

Nietzsche's Footfalls

David Pollard

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Contents

| Introductory | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|

Röcken still lies in the Eastern German flatlands under a limitless cobalt grey sky and, because there are signposts pointing away but none towards it, you can easily drive past without realising it is there. The village is just off a road surfaced with cobbles that shake the car violently to a crawl. It lies beyond Lützen, site of the battleground where Napoleon defeated the allied Prussian and Russian armies on his victorious march to Moscow (a march another dictator tried later with equal success and equal failure). Nietzsche mentions that he saw cheering rebels passing the parsonage on wagons during the year of revolutions but the very rarity of this contact proves the isolation of the place. Off the road are the few houses that make up the village, children playing on bikes raising dust on the earth tracks. Like the motorway a few miles away and the great armies that on to their battle at Lützen, the world has passed the place by. It is not on the map and it is not easy to get off the motorway at the right place or to get back on to it again. Once there, the steeple directs you to the church and you leave the car in the shadow of a wall.

The place is run-down like the rest of the village. Surely no services have been held here for a long while. However, the latch moves down and, if shoved, the door gives. Inside, the place has a quiet Lutheran beauty. Facing the east

end are fifteen rows of wooden pews painted in pale red, green and white. A balcony runs around three walls and is painted with improving inscriptions from the Bible. Above the door is a small organ. In front of the apse is a wooden screen which incorporates altar, pulpit and vestry. The altar is painted and the pulpit, of the same design, is directly above it. The cross on the altar seems to point towards the place where the parson would stand to give his weekly sermon. The South wall has seven deeply set windows which throw a gentle shadowy light into the building. Like the motorway, time has passed this little building by. Outside the surrounding churchyard is overgrown and full of weeds and high grass. This isn't really the kind of graveyard you expect.

There are only a couple of tombs and these, peaceful in the evening light, are set against the south wall of the little church. The more showy of these is covered in carefully raked pebbles and almost overshadows the three graves beside it. These are overhung with a soft green bower so as to make it difficult at first to read the inscriptions on the stones to the right and left. But you lean down and push the greenery to one side. The grave on the right, which is different from the others, is inscribed to Franziska Nietzsche born Oehler and the dates are 2nd February 1826 to 20th April 1897. The grave on the other side is dedicated to Friedrich Nietzsche, born 15th October 1844, died 25th August 1900. On this are some fading flowers, lobelia in a pot and a wilting bunch of cut irises. The stone in the centre, clear of the shadows, is altogether easier to see

and belongs to Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, born 10th July 1846, died 8th November 1935. It is difficult not to get the impression that she has elbowed aside her mother and her brother in the calm of death.

The parsonage is a nondescript three storey building which is now in private hands and no amount of persuasion will get you into the room in which Nietzsche was born. The woman who answers the door, standing there with her hands on her hips, tells you that it is not possible although she hesitates for a moment at the mention of money. Here, as always, birth and death are within a few footsteps of each other but no hint of what brought the baby to the grave. The real posthumous existence is not that far away at Weimar where the mad philosopher lived quietly with his sister, saying little and writing less, while his reputation was both made and destroyed in the archive downstairs.

But this is only one story of posthumous existences, of real lives that have past. There is another which also has to do with graves. On the fifth of May 1934 Uberbahnsturmführer Alfons Sachs or Shacks and Gruppenführer Henrik Himmler (no relation) boarded the steamer SS Peru for the four thousand mile journey across the ocean to the coast of Latin America. Both felt honoured to have been chosen for this crucial mission. They had in their care a small urn; stone, Greek in form but without the subtlety, in which was some German earth. This they were instructed to take to the heart of the Paraguayan jungle. The urn had been

sent half way round the globe for a ceremony dear to the heart of the leader of the Third Reich and Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, one of his most faithful subjects. Around a grave in the middle of an unkempt clearing a small crowd had gathered, composed mostly of the schoolchildren who are always commandeered for these occasions. The seal on the urn was broken and German soil, the real stuff from the fatherland, sprinkled over the grave.

After a delay of nearly half a century this gesture put an end to the half-and-half existence of the man whose body was and still is rotting beneath. Certainly he was dead and a valid certificate issued to that effect by the proper authorities and yet, in the old country, there was much hard work being done to resurrect both husband and brother and turn them into . . . Resurrection that can qualify mortality and deny it its quiescence, that can make a corpse revolve a hundred and eighty degrees in its grave and face about. Certainly this is one of those deaths denied the finality hoped for in endings. His ghost is still there, hovering and dangerous.

