The missionaries also enforced a new social order when indigenous modes of living were replaced with Western European norms, including a non-nomadic lifestyle and a moral system

¹ Charles Adams, *Evangelism in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century, or, an Exhibit, Descriptive and Statistical, of the Present Condition of Evangelical Religion in All Countries of the World* (Boston: Charles H. Pierce, 1851), <https://books.google.com/books?id=T19bAAAAMAAJ>, quoted in Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 226.

based on teachings in the Bible. And Anglo-American missionaries taught the converts English so that they could read the Bible and other spiritually uplifting material. The goal of the religious civilizing mission in the antebellum era was to introduce indigenous peoples to a Western European way of living. The missionaries presumed that indigenous peoples all across the earth would recognize the superiority of Western European ways of life and willingly adopt the new lifestyle, a process of awakening to a superior mode of living that was termed “becoming civilized.” As the civilizing mission brought the benefits of Western European civilization to the rest of the world, it attempted to plant that one culture across the known world. In other words, the civilizing mission destroyed cultural variation.

The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* had been trained by Herder’s ideas to value cultural difference, so while they agreed that indigenous people needed to be evangelized and educated, they vehemently disagreed with the socialization portion of the civilizing mission. Instead of socializing all humans according to Western European norms, the Germans thought each *Volk* should retain its own distinct cultural expressions (including literature, history, language, and art). The German clergy-editors wrote scathing critiques of the imperialist nations, who destroyed their conquered subjects’ indigenous culture. This critique was partially a response to the Germans’ need to create a cultural identity for themselves, which they formed in contradistinction to Britain, France, and Spain: if those nations were imperialist bullies, the Germans were not. The imperialist critique was also based on the *Bildungsideal* (goal of human progress) of a culturally diverse humanity, which the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* believed was God’s divine plan.

The Civilizing Mission and Religious Imperialism

In 1835 the American Tract Society, an ecumenical Protestant group interested in “reforming the morals and energizing the souls of the United States,” was sending tracts with missionaries to fulfill its “dual mission to educate Christians and to convert non-Christians.”² These religious pamphlets were initially reprinted British tracts, but were quickly tailored for American missionaries. Tracts covered a variety of topics, including the dangers of immoral living and a presentation of the gospel message. Missionaries could use them to lead a sinner to pray, and one unintentional result of the society’s work was the development of a new kind of sinner’s prayer that often led to an immediate conversion experience. Tracts could also be distributed as educational tools for people who did not attend church. Prayer and Scripture reading became the moment of grace, not just the means to grace.” With a growing literacy rate and the new expectation that conversion could occur at any moment, tracts and religious periodicals flourished during the antebellum period and were popular conversion tools for missionaries, as well as guides for the continued religious formation of new converts.

The British and Anglo-American missionaries also educated their subjects by teaching them to read. As David Hall notes, in colonial America “learning how to read and becoming ‘religious’ were perceived as one and the same thing...the godly in England and New England valued direct access to the Word of God as the most precious of their privileges.”³ In the first half of the nineteenth century, Protestant missionary societies, tract societies, and Bible societies proliferated in both England and America, and they were united “on the one evangelical doctrine

² Lincoln A. Mullen, *The Chance of Salvation: A History of Conversion in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 32–36.

³ David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 18–20.

they shared: Bible literacy.”⁴ In the Western nations, literacy and Bible reading was just the beginning of one’s education. Reformers like Horace Mann “linked literacy to the advancement of individuals and of the commonwealth,” predicting that literacy would aid industrialization and “promote a national identity.”⁵

In addition to converting and educating, missionaries also socialized indigenous people according to the Western European standard of behavior, which were based on biblical guidelines, with the intent of incorporating them into the industrializing world. This socialization was understood to progress through several stages, including “a transition in the mode of production as all societies moved from hunting and gathering, through stages of pastorage and settle agriculture, to finally arrive at a commercial economy. It further included changes in social institutions, in ideas of justice and property, in custom and culture, and in the role of women.”⁶ Both Protestants and Catholics missionaries were engaged in the civilizing mission. In the first half of the nineteenth-century, Catholic missions work expanded as a significant number of new missionary societies were established, and others, such as the

⁴ David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43. On the commitment of the American Missionary Association (AMA) and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) to literacy, see Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, American Society of Missiology (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004); Jay Riley Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Joyce Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association’s Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation* (New York: Crossroad, 2005).

⁵ Barbara Sicherman, “Ideologies and Practices of Reading,” in *A History of the Book in America*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al., vol. 3 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 285; See also Brown, *The Word in the World*; Brown, “Religious Periodicals and Their Textual Communities.”

⁶ Twells, *The Civilising Mission*, 14.

Leopoldine Foundation that supported the Cincinnati mission, began to be supported at the popular level.⁷

Whereas in previous centuries Catholic missionaries spread a particular form of Catholicism that corresponded to a specific religious order and the culture of its reigning monarch, in the early 1800s, missionaries were instructed that “almost any form of civilization was superior to barbarism, and that Christendom was clearly preferable to alternative forms of civilization.”⁸ While limited concessions or accommodations could be made when converting indigenous peoples, Western Christianity and Western European standards of socialization were the gold standard. Intellectuals and missionaries across denominations debated whether indigenous peoples needed to be educated before they would be ready to convert, or whether conversion preceded one’s ability to receive training in proper behavior, but they all agreed that these three steps were integral to the civilizing mission.

The religious civilizing mission was more than a program to inculcate a moral lifestyle; it had an imperialist component, as well. While the Anglo-American missionaries may have seen themselves as “benevolent donors of civilization,” the civilizing missions can be differentiated from purely philanthropic efforts “by the nature of their horizontal expansion; that is, when whole empires spread their governmental and civilizational systems so that other empires adopt them.”⁹ According to British historian Niall Ferguson, this was a new means of viewing subject peoples that emerged when Victorians “dreamt not just of ruling the world, but of redeeming it.

⁷ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, American Society of Missiology (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 214.

⁸ William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 18.

⁹ Michael Falser, “Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: Methodological Considerations,” in *Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: From Decay to Recovery*, ed. Michael Falser (Cham: Springer, 2015), 19.

It was no longer enough for them to exploit other races; now the aim became to improve them. Native peoples themselves would cease to be exploited, but their cultures—superstitious, backward, heathen—would have to go.”¹⁰ For example, with regard to the British mission in Africa, “their goal was not so much colonization as ‘civilization,’ introducing a way of life that was first and foremost Christian, but was also distinctly North European in its reverence for industry and abstinence.” The intended result was the homogenization of the world’s cultures because as the *religiously* converted peoples were *socially* transformed, they all would conform to the Western European style of culture. Anglo-American missionaries saw their work as an extension of the British project, and the early foreign missions movement was a joint attempt to bring the superior Western European religion and culture to non-Europeans.

In order to reach the goal of the civilizing mission, the missionaries evaluated the indigenous peoples’ moral, spiritual, and social condition according to Western European standards and constructed a hierarchy of peoples according to how civilized they were deemed. From then on, the people’s relative progress could be tracked, and the hierarchy was used to determine the best theological means for converting the people. For instance, Susan Neylan demonstrates that “the image of a wrathful, punishing God was popular with Euro-Canadian missionaries, for it could easily be used to justify the moral and spiritual superiority of ‘whites’ over ‘Indians’ who were being punished for their ‘wicked ways.’”¹¹ These missionaries encouraged the Indians to convert and receive God’s favor. In another case, MEC minister and professor Charles Adams used the language of civilizing missions to explain why Manchurians

¹⁰ Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, 116.

¹¹ Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*, 134.

were superior to Mongolians: “By their union with a partially civilized people, they have become a more cultivated race. They possess a literature, while their language is essentially different from the Chinese, and is marked by excessive smoothness.”¹² Indigenous people who adopted habits that resembled Western European modes of living were considered more civilized. Although missionaries were just beginning to make inroads in China, there were already signs of civilization that moved the Manchurians up the ladder, closer to the Western European standard.

Jewish and Christian intellectuals in antebellum America monitored the comparative progress of the world’s populations (with regards to religious civilizing missions), and they looked to the Bible for scriptural justification of the relative positions of each race on the hierarchy of progress. But by mid-century, theories about human lineages proliferated as scientific discoveries challenged long-standing biblical exegesis and as “the antiscientific forces found it increasingly difficult to contain the advances in biological and geological knowledge within the limits of the Judeo-Christian eschatology.”¹³ In the previous two centuries, the so-called “Table of the Nations” in Genesis 10 was interpreted as both the source of human ethnic diversity and an enumeration of the original ethnic groups. As such, it was the “most influential passage of scripture” for biblical theories about the origins of the human family.¹⁴ But with discoveries in natural science, archaeology, and philology in the nineteenth century, Genesis 10 became insufficient for answering all the questions about human diversity. New debates erupted about degeneration versus evolution and produced questions about the potential for human progress and perfectibility. The theological narrative was broadened to include Genesis 9-11,

¹² Adams, *Evangelism in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*, 190.

¹³ Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture*, Updated ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001), 54.

¹⁴ Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20.

which was used to tell a degenerative tale of fall, flood, defiance, and diaspora, after which some groups reputedly degenerated into savagery and others, aided by God, progressed toward new heights of civilization. Race became the nomenclature used to distinguish people, and the crucial question became how to determine which races of people were protected by Providence.

Whereas the Enlightenment thinkers assumed the superiority of Western Europeans and theorized about the potential for savages to be civilized through conquest, in the early nineteenth century, thought shifted and some races were no longer considered capable of being civilized. “Increasingly it came to be understood that mankind was engaged in a struggle that would eliminate the inferior and elevate the superior nations and races.”¹⁵ With the rise of evangelicalism and millennialism in antebellum America, missionaries penetrated un-missionized areas of the world and periodicals praised the missionaries’ role in extending the Western Christian empire. “Many prominent Americans, North and South, believed in the destiny of the white race to rule the colored peoples of the world,” and they promoted Christianity and commerce as “the great civilizing agents of world history.”¹⁶ At this time, civilization was “marked by the rise of the state, government bureaucracy, writing, and a complex division of labor. Less widely noted, but of equal import, was the conversion of tribal and nonstate peoples to more socially expansive and doctrinally formalized religions,” which in the early-nineteenth century was understood to be Christianity, or less commonly, Judaism.¹⁷ In this context, a race signaled that it had become civilized and was progressing in a positive

¹⁵ Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, 98.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders’ Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 206–15.

¹⁷ Robert W. Hefner, “Introduction: World Building and the Rationality of Conversion,” in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 4.

direction by converting to Christianity (or Judaism, from a Jewish perspective) and codifying Western European morals and ethics into its bureaucratic and legal systems.

This impulse to create a racial hierarchy was pervasive and it crossed a newly emerging class line that gave white Christians a common cause and deepened a racial divide that was based on color and biology. British and Anglo-American missionaries provided a bulk of the data as they evaluated the willingness of various peoples to participate in the religious civilizing mission, and intellectuals at home used the reports to draw conclusions about human potential. Whereas the missionaries were of “mainly artisan and lower-middle-class origins,” the philanthropists and organizers of missionary and tract societies who directed the civilizing mission were journalists, clergymen, and other professionals who were “increasingly influenced by Enlightenment notions of education and social progress.”¹⁸ Missionaries reported on the large-scale *unwillingness* of certain groups, such as the Chinese and American Indians, to convert to Christianity, which the educated middle-class interpreted as the *inability* to become civilized due to racial limitations. University trained theologians used missionary reports to construct a hierarchy of races that predicted the barbarians’ ability to progress beyond their position on the human ladder, from heathenism to religious perfection. In the antebellum era, such rhetoric led American Protestants to become discouraged with the lack of success in their domestic mission to convert the Indians. They shifted their evangelical fervor to slaves, and both Catholics and Protestants shifted their primary focus to missions outside America. Missionary work became inseparable from imperialism as “conceptions of race helped the Victorians

¹⁸ Twells, *The Civilising Mission*, 4.

interpret and categorize all humans everywhere and throughout history, including themselves—
‘the imperial race,’ the conquering, colonizing, but supposedly humane ‘Anglo-Saxons.’”¹⁹

Anglo-American Protestant theologians initially concluded that heathenism was inextricable from barbarism and blackness; however, when American slaves began to convert to Christianity, theologians again altered their rhetoric. By mid-century, Northern scholars such as Josiah Nott, Samuel George Morton, and Louis Agassiz advanced the polygenist theory that “either nature or [God] had created blacks separate and inferior to whites,” but most Southern evangelicals were staunch monogenists. One form of rebuttal to the polygenists came from “white Southern clergymen [who] insisted, time and time again, that Christianization would make blacks more secure in their blackness—their enslavedness—because it would make them obedient and content in that obedience.”²⁰ Instead of fully civilizing the black race by making them like the white Anglo-American Christians, conversion could only pacify them by introducing behavioral restrictions. Despite these differences, both groups of religious thinkers agreed that Christianity seemed unable to erase biological determinants.

This description of the relationship between race and religion demonstrates that during the antebellum era, By the Civil War, American intellectual thought shifted significantly. By the Civil War it became apparent that Christians’ attempts to convert indigenous people were less effective than predicted. From the perspective of those involved in the civilizing mission, either the Christian message or the unconverted people were to blame for the failure. The gospel was

¹⁹ Patrick Brantlinger, *Taming the Cannibals: Race and the Victorians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 19.

²⁰ Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 207; Banton, “The Classification of Races in Europe and North America: 1700-1850,” 54.

effective for converting white Western Europeans, so some missionaries offered race-based excuses for failed missions, while others revamped their evangelization techniques at the end of the century. But during the antebellum era, missionaries and religious intellectuals were still expectantly gathering data about indigenous people and attempting to civilize them through conversion, education, and acculturation.

A German, Anti-Imperialist Critique of the Civilizing Mission

To understand the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*'s critique of the civilizing mission, one must remember that the German intellectuals who wrote about human variation in the first half of the nineteenth century were not members of a nation-state and would not participate in the colonization of African people until the end of the century. Werner Telesko asserts that the German Empire's political organization as a heterogeneous collective was "a distinctive feature of the Central European region in the nineteenth century," and the monarchy did not attempt to standardize or homogenize the complex assortment of cultures comprising the German Empire until the early-nineteenth century.²¹ This acceptance of cultural diversity also distinguished the Germans from the British Empire, which attempted to acculturate the peoples it colonized through the civilizing mission.

German intellectuals only joined discussions about the civilizing mission in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and their development of a civilizing mission developed from French ideas, rather than British missions. Michael Falser explains that the German term *Zivilisierungsmission* was developed from the French term *mission civilisatrice*, which only "reached its apogee during France's Third Republic (1871-1940)." The French model "had the

²¹ Werner Telesko, "Colonialism without Colonies: The Civilizing Missions in the Habsburg Empire," in *Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: From Decay to Recovery*, ed. Michael Falser (Cham: Springer, 2015), 37, 46.

closest connection to applied cultural heritage politics of all European colonial endeavours,” so it was more closely aligned with the extant German explanations of human variety as cultural difference than with Anglo-Americans’ biological theories of race.²² Thus, although German intellectuals did eventually support the agenda of the civilizing mission, this occurred after Germany was politically unified and able to colonize indigenous people, differed from the British model in its support of the German Romantics’ *Bildungsideal* of preserving cultural difference, and occurred at a later periodization than Anglo-American missiology.

In light of these differences, it might seem that the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*’s critique of the civilizing mission in antebellum America was irrelevant—after all, they were unable to participate in the civilizing mission. However, as Susanne Zantop points out, although the Germans were late-comers to imperialism, they nevertheless imagined themselves as the ideal colonizers long before then. By criticizing the imperialist nations and their civilizing mission, Cincinnati’s religious *Bildungsbürgertum* asserted the cultural supremacy of the German *Volk*. The German clergy-editors linked the imperialists’ acculturation of indigenous cultures with the degeneration of Western European culture due to the atrocities that were committed against the indigenous people they conquered. Because the Germans were not involved in imperialism, the German *Volk* represented the uncorrupted exemplar of Western European culture. Instead of situating the German *Volk* as one of the civilized western European peoples—instead of equating themselves with Britain, France and Spain—the editors critiqued those nations as corrupt, uncivilized imperialists and they asserted their German supremacy, describing their *Volk* in contradistinction to imperialist nations.

²² Falser, “Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: Methodological Considerations,” 9.

Zantop notes the presence of a minority group of intellectuals in Germany who created an anti-colonialist rhetoric, among whom was Heinrich Heine, who outright rejected colonialist fantasies. According to Zantop,

There was considerable opposition to colonialism in Germany—first in the form of moral outrage over Spanish colonialist practices and slavery, then more on economic and ideological grounds: the colonies, it was quickly discovered, would not produce sufficient revenues and would cost the state more than they earned. There was also opposition to the nationalist anti-French and anti-British rhetoric among more cosmopolitan or internationalist sectors of the population, the progressive bourgeoisie, and the socialist working class. However, moral exhortations, an idealistic internationalism, or bookkeeping arguments could not stem the enthusiasm, the tide of libidinal energy tales of conquest and heroic encounters generated in the public, particularly among the young.²³

Decades before the establishment of German colonies in Africa in the 1880s, German intellectuals debated the effect of imperialism on culture, and they monitored the development of French, Spanish, and British colonies. Even though the colonialist intellectuals in Germany would eventually triumph, notable writers warned German readers of the dangers of destroying culture through imperialism.

One source of anti-colonialist rhetoric not examined by Zantop is the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Cincinnati, which provided a religious critique of British, French, and Spanish imperialism and offered a corrective through the principles of *Bildung*. Whereas the participants in the civilizing mission evaluated the level of civilization of the unconverted peoples, the German editors catalogued the progress of every *Volk*. The *Bildungsbürgertum* would have been educated by Kant's writings that the British "are driven by their mercantile spirit [*Handelsgeist*]; they are 'unsociable' [*ungesellig*], in battle with the French for the rule of the world, a battle for survival or annihilation." Similarly, Kant labeled the Spanish government

²³ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 203.

“the brutal exploiter,” and Herder described the British people as “greedy” and the Spanish people as “cruel.” As Todd Kontje notes, in the early-nineteenth century Fichte warned that “the real enemy is not Napoleon’s army but the seductive force of the foreign ideology that threatens to alienate Germans from their own cultural tradition.”²⁴ Fichte warned that the French are a weak *Volk* that conquers others because they have lost the sense of their own national identity.

These same German intellectuals describe their own *Volk* as “honest, kind and enterprising,” “morally superior,” and virtuous because of their lack of aggression toward other cultures, in sharp contrast to the imperialists.²⁵ Zantop points to Herder’s 1787 poem “England und Deutschland” as an early example of this anti-colonialist rhetoric:

Proud Britain, you! you plunder from the East and the West
Costly rice, that consumes you brilliantly in flames,
The sole Phoenix! We, the industrious German bee,
Collect honey from every meadow, and collect it—for whom?²⁶

In Herder’s poem, British imperialists are attracted by the most exclusive goods of the foreign countries, and they conquer those inhabitants so they can steal the results of other people’s labor. The result of “plundering” is being “consumed”; by conquering the peoples of the East and West, the British *Volk* was destroying itself because it committed barbaric acts against other humans. The German *Volk*, on the other hand, benefits from the fruits of its own labor, like bees who

²⁴ Todd Curtis Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 102, <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/cat/bib/5158098>.

²⁵ Quoted in Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 95–96.

²⁶ Johann Gottfried Herder, “England und Deutschland,” in *Herders Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, vol. 29 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1889), 160, <https://babel.hathitrust.org>. Herder’s original text reads: “*Stolzes Britannien, du! du raubst von Osten und Westen / Köstlich duftendes Reis, das dich in Flammen verzehrt, / Glänzender Phönix! Wir, die deutsche fleißige Biene, / Sammeln auf jeglicher Flur Honig, und wissen nicht, wem?*” Suphan edited the text to read: “*Soltzes Britannien du! du raubst von Ganges und Euphrat / Köstlich Reis, das dich glänzend in Flammen verzehrt, / Einziger Phönix! Wir, die deutsche fleissige Biene, / Sammeln auf jeglicher Flur Honig, und sammeln ihn—wem?*”

collect pollen and turn it into honey. The German people collect and preserve those aspects of foreign countries that they admire (“honey from every meadow”), but they do not steal those cultural artifacts or conquer other *Völker*. Most importantly for Herder in this poem, the British viewed their empire as the apex of civilization and thought they were entitled to an extravagant tribute, but he implied that the Germans worked selflessly for the good of humanity. Such so-called ethical, humanitarian effort improves the German *Volk*, as well as the whole human population, and Herder valorizes the maintenance of variation within the human species.

In 1859 Charles Darwin published the first edition of *On the Origin of the Species*, in which he describes the master-slave relationship in nature by observing two species: ants and bees. His work on the bees was part of a larger project on flight paths and was the result of research conducted from 1854 to 1861, which culminated in correspondence in 1872 with Professor Hermann Müller of Lippstadt, “the authority on the relationships between flowers and insects.”²⁷ Darwin’s interest in insects led him to conclude, at least in his early work, that humans were not the only creatures capable of reasoning, and he described reasoning as an instinct associated with intelligence. For Darwin, instinct was the product of the repeated training of the desires, and “in the actions of bees, ants and wasps, Darwin discerned the power of reason: ‘Go, thou sluggard, learn arts and industry from the bee, and from the ant! Go, proud reasoner, and call the worm thy sister!’”²⁸ Reasoning could be learned from other species, practiced, and perfected. Among the animal kingdom, the more intelligent species were distinguished by their reasoning, which was a sign of their progress.

²⁷ R. B. Freeman, “Charles Darwin on the Routes of Male Humble Bees,” *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History)*, Historical Series, 3, no. 6 (1968): 179.

²⁸ J. F. M. Clark, *Bugs and the Victorians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 36.

Although Darwin's *Origin* was not translated into German until 1860 (by Heinrich Georg Bronn), his work was closely followed and favorably received during the 1850s-1860s by German intellectuals. Five years before Darwin published *Origin*, a brief paragraph appeared in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*:

Variations Like the Humans! Darwin brings up the following curious fact: The bees, which were imported to the islands of Barbados and the West Indies, quit collecting honey after the first year. They found the weather so wonderful and the pollen so extravagantly plentiful that they consumed their resource, decided to quit working, and amused themselves by flying around the sugar houses and stinging the *Neger*.²⁹

On the one hand, this anecdote might seem to be making an argument for variation due to climate, and this may have been Darwin's intent. When read next to Herder's poem, however, this article draws analogies to the English phoenix and the German bee and makes a case for variation within a species—in particular, cultural variation within the human species.

Just as the English *Volk* differs from the German *Volk*, in Herder's poem, Darwin's Caribbean honey bees behave differently from those in other parts of the world. The bees were presumably imported from Europe, where the imperialists would have collected them to enhance their sugar manufactories, making this a comparison between indigenous European bees and bees relocated to British colonies. In this article, the Caribbean bees have progressed backwards from their European origins by becoming

²⁹ "Grade wie die Menschen!," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, June 22, 1854. "Grade wie die Menschen! Darwin erwähnt folgende merkwürdige Thatsache: Die Bienen, welche auf die Barbadoes und die westlichen Inseln gebracht wurden, hörten nach dem ersten Jahr auf, Honig einzusammeln. Sie fanden das Wetter so lieblich und das Honigmaterial so reichungeheuer liederlich und ausschweifend wurden; sie verzehrten ihr Capital, beschlossen nicht mehr zu arbeiten und unterhielten sich damit, dass sie um die Zuckerhäuser flogen und die Neger stachen."

lazy, self-centered, and injurious to others. Instead of producing honey for others to consume, these bees consume their own pollen and are consumed by their greed, much like the British rice stealers. The degeneration of the bees was caused by the British imperialists, who removed the bees from their indigenous environs and forced them to live under the influence of a foreign system.

Herder's industrious German bees are like Darwin's European honey bees, which thrive in their indigenous environment and are independent of the imperialists' oppression. Similarly, the German *Volk* are distinct among Western Europeans. By not succumbing to imperialist greed and the destruction of other cultures, the German *Volk* is superior to the other Western European *Völker*. Herder's critique of imperialism is based in an argument for preserving cultural diversity and resisting acculturation.

In addition to reflecting the anti-imperialism, German Romantics such as Herder and Fichte, Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* participated in a transatlantic rhetoric with two anti-colonialist contemporaries in Germany: Heinrich Heine and Wolfgang Menzel. Heine was a frequent contributor to the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, a newspaper that was delivered to Cincinnati and was often quoted by the *Bildungsbürger*. Zantop summarizes that Heine's writing

associates the fate of the natives in the New World with that of the Moors and Jews in fifteenth-century Spain, with German peasants suffering under feudal lords and Indian Brahmins lamenting the destruction of their world by British colonizers. Colonial independence wars on the American continent conjure up memories of revolutions back home...He depicts processes of colonization not euphemistically as "natural surrender" or "marriage of cultures," but as acts of cannibalism on the part of powerful regimes, as they incorporate and assimilate territories and peoples.³⁰

³⁰ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 203–4.

Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise extolled Heinrich Heine in *The Israelite* as a pantheist who eventually returned to his Jewish roots, and in Heine's obituary, Wise wrote that he was "one of the brightest stars of the modern literature of Germany, one of the ablest literary advocates of political liberty."³¹ Wise favored Heine over Menzel because the latter opposed Jewish emancipation in 1831-1832 and was an anti-rationalist Romantic; however, other religious *Bildungsbürger* preferred Menzel because of his pro-Christian perspective—he was a Protestant with Catholic sympathies. Menzel was a literary critic who edited the highly-successful and widely acclaimed *Literaturblatt* (1830-1869), which was published in Stuttgart. According to his 1877 obituary published in *The Spectator*, Menzel "combated the reigning formula of Continental Liberalism, which were hateful to him, as a French importation, by a German national programme, which excluded everything like levity in morals or superficiality in the mind, and from which he expected an ultimate triumph, as well over foreign influence in religion, as in politica, literature, and art."³² Menzel wrote about the dangers of French cultural influence to Germans and extolled the superior German culture. In 1845 William Nast shared Menzel's review of the German *Volk*'s condition in Cincinnati's *Christliche Apologete*: "The upswing of the German spirit,' he says, 'in the Protestant press began with a pious, moral, serious reaction against atheism and the demoralization of the French, with a reaction of the hale and hearty middle class against the corruption of the court and the nobility."³³ Similarly,

³¹ Isaac Mayer Wise, "Heinrich Heine," *The Israelite*, April 3, 1857.

³² "Wolfgang Menzel," *The Spectator*, March 24, 1877, <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/24th-march-1877/19/wolfgang-menzel>.

³³ William Nast, "Wolfgang Menzels Neujahrsbetrachtungen," *Der Christliche Apologete*, May 3, 1845. "Der Aufschwung des deutschen Geistes, sagt er, in der protestantischen Presse begann mit der Reaktion eines frommen sittlichen Ernstes gegen den Atheismus und die Demoralisation der Franzosen, mit einer Reaktion des gesund gebliebenen Mittelstandes gegen die Corruption der Hoefe und des Adels."

between 1845-1860 the editors of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* regularly reviewed Menzel's *Literaturblatt*, indicating their sustained support for his perspectives.

Following the lead of these German intellectuals and writers, Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* challenged the imperialists' claims of cultural supremacy by critiquing the religious civilizing mission. Some editors pointed to the imperialists' violent means of subduing the Indians, which indicated that the usurper was no more culturally developed than their victims. Other editors noted the imperialist missionaries' inability to convert the Indian *Völker*, which proved the Anglo-Americans' lack of religious progress.

Wise attributed Spanish degeneration to the priests' use of brute force against the Indians. According to Wise, Christopher Columbus was undoubtedly on a divinely sanctioned mission to the New World, but the voyage was sanctioned by the Jewish god, not the Catholic one. The priests had a corrupted understanding of God; hence, they were acting upon a faulty interpretation of the scripture. The priests arrived to rule the Indians, but "violent affrays succeeded, in which some white men were killed, and thus the tocsin [toxin] of warfare was raised by the misrule of those civilized ecclesiastics who professed to be ministers of a church of love and peace, of charity and good will."³⁴ Wise notes that Spain was once "mighty and respected," but ever since Columbus fulfilled his providential mission, "from the day of the discovery of America the Spanish dynasty has been on the decline."³⁵ Wise saw regression as God's judgment against Spain, which was being punished for "the blood of the Native Americans, of the people of the Netherlands...the blood and the shrieks of despair of the

³⁴ Isaac Mayer Wise, "An Epoch in History, Chapter IX," *The Israelite*, October 27, 1854.

³⁵ Isaac Mayer Wise, "An Epoch in History, Chapter VIII," *The Israelite*, October 20, 1854.

agonized victims of the inquisition...the blood of the exiled sons of Israel, the tears and the sight of our outraged mothers that cried to heaven for justice, vengeance and retribution.”³⁶ Wise described how a *Volk* became more civilized when the people subdued their violent natures and interacted peacefully with other *Völker*—a trait that the Spanish had lost when they became imperialists.

More than just religious intolerance, this linking of religion with civilization invoked the cultural politics of *Bildung* for evaluating human progress. The Mosaic law was the basis of a civilized society because the ten commandments undergirded Western European legal systems. But when supposedly civilized imperialists were cruel toward indigenous people, they violated the ten commandments, meaning that they acted in uncivilized ways, belying their true condition. Even Christian nations, whose religion was founded on Judaism, were culturally regressing because of their immoral treatment of indigenous people.

In 1846 *Der Wahrheitsfreund* reported on the failure of the first Catholic missionaries in America to convert the Indians. The editor claimed that the French and Spanish priests had experienced limited success in converting the Indians, as did the Jesuits or “Black Coats who preached in their language, but the Catholic editor maintained that the French themselves were far from civilized.³⁷ Citing an incident in 1706, the editor describes a confrontation in which a French army officer’s dog bit an Ottawa Indian. According to the editor, “this cruelty prompted the Ottawa Indians to vengeance” and led to deaths on both sides. The editor concluded that the French were crueler than the Indians because the latter were provoked by the supposedly

³⁶ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Spain and God’s Judgment,” *The Israelite*, August 22, 1856.

³⁷ “Die Lage der katholischen Missionen seit dem Jahre 1822,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, April 9, 1846. “...den Schwarzrock, der seinem Stamme gepredigt hatte.”

civilized Frenchman.³⁸ Similarly, the editor averred that the Spanish *Volk* were cruel, as attested to by the history of North America. In Florida, New Mexico, Texas, “Alta California,” and Kentucky “we see nothing of the atrocities against the Indians which tarnish the earliest annals of Spanish America.”³⁹ It was only due to the superior effectiveness of the Irish and German Catholics, who had been immigrating since 1822, that the *Indianer* were finally converting. The editor claimed that “the effectiveness of the Catholic Church over the indigenous tribes of those provinces is remarkable in every respect...the Indian race gives a clear testimony of the superb ability of the missionaries to provide access to Christianity and European civilization.” Every *Volk* that was cruel to another *Volk* was uncivilized, and that evaluation was proved by the *Volk*’s inability to convert indigenous people.

William Nast made a similar argument about the Anglo-American Methodists’ inability to convert. For Nast, the Protestant mission societies and tract societies were redemptive agents of the civilized nations because they “pave the way for the gospel, so that the dark superstition and the demonic delusions fall away,” but only the Germans could effectively use those tools.⁴⁰

³⁸ “Ursuche des Indianer-Angriffs auf Detroit im Jahr 1706,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, May 23, 1858.

³⁹ “Das katholische Element in der Geschichte der Ver. Staaten,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, October 22, 1857. Interestingly, the German Catholic editor claims that Florida and Maryland were “Catholic colonies,” instead of associating an imperialist nation with the American colony. “*In diesen Kolonien sehen wir Nichts von den Grausamkeiten gegen die Indianer, welche die frühesten Annalen von Spanisch Amerika beflecken, den diese Kolonien wurden gegründet zu einer Zeit, als die Kirche Gesetze zum Schutz der Indianer erwirkte, und die Regierung Alles, was in ihrer Macht lag, that, Verbrechen zu verhüten. Die Wirksamkeit der katholischen Kirche, den Indianerstämmen jener Provinzen gegenüber, ist in jeder Hinsicht bemerkenswerth, und obschon die Indianer beinahe gänzlich New-Mexico verlassen, so gibt doch die indianische Race dort ein evidentes Zeugniß von der hervorragenden Fähigkeit der Missionäre dem Christenthum und europäischer Civilisation Eingang zu verschaffen.*”

⁴⁰ William Nast, “Eine Neujahrsbetrachtung über das Missionswesen,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 1, 1857. “*Die Künste und Missionschaften der civilisirten Völker bahnen dem Evangelium den Weg, so dass der finstere Aberglaube und die teuflischen Verblendungen weichen müssen.*” “*Da, so es noch vor zwanzig oder dreissig Jahren durchaus finster war, und*

As he examined the foreign missionaries' progress during the last half century, he noted, "it was absolutely dark even twenty or thirty years ago and no divine ray of light had yet illuminated the hearts of the *Völker*, but now the bright light of the Gospel shines with full clarity. Tribes of people (*Völkerstämme*) who fought a constant war against each other have now been transformed into a peaceful people (*friedlichen Volke*)." Nast was particularly eager to establish a German-language tract society to aid his work, and in 1847 he gained approval for the Methodist Book Concern to print his tracts. Regarding the effectiveness of the German Methodist missionaries and their tracts, Charles Elliot, a professor at Iowa Wesleyan University, wrote, "Our [German] missionaries are now traveling over some of the same ground, and preaching and distributing books and tracts in the same towns and cities through which Wesley traveled over a hundred years ago... The Methodist Church, both in England and America, owes a debt to Germany which she ought to pay."⁴¹ German missionaries were successfully completing the work that Wesley started and that Anglo-American Methodists were unable to finish in the Midwest.

The *Protestantische Zeitblätter*'s editor argued that British and American missionaries engaged in a kind of religious imperialism that benefitted themselves instead of the people they were evangelizing. He exclaimed, "We have all too many reasons to complain about missions work as a not insignificant evil."⁴² From his perspective, missionaries were spreading "a highly

noch kein göttlicher Lichtstrahl die Herzen der Völker beleuchtete—scheint nun das helle Licht des Evangeliums in seiner vollen Klarheit. Völkerstämme, die einen beständigen Krieg gegeneinander führten—sind nun zu einem friedlichen Volke umgestaltet worden."

⁴¹ Adam Miller, *Experience of German Methodist Preachers* (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1859), 7–8.

⁴² "Die Heiden-Mission," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, December 31, 1857. "...nur zu oft nicht Missionäre der Humanität und der Bildung sind, sondern der Buchstabenorthodoxie und des Fanatismus." "Wir haben nur allzu vielen Grund, das Missionswesen als ein nicht geringes Uebel zu beklagen... die Resultate unverhältnissmässig gering seien (wirklich kostet, wenigstens bei den Engländern und Amerikanern, deren Missionsstationen die zahlreichsten sind, eine

deficient form” of Christianity that was largely comprised of “Pietist fanatics” who all too often “were not missionaries of humanity and of *Bildung*, but of orthodoxy and fanaticism.” In addition, the GEP editor felt that the financial support needed to sustain foreign missions was ill-spent. The editor pointed out that “the results are disproportionately low,” and the effort is very expensive, “at least among the English and Americans, whose missionary stations are the most numerous, where each conversion actually costs £ 2,000.” The money spent on foreign missions should be used “for the moral uplift and *Bildung* of our own people.” More important, the British and Anglo-American missionaries “suppress free thought, deliberately silence reason, and stubbornly resist cultivating material progress wherever a pecuniary advantage is not immediately apparent to them.” These missionaries of British “pietistic” (evangelical) Christian denominations claimed to be bringing spiritual freedom to the unconverted peoples. But the GEP editor accused them of engaging in a kind of intellectual and economic violence over unconverted peoples by repressing the *Völker* in order to gain a financial advantage over them.

Domestic missionaries were no better, he opined, because they had been unsuccessful in civilizing the Indians. While the President, the Secretary of War, and Congressmen debated how to handle the recent Indian attacks against settlers in California, the editor called for immediate retribution by federal authorities, who could accomplish what the missionaries could not.

It is high time. Someone should have set a limit for these native tribes long ago. A long time ago German mercenaries enlisted by the American army were scalped by the Indians, nothing came of it. But when the Yankees from New England are attacked on their way to California, that is another thing. The redskins (*Rothhäute*) must be converted, either by the tract society or by fire and sword.⁴³

Bekehrung 2000 Pfd. Stern.)” “...für die sittliche Hebung und Bildung des eigenen Volkes dringend bedürften.”

⁴³ “Amerikanische Rundschau,” January 23, 1855. “*Der Präsident übermachte eine Botschaft und Briefe des Kriegssekretärs in Bezug auf Feindseligkeiten der Indianer gegen die Einwanderer, die von den östlichen Staaten nach Californien überfiedeln, so wie gegen die*

The editor sarcastically offered two options for civilizing the violent Pacific Indian tribes: religious conversion or brute force. Since the evangelical denominations of Christianity were preaching a “deficient” form of the gospel, which was evident by their inability to convert the Indians in the eighty years since the American Revolution, the religious program of the missionaries would continue to be ineffective. In his opinion, the only way to subdue the Indians was with physical force. The civilizing mission was incapable of succeeding because the missionaries’ interpretation of the gospel lacked the power to convert the Indians.

Rabbi Wise also condemned the missionaries, particularly because of their intense proselytizing of Jews in the antebellum period, and he linked their coercive methods to an ungodly character. In the inaugural months of *The Israelite*, Wise addressed the problem in a series of front-page articles, as well as a serial novel entitled, “The Convert.” On the front page of the very first issue, he suggested that missionaries should be sent back to England to teach the members of the Christian Church the golden rule.⁴⁴ The following year he blamed the American Jews’ disinterest in practicing Judaism on “that peculiar and non-Jewish bigotry and bondage of the reasoning faculties taken from American and English Christian sects...When we came to this country, we found Judaism poisoned by the views and principles peculiar to American and English churches.”⁴⁵ Wise was also alarmed that the Jews in Palestine were being “persecuted” by missionaries. He complained, “nothing can be more mortifying and painful to the Jew than

Grenzbewohner. Hoch in der Zeit. Man hätte diesem Trieben der Natives schon lange ein Ziel setzen sollen; so lange den bei der amerikanischen Armee angeworbenen Deutschen die Kopfhaut heruntergezogen wird, kömmt es nicht sehr darauf an, wenn aber Yankees von den New-England Staaten auf ihrem Wege nach Californien beraubt werden, das ist ein anderes Ding. Die Rothhäute müssen bekehrt werden, entweder durch die Tracktat-Gesellschaft oder durch Feur und Schwerdt.”

⁴⁴ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Missionaries Wanted,” *The Israelite*, 1854.

⁴⁵ Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Object of Our Contention,” *The Israelite*, May 18, 1855.

the artful and cunning persecution of our brethren in the Holy Land by the hirelings of English and German mission societies.”⁴⁶ Missionaries were a detriment to the existence of authentic Judaism because Christian interpretations of the Bible represented a corrupted understanding of Wise’s religion and the preachers of that message had corrupted characters. These British and Anglo-American missionaries were a threat to the progress of the Jewish *Volk* across the globe because of their religious imperialism.

Whether Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, each of these editors in Cincinnati placed the German *Volk* at the apex of civilization because it was untainted by the degenerative influence of imperialism. None of the editors disputed the need for religious training, education, and some form of socialization, although the editors each had a different view of which doctrine was efficacious for civilizing indigenous people. Despite the editors’ concerns about the spread of the “wrong” kind of religion across the globe and the oppressive acts performed by Western imperialists against other *Volk*, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* agreed that some form of Western European socialization was necessary to civilize the world.

Overall, each editor evaluated each Western European nation according to its success at converting unbelievers and to the morality of the *Volk*, which he determined by observing their missionaries’ behavior toward the indigenous people. These editors compared the so-called civilized nations in Western Europe and North America to the German Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish *Volk*. The non-Germans were found lacking because of the negative moral effects of conquering other peoples. Instead of praising the progress of the civilizing mission, as Charles Adam had—instead of aspiring to emulate the imperialists—the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*

⁴⁶ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Our Persecutors,” *The Israelite*, April 18, 1856.

added a religious critique to the anti-imperialist German intellectuals' rhetoric by criticizing foreign and domestic missionaries.

***Bildung* as a Corrective to the Civilizing Mission**

Even though the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* critiqued the imperialists and did not participate in the civilizing mission, they agreed with the need to convert, educate, and socialize the unreached *Völker*. In fact, the editors continually theorized how to civilize each *Volk* using the concept of *Bildung*. Despite George Stocking's claim that during the Victorian era, Germans preferred the term 'culture' over 'civilization,' which was negatively associated with the French enlightenment, these clergy discussed the spiritual condition of the various *Völker* and the need for them to be civilized.⁴⁷ The key to understanding why they advocated converting, educating, and civilizing the indigenous people yet rejected the civilizing mission requires an investigation of *Bildung*'s teleology (*Bildungsideal*). While the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* agreed with the conversion stage of the civilizing mission, they advocated a different kind of education that would result in the efflorescence of cultural diversity when each *Volk* learned to express its unique *Volkgeist* (spirit of the *Volk*). And while the imperialists attempted to socialize the indigenous people by acculturating them, thereby creating cultural uniformity, the philosophy of *Bildung* valued cultural diversity. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* found biblical justifications for this diversity in Genesis 10-11, when God dispersed the people across the face of the earth and cultural distinctions developed. In terms of the perfect social organization, the *Bildungsideal* was the restoration of humans to this state of cultural diversity, not the acculturation of all *Völker* to Western European social norms.

Converting the Unbelievers

⁴⁷ Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 20.

The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* agreed with the Anglo-Americans that the indigenous peoples needed to be converted, and all four editors supported the methods of conversion that were used by their own denominations. The editors also agreed that conversion, or the transition from heathenism to the recognition of the one true God, was necessary for civilization, but of course, they disagreed on whether that god was Jewish or Christian, Catholic or Protestant. And although they did not all use the term “conversion,” the four clergy-editors distinguished between those who believed in God and those who did not.

Because the Germans were unfamiliar with Methodism, Nast had to teach his readers about the need for an evangelical conversion. In an exposition on 2 Thessalonians 3:2, Nast’s young readers learned that Paul preached to the “dumb heathens” (*dumme Heiden*) in the Roman empire, who were in the same spiritual condition as the German youth before they were converted.⁴⁸ Using 2 Timothy 3:5, Nast described an inner change that elevated a person out of unbelief: “We believe that in the blink of an eye, where the precious name of Jesus is first revealed to a soul...where the living witness of the Holy Spirit transforms the soul and brings Jesus near—in that same instant, faith is born.”⁴⁹ An individual was only an unbeliever until he or she heard the gospel message and made the decision to become a Christian. Then they were transformed internally such that they were no longer in an unsaved state.

The German Evangelical Protestant congregation in Cincinnati consisted of Lutherans and Calvinists who espoused a rational theology and rejected the inner conversion and heart-felt

⁴⁸ William Nast, “Für die Jugend. 2 Thes. 3, 2. 1,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, November 19, 1857.

⁴⁹ William Nast, “Gedanken über 2. Timotheus 3,5,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, July 31, 1856. “*Wir glauben, daß in dem Augenblick, wo der theurer Jesusname einer Seele zum erstenmal geoffenbart wird...wo dieselben durch das lebendige Zeugniß des helige Geistes ihr innerlich verklärt und nahe gebracht werden, daß in demselben Augenblick der Glaube geboren wird.*”

pietism that Nast preached. In this editor's opinion, the Methodists preached a doctrine of "fanaticism."⁵⁰ Instead, conversion should "teach those people in whom the tendency to evil, the fear, to refrain from punishment, that the disadvantages of evil are always greater than those Advantages which can spring from the yielding to the charm of evil. This teaching applies to the peoples in the form of religion, and to us Protestant Christians, in the commandments of the Divine Sage, Jesus of Nazareth... the will of man must be directed to the observance of the good, but also to the laws of nature."⁵¹ For GEPs, conversion was a re-calibration of internal desires that occurred after hearing a moral gospel message, and it required individuals to shun evil and seek after the good, as defined by Jesus.

Wise taught his Jewish readers that hearing the gospel message was meaningless because Jews did not believe that Jesus was the messiah, and because one became a Jew by being born into a Jewish family, he did not have a conversion program. But he agreed that exchanging idolatry for worshipping God was the key to transitioning out of a state of unbelief. Wise differentiated between the uncivilized ancient Hebrews of the Old Testament who made blood sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem and the modern-day Jews. He used Genesis 29:10; Daniel 9:24, 27; 1 Maccabees; and Isaiah 43 to conclude that the turning point for the Jewish *Volk*

⁵⁰ "Die Heiden-Mission."

⁵¹ "Ein Wort Zu Ro. 42 d. Blts," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, January 29, 1863. "Daraus aber ergibt sich mit vollster Gewissheit, dass es das Ziel der Menschheit sein muss, diejenigen Menschen, bei welchen der Hang zum Bösen, die Furcht, vor der Strafe überwiegt, dahin zu belehren, dass die Nachteile des Bösen immer grosser sind, als die Vortheile, welche aus der Nachgiebigkeit gegen den Reiz des Bösen entspringen können. Diese Belehrung trifft an die Völker in der Form der Religion, und an uns Protestantische Christen, in den Geboten des göttlichen Weisen, Jesus von Nazareth... der Wille des Menschen auf die Befolgung des Guten aber auch Naturgesetzlichen gerichtet werden muss." The German Evangelical Protestants did not believe in hell, so this moral conversion was part of their discourse on good and evil. See also "Biblische Geschichten," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, November 6, 1856; "Die Entwicklung in Der Religion," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, May 4, 1854.

occurred when “the punishment of the vile Antiochus took place...[and] the sanctuary was cleansed...The children of Israel from that period forever abandoned idolatry with all its abominations, bringing in amongst themselves ‘everlasting righteousness’ and ‘anointing the Holy of Holies.’”⁵² Ever since they stopped making sacrifices to idols and started following God, the Jews were no longer uncivilized.

Like the Jews, the German Catholics did not think of themselves as having been converted. Children born to Catholic families were baptized as infants, which made them members of the Catholic Church. *Der Wahrheitsfreund* discussed conversion in the context of Jesuits and other priests teaching American Indians to abandon their former practices and embrace Catholicism. In 1858 readers learned about the Jesuit mission to the “nearly converted” Potawatomi tribe, and in the following year they read about the Jesuit school that worked with Menominee and Winnebago Indian children.⁵³ Unlike the Protestant missionary schools for American Indian children, which encouraged an evangelical type of heart change, the Jesuit schools in the American West almost exclusively taught the catechism.⁵⁴

The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* agreed with Anglo-American missionaries that unconverted *Völker* were uncivilized because they worshipped false gods and they could not be civilized until they acknowledged the God of the Bible. The Germans believed their *Volk* was civilized because they acknowledged the one true God, and each thought his denomination worshipped God in the right way.

⁵² Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Signs of the Times,” *The Israelite*, August 17, 1855.

⁵³ “Zustände der Indianer in den Ver. Staaten, Chapter XII,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, June 5, 1858; “Civilisationsfähigkeit der Indianer,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, January 20, 1859. “...die alle eine rege Thätigkeit bekündeten.“

⁵⁴ Gerald McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848-1919* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 150.

An uncivilized *Volk* not only lacked religious enlightenment the people also acted in immoral ways because of their spiritual state. There were many articles in the four papers to help the readers identify unconverted *Völker* based on behaviors like “murder, polygyny, adultery, and the shedding of human blood.”⁵⁵ Nast singled out the Fiji Islanders in a report from Commander Arthur Sinclair’s expedition to the Fiji Islands in 1859, when he encountered “a cannibalistic tribe that attacked a small American convoy, killed the travelers, and roasted and devoured them.”⁵⁶ Nast also described an African tribe from the Gold Coast of Africa whose King Adahanzen’s faults included having slaves and multiple wives, making sacrifices to pagan gods, and treating women with gruesome cruelty. According to Nast, “The *Neger* who inhabit this land of gold cover their palaces, courtyards and even marketplaces and streets with skulls from people killed in wars and festivals, funerals, and murder victims. They buried the women and slaves alive with their dead husbands or masters. Isn’t it terrible how deep the person who is alienated from God may sink!”⁵⁷ Being uncivilized was associated with behavior that

⁵⁵ “*A sanguine abhorret Ecclesia—'Die Kirche verabscheut alles Blutvergießen,' II,*” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, January 9, 1840. “*War Mahomed's Menschelmord, z. B. Seines Sekretärs, seine Vielweiberei, seine Ehebrüche, ja Blutschasde, waren diese 'Heldenwerke' tadellos, erbaulich?!*” This article was written in response to a discourse in the newspapers about the inhumanities of the Inquisition, and the editor denied the accusations that the Church had murdered people, attempting to distance himself from “bloodthirsty heathens” and accusations in Blaise Pascal’s “Provincial Letter XIV.”

⁵⁶ William Nast, “Kannibalismus auf den Feier Inseln,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 6, 1859. “*...ein Menschenfresser-Stamm, ein kleines amerikanisches Fahrzeug überfallen, und die Mannschaft ermordet, gebraten und aufgefressen hätten.*”

⁵⁷ William Nast, “Afrika im Naturzustande, oder was ist Heidenthum und seine Wirkungen?,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, March 1, 1855. “*Die Neger, welche dieses Goldland bewohnen, pflastern ihre Paläste, Höfe und sogar Marktplätze und Straßen mit den Schädeln der in Kriegen, bei Festen, Begräbnissen und Opfern Ermordeten; sie begraben die Weiber und Sklaven beim Tode des Mannes oder Meisters lebendig.—Ist es nicht schrecklich, wie tief der Gott entfremdete Mensch versinken kann!*” This article was plagiarized from an article entitled, “Condition of Africans in their native land,” which appeared in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, a compilation of the monthly issues of a magazine published by The American Colonization Society. See “Condition of Africans in their native land,” *The African Repository*.

contradicted the biblical standards and with idolatry, and until a person was converted, he or she could not behave morally. Immoral behavior was an indicator of one's unconverted state.

From the Jewish and Christian perspectives of the editors, taking their doctrinal differences into account, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* agreed that every *Völker* who did not acknowledge the God of the Bible as the sole deity needed to be converted. Ever since either the second century B.C.E. (Antiochus) or the first century C.E. (Jesus), participation in a religious system based on the one true God of the Bible was requisite for having progressed beyond heathenism. They also agreed that unconverted *Völker* worshipped idols, consumed human blood, were violent, and broke the ten commandments. Based on missionary reports and ethnological information, the editors singled out the ancient Romans, ancient Persians, all Muslims, Hindus, the Chinese, and particular African tribes as unconverted *Völker*. The editors agreed that indigenous people had to be converted to Christianity (or Judaism, for Rabbi Wise), but they disagreed on whether conversion should occur through missionary activity or organically via an individual's intellectual reasoning. In all of this, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* agreed with the first phase of the civilizing mission in identifying unconverted, indigenous peoples and converting them to a particular religious system.

Educating Individuals and Expressing the *Volkgeist*

The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* also agreed in principle with the religious imperialists, who insisted that indigenous *Völker* must also be educated and socialized in order for them to

*Vol XXX-1854, published monthly by the American Colonization Society, (Washington, 1854) 348-49, <https://books.google.com/books?id=3aooAAAAYAAJ>. This periodical was a compilation of articles from other newspapers, including the *Christian Advocate*, which may have run the original article, but it is notable that Nast's publication date was after the ACS's year-end volume was published, not when the original article would have been published prior to its inclusion in the ACS volume, indicating that Nast did not read it in the Methodist periodical.*

become civilized. However, the Germans advocated for a significantly different type of education because they were attempting to create a radically different type of social system. The most prevalent British model of education in the Victorian era emphasized obedience and self-control by training individuals to constantly monitor themselves and others for immoral behavior, in order to produce literate subjects with good moral character and to ensure social order. This went beyond the enforcement of the golden rule and the ten commandments. Thoughts, words, and deeds were all examined for indications of sinfulness.

In contrast, the German Romantic mode of education sought to train individuals to release their inner *Volkgeist*, which was a constitutive force that produced distinctive art, literature, history, and other cultural forms. Instead of constraining individuals' behavior, the German method encouraged intellectual and aesthetic creativity and anticipated increasingly more sophisticated expressions of the *Volkgeist*. Each *Volk* was believed to have its own unique culture, which would be expressed when individuals were properly trained to activate this inner spirit. The British model of control and order stifled this creative spirit, and by acculturating their subjects, the imperialists destroyed their subjects' unique *Volkgeist*. Applying religious principles to *Bildung*, Cincinnati's editors described a more effective means of socializing and educating the *Völker* that would preserve and develop indigenous culture, rather than destroy it. The *Bildungsideal* would be attained when indigenous peoples converted to the religion of the *Urvolk* (original pair of humans—Adam and Eve) and perfected the unique cultural expressions (literature, language, art, history) of their own *Volk*.

These two types of education were achieved using different pedagogical methods. For the imperialist missionaries, education required a form of literacy that taught individuals to read the Bible, which allowed them to grow in their knowledge of God and Jesus, interpret scripture,

and (for evangelicals, at least) to access the Holy Spirit so they could discern God's will and behave accordingly. By learning to read this way and by reading the proper materials, the missionaries intended to provide individuals an education that deepened their Christian faith and instructed them in godly, moral behavior. During the antebellum era, evangelical modes of reading were instantiated in American public schools and in Anglo-American missionary schools, which were both based on the British Lancastrian model, often called monitorialism.

Joseph Lancaster developed this model of education to meet the needs of the industrializing British nation by instilling a moral education in its lower classes. The British and Foreign School Society adopted Lancaster's model for use in all areas of the empire, including missionary schools in Egypt and India, "to integrate all the peoples of the world into the Lord's dominion, and becoming part of that dominion entailed subjecting oneself to constant moral scrutiny."⁵⁸ Students monitored each other's behavior to simulate God's constant supervision. Their schoolwork consisted of "the copying and rote-learning of 'rational' and 'moral' statements. Memorizing 'facts' was imagined to translate into the formation of right principles and, in turn, into a reformed way of conduct."⁵⁹ The "3 Rs" (reading, writing and arithmetic), science, and history were taught at the elementary school level, but always with the explicit references to the superior British race. The textbooks incorporated the goals of the civilizing mission by mixing lessons in academic topics with messages about Western European socialization, religious obedience, and racial hierarchy.

⁵⁸ Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 11.

⁵⁹ Jana Tschurennev, "Incorporation and Differentiation: Popular Education and the Imperial Civilizing Mission in Early Nineteenth Century India," in *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia*, ed. Carey A. Watt and Michael Mann (New York: Anthem, 2011), 113–14.

Paul Nord notes, “In most ways, but not every way, the American societies followed the model of the British and Foreign Bible Society.”⁶⁰ In American schools, Lancaster’s method was already influential after the Revolutionary War, especially when it was adopted by New York state schools at the turn of the century. In the 1830s, William H. McGuffey incorporated the Lancastrian system into his McGuffey readers, which were extensively used for decades in schools throughout the southern and western portions of America, where conversion and social order were of great concern to East Coast intellectuals. McGuffey readers incorporated biblical principles, moral lessons, and social training into the academic curriculum, and they used an innovative method for reading that ensured rapid literacy.⁶¹ This type of moral education was also supported by leaders of the public school movement such as Horace Mann, who reiterated throughout the 1840s that “it was moral edification, far more than the education of the mind, which was the key for transforming the nation.”⁶²

In British and American secular schools, as well as missionary schools throughout the world, in the first half the nineteenth century, Bible literacy and imperialism were linked through the education system, as students were taught to behave and think like Western Europeans. Because so many of the men shaping public education were evangelicals, the educational arm of

⁶⁰ Nord, *Faith in Reading*, 43.

⁶¹ McGuffey is significant for Cincinnati because he was the president of Cincinnati College in 1836 and “a school on the Lancastrian method was maintained” there. Also, the McGuffey readers were first published in Cincinnati. See Henry Hobart Vail, *A History of the McGuffey Readers* (Cleveland, 1919), 25.

⁶² William Jeynes, “Character Instruction in Protestant Education Throughout History,” in *International Handbook of Protestant Education*, ed. William Jeynes and David W. Robinson, vol. 6, *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* (Springer, 2012), 9, 11; For more on McGuffey and his readers, see Henry Hobart Vail, *A History of the McGuffey Readers* (Cleveland, 1919); George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Barbara Ruth Peltzmann, *Reading Instruction in America* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), 17.

the civilizing mission reflected the goals of the imperialist agenda for acculturating and socializing British and Anglo-American subjects at home and abroad. The German educational system, however, developed along different lines; whereas Mann advocated a moral education, the Germans educated the mind. Instead of focusing on the moral formation of students through external forces (peer pressure to behave and rote mechanics to inculcate interior changes), the German system trained the intellect to release the *Volkgeist*, using self-reflection to produce change in accordance with the concept of *Bildung*.

Despite anti-French sentiment in Germany, Fred W. Beuttler explains how “Rousseau’s *Emile* (1762), had a profound effect on German education, a new ideal ‘not to train man to be an obedient subject, to behave correctly in society, or to follow blindly the tenets of some ecclesiastical system, but rather to cultivate all that is human in man, to cultivate his full and unfettered individuality by the development of all the powers implanted in him by Nature—in short, to cultivate humanity.’”⁶³ The *Protestantische Zeitblätter* editor likened the difference between the British and German methods to the difference between training a dog and a human child. One teaches a dog to control his behavior, but a child needs “additional instruction in order to develop his God-given capacity for understanding (*Verstandesbildung*).”⁶⁴ Unlike a dog, a child already knows that right and wrong exist, so merely teaching him to control himself (monitorialism) is insufficient. A child must also be taught the value of good behavior.

⁶³ Fred W. Beuttler, “‘Rendering to the Kaiser’: Protestantism, Education, and the State in German History,” in *International Handbook of Protestant Education*, ed. William Jeynes and David W. Robinson, vol. 6, *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* (Springer, 2012), 177.

⁶⁴ “Ein Wort zu Ro. 42 d. Blts.” “*Der Hund bleibt in jenem Zustande stehen, er ist eingehorsam Thier, ein wohl dressirter Hund. Das Kind aber empfängt weiteren Unterricht; die ihm von Schöpfer verliehen Vernunft lässt Verstandesbildung zu, und es finden sich durch den Unterricht im Guten neue Mittel, dem Reize der Sinne zu widerstehen.*”

The *Bildungsideal* for education developed the human understanding—something animals lacked—and resulted from a combination of Enlightenment reasoning and Romantic self-reflection. When used in conjunction, the German system educated the whole person by activating a process of self-discovery—an endeavor that was presumed to continue long after graduation. This introspection was seen as “a way to re-capture the spiritual unity of the human being, [which was] disjointed by the forces of rationalism.”⁶⁵ In this system, education occurs when an individual considers information by reflecting on his own perspectives. Herder offers one example of this type of education through the constitutive property of speaking one’s native language. For Herder in particular, *Bildung* was a process of perfection that occurred both within an individual and within a *Volk*, such that the culture could only reach its perfect form when the individuals comprising that *Volk* were also *gebildet*. Education was the awakening of an “inner sense” or essence of individuals as they became conscious of their “inner language,” which Herder referred to as one’s mother tongue, or “the language of parents and children.”⁶⁶ The use of one’s mother tongue (in Herder’s case, High German) was generative—it cultivated one’s *volkisch* characteristics and caused one to respond to the environment in ways that were appropriate to one’s *Volk*. For Herder, “*Bildung* could not be something imposed from the outside; it had to be aligned with the inner sense of a people.” The external controls put in place by monitorialism could not achieve the *Bildungsideal*.

Another example of this self-reflective type of education lies in F. Schlegel’s explanation of how mythology generates new culture: “All thinking is a divination...[in which] this imaginative essence of thought becomes conscious, merging critical thought with feeling and the

⁶⁵ Myers, *The Double-Edged Sword: The Cult of Bildung, Its Downfall and Reconstitution in Fin-de-Siecle Germany* (Rudolf Steiner and Max Weber, 2:24).

⁶⁶ Smith, *The Continuities of German History*, 57.

voice of inner conscience, endowing life with moral meaning and purpose.”⁶⁷ Self-reflection leads to the reification of the *Volkgeist* as new thoughts are produced and ideas from the past are folded into new understandings of the present, which become part of culture. The type of education prescribed by *Bildung* emanated from within individuals, not from learning facts.

The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* saw the classroom as only one place where education occurred, and education was not envisioned solely as self-improvement. In the first half of the nineteenth century, *Bildung* still retained a sense of utility for social education (*Erziehung*), which had been the primary emphasis of education during the Enlightenment. According to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s understanding, *Bildung* “helps the individual to look inward into her or his feelings and beliefs on the one hand and outward to the objective institutions and posited laws on the other.”⁶⁸ In a practical sense, the German educational system was reformed to produce middle-class workers for the State; however, the addition of the Romantic philosophy of *Bildung* made education less of a duty and more of a privilege that would elevate the entire German *Volk*. Wilhelm von Humboldt imagined how “the university can reach beyond local borders and exert an influence ‘on the *Bildung* of the entire German-speaking nation.’”⁶⁹ Recognizing that every German subject was capable of self-reflection, even those without a university degree, he enthused, “If individuals portrayed in the *Bildungsroman* gain a sense of

⁶⁷ Max Blechman, “The Revolutionary Dream of Early German Romanticism,” in *Revolutionary Romanticism: A Drunken Boat Anthology*, ed. Max Blechman (San Francisco: City Lights, 1999), 28, <https://books.google.com/books?id=A8-cVSC90bQC>; For more on Herder and language, see Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁶⁸ William E. Conklin, *Hegel’s Laws* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 28; Elliot L. Jurist, *Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche: Philosophy, Culture, and Agency* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002); Nigel Tubbs, *Education in Hegel* (New York: Continuum, 2008).

⁶⁹ Kontje, *German Orientalisms*, 103.

who they are in the present by looking back over the events of their past, then the collective German subject could do the same by studying the history of its national literature and the development of its language.” Humboldt believed that identity formation occurred by reflecting on the unique aspects of one’s *Volk*, meaning that each *Volk* is unique.

In Cincinnati, the editor of the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* also drew from Hegel’s description of the nature of *Bildung* as it affected both the individual and human existence (*Dasein*). He described God’s progressive unfolding of creation and compared it to the organic development of humans:

...the Eternal One commands the whole universe with his all-powerful “Become!”, from whose creative life-force all forms and stages of life (*Bildungsstufen*) and existence (*Dasein*) come into being, each in its appointed time, and he placed his eternal order within them, such that his eternal providence determined the source and duration of the existence of all of nature. With every further development (*Aufschlosse*) in the realm of nature, we recognize an organic system that rules and governs both the natural world and human life, which is simply a healthy development and blossoming and living, where the gifts and forces and conditions of life are working and taking effect in such an orderly and lawful way that every gift and force contributes to the development and representation of the individual, as well as the whole.⁷⁰

The editor described the series of events that lead to progressive stages of *Bildung* as organic, meaning that the process is allowed to continue in its own time, without external force. This creative, organic process is at work within humans because the *Volkgeist* within each individual

⁷⁰ “Religion und Natur,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, January 6, 1859. “...der Ewige mit seinem allmächtigen: ‘Werde!’ dadurch waltet, dass seine schöpferische Lebenskraft alle Formen und Bildungsstufen des Lebens und Daseins aus sich heraus entstehen lässt, jede, sobald die Zeit erfüllet ist, und deren ewige Ordnung darin sich er gestellt ist, dass das Ganze der Natur die Wurzel und Dauer ihres Daseins in siner ewigen Vorsehung hat. Mit jedem weitem Aufschlaffe im Reiche der Natur stellt sich aus das gesammt Walten und Wirken in ihr als ein organisches dar, deshalb wir erkennen überall in der Naturleben wie im Menschenleben nur eine gesunde Entwicklung und Gedeihen und Leben, wo die Gaben und Kräfte und Lebensbedingungen auf eine geordnete gesetzmässige Weise so auf einander wirken und in einander greifen, dass jede Gabe und kraft von innen heraus zur Entwicklung und Darstellung des Einzelnen wie des Ganzen beiträgt.”

is ready to be expressed as soon as the individual is attuned to this inner cultural nature. The source of the *Volkgeist* is God, who commanded the *Völker* to express themselves according to that inner, cultural life-force, and people are able to express their *Volkgeist* when they recognize God's presence (in this case, by becoming a GEP). When individuals are engaged in the generative activity of self-reflection, they gain new perspectives on their own identity, as well as their cultural identity as a *Volk*, and they create cultural products such as art, literature, and histories that express the *Geist* of their *Volk*. The cycle continues as people reflect on those new products. A *Volk* progresses as its individuals participate in this generative process, refining its culture to more accurately reflect the *Geist* shared within each member of that *Volk*.

The four editors saw their newspapers as providing the training that their readers needed to become *gelehrt* (educated) members of the German *Volk*. They describe this education as developing an individual's spirit.⁷¹ According to Wise, Moses was the first person to understand the importance of this type of education and to advocate for it. Many groups of ancient people created systems of laws, all based on what they knew about their false deities, so their knowledge was faulty. According to Wise, Moses was the only one who knew the true God, and Moses' knowledge was based on his personal contact with the deity who was the source of knowledge. In order to prevent the mis-education of humans, Moses "demanded the total extinction of every thing that could mislead the mind into fictitious or superstitious ideas."⁷²

⁷¹ This term should not be confused with the evangelicals' attempt to develop the heart religion or become aware of the Holy Spirit (der *Heilige Geist*). For the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, *Volkgeist* referred to one's cultural or *Volk* spirit. Every individual in a cultural group was said to have an inner essence that expressed itself through the creation of a unique language, art, literature, and so on.

⁷² Isaac Mayer Wise, "The Theory of the Political Laws of Moses (Part I)," *The Israelite*, September 19, 1856.

Wise describes education as being “reasonable” or using reason to make daily decisions rather than using the emotions. He claimed that the Jews exemplified an educated *Volk* because they “practice one law received from God: ‘You shall be a reasonable being.’ It was this law, that was conferred on man at the creation as a distinction from other animals, on the two tables [tablets] engraved: God, Reason.”⁷³ The Mosaic law was applicable to all humans, and “after the creation it was offered to several nations,” but the Israelites were the first to embrace it. The Israelite *Volk*’s interest in receiving an education from the one true God demonstrated for Wise that religious truth and secular knowledge go hand-in-hand. He established the principle that God’s commandments “could not be delivered to those, whose minds were involved in ignorance, but only to those who were intellectual enough to appreciate it.” Those people who could no longer recognize the truth were corrupted humans, and they acted in unreasonable, irrational ways.

As Rabbi Max Lilienthal wrote in an article for *The Israelite*, “It is a truism that can not be denied that every child has to be trained and instructed according to his individual capacities,” and this truism was born out in America by the creation of a public school system.⁷⁴ However, when God declared that the Jews must be a reasonable *Volk*, Lilienthal explained that God did not intend for education alone to develop reason; nor did he intend for knowledge to be transferred at a school desk. When a *Volk* has access to these truths but abandons reason, Lilienthal added that the *Volk* becomes undisciplined and devolves. Being properly educated meant learning to think rationally, at which stage learning continues organically as truths are realized internally upon self-reflection and in conjunction with one’s nature or *Geist*.

⁷³ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Civilization as Propagated by Judaism,” *The Israelite*, September 1, 1854.

⁷⁴ Max Lilienthal, “Be Not Intolerant!,” *The Israelite*, April 10, 1857.

The Christian *Bildungsbürger* agreed with Wise's conception of education, but as having emanated from the *Volkgeist* that was imparted by the Christian God. In 1853 *Der Wahrheitsfreund* emphasized the distinct processes of utilitarian education and cultural development in a series of articles called "Human Education and *Bildung* is Nourishment and Development for the True Heart."⁷⁵ The articles expanded on two well-known sayings of Saint Augustine: "The food and drink of mankind is not of this world" and "You, oh Lord, have made us, and our heart remains restless until it finds rest in you, oh God." Like Wise, the Catholic editor situated these sayings in the on-going debates about the establishment of public schools. He argued that children needed to be educated for their own intellectual benefit, but also that the education of the individual can lead to the progress of humanity. It was especially important to educate children from a young age and to continue that education for as long as possible, including trade schools and universities, because a child's education "is not only for *Bildung*, but also for the education of humanity." This kind of education trains the mind in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and helps people to "think about what education and *Bildung* can get them in terms of getting food, being polished, and not disturbing the social order." This kind of education gave humans instruction in how to provide for themselves and to live together peaceably, which benefitted both the individual and society. Education achieved multiple ends because individual progress leads to social progress, and individuals were motivated by internal instincts to act in the best interest of their *Volk*.

⁷⁵ "Erziehung und Bildung (Part I)"; "Erziehung und Bildung des Menschen (Part II)," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, January 13, 1853. "Nicht irdisch ist des Menschen Trank und Speise" and "Du, o Herr, hast uns gemacht, und unser Herz bleibt unruhig, bis es ruhet in Dir, o Gott!" "...das hält man jetzt nicht für Bildung, sondern selbst für Erziehung des Menschen." "...kleine fuehlt und denkt unsere Zeit vom Menschen, seiner Bestimmung, Erziehung und Bildung."

But the training received in schools was incomplete and deficient because “few people in our time feel and think about humanity, its purpose, education (*Erziehung*), and *Bildung*.” The education obtained in schools and universities only trains the outer person and it only teaches individuals to love the things of this world. Even people who were civilized were still restless and degenerate because they lacked inner peace, and the attainment of inner peace required a different kind of education. In fact, “true education and *Bildung* can only exist as God increasingly recognizes those traits in humanity, and as humanity becomes aware of him.”⁷⁶ Education and *Bildung* is a progressive accretion of knowledge of temporal and spiritual truths, and only the attainment of this kind of holistic education brings one peace. Furthermore, this education can only be attained by recognizing the one true God; it cannot be gained apart from God.

When this type of education and development was progressing, the Catholic editor, like Wise, claimed that an internal change occurs within individuals.

And the more often this higher illumination and lightning or resurfacing occurs in us, and the more we give it space, the more it takes on our, I would say, flesh and blood; it becomes nature to us...thus the enjoyment of the Higher and Eternal nourishes, strengthens, elevates and liberates the Divine into us, our true immortal heart and our true, unstable mind, bringing it ever greater fulfillment and enlightenment.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ “*Erziehung und Bildung (Part II).*” “*Demnach kann also die wahre Erziehung und Bildung nur darin bestehen, daß sich Gott immer mehr und mehr in den Menschen verwirkliche, und sie sich desselben bewußt werden.*”

⁷⁷ “*Erziehung und Bildung (Part II).*” “*...sein göttliches Herz, seinen göttlichen Geist setzte er hin, sein göttliches Wesen gab er hin zum Genuß. Wer ihn nicht genieße, würde das ewige Leben nicht in sich haben.*“ “*Und je öfter diese höhere Einleuchten und Aufleuchten oder Aufleden in uns sich wiederholt, und je lieber wir demselben Raum geben, desto mehr nimmt es in uns, möchte ich sagen, Fleisch und Blut an, wird es uns zur Natur.*” “*So nährt, stärkt, erhebt und befreit der Genuß des Höhern und Ewigern das Göttliche in uns, unser wahres unsterbliches Herz und unsern wahren unsterblichen Geist, und bringt es zu immer größerer Erfüllung und Erhellung.*”

The effect of being educated about God's nature is that over time, his divine nature becomes instantiated in the individual. "Thus, the enjoyment of the Higher and Eternal nourishes, strengthens, elevates and liberates the Divine into us, our true immortal heart and our true, unstable mind, bringing it ever greater fulfillment and enlightenment." The divine nature of God instructs and develops the unstable, mortal human being, bringing it peace and joy, and we become filled with the truth we discovered about ourselves, our *Volk*, and our place in the world (*Dasein*).

According to the Catholic and Jewish editors, internal development is possible only because God revealed the truth to humans and humans activate the education process through faith in God. These two editors' descriptions of the ideal type of education resound with German Romanticism. The reader should not misconstrue the language of *Bildung* as pietism, since it is delivered here by liberal Jewish and traditional Catholic editors.

Nast offered an evangelical's description of the ideal German education, which occurred when individuals "embrace the knowledge of ourselves in relation to God...in other words, damnation and salvation, decay and restoration."⁷⁸ This knowledge was revealed progressively and "is itself an endless subject of learning." More than being a merely intellectual or religious type of knowledge, "this truth corresponds to the deepest and most inalienable nature of our nature. It is not merely believed; it is also felt." When one hears and learns the secular and religious truth about humans, the natural world, and God, that knowledge continues to grow and

⁷⁸ William Nast, "2 Tim. 3, 7 (Part II)," *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 6, 1859. "Die seligmachende Wahrheit umfaßt die Erkenntniß unserer selbst und Gottes: unserer selbst in Bezug auf Gott, Gottes in Bezug auf uns, mit anderen Worten: die Verdammniß und das Heil, den Verfall und die Wiederherstellung." "Jahrhunderte genügen nicht, um sie zu ergründen; und in diesem Sinne ist sie selbst auch ein endloser Gegenstand des Lernenst...Diese Wahrheit entspricht dem tiefsten und unveräußerlichsten Wesen unserer Natur, sie wird nicht bloß geglaubt, sie wird auch empfunden."

change individuals internally. But this goes beyond Christian purification. Those who pursue *Erziehung* and *Bildung*—those who seek to educate themselves by engaging the *Geist* to release inner truth, rather than imposing external knowledge structures—go through a process of recognizing one’s *Volkgeist*, or cultural spirit. For those who reject the saving knowledge of God, there is only decay and degeneration because one cannot access one’s *Volkgeist* without first recognizing religious truth by converting to Protestantism. Religious conversion is foundational for a proper education and is the means by which one accesses one’s *Volkgeist*.