No coincidence, perhaps, that the little ceremony by the graveside took place in Asunción. The town was named, of course, not after the assumption of Moses but of Mary who was gathered up into heaven to live in glory for all eternity. You know the kind of thing, clouds parting and the virgin, dressed in blue satin which shimmers in the light of sun and halos, floating upwards towards the figures of God and Jesus who sit on high, awaiting her with

outstretched arms. The Paraguayan jungle mists swim and part just like the clouds in so many religious paintings and, as they do so, in the space that now becomes visible, the tombstone is revealed. The grave is now overgrown with weeds and began to fall apart many years ago. There is a cracked vase which is sometimes filled with flowers. On the headstone are words inscribed in the hope of a similar kind of resurrection, 'Here lies with God, Bernhard Förster, founder of the colony of 'Nueva Germania''.

But this is a strange kind of after-life where ghosts and zombies dwell, those half-dead who return to haunt us through the generations. The reverse of sanctification. There is an unpleasant smell of suicide in the air and a persistent refusal of the dead to lie still in their graves and of the living to leave well alone. The grave is in the cemetery of San Bernadino, named after a fifteenth century preacher monk who, for much of his life, ranted against the Jews.

Förster's death, the Paraguayan one, leaves another body in that parade of the dead. It took place in the Hotel del Lago, near the provincial capital. On the morning of June 3rd 1889, the maid as usual pushed her trolley loaded with sheets and towels along the corridor on the second floor and opened the door of the bedroom. The poor girl was half stunned by the smell of chemicals in the stagnant air. On the bed was the already stiffening corpse. She left it there and fled for help. Earlier Förster had written to his sister, 'I am in a bad way. What will become of us?' Then he had put the pen carefully on the little cabinet by the side of the

bed and had swallowed a lethal mixture of strychnine and morphine.

This pathetic suicide lies at the centre of a subtle mixture of lives and resurrections. That of Friedrich Nietzsche for one. On January 3rd, exactly five months to the day before the discovery of that stinking body half way round the globe in Asunción, the philosopher had left his hotel room in Turin and made his way towards the Piazza Carlo Alberto where he saw an old nag being brutally whipped by its master. Overcome with pity for the beaten horse he had broken into tears, staggered across the square and flung his arms around the poor animal's neck in an attempt to protect it. Then he had collapsed sobbing onto the cobbles. Thus ended a prolonged period of euphoria and the beginning of his own posthumous existence. In Turin at that very moment, sitting at his desk, was Cesare Lombroso, the author of 'Genius and Insanity'.

The sister of the insane philosopher was the widow of the corpse in Asunción. She knew exactly where her duty lay and immediately fled from husband to brother, from one kind of posthumous existence to another. By the way, and this is also part of the story, it was Hitler, the German dictator, the one who tried to end the legend of the wandering Jew in his own original way, who sent the earth of Germany to cover that grave in the jungle of Paraguay. And this leads us to another resurrection, perhaps the most dangerous of all, the one which demands the final burial of

the holocaust and the celebration of the führer's birthday half a century and more after another suicide, this time by a bullet in the head in the private bunker under the burning city of Berlin. Then there is Heinrich Heine, the Jewish poet lying on his mattress grave and another, John Keats, who was the first to think of the phrase 'posthumous existence' to describe a life beyond the world in the very letter in which he makes his 'awkward bow' from it. 'I have', he writes far away from home and friends in Italy, 'an habitual feeling of my real life having past'. Both of these are dying and yet still alive. And it doesn't stop there, for these are infinite resurrections, each playing on the other till the end of time. These lines merely add to them, are yet another rebirth and remembering of things which need, perhaps, to be forgiven.

Thus we have a whole series of unquiet graves all of which are the legacy of Palinurus, the exiled pilot of Aeneas' storm-tossed bark who, chosen as victim to assuage the fury of Juno, was vanquished by the god of sleep and cut off from the boat he was steering, taking not only the tiller but the rudder and entire stern along with him. As Dryden translates the Aeniad, 'The God, insulting with superior strength / Fell heavy on him, plung'd him in the Sea, / And, with the Stern, the Rudder tore away'. This left Aeneas to fulfil the oracle and land, quite by chance or at least without the aid of his pilot, on the shore of Italy, the birthplace of fascism.