Nast echoed the Catholic editor’s concern that education seldom produced inner peace, which he ascribed to the fact that so many people were “unconverted or half-converted.”⁷⁹ In an exposition of 2 Timothy 3:7, he explained how it was possible for even a professed believer to be educated—knowing the truth—without developing an understanding of the truth. Nast encouraged the German Methodists to look beyond the benefits of schooling that only afforded the temporal gains of “pleasure, business and even duty”; it was far better to pursue an education that transformed the inner person. The transformation began with the hearing of the gospel message: when the gospel message converted the indigenous people, it “illuminated the hearts of the *Völker*” and gave them clarity and inner peace.⁸⁰ Moreover, their outer behavior reflected their inner state, according to missionaries who reported that the “tribes of people (*Völkerstämme*) who fought a constant war against each other have now been transformed into a peaceful people.” According to Nast, the kind of education that taught children social skills,

⁷⁹ William Nast, “2 Tim. 3, 7 (Part 1),” *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 13, 1859. “...sehr vielen Unbekehrten oder Halbbekehrten.”

⁸⁰ Nast, “Eine Neujahrsbetrachtung über das Missionswesen.” “Da, so es noch vor zwanzig oder dreissig Jahren durchaus finster war, und noch kein göttlicher Lichtstrahl die Herzen der Völker beleuchtete—scheint nun das helle Licht des Evangeliums in seiner vollen Klarheit. Völkerstämme, die einen beständigen Krieg gegeneinander führten—sind nun zu einem friedlichen Volke umgestaltet worden.”

foreign languages, and how to sing—the monitorial system—was not the kind of *Bildung* that produced inner peace. The “right *Bildung*” (*die rechte Bildung*) was learned from God and produced “the blissful harmony of the heart.”⁸¹

The editors all agreed that education was requisite for individual progress, but attending school could only enforce moral behavior or teach vocational skills. People were filled with peace and a sense of purpose when they were inwardly motivated by a love for self, God, and community. As individuals were developed by this organic, generative type of education that expressed one’s *Volkgeist*, the whole *Volk* began to coalesce around a group identity that revealed itself in the creation of a distinct culture of people. But if engaging in this type of education was the only way to create cultural efflorescence, what were the cultural implications of an improper education? The German system of education emphasized the danger of losing one’s cultural identity and asserted that indigenous people only should adopt the Christian (or Jewish, depending on the editor’s perspective) religion from Western Europeans. Since the European moral code was found in the Bible, the editors believed that behaving in a civilized manner was a consequence of one’s religious conversion, not education or socialization. In contrast, it was within the British monitorial system of education that people learned proper comportment and produced subjects who were acculturated to Western European, Christian society, which the imperialist nations believed to be the epitome of civilization. The goal of the imperialists’ civilizing mission was to convert the whole world to the Western European religion,

⁸¹ William Nast, “Die rechte Bildung,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, 1852. “*Daß die Kinder mit den Leuten umgehen können, daß sie gewandt sind im Anstand des Lebens, daß sie diese und jene Kenntnisse errungen, diese oder jene Sprache gelernt haben, geschickt sind in Musik, Gesang und dergleichen. Das heißt man Bildung.—Wohl ist solche Bildung auch das ihre werth. Aber sie sichert dir keinen inwendigen Frieden... Wenn Christus in dir, und du in Christo eine Gestalt gewinnst, dann hast du die rechte Bildung... Dann ist auch die rechte Sprache und die rechte Musik da, die tiefe Uebereinstimmung, die selige Harmonie des Herzens.*”

mode of thinking, and style of living—to erase cultural diversity and achieve uniformity. The *Bildungsideal* valorized the cultural diversity that the imperialists sought to control and eradicate.

An Argument for Resisting Acculturation

During the antebellum era, these two ways of understanding education and two different goals for socialization produced two distinct views of human progress that were at odds with each other. George Stocking summarizes the Anglo-American perspective on human progress:

Both Brits and Americans turned away from German thought, so that in general classical evolutionary writers saw the evolution of culture as an ideational phenomenon: cultural progress consisted primarily in the production of new and better ideas. But in treating questions of human motivation, they tended to think in terms of individual actors pursuing pleasurable or adaptive goals according to the best knowledge that was available to them. The ideas that they produced were ideas provoked by the external world, and intended to bring it under control; ultimately the progress of culture and the progress of science were one and the same.⁸²

The British and Anglo-American ideal was to acculturate indigenous peoples to a single social system from which new ideas would be produced, and all ideas—humanist and scientific—would contribute to the spread and overall progress of Western European society.

But for the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, the relationship between culture and science was different. New ideas were generated within diverse cultural contexts and emanated from a *Volk's Geist*, not a classroom education. Diverse cultures produced diverse expressions of truth once people graduated from the school system. Notably, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* thought that religious truth was universal, not culturally constructed. Art, literature, language, and history comprised a *Volk's* culture, which was an inner phenomenon and unique to each

⁸² Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 311.

Volk. Similarly, science was considered a subjective interpretation of the natural world that varied according to each *Volk*.

According to the philosophy of *Bildung* in the mid-nineteenth century, “science and technology reflect the sensibility or the presuppositions of the subject and should not be conceived as having any objectivity or as capable of causing any progress in themselves.”⁸³ Individuals learn by interpreting knowledge according to their cultural perspectives, taking rational information and interpreting it using their *Volkgeist*. When imperialists imposed their own culture on conquered people, they effectively removed that *Volk*’s ability to understand and experience the world in uniquely authentic ways. An acculturated *Volk*’s progress would be inhibited because an individuals’ ability to become *gebildet* depended on the development of the *Volk*’s indigenous culture.

The editor of the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* compared the outcomes of the two competing systems of education in the Western world using imperialist terms:

In our day there are still two main schools of education, namely instruction with a religious basis, of which we may call one the “free” or the “natural” way and the other the “unfree,” the “dumb,” or the “training” method...One seeks to lead the person to the freedom of the spirit (*geistiger Freiheit*), the other to the enslavement of the spirit (*geistiger Knechtschaft*). One regards and holds sacred every single peculiarity or individuality of humans and seeks to guide them to a freer and more rational self-determination. The other wants to obliterate every free individuality, in order to bow all people under the uniform yoke of a common authority...One follows the natural path and seeks to fan all the godly seeds (*Keime*) that exist within people. The other destroys the natural inclinations, first, so that as early as possible they are capable of accepting that which is contrary to the laws of nature, and secondly, so that everything can be forced from the outside into the people.⁸⁴

⁸³ Blechman, “The Revolutionary Dream of Early German Romanticism,” 9.

⁸⁴ “Über den Religions-Unterricht unserer Kinder,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, February 10, 1859. “Und daher gibt es auch in unseren Tagen noch zwei Hauptrichtungen der Erziehung und des Unterrichtes namentlich auf dem religiösen Boden, von denen wir die eine die freie, die naturgemässe nennen dürfen, die andere die unfreie, die verdummende, die Abrichtungsmethode. Die eine sucht den Menschen zu geistiger Freiheit hinzuführen, die andere zu geistiger

The first school comported with *Bildung* because it allowed students to develop according to the organic model, guided by the self and flowing outward from the individual's self-knowledge, creating and generating knowledge. This model respected "particularity," or diversity, and allowed individuals to develop according to the "divine seed," or *Geist*, that was placed in them by God. In contrast, the second model is "unfree," it "obliterates individuality" in order to produce acculturated subjects, it "kills" what is natural to the people, it imposes external limitations on them, and it destroys cultural knowledge.

Given the GEP editor's dismissal of most missionaries, it is notable that the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* extolled the work of two missionaries, Williamson and Riggs, for their work among the Dakota Indians.⁸⁵ Instead of excoriating them for spreading a fanatical form of Protestantism, the editor praised them for setting the Dakotas on the path toward civilization. "Not by the instilling of misunderstood religious conceptions, but by practical instruction in the early beginnings of civilization, have they achieved this gratifying result. They gave the Dakotas a scripture, adapted them to domestic life, and implanted in them the impulse

Knechtschaft. Die eine achtet und hält heilig jede einzelne Eigenthümlichkeit oder Individualität des Menschen und sucht diesen nur zu freier und vernünftiger Selbstbestimmung anzuleiten; die andere will jede freie Individualität verwischen, um alle Menschen unser das einförmige Joch einer allgemein herrschenden Autorität zu beugen... Die eine folgt der Spur der Natur und sucht alle göttlichen Keime im Menschen zu wellen; die andere ertötet zuerst die Natur, um sie so frühe als möglich zur Aufnahme widernatürlicher Glaubensgebote fähig zu machen und Alles von Aussen in den Menschen hinein zwängen zu können." Note, Kant's racialist writings include the idea of a *Keim* or seed or germ that gets expressed physically, but here the editor is talking about a divine seed that blossoms and develops along the lines of *Bildung*.

⁸⁵ "Stephen R. Riggs and Family Papers," Minnesota Historical Society, accessed February 12, 2019, <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00797.xml>. According to the site, Riggs and his wife were Presbyterian missionaries sent by the ABCFM in 1837 to civilize the Dakotas. He produced a lexicon for the Dakotas and translated the Bible into their language.

to useful activity.”⁸⁶ In the editor’s opinion, the Dakotas were thriving because they had been given the Bible in their own language, so they could read and interpret it by themselves—without the influence of Western European interpretations—and they were self-ruling. The editor referred to the Dakota’s new mode of living as a “free state” that was established by the missionaries but had been operating under the direction of the Dakotas for two years. During this time the *Volk* could develop organically, since it had been trained in the basic tenets of a Christianized society, which included relinquishing their “superstitions” and the “barbarism of a hunting people.” This was the *Bildungsideal* for human progress. The Western Europeans had equipped an indigenous *Volk* to progress without forcing them to acculturate and without prolonged missionary contact. The GEP editor described the Indians as a self-ruling *Volk* whose community he dubbed “the little Dakota Republic.”

That same year, the editor of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* provided readers with “a clear testimony of the superb ability of the [Catholic] missionaries to introduce the Indians to Christianity and European civilization.”⁸⁷ However, the editor was concerned that the missionaries were exerting too much influence on the Indian *Völker*. In a report on the conditions of the Indians, he noted that it was only recently that Germans had come into contact with the Indians in the American West. The missionaries now had the opportunity to help

⁸⁶ “Minnesota,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, January 29, 1857. “*Diese kleine Dakota-Republik ist die Frucht jahrelanger aufopfernder Bemühung zweier vortrefflicher Menschen, der Missionäre Williamson und Riggs. Nicht durch das Eintrichern unverstandener religiöser Vorstellungen, sondern durch praktische Unterweisung in den ersten Anfängen der Civilisation haben sie dieses erfreuliche Resultat erreicht. Sie waren es, die den Dakotas eine Schriftsprache gaben, sie an in häusliches Leben gewöhnten, ihnen den Trieb zu nützlicher Thätigkeit einpflanzten. Unter ihren Auspitzten ward vor zwei Jahren der kleine Freistaat ins Leben gerufen.*”

⁸⁷ “Das katholische Element in der Geschichte der Ver. Staaten.” “...so gibt doch die indianische Race dortein evidentes Zeugniß von der hervorragenden Fähigkeit der Missionäre dem Christenthum und europäischer Civilisation Eingang zu verschaffen.”

civilize the *Indianer* with “German education, German diligence, and German civilization.” But the editor wondered, “Will this influence be another contribution to the destruction of the last *Keime* of life and civilization in that population or to their preservation?”⁸⁸ If the German *Volk* exerted too much influence on the Indians, it would destroy the Indians’ essence or *Volkgeist*, and that would lead to the extinction of the *Volk*, which was already thought to be disappearing. He worried that the German missionaries would become like the imperialists, whose civilizing mission acculturated indigenous people.

Wise approached the question of acculturation from a distinct position, making the claim that the Jews were a *Volk* that was dispersed throughout the world and lived in a diversity of cultures without losing their Jewish *Geist* because God was protecting them. He described the Jews as belonging to “the nation of Israel, “ which had a distinct “character,” and that their religion of Judaism “is a living, active power.”⁸⁹ But while some people said that all Jews were “united by the essence, the lofty spirit...of which no Israelite can be divested,” Wise vehemently disagreed. He said “man must have forms but also union,” meaning that their cultural practices or “outer forms” were diverse and particular to their geographical location, but their religion, which was the basis of their *Volkgeist*, was common to all Jews. Moreover, as the Jewish *Volk* progressed, Wise believed that “the end and aim of this steady and incessant progress is that Judaism develops gradually its universal character [and] divests itself of its peculiarly national garment.” As the Jews were emancipated from the world’s nations, they would be able to

⁸⁸ “Zustände der Indianer in den Ver. Staaten, Chapter I,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, October 13, 1857. “..wird dieser Einfluß ein weiterer Beitrag sein zur Zerstörung der letzten Keime des Lebens und der Gesittung in jener Bevölkerung, oder zu deren Erhaltung?”

⁸⁹ Isaac Mayer Wise, “No Talmud,” *The Israelite*, November 30, 1855.

develop their universal, Jewish *Volkgeist*, which was being stifled but not being destroyed by the influence of their host nations because God protected the Jewish *Volk* from degeneration.

One might expect Nast to support the civilizing mission's acculturation of indigenous people if Nast were a fully-acculturated pastor in the MEC. Indeed, Nast was less adamant than the other editors about the need to preserve culture, perhaps because evangelicals understood themselves to be a community that transcends national boundaries. Nevertheless, he occasionally revealed his allegiance to the *Bildungsideal* of cultural diversity. Regarding the Chinese *Volk*, he speculated that if the missionaries successfully converted and civilized that huge nation, China would not only prosper financially, but would also "occupy an outstanding position in the fields of literature and the arts."⁹⁰ Being set on the path of cultural progress by missionaries who understood *Bildung* would cause their cultural products to flourish. But a civilizing mission that produced economic progress but lacked *Bildung* would have "ruinous consequences and [result in] great moral depravity."⁹¹ By way of example, Nast pointed to the Israelites, who disobeyed God by intermarrying with the Canaanites. Instead of describing a *racial* degeneration, Nast explained how acculturation (adopting the cultural habits and values of another *Volk*) resulted in *cultural* degeneration. He taught that the Israelite *Volk* was corrupted

⁹⁰ William Nast, "Civilisation in China," *Der Christliche Apologete*, October 27, 1862.

"Welchen unermesslichen Handel und Verkehr könnte es treiben, und welche hervorragende Stellung möchte es in dem Gebiete der Literatur und der Künste einnehmen!"

⁹¹ William Nast, "Merkwürdige Ansichten des Weltverkehrs von einem japanesischen Gelehrten, einem Heiden," *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 18, 1855. "Das erste Handelsvolk, von dem die Geschichte uns erzählt, sind die Phönizier oder Cananiter, es hatte glänzende Erfolge, und über die Verderbniß desselben und darauffolgende Strafgerichte braucht man wohl dem Leser der Bible nichts weiter zu sagen, -- der Ungehorsam der Israeliten, daß sie sich gegen Gottes Gebot mit den Cananitern vermischten, war für sie von traurigen Folgen, indem der Handelsgeist auf sie überging, ihnen noch heute anliebt, und wohl eine Hauptursache ihrer Zerstreung durch die ganze Welt ist, da dieser Geist sie überall hintreibt, wo Gewinn zu machen ist, ohne Ruhe und ohne Nast."

by intermarrying with the Phoenicians or Canaanites, whose “trade spirit (*Handelsgeist*) was passed to them...and is probably a major cause of their destruction throughout the whole world, because this *Geist* drives them to go wherever profits can be made, without peace or rest.” He also offered an example of cultural degeneration when he compared the African *Volk* living in America with those in “the Motherland.” He concluded that Africans in America were unable to develop their *Volk*, unlike those who remained in Africa, where nature nourished the land and its indigenous people. Nast claimed that in Africa, not only do the plants thrive, but with a proper culture (*Cultur*), the continent would soon become rich with people (*volkreich*) and agriculturally productive.⁹² These examples reveal Nast’s belief that a *Volk* thrives when it is in its indigenous homeland and is able to develop organically—without the influence of other cultures.

According to the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, a two-stage plan could prevent any further loss of the world’s cultures. First, each *Volk* must become civilized according to the philosophy of *Bildung* by converting to Christianity (or Judaism, for Rabbi Wise), being educated according to *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, and developing their culture through the expression of their *Volkgeist*. Second, imperialism must be halted. Not only did the imperialists destroy cultural diversity by acculturating their subjects; they also destroyed their own *Volk* by committing atrocities against other humans, which caused a moral regression from their own civilized stage toward heathendom.

A Biblical Mandate to Protect Cultural Diversity

⁹² William Nast, “Die unbekanntten und uncivilisirten Theile der Erde,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, March 28, 1861. “Während der Afrikaner in Amerika sich nicht entwickeln kann, so verhält es sich ganz anders mit seinem Volksstamm in Mutterlande... daß Afrika ein Land ist, wo die Natur die reichsten Pflanzen und Früchte hervorbringt, und das angemessene Cultur bald zu einem reichen, volkreichen und produktiven Welttheile erheben würde.”

This critique of the civilizing mission also had a biblical component, which complemented the anti-imperialist argument that the German *Volk* was an exceptionally civilized *Volk* who valued cultural diversity. Their biblical argument for protecting cultural diversity was associated with the Romantic intellectuals' work in the academic fields comprising German Orientalism including ethnology, Indology, biblical criticism, and philology, and it incorporated their own theological perspectives. Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* agreed that God was the architect of human diversity and that cultural diversity was mandated by scripture. Although they each drew on different verses, all four editors linked cultural diversity with God's ideal for humanity. By looking backward through human history, the editors participated in the German Romantics' search for their *Volk* in relation to Adam and Eve, the *Urvolk*.

F. Schlegel's work in comparative linguistics sought to discover the original language spoken by Adam and Eve, and he worked backward in time to create a genealogy of the world's known languages, leading him to declare that Sanskrit was the *Ursprach* (original human language). Schlegel's work led Herder to identify the Kashmir region in Asia as the *Urheimat* (original human homeland). Through 1830, intellectuals attempted to connect the German language to Sanskrit and the ancestral Germanic tribes to Asia. Others scoured ethnologies to compare cultures and locate the *Urvolk*, making a genealogy of cultures. For most of the nineteenth century, until the German nation-state was formed, German intellectuals asserted an "*Urvolk Germania*," gathering linguistic and cultural evidence to prove their descendancy from the original human pair.

Crucial to these investigations was the assumption that the human origin story was revealed by God to Moses, as recorded in the book of Genesis. Using Genesis 9-11, the Germans developed two theories about the origins of human diversity. The first theory followed

Noah's three sons after the Flood. This was an argument for linguistic and cultural diversity that was significant for Germans in the late-eighteenth century. It can be traced to the "legacy of Georg Wilhelm Leibniz and the authors of universal history (*Universalgeschichte*)," and Leibniz's work was a precursor for the field of ethnology.⁹³ Leibniz's work is significant because it demonstrates that this quest for human roots included Jewish, as well as Christian, *Bildungsbürger*.

Starting with Noah's sons, Leibniz "classified the world's languages into two 'species,' the northern Japhetic family and the Aramaic of the south."⁹⁴ This work relied on verses from Genesis 10 that indicated each of Noah's children established separate family lines, languages, cultures, and homelands after the Flood. For example, Genesis 10:2 and 5 record, "The descendants of Japheth...From these the coastland peoples spread. These are the descendants of Japheth in their lands, with their own language, by their families, in their nations" (NRSV). Genesis 10:20 enumerates, "These are the descendants of Ham, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations," and Genesis 10:31 similarly specifies, "These are the descendants of Shem, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations." Genesis 10:32 concludes, "These are the families of Noah's sons, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood."⁹⁵ The German

⁹³ Benes, *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, 67.

⁹⁴ Benes, 68.

⁹⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther Bibel*, 1545, <https://www.biblegateway.com>. 10:2, 5 "Die Kinder Japheths sind diese...Von diesen sind ausgebreitet die Inseln der Heiden in ihren Ländern, jegliche nach ihren Sprachen, Geschlechtern und Leuten." 10:20 "Das sind die Kinder Hams in ihren Geschlechtern, Sprachen und Leuten." 10:31 "Das sind die Kinder von Sem in ihren Geschlechtern, Sprachen, Ländern und Leuten." 10:32 "Das sind die Nachkommen der Kinder Noahs in ihren Geschlechtern und Leuten. Von denen sind ausgebreitet die Leute auf Erden nach der Sintflut."

linguists followed the biblical model of using genealogies, hoping to re-create human family tree that extended back to the Flood. Noah and his sons became the point from which their work began, and theories of cultural and racial diversity were derived from Noah's three progeny.⁹⁶

According to Tuska Benes, a second line of Orientalist work "drew its initial authority from traditional biblical narratives of the dispersal of the nations after Babel."⁹⁷ These intellectuals focused on clues to language and the migration of culture in the story of the Tower of Babel from Genesis 11:1-9, according to which God took a single *Volk* with a common language and created diversity. According to the biblical account,

¹Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ²And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." ⁵The LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. ⁶And the LORD said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹Therefore it was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (NRSV, emphasis added)⁹⁸

⁹⁶ This work will become significant in future work on the American Civil War.

⁹⁷ Benes, *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, 66. Benes notes that "comparative philology enabled a new type of comparative cultural history that rewrote the genealogical table presented in the Old Testament, questioning its monogenetic view of human origins and seeking other models for the emergence of cultural diversity than the story of Genesis...[and] had substantial implications for biblical criticism, as it did for the German national self-understanding" (67). Only one of the four editors in Cincinnati was open to biblical criticism, and none could be described as engaging in nationalist rhetoric—the development described by Benes was not supported by the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*.

⁹⁸ Luther, *Luther Bibel*. Gen. 11:1-9, "Es hatte aber alle Welt einerlei Zunge und Sprache. Da sie nun zogen gen Morgen, fanden sie ein ebenes Land im Lande Sinear, und wohnten daselbst. Und sie sprachen untereinander: Wohlauf, laß uns Ziegel streichen und brennen! und nahmen Ziegel zu Stein und Erdharz zu Kalk und sprachen: Wohlauf, laßt uns eine

In this account, which historically would have occurred after the Flood, the human population is multiplying and migrating westward, but God describes them as still having one common language and a single culture (11:6). After viewing what the corporate body could accomplish, God institutes a system of human diversity by creating distinct languages (11:7) and “scattering them abroad over the face of all the earth” (11:9). Although the Orientalists’ work “grew out of a long-standing desire to locate a terrestrial paradise or Garden of Eden,” they would not be able to trace human language and culture to the *Urvolk*; the genealogy could reach no further back than the Tower of Babel, when the original culture of the *Urvolk* was destroyed by God.⁹⁹

Germans theorized that God destroyed the unity that had existed since human creation and replaced it with cultural diversity, and protecting this system of *Dasein* (human existence) became the goal of Germans like Cincinnati’s religious *Bildungsbürgertum*. As Stocking notes, in the first half of the nineteenth century Germans conceived of world history “in migrational terms, with a sequence of peoples moving across the face of Europe from a primitive Aryan homeland. However, in contrast to the dominant monogenetic tendency of the technological tradition, the emphasis was not so much on reducing present variety to original unity as on the preservation of racial essence.”¹⁰⁰ Believing that God crafted cultural uniqueness by implanting

Stadt und einen Turm bauen, des Spitze bis an den Himmel reiche, daß wir uns einen Namen machen! denn wir werden sonst zerstreut in alle Länder. Da fuhr der HERR hernieder, daß er sähe die Stadt und den Turm, die die Menschenkinder bauten. Und der HERR sprach: Siehe, es ist einerlei Volk und einerlei Sprache unter ihnen allen, und haben das angefangen zu tun; sie werden nicht ablassen von allem, was sie sich vorgenommen haben zu tun. Wohlauf, laßt uns herniederfahren und ihre Sprache daselbst verwirren, daß keiner des andern Sprache verstehe! Also zerstreute sie der HERR von dort alle Länder, daß sie mußten aufhören die Stadt zu bauen. Daher heißt ihr Name Babel, daß der HERR daselbst verwirrt hatte aller Länder Sprache und sie zerstreut von dort in alle Länder.”

⁹⁹ Benes, *In Babel’s Shadow: Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, 66.

¹⁰⁰ Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 24–25.

a *Volkgeist* in each *Volk* sometime after the Flood, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* rejected the civilizing mission because it ultimately defied God's design for cultural diversity and prevented the human race from activating the *Volkgeist* that would restore each culture to its perfect state. Cultural regression had resulted in heathendom, but by applying the tenets of *Bildung*, cultural guardians like the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* could re-awaken the *Völker* and restore God's plan for cultural diversity.

In accordance with the evangelical method of interpreting the Bible literally, Nast had no doubt that cultural diversity existed in ancient biblical times. When Nineveh and Babylon were discovered, Nast crowed that Julius Oppert's translation of cuneiform inscriptions proved the "incontrovertible truth" of the portions of the Bible that mentioned those cities, and thus by extension, the whole Bible. Not only was this a victory over the biblical critics who denied the literal reading of the Bible, but it confirmed for Nast "the historical truth of the events in Genesis 11," including "the construction of the Tower of Babel and the resulting confusion of languages."¹⁰¹

Nast believed that the *Völker* who were created after the dispersion from the tower each had its own *Volkgeist* that developed through *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, but after being converted they also shared God's *Geist*, the Holy Spirit. Nast explained that there was a higher form of *Bildung* that exceeded one's practical education and cultural development: "true *Bildung*"

¹⁰¹ William Nast, "Babylon--der Thurm von Babel," *Der Christliche Apologete*, 1855. "...durch die in neuester Zeit unternommenen Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen in Niniveh und Babylon als unumstössliche Wahrheit ausweist; und ist dieser Theil der Bibelwahr, wer hat dann das Recht, an dem übrigen Theil derselben zu zweifeln?...Alle bisher gemachten Entdeckungen geben uns Grund zu glauben, dass noch weitere höchste wichtige zur Bestätigung der historischen Wahrheit der in der heilige Schrift beschriebenen Begebenheiten gemacht werden. Die in 1 Mos. 11. enthaltene Nachricht vom Thurmbau in Babel und der dabei erfolgten Sprachenverwirrung wurde nicht nur bezweifelt, sondern sogar lächerlich gemacht von gelehrt seyn wollenden Ungläubigen."

(*wahre Bildung*) was the purification of a Christian by God's grace and spirit...in order to be transformed into God's image."¹⁰² For Nast, the model for every human was Jesus Christ, and the purpose of human existence was to strive to become like Christ. As with the process of being educated in the German system, this striving after Christ was also an inner process, not one imposed by external controls. Nast taught the etymology of "*Bildung*" as having the root "*Bild*" or image, and referring to a process of becoming like a particular image, or *hineingebildet*.¹⁰³ *Hineinbildung* refers to an image or illusion that exists within an individual, and Nast said that "the right *Bildung* (*rechte Bildung*) is the *Hineinbildung* of the holy image (*Bild*) of God and Jesus."¹⁰⁴ Instead of referring to merely being educated (*gelehrt*), this religious *Bildung* consisted of being transformed into the image of Christ, which was implanted in the *Volkgeist* by God. According to the process by which *Bildung* took place, an individual self-reflected on the image of Christ, aided by the Holy Spirit that dwelled within believers, and the generative work of *Bildung* gradually transformed the individual into the object of that introspection. Self-reflecting on art stimulated an individual to produce art that increasingly reflected the *Volkgeist*;

¹⁰² William Nast, "Was gehört zur wahren Bildung?," *Der Christliche Apologete*, 1852. "Immer bleibt es dann ein besonderer Vorzug, wenn der Geist und dessen äußeres Leben noch weiter ausgebildet wird durch Wissenschaft, Kunst, edle Kenntnisse aller Art und durch Umgang mit sein und edel gebildeten Menschen, deren gute und seine Sitten zu lernen Jedermann sich bestreben sollte." "Jeder Christ... ist berufen, durch Gottes Gnade und Geist veredelt, in Demuth, Liebe und Wahrheit vorklärt zu werden in Gottes Bild."

¹⁰³ Nast, "Die rechte Bildung." "Um die rechte Bildung ist es etwas herrliches. Was ist hiese? Bildung kommt her von Bild. Und das ist Bildung, daß wir hineingebildet, verkläret werden in das Bild Christi. Ihr seyd allzumal Gottes Kinder durch den Glauben an Jesum Christum; denn wie viele eurer getauft sind, die haben Christum angezogen. Der rechte Zuchtmeister ist der heilige Geist. Er arbeitet täglich daran, dich in die rechte heilige Christennatur zu bilden. Wenn Christus in dir, und du in Christo eine Gestalt gewinnst, dann hast du die rechte Bildung."

¹⁰⁴ Nast, "Was gehört zur wahren Bildung?" "Denn die rechte Bildung ist die Hineinbildung in das heilige Bild Gottes und Jesu."

similarly, reflecting on the image of Christ produced an individual who increasingly reflected the spirit of God in human form.

Unlike *Der Christliche Apologete*, the Catholic newspaper did not take a position on the veracity of the Bible with respect to the archaeological discoveries, so it is difficult to know from the newspaper whether the editors were even concerned with the *source* of cultural diversity. Catholic scholarship indicates that at mid-century, Jesuits were acting in accordance with federal mandates to Americanize Indian children, rather than preserve indigenous culture. According to Gerald McKevitt, “During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jesuits, like many other religious bodies, made a concerted effort not only to evangelize the native peoples of the Far West, but also to hasten their assimilation into American culture through education.”¹⁰⁵ At the end of the century their methods softened somewhat, as there were also cases where the Jesuits adapted indigenous customs to Catholic ceremonies.¹⁰⁶

While it is impossible to provide a monolithic Catholic position on the preservation of culture, it is fair to say that the German Catholics seemed to have valued cultural diversity more highly than the Jesuit educators, who were involved in the civilizing mission. In his biography of Henni, Peter Leo Johnson notes that for the first five years of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, the founding editor promoted two topics: “Complementing his interest in education, Henni was also vitally concerned with the encouragement and support of culture among his people. He considered the natural marriage of culture and religion to be expressed in the form of music, and

¹⁰⁵ McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848-1919*, 150.

¹⁰⁶ For example, see Ross Alexander Enochs, *The Jesuit Mission to the Lakota Sioux: Pastoral Theology and Ministry, 1886-1945* (Kansas City: Sheet & Ward, 1996). According to Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, ed., *A Companion to the Early Modern Catholic Global Missions* (Boston: Brill, 2018), 4, Catholic methods of missionizing are dependent on time and place and can variously be described as “a process of repression, hybridization, adaptation, or inculturation.”

thought it was extremely useful in advancing spiritual development.”¹⁰⁷ Ten years after Henni left Cincinnati, the paper’s editor linked education and culture through *Bildung* when he described a kind of religious *Bildung* that occurred in those “who have eternal life” and which enlivened the human heart, *Geist*, and life.¹⁰⁸ Whereas secular and religious education trained the body or outer human, which he called *Ausbildung*, the inner enlivening came from God in the form of *Einleuchten* (elucidation) and *Aufleuchten* (illumination). Conversion awakens the divine impulse (*göttlicher Drang*) in a person, and “the more space we give it, the more it takes over our flesh and blood, becoming part of our nature.” As the divine became ever more a part of a person’s *Geist*, it brought the person “greater fulfillment and enlightenment,” and this cycle continues as the individual reflects on the revelation of God. This *göttliche Bildung* was a necessary component of being truly educated, and as for the Methodist editor, the Catholic editor considered it a common part of every converted individual, even if he did not speculate on its biblical origins.

Rabbi Wise editorialized about the supposed discoveries of Nineveh and the Tower of Babel, but he discounted them as Christian attempts to corroborate their own interpretations of scripture.¹⁰⁹ Instead, he associated the origins of cultural diversity with the Noachic covenant,

¹⁰⁷ Johnson, *Crosier on the Frontier*, 53.

¹⁰⁸ “Erziehung und Bildung (Part II).” “...und je öfter diese höhere Einleuchten (elucidation) und Aufleuchten (illumination) oder Aufleuchten in uns sich wiederholt, und je lieber wir demselben Raum geben, desto mehr nimmt es in uns, möchte ich sagen, Fleisch und Blut an, wird es uns zur Natur; und wiederum, je mehr es uns zur Natur geworden, desto schneller, leichter und größer wiederholt es sich in uns. Ich nenne dieses in Genießen eines höhern und ewigern Seins und Lebens, und wie jeder physische Genuß uns physisch nährt, stärkt und gretz macht, jeder blos gesellige Genuß unsere gesellige Fähigkeit erhöht; so nährt, stärkt, erhebt und befreiet der Genuß des Höhern und Ewigern das Göttliche in uns, unser wahres unsterbliches Herz und unsern wahren unsterblichen Geist, und bringt es zu immer größerer Erfüllung und Erhellung. Durchaus vor Allem ist zur wahren Erziehung und Bildung des Menschen der Genuß des Göttlichen notwendig.”

¹⁰⁹ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Supposed Discover of the Tower of Babel,” *The Israelite*, 1857.

which God made with Noah and his descendants. Among other things, God commanded his people “not to shed human blood, and not to eat the blood of animals.”¹¹⁰ Wise interpreted this as a command for God’s people to behave in a civilized manner, distinguishing themselves from those who rejected God’s covenant and lived “in a state of barbarism.” According to Wise, this covenant was refined when God promised that Abraham would be “the father of ...’a collection of nations’ or tribes, who should not be separated and secluded tribes, but should form a unity of plurality—*E pluribus unum*; for the union of different families, tribes or nations, as the divisions of men were anciently called, is the basis of civilization.” Barbarians lived in tribes or nations that were scattered, separate, and without a unifying character, but civilized people embraced their cultural differences while being unified under a single religion.

Wise saw religious progress being made as more Jews embraced Reform Judaism. He anxiously anticipated civil progress as he monitored the world scene for news of Jews being emancipated because “this universal progress of humanity is the only means of ameliorating the condition of Israel.”¹¹¹ In the future, Wise envisioned a time when the Jews of every tribe and nation would unite in the “Holy Land” and live in the land of their ancestors, creating the lasting “unity and plurality” that God promised Abraham.¹¹² Drawing from the writings of the sages, Reform Rabbi Isidor Kalish completed the connection between Jewish progress and *Bildung*, saying that when they have accomplished this unity, “you will see wonders. Everywhere infidelity and superstition will be conquered, everywhere a new life and spirit will be awakened.”¹¹³ Jews were united by religion but had adopted diverse cultures. One day they

¹¹⁰ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Review of Rev. Dr. Wm. H. Hughart’s Discourse Delivered in Little Rock, Ark., II. Covenant,” *The Israelite*, April 17, 1857.

¹¹¹ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Retrospect,” *The Israelite*, September 26, 1856.

¹¹² Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Signs of the Times, Daniel 7,” *The Israelite*, June 15, 1855.

¹¹³ Isador Kalish, “The Conference,” *The Israelite*, July 6, 1855.

would come out of diaspora and also become a unified nation, from which they could fully express their Jewish culture or *Judentum*.

The GEPs are somewhat of an anomaly in this application of *Bildung* because they did not interpret the Old Testament literally. In addition, their rationalist theology rejected the biblical accounts that seemed to contradict the laws of nature. Stories that other members of Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* accepted were dismissed as legend or superstition. These biblical mainstays included the creation of the earth ("What a sad effort to reconcile a legend...with our geological knowledge!"), original sin ("What enlightened person can try to defend the creation of the world as the genesis of evil?"), the existence of the Garden of Eden ("you won't find a previously planted garden anywhere"), the serpent's temptation of Eve ("the legend does not agree with the laws of nature at all"), and the Flood ("the Flood was like every other natural event").¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the editor was interested in the biblical basis for the source of cultural diversity, which he located in the "Cainite race" (*kainitischen Geschlechte*). In an article where he pointed out contradictory scripture, the editor noted that Cain was banished from his father's house after killing Abel. Yet according to Genesis 4:17, despite the assertion that there were only three people alive at the time, Cain founded a city, presumably for inhabitation by a large number of people who were not related to him and who were living in a region far from his family. The editor offered this as early evidence of cultural diversity.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ "Wie weit darf die Aufklärung gehen?," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, November 20, 1862. "Welches traurige Bemühen, eine für ihre Zeit hochweise Sage mit unsern geologischen Kenntnissen in Einklang bringen zu wollen!" "Welcher Aufgeklärte kann auf die Weise, wie es in frommem Eifer Tausende versucht haben, die erschaffung der Welt, wie die erste Entstehung des Bösen, zu vertheidigen versuchen?" "Einen vorher angepflanzten Garten findet man nirgends." "Die Sage stimmt mit den Naturgesetzen durchaus nicht." "Die Sündfluth geht vorüber wie jedes andere Naturereigniss."

¹¹⁵ "Pietistischer Widerwille gegen Bildung," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, July 15, 1858; "Kain und Abel," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, August 3, 1858. "Wer in der ganzen Erzählung

If the GEP editor espoused a rational interpretation of the Bible, his outlook on human progress was Romantic. While the other editors wanted to recapture the purity of the original cultures, this editor claimed that it was impossible to return to the past because as religion progresses, it changes and reflects the current stage of human development. Instead, he described an ideal future in which culture was so developed that multiple forms of *Bildung* existed. A religious component that he called “*geistige Bildung*” will progress to a create “a realm of morality and brotherly love” (*ein Reich der Sittlichkeit und Bruderliebe*) that is unsurpassed.¹¹⁶ At the social level, “*Fortbildung*” will result in a perfected system of morals and institutions for the “collective humanity” (*der gesamten Menschheit*).¹¹⁷ And at the individual level, he gushed, “every perfection of our inner being makes us capable of a higher bliss, which, more or less here on earth (as inner well-being or peace of mind), in an incomparably higher and ever-increasing mass, will infallibly become part of it in the future life.”¹¹⁸ For this editor, every *Volk* would develop along these three forms of *Bildung* and achieve perfection, which would

von den ersten Menschen eine buchstäbliche wahre Geschichte sucht, der wird be einiger Aufmerksamkeit auf Widersprüche stossen. Adam und Eva, Kain und Abel sind die einzigen Menschen auf Erden, so wird erzählt, und doch lässt dieselbe Erzählung Kain ausrufen: ‘So wird mir das gehen, dass mich todtschlägt, wer mich findet.’ Liegt nicht in diesem Ausspruch, dass auch schon andere Menschen in andern Ländern gelebt haben müssen? Gott machte ja ferner auch ein Zeichen an kain, dass ihm die Leute nichts thun sollten. Und wenn es im 17. Vers heisst: Kain baute eine Stadt, so lässt es sich doch nicht annehmen, dass er für sich und sein Weib allein eine ganze Stadt gründen werde.”

¹¹⁶ “Einige Worte über Christliche Bildung,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, May 4, 1854.

¹¹⁷ “Biblische Geschichten.”

¹¹⁸ “Die Entwicklung in der Religion, Schluss,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, November 6, 1856. “*Dagegen ist es gewiss, dass es keinen stärkeren Antrieb zum Guten geben kann, als die Erkenntniss, dass das Gute nichts anderes ist als das, was unserer eigenen Natur entspricht, und die hieraus folgende Ueberzeugung, dass durch die Ausübung des Guten unser Wesen vervollkommnet wird, und dass jede Vervollkommnung unseres inner Wesen uns auch einer höheren Glückseligkeit fähig macht, die uns mehr oder minder schon hier auf Erden (als inneres Wohlsein oder Seelenfriede), in ungleich höherem und steigendem Masse aber in dem zukunstigen Leben unfehlbar dadurch zu Theil werden wird.*”

eventually result in the overall perfection of humanity. Humanity was a collective of distinctive cultures that shared a common origin and a common goal of becoming perfected (*gebildet*).

The four editors taught their readers about the differences between *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, which they had learned at the German universities and which included the educational *Bildung* of the individual that is described by many scholars. However, this religious *Bildungsbürgertum* expanded the philosophy and added new religious concepts to *Building*, which have not been addressed by English-language scholarship. These include *Fortbuilding* (which occurred at the social level, creating moral institutions), *geistige Bildung* (at the human level, which created a society operating on morality and brotherly love), and Jewish or *christliche Bildung* (at the individual level, which purified the recipients of the Noachic and Abrahamic covenants, or transformed Christians into the image of Christ). For the four Cincinnati editors, one could not civilize a *Volk* merely by converting, educating and imposing cultural changes; there must also be a religious development that was explainable through *Bildung*, if the philosophy was to be internally cohesive and universally applicable. Because they considered religion to be part of a *Volk*'s culture, religion had to operate within the philosophical system of *Bildung*, as well. When the *Bildungsideal* conflicted with the socialization phase of the civilizing mission (the protection of indigenous culture versus acculturation), the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* had an additional reason to reject the imperialists' agenda. The acculturation of indigenous peoples through the civilizing process destroyed the system of human existence instated by God, who sanctioned cultural diversity. While they agreed with the need to convert, socialize, and educate indigenous peoples, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* did not condone the methods of the imperialists' civilizing mission.

Conclusion

The civilizing mission was the basis of British foreign mission programs, and in the first half of the nineteenth century, it was the model for newly emerging Anglo-American mission societies, as well. The civilizing mission comprised a threefold plan for civilizing non-European societies by converting the people to Christianity, by educating them, and by supplanting local cultural mores with a Western European social system. Being educated according to the British system of monitorialism was thought to guarantee that individuals would read moral, religious materials in a way that solidified their conversion and propelled them forward in their march toward civilization. Through the religious conversion, socialization, and education of individuals, the non-European peoples would become civilized, or acculturated, according to British (Western European) standards. From the perspective of the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, the civilizing mission, if successful, would result in the homogenization of humanity. This vision for the future was problematic because it directly contradicted the cultural goal of *Bildung*, and the methods of the civilizing mission focused too narrowly on individual progress.

The four editors representing the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* headed congregations in Cincinnati which were not directly involved in evangelizing indigenous peoples; rather, they were invested in the development of their own *Volk*. German Methodists preached to German immigrants, German Catholic priests shored up delinquent Catholics, GEPs called for an end to dogmatism among German believers, and the Jewish Reform movement developed a form of irenic Judaism in America. Nevertheless, they all scoured mission reports and newspapers for ethnological data regarding each *Volk* around the globe and then applied the principles of *Bildung* to evaluate each *Volk*'s progress. Like the British and Anglo-American mission workers, these Germans described a threefold system of converting, socializing, and educating indigenous peoples in order to achieve human progress. They each held a similar view of the

need to convert the non-Europeans to their own denomination, which they deemed to be the most advanced religious system in existence. However, regarding education, the Germans advanced a pedagogical model in which *Bildung* was foundational to the inner training of the *Geist*, or human spirit, rather than British monitorialism. Also, in this model there were distinct roles for individual and *Volk* education that entwined to produce progress at every level of human organization.

In terms of the cultural goals of civilization, the British and German models differed in how they envisioned God's coming kingdom. The former called for all Christians to adopt Western European culture, while the latter called for cultural diversity that expressing the *Volkgeist* of each human population. Ideally, the goal of *Bildung* was to restore humanity as closely as possible to the *Urvolk* in the Garden and to locate the German *Volk* within their descendants. Realistically, however, subsequent to biblical events in which God dispersed humans into diverse populations and introduced multiple languages, the Edenic state could no longer be achieved. The Germans determined that this divinely-appointed state of culturally diverse human existence must be maintained in order for humans to be perfected. Because the civilizing mission destroyed indigenous cultures, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* described the imperialists as degraded Christians who were progressing backward into heathenism. Using the philosophy of *Bildung* to counter the civilizing mission, these Germans critiqued imperialism and theorized about the ideal way to colonize indigenous peoples decades before the formation of the German nation-state.

Chapter 4

Using *Bildung* to Track the End Times

We have seen that the editors of Cincinnati's German-language, denominational newspapers in the antebellum era agreed that God intended for all believers to participate in a single religious system in kingdom of God, even if they disagreed about whether that system was Judaism or Christianity. Instead of cataloguing indigenous peoples according to biological race, these German editors identified *Völker* who still worshipped idols, were polytheistic, and did not recognize the God of the Bible. The previous chapter presented the German editors' rubric for evaluating human progress, which culminated in cultural diversity, according to God's design. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* also evaluated each known *Volk* using the language of cultural progress: civilized Germans, not-so-civilized imperialists, converted indigenous peoples who had not yet reached the level of education and socialization of the Western Europeans, and peoples who were not yet converted to Christianity or Judaism. While this rubric is problematic because it uses Western European society as the plumb line for measuring the progress of all other *Völker*, they still believed that all humans were fully capable of eventually becoming *gebildet* (fully developed).

During the antebellum era, Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, along with many other Westerners, watched the progress of civilization. Unlike other Americans and Western Europeans of their time, who used the data on developing races to make a racial hierarchy, the German editors did not make normative claims about the non-Europeans. Aligning themselves with Heinrich Heine and in the tradition of Johann Gottfried Herder, these editors refused to

“buy into hierarchies, be they racial or cultural.”¹ Throughout the antebellum era, they used the ethnological data from missions work and other sources to construct a catalog of the world’s cultures in order to determine the status of human progress toward the coming of God’s kingdom (the religious *Bildungsideal*), in which every *Volk* would be *gebildet*.

At the outbreak of the American Civil War, when the Emancipation Proclamation took effect and missionary work stalled in certain regions of the world, some of the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* began to question the capacity of certain *Völker* to become *gebildet*. A potential philosophical incongruity developed: what if some *Völker* could not become fully developed, but every *Volk* in God’s kingdom must be *gebildet*? The editors attempted to answer the question of human capacity by applying their eschatological beliefs to the concept of *Bildung*, and some of them concluded that all *Völker* who failed to become *gebildet* before the End Times would become extinct. Beyond their expectation of a culturally diverse kingdom of God, each denomination used its distinct scriptural interpretation of the End Times to surmise which *Völker* would be absent from the kingdom.

Roman Catholics and Methodists were actively proselytizing in the 1830s-1860s, with the expectation that unconverted people would respond immediately and positively when they heard the gospel message, and these two groups competed with each other for the unsaved souls. When it became apparent that some *Völker* resisted conversion, Methodists and Catholics became concerned about the impact of that resistance on their initiative to fulfil the Great Commission, and they searched for explanations for the indigenous peoples’ resistance. Conversely, the Reform Jews and German Evangelical Protestants (GEPs) did not have a sense

¹ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 204.

of urgency like the Catholics and Methodists, as they did not believe that the worldwide conversion of all humans was a prerequisite for the End Times.

Rabbi Wise taught that worshipping the one true God is a natural, organic impulse that emanates from within each human being and was placed there when God created Adam. Jewish missionaries are unnecessary because humans have already received God's revelation through Moses' teachings. The *Völker* who reject Judaism, and those who fail to create a society based on the ten commandments (which could lead them back to Judaism), and those who fail to live moral lives despite the existence of such a social organization would be destroyed by God before he established his kingdom. On the other hand, the GEP editors believed that the process of conversion would not even conclude in this earthly existence because many *Völker* will remain too irrational to recognize the veracity of the gospel message. They would all be converted and educated by God in the coming spiritual kingdom and humanity would be perfected at that time. For these two denominations, human effort would have no effect on the kingdom of God; nor would evangelization alter God's timetable.

Thus, while all four editors closely monitored cultural progress, they were ultimately monitoring the progress toward the End Times. They each incorporated their eschatological beliefs into the framework of cultural progress described by *Bildung*. And they shared a providential belief that God had devised a plan to deal with any *Völker* that failed to become *gebildet*, although because of their doctrinal differences, they disagreed about the details of God's plan. Because the editors believed that their own denomination was the exclusive source of religious truth, they expected people practicing other religions or forms of Christianity to either convert or disappear by the time humanity had become *gebildet*. There was no need to

construct a hierarchy of cultures because God's coming kingdom would only comprise *gebildete Völker* and they would all belong to a single theological system.

Re-Uniting the *Völker* Through Catholicism

If Catholic foreign missions began with Jesus' apostles spreading out from Galilee to fulfill the Great Commission, then by the mid-nineteenth century, it seemed the Commission was almost complete. Catholic missions had been established in western Africa in the 1450s, in Latin America in the 1490s, and in India in the 1500s, as missionaries from the various orders arrived in tandem with Portuguese explorers. During the modern era, Jesuits reached China in 1602, but like the Protestants, Catholics struggled to establish Christianity through the 1860s, as Chinese rulers alternately embraced and rejected the missionaries. In North America, Catholic missionaries were very active across lower Canada in the 1820s-1840s, and by 1860 they had reached the Arctic Circle. In the Pacific region, missionaries arrived in New Zealand in 1835, and the first Mass in Hawaii was celebrated in 1827. The Catholic faith had already been introduced to all the major geographic locations by the end of the antebellum era, with few places remaining. So it is not surprising that in the first half of the century, *Der Wahrheitsfreund* contained no discussion of humans' capacity to become *gebildet*; it appeared that every known *Volk* was well on its way toward the *Bildungsideal*.

The editors of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* believed that the most civilized nations were located in Europe, from where the Christian message seemed to be moving westerly to the "*Wilden*" (savages) of Canada and North America and eastward to China, "the Levant," and Africa.² The cultural progress in those areas was due to Catholic missionaries who had "re-connected" the East and the West through one common religion and had restored worldwide "unity." In a

² "Die Lage der katholischen Missionen seit dem Jahre 1822."

survey of missions activity from 1822 to 1844, the Catholic editor effused, “with this examination of Catholic missions...we see the same kind of progress (*Fortschritt*) on all five continents.”³ Roman Catholicism had encircled the globe and the editors were confident that every *Volk* would eventually convert to Roman Catholicism, based on the reports they received from numerous missionary orders. The editors regularly printed missionary reports that contained information about numbers of conversions and personal testimonies and minimal ethnological data, presumably because Roman Catholic leaders were well-informed about indigenous cultures.

The Catholic editors also engaged in polemics with William Nast over progress in converting the indigenous people, but these articles were written to make exclusive truth claims by bragging about successful conversions. In typical mid-nineteenth century fashion, the German Catholic and Methodist editors sparred for supremacy with regard to foreign mission work, particularly in China and Hawaii. Between 1839 and 1841 *Der Wahrheitsfreund* published articles such as, “The Christian-Puritan Tyranny in the Pacific Ocean,” “Rebuke by the *Christliche Apologete*, regarding the account of Catholic work in the Sandwich Islands,” “The *Christliche Apologete* in Cincinnati and the Protestant Preacher on the Sandwich Islands,” “On the conversion of Sandwich Islanders to Catholicism,” and “Papacy in the Sandwich Islands, from the *Apologete*.”⁴ In their coverage of missions in the Pacific, the editors of *Der*

³ “Die Lage der katholischen Missionen seit dem Jahre 1822.” “...so daß sich bei einem *Anderblick der Katholischen Missionen im Jahr 1844 ein Fortschritt derselben in allen 5 Weltteilen nachweisen läßt.*”

⁴ “Die christlich-puritanische Zwingherrschaft im Stillen Meere,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, August 1, 1839; “Zurechtweisung des christlichen Apologeten in Bezug auf die Darstellung der katholischen Angelegenheit auf den Sandwichs-Inseln,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, May 7, 1840; “Der christliche Apologete in Cincinnati und die protestantischen Prediger auf den Sandwichs-Inseln,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, August 13, 1840; F. E. Huber, “Ueber 1000 Sandwichs-Insulaner zum römisch-katholischen Glauben bekehrt!! (Wiederholte Zurechtweisung des Apologeten),”

Wahrheitsfreund engaged in polemics with Nast regarding which doctrine was the gospel truth, rather than assessing the capacity of the Asian *Völker* to become *gebildet*. The success of the Catholic missions in Asia was sufficient evidence of the catechumen's capacity.

Instead, the editors' engagement with human capacity must be inferred from the articles on American Indians and Africans as it gradually developed during the antebellum era. The previous chapter demonstrated how the Catholic priests converted indigenous people and taught the new converts the tenets of moral living, which included "the desire to work," willingness to "take up residence and farm the land," and the inclination to up their bloodthirsty ways.⁵ The connection between blood and barbarism was an important an issue to the Catholics because they were accused of having blood-stained hands by "all the enemies and slanderers of the Catholic Church." In response to accusations about Inquisitors torturing Jewish and Protestant prisoners or Crusaders mowing down resistors, the editors insisted that "the Church abhors all shedding of blood." This distinction was vital to the editors' assessment of the *Indianer* and *Neger* in their indigenous environments. In the early years, the readers gleaned from numerous articles that the *Indianer* and *Neger* were bloodthirsty, violent, and barbaric people in their uncivilized condition. Over time, the editors determined that these *Völker* could be civilized and taught to abandon cannibalism, murder, and scalping, but eventually the editor concluded that the *Indianer* and the *Neger* would never become *gebildet*.

The amount of coverage and the assessment of the *Indianer* and *Neger* varied somewhat with editorship and changed over time. During Henni's tenure as editor of the weekly paper,

Der Wahrheitsfreund, January 7, 1841; "Pabstthum auf den Sandwichsinseln," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, April 29, 1841.

⁵ "A sanguine abhorret Ecclesia—'Die Kirche verabscheut alles Blutvergießen,' I," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, January 2, 1840. "...aller Feinde und Verleumder der Katholischen Kirche."

there was a strong emphasis on Indian tribes in North America, particularly the Seminole War in Florida, skirmishes in Texas where a new German colony was being established, Oregon Indian tribes attacking Mormon pioneers and other settlers, and the Trail of Tears. Lengthy missionary reports poured in from Detroit, Minnesota, and Oregon to relay the missionaries' successful conversion and civilization of the *Indianer*, which allegedly removed their barbarism. Henni's articles about *Neger* in the Ohio area, on the other hand, were brief and mostly limited to runaway slaves who rebelled against their masters or committed *grausam* (gruesome) crimes.⁶

During Oertl's tenure (1844-1846), the emphasis on missions practically disappeared. Instead, the editor gave instructions on how to live a moral life—doing good works, recognizing the signs that God was at work in the church, when to fast and celebrate—and news about the condition of the church around the world, as well as limited news in America. A German missionary travelling through Western America beyond the frontier provided a travel narrative especially for *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, but it contained no mention of *Indianer*. Instead, the goal of the missionary's trip was to encourage Catholics who were living on the frontier without pastoral support. A single report on a mission to the Indians in California reported that the Franciscan priests ran a school in which “the lessons are given in a very natural way: the children of the natives, like those of the white race, are taught reading and writing, singing and music.”⁷

⁶ There were no reports of Catholic missionary activity among the black population in America, as that did not become a focus of the American Catholic Church until the early twentieth century. Although Protestants were experimenting with converting slaves in the South, *Der Wahrheitsfreund* did not cover their efforts and the Catholic Church did not join them in sending missionaries to plantations.

⁷ “Missionen in Obercalifornien,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, March 13, 1845. “Die Unterricht geschieht auf ganz nat__rschalische Weise: die Kinder der Eingeborenen, wie denen der weissen Race gemischt, erhalten hier den Unterricht im Lesen und Schreiben, ferner in Gesang und Musik.” “Seit der Einfluss der Mönche schwächer wurde, ist ein Theil der Indianer wieder zu ihren nomadischen und rauberischen Gewohnheiten zuruckgelehrt, und einiger Stämme bauen wie unter den Missionären den Boden.”

However, as the influence of the Franciscans diminished, “some of the Indians have returned to their nomadic and rapacious habits, and some tribes, like among the missionaries, worked the land.” By mid-century, it seemed that the *Indianer* were not being awakened to their *Volkgeist* through the “natural” method of a *Bildung* education.

When Lehmann took over the editorship in 1846, and for the first nine years of Hemann’s editorship, the paper became a daily and the number of articles addressing Indians and blacks in America increased substantially, but still rarely included news from Cincinnati. Missionary reports on Indian tribes now came from the American frontier, as well as from Central and South America, and they continued to emphasize the priests’ successes in converting and civilizing the *Indianer*. In addition, readers contributed anecdotal evidence on the civilization of the *Indianer* through letters written to the editor, offering ethnological data from their personal experiences.

For instance in 1856, a reader wrote from Winona, a town in the Minnesota Territory: “Undisturbed by border skirmishes, without slavery humbug, with little temperance fanaticism, without the battered election box, the immigrant finds a home here which is very similar in climate and production to Germany...We live in the best association with the Indians everywhere in the territory; they appear to be peaceful and friendly.”⁸ Occasionally a reader offered proof of an individual *Indianer* whom they described as *gebildet*. In 1857 one reader reported, “A few days ago I had the opportunity to get to know a true Native of America, an Indian leader, generally known here by the name ‘Fat Red Chief.’ He was friendly and *gebildet*...He had traveled not only in America but also in large parts of Europe, namely for a long time in

⁸ “Winona, Minnesota Terr. Ende Febr.,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, March 20, 1856. “Ungestört von Grenzstrolchen, ohne Sklavenhumbug mit nur wenig Temperenz-Fanatismus, ohne zerschlagene Wahlkasten—findet der Einwanderer hier eine Heimat, welche in Klima und Produktion Deutschland sehr ähnlich ist...Mit den Indianern leben wir überall im Territorium im besten Verkehr, sie zeigen sich friedlich und freundlich.”

Münster, and spoke good German, French and English.”⁹ The signs of the *Indianer*’s cultural development included residing in Germany (where he could be influenced by civilized Germans) and being educated in Western European languages.

As late as 1857, Hemann was optimistic that the *Indianer* in America would become *gebildet*, and he described both the Catholic priests and the Indians as having progressed beyond their older, bloodthirsty ways. He countered the perception that Catholic missionaries were cruel to the Indians and rebutted Nast’s and Wise’s claims that Catholics tortured the Indians. Hemann blamed the old Spanish Catholics for the atrocities carried out during the colonial period in places like New Mexico, such as forcing the *Indianer* to convert and massacring them. Regarding the missionary work in the mid-nineteenth century he claimed, “The effectiveness of the Catholic Church over the indigenous tribes of those provinces is remarkable in every respect...the *Indianer* gives a clear testimony of the superb ability of the missionaries to provide an entry point to Christianity and European civilization.”¹⁰

Catholic missionary work among the *Neger* was carried out exclusively in Africa, and the Catholic priests were notably the first to convert the western Africans during the slave trade and also the first to establish a mission in the interior of the continent. Although the Catholics were not attempting to convert slaves in America, Hemann attempted to show how the Catholic

⁹ “Urbana, Champaign Co., O.,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, September 10, 1857. “Vor einigen Tagen hatten ich Gelegenheit einen den wahren Natives von Amerika, einen Indianerhäuptling, hier allgemein unter dem Namen der rothe dicke Chief bekannt, kennen zu lernen Er ist eben so freundlich as gebildet...Er hat nicht bloss Amerika, sondern auch einen grossen Theil Europas bereist, hat sich namentlich in Münster langere Zeit aufgehalten, und spricht vollkommen gut deutsch, französisch und english.”

¹⁰ “Das katholische Element in der Geschichte der Ver. Staaten.” “Die Wirksamkeit der katholischen Kirche, den Indianerstämmen jener Provinzen gegenüber, ist in jeder Hinsicht bemerkenswerth,...so gibt doch die indianische Race dortein evidenten Zeugnis von der hervorragenden Fähigkeit der Missionäre dem Christenthum und europäischer Civilisation Eingang zu verschaffen.”

Church was concerned about the *Neger* slaves (*Sklaven*) in other lands. In 1855 there was a brief review of a book by J. Holzwarth that was discovered in a little bookstore in Tübingen entitled, *Petrus Claver, Sklaver der Negersklaven*. The editor said this biography of a seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary depicted “the maternal concern of the Church for her poorest children, the *Negersklaven*.”¹¹ In 1856 there was a report from Munich about a Father Oliviert who bought black slave children from an undisclosed location, baptized them, and took them to live at the parish church in Au.¹² In 1857, Hemann insisted that the Church was highly concerned about the welfare of the Indians, and “the all-loving Mother is no less concerned for the welfare of the poor *Neger-Sklaven*.”¹³

In 1859 to 1862 the paper’s coverage shifted (while still under Hemann’s editorship) and began covering mostly Catholic news from around the world. The number of articles on nonwhites dropped substantially. The last article on American Indians appeared in September 1859 and there was almost no reporting on blacks in America anymore. Where previously there were articles on free blacks in the northern states, after mid-century there remained only a few notices on blacks in Canada, the Harper’s Ferry incident, and one article on the “*Negerfrage*” as fears of Southern secession mounted.

It seems likely that the editor was uninterested in covering the progress of the *Indianer* and the *Neger* because Catholic missionizing was ineffective in civilizing these *Völker*. Since 1857, the editor became less confident that the *Neger* had the capacity to become civilized, and

¹¹ “In der Laupp’schen Buchhandlung,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, December 13, 1855. “...die mütterliche Sorge der Kirche für ihre ärmsten Kinder, für di *Negersklaven*, zu zeichnen.”

¹² “Aus München,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, June 26, 1856.

¹³ “Das katholische Element in der Geschichte der Ver. Staaten.” “*Liess sich jedoch die Kirche die Sorge für den rothen mann in hohem Grade angelegen sein, so war sie, die allliebende Mutter auf das Wohl der armen Neger-Sklaven nicht minder bedacht.*”

by the outbreak of the Civil War, Hemann doubted that either the *Indianer* or the *Neger* could ever become *gebildet*. In 1857 the editor published an undoubtedly fictionalized account of a conversation between a missionary and an Indian in the Lake Superior region, in which the Indian was considering whether to convert. The missionary assured him, “Anywhere *Indianer* live together in a village and do not pray [are non-Christians], they gradually die out; they gradually become less and less numerous. As the snow melts away in the spring and gradually becomes less and less, so the nonbelieving *Indianer* become fewer and fewer.” The Indian replied, “Yes, I have seen it myself. The *Indianer* are dying off, especially the children.”¹⁴ The article ended predictably with the conversion of the Indian and gave the readers a peek into the life of a domestic missionary. But his conversion was framed as an exception in the larger narrative of the disappearing Indian. Individual *Indianer* could be converted, but overall, the *Volk* was not embracing Catholicism, was not progressing, and was being eradicated based on its rejection of religious truth.

Even on the reservations where children were being converted, the missionaries were only able to deliver the *Indianer* to the threshold of civilization because they lacked certain characteristics that would allow them to achieve their full potential. In 1857 the editor surmised, “without the protective and governing tutelage of the more capable [Catholic] brothers, it is doubtful whether the *Indianer* will achieve the level of self-reliance of which it is capable.”¹⁵

¹⁴ “Vom Lake Superior,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, September 24, 1857. “Missionär. Wenn irgendwo *Indianer* in einem Dorfe beisammen wohnen und nicht beten [heidnisch sind], da sterben sie allmählig weg, da werden ihrer allmählig weniger. Gleichwie der Schnee wegschmilzt im Frühling und allmählig weniger wird, so auch werden die nichtbetenden *Indianer* immer weniger, sie schmelzen gleichsam allmählig weg...*Indianer*. Ei freilich, so ist es, das weiss ich selbst. Ich sehe ja, wie die *Indianer* immer wegsterben, besonders die Kinder.”

¹⁵ “Zustände der *Indianer* in den Ver. Staaten, Chapter I.” “Er es je zu derjenigen Selbstständigkeit bringen wird, die ihn befähigte, ohne die schützende und leitende Vormundschaft des höher begabten Bruders ein auf den festen Pfeilern der Religion, der

The newspaper occasionally offered a brief biography of a *gebildet Indianer*, especially one who had traveled to Europe and could speak English. But as a *Volk*, the newspaper editors concluded that “the *Indianer* will always need the nursing of the whites. And as from the day when Columbus set foot on Guanahani, so will it continue to the day when the last Indian tribe on the earth disappears.” Some individual *Indianer* were willing to become Christians, but as a *Volk*, they could progress no further because they lacked the self-discipline to fully adopt the customs of civilized people. They were unable to advance to the next stage of *Bildung* to develop their *Volk*, which they had to do for themselves, in order to become *gebildet*. Becoming a Catholic was necessary, but not sufficient, to become *gebildet*. However, a *Volk* that failed to convert to Catholicism would surely vanish from humanity.

In 1857 Hemann compared these two *Völker*, switching between *volkisch* and biological terms. He asserted, “[The Indian’s] belonging somewhere in between the Caucasian and the Ethiopian (whites and negroes) is certainly not a sign of personal weakness, such as in the case of the *Neger*, for whom the state of slavery is tolerable or even desirable. But the *Indianer* still lacks the will to work and the organizational talent to make him the first among the masters of the earth.”¹⁶ The *Indianer* lacked the will to work, but the *Neger* was content to remain a slave, and the latter was a greater detriment to becoming *gebildet*. The Indian raids, bloodthirsty and

Gesittung, des Ackerbaus und Gewerbfließes gegründetes Gemeinwesen zu bilden.” “...der Indianer wird stets der flegling des Weißen bleiben, und wie von dem Tage an, da der kühne Genuese seinen Fuß auf Guanahani setzte, so wirk bis zu dem Tage, wo der letzte Indianerstamm von der Erde verschwindet.”

¹⁶ “Zustände der Indianer in den Ver. Staaten, Chapter I.” “*Gleichsam in die Mitte gestellt zwischen dem Kaukasier und Aethiopier (Weißen und Neger) kommt ihm zwar nicht die persönliche Haltlosigkeit zu, welche dem Letztern (which for the latter) den Zustand der Knechtschaft (the condition/state of slavery) erträglich (tolerable) oder selbst wünschenswerth macht; aber es fehlt ihm doch der Arbeitrieb und das organisatorische Talent, die den Ersten zum Herrn der Erde machen.*”

barbaric though they were, demonstrated a desperation to avoid enslavement. The editor perceived the *Neger* to be too passive to fight for his freedom, and therefore would not be able to advance even as far as the *Indianer*. This is the first substantial evidence that an editor of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* doubted that every *Volk* would become *gebildet*.

Two years later Hemann reported that the condition missions in Central Africa was abysmal, in comparison to the Indian missions in America. According to a series of reports from missionaries in the interior of the continent, the missionaries' work began with years of effort in isolation to establish the mission, followed by a long period of "preaching the Word without any fruit, for I believe that the *Neger* never ever become Christians merely through preaching."¹⁷ Unlike at the Indian missions, few of the forty or fifty people at the African mission were Christians, even after years of work there. The original plan was for the converted Africans to go to Europe and train to be missionaries, while the rest of the Africans living at the mission farmed the land and performed manual labor. But in 1857 the missionaries' goal was only possible "with the outlay of mental and material resources and under the constant guidance of European missionaries." The capacity of the *Neger* to even convert seemed so unlikely that the missionaries concluded, "as we take stock of the future here, [success] seems impossible with the Bari." The Africans resisted both conversion and socialization, indicating that they would never become civilized; becoming *gebildet* was unattainable.

Also in 1859, the editor took a final look at the capacity of the *Indianer* to become *gebildet*. Based on reports from the Office of Indian Affairs, Indian children were thriving on

¹⁷ "Mission von Central-Afrika," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, September 29, 1859. "...dann doch fruchlose Word des Missionars, denn ich glaube nie und nimmermehr, daß die Neger durch bloßes Predigen zu Christen werden." "...mit einer Anzahl von Jahren und mit Aufwand von geistigen und materiellen Mitteln unter beständiger Leitung europäischer Missionäre." "...so bietet sich dem berechnenden Bestande eine Zukunft dar, die bei den Bari unmöglich scheint."

farms and in schools. For the editor, this indicated that although adult *Indianer* might not have responded to conversion, education, and socialization programs in the past, when those same efforts were applied to their children, the *Indianer Volk* seemed capable of becoming gebildet, but their progress was not guaranteed. As he summarized, “If these *Indianer* die out, it will be because they degenerated or because they eventually dispersed further from their homeland...not because they lacked the desire to work.”¹⁸ Two years prior, the editor thought the *Indianer* were doomed because they were lazy and dependent on white missionaries, but now the children offered proof that the *Volk* was actually industrious. Overall, the editor was still skeptical that the *Indianer* would survive.

Henni had reminded his readers in 1839 that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. When a person refused to convert to Catholicism, they rejected the true faith that was found in “the one church, which the Lord gave the Apostles...and is also given for all following times.”¹⁹ Henni further explained in 1841 (in a response to Nast’s article that Methodists held the keys to the kingdom of heaven), “We want our brethren who are concerned with true Christianity, the true Church, and their eternal salvation, to note the only way in which the reconciliation of faith is achieved, the revealed truth is found, and thus the key to the Church of God can most assuredly be acquired.”²⁰ Henni appealed to the tradition dating back to the

¹⁸ “Civilisationsfähigkeit der Indianer.” “Wenn diese Indianer aussterben, so ist es nur, weil man sie verkommen lässt, oder später wieder von ihrer Heimath, die sie selbst urbar gemacht, vertreibt, nicht aber, weil ihnen die Lust und Liebe zur Arbeit abgeht.”

¹⁹ “Außerhalb der katholischen Kirche kein Heil,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, August 22, 1839. “Indessen ist die Wahrheit nur Eine, und kann foglich sich nicht in allen christlichen Sekten befinden, die einander in wesentlichen Lehrfätzen geradezu widersprechen; sondern notwendig besteht sie bei der Einen Kirche, welcher der Herr sie übergab, und die, von den Zeiten der Apoſtel angefangen, bis auf unsere Tage, dieselbe ohne Unterbrechung lehrete und bekannte, und sich auch allen folgenden Zeiten übergeben wird.”

²⁰ “Methodistische Wiedergeburt--der einzige Schlüssel zum Himmel?!” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, May 6, 1841. “Wir möchten daher alle diejenigen unseren Brüdern, denen es

Patristic Era, saying that the only way to enter the kingdom of God was laid out by Vincentius Lirinensis in 434 C.E. Lirinensis probed the writings of the apostles, “from whose mouths we can find no better description of what real Christianity, religion, and Catholics are,” and he established the Roman tradition that Catholicism was the true and apostolic church. This exclusive claim to religious truth meant that when the *Neger* (or any other *Volk*) rejected Catholicism, they had no place in the kingdom of God.

Henni’s theological tethering to fifth century doctrine is significant because it correlates with Judith Wolfe’s depiction of the “relative stagnation of Roman Catholic eschatology in the nineteenth century.”²¹ Protestants were debating traditional eschatological doctrines, in particular the eternal confinement to hell (apocatastasis) and millennialism; however, the Catholic Church was exempt from the doctrinal reforms that resulted from these debates. Wolfe notes that “Roman Catholicism was the only major Western denomination largely exempt from these developments, largely because of the insulating effect of their traditional belief in purgatory and in a-millennialism (that is, the idea that the millennium is already underway).”

Indeed, Henni had outright rejected William Miller’s pre-millennialist interpretation of scripture, in which Miller warned that the world would end in 1843 and usher in the millennial age.²² And while in England and North America, “certain fantastical sects...such as the

um das wahre Christenthum, um die wahre Kirche, und ihr ewiges Seelenheil ernstlich zu thun ist, auf einen Weg aufmerksam machen, auf dem allein die Uebereinstimmung des Glaubens erreicht, die geoffenbarte Wahrheit gefunden, und so der Schlüssel zur Kirche Gottes am sichersten erlangt werden kann. “Vinzentius Lirinensis in Gallien geboren lebte unter dem Kaiser Honorius, und wohnte dem Erhesinischen Concilium, in Jahre 434... so können wir auch nirgends besser auffinden, was eigentlich Christlich, Kirchlich und Katholisch sei, die aus dem Munde derselben hl. Väter.”

²¹ Judith Wolfe, “Eschatology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, ed. Joel D. S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

²² “Krieg auf allen Seiten,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, November 19, 1840.

Irvingites, Mormons, [and] Adventists adopted both apocalyptic and millenarian views, expecting the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom at an early date,” Catholics held firm to traditional beliefs.²³ Catholic theologians including Henni mocked denominations such as the Mormons, who “like their twin brother the Methodists, give thanks and praise the heavens that the ‘true light’ which Luther, Calvin, King Henry, etc. searched for in vain would finally be revealed” to them.²⁴

Instead of a cataclysmic end to the present world and the creation of a kingdom over which Christ would rule in the future, mid-nineteenth century Catholic eschatology dated to Augustine of Hippo, who claimed that Christ began ruling over the earth subsequent to his resurrection. The editors of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* supported missions work because it fulfilled Christ’s Great Commission, but there was no rush to evangelize the world and instantiate the kingdom (as in evangelical Protestantism) because God’s kingdom was already in existence. Christ was already ruling over that kingdom and it was already being perfected by Christ. This eschatology dovetailed with the teleology of *Bildung*, in which humanity was continually moving toward its most perfect state. The kingdom of God was already established on the earth, and since that kingdom was already being perfected, nothing imperfect could remain. From this perspective, any *Volk* that rejected Roman Catholicism would perish, due to its apostasy. Those *Völker* who were incapable of becoming *gebildet* would disappear from humanity.

²³ J.P. Kirsch, “Millennium and Millenarianism,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1911), www.newadvent.org.

²⁴ “Deutsche Mormoniten,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, August 27, 1840. “*Die Mormoniten können sich daher, wie ihre Zwillingsbrüder, die Methodisten, Glück wünschen, und den Himmel preisen, dass doch endlich auch dem Deutschen einmal dass ‘wahre Licht,’ nach dem Luther, Calvin, und König Henry etc., umsonst gesucht, aufgegangen sei!!*”

By the start of the Civil War, the Catholic editors' evaluation of the Indians and Africans had shifted significantly. The *Indianer* seemed unable to become fully civilized because they could not independently develop their *Volkgeist*, but at least they were eager to convert and become educated. The *Neger* would neither convert or become educated enough to develop their *Volkgeist*.

had lost their desire to work, were slow to internalize the message of the Gospel, and seemed unsuited for anything but supervised manual labor. Based on the capacity of these *Völker* to progress, as demonstrated at the mission stations and evaluated by the *gebildet* priests, there was little hope that these two *Völker* could be become *gebildet*. According to Roman Catholic eschatology and the teleology of *Bildung*, there was no place for the *Indianer* and the *Neger* in the final, perfected state of humanity. There was no need to create a hierarchy of human cultures because the imperfect *Völker* were already being culled from humanity, as evidenced by the disappearing *Indianer*.