Palinurus, after 'Three blust'ring Nights', finally came ashore

near Velia, only to be brutally murdered and left on the beach. Because unburied, he had to wait a posthumous hundred years before being permitted to cross the Styx. Incidentally, Dido called out for the same fate for Aeneas, 'Let him fall before his time and lie in the sands unburied'.

There was another unquiet grave, this time in a darkened room at number 50 Rue d'Amsterdam. Here lay the poet Heinrich Heine, the first Jew to achieve real prominence in the history of German letters. He was the son of Samson and the grandson of Lazarus. Born before the wedding of his parents, he was, as well as being Jewish, also illegitimate. The Heine family business had failed and his father, just like Nietzsche's, had lapsed into a kind of epileptic madness, another kind of posthumous existence. He writes of a visit to his father, 'In my delight at seeing him, I wanted to rush up to him and kiss his hand. But strangely enough, the nearer I came to him, the more everything became blurred and changed its shape. When I bent to kiss his hand, I was seized by a deathly chill, the fingers were dry as twigs and he himself a tree without leaves and covered with frost'.

Likewise, Heine lay dying ever so slowly. In Germany it was announced that he had entered an asylum and, soon after, that he had died. This was near enough to the truth. In fact he had returned to Paris and taken to his bed, or rather a pile of mattresses in a shabby second floor room. A small ante-room led to this bedroom which was basic but large

enough. The place was in semi-darkness and semi-silence, the curtains drawn, the only sound of piano playing which came from the other side of the courtyard beyond. The poet himself lay in a darkened part of the room separated from the rest by a screen. On the walls were a portrait of his wife and two etchings by Robert, 'The Fishers' and 'The Reapers', but they were hardly distinguishable in the gloom. On mattresses placed on the floor lay Heine. Once the visitor had got used to the darkness he could see the wasted body under the bedclothes. His beautiful, white, bloodless hands lay on the counter-pain and his face, also beautiful, showed no pain. His relief came, not from strychnine and morphine but from writing and morphine. He stayed immobile on this bed for eight years.

In these rooms he lived half helpless on his mattress grave, a posthumous existence which lasted just two years less than Nietzsche's. Both were controlled by adoring women jealous of their own role: Nietzsche by his sister, Elizabeth, Heine by his wife, Mathilde. The story goes that the poet's existence was little helped by her behaviour. The only doctor who ever relieved his terrible suffering was a certain Dr Wertheim. He bravely complained about the quality of Mathilde's nursing and got punched squarely on the jaw for his pains after which he never returned. She was horribly jealous of anyone who could do more for the dying poet than she could herself.

An eternity with nothing to do. Hour after hour in the company of drifting thoughts, trapped in a death once

removed, a body cradled in time, like a baby but without the hope of escape, of getting up on uncertain legs and walking away. Caught up in immobility surrounded on all sides by thoughts that prey like vultures on one's own flesh, thinking it already dead. Mirrors stare back in every direction. Eyes, pallid in the half light and that strange grin of the zombie which insists on the certainties that have to be forgotten until the next thought rises to displace it and even that is the same thought. Idle time has gates that swing too easily. The slightest draught blows them open to admit large sorrows it had hoped forgotten. Not vistas of daffodils under a blue sky but fears.

Fear, of course, is origin and out of that Hades came his finest work. The poems he wrote at this time were 'like listening to a man buried alive, They are 'a cry from the grave', a cry in the night from someone buried alive, or even from a corpse, "Life is lost to me forever". An unquiet grave, without the privileges of the dead, who have no need to spend money and write letters, let alone books, In this unhappy state, 'I've long been measured for my coffin, and for my obituary also, but I am taking so much time dying that I am beginning to find it as tedious as do my friends'., 'I hope that the interminable death song of the swan of the Rue d'Amsterdam hasn't bored you too much!' whispered the sick man and turned away. When Mathilde prayed to God to forgive him his unkindness, he told her, 'He will pardon me; it is his job'.

Nietzsche thought very highly of Heine, 'The highest conception of the lyric poet was given me by Heinrich Heine. I search over the realms of thousands of years for equally sweet and passionate music in vain [...] and how he handles his German! One day it will be said that Heine and I have been far and away the first artists of the German language at an immeasurable distance ahead of everything that mere Germans have done with it'.