Spreading Methodism to the Undiscovered *Völker* of the World

Whereas the Catholics viewed their missionary work as almost complete, Nast saw a vast, untapped potential because Methodism had not yet gained a stronghold in Asia, Africa, and South America. In addition, he had difficulty evaluating whether each *Volk* had truly been converted. The Catholic method of conversion was baptizing and catechizing the people, but Methodist preachers needed evidence of an inner transformation after hearing the gospel message. Once converted, Catholics were taught to abstain from certain behaviors and to fast on specific days, but Nast claimed that behavior modification was a false evidence of effective conversion because “abstinences of various kinds have always been practiced in the religions

invented by man.”²⁵ People who were converted to false religions used human willpower to abstain from immoral actions and pretended to be changed. Nast warned, “the more numerous these abstinences are among a people, the more immoral is such a people.” He thought that Catholics reformed their behavior using their own strength, whereas true Christians (evangelical Protestants) were changed by God, who took away those uncivilized desires.

Discerning the people who were truly converted was tricky, but Nast continually found evidence of development among all the *Völker* he examined in missions reports during the antebellum era. Instead of counting individual conversions, Nast enumerated telltale social characteristics from which one could evaluate a *Volk*’s progress. These included military strength, commercial success, excellence “in the field of literature and the arts,” industrialization, the establishment of a comprehensive education system that could “train the best men of that nation,” and “capable statemen and generals.”²⁶ These civilized behaviors existed within a *Volk* because God enabled the people to act in moral ways and produced improvements at the social level, indicating that the *Volk* was on its way to becoming *gebildet*.

The people of the Friendly Islands [Tonga] was one example of a *Volk* that was progressing, in Nast’s opinion. Before the arrival of Protestant missionaries, “although the

²⁵ William Nast, “Das heidnische Rom. Abstinenzen, Fasten,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, 1847. “Abstinenzen von verschiedener Art wurden in den von Menschen erfundenen Religionen stets ausgeübt...Je zahlreicher diese Abstinenzen bei einem Volke sind, desto sittenloser ist auch ein solches Volk, weil es gegen die Laster, die es nicht verlassen will.”

²⁶ Nast, “Civilisation in China.” “Welchen unermesslichen Handel und Verkehr könnte es treiben, und welche hervorragende Stellung möchte es in dem Gebiete der Literatur und der Künste einnehmen!...Warum sollten wir Geringeres von China erwarten, wenn seine Grenzen nun der Predigt des Evangeliums ganz geöffnet würden, wenn die Einführung unsere neuen Erfindungen eine Umwälzung seines Arbeitssystems herbeiführen würde; wenn Schulen und Höhere Lehranstalten die besten Männer jener Nation ausbilden würden; wenn fähige Staatsmänner und Generäle allen Gebieten des politischen Lebens neue Kraft einflößen würden?”

inhabitants had many good qualities, they were very corrupt... But a splendid change has taken place, and now they are ‘wild flowers blooming like a rose.’”²⁷ Nast enumerated the European missionaries, indigenous preachers, school teachers, and the population that had converted to Methodism in twenty-six years of work there and eradicated such atrocities as cannibalism. He added that their “religion has wonderfully improved the state of morals, government, and common good, and brought about a state of affairs that cannot be considered without deep gratitude to God.”²⁸ Perfection was only possible through the conversion of individuals whose collective behavior also underwent a change that was recognizable by *gebildet* European Protestants.

Nast also surveyed the condition of the *Indianer* and *Neger*, but contrary to *Der Wahrheitsfreund*’s eventual judgment that these two groups lacked the capacity to become fully developed, Nast withheld his verdict. The bulk of his articles regarding the *Neger* in America documented atrocities committed against them by Anglo-Americans, although if there was something egregious to report, Nast did not withhold the information from his readers. He also described exemplars of the *Volk*, such as the Alabama slave who was *gelehrt* (educated) but not *gebildet*. And he ran a longer biography of a preacher in St. Thomas who labored for years to earn enough money to free all six members of his family and then converted them to Methodism, demonstrating that he was hardworking, diligent, and determined, as well as converted.²⁹

²⁷ William Nast, “Die Freundschaftsinseln,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, 1853. “*Obgleich die Einwohner viele gute Eigenschaften befaßen, so waren sie doch sehr verdorben, als die Missionäre zuerst dahin kamen. Aber eine herrliche Veränderung hat stattgefunden, und ‘die Wildniß blüht wie eine Rose.’*”

²⁸ Nast. “*Religion hat den Zustand der Sitten, der Regierung und des allgemeinen Wohls wunderbar verbessert und einen Stand der Dinge herbeigeführt, der nicht ohne tiefe Dankbarkeit gegen Gott betrachtet werden kann.*”

²⁹ Examples include: William Nast, “Ein gelehrter Sklave,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, November 22, 1855; William Nast, “Der Neger-Prediger,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, October 4,

Similar to his treatment of *Neger*, Nast portrayed the *Indianer* as victims of white aggression, which comports with the Anglo-American evangelical press decades earlier in the 1820s-1830s, which “urged a more benevolent policy toward Indians and sought to expand missionary work among the various tribes. They condemned forcible seizures of Indian land by the southern states, and even published on occasion the words of Indians themselves.”³⁰

Whereas the evangelical press after the 1830s was pessimistic about the capacity of the Indians and blacks to become civilized, Nast remained highly optimistic.

Nast refused to report the number of whites who were killed, kidnapped, or scalped by Indians in skirmishes and wars, in stark contrast to the German Catholic paper. Rather, his articles contained military news on the progress of the battles. Sometimes he very briefly noted their uncivilized behavior, such as a one-line notice of murders or an attack on the U.S. mail transport.³¹ Instead of emphasizing the bloodshed committed by *Indianer*, Nast’s paper was filled with Methodist missionary reports which provided him with evidence that the *Volk* was developing because the *Indianer* were converting all across the nation. When conflicts between settlers and *Indianer* arose, Nast claimed they were “caused by misunderstandings or ignorance with their customs and manners, but most often, the brandy given to them by the whites.”³²

1855; William Nast, “Grausamkeit gegen Neger,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 28, 1858; William Nast, “Folgende Insurgenten von Harpers Ferry,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, November 17, 1859; William Nast, “Eine Depesche von Harpers Ferry,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, December 1, 1859; William Nast, “Am 16. December,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, December 22, 1859; William Nast, “In Virginien herrscht immer noch grosse Aufregung,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, November 24, 1859.

³⁰ Gonzalez and Torres, *News for All the People*, 96–97.

³¹ See William Nast, “Endes des Siouxkrieges,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, April 17, 1856; William Nast, “Indianer-Missionen,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, August 28, 1856; William Nast, “Die Comanches fahren fort,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 13, 1859; William Nast, “Allgemeine Nachrichten,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, March 1, 1855.

³² William Nast, “Indianer in Minnesota,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, May 28, 1857. “...aber erforscht man den eigentlichen und wirklichen Grund zu solchen Vorfällen, so erweist

While Nast never claimed that the *Neger* and the *Indianer* were civilized or *gebildet* yet, he depicted them as progressing because they were converting and being educated.

In 1861 Nast surveyed the unknown and uncivilized parts of the earth, attempting to quantify the remaining missions work to fulfill the Great Commission. Nast saw himself as one of the European missionaries called to “fulfill our mission to the civilization of America,” but since that work was progressing favorably, he thought it was “appropriate to see which spaces [in the world] still exist for the emergence and progress of other nations.”³³ In 1857 Nast had reported on the customs of the West Africans, noting that despite the various tribes’ difference, in terms of religion they all practiced fetishism. They also believed so firmly in life after death that “committing suicide is very common means of obtaining a better life, for they know little or nothing about punishment and retribution after death.”³⁴ Four years later, based on the recent exploration of the interior of Africa by “Barth, Livingstone and Kropf,” Nast informed his readers that “we know very little about Africa and have barely made any start with our knowledge of that continent.”³⁵ Because *gebildet* Europeans still did not have much ethnological

sich, daß entweder Mißverständnisse oder Unbekanntschaft mit ihren Sitten und Gebräuchen, am häufigsten aber der Branntwein, der ihnen von den Weißen verabreicht wurde, die Veranlassung waren.”

³³ Nast, “Die unbekanntten und uncivilisirten Theile der Erde.” “...so dürfte es angemessen seyn, zu sehen, welche Räume für das Emporkommen und die Fortschritte anderer Nationen noch vorhanden sind...bis wir unsere Mission zur Civilisation Amerika’s erfüllt haben.”

³⁴ William Nast, “Die Gebräuche der Neger in West-Afrika,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, May 21, 1857. “*Der Neger glaubt ein Leben nach dem Tode und zwar so sest, dass Selbstmord etwas sehr Gewöhnliches ist, um sich ein besseres Leben zu verschaffen, denn von Strafe und Vergeltung nach dem Tode wissen sie wenig oder gar nichts.*”

³⁵ Nast, “Die unbekanntten und uncivilisirten Theile der Erde.” “*wir sehr wenig von Afrika wissen und mit unserer Kenntniß von jenem Continent kaum den Anfang gemacht haben.*” Apparently, Nast either did not read the regular column in *Der Wahrheitsfreund* on the Catholics’ mission work there, or he discounted the work because he did not consider Catholicism to be true Christianity; only the spread of Methodism was considered progress.

information about the *Völker* living in two-thirds of Africa, it was too soon to determine the potential of the *Neger*.

Nast took a similar perspective on the *Völker* in Asia. He reported that “the journeys of the American Collins and the Englishman Atkinson along the great Amur River and in the steppes of the Tartars teach us that, notwithstanding our acquaintance with China and India, we have barely penetrated into mighty Asia.”³⁶ European explorers knew almost nothing about “the origin and nature of that great race of the Tartars.” Nor had they discovered the history of the “Mongols,” whose “descendants inhabit the palace of Peking” and who are the “unequivocal” ancestors of the North American Indians. Nast concluded that “Central Asia is only known to us as a myth” and therefore, as in the case of Africa, it was too soon to determine whether those *Völker* could or would become *gebildet*.³⁷

³⁶ Nast. “*Die Reisen des Amerikaners Collins und des Engländers Atkinson an den Grenzstrichen des großen Amurstromes und in den Steppen der Tartarei lehren uns, daß ungeachtet unserer Bekanntschaft mit China und Indien wir nur wenig in das mächtige Asien vorgedrungen sind... Monumente an den Ufern des Amur in Rußland und in andern Theilen Europa’s bezeugen den Zug der Mongolen aus dem Norden, um den Süden zu erobern. Die große chinesische Mauer konnte sie nicht abhalten und ihre Nachkömmlinge bewohnen die Pal:aste Pekins. Wenn wir die hohen Backenknochen, das dreite Gesicht und die rothe Haut unserer nord-amerikanischen Indianer betrachten, so haben wir den unzweideutigen Beweis, daß der Mongole über das nördliche stille Meer seinen Fuß indie Wälder und Ebenen Amerika’s gesetzt hat. Wer sind aber die Mongolen? Von wo sind sie ausgegangen? Wie wenig wissen wir von diesem Volksstamme und wie wenig ist ihr Land uns bekannt...Centralasien ist uns gleichsam nur als eine Mythe bekannt.*”

³⁷ This is one of the very rare instances in which an editor used phenotypic data to describe a *Volk*. Nast may have reprinted the phrase from his unattributed source, which is almost exclusively the only time phenotype or derogatory terms are used to refer to *Völker*. Or he may have believed the original human lineage consisted of the four skin colors specified by Kant and others, but spent most of his time considering the further diversification of humanity into *Volk*. In this case there is no malice in what reads as an ethnological description when he said, “*Wenn wir die hohen Backenknochen, das dreite Gesicht und die rothe Haut unserer nord-amerikanischen Indianer betrachten, so haben wir den unzweideutigen Beweis, daß der Mongole über das nördliche stille Meer seinen Fuß indie Wälder und Ebenen Amerika’s gesetzt hat.*”

In a single sentence, Nast similarly dismissed the possibility of evaluating South America because “it is obvious that, without paying much attention to the similarly almost unknown interior of South America, only a small part of the earth is really civilized, and that an immense part of its surface is unknown, if not unoccupied.”³⁸ Nast saw the potential for missionaries in America to join the Europeans in following the command to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel” because his ultimate assessment of the global mission field was that “the gate of civilization is open everywhere.” Until all the peoples heard Gospel message, the potential for civilizing the world was great, and he was reticent to draw hasty conclusions about the capacity of an entire *Volk* to fully progress.

The following year Nast updated his readers on the condition of the Chinese *Volk*, which looked promising as the Taiping Rebellion seemed to be nearing an end. In addition, the Chinese government “provided notable evidence of their friendliness toward outsiders through the appointment of the American, Ward, to the Mandarin,” a sign of goodwill that suggested to Nast an openness to Western modes of civilization.³⁹ He explained that, “coupled with the work of

³⁸ Nast, “Die unbekanntten und uncivilisirten Theile der Erde.” “*Es ist offenbar, daß ohne in ein weiteres Augenmerk auf das ebenfalls beinahe unbekanntte Innere von Südamerika zu richten, nur ein kleiner Theil der Erde wirklich civilisirt ist, und daß ein unermesslicher Theil ihrer Oberfläche unbekannt, wo nicht unbesetzt ist...Das Thor der Civilisation ist überall geöffnet. Der Befehl: 'Gehet hin in alle Welt und prediget das Evangelium' ist insbesondere an die jetzige Christnwelt gerichtet.*”

³⁹ Nast, “Civilisation in China.” “*durch die Ernennung des Amerikaners Frederick Ward, zum Mandarin, einen besonders bemerkenswerthen Beweis ihrer freundschaftlichen Gesinnung gegen Ausländer gegeben... Angenommen daß China während eines Zeitraums von fünfzig Jahren eben so schnell, als es in den Vereinigten Staaten der Fall war, in der Civilisation fortschreiten würde, so müßte es offenbar die mächtigste Nation des Erdkreises werden... wenn seine Grenzen nun der Predigt des Evangeliums ganz geöffnet würden, wenn die Einführung unsere neuen Erfindungen eine Umwälzung seines Arbeitssystems herbeiführen würde; wenn Schulen und Höhere Lehranstalten die bested Männer jener Nation ausbilden würden; wenn fähige Staatsmänner und Generäle allen Gebieten des politischen Lebens neue Kraft einflößen würden.*”

Christian [Protestant] missionaries, the civilization of modern times is aimed at breaking down the barrier which has previously isolated half of humanity from any contact with the Christian world.” He optimistically speculated, “If we assumed that China would progress as quickly as the United States in the next fifty years, it would obviously be the most power nation in the world.” That progress was possible as soon as they “open their borders to preachers of the gospel, when the introduction of our new inventions revolutionizes their industries, when the best men in the nation are educated in schools and universities, [and] when statesmen and generals reinvigorate all areas of political life.”

Unlike the Catholic editors who believed their religion had encircled the globe and civilized most *Völker*, the Methodist editor saw three continents of *Völker* who had yet to be evangelized. And in contrast to the Catholic editor’s final judgment of the *Indianer* and *Neger*, Nast was optimistic that the Chinese and possibly all the Asian, Latin American, and African *Völker* would become *gebildet*. Instead of eliding certain *Völker* from humanity or creating a hierarchy of all cultures, Nast noted where he saw progress without speculating on the capacity to become *gebildet*. This difference between German Catholics and German Methodists can be explained by their divergent views on eschatology, as Nast’s optimism comported with the pre-millennialism of mid-nineteenth century Methodist doctrine.

Early-nineteenth century Methodists in England and America shared two eschatological doctrines that differed sharply from Roman Catholics: adventism (“belief in the absolute or relative imminence of the Return of Christ promised in the New Testament”) and pre-millennialism (“the belief, based on Revelation 20:1-6, that a thousand-year messianic kingdom on earth will precede the general resurrection and the creation of a new heaven and earth...[and]

that Christ himself...will inaugurate this messianic kingdom”).⁴⁰ In the inaugural two years of his newspaper, Nast taught his German readers the basic tenets of Methodism. Germans were unfamiliar with this British sect of Protestantism and the immigrants needed to be instructed in how Methodism differed from Lutheranism, in particular. Some articles address baptism by immersion, the origin and consequences of sin, and Methodism as the one true Christian denomination.⁴¹

Nast also wrote many articles that educated readers on evangelical eschatology and used biblical exegesis of prophetic scriptures. He explained the eternal condemnation of all unconverted individuals using Hebrews 9:27, warning that “you have to die—maybe soon—and then the judgment will follow.”⁴² He warned that Satan was prowling over the earth, trying to deceive Methodists and distract them from perfecting themselves until Christ returns. Using 2 Thessalonians 2:3 Nast taught the pre-millennialist doctrine that Christ would not return to earth “unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction.”⁴³ But Nast reassured his readers that they would remain safe from the deceiver if they continued to follow Nast’s teachings, because evangelical preachers like him were messengers of peace who were chosen by God to be like the watchmen on the walls of

⁴⁰ Wolfe, “Eschatology.”

⁴¹ See William Nast, “Jesaias 55,1,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, July 11, 1845. Here he says, “But beloved, the present generation thinks it is wiser than the previous one. They no longer want to be saved according to the evangelical conditions or to enter into the kingdom of heaven through faith in the crucified and resurrected Savior Jesus Christ, without whom there is no salvation.” (“*Aber lieber, das jetzige Geschlecht will weiser seyn als das vorige; sie wollen nicht mehr nach den evangelischen Bedingungen selig werden, oder in das Himmelreich eingehen durch den Glauben an den gekreuzigten aber wieder auferstandenen Heiland Jesus Christus, ausser welchen doch kein Heil ist.*”)

⁴² William Nast, “Ueber Ebr. 9.27,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, August 22, 1845. „*Du musst sterben, vielleicht bald, und alsdann folgt das Gericht.*“

⁴³ William Nast, “Die Verführer. „Lasset euch Niemand verführen in keinersei Wei’r.“ 2 Thess. 2,3,” *Der Christliche Apologete*, August 21, 1846.

Jerusalem.⁴⁴ And those who followed Nast's teachings were called "the true Church of Christ...and citizens of the spiritual Zion or Jerusalem...Such believers constitute the spiritual priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9)." On Christmas Day in 1846, Nast used 1 Peter 4:7 to declare that "from the prophetic revelation of God we learn everything that we know about a universal judgment of the world and the future life...the end of all things in regard to this earthly life has come very near."⁴⁵ From Revelation 14:1-5 Nast explained that the millennial reign would comprise 144,000 faithful believers who have the name of the Lamb written on their foreheads, who do not fear the coming tribulation, and who are the first fruits of humanity given to God and to the Lamb.⁴⁶

Nast continued to teach these doctrines throughout the antebellum era and he applied them to his evaluations of the *Völker*. In 1857 when Nast surveyed the foreign mission field, he explained that "the whole world is open and accessible to missionary activity; and the gospel must be proclaimed to all peoples before the desired millennial kingdom can break in. Nothing

⁴⁴ William Nast, "Die Wächter auf der Mauer Jerusalems. Jes. 62, 6. 7," *Der Christliche Apologete*, November 27, 1846. "Solche Friedensboten will sich der Herr bestellen und nur Solche sind tüchtig, das Amt eines evangelischen Predigers zu führen...Dieses Jerusalem ist die wahre Kirche Christi und alle gläubigen, von Gott widergeborenen Seelen sind Gleider derselben, haben Gemeinschaft mit dem Vater und dem Sohn, und sind Bürger des geistlichen Zions oder Jerusalems, nicht mehr Gäste und Fremdlinge. Solche Gläubige bilden das geistliche Priesterthum, 1. Petri 2, 5. 9."

⁴⁵ William Nast, "1. Petri 4,7," *Der Christliche Apologete*, December 25, 1846. "Der Tod ist uns geweissagt und ist uns so gewiss, dass wir ihn kaum mehr als eine Erfüllung einer Weissagung ansehen; aus der prophetischen Offenbarung Gottes lernen wir aber alles, was wir von einem allgemeinen Weltgericht und dem zukünftigen Leben wissen. Für uns ist das Ende aller Dinge rücksichtlich dieses Erdenlebens wirklich nahe gekommen."

⁴⁶ William Nast, "Das Lamm auf dem Berge Zion. Offenb. 14, 1-5," *Der Christliche Apologete*, January 1, 1847. "Mit dem Lamme siehet der glückliche Seher auch eine Schaar 'von 144,000', die haben den Namen seines (des Lammes) Vaters an ihre Stirne geschrieben, und diese sind erkaufte von der Erde...Sie folgen dem Lamme nach, wo es hingehet; sie gehen also nicht ihre eigenen Wege; sind nicht doppelherzig, gehorchen nicht Andern; sie fürchten sich auch nicht vor Spott namen, Kreuz oder Trübsal, denn sie gehören Jesu an, und wo Er ist, und in dem, was Sein ist, da sind sie auch."

less than this is the great task of the church of the Church. Both the commands and the promises of God underlie this task.”⁴⁷ In 1861 he continued to insist that “the disdain which civilized people display for Africa must not be taken into account. It is not an intimation of the intentions of God, who governs world history for the rebirth of humanity...Although the *Afrikaner* cannot progress in America, he behaves altogether differently with his *Volksstamm* (folktribe) in the motherland.”⁴⁸ Nast was confident that everyone who was saved had the capacity to become *gebildet* because the *Heiliger Geist* would propel them toward that divine goal, in accordance with the teleology of *Bildung*. According to evangelical eschatology, those who rejected the gospel would be condemned to the lake of fire on judgment day, and those who remained would be *gebildet*. Until that fateful day, there was still time for the unconverted to be saved from hell.

Waiting for the *Völker* to Embrace Irenic Protestantism

If the Catholic and Methodist editors were confident that their missionaries could convert the world’s *Völker*, August Kroell was skeptical that these missionaries could convert *any* of the indigenous *Völker*. Human effort to convert these *Völker* would have limited effect as long as the missionaries were preaching a corrupt version of the gospel message that was based on original sin and salvific atonement. The *Protestantische Zeitblätter*’s editors believed that when the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* educated people to think rationally, the German Americans—whether dogmatic Christians or Freethinkers—would recognize the verity of irenic

⁴⁷ Nast, “Eine Neujahrsbetrachtung über das Missionswesen.” “*Die ganze Welt ist für die Missionsthätigkeit geöffnet und zugänglich gemacht; und das Evangelium muss allen Völkern verkündigt werden, ehe das erwünschte tausendjährige Reich hereinbrechen kann. Nichts weniger als dies, ist die grosse Aufgabe der christlichen Kirche.*”

⁴⁸ Nast, “Die unbekanntten und uncivilisirten Theile der Erde.” “*Die Verachtung, welche civilisirte Völker an den Tag legen, darf nicht in Anschlag genommen werden. Sie ist keine Andeutung dessen, was Gott zu thun beabsichtigt, welcher die Weltgeschichte zur Wiedergeburt der Menschheit regiert. Während der Afrikaner in Amerika sich nicht entwickeln kann, so verhält es sich ganz anders mit seinem Volksstamm in Mutterlande.*”

Protestantism, as could every *Volk*. But even if a *Volk*'s cognitive ability was so undeveloped that it could not recognize the rational presentation of the gospel message in the earthly life (*Erdedasein*), it would certainly be convinced by God at some future time.

While the German Evangelical Protestant (GEP) editors had a limited interest in non-German *Völker*, they occasionally offered insights into the condition of Asian *Völker* (including Russians, Japanese, Chinese, and Asian Indians or *Indien*), Africans, and American Indians. These insights were based on ethnological data and missionary reports and were framed as the failure of dogmatic Protestants to convert *Völker* who were ripe for conversion. In particular, the editors lambasted “orthodox” Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, and Catholics for ineptly interpreting the Bible.⁴⁹ Human progress was limited by dogmatic Christianity and improper education, but according to the GEP's interpretation of the Bible, this was only a problem in the short-term. Conversion would continue in the afterlife and would be completed by God's direct witness. As a result, the editors were not particularly interested in a *Volk*'s capacity to become *gebildet*.

Although the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* almost never cited its sources, at least one article was likely reprinted from *Die Gartenlaube*, a widely-read German magazine that offered data from places around the world where German speakers lived. Kroell recounted an Indian legend on the creation of humanity in which the Creator formed black, brown, and white men from natural materials, after which each man chose an item that would define his progeny. The black man selected a hoe and a spade, which is why “he works hard cultivating the earth.” The Indian

⁴⁹ See “Das Palahoi-Volk in Afrika,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, June 24, 1858; “Kaum ist China dem Weltverkehr Geöffnet,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, February 10, 1859.

chose weapons, which explains why he “makes war and robs.”⁵⁰ The white man selected a book that contains knowledge and “therefore, he is wise, but also cunning, for the book has everything he wants to know, good and evil.” The story reputedly came from Indian oral tradition, as this assessment of humanity was said to be part of the “wise sayings, legends and secrets” that were passed on from “Aneth-Ematla, the chieftain of the Tallogis,” to his successor. While the image of whites as the people of the book is a common trope, for the white GEP editor the story affirmed his assertion that people who live according to reason and rationality are the most *gebildet*, while also demonstrating that the *Indianer* possessed some wisdom and perhaps reason.

Another likely source of Kroell’s data was the *Evangelisches Missions-Magazin*, a magazine produced by the GEP mission society, which was based in Basel, Switzerland. Founded in 1815, the mission society sent workers to Russia, the Gold Coast, India, and China before the mid-nineteenth century. In 1859 the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* ran an article on “Die wilden Santals,” a “well-known wild primitive race” that lived in Central India.⁵¹ The missions magazine had been reporting on “Die wilden Santals” since its first edition in 1857, so its readers would be familiar with this Asian *Volk*. From its inception, the society “began opposing the narrow confessional distinctions of the day,” and by mid-century it operated “on the apostolic method of missions which did not recognize the distinction between Lutherans and Reformed” Christianity.⁵² This interdenominational missions society “won loyal supporters throughout

⁵⁰ “Sage der Indianer von der Erschaffung der Menschen,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, September 9, 1858. “...den Boden zu bebauen mit harter Arbeit...desshalb lagt, kriegt und raubt er von Anbeginn der Welt...Deshalb ist er weise, aber auch listig, denn das Buch sagt Alles, was er wissen will, Gutes und Böses.” “Der weise Aneth-Ematla, welcher von mir Häuptling der Tallogis war, theilte mir bei meiner feierlichen Annahme als sein Nachfolger nebst andern weisen Sprichwörtern, Sagen und Geheimnissen, die ich alle auswendig lernen musste...”

⁵¹ “Die wilden Santals,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, July 14, 1859.

⁵² Carl E. Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier: A Study in the Rise of Religion among the Germans of the West, Based on the History of the Evangelischer*

Germany,” and despite the inclusion of evangelical Lutherans in the society, it is likely that the GEP editors supported its work as an irenic Protestant organization.⁵³

Kroell used the article on the Santals to counter the reports of dogmatic Protestant missionaries who reported difficulties in converting the *Indien*. On the contrary, he noted that the dogmatic preachers had actually proven that the Santals “are not hopelessly wild...they have a sense of truth and faithfulness...[and] no matter how wild the Santals may be, their moral sense is not extinct.”⁵⁴ While the dogmatic missionaries equated the Santals’ resistance to the gospel as their inability to be converted, the GEP editor interpreted on the ethological data they provided in a different way. The Santals already possessed a morality and recognition of truth, and even though it was more instinctive than rational, these traits proved that the Santals were capable of being civilized and becoming *gebildet*.

Kroell was cautiously optimistic about the Santals but he also noted that cultural progress across the whole continent of Asia was uneven. Furthermore, he warned that the progress made by a seemingly converted *Volk* could be thwarted by secular influences, as evidenced in a comparison of China to one of its Asian neighbors. According to the editor, the Russian Orthodox Church had been polluted by the czar’s political interference in religious matters. When the czar declared himself to be the Church’s representative of God (*Stellvertreter*) and its chief administrator, he took on the role of pope within the Russian Orthodox Church. The editor

Kirchenverein Des Westens (Evangelical Church Society of the West) 1840-1866 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 8–9.

⁵³ Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 21.

⁵⁴ “Die Wilden Santals”; “Der Militäraufstand in Indien,” *Evangelisches Missions-Magazin*, October 1857, <https://books.google.com/books?id=OCgpAAAAYAAJ>. “...seither sind sie mehr bekannt geworden, und man hat gefunden, dass sie nicht hoffnungslos verwildert sind. Folgende Anekdote zeigt, dass sie Sinn für Wahrheit und Treue haben... Es wurde klar, dass, so wild die Santals auch sonst sie mögen, ihr sittliches Gefühl nicht exstorben ist.”

claimed this was a degeneration to Catholicism and a move away from apostolic Christianity. In contrast, after the Taipei Revolution the Chinese *Volk* had made a positive transition from a non-Christian religion to a corrupted form of trinitarianism, thanks in part to the separation of religion and politics. According a missionary report, China's leader had declared that "the great God is G[uofan]. The monarchs of this *Zeitlichkeit* (temporality) may have named him king, but nothing more."⁵⁵ Unlike the Russian czar, the Chinese ruler stayed out of religious matters. While the Chinese were headed toward full conversion, Kroell claimed that the Chinese had yet to incorporate Jesus and the Holy Spirit into their full understanding of Christianity. They had begun to convert but still lacked the full truth of the gospel. Comparing the Chinese *Volk* to the Russian *Volk*, the editor speculated that "the not-yet-Christian, half-heathen Trinity of the Chinese religion nevertheless stands much closer to Christianity than Russian and Roman Catholicism."

In 1860 the Kroell described the Japanese *Volk*, providing such details as the composition of the soles of their bamboo shoes, and he gave examples of their "peculiar" and "extremely awkward" behavior, such as a civil ritual in which one of the mayor's subordinates "blew his nose into his fingers."⁵⁶ Overall, the editor claimed that the Japanese *Volk* did not have "a high degree of intelligence, though there is some cunning in the eyes." Compared to the Chinese, "as far as intelligence, literature, schools, and seminaries are concerned, the Japanese are far beyond

⁵⁵ "Russisches Christenthum und chinesisches Heidenthum," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, June 22, 1854. "dass das noch-nicht-christliche halb-heidnische Dreieinigkeits Chinesentum dennoch dem Christentum vie naeher steht, als der russische und roemische Katholicismus."

⁵⁶ "Das Aussehen der Japanesen," *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, June 28, 1860. "Während der Vorstellung vor dem Mayor schneuzte sich einer der untergeordneten Geister die Nase durch die Finger." "Ihren Höflichkeit und Artigkeit sind ausnehmend, doch brücken die Gesichter der Meisten keineswegs einen hohen Grad von Intelligenz aus, obgleich eine gewisse Schlauheit in den Blicken der etwas m atten Augen liegt."

the Chinese, although of course they cannot compare with European civilization.”⁵⁷ For example, in the previous year the editor had reported that the Chinese peasants were superstitious: a Chinese peasant claimed he could tell time by looking into his cat’s eyes.⁵⁸ In terms of conversion, education, the potential for rational thinking, and the development of *Volk* literature, Asians lagged far behind Europeans, the Chinese *Volk* was less developed than the Japanese, and the Russians and Chinese were not fully converted to true Christianity. But the editor made no claims that their ability to become *gebildet* was limited, and instead of ranking the Asians hierarchically, he described their relative progress, as if they were at different stages of a running race.

Turning to the *Indianer* in America, Kroell claimed that the *Indianer* were still progressing as a *Volk* because many tribes had converted to Christianity, but others still clung to indigenous superstitions. With respect to the question of whether Kroell thought the *Indianer* could ever become *gebildet*, he seemed ambivalent, as the paper’s articles alternately described Indian tribes as friendly, childlike, noble, or bloodthirsty, and several of these terms were applied to the same tribe. For example, in 1856 the editor offered an anecdote about a Shoshone warrior as a type of noble Indian. A *Mexicaner* asked a Shoshone to sell him a horse, but the *Indianer* refused, so the *Mexicaner* stole it from him that evening. The *Indianer* caught the *Mexicaner* trying to steal his horse, but he refused to kill the thief “for the sake of others (lest they take vengeance on my tribe),” even though the *Indianer*’s “was heavy and the nefarious deceit

⁵⁷ “Ueber Japan,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, March 29, 1860. “Was Intelligenz, Literatur, Schulern und Seminarien betrizt, stehen die Japanesen weit über den Chinesen, obgleich sie sich natürlich mit europäischer Civilisation nicht vergleichen können.”

⁵⁸ “Die Uhr Des Chinesischen Bauers,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, July 7, 1859.

wounded him to the core.”⁵⁹ In this case, the *Indianer* was a noble warrior and the editor contrasted him with the Mexican, who was “wild, impetuous, [and] devoid of moral principles, but not without feeling.”

Kroell’s conception of these *Indianer* changed two years later. He reported that a member of a Shoshone chief’s family died, “not only were his favorite horses sacrificed on his grave, but also a little boy, whom the deceased loved like his own son, was buried alive with him to accompany him on the great journey to the spirit world.”⁶⁰ In this case the Shoshone are typified as a bloodthirsty, uncivilized tribe that showed no mercy to an innocent child because of their non-Christian beliefs. Rather than offering a judgment on the *Indianer*’s potential, Kroell offered ethnographic data that showed its current condition.

In 1859 the editor reported on Indians in Oregon, Texas, and New Mexico who committed violence against white settlers. After federal troops were dispatched to quell the violence in these areas where settlers were pushing into Indian territory, the editor reported that “the Indians have promised to keep peace now.”⁶¹ In this article and others, the editor presented the Indian tribes in two phases of development. There were some “friendly *Indianer*” who led the soldiers into Indian territories to quell the violence and displayed civilized tendencies. But

⁵⁹ “Ein Edelsinn eines Indianers,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, May 30, 1856. “...denn das Herz war ihm schwer und der schändliche Betrug verwundete ihn bis ins Mark. Endlich fasste er sich und sagte: ‘Blasses Gesicht! um Anderer willen (damit sie nicht Rache nehmen an meinem Stamme) will ich nicht suchen dich zu tödten’ ...Der Mexikaner war wild, ungestüm, ohne sittliche Grundsätze, aber nicht ohne Gefühl.”

⁶⁰ “Ein Indianer-Vergräbniss,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, July 1, 1858. “Als unlängst ein Bruder des ‘Little Soldier,’ des Häuptlings der Schoshoner oder Schlangen indianer [vom Utah-Stamm] starb, wurden nicht allein seine Lieblings-Pferde auf seinem Grabe geopfert, sondern auch ein kleiner Knabe, den der Verstorbene wie seinen eigenen Sohn liebte, lebendig mit ihm begraben, damit dieser ihn auf der grossen Reise nach dem Geisterreich begleite.”

⁶¹ “Die Indianer in Oregon, Texas und New-Mexiko,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, January 20, 1859. “Die Indianer haben jetzt Frieden zu halten versprochen.”

there were also violent Indians who were like children that had to be punished in order to teach them proper behavior. Overall, the *Indianer* were more civilized than the *Mexicaner*, but the editor did not comment on whether either *Volk* could become *gebildet*.

Kroell used anecdotes and scripture to describe the condition of the *Neger* in places like Africa and the West Indies. Reaching back to the apostolic era for evidence of their capacity to become *gebildet*, the editor used the biblical story of Philip's conversion of the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26-40 to demonstrate that *Neger* could be converted and could achieve a high degree of rationality. According to a lengthy poem published in the paper,

The progress is tremendous
That has been made in our time in comparison to earlier times;
We have come further in recent decades
Than in the previous centuries;
The mighty forces of nature are subject to human dominion.
...But on the other hand, our time also suffers from prejudices
that were not known before.
...It was not like that at the time,
In which the account of the treasurer from the land of the Moors occurs.⁶²

In the editor's interpretation of Acts 8, God created the *Neger* as a reasonable *Volk* that would be come *gebildet*, and God had imprinted his image on the soul of the *Neger*, as with all other humans. When the African was instructed by Jesus' apostle using the gospel message taught by Christ, he was converted immediately.

⁶² "Bilder aus der Apostelgeschichte: Der Kämmerer aus Mohrenland." "Die Fortschritte sind ungeheuer, / welche unsere Zeit im Vergleich zu den frueheren gemacht hat; / in Jahrzehnten sind wir weiter gekommen, / als man frueher in Jajrhundertern kam; / die gewaltigen Kraefte der Natur sind der Herschaft des Menschen unterworfen. / ... Aber umgekehrt leidet auch unsere Zeit an Vorurteilen, / dan man frueher nicht kannte. / ... So war es zu jenen Zeiten nicht, / in welche die Erzählung von dem Kämmerer aus Mohrenlande fällt." "Dieser Mohr war nicht ohne Bildung und Erziehung gewesen, / sonst haette er den Propheten Iesaias, der in einer ihm fremden Sprache geschrieben war, / nicht lesen koennen. / Wir sehen also hier einen gebildeten und unterrichteten Neger, / waehrend den unsern Bildung und Unterricht verboten ist." "Ein Verbrechen an der Menschheit ist es, wenn man selbst die Mittel zu weiterer Erkenntniss, Lesen und Schreiben, verbietet und der Unterricht darin als Verbrechen gilt."

Kroell noted that “This Moor was not without *Bildung* and *Erziehung* / otherwise he could not have read the prophet Isaiah, / which for him was written in a foreign language, / that he could not read. / We also see here a *gebildet* and educated *Neger*, / while *Bildung* and education are forbidden to ours [*Neger* in America].”⁶³ In his social commentary on the condition of slaves in America, Kroell emphasized the link between education and progress. He pointed out that without access to an education, the portion of the *Neger Volk* living in America could never become *gebildet*, even though biblical scripture indicated that the *Volk* had that capacity. The editor described a degeneration of the *Neger Volk* that was due to their treatment by so-called civilized Westerners.

According to his line of thinking, first-century Africans had been highly educated, were Christians, and were even *gebildet*, so despite their degenerating progress in the nineteenth century, the editor believed that the Africans had the potential to return to their earlier condition. As the editor vehemently explained, “It is a crime against humanity / when one is denied the means of gaining further knowledge, reading and writing, / and when education is considered a crime.”⁶⁴ The *Neger* were rational beings with the same capacity as all other humans, but their lack of education and limited access to an uncorrupted gospel message prevented them from reaching their potential as a *Volk*.

⁶³ “Bilder aus der Apostelgeschichte: Der Kämmerer aus Mohrenland.” “*Dieser Mohr war nicht ohne Bildung und Erziehung gewesen, / sonst haette er den Propheten Iesaias, / der in einer ihm fremden Sprache geschrieben war, nicht lesen koennen. / Wir sehen also hier einen gebildeten und unterrichteten Neger, / waehrend den unsern Bildung und Unterricht verboten ist. / Und das ist unter allen Schaendlichkeiten der Slaverei gewiss die schaendlichste und empoeerendste Seite.*”

⁶⁴ “Bilder aus der Apostelgeschichte: Der Kämmerer aus Mohrenland.” “*Ein Verbrechen an der Menscheheit ist es, / wenn man selbst die Mittel zu weiterer Erkenntniss, Lesen und Schreiben, / verbietet und der Unterricht darin als Verbrechen gilt.*”

In response to those who said that all Africans were unable to understand spiritual truths and convert to Christianity, the editor referred to the ethnographical data provided by David Livingstone during his time living with the Palahoi people. The editor cited an article in the *Lutherische Kirchenbote* that described the Palahoi as technologically advanced but arrogant and spiritually bankrupt.⁶⁵ When Livingstone asked the king's permission to proselytize the Palahoi, the ruler granted the request but stipulated that his subjects had the right to choose between their own religion and Livingstone's. Although the missionary "sought to teach them Christianity, he did not find them very eager to learn. They fancied they understood [religion] much better than the missionary."⁶⁶ Livingstone concluded that the Palahoi, who lived in central Africa, were a different tribe than the *Neger*, who lived on the west coast of Africa. He reported that the Palahoi, whose physical appearance and cultural achievements resembled "the Moors," were impervious to conversion, while "the *Neger* in Africa were far more willing to accept the doctrines of Christianity than the more educated Palahoi,"

Whereas Livingstone evaluated capacity by differentiating between the African tribes, however, Kroell blamed Livingstone for the Palahoi's rejection of the gospel. He noted,

We, on our part, are not surprised when a people already at a certain stage of culture—a people who knows the art of writing and knows idol worship, believes in God and immortality—is less willing to accept missionary Christianity than the very raw *Neger* tribes. It is easier to persuade someone who is not yet used to thinking than someone who has already somewhat learned to use reason. The speeches of King Dabul-Behzad betray much natural wisdom, and unless one removes reason from faith, it is impossible to accept the missionary's Christianity. If the missionaries proclaimed the simple gospel of Jesus Christ instead of orthodox Lutheranism, they would achieve greater success, for this does not

⁶⁵ Both the attribution and the use of a Lutheran source were a rare occurrence and, therefore, this is a significant commentary.

⁶⁶ "Das Palahoi-Volk in Afrika." "...und suchte sie im Christenthum zu unterrichten, aber er fand sie nicht sehr lehrbegierig. Sie bildeten sich ein, sie verstünden diese Sache viel besser als der Missionär. Er fand die *Neger* in Afrika viel bereitwilliger, die Lehren des Christenthums anzunehmen, als die weit mehr gebildeten Palahoier."

require castrating reason, but rather the thinking person finds within it precisely what he or she has sought and desired: the purest and most sublime reason.⁶⁷

Kroell explained that Livingstone preached a gospel that had to be accepted merely by faith because it was an irrational gospel. When Livingstone preached to the uneducated masses in western Africa, he was more successful because their ability to reason was underdeveloped and they were persuaded by his false version of the gospel. However, when preaching to the more culturally developed Palahoi, Livingstone's gospel message lacked the rational argument that would have convinced them to convert. This confirmed for Kroell that while there were differences among the African tribes, they all shared the human capacity to convert and become *gebildet*.

In contrast to the "orthodox Lutheran" doctrine that Livingstone and other missionaries spread, the GEPs claimed to preach an uncorrupted interpretation of Christianity that could be explained rationally and did not require a leap of faith. No thinking person would be fooled by the teaching of dogmatic, orthodox missionaries. When missionaries were armed with a non-dogmatic gospel message, they effectively converted these non-Christians. Thus, the GEP editor did not reject all efforts at missionizing—just those of missionaries outside his denomination. Foreign mission work failed to produce many converts because most preachers were presenting a

⁶⁷ "Das Palahoi-Volk in Afrika." "Wir unsererseits wundern uns gar nicht, wenn ein Volk, das schon auf einer gewissen Stufe der Kultur steht, das die Schreibkunst kennt und fern von Götzendienst den Glauben an Einen Gott und Unsterblichkeit kennt, wenn ein solches Volk weniger bereitwillig ist, das Missions-Christenthum anzunehmen, als die ganz rohen Negerstämme. Wer überhaupt noch nicht zu denken gewohnt ist, lässt sich leichter irgend Etwas aufschwätzen, als wer bereits doch einigermaßen seine Vernunft zu brauchen gelernt hat. Die Reden des Königs Dabul-Behzad verrathen viel natürlichen Verstand, und ohne die Vernunft gefangen zu nehmen unter den Glauben, ist es unmöglich, das Missions-Christenthum anzunehmen. Würden die Missionäre statt orthodoxen Lutherthums das einfache Evangelium Jesu Christi verkünden, sie würden grössern Erfolg erzielen, denn dieses verlangt nicht, die Vernunft zu kastriren, sondern der denkende Mensch findet in ihm gerade das, was er gesucht und verlangt hat, die reinste und erhabenste Vernunft."

faulty version of Christ's gospel message. Kroell posited that every *Volk* that was considered unreachable by Christian missionaries actually had the capacity to be civilized and *gebildet*; they only needed to hear the untarnished words of Christ.

The GEPs, like the Methodists, took a snapshot of each *Volk*'s condition and periodically compared them throughout the antebellum era without making a hierarchy of cultures. In the early 1860s, the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* broadened its scope and compared humanity to other created beings, such as animals and angels, and to God. Even this was emphatically not a reconstitution of the Great Chain of Being, in which each chain or species was positioned relative to the others according to its fixed potential. Instead of constructing a hierarchy that reached from earth up to Heaven, the editor spoke in terms of humanity's proximity to God. This idea of progressing toward God's perfection invokes the concept of *Dasein* and builds on Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophical work.

Just as Kant and Herder differed in their understandings of race, Friedrich Schelling and Hegel disagreed on the relationship between history and human progress, and their modes of thought were based respectively on Kant's and Herder's work. Arthur Lovejoy has argued that Schelling's "evolutionary theology" was a form of the Great Chain of Being. Lovejoy summarizes Schelling's theory, saying that human evolution occurs when "the more perfect has risen from its own less perfect condition," an idea which was developed in 1800-1812 and describes the progress from child to ignorant adult to learned human.⁶⁸ Schelling built on Kant's understanding of human progress and described a process in which humans evolve and become something more than they were when they were created. A more apt source for the religious

⁶⁸ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 317, 322.

Bildungsbürgertum is Hegel, whose work derived from Herder and whose distinction between the earthly existence (*Erdedasein*) and the eternal, heavenly *Dasein* is referenced repeatedly in the *Protestantische Zeitblätter*.

According to Paul Redding, Hegel's understanding of human progress was a "form of analysis of cultural phenomena that can be related back to the work of Johann Gottfried Herder," in whose writings we see "a tension between the more 'Enlightenment' conception of history as a narrative in which 'reason' and 'humanity' are progressively realized—a conception of history inherited by Hegel—and a more relativistic one in which human history presents a panorama of distinct and incommensurable forms of human life and mentality."⁶⁹ In the *Protestantische Zeitblätter*'s evaluation of the world's cultures, the capacity for development exists at the human level; in other words, every *Volk* has the same capacity to become *gebildet*. Like Hegel, the GEP editors describe human progress in terms of receiving the kind of education that develops human reason and the spirit—an education which can be delivered by *gebildet* human teachers in this lifetime and by God in the afterlife.

Although the GEPs were uninterested in ranking human cultures during the antebellum era, as soon as the American slaves were freed (by the Emancipation Proclamation) the editor speculated on the relationship among humans, animals, created spiritual beings, and God. In March 1863, two months after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* asked two questions: "Is Humankind Closer to God or to the Animals?" and are humans "The Animal's Brother or God's Children?" The first article offered the opinion of an unnamed source that claimed "each individual person forms a special relation to God, to whom

⁶⁹ Paul Redding, "G. W. F. Hegel," in *Nineteenth-Century Philosophy of Religion: The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Graham Oppy and Nick N. Trakakis, vol. 4, *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 55.

he has to give an account for himself...So if you want to answer this question, you can actually answer it only for yourself” by a process of self-reflection.⁷⁰ A human’s relative position was dependent on each individual’s personal relationship with God. In an explication of Jacob’s ladder (Gen. 28:10-17), the anonymous author claimed that humans are distinguished from animals because humans have a larger mental capacity (*Geisteskräfte*) than the animals. Even if individual humans fail to exercise their ability to reason, they nevertheless have an intellectual capacity, whereas the animals can never progress to a state where they can reason. This author concluded that it was impossible to move beyond the natural limits set by God for humans and animals, saying “As they were, they still are and must therefore remain, unless they are changed by external forces.”⁷¹ Each has a distinct relationship to each other that is static, like links in a chain or rungs on a ladder. The editor of the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* disagreed, saying, “We will present our own, dissenting opinion on this next time.”

The relationship among God, humans and animals was hotly debated at mid-century by German intellectuals both inside and outside the Church. For example, in 1863 Maximilian Perty published his anthropology lectures at the University of Bern, including one entitled “The Origin of Man” (*Entstehung des Menschen*), which paired Herder with Darwin. Perty noted that “in earlier times Herder called the animals the older brothers of man, and no one argued with him...it is not necessary, even from the point of view of the emergence of the higher from the

⁷⁰ “Steht Der Mensch Gott, Oder Dem Thiere Näher?,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, March 19, 1863. “...jeder einzelne Mensch ein besonderes Verhältniss zu Gott bildet, dem er auch für sich selbst Rechenschaft geben muss... Wer also diese Frage auch beantworten mag, er kann sie eigentlich nur für sich selbst beantworten.”

⁷¹ “Steht Der Mensch Gott, Oder Dem Thiere Näher?” “Wie sie waren, so sind sie noch und müssen also bleiben, es sei den, dass sie durch ausser ihnen liegende Kräfte verändert warden.” “Wir warden unsere eigene, abweichende Ansicht hierüber das nächste Mal bringen. Die Redaktion.”

lower, to derive man from the monkey. Suffice it to say that both have sprung from the same parental strain.”⁷² Pointing to a German philosopher whose ideas about a common ancestry predated Darwin’s, Perty argued against a hierarchy of beings.

Fifteen years earlier, Philipp Marheineke’s systematic theology was posthumously published, in which he distinguished humans from the animals in an explanation of the ritual of baptism in the GEP Church. Marheineke received his academic training at the turn of the nineteenth century at Göttingen, where he was initially influenced by Schelling’s writings, but by 1827 he abandoned Schelling for Hegel. He subsequently “came to be regarded as the leader of the Hegelian Right. He sought to defend and explain all the orthodox doctrines of the Church...in terms of Hegel’s philosophy.”⁷³ In his systematic theology, Marheineke noted that both humans and animals were born into the natural world, “and thereby [the human] approaches the animal. But in the possibility of attaining consciousness and understanding, of rationality and freedom, [the human] is absolutely different from the animal; he is the creature of God in a different sense than the animal creature. In the gradually developing child, the mind itself is already lively,” and although a child is innocent and “dominated by sensuality,” its mind would one day be awakened by the teachings of the Church and “transplanted, as it were, out of the

⁷² Maximilian Perty, *Anthropologische Vorträge gehalten im Winter 1862 - 1863 in Der Aula Zu Bern* (Leipzig and Heidelberg: C. F. Winterische Verlagshandlung, 1863), 41, <https://books.google.com/books?id=cMg6AAAACAAJ>. “...hat ja vor langer Zeit schon Herder die Thiere die älteren Brüder des Menschen genannt und Niemand hat darin Arges gefunden... Es ist aber auch auf dem Standpunkte des Hervorgehens des Höheren aus dem Niedrigeren gar nicht nöthig, den Menschen vom Affen abstammen zu lassen, sondern es genügte schon die Annahme, dass beide demselben Urstamm entsprossen sind.”

⁷³ Hugh Chisholm, ed., “Philip Konrad Marheineke,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1911), <https://books.google.com/books?id=N1YEAAAAYAAJ>.

poor soil of the world to the divine soil of the kingdom of heaven.”⁷⁴ For Marheineke, animals and humans were both created by a divine God and were born on the earth into a material, sensual existence (*sinnliche Daseyn*), but humans also have a dormant spiritual consciousness. Over the course of their lifetimes, that consciousness is awakened by the Church and they develop a spiritual nature that separates (but does not elevate) them from the animals and, through baptism, initiates their inhabitation of the divine kingdom of God.

The editor expanded on this idea in his follow-up article in the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* in March 1863. Referring to the teaching in the church’s catechism, he reiterated that humans have a two-fold nature that is earthly and divine, and unlike the animals, a human is God’s child and “God’s image (*Gottes Bild*) is reflected” in each human.⁷⁵ For the GEP editor, there was no doubt that that humans were distinct from the animals because of their dual nature; however, because “only relatives can recognize relatives,” he inquired whether humans were more closely related to the animals than to God. By adding this third dimension to the extant debate about the origins of humanity and by shifting the focus away from individual salvation, the editor asserted that the answer lay in “humankind’s eternal nature and destiny.” Using Christ as the test case for his argument, the editor asked, “To whom was Christ more closely related: the beast or God?”

⁷⁴ Philipp Marheineke, *D. Philipp Marheineke’s theologische Vorlesungen: System der christlichen Dogmatik*, vol. 2 (Verlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1847), 524, <https://books.google.com/books?id=W4JByv2YNSYC>. “*Ob zwar an sich vernünftiges und freies, in beiden geistiges Wesen, hebt der Mensch doch seinen Lebenslauf in der materiellen Natur und Sinnlichkeit an und steht dadurch dem Thier nahe. In der Möglichkeit aber, zum Bewusstseyn und Verständigseyn, zur Vernünftigkeit und Freiheit zu gelangen, is er vom Thier absolut verschieden; er ist Geschöpf Gottes in einem andern Sinne, als die thierische Creatur. In dem sich allmählich entwickelnden Kinde ist der Geist selbst schon rege, wengleich nur als Unschuld und Gemüthlichkeit und noch noch beherrscht von der Sinnlichkeit.*”

⁷⁵ “Das Thieres Bruder oder Gottes Kind?,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, March 26, 1863. “*Nur Verwandtes kann Verwandtes erkennen.*” “*...was des Menschen ewige Natur und Bestimmung ist.*”

Citing the dual nature of Christ, who “started as a simple human being,” became “higher than all the angels,” and claimed unity with God (John 10:30), the editor stated that “we shall all be one with the Father...[that] is the destiny of us all.”⁷⁶

The GEP editor believed that it was the destiny of *all* of humanity to be united with God eventually—not just individuals who had been converted during their time on earth—because each person contained the germ (*Keim*) of the belief in God, like a seed that is waiting to grow into a fruit-bearing plant. And just as fruit is “very unequal in size, beauty, and perfection...so the fruits of each divine germ are unequal and different, according to the different stages of spiritual development for individuals or a whole *Volk*.”⁷⁷ After being awakened, this germ of God-consciousness (*Gottesbewusstseins*) developed gradually as the experiences of life perfected one’s knowledge of God and the faithful person became more and more like God (*dem Vater immer ähnlicher zu werden*).

Those who had not been awakened during their mortal lives were not consigned to hell, according to the GEP’s interpretation of the scriptures. In fact, the editor denied the existence of hell. Although he was criticized by some of his readers for taking what they saw as a radical position, debates about the existence of hell were common among nineteenth-century

⁷⁶ “Das Thieres Bruder oder Gottes Kind?” “*Mit wem war Christus wohl näher verwandt, mit der Bestie oder mit Gott?*” “*Aber werfen wir unsern Blick auf Christum. Er selber sagt, ‘Ich und der Vater sind Eins.’ Dasselbe spricht er als die Bestimmung unser Aller aus.*” “*Ist aber Christus nach der Lehre der Schrift nicht selber höher als alle Engel? Und doch hat er als einfacher Mensch begonnen.*”

⁷⁷ “Die Menschheit soll eine Gottesfamilie sein,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, May 26, 1853. “*So wie die Früchte der Pflanzen in der Körperwelt an Grösse, Schönheit- und Vollkommenheit, je nach der Verschiedenheit des Bodens, des Climas und der Witterung einander sehr ungleich sind, so sind auch die Früchte jedes göttlichen Keimes je nach der verschiedenen Stufe geistige Entwicklung, auf der ein einzelner Mensch oder ein ganzes Volk steht, sehr ungleich und verschieden.*” “*Auch weisen die Juden dem Teufel, den sie aus der persischen Religion in ihre Vorstellung aufgenommen hatte, seinen Aufenthaltsort in der Hölle an.*”

theologians. In addition to a renewed interest in millennialism, which was evident in the Methodist paper, there was “fierce criticism of the doctrine of an eternal hell...[which] became widespread within all camps of Protestant theology, both in continental Europe and in the English-speaking world.”⁷⁸ Kant, Schleiermacher, and some pietist theologians even “introduced versions of ‘purgatory’ as a post-mortem but not unending process of purgation into Protestant theology.” The *Protestantische Zeitblätter*’s editors denied the existence of hell and described the afterlife as a time when humanity would be perfected, rather than purged, by God.

According to the GEP editor, the concept of hell was based on an ancient belief in a subterranean underworld, which Christians later adopted to threaten non-Christians. Further, he blamed the Jews for perpetuating the idea that the devil, “whom they have taken from their misunderstanding of Persian religion,” ruled over hell. This corrupted version of punishment for sinning was then refined by the Christians such as Catholics and Old Lutherans, “whose most important belief is the doctrine of reconciliation through the blood of Christ.”⁷⁹ According to the editor, these Christians believed that in the latter days, “the Lord returns from heaven to the earth, first raises the dead in Christ (those who died as faithful Christians), then we who live and are left are changed (not dead) and drawn toward the Lord in the clouds, and we will be with the Lord forever. Immediately afterwards follows the universal judgment of all living and dead, and then the end.”⁸⁰ Kroell asserted that this was a deviation from the apostles’ plan of salvation,

⁷⁸ Wolfe, “Eschatology.”

⁷⁹ “Die Blutgläubigen im Widerspruche mit der Bibel.” “*Das wichtigst Stück ihres Glaubens ist die Lehre von der Versöhnung durch das Blut Christi.*”

⁸⁰ “Die Blutgläubigen im Widerspruche mit der Bibel.” “*...denn in diesen Tagen kommt der Herr von Himmel auf die Erde zurück, weckt zuerst die Todten in Christo (die als treue Christen Gestorbenen) auf, wir aber, die wir leben und übrig bleiben, werden verwandelt (sterben nicht) und in den Wolken dem Herrn entgegen in der Luft hingerückt werden, und so bei dem Herrn sein allezeit. Gleich darauf folgt das allgemeine Weltgericht aller Lebendigen und Todten und dann das Ende.*” “*Die Versöhnungslehre der Bible ist, wenn auch ein heidnischer*

which stipulated that non-Christians were permanently cleansed of all sin when they were converted—there was no theological need for continual confession, atonement, and reconciliation. The doctrine of atonement, “though a pagan error, is well-intentioned and innocuous, [and] made the transition to Christianity easier for the people of their time, whose heads were filled with the superstition of the sacrificial system”; nevertheless, it was an outmoded way of interpreting the New Testament. According to the GEP’s interpretation of the Bible, which was based on a progressive revelation of the true meaning of scripture as human knowledge and understanding advance, the need for both atonement and priests had been superseded.

In addition, the physical existence of heaven and hell was refuted by what had been scientifically discovered about the universe, as the editor understood these concepts in 1853. Heaven and hell were better understood as internal conditions, existing within each human being.⁸¹ In 1856 the editor likened this internalized conception of heaven and hell to a struggle between the “good” or “right” (or true, spiritual nature of humans) and “evil” or “wrong” (or that which opposes the spiritual nature).⁸² By equating human nature with godliness, there was no

Irrthum, doch wohlgemeint und unschädlich. Sie hat den Menschen ihrer Zeit, welche die Köpfe vom Aberglauben des Opferwesens voll hatten, den Uebergang zum Christenthume erleichtert, die Opferaltäre umgestürzt und der Anbetung Gottes im Geiste und in der Wahrheit Bahn gebrochen.”

⁸¹ “An die geehrten Leser der Zeitblätter.” “...daß das eine grundfalsche Vorstellung sei, die durch die Beschaffenheit des Weltalls vollkommen und unwidersprechlich widerlegt werde; und daß nach Jese Erklärung das Himmelreich, folglich auch das Reich der Hölle, nicht ein äusserliches und sichtbarres, sondern, inwendig in dem Menschen sei, er möge nun noch auf Erden sein oder der Vater möge ihn nach einer andern Wohnung in sinem großen Vaterhause gerufen haben.”

⁸² “Die Entwicklung in der Religion, Schluss.” “Dieses Verhalten des Menschen nennen wir das ‘Gute’ oder ‘Rechte,’ das Gegenteil ‘Böse’ oder ‘Unrechte.’ Das Gute und Rechte ist hiernach nichts Anderes als der eigentlichen (geistigen) Natur des Menschen gemäss ist; das Böse oder Unrechte aber ist das, was dieser höheren und eigentlichen ‘Menschennatur’

such a thing as an evil nature; every person was only equipped with the spiritual seed implanted by God. Acting against one's true nature caused discomfort, which was sufficient punishment: "there is no need for any reward and no punishment for the good and the bad; they reward and punish themselves."

Ultimately, the GEP editor believed that every person would reach a point when they recognized God because they had become rational enough to realize the true meaning of the gospel: to love yourself, your neighbor, and God. The editor admonished, "We must not be disturbed by the fact that it does not happen to many in this earthly life and does not happen to anyone completely. God has calculated this institution for the whole duration of human existence (*Dasein*)."⁸³ This eschatological perspective helps explain why the editors of the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* railed against missionaries who taught dogmatic, orthodox interpretations of the gospel message yet did not participate in evangelization in Cincinnati or elsewhere. There was no millennial mandate to convert indigenous peoples because there was no literal kingdom of God, and the ability to be converted was limited by human rationality, which would not be perfected until God intervened. In fact, no one would be completely *gebildet* in the *Erddasein*.

Furthermore, the GEP editors had no need to rank the *Völker* because they believed that everyone contained a divine germ that guaranteed universal salvation. The editors could mitigate personal suffering by sharing the truth about good and evil in the pulpit and in their newspaper, but the masses who were uneducated, irrational thinkers (*ungelehrt*) would be impervious to the

entgegen ist." "Es bedarf also gar keines Lohnes und keener Strafe für das Gute und Böse, den beides belohnt und bestraft sich durch sich selbst."

⁸³ "Die Entwicklung in der Religion, Schluss." "Dass es bei Vielen in diesem Erdenleben nicht, und bei keinem vollständig geschieht, dies darf uns nicht befremden, den Gott hat diese Einrichtung für die ganze Dauer des menschlichen Daseins berechnet."

teachings until some future date. By cataloging those *Völker* who were sufficiently rational to respond to the gospel, the editors identified the populations where their denomination's foreign missionaries would be the most effective. The editors combined dimensions of theodicy, eschatology, and the philosophical concept of progress (*Bildung*) to argue that all humans have the same individual capacity for development, and no matter the relative development of each individual or *Volk*, all of humanity would be perfected eventually.

Locating the Jewish Diaspora Among the *Völker*

Unlike the Christian editors, who were optimistic that the world's cultures would eventually be converted to Christianity, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise anticipated the destruction of every *Volk* that rejected Judaism. Instead of viewing humanity as needing to be converted to Judaism, he preached a jeremiad in which humanity strayed further and further from the wisdom imparted by Moses. Because Wise believed that only the Jewish *Volk* would remain in the last days, he saw degeneration in every culture. Instead of creating a hierarchy of *Völker*, Wise scoured the world for Jewish communities, which he thought were descendants of ancient Jews whom God sent as missionaries to convert the Gentile *Völker*. God commanded this Jewish diaspora to acculturate (but remain faithful to Judaism) until the End Times, which would occur when the Jewish *Volk* had become *gebildet* and when God reassembled them in the geopolitical nation of Israel. Thus, for Wise all cultures of the true Jewish *Volk* are coeval. Instead of creating a hierarchy of cultures, Wise measured the progress of the Jewish diaspora to determine when the nation of Israel would be re-founded.

Wise wrote that Christian and Muslim nations were instituted on the principles of the Mosaic Law, yet they were degenerating because the Christian and Muslim *Völker* within their borders had departed from their religious roots. Looking across the globe, Wise saw nations of

people who had all received “the law that was conferred on man at the creation...The Thora [Torah]...was offered to several nations; all of them refused to receive it, till the offer was accepted by the Israelites.”⁸⁴ Since then, all the Gentiles had been degenerating, which Wise supported using a paraphrase of Deuteronomy 11:26-28: “The habitual departure from the ways and commandments of God gradually leads to idolatry and atheism.”⁸⁵ Hence, the immorality that existed throughout history resulted from the Gentiles’ rejection of God’s law. Spanish Catholics of the fourteenth century persecuted the Jews during the Inquisition, and when the Jews fled to Africa, the Muslims “plundered and killed the fugitives, defiled their wives and daughters, and ripped up the bodies of others, in hope of finding some pieces of gold swallowed by them.”⁸⁶ More recently, with the fall of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey and the dissolution of “the power of the Romish hierarchy...in Spain, Switzerland, Sardinia and Mexico,” the new nations were ready to be civilized.⁸⁷ “Asia is open to European civilization, Turkey is Europeanized, and Russia must yield gradually to the golden sway of humanity.” Because the Russian government was “founded on Asiatic autocracy and religious fanaticism,” Russia needed to “bend its head before the might and power of civilization” and adopt the Jewish moral code.⁸⁸ If Spain, Portugal and Italy wanted to progress, Wise advised them to “change their system of medieval inquisition.” These nations had departed from their mosaic roots, but with the changes in regimes, they had a chance to recreate their social systems to cohere with the Torah.

⁸⁴ Wise, “Civilization as Propagated by Judaism.”

⁸⁵ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Exposition of Deuteronomy 11:26-28 (Part II),” *The Israelite*, November 21, 1856.

⁸⁶ Max Lilienthal, “Synopsis of the History of the Israelites, Chapter V,” *The Israelite*, January 8, 1858.

⁸⁷ Wise, “Retrospect,” September 26, 1856.

⁸⁸ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Political News,” *The Israelite*, June 13, 1856.

Even Germany had not progressed sufficiently because political and religious despotism kept the German *Volk* in a degenerated state, but Wise's evaluation of Germany was more complicated than that of other nations. In an article on the progress of Jews living in Germany, he explained the culture's religious significance to Jews:

In Germany the Judaism of Persia is reformed to a universal religion of all civilized men. The universal character of our religion was developed in these epochs, the Prophets, the *Sopherim*, the *Tanutim*, the *Amoraim*, the Philosophers of the middle ages, Moses Mendelssohn and the modern German school. They have succeeded so far as to bring our literature up to public acknowledgement, and with our literature also our principles and doctrines find their way not only into the libraries of the learned, but also into the hearts of reflecting men. This is the part which Germany is destined to enact in the history of Judaism, to develop its universal character for the benefit of mankind.⁸⁹

Germany had spiritual significance for Jews because it was the birthplace of Reform Judaism, and so the German *Volk* were part of God's plan for the enlightenment of the Jews. Wise self-identified as a German intellectual and extolled the religious and educational progress made by German rabbis. But because Jews were not fully emancipated in Germany yet, the German *Volk* was still underdeveloped. He criticized the political and social systems of the German empire, citing "clerical arrogance, antiquated privileges of nobility, [and] religious sectarianism...[which] kept the spirit of the people down [and] divided it in numberless fractions."⁹⁰ This ambiguity toward the German *Volk* continued until the Civil War, when Wise became Americanized.

In September 1856 he looked back over the events of the year and rejoiced that "the past year was one of the greatest that history has recorded for a long time." The fall of Sebastopol at the end of the Crimean War had opened Asia—in particular Turkey and Russia—to the spread of

⁸⁹ Isaac Mayer Wise, "Retrospect," *The Israelite*, September 14, 1855.

⁹⁰ Wise, "Political News," June 13, 1856.

European culture, and the Pope's power was diminished. Wise interpreted these events as progress initiated by God, who "according to the Decalogue...opposes tyranny and despotism, chastises tyrants and oppressors, and helps the oppressed."⁹¹ God's guiding influence could be recognized "by the progress of events, art, science and civilization."⁹²

Regarding the American Indians, Wise did not cover any news regarding Indian wars or skirmishes. He published an anecdote that was meant to shame Christian missionaries, an Indian folk belief that spirits of the dead inhabited birds, and a brief note that the Spanish Catholics had persecuted the Native Americans. Thirdly, in his history of the Jewish settling of America, Wise declared that "the first ambassador between the Indians and the white people" was a Jew, not a Frenchman or a Spaniard.⁹³ He never attempted to associate the Indians with the lost tribes of Israel or draw any other connection between the two *Völker*, except to imply in his anecdote that all humans are children of God. With respect to the blacks in America, Wise did not cover uprisings, cruelty against the slaves, prejudice against the blacks, or any other topic besides the political institution of slavery.

Wise summarized that Asia and Africa had not started progressing; nor had the American Indians, because they still believed superstitions, which were not rational. But did Wise think they had the capacity to ever become *gebildet*? He was generally optimistic that conditions were improving as nations emancipated the Jews and worked to end the oppression of his *Volk*, but he said extremely little about indigenous people. Rather, his analysis of world cultures consisted of evaluating the presence of Jews within each *Volk*. Wise declared that the "universal progress of

⁹¹ Isaac Mayer Wise, "The Feast of Weeks," *The Israelite*, May 29, 1857.

⁹² Isaac Mayer Wise, "Ever Coming," *The Israelite*, December 28, 1860.

⁹³ Wise, "An Epoch in History, Chapter VIII."

humanity is the only means of ameliorating the condition of Israel,” and so he identified the nations in which Jews were emancipated and given civil liberties as a sign of this progress.⁹⁴

While most Christian denominations used missionary reports to track the progress of the civilizing mission, Wise scoured the reports for the diasporic Jewish population. As Eric L. Goldstein notes, nineteenth-century Jews understood themselves to be distinct “not only in cultural particularity but in biology, shared ancestry, and blood.”⁹⁵ Jewish Americans leaders such as Wise described their *Volk* according to both their religion (Judaism) and the culture in which individual Jews lived. Missionaries to indigenous cultures, as well as travelers, often mentioned the presence of Jewish communities in their reports. Wise looked for specific Jewish markers, such as circumcision, the ability to read Hebrew, owning a Torah or other Hebrew scriptures, celebrating the Jewish holidays, keeping kosher, and singing the Shema. Then he assessed whether the people were still faithful Jews or had degenerated into Gentiles.

Wise’s interest in the diaspora related to his eschatological expectations. He taught that in biblical times, Israel had been a unified nation, but “we were dispersed among all nations to build up the grand temple in which all mankind [will] worship the God of truth.”⁹⁶ While in diaspora, the Jews were to temporarily adopt the cultures of the nations in which they resided and be “a nation of priests, the champions of truth, the consecrated servants of the Lord, who were charged to combat against fiction, and to bear the banner of truth.”⁹⁷ Meanwhile the Jews would make “steady and incessant progress” as a *Volk*. When the Jews had developed a

⁹⁴ Wise, “Retrospect,” September 26, 1856.

⁹⁵ Goldstein, “‘Different Blood Flows in Our Veins’: Race and Jewish Self-Definition in the Late Nineteenth Century America,” 29.

⁹⁶ Wise, “No Talmud.”

⁹⁷ Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Theory of the Political Laws of Moses (Part II),” *The Israelite*, September 26, 1856.

“universal character,” God would reassemble them, and the Jews would shed their “peculiarly national garments” and be reinstated as the nation of Israel. Although the missionaries traveled to these areas to make Christian converts, Wise read the reports and evaluated the diasporic Jews’ effectiveness in awakening the Gentiles to the truth. As he explained, “Israel was chosen an agent of Providence, to promulgate the divine truth, the basis of which we have already written, and accelerate the progress of mankind toward perfection in truth, justice and fraternity...until these doctrines of truth will have been adopted by the Gentiles.”⁹⁸ Reading the political and cultural signs of the times, Wise waited for human reason to triumph over false revelation, and he measured the progress toward the reunification of the nation of Israel, when God would call all the Jews out of diaspora and establish his kingdom.

Not all of Wise’s information came from Christians. Wise provided at least one example from the *Weekly Gleaner* regarding the possible presence of Jews in Africa. This newspaper was founded in 1857 by Rabbi Julius Eckman in San Francisco, and it “became one of the primary sources of information on western Jewish communal life for Jews living in the eastern United States and Europe.”⁹⁹ In this particular article, a Christian missionary named Rev. Dr. Phillip passed along information from two conversations with Jews. The first came from a Russian Jew, who reportedly discovered “a great number of Israelites inhabiting the oases of Sahara.”¹⁰⁰ They consisted of “100s of Israelites...with numerous synagogues, and about 100 copies of the law, written upon parchment, some of which were more ancient than any he had ever seen.” The

⁹⁸ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Jewish Principles and Doctrines, II,” *The Israelite*, July 24, 1857.

⁹⁹ Ava F. Kahn, ed., “Gleanings from the Far West: A Prospectus,” in *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849-1880*, American Jewish Civilization (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 212, <https://books.google.com/books?id=fgDd6gpGJrcC>.

¹⁰⁰ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Jewish Negroes,” *The Israelite*, April 3, 1857.

missionary also spoke with a German Jew, who found “a large number of Jewish negroes” living near Bambara [West Africa]. The West Africans “have a parchment with the Law of Moses, like the previous group, but also know of the prophets, although they don’t have any writings, and also have some passages ‘derived from the psalms.’” The Christian missionary was surprised to find Jews who were African in appearance, and when asked about this contradiction, the so-called African Jews explained,

After the destruction of Jerusalem, at the time of the first captivity, some of their ancestors having neither goods nor lands, fled to the desert...nearly all the women died along the way. The children of Ham received them with kindness, and by inter-marriage with their daughters, who were black, they communicated their color to their children. These children became, generation by generation, of a deeper hue, until no difference of color now distinguishes the children of Shem from those of Ham. The form of their features, however, is very different from that of the negroes around them.¹⁰¹

The missionary was concerned about the biological features of the Africans claiming to be Jewish, but Wise extracted religious data from this exchange, instead of racial details.¹⁰² Jews were commanded by God to refrain from marrying outside the faith, so intermarriage with the local tribe indicated to Wise that this was a corrupted group of Jews. Furthermore, he concluded that while both groups retained some vestiges of Judaic practice, “these Jews have mingled some of the superstitions of ‘oral law’...with those of their neighbors, the Mohammedans and the heathens.” Their manuscripts could be useful to Jewish scholarship, but these people needed to

¹⁰¹ Wise.

¹⁰² The effects of climate on this group that had presumably lived in Africa for centuries was not considered. The fact that there were physical variations in the Jews living in the mid-nineteenth century was overlooked, suggesting a form of racialized prejudice. It is unclear whether the Africans, the Russian or German Jew, the Christian missionary, or Rabbi Eckman used the language of the curse of Ham. The African Jews seem to have a patriarchal understanding of Jewish lineage.

benefit from “intercourse with the civilized world.” There was no doubt that diasporic Jews had settled there long ago, but they were no longer Jews.

Wise also provided an evaluation of a North African tribe called the *Bachuzim* who claimed to be nomadic Jews, according to information from Rev. Gabriel Netter, the rabbi of Constantine. The tribe claimed to have lived in Africa since the year 1500 and made their living as nomads trading luxury items with the Arabs. The *Bachuzim* supported their claim by noting that outsiders recognize them as Jews, as they are “frequently molested, on account of their being of Jewish descent, for which they are often taxed oppressively.”¹⁰³ Wise evaluated the “moral and religious condition” of the *Bachuzim*, denigrating their nomadic life, which “is not calculated to develop the energies or genius of man”; the “low state” of their intellect; and their lack of a civilized society, which is necessary to provide a proper education. He praised them for being “honest and law-abiding, hospitable and friendly. In all these respects they stand above their neighbors.” Yet in terms of their religious status, Wise concluded that because of “bigamy, divorce, lack of education, no “Shochet,” [and] illiteracy...their religion is mostly a matter of tradition.” Disagreeing with the Rabbi of Constantine, Wise said this was a degenerated group of former Jews. Despite these three reports of Jewish *Volk* in Africa, Wise declared that the Jewish diaspora on the African continent was defunct.