Heine's illness can be dated from 1844, the date of Nietzsche's birth. In this year he published his 'New Poems' and 'Winter Story'. It was towards the end of that year that Heine's uncle Solomon died, a multimillionaire worth some 40 thousand million francs. Heine had always been led to understand that he would inherit a considerable pension from this estate but nothing was mentioned in the will and his cousin, Carl, to whom the fortune was left, allowed Heine a mere 2000 francs a year, a pittance. Heine was devastated 'God forgive my family for the sins they have committed against me. Truly it is not the question of money, but the moral outrage that the most intimate friend of my youth and my blood relation did not honour his father's word that has broken the bones of my heart; and I am dying of the fracture'. The shock of his disinheritance weakened him in the face of his disease. He was threatened with jail if he should try to re-enter Prussia and went instead to Barèges in the Pyrenees where his health collapsed. He was almost blind and could hardly

speak or swallow and he had continual fainting fits. It was then that the announcement of his death was made and he lay down on his mattress grave. He had trouble with his eyes and his mouth and often could not swallow his food. He had to push up his left eyelid with his finger in order to read, 'Alas, I can now eat only on one side and weep only with one eye. Oh ladies, shall I be able to claim only half your hearts in future'? He could not even kiss.

That year then, 1844. A year we need to tread around with some care. A year with its own history which circles round its own and other stories. A few more pointers:

John Smith and his brother Hyrum, founders of the Mormon Church, were dragged from their prison cell by a mob of 200 and lynched in Carthage, Illinois, the result of a disagreement over the question of polygamy. A rioter commented, 'If the law could not reach them then powder and shot could'. Brigham Young rose up to be the new leader. The Smiths were translated.

James Knox Polk was elected the eleventh President of the U.S.A. Polk was president from 1844-1848. He began a process which doubled the size of the nation within a decade and gave the fledgling land some lebensraum. His stated aims were 'the reoccupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas' and it was indeed during his rule that Texas was added to the United states. The U.S.A. and China signed their first treaty of Peace, amity and commerce. Joseph Buonaparte, brother of the dictator, died.

Much in the way of publications. Dumas Père produced both 'The Count of Monte Christo' and 'The Three Musketeers', Charles Dickens finished 'The Chimes' and 'Martin Chuzzlewit', Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote her 'Poems'. A new and enlarged edition of Schopenhauer's 'The World as Will and Idea' appeared.

Also in 1844 Karl Marx, who Nietzsche never met or mentioned in his writing, met Friedrich Engels in Paris and wrote 'The Jewish Question'. This year also saw this descendent of a line of Rabbis married, exiled and converted to Communism. In his book, Marx explains how the Jews emancipated themselves through the power of money, 'The Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews. Money is the jealous god of Israel, beside which no other god may exist. The Christian has absconded with Judaism' and 'the social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from Judaism'. A curious twist for a Jewish anti-semite who writes of 'the stock-exchange synagogue of Paris' and of 'Stock-exchange Jews'. Bakunin wrote that 'this whole Jewish world which is made up of a single exploiting creed' is a world that is 'at the disposal of Marx on one hand and the Rothschilds on the other'. When the communist millennium finally arrived the Jews would, naturally, 'disappear'. It was Heine, of course, who wrote that 'money is the god of our time and Rothschild is his prophet'. Engles published 'The Condition of the Working Class in England'.

In the spring of 1844 Darwin began to jot down some notes

of an idea that had been running around in his head. By the end of the summer it was a full 189 pages long. It was the first draft of what was to become some fifteen years later, the first edition of the 'Origin of Species'.

In 1844 Gustave von Salomé married Louise Wilm in St Petersburg. Later, they had a daughter. In the same year the Polka was introduced into Europe from Bohemia and Wagner finished and carefully revised the score of Tannhäuser.

And of course, Eugène Sue published his 'Wandering Jew'.

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Also I 1844 Benjamin Disraeli published his novel, 'Conningsby', the first of his political trilogy, the other two being 'Sybil' and 'Tancred'.