Wise was very interested in the possibility that there were still Jews living in Asia, and he provided articles on the latest evidence for several years. Using a Jesuit missionary report by Father Gaubil and Father Domenge, who had interacted with the self-identifying descendants of the original Jews, “the Israelites came first in to the Empire of China under the dynasty of

¹⁰³ Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Bachuzim, or Nomadic Jews of North Africa,” *The Israelite*, January 16, 1857.

Tcheou, which governed affairs from 1122 to 249 B.C.” and remained there into the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁴ A month later, based on information provided to the *San Francisco Herald* by a missionary named Rev. Schuck, Wise informed his readers that while there may have been prominent Jews in China at one point, “the airs [heirs] of the Jews gradually declined, and many of them became the followers of Mohammed, as has happened to the Jews of Peking, and to many others.”¹⁰⁵

In 1857 Wise provided his readers with an excerpt from Emanuel Hecht’s *Synopsis of the History of the Israelites* that claimed there were black Jews in China. This book, translated and edited by Lilienthal and serialized by Wise in *The Israelite*, outlined how sixth century Jewish refugees from a vast area covering Persia to India migrated to Portugal, until they were expelled in the sixteenth century. Then they migrated with other Jews from Yemen and western Asian cities to China. “Having established themselves in the provinces conquered by the Europeans, the young men purchased black slaves and married them, after having converting them to the Jewish religion. That is the origin of the black Jews.”¹⁰⁶ This report served to link the black Jews to the Babylonian exilic period, strengthening their claim to membership in the Jewish *Volk*. The book then evaluated “the colony of the *Bene Israel* in East India,” which also “seems to be of Persian origin,” based on a study of their language, social customs, and religious praxis. In 1858 Wise addressed the report by Christian missionary Dr. Buchanan who in 1806 visited both black and white Jews still living in India. Wise intimated that none of the blacks were actually Jews, noting that they had no priests or Levites, and that the whites “never intermarried

¹⁰⁴ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Jews in China,” *The Israelite*, April 6, 1855.

¹⁰⁵ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Jews in China,” *The Israelite*, May 11, 1855.

¹⁰⁶ Max Lilienthal, “Synopsis of the History of the Israelites, Chapter IV,” *The Israelite*, January 1, 1858.

with their black brethren and looked upon them as an inferior people.”¹⁰⁷ Biological race (skin color) seemed to be an important marker of Jewishness, yet Wise used phenotypic evidence to prove cultural disinheritance. He demonstrated that Jewish laws (such as the injunction against intermarriage) were violated and concluded that the black Jews in India were not truly part of the Jewish *Volk*.¹⁰⁸

When Presbyterian missionaries reported that the Afghan people might be “a portion of the Ten Tribes of Israel,” Wise responded, “there is nothing except their obscure tradition which entitles to the hypothesis of their Israelitish origin.”¹⁰⁹ The ten tribes were scattered, some remained in Africa or Asia, some remained Jews, and “those who were addicted to idolatry were amalgamated with the nations among whom they lived. Several of them are yet in the interior of Africa and on the mountains of Tartary.” He called for intellectuals abandon the quest to find the ten lost tribes of the ancient Israelites, which were not among the tribes of the known world, “although some isolated tribes might be found in the unexplored regions of Asia and Africa. The claims of the Afghans to Israelitish descent most likely rest on the same ground as that of...the American Indians, who some years ago were thought to be remainders of the ten tribes.” By 1858, Wise could find no evidence of Jews currently living in either Asia or Africa, except possibly some white-skinned Jews in India.

In the antebellum era, American Jews also began referring to themselves as a nation, a term that since the American Revolution connoted loyalty to a political body. Jews employed the term when they “wanted to express a sense of identity beyond religion...describing

¹⁰⁷ Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Jews in India,” *The Israelite*, April 2, 1858.

¹⁰⁸ This raises an interesting question about whether the ban on intermarriage with the Canaanites in Deut. 7:1-4 was based on concerns about racial mixing. That question will not be discussed in this paper.

¹⁰⁹ Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Ten Tribes,” *The Israelite*, April 10, 1857.

themselves as a ‘dismembered’ nation, a ‘portable’ nation, a nation ‘independent of every soil.’”¹¹⁰ In *The Israelite*, Wise explained this link between religion and nation in terms of the teleology of Judaism. He interpreted the prophetic books of the Bible, looking for clues to diasporic colonies and to extant Gentile nations who would ally with the Jews in the end times. He revealed his findings in a column called “The Signs of the Times.” In an exegesis of Ezekiel 38:10-12, Wise conjectured that Abraham’s grandsons from his second wife, Keturah, “settled in Hindostan, and possibly established the religion of their father Abraham, or Abram,” but they “deteriorated into the doctrines and dogmas of Brama; and they may probably compose a portion of the army of Tarshish, who appear to be the protectors or allies of the Jews.”¹¹¹ Gog and Magog, who would fight against the Jews in the final days, descended from Noah’s son “Japhet,” and among those descendants was Gomer, whose son “is designated by all the ancient writers, as the ancestor of most of the German tribes.” For Wise, prophetic scripture provided historical facts about the establishment of Jewish colonies around the globe and strategic information about future allies and opponents. His ambiguity toward Germany can be understood as a tension between the religious advances made by German Jews and biblical predictions that the Germans would one day betray the Jews.

Wise’s interest in assessing the authenticity of diasporic Jewish praxis was not unique. D. E. de Lara provided his own evaluation of the condition of the Jewish *Volk* in an address given on the ninth day of Ab, which Wise reprinted. The speech encompassed Asia and Africa (“the Oriental and African Jews are not only strict observers of the laws of Moses, but hold the traditions in equal veneration”), Europe (“with the exception of the Polish [they] are either only

¹¹⁰ Goldstein, “‘Different Blood Flows in Our Veins’: Race and Jewish Self-Definition in the Late Nineteenth Century America,” 36.

¹¹¹ Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Signs of the Times, Ezekiel 38,” *The Israelite*, June 22, 1855.

strict observers of the Mosaic laws or even quite neglectful of most of even these”), and America (“on the condition of the Jews in this country I abstain altogether from making any remarks for obvious reasons”). As a member of the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, Wise carefully examined the available ethnological and religious data and joined the discussion of the progress of the Jewish *Volk*.

The Ninth of Ab afforded the rabbis an especially poignant moment for evaluating the condition of the Jews because for Reform Jews, the day associated the final destruction of the Jerusalem temple with a messianic conception of the nation of Israel. According to de Lara,

All the nations of the earth have either ceased to exist as nations altogether, or have become mixed or amalgamated with other nations—the Jewish nation alone exists as a nation, thanks to the peculiar nature of the Mosaic institutions... and particularly to the three great bonds of national union: circumcision (on the eighth day), intermarriage [within Judaism], and the preservation and culture of the Hebrew language and literature. For so long as these continue to exist, so long must the nation continue to exist as a distinct people, distinct both physically and intellectually, both morally and socially.¹¹²

On the Ninth of Ab, Jews remembered the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and for Reform Jews the day promised the restoration of a Jewish theocracy in the future. For this reason, having a kind of global census of the Jews provided a metric for assessing the immediacy of the End Times.

According to Rabbi David Einhorn, “Reformed Judaism beholds in the cessation of the sacrificial service the termination of a special nationality and the scattering of the Jews among all nations the fundamental conditions for the fulfilment of their mission among mankind. Only after the destruction of Jerusalem was it possible for Israel to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; a conception which even in the Talmud is intimated in the saying, ‘On the day of the

¹¹² D. E. de Lara, “The Ninth Day of Ab,” *The Israelite*, August 10, 1855.

destruction of the Temple the Messiah was born.”¹¹³ Wise identified that messiah as the Jewish *Volk* in 1855 when he declared,

The nation of Israel is the savior of mankind, it was crucified thousand times between the lowest criminals to take away the sins and follies of mankind. Thousand times the executioners divided among themselves by lot, the cloths of which dying Israelites were divested. Thousand times Israel was buried, and thousand times it threw open its graves, to rise to life and light. We know of no individual, of no congregation who have to accomplish this sublime task; the nation is charged with the messianic duty, and therefore the nation must remain one and undivided, until all nations have become one Israel.¹¹⁴

The following year he reiterated, “Israel, so history teaches, was dispersed, to expiate the sins of humanity, to redeem them from superstition, injustice and fiction. Israel is the Messiah sent forth to the whole world to teach the divine Law to all nations. Israel was crucified a thousand times, and a thousand times it resurrected to unfurl again the banner of the Lord upon all heights.”¹¹⁵ Whereas Christians believed Jesus was the messiah whose death and resurrection removed the penalty of sin, Reform Jews in the antebellum era claimed that the nation of Israel performed that role. Wise rejected Christians’ messianic doctrine “not only because its theology contains many imperfections, but chiefly because its MAN is imperfect, a sinful wretched being which depends on impulses outside of himself, over which he has no command.”¹¹⁶ According to Wise, “All men are elected to become perfect, for each of them is an image of God. Every man is gifted with freedom of choice,” but every human succumbed to sin. Therefore, no individual human could be a savior. Salvation was found within “a code of ethics more or less

¹¹³ Max Landsberg and Kaufmann Kohler, “Ninth Day of Ab,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, accessed May 29, 2019, www.jewishencyclopedia.com.

¹¹⁴ Wise, “No Talmud.”

¹¹⁵ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Our Sins and the Sins of Our Fathers,” *The Israelite*, September 26, 1856.

¹¹⁶ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Jewish Principles and Doctrines, IV,” *The Israelite*, August 14, 1857.

fully acknowledged by a civilized nation, as the only basis of liberty and civilization.” While every person was capable of being *gebildet*, only those who followed the Mosaic law and were members of the Jewish *Volk* would achieve that condition.

Wise’s Passover address in 1856 declared that when the Hebrews were released from their bondage to Egypt, “the savior of mankind emerged from its doom of Egyptian tyranny... Israel the fountain head, from which the pure and refreshing water of godliness and truth flows continually, which forms into systems to the happiness and prosperity of mankind. This fountain head was dug on the day when Israel was redeemed from Egyptian bondage, and this day is the feast of Passover.” Wise promoted a national identity for the Jewish *Volk* that incorporated contemporary religious themes like messianism and slavery—a triumphal narrative that gave meaning to their present suffering and antisemitism, as well as a vision for the future state of Israel. Instead of asserting a new national homeland for Reform Judaism in America, in the antebellum era Wise described how the ancient nation of Israel was a fountain that had never stopped flowing and would again be established terrestrially in Palestine.

In an annual Sukkot article, Wise reminded the Jews that “the universal aim of religion...is brotherly love, union, and peace.” They would continue to celebrate Sukkot “until the nations be united before God, fraternized in purity, and tied together by the bands of joy, until poverty and misery be exiled from society by universal charity.”¹¹⁷ This united nation would be exclusive to Jews and the result of “steady and incessant progress, that Judaism develops gradually its universal character, divests itself of its peculiarly national garment, in the same ration [ratio] as the Gentiles are saved from their erroneous doctrines and inherited misconceptions...This is the messianic idea of the prophets.” During the Feast of Weeks the

¹¹⁷ Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Feast of Booths,” *The Israelite*, September 28, 1855.

following year, he added that in the end, only the Jewish *Volk* would remain. At that time, the Jews “will all be united before God in rendering praise to Him for the instruction conferred on Israel for the benefit of mankind. Then there will be one great fraternity of all men before God; ‘That day God will be One and His name will be One.’”¹¹⁸ In that day, the Shema would be fulfilled and the words recited by the Jewish *Volk* for millennia would come to fruition. God would be united with his chosen people, who were the true missionaries to the world. All those who had remained steadfast in their faith and practice, as laid out by Moses, would be one people, all national identity would cease to exist, and one pure religion would remain. As Wise plainly stated, “Moses dethroned the gods of antiquity and put a stop to the hierarchy in heaven and on earth.”¹¹⁹ There was no hierarchy of pagan gods and there was no hierarchy of humans.

According to Wise’s understanding of the future Kingdom of God on earth, the diasporic Jews would reassemble in the geographic locale of the biblical nation of Israel, Jerusalem would be restored as its capital, and the Gentile *Völker* would either convert to Judaism or be destroyed. For now, the Jews were culturally diverse in order to witness to the Gentile *Völker* in their own nations, but eventually the Jews would shed their particular ethnicities for a fully Jewish identity. Thus, Wise presumed that the Jewish *Volk* was the most developed of all the world’s cultures and was well on its way to becoming *gebildet*. Every other *Volk*’s capacity to become *gebildet* was determined by its ability to recognize the Jewish *Volk* as God’s chosen people and to return to Judaism, the true religion of God.

Using data gleaned from missionary reports, Jewish periodicals, and other Reform rabbi’s speeches, Wise examined the world’s cultures for remnants of the Jews that God had sent to live

¹¹⁸ Wise, “The Feast of Weeks.”

¹¹⁹ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Exposition of Deuteronomy 11:26-28 (Part I),” *The Israelite*, November 14, 1856.

among the Gentiles as missionaries of the truth. Wise identified authentic Jews only in the nations that had emancipated their Jews and provided them with civil liberties because they followed the moral code laid out by Moses. Those *Völker* who did not recognize the Jews as God's chosen people were the slowest to emancipate the Jews, oppressed the Jews via civil laws, or rejected the theological truths of Judaism. Eventually, the diasporic Jews living among them became degraded by their interactions with these Gentile *Völker* and were acculturated into those non-Jewish peoples. Wise interpreted Jewish holidays in terms of eschatology, which he used to justify his evaluation of the world's cultures. Without a contingent of Jewish citizens, those cultures lost the salvific influence of the Jewish people, as well as their capacity to become *gebildet*. In the future when God established his kingdom on earth, he would destroy them for being blind to theological truths. For Wise and other Reform rabbis, there was no need to create a hierarchy of the *Völker* because they would all be eradicated.

Interestingly, despite Wise's reticence to write about biological race, he did include three pieces over the years that were written by respected rabbis and national speakers who addressed race in a manner that was more typical of the Anglo-American discourse. Wise did not comment on these writings—he merely reprinted them—and yet, they substantiate the belief among some antebellum-era Jews that only white-skinned, Western European, Ashkenazi Jews would survive the End Times.

In the first instance, in 1855 Wise printed a speech given by “the Rev. Dr. Mensor of Dublin, Ireland [and] read before the Philosophical Society of Trinity College.”¹²⁰ Although Wise gives him no introduction, Meyer Mensor was an orthodox rabbi who was hired by the

¹²⁰ Meyer Mensor, “A Theory on the Change of Color among the Human Race by the Rev. Dr. Mensor of Dublin, Ireland. Read before the Philosophical Society of Trinity College, Dublin,” *The Israelite*, July 13, 1855.

Chicago congregation K.A.M. in 1858 “to put a modern but traditional face on the synagogue.”¹²¹ When Mensor was chosen to serve at the Chicago congregation, “Dr. Wise announced the election... ‘with much gratification, not only because it shows the earnest desire of the congregation to contribute their part to the improvement and advancement of the cause of Israel—but also because the Rev. Dr. Mensor is a man of extensive learning and decided principles, a moderate reformer of the legal school, and a man who has acquired already a fair reputation among our literary people.’”¹²² In the reprinted speech, Mensor described how “Adam’s color was of a fair hue, and the mark which God put on Cain was, he changed the fair color of Cain into a dark one.”¹²³ He went on to say that the black Africans descended from Ham, who “married from the wicked race of Cain.” This was both an indictment of intermarriage and a biblical explanation of the source of phenotypic diversity. The descendants of Seth, “to which Noah belonged,” and those of Cain intermarried and produced “the range of colors” between black and white. Mensor also quoted a recent interview in a missionary journal with a “Jewish negro” living in the African desert who claimed his ancestors were Jews who fled the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and intermarried with African women.

The following year Wise printed an article from the *Westminster Review* on the “Jewish Complexion” that quoted Morris Raphall and Isaac Leeser. The article claimed,

The Jews have a history more authentic than that of any other people; their antiquity as a race is indisputable, and their identity equally so. They are cosmopolites, and still sacredly faithful in all religions to the religious usages of their forefathers, one of which is the prohibition of intermarriages with Gentile

¹²¹ Jeffrey S. Gurock, ed., *Orthodox Jews in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), <https://books.google.com/books?id=MKyLmWOSCPoC>.

¹²² Hyman L. Meites, ed., *History of the Jews of Chicago* (Chicago: Jewish Historical Society of Illinois, 1924), 65–66, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00000592/00001>.

¹²³ Mensor, “A Theory on the Change of Color among the Human Race by the Rev. Dr. Mensor of Dublin, Ireland. Read before the Philosophical Society of Trinity College, Dublin.”

people. Thus, they combine in themselves a series of conditions, that convert them into a touchstone, by which to test ethnological theories.¹²⁴

Leeser, who had traveled extensively throughout the world and published his experiences in the *Occident*, was quoted, “All Jews that ever I beheld are identical in features.” According to Raphall, the people in Malabar (a region of Kerala, India) who claim to be black Jews are actually “Hindoos.”

In 1861 Wise reprinted a speech given by R.J. De Cordova, who was a “well-known American humorist and orator, who served as lecturer in English at New York City’s Temple Emanu-El” during the Civil War period.¹²⁵ In an exegesis on Genesis 10:33, Cordova states,

We find an abstract statement of the earliest divisions of mankind into national distinctions... And this classification so took the form of positive knowledge of all the bearings of the subject that not only were names accorded to the various races, but the place of each in a graduated scale of ability and usefulness was established as a clearly demonstrable and a clearly demonstrated fact. Thus we know that the Cis-Caucasian race is the most able and most useful of all—the Asiatic coming next—the Mongol next—the American [Indian] next—and the African or Negro lowest under all. These several races have likewise and with equal certainty been subdivided and separately classed, each subdivision being found to contain varieties of feeling, thought, appearance, and even color, distinguishing it from all the others.¹²⁶

Cordova and the other two rabbis said what Wise was unwilling to say in the first seven years of *The Israelite*. The biblical record proved that phenotypic race had existed since the offspring of Adam and Eve, and a diversity of nations or *Volk* was present since the days of the tenth chapter of Genesis. These variations occurred because of intermarriage, which was prohibited by God, and the offspring of those conjunctions were not pure Jews, due to their corruption by Gentiles.

¹²⁴ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Jewish Complexion,” *The Israelite*, July 31, 1856.

¹²⁵ Bertram W. Korn, “The HaHam DeCordova of Jamaica,” *American Jewish Archives*, no. November (1966): 141–54, americanjewisharchives.org.

¹²⁶ Raphael J. De Cordova, “A Lecture. On War, Foreign and Civil, and the Blessings of Union and Peace,” *The Israelite*, January 18, 1861.

Cordova articulated a hierarchy of the original four races, but Wise only addressed the national, or cultural, differences among the Volk that developed long after Cain was dead.

Although Wise hardly ever directly mentioned biological race or racial hierarchies, he periodically used other authoritative voices from Judaism to teach his readers about race. Acting as a kind of censor, he vetted reports that contained information supporting his understanding of the *Bildungsideal* as exclusively Jewish, both culturally and religiously. Through the words of a speech given by D. E. de Lara, Wise explained that “all the nations of the earth have either ceased to exist as nations altogether, or have become mixed or amalgamated with other nations, —the Jewish nation alone exists as a nation, thanks to the peculiar nature of the Mosaic institutions...circumcision (on the eighth day), intermarriage [among the Jewish *Volk*] and the preservation and culture of the Hebrew language and literature.”¹²⁷ Using these other voices, Wise informed his readers that blacks, Indians, and the Chinese were uncivilized, and that there were no Jews remaining in any of these *Volk* because they had been corrupted by acculturating into Gentile nations.

Only the descendants of Noah’s son, Japheth, who still practiced an unadulterated version of Judaism and had not intermarried with Gentiles were part of the Jewish nation that was protected and blessed by God. Regarding the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, the Spanish *Volk* was tainted by Catholics and imperialists. Authentic Judaism resides in the wisdom of the German rabbis who lead the Reform movement. Thus, when Wise spoke of the triumphalism of the Jewish *Volk*, he referred to Jews of Western European descent, and Ashkenazi Jews in particular, although he never said so explicitly. By reading *The Israelite* over time, however, American Jews would be educated in this rhetoric by the start of the Civil War.

¹²⁷ de Lara, “The Ninth Day of Ab.”

Conclusion

By the outbreak of the Civil War the Catholic editors had reached the same the negative conclusions as the Anglo-Americans about the capacity of the *Indianer* and the *Neger* to be *gebildet*. The Methodist editor was cautiously optimistic that every *Volk* would be perfected and saved from hell, but he awaited more ethnological data on three continents before making his final assessment. The GEP editor was confident that all of humanity would be *gebildet* eventually because everyone would spend eternity with God, who would then perfect humanity himself. The Reform Jewish editor believed every *Volk* initially had the capacity to become *gebildet*, but because the Gentiles had rejected the witness of Moses and the diasporic Jews, only the faithful Jews would become *gebildet*.

The editors' idealistic philosophical belief that all humans had the capacity to become *gebildet* was tempered by their exclusive religious claims and their eschatological expectations. Based on ethnological evidence (largely from missions reports), biblical exegesis, and German philosophy, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* created visions of the kingdom of God that included certain of the world's *Völker* and excluded others. Unlike Anglo-Americans of their day, these German clergy-editors did not create racialized hierarchies because each concluded that only *gebildete Völker* would survive the End Times. By aligning themselves with the wrong religious system or by clinging to irrational beliefs about God, certain *Völker* would never reach the potential that God had intended, and the consequence for that ignorance was separation from God (either by being physically eradicated or being consigned to hell). Only the GEPs fully incorporated the idealism of *Bildung* with their theology by providing a doctrinal justification for the full and complete development of every *Volk* created by God at the Tower of Babel.

Chapter 5

Transnational Contributions to Defining the German *Volk*

The editors in Cincinnati considered themselves members of the German *Volk*, but they also identify with particular religious communities. Each editor's denomination made exclusive claims about religious truth, which reinforces the idea that they saw themselves as distinct religious groups within the German community, each claiming religious authority through exclusive truth and through access to the divine. If the German *Volk* were the most civilized in the geo-political sphere, so were the Catholics or the Protestants or the Jews in the religious world. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* worked to bring about the *Bildungsideal* and create an identity for the German *Volk*, but the editors vehemently disagreed on one aspect of their *Volk* identity: religion. None of the editors envisioned Germans as a religiously plural *Volk*. In fact, each editor's denomination made exclusive claims about religious truth because they saw themselves as distinct religious groups competing for dominance within the German community, each claiming religious authority through access to the divine. They claimed that the German *Volk* was the most civilized in the geo-political sphere, and each clergy-editor averred that only his denomination was authentically German.

As newspaper editors and clergy, each man saw himself as contributing to the expression of a German *Volk* that claimed a particular denominational history and literature, in addition to their language, literature, and culture. And each editor emphasized a different expression of that *Volk* in his newspaper: religion for the Methodists and German Evangelical Protestants, literature for the Catholics, and history for the Jews. These newspapers functioned as more than a news source or ethnic binder for immigrants. The denominational papers were not the product of mere human hands; nor did they attempt to sway public opinion; rather, they developed the

Volk by expressing truths that were contained within the *Volkgeist*. The newspapers were a vehicle for expressing the distinct religio-Germanic *Volk* essence that was already present in every one of the readers, but because the editors were more educated than the typical German individual, they were more *gebildet*, and so they were qualified to educate the masses.

Once a *Volk* had acknowledged the god of the Bible, was becoming educated in the proper way, and lived in a civilized manner, then enough of the corrupted ways adopted during heathenism had been stripped away to develop the *Volkgeist*. At that point the *Volk* was able to return to its roots and develop that distinct, inner essence that defined the people. Speaking and writing in their indigenous language, writing down the history and stories that were specific to the *Volk*, and writing literature that expressed the *Volk* essence was necessary to progress as a *Volk*. All of the editors were all concerned that their readers would skim the newspaper without establishing an understanding of the truth printed on the pages. The editors each believed that they had provided the most efficacious knowledge, which was just waiting to be internalized by the readers. This ripe fruit at the readers' fingertips would propel the German *Volk* in Cincinnati ever closer toward the goal of *Bildung*.

Moreover, the editors were explicit about their intentions for the readership and expected that by explaining the positive role of the newspaper in that progress, readers would eagerly participate in their own education, as well as in the progress of their religious denomination in America. If the role of the clergy was to produce civilized individuals, the clergy-editor played a vital role in enabling his religio-Germanic *Volk* to become *gebildet*. Since each editor believed that his denomination was the one true religion that would be exclusively established in the kingdom of God, these editors saw themselves as leaders of their denominations and, by extension, the cultural guardians of the German *Volk*. They applied the religious teleology of

Bildung (*Bildungsideal*) to their providential work as clergy-editors and used their newspapers to advance their German denominations to the *gebildet* state that was revered as the pinnacle of human existence. The four editors competed with each other, maintaining a rhetoric of improvement but also making exclusive claims about the religious identity of the German *Volk*. In Germany debates raged on about whether Jews or Turks or Gypsies could be true Germans, and Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* extended those debates across the Atlantic Ocean.

Claiming the German Roots of Methodism

William Nast saw the development of religion as the most important cultural product for his readers. Because he was the founder of a new denomination for German *Volk*, he needed to not only train them in the doctrines of Methodism, but also describe the religion as German, rather than Anglo-American. Nast converted to Methodism from Lutheranism, the denomination most readily associated with Germans since the Protestant Reformation, but he had a difficult converting other German immigrants, as the slow growth of the church demonstrates. In the first few years of publication, he printed weekly front-page articles explicating scriptures that were foundational to his readers' new evangelical faith, such as the difference between "having sin" and "doing sin" in 1 John 3:9.¹ More importantly, he described Methodism as an extension of German culture, not merely compatible with it.

As was demonstrated in a previous chapter, Nast needed to use preachers who were relatable to the newly arriving Germans in order to successfully convert them to an Anglo-American denomination. He did this by insisting to the MEC that his evangelists needed to preach in the German language and retain cultural customs that signaled their close association with the Fatherland. This was more than a savvy evangelism tactic, however; maintaining the

¹ Nast, "Gedanken über 2. Timotheus 3,5."

German language and customs was also a way of preserving the German *Volk* when the immigrants were living amidst the American *Volk*. To convince the German immigrants that they were not acculturating by adopting a British or American religion when they converted to Methodism, Nast used *Der Christliche Apologete* to present an apology of what he thought of as a German denomination that progressed from Lutheranism.

By translating all of the MEC documents into the German language, Nast made Methodism seem like a German religion. While most of his constituents were fluent in German but not English, this was admittedly a means of sharing church statutes with a congregation that could not otherwise access them, but conducting services in German gave Methodism an ethnic identity. In 1849 Nast translated the *General Rules of the Discipline* (or *Die Lehre und Kirchenordnung der Bischöfl. Methodistenkirche*). His translation of the *Discipline* is faithful to the English-language version but was printed in a Gothic typeface like every other German book of the day and contained no English words. Later he also translated hymn lyrics and tracts. In 1868, at the behest of his German pastors, Nast created an official catechism, which was unheard of in the MEC, but which was “examined and is highly recommended by competent judges,” and a resolution passed at the General Conference to allow the Western Book Agents to print his catechism.² By the time Nast was done, the German Methodist Church had its own complete set of authoritative texts.

Nast’s explanation of camp meetings is a more telling example of how he taught his readers that Methodist customs had their roots in German culture. The German editors were all wary of the radical, socialist, atheistic, free-thinking 48ers who immigrated to Cincinnati at the

² William L. Harris, ed., *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 1868), 334.

mid-century. And the Germans, as well as many Americans, were leery of the fanatical goings-on at camp meetings on the frontier. Because Ohio was part of that frontier, the threat from such uncivilized behavior seemed even more real. The typical kinds of behavior at frontier revivals that were documented by Barton Stone and preserved by historian Sydney Ahlstrom included jerking, falling down, dancing, running, barking, and raucous singing that “silenced every thing, and attracted the attention of all.”³ These MEC revival tactics were hardly the kinds of behavior exhibited by a civilized German. Yet Nast was not deterred.

From 1844 through 1856, Nast published notices of upcoming *Lagerversammlungen* (camp meetings) every summer in the German language. He also printed reports of past camp meetings when German missionaries provided them. He obviously expected his congregants to participate in this evangelical opportunity, and in 1857 he published a German-language tractate, or treatise, on the subject. He opened his work with the admission, “Of all the liturgical practices that are particular to the Methodist Church, none provokes more offense than the camp meeting.”⁴ He explained that he was hardly surprised, therefore, that Germans scoffed at Methodism’s distinctive claims to being a “true religion of the heart” and having a zeal for God, and they dismissed “*den Geist der Religion*” as religious “fanaticism” and “enthusiasm.” However, according to Nast, the practice established in the Methodist Church by John Wesley had roots that extended to the Fatherland, as well. Concomitant with Wesley but on another continent, Nast inserted the famous German preacher and evangelist Ernst Gottlieb Woltersdorf (1725-1761) into the history of camp meetings. Nast situated the actions of both of these

³ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 434–35.

⁴ *Sammlung von Traktaten*, vol. 2 (Cincinnati: Swormstedt & A. Poe, 1857), 1. “*Unter den gottesdienstlichen Gebräuchen, welche der Methodistenkirch eigenthümlich sind, hat wohl keiner mehr Anstoß erregt, als die Lagerversammlungen.*” “*...wahrer Herzensreligion...Fanatismus...Schwärmerei.*”

preachers in the traditions of the Early Church. He compared the camp meetings on the American frontier with biblical accounts of Jesus' outdoor evangelism in Matthew 14:21 and John 6:10, in which thousands of attendees heard the gospel message and were converted.

According to other sources, Ernst Woltersdorf was educated at Halle, converted to Lutheranism, kept in close contact with the Moravians in Herrnhut, wrote many hymns, and ran an orphanage in Bunzlau.⁵ Nast, however, told a different story of a man who “burned with love for poor souls. He was not content to preach and work only in the church (where he often produced great revivals), but as we find in his life story, he also erected altars among the green trees in the wild to call the sinners to Jesus and to build up God's *Volk*.”⁶ Nast gleaned this information from an autobiography in an edition of Woltersdorf's Psalms, which mentioned a memorial plaque on a fence in Bunzlau that marked his “wilderness temple.” According to Nast's interpretation, “Here we see an example of a camp meeting in the middle of Germany, and this is just one example—we don't know how many more existed that were never recorded.” Jesus, Woltersdorf, and Wesley created a lineage of men who were committed to saving lost

⁵ John McClintock and James Strong, “Ernst Gottlieb Woltersdorf,” in *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (Harper & Brothers, 1891), https://books.google.com/books?id=t_1MAQAAMAAJ; Ernst Gottlieb Woltersdorf, *Fliegender Brief evangelischer Worte an die Jugend*, 4th ed. (Dresden: Justus Raumann, 1854), <https://books.google.com/books?id=DXU9AAAACAAJ>; Karl Rudolf Hagenbach, *History of the Church in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, trans. John F. Hurst, vol. 1 (New York: C. Scribner & Company, 1869), <https://books.google.com/books?id=HoQvAAAAAYAAJ>; Cornelia Kück, “Woltersdorf, Ernst Gottlieb,” in *Religion Past and Present*, April 1, 2011, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/religion-past-and-present/woltersdorf-ernst-gottlieb-SIM_026423?s.num=16.

⁶ *Sammlung von Traktaten*, 2:6–7. “...brannte vor Liebe für arme Seelen; er begnügte sich nicht allein, in der Kirche (wo er oft große Erweckungen hervorbrachte) zu predigen und zu wirken, sondern, wie wir in seiner Lebensgeschichte finden, er errichtete auch Altäre unter den grünen Bäumen in der freien Natur, um Sünder zu Jesu zu rufen und das Volk Gottes zu erbauen.” “Hier sehen wir eine Lagerversammlung mitten in Deutschland, und dieß ist ein Beispiel, deren es vielleicht noch viele giebt, die nicht aufgezeichnet und auf uns gekommen sind.”

souls and edifying Christians through outdoor preaching, which could reach a much greater number of people than a church service.

Having associated camp meetings with the German *Volk*, Nast proved that he followed in Woltersdorf's footsteps when he preached in the marketplace to immigrants who refused to enter his church. Then Nast spent several pages of the treatise explaining the very orderly procedures of German camp meetings in the American West, which consisted of regular prayer, preaching, and meals. The civilized German *Volk* held camp meetings that contrasted with anything untoward that may be happening at Anglo-American meetings.

By endorsing a particular form of camp meetings and also by engaging in outdoor preaching himself, Nast portrayed the camp meeting as a custom of both the German people and the Methodists. This further differentiated German Methodism from Anglo-American Methodism and distanced Nast's denomination from anything that could be construed as fanatical. Instead of reading secular books, Nast encouraged his readers to study the German-language biographies of men of the faith, the evangelistic roots of German Protestantism, and biblical exegesis. Such an education would reveal the true spirit of the German *Volk* that was rooted in Luther's Protestant Reformation but progressed into German Methodism. *Der Christliche Apologete* assured its readers that being a German Methodist was not a contradiction of terms, and that participating in the custom of the camp meeting was a way of more fully expressing the true German *Volkgeist*.

Continuing in Luther's Polemical Tradition

Whereas Nast taught Cincinnati Germans about Methodism by explaining the tenets of the faith and grounding them in German traditions, the editor of the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* followed the rhetorical tradition of Martin Luther, who used disputation to teach his followers

what not to believe. Using the negative example of other denominations, Luther had offered scriptural evidence for how misguided Christians were following a false path that would never lead to God. It was “the necessity of opposing such positions” that drove Luther to develop his theology and “defend the faithful against error,” a skill that he honed “as a disputant at the university.”⁷ Working within the traditions of Lutheranism and the Reformed church, the German Evangelical Protestant (GEP) clergy eschewed canonical writings and instead developed their own irenic theologies. Following in Luther’s polemical tradition ensured that the church in America remained connected to the German church and also gave each pastor the justification for developing his own body of exegetical writings.

The newspaper arguments among the religious *Bildungsbürgerthum* have been noted by scholars and the contentious nature of their relationship in print is well-known. As Henry John Groen notes in his summary of the German American press in general, “the editors of the German-language newspapers, due to political differences as well as personal disagreements, were at this time engaged in petty bickering among themselves. Their bickering led to a state of protracted strife which divided their readers into several antagonistic groups.”⁸ Joining in the debate over whether to support the public school system, as with the secular papers, all four editors presented their views as superior to the other clergy’s positions. Similarly, Archbishop Gaetano Bedini’s well-known visit sparked controversy in the papers that lasted for several weeks.

⁷ Anna Vind, “Luther’s Thought Assumed Form in Polemics,” in *Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Batka L’ubomir, Oxford Handbooks Online (Oxford University Press, 2018), www.oxfordhandbooks.com.

⁸ Groen, “A Note on the German-American Newspapers of Cincinnati before 1860,” 70.

In this type of discourse, August Kroell reacted to events he read about in the pages of their competitors' religious papers and responded with their own perspective. An entirely different discourse was centered around theological differences, however. Kroell mounted a unidirectional, sustained attack against the other editors that was unrelated to current events. In the latter case, the pages of the *Zeitblätter* were regularly filled with disputations that rebutted the theological positions of the other denominations in Cincinnati in order to extol the GEP Church's highly rational exegesis.

Luther's polemics have been characterized as "ironic, sarcastic, satirical, coarse, and almost abusively rude."⁹ Using "the word as weapon," Luther's "eruptive and verbally violent attacks are a natural part of the landscape of sixteenth-century communication...they were accepted practice." Whether Luther lambasted Andreas Karlstadt for being an iconoclast like the Roman Catholics or critiqued the Catholic Church for allowing indulgences to be sold, he saw his role as the protector of the exclusive revelation of God. Just as Luther sought to defend God's Word from fallacious interpretations by pointing out the errors of others, the GEP editor remained vigilant and sustained a polemic against the other three denominations, as well as the rigidly orthodox GEP clergy who attempted to co-opt Kroell's newspaper, which was the organ of German Evangelical Protestantism in 1853.

According its masthead in 1854, the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* was "a weekly paper for the instruction and edification of thinking Christians."¹⁰ Unlike the Anglo-American religious press, which was reputedly only interested in the pursuit of money, Kroell's paper aspired to represent the principles or fundamentals of Protestantism, which could be summarized as "the

⁹ Vind, "Luther's Thought Assumed Form in Polemics."

¹⁰ "Eine Wochenschrift zur Belehrung und Erbauung denkender Christen." For example, see May 4, 1854.

freedom to investigate, as well as the right to express the discoveries and offer applications; in other words, the recognition of this freedom and this right is called Protestantism.”¹¹ Kroell claimed that these principles were practiced by the Reformers when they examined the Church’s statutes and demanded changes, and that religious truth was henceforth only found in Protestantism as it was established in the German Reformation. Before then the Church was mired in the “old and mistaken past of the sinister Catholic times.” But the Reformers issued “*ein schriftliche Protestation (Widerspruch)*” (a written protest or disputation), and at that moment Protestantism was born.

Kroell noted that some of the unity that bound the Reformers together in seeking the truth had been lacking in GEP, which was established in order to maintain the irenic impulse of the Reformers. The laity were confused about which confessions of the faith should be retained from the time of the Reformation and which needed to be discarded, because religion was progressing and some of those tenets had become outmoded. According to the editor, his greatest obstacle in producing this organ of true Protestantism was that “many of our own fellow believers are not sufficiently able to distinguish between what is pure, true Christianity—that is, the Christianity of Jesus Christ—and what human beings added from Jewish and pagan ideas.”¹²

¹¹ “An die geehrten Leser der Zeitblätter.” “*Dieses Princip schliesst mithin in sich: Freiheit zu forschen, sowie das Recht, das Erforschte auszusprechen und in Anwendung zu bringen; oder richtiger gesagt: die Anerkennung dieser Freiheit und dieses Rechtes ist—Protestantismus. Die Reformatoren namen beide für sich in Anspruch und machten Gebrauch davon, sonst hatte es ihnen ja nie einfallen dürfen, nur daran zu denken, ob die Satzungen der Kirche auch Wahrheit enthielten oder nicht, vielweniger an denselben etwas zu ändern.*”

¹² “An die geehrten Leser der Zeitblätter (Schluss),” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, October 20, 1853. “*Gerade dieser Umstand, daß Viele unserer eigenen Glaubensgenossen nicht genugsam zu unterschreiden wissen zwischen dem, was reines wahres Christenthum, also Christenthum Jesu Christ ist, und was als Menschenfaßung aus judischen und heidnischen Vorstellungen ihm angehängt und beigemischt wurde—gerade Das ist größte Hinderniß für die Zeitblätter.*”

This was complicated by the GEPs belief that truth was still being revealed, unlike the other Christian confessions that believed that religious revelation was finished and complete. The editor posed the question, “Let us now ask...what is true Christianity?” Then, in the homey tradition of Luther’s Table Talks or *Tischreden*, he offered his readers an exegesis, saying “Let us study it together...”¹³ The editor concluded that much of the laity was confused because they clung to old teachings, which was an obstacle developing into what he and the Reformers envisioned as a progressive church that was unified in the basic articles of the faith: the pursuit of the truth. Doctrine would change over time (and may even become unnecessary), but the pursuit of truth was an ongoing religious injunction. Kroell gave one example of old teachings that needed updating in his examination of the Lutheran catechism concerning the Holy Spirit, which was reprinted from the *Lutheranischen Zeitschrift*. Kroell quoted the catechism, which described the third person of the Trinity as “a distinguished person...which affects man’s mind” and was “sent” (*gesendet*) to the believers in Christ.¹⁴ Kroell complained, “Could there even be a more wooden view of the Holy Ghost than this Lutheran Orthodoxy?” The discoveries uncovered since the writing of that catechism and other Church documents mandated continual diligence against the embedment of orthodoxy.

By 1862 the *Protestantische Zeitblätter* had established a firm position against other Christian and Jewish denominations who esteemed the Old Testament, pushing the limits of the

¹³ “An die geehrten Leser der Zeitblätter (Schluss).” “*Fragen wir nun: Worin besteht denn nach dieser Auffassung das wahre Christenthum?...so läßt sich dieser kurz so zusammenfassen...*”

¹⁴ “Lutherische Fragestücke über den heiligen Geist,” *Protestantische Zeitblätter*, May 13, 1858. “*Kann es wohl eine hölzernere Ansicht vom heiligen Geiste geben, als diese lutherische Orthodoxy sei hat?*” “*‘Wer ist der heilige Geist?’ Er ist wahrer Gott sammt dem Vater und Sohn, doch als eine unterschiedene Person, von Ewigkeit ausgehend, vom Vater und Sohn gesendet.*”

Aufklärung even further in order to reveal new theological truth. Kroell cited Aurelius Augustinus, Luther, and many other scholars who had rightly recognized that life comprises more than human existence (*Dasein*). Most importantly, “God has given us reason in order to know His truth.”¹⁵ Noting that Luther and others based their argument for rationality on the Old Testament, the editor posited a supersessionist argument by claiming that religion had progressed beyond the revelation of the Jewish Bible. He offered a proof that the Old Testament was “the most venerable of all ancient books [yet] was nothing more than the Jewish book of religion.”¹⁶ According to Kroell, scholars had withheld this proof because they were afraid of the negative affect on the common person’s faith if Old Testament concepts like the existence of the devil were removed from theological teachings. Kroell had no such fear. He systematically tore down the scaffolding of literal interpretations of the Old Testament stories that were meant to scare people into submitting to an ethical system. Then he attacked New Testament justifications of a sacrificial system, saying that the messiah was actually just a man who taught a gospel of love. Christ “did not become a sacrifice for the sins of humanity; he died for the truth...He was the greatest discoverer...He discovered the only true religion: love God above all, and your neighbor

¹⁵ “An die geehrten Leser der Zeitblätter.” *“Das Leben is höher als das Sein, aber beide sind enthalten in dem Höchsten, dem Erkennen, welches in der ihr eigenes Wesen begreifenden Vernunft ist. Auch die Dinge und ihn, der über Allem ist, Gott, erkennt die Vernunft wie sie sich selbst, den Gott hat der Vernunft gegeben, ihn nach seiner Wahrheit zu denken. Aehnlich äusserte sich bekanntlich auch Luther und viele Andern.”*

¹⁶ “Wie weit darf die Aufklärung gehen?” *“Man muss es den Leuten geradezu sagen, dass das alte Testament, obgleich das ehrwürdigste aller alten Bücher, nichts anderes sei, al sein jüdisches Religionsbuch... Der Beweis für diese Verschiedenheit ist leicht zu führen—doch hat eine gewisse Scheu, ängstliche Gemüther zu verletzen, wohl am Meisten dazu beigetragen diesen Beweis zurückzuhalten. Viele aber glauben auch, das smit dem gemeinen Manne, wie man in der alten Welt sagen würde, ohne den Teufel mit seiner ganzen Dämonenschaar, nicht auszukommen wäre.”*

as yourself.”¹⁷ The editor boiled down the message of the entire Bible to one teaching, which connects a central Jewish teaching to a foundational lesson in Christianity, as seen in the book of

Mark:

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which command is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”¹⁸

This commandment, often referred to by Christians as the Great Commandment, is recorded in all of the gospels (Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:28-31, Luke 10:25-28, John 13:31-35). In Mark’s and Luke’s versions, Jesus issues the commandment in response to a legal disputation, which provides an implicit link for Kroell from his use of polemical teaching to Luther’s disputations and to Jesus’ own style of teaching.

Kroell understood the New Testament formulation of the Great Commandment to supersede the ethical system based on the ten commandments. Notably, the foundational understanding of the Jews’ relationship to God, known as the Shema and cited in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, is contained in Jesus’s teaching. And Jesus’s directive to love one’s neighbor references the similar Jewish commandment in Leviticus 19:17-18. In Kroell’s exegesis of John 13:34, the rational search for theological truth was established by Jesus, who described this as a “new”

¹⁷ “Wie weit darf die Aufklärung gehen?” “...unter diesen aber strahlt hervor die hehre Lichtgestalt des göttlichen Erlösers, Jesus Christus, historisch und doch Ideal. Aber er wurde nicht anders ein Opfer für die Sünden der Menschheit, als andere grosse Männer; er starb für die Wahrheit, und weckte die Menschen aus einem wüsten Taumel, in welchen die Leidenschaften fast die ganze Welt gestürzt hatten, nachdem in schönen Zeiten der gossen Römer und Griechen vorüber waren. Er war der grösste Entdecker, grosser als Archimedes, Sokrates, Columbus, Newton und alle anderen; er entdeckte die einzig wahre Religion: Liebe Gott über Alles, und deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst.”

¹⁸ Mark 12:28-31

commandment that was given to those who believed he was the promised messiah. For the GEP editor, this commandment encapsulated all biblical truth and was the basis for all future rational discovery. Jesus discovered this truth, educated his contemporaries, and died in order to “arouse humanity from the desert whirlwind of passion that threatened to destroy the whole world.”¹⁹

Kroell called on Christians and Jews to relinquish their faulty reliance on outmoded Old Testament teachings and embrace the GEP interpretation of Jesus’s teachings as the sole source of truth. German religion had progressed beyond pietistic passion, thanks to rational interpretations of scripture. In the style of Jesus’ disputations, Kroell taught a secessionist doctrine that had been reformed in the sixteenth century by Luther and developed into irenic Protestantism, which was disseminated by the modern Prussian state to the German *Volk*.

Defining a German Literature of Catholicism

The two Protestant preachers connected the German *Volk* to apostolic Christianity via the German Reformation, but the Catholic editors had no such anchor in German history. Instead of making a religious claim for superiority within the German *Volk*, the editors showed how within the true religion of Catholicism, the German Catholics were the most developed. They did this by focusing on German literary achievements, and they imagined *Der Wahrheitsfreund* as more of a weekly literary periodical than an exclusively religious newspaper.

The editors defended their choice to promote German Catholic literature when they endorsed the new Catholic paper in St. Louis. *Der Wahrheitfreund*’s editor introduced the author

¹⁹ “Wie weit darf die Aufklärung gehen?” “*Er hat Manner gegeben, welches ich in der Aufklärung und Erziehung der Menschheit ausgezeichnet haben; unter diesen aber strahlt hervor die hehre Lichtgestalt des göttlichen Erlösers, Jesus Christus, historisch und doch Ideal. Aber er wurde nicht anders ein Opfer für die Sünden der Menschheit, als andere grosse Männer; er starb für die Wahrheit, und weckte die Menschen aus einem wüsten Taumel, in welchen die Leidenschaften fast die ganze Welt gestürzt hatten...Ist dies anerkannt, dann ist es mit jener Orthodoxie, wie sie bisher die Menschen qualte, vorbei.*”

of *The Leader* as one who formerly produced “an excellent Catholic monthly [literary] publication” in Baltimore. According to an editorial in its inaugural edition, which was reprinted in Cincinnati, *The Leader* noted, “Many believe a Catholic newspaper must be only a religious paper,” but the editor believed that it was necessary and expedient to use “literary and political papers and organs,” and they intentionally copied the style of Harper’s and Putnam’s magazines.²⁰ Newspapers like *Das Freeman’s Journal* took “a particularly cold stance against literature.” While that paper was “certainly necessary for Catholic journalism,” it was outmoded and had only “paved the way of the future.” That future included literature, among other features. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*’s editor agreed with *The Leader* that Catholic journalism was progressing and moving beyond the limited content provided by the older newspapers.

According to *Der Wahrheitsfreund*’s editor in 1840, “The value of German language and literature has long been recognized, but only very recently has their merit been fully appreciated” by non-Germans.²¹ The editor maintained an on-going interest in the languages of other *Volk* and emphasized that the Catholic priests converted the Africans, American Indians, and Chinese using their own tribal languages. Instead of teaching indigenous peoples the German language, the priests coined Christian terms in the indigenous tongue and translated important religious documents into the language that the converts would respond to with their *Volkgeist*.²² Likewise,

²⁰ “Was ist eine katholische Zeitung?” „*einer ausgezeichneten katholischen Monatsschrift... Viele glauben, eine katholische Zeitung müsse eine religiöse Zeitung sein... literarischen und politischen Blätter und Organe... zwar als ein nothwendiges für den katholischen Journalismus... die Zukunft den Weg gebahnt.*”

²¹ “From the Catholic Herald in Phila.,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, October 15, 1840. “*der Werth der deutschen Sprache und Literatur ist schon lange anerkannt; doch erst seit einer verhältnißmäßig kurzen Zeit wurden ihre Verdienste völlig gewürdigt.*”

²² For example, see “Zur Mission in Central-Afrika,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, October 28, 1858; “Die Lage der katholischen Missionen seit dem Jahre 1822”; “Bischof Baraga’s Visitationsreisen am See Superior,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, October 26, 1854; “Der Hochw’ste Bischof Baraga,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, June 21, 1855.

the German *Volk* needed a literary canon in its own native language, and the editors announced when volumes of folk stories and histories were translated into German. Language was seen as a kind of literary artifact with which a people could advance their *Volk*, once they were converted, educated, and civilized, and Catholic priests facilitated the development of writing in indigenous languages.²³

To achieve the *Bildungsideal*, every *Volk* eventually had to develop a literature that expressed its own *Volkgeist*. For the religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, the right kind of literature was written by Germans who practiced the true religion—in this case, Catholicism. When the new sect of “German Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Missouri, Ohio, and other states” began publishing its organ, the Lutherans declared it “*die Schrift die ‘norma normans,’ das Symbol die ‘norma normala,’*” which produced a firestorm of responses as German editors from other newspapers debated which paper was the golden standard of truth.²⁴ There was much at stake to produce the literature that reflected the true German *Volk* because, as *Der Wahrheitsfreund*’s editor reminded the readers,

If the literature of a nation is the mirror of its inner, spiritual life, then with every new catalog that deals with the annual literary production of a nation, such as the *Meßcataloge*, the view is expanded significantly by a respectable contribution to its cultural history. A glimpse into such a book could destroy some illusions of the vaunted high culture, or even teach many haughty despisers of the past some humility.²⁵

²³ “Literarische Thätigkeit der Missionäre,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, October 22, 1846; “Volks-Sagen der Indianer in N. Amerika (Mitgetheilt von C. Hammer),” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, December 3, 1840. “Folk sayings” are described as the myths of non-Christians, as opposed to “the literature of a *Volk*,” which is produced when a *Volk* is converted and educated such that it can identify and write down the things that emanate from the *Volkgeist*.

²⁴ “Der Protestantismus,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, March 15, 1855.

²⁵ “Gedankenspäne,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, October 5, 1854. “Wenn die Literatur einer Nation für den Spiegel ihres inner, geistigen Lebens gilt, so hat jeder neue Catalog, der sich über die literarische Jahresfrucht einer Nation, wie z. B. Meßcataloge, erstreckt, die Bedeutung eines respektablen Beitrages zur Culturgeschichte. Ein Blick in dieselbe könnte zu Zeiten

Granted, the Roman Catholic Church had been concerned about the literature read by the laity since the Protestant Reformation, when canon law proscribed reading materials to prevent the spread of heretical ideas. The Vatican produced the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of Forbidden Books) from 1564 to 1966, a censored list of books that could be read by Catholics “only with permission.”²⁶ In addition to this high-level dictum, however, the editors of local papers provided another level of censorship when they reviewed and reprinted literature for their ethnic readers.

If German Catholics expressed the true spirit of the German *Volk*, then reading literature that had been vetted by *Der Wahrheitsfreund*'s editors would continue to develop the *Volk* by properly training and educating its readers. The Catholic editors contributed to this progress by expanding the individuals' understanding of their *Volk* by providing reading material that was written by the most educated and insightful members. To this end, the editors regularly published lists of newly acquired German-language books at booksellers in Cincinnati and elsewhere, such as *Die katholischen Buchhändler Dunigan und Bruder* in New York. The editors also reviewed items from the very highly regarded *Literaturblatt* by the German literary critic Wolfgang Menzel. And the editors provided their own literature review in a regular column called “*Katholische Literatur*” from 1844 – 1855, which reviewed works by German authors including Fichte and Richard Wagner.²⁷

manche Illusionen von gepriesener Culturhöhe zerstören, manchem hochmüthigen Verächter der Vorzeit Bescheffdenheit lehren.”

²⁶ Una M. Cadegan, *All Good Books Are Catholic Books: Print Culture, Censorship, and Modernity in Twentieth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 866.

²⁷ “Inlandische kirchliche Nachrichten,” *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, January 17, 1856. Although Menzel was a Protestant, the editors of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* from 1838 – 1860 believed he had Catholic leanings because he was sympathetic to the Catholic press in Germany.

The Catholic editors were also concerned about the German *Volk*'s progress stagnating or even degenerating through the reading of cheap novels. They warned their readers: "The overwhelming amount of light and shallow 25-cent books cannot compare to the small number of significant, true, scholarly works!"²⁸ To address this danger, the editors continually provided appropriate novels in serialized form each week, much like the monthly magazines they sought to emulate. Each new installation was placed prominently on the front page. For example, in 1848 there were multiple chapters reprinted from *Das Buch vom ewigen Juden, oder Morgen- und Abendland*, including an especially exciting chapter on pirates.²⁹ In 1853 the paper ran a serialized novel from the 1830s called *Die Rose von Rom, oder, Ehre Vater und Mutter*. The following year they reprinted a novel about American Indians called *Der junge Tambour, oder Lohn des Vertrauens auf Gott*.

Premiering on January 3, 1856 and running for nineteen chapters was "*Mutter und Sohn, oder die Wege der Vorsehung führen immer zum rechten Ziele*."³⁰ This sentimental novel ended

Throughout this period they provided Cincinnati's population with relevant information from Menzel's periodical.

²⁸ "Gedankenspäne." "In welchem ungeheuren Mißverhältniß steht nicht die Legion der leichten und seichten 25 Cent-Bücher zu der kleinen Zahl bedeutsamer, wahrhaft wissenschaftlicher Werke!"

²⁹ Wilhelm Michael Nebel, *Die Rose von Rom, oder, Ehre Vater und Mutter* (Augsburg: Weith & Rieger, 1838), http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb11259139_00001.html; Franz Maria Brug, *Der junge Tambour, oder Lohn des Vertrauens auf Gott* (Augsburg: Lampart, 1853), http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10761880_00003.html; Franz Maria Brug and Johann Evangelist Stadler, *Das Buch vom ewigen Juden, oder Morgen- und Abendland* (Augsburg: Lampart, 1846), <https://books.google.com/books?id=BCxQAAAACAAJ>. "The Rose from Rome, or the Holy Father and Mother." "The Young Tambour, or The Cost of Faith in God." "The Book of the Wandering Jew, or The Orient and the Occident."

³⁰ Franz Maria Brug, *Mutter und Sohn, oder die Wege der Vorsehung führen immer zum rechten Ziele*, vol. 32, *Lehrreiche Abendunterhaltungen für Jugend- und familienkreise* (Augsburg: Lampart, 1855), http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10758900_00001.html?leftTab=toc. *Mother and Son, or the Way of Providence Always Leads to the Right Outcome*. "Lehrreiche

with the moral lesson that through God's Providence, good people eventually achieve peace and happiness. The novel was written by a prolific Catholic author, Franz Maria Brug, who lived in Augsburg. The work was previously published in Brug's instructional magazine "for mature youth and adults" and was intended to be read in the evening instructional hour. All of these were serialized novels that were originally published in Germany, presumably by Catholic authors, and all were considered appropriate historical fiction for *Der Wahrheitfreund's* readers in Cincinnati. This sustained emphasis on providing the proper kind literature for the newspapers' readers was an intentional effort toward *Bildung*. As the editor in 1854 explained, "The literati and the book dealers constantly advance the enlightenment of the *Volk!*"³¹ By contributing to a Catholic literature and establishing the German Catholics as literati, the editors of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* positioned themselves as representatives of the true German *Volkgeist*.

Claiming a History for the Jews

According *The Israelite's* masthead in 1854, the Jewish newspaper was "devoted to the Religion, History and Literature of the Israelites." Like the German Catholics, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise was concerned about developing a body of religious literature, and he called on the Western European literati—both Jewish and Christian—to contribute suitable pieces for publication in his newspaper. In his estimation, "on comparing the Jewish journals of this country with those of Germany, France, and America, it will be found that we are far behind our continental and transatlantic co-religionists, as far as literary contributors are concerned."³² Like

Abendunterhaltungen für Jugend- und Familienkreise...für die reifere Jugend und für Erwachsene."

³¹ "Gedankenspäne." "So befördern aufgekärt sein wollende Literaten und Buchhändler die Aufklärung des Volkes!"

³² Isaac Mayer Wise, "Literary Contributions to the Jewish Press," *The Israelite*, January 26, 1855.

Der Wahrheitsfreund's editors, Wise wanted to print moral works, but unlike the Catholics, Wise did not only print literature from his denomination. According to his call, he was interested in "those philanthropists who are desirous for the elevation of the Jewish spirit...In assisting the literary labors to elevate the tone and character of the Jewish press, they materially contribute to enhance the esteem for their own people." In a sort of cosmopolitan impulse, printing non-Jewish literature could reduce antisemitism and also develop the Jewish *Volk* by providing higher quality reading material.

Unlike the German Christian newspapers in Cincinnati, which targeted one particular immigrant population, Wise's paper was initially meant to spread the tenets of true (Reform) Judaism and to unite all the Jewish people in America. Wise understood his audience to consist of "men who through their business life and participation in daily politics have more contact with the English-speaking population."³³ His religious paper had to be written in English in order to reach the largest possible audience. In 1855 he started a German-language supplement to *The Israelite* in magazine format that targeted the German housewife, but he quickly handed off the editing of this periodical to an associate. So it is no surprise that *The Israelite*'s masthead omitted "language" as a central topic for developing the Jewish *Volk*. Instead of emphasizing language and literature, he developed the *Volk* by commissioning historical works.

While Cincinnati's other denominational papers reviewed German histories and universal histories from the press in the Fatherland and reprinted authoritative books that had been approved by a church hierarchy, Wise solicited new histories. For this work, he could not turn to Christian Bible scholars because their exegetical works "are all a mistake, being founded on a

³³ Isaac Mayer Wise, "Deborah," *The Israelite*, March 2, 1855. "...der Man durch sein Geschäftsleben und Theilnahm an der Tagespolitik sich der englischredenden Bevölkerung näher anschließt."

perversion of the Scriptures, and not having a sufficient knowledge of the Hebrew language, and the manners and customs of the ancient Israelites.”³⁴ In order to understand the Jewish *Geist* being expressed throughout history, one needed to be a member of that *Volk*. But Wise allowed that historical *fiction* could be written by Christian authors who were sympathetic to the plight of the Jews.

This plan backfired on Wise at least once, when he printed a serialized version of the historical novel, *Judea Capta*. The work was written by the prolific British Christian authoress and magazine editor Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna in 1845 and is still available in print. The book offers a philosemitic history of Israel that culminates in a jubilant version of the restoration of the nation of Israel. It opens with a scriptural promise that Wise awaited: “‘Again will I build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel!’ saith the Lord.”³⁵ Wise apparently expected his readers to enjoy a novel that was sympathetic to the Jewish plight. However, at the conclusion of the serial, his readers complained that Wise “permits the popular authoress of the above historical essay to give utterance to her religious views in a Jewish paper.” Wise defended his choice by claiming, “her [Christian] religious views...are not our views,” but she is a commendable example of a Christian author who “had the moral courage to defend the outraged Jews of those days against a host of historiographers.” Wise added that while her interpretation of historical events was tainted because she was not a member of the Jewish *Volk*, her attitude toward the Jews was exemplary for her time. Furthermore, the errors of Christian writers before

³⁴ Joseph Jonas, “The Signs of the Times, Being a Review of the Prophecies, Past, Present, and Future,” *The Israelite*, May 25, 1855.

³⁵ “Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna,” html, Poetry Foundation, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org>; Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, *Judea Capta* (New York: Baker & Scribner, 1848), 1, <https://babel.hathitrust.org>.

her time “were thoughtlessly repeated by Jewish writers,” so by publishing her novel, Wise was also holding future Jewish writers to a higher standard.³⁶

On the same page as this critique of *Judea Capta*, Wise ran the fifth installment of a serial history, *Leaves from the History of the Spanish Jews*, by Nathan Mayer.³⁷ Mayer (no relation to Wise) was the son of a rabbi who opposed the Reform movement, in favor of Conservative Judaism. Nathan Mayer was a physician and “one of the first Jewish American novelists, now essentially forgotten.”³⁸ He wrote several serialized novels and various other articles that were published in *The Israelite*. Wise never published any readers’ complaints about Nathan Wise’s historical novels, so one can assume that his intimate knowledge of the *Volk* produced authoritative work.

In between these two articles, Wise ran a third historical piece, this time a half-column review of Rabbi Morris Raphall’s *Post-Biblical History of the Jews from the close of the Old Testament, about the year 420 B.C.E. till the destruction of the Second Temple, in the year 70 C.E.* Wise endorsed the work of this rabbi, who also held a Ph.D., and whose scholarship as a member of the Jewish *Volk* was presumably beyond reproach, but Wise responded cautiously this time. He noted,

Besides this there is no period in history which was more disfigured by pious historians than the one on which the work treats. We have no doubt but that Dr. R. has done justice to the subject, but we abstain from speaking of the internal merits of the work before we have carefully read it. We assure both the author and the publishers, that we shall not be guided by the precedents, set by the

³⁶ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Judea Capta,” *The Israelite*, March 14, 1856.

³⁷ Nathan Mayer, “Leaves from the History of the Spanish Jews,” *The Israelite*, March 14, 1856.

³⁸ Jules Chametzky et al., eds., “Nathan Mayer,” in *Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology* (W. W. Norton, 2001), 94–95, <https://books.google.com/books?id=DwQIVoyHac8C>.

uncritical and dishonest critics of our own work, ‘History of the Israelitish Nation from Abraham to the destruction of the first Temple.’³⁹

Wise was cautious because he realized his readership was not always ready to accept the progressive ideas of Reform Judaism. Two years earlier the editor of a rival Jewish paper, the *Occident*, had sharply criticized Wise’s *History of the Israelitish Nation*, which was his own attempt to historicize his Jewish heritage. Wise serialized his history and published it in the first six issues of his newly launched newspaper. The *Occident*’s editor, Isaac Leeser, panned the history, stating that Wise’s book “is set up against all the testimonies of ages, against the Bible itself, and against all that host of priestly scribes whom the Jews have always been accustomed to receive as trustworthy and indisputable evidence. The work has one great merit—it is in its opinions entirely original.”⁴⁰ Representing a traditional understanding of Judaism, it is not surprising that Leeser would find Wise’s Reformed, modernized interpretation of Judaism to be offensive and inauthentic.

Wise contrasted Leeser’s response to the history with a review from the *Christian Register*. That editor understood Wise to be offering a fresh perspective on Jewish history, which “he treats not ecclesiastically but politically, bestowing special attention upon Rabbinical literature and traditions, so far as to illustrate the manners and customs of the people of whom he writes.” The second review aligns with Wise’s attempt to express the spirit of the Jewish *Volk* without producing a theological treatise. While the review provides a second piece of evidence that Christian writers sometimes aligned with Wise’s agenda to ameliorate the Jewish Volk, and it also demonstrates why traditional Jews might not appreciate the literary license Wise took with his cultural history. Wise

³⁹ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Post Biblical History of the Jews,” *The Israelite*, March 14, 1856.

⁴⁰ Isaac Mayer Wise, “Our History,” *The Israelite*, July 21, 1854.

moved Judaism forward by reinterpreting the past from a less dogmatic or orthodox perspective, and in this case, the Christian editor was more awakened to the progress of Judaism than Leeser.

Wise also wrote a comprehensive history of America for his readers, many of whom had not been educated and raised in that country and were deficient in their knowledge of the American *Volk*. Writing under the pen name Talmud Americus, Wise introduced this history in the eighth issue of the newspaper, just two issues after the conclusion of his history of Israel, and it continued for approximately twenty installments. Wise began with the discovery of America, in which Jews financially backed and scientifically outfitted Christopher Columbus's voyages. While Catholics might claim to have discovered America, Wise noted that Jews accompanied Columbus as they fled from the Spanish Inquisitors. Countering *Der Wahrheitfreund's* triumphant story of Jesuits converting the Indians, Wise narrated a different story that encompassed "the discovery of America, [the] influence of the Jews on it, their participation in all discoveries tending to civilize the world, an unmistakable fulfillment of Divine promise, [and] a brief exposition of the opposition of the Catholic church and their cruelties toward our people."⁴¹ While the German Jews might be relative newcomers to American soil, God had placed the first Jews in America almost 350 years prior. According to this revised history, the current condition of the American *Volk* was largely due to the civilizing influence of the Jewish *Volk* living in the Americas for centuries, not the cruel and uncivilized Spanish and Portuguese Catholic *Völker*.

It seems that Wise's inclusion of "literature" and "history" in the masthead in 1854 did not connote distinct genres of writing for this editor. Instead, he experimented with alternate

⁴¹ Isaac Mayer Wise, "An Epoch in History, Chapter I," *The Israelite*, September 1, 1854.

versions of history, told in a literary style to appeal to the tastes of readers in mid-nineteenth century America. His infatuation with historical writing on the one hand answered detractors who argued that the Jews had no history because they were a minority group living in many nations, and thus were not a distinct *Volk*. On the other hand, Wise used these histories to advance what he decidedly asserted was a *Volk* with a unique spirit that revealed its past through historical works. Wise established a new Reform base in America, from which he could assert the superiority of the Jewish *Volk* and its progressive influence on the history of both the German and American *Völker*.

Conclusion

In each of these newspapers, the editors used what German philosophers described as the cultural markers of a *gebildet Volk*—the production of religious, literary, and historical writings—to stake a claim that their religious group had achieved a penultimate level of progress within their *Volk*. Each of them communicated a desire to develop those characteristics for the benefit of the *Volk* and for humanity. Because each religious group also claimed to have exclusive access to a different form of divine truth, it should not be a surprise that they each described a different version of the *gebildet German Volk*. For each of the editors, there could only be one true religion for the German *Volk*. However, the relative importance of religion and ethnicity varied. The Methodist and GEP editors described their religion as one cultural component of the German *Volk*, but the Catholics privileged religion over ethnicity: within the universal Catholic Church, the Germans were the only *gebildet Volk*. And while Wise was deeply affected by German philosophy and the German Reform movement, when he described his aspirations for the Jews, his membership in the Jewish *Volk* trumped that of his German

affiliation. But whether religious or ethnic identity was seen as the broader category, every editor of this religious *Bildungsbürgertum* intimately linked religion and *Volkgeist*.

Having been educated in the philosophical concept of *Bildung* for evaluating human progress, the editors speculated on how human cultural diversity occurred, building on the work of the German intellectuals. In stark contrast to the British and Anglo-Americans in the first half of the antebellum era, the German editors evaluated the capacity for progress according to *Volk*, not biology or phenotype. Each *Volk*'s progress was interpreted through scripture and monitored through the lens of missionary reports. This is where differences in religious claims among German Catholics, Protestants, and Jews become significant in their depictions of the perfected human race.

The Catholic, Methodist, and Jewish editors made competing universalist claims to religious truth. And although the GEPs had a more irenic version of religious doctrine, it was an exclusively Protestant doctrine that excludes pietistic and evangelical theologies. This implies that the final goal of *Bildung*—a perfected humanity that is unified around a single religion—was impossible to achieve at the mid-nineteenth century. Perfection could only be imagined on the pages of the newspapers.

Within the context of an individual's progress, the editors wrote articles that instructed their readers on the potential of the *Indianer*, the *Neger*, and all the known *Völker* on the earth to be educated and civilized, to progress and become *gebildet*. Humanity diversified at various historical and biblical events, but there was a single human race created by a single God, and in order to be perfected, humanity had to return to that culturally diverse state once again. Each editor interpreted the Bible and religious tradition in different ways in order to determine the status of human progress, as well as to propel his religio-Germanic *Volk* forward. The editors

implicitly warned against miscegenation and acculturation, and each communicated an exclusive religious claim to cultural supremacy.

The need to make the grand claim that only their own denomination of Germans was *gebildet* was entwined with the need to define a German identity that was distinct from the other European *Völker*, as Susanne Zantop has stated. Furthermore, in the first half of the nineteenth century these claims comported with the German Romantics' agenda to recover and communicate a common cultural heritage that would unite the Germanic people when the German nation was finally founded. Each member of Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* attempted to assert an exclusive religious identity for the German *Volk*, and that required evidence of superlative cultural development. In an American context, immigrant newspapers often served to stabilize a minority ethnic group; however, in Cincinnati's case, these denominational papers competed with each other over ideology, trying to win over religiously diverse Germans to a single theological viewpoint in the name of progress. Fierce debates raged in the pages of these four papers in the name of religious truth, all the while providing a public sphere for the immigrants to work out a national identity while they awaited the political formation of the German nation.

From a German perspective, the clergy-editors of Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* applied their university education to the benefit of the German Empire, even though they were not employed by the Prussian state. From their places of influence in American churches and synagogues, they educated the German immigrant masses in order to properly train them and awaken the German *Volkgeist*. The editors had received instruction in the philosophical tenets of the cultural politics known as *Bildung* and were loyal to their duty to unify the German *Volk* through a rhetoric of progress that emphasized the development of a

Volk's history, language, religion, and literature. Because these editors were also clergy, they incorporated religious doctrines and motivations into their application of *Bildung* in America and found reasons to work toward the coming kingdom of God that were unique to their German roots. While they were united in their determination to strive for cultural perfection, these Germans tailored their understandings of *Bildung* to conform to their theological beliefs and practices.

Race, religion, and ethnicity formed a complex calculus for these German immigrants in the decades leading up to the American Civil War. During the antebellum era, Anglo-Americans tended to think of the German immigrants as an ethnic bloc, but this was actually a time of discord and disunity within the German American community. Regional, linguistic, and religious differences pulled the immigrants in diverse directions and revealed just how disjointed the German states were in the first half of the nineteenth century. America changed after the Civil War, as the nation struggled to incorporate freed blacks into mainstream society, and the German immigrants changed, as well. *Bildung* took on new meanings as philosophy progressed after the German nation was founded in 1871. The narrative of cultural progress lost its urgency as the German *Volk* set to the task of implementing their ideals into a practical model, and the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Cincinnati began the process of acculturating, which would continue through the early-twentieth century.

Because the clergy-editors had initially resisted acculturation, a transatlantic exchange occurred through the pages of their newspapers during the antebellum era. All four of the papers were exported to Germany and read by thousands of Europeans, just as their counterparts in America read German periodicals. The Prussian State never intended for the education of the *Bildungsbürgertum* to have an effect outside the German empire, yet Cincinnati formed a

crucible for these four editors and their affiliated clergy to test out the tenets of *Bildung*.

Although they did not intentionally settle in a place where blacks, Indians, and (later) Asians flowed through this intercoastal nexus of trade and intellectual discovery, Cincinnati provided an ideal locale for observing people of many cultures.

The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* can be viewed as a group of German colonists who sent home weekly reports in religious newspapers, under the guise of progressing the German *Volk* in a foreign land, while inadvertently providing information about living among less civilized *Völker*. From this perspective, Zantop's conclusion could be extended beyond the borders of the German empire and applied to a transatlantic scene. Even before the formation of the German nation, Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* fantasized about what it would be like to improve the imperialists' methods and spread German idealism across the globe. They combined the philosophical concept of *Bildung* with biblical exegesis, applied it to the ethnological information supplied by missionaries, and refined their ideas in a transatlantic conversation carried out in the public sphere of German-language periodicals.

This investigation of the cultural politics of *Bildung* also offers insights into the contemporary field of race theory. Audrey Smedley represents recent scholarship that posits race as a social construct, rather than an ontological reality. Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum* also rejected the existence of distinct human races, building on Herder's declaration that there was no such thing as racial difference. But this did not lead the Germans to discount all human variation. If the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* did not create a hierarchy of human populations, they certainly created categories that others could rank.

This study of nineteenth-century German Romantics' attempts to deny racial difference reveals that recent attempts to promote color blindness or the removal of race as a category of

analysis are not sufficient to address the problems that underly racial intolerance in America. Because the Germans needed a way to distinguish themselves from other Europeans after the Napoleonic Wars, they necessarily identified how they were different from other peoples. When Western European intellectuals described the Germans as underdeveloped, the Germans responded with ways in which they were notable. Lacking a political identity, they turned to culture and developed the concept of *Volkgeist*, and educated the German people in this newly revamped iteration of *Bildung*, or cultural progress. The same defensive rhetoric that created ethnic cohesion also supplied an argument for which culture was developing or progressing toward an ideal state. While denying racial difference, the religious *Bildungsbürgertum* asserted their own cultural and religious superiority in a move to save face and catch up to the newly forming nation-states.

Merely denying the existence of racial difference will not solve the racial tensions in twenty-first century America. Implicit in racial arguments are evidences of power imbalances. The party press used race to win elections and garner political power. The religious *Bildungsbürgertum* used culture in similar ways to increase their social status and impel their political leaders to create the German nation-state. They were unwilling to denigrate other people groups according to biological determinism, but the result of their cultural stigmatism was similar. When a human population lacks the power to access the resources it needs to survive (or perhaps to thrive), one method that has been employed repeatedly throughout history to right the imbalance is creating a rhetoric of human difference. Whether based in biology or culture or some other measure, creating categories of human difference leads to comparisons and ultimately to normative claims. In the case of Cincinnati's religious *Bildungsbürgertum*, race,

religion, and culture formed a complex moral calculus for elevating the Germanic people in a time of political uncertainty.

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