Disraeli's uniqueness was to emphasise his Judaism instead of hiding it 'In spite of centuries', he wrote to his Christian readers, 'of tens of centuries, of degradation, the Jewish mind exercises a vast influence on the affairs of Europe. I speak not of their laws, which you still obey, of their literature with which your minds are saturated; but of the living Hebrew intellect. You never observe a great intellectual movement in Europe in which the Jews do not greatly participate'. Disraeli went even further 'On every sacred day you read to the people the exploits of Jewish heroes, the proofs of Jewish devotion, the brilliant annals of past Jewish magnificence. The Christian Church has covered every kingdom with sacred buildings, and over every altar [...] we find the tables of the Jewish law. Every

Sunday - every Lord's Day - if you wish to express feelings of praise and thanksgiving to the Most High, or if you wish to find expression of solace in grief, you find both in the words of the Jewish poets'. In this Disraeli agreed with De Chirico who wrote in his Memoirs 'Anti-semitism will end only when the Jews stop hiding and assuming the attitudes of whipped dogs and will say in a loud voice and to everyone's face 'I am a Jew and I am proud of it!'

And this is interesting because Disraeli really did believe, just like the anti-semites who followed closely on his heels, of a Jewish conspiracy of chosen men of a chosen people dominating history from behind the scenes. In his first novel 'Alroy', he writes of a plan for a Jewish Empire controlled by Jews and in 'Conningsby' there is still Jewish money controlling world diplomacy and governing the courts and governments of the world. Just like Hitler's publicity machine, Disraeli believed 'that the first Jesuits were Jews; that mysterious Russian diplomacy which so alarms Western Europe is organised and principally carried on by Jews; that mighty revolution which is at this moment preparing in Germany and which will be in fact a second and greater Reformation [...] is entirely developing under the auspices of Jews'. And even 'all is race [which is ...] the key to history' and 'there is only one thing which makes a race and that is blood'. Not only theory but practice. It was Henry Oppenheim who told Disraeli that the Khedive of Egypt wanted to sell the Suez canal and it was Lionel Rothschild who lent him the four million pounds to pay for it.

This did not go unnoticed. There was even a piece in 'Punch' by Thackeray, also in 1844, called 'Codlingsby' in which Mendoza, who is a direct descendant of Rebecca, reveals to The Marquis of Codlingsby that absolutely everyone is Jewish, including the King and the Pope. That same year, Christopher North, under the pseudonym of Professor Wilson, published an 'Anti-Conningsby.

A return to the question of fear and origin which is never far away. An internal resurrection which is at the heart of stories. Even Jesus had a problem with origins, born with some questions as to his paternity, he vanished for thirty years before reappearing to testify that he was the son of God.

Hitler is not much less of a muddle. His father, Alois, was an illegitimate son who grew up with his mother's maiden name and no guarantee that she knew who his father was. The story goes that after the death of his mother, he also vanished for some thirty years only to reappear to testify that he was in fact not a Schicklgruber but a Hitler. Would he have been taken as seriously if he hadn't changed him name? Much later, Nietzsche, in his turn, insisted on coming from a line of Polish aristocrats as his name, Niâzky, shows. He was to write, 'I am a pureblooded Polish nobleman in whom there is not a trace of ignoble blood, least of all German blood'. His mother used to tell him and Lisbeth about their ancestor Count Nietzski who had defied religious persecution when he had been

involved with the break from the Catholic church. As a result of his defiance he had been banished and had led a life of wandering from one place to another for three years, not quite as long as the eternal exile of the wandering Jew. Their son, born the night before their flight, had been brought up during their wanderings and this had given him the strength to resist all his ordeals. He grew up healthy and lived long and transmitted both qualities to his heirs. Later Nietzsche was easily recognised as a Pole and this even by the Poles themselves who addressed him in Polish and expected a reply. One of them tells him, 'Your race is Polish, but your heart has turned heaven known where'. In a letter to Gast from the spa at Marienbad 'There are many Poles here and they - it's most extraordinary - insist on taking me for a Pole, keep greeting me in Polish, and refuse to believe me when I tell them I'm Swiss' and wrote, 'Personally, I am still so much a Pole that I would sacrifice all other music for Chopin'.

When Nietzsche told Cosima that he was descended from a line of Polish counts she answered, 'What a pity, I would find you much more interesting had you been the son of some unpretentious clergyman from Thuringia'.

Thus are things reborn. Origin and re-birth hover around the question of inspiration and the beginnings of stories. It is generally accepted that Heine's 'Tannhäuser' ballad was used as the basis for Wagner's opera. It has its name in common as well as its giants and dwarfs, Valkyries, a young Siegfried, elves and gnomes and all the population of Ger-

man myths. The gnomes, who are called Nibelungen, mine for precious stones deep in the earth. They wear little caps which can make them invisible and forge the best swords which only the giants know how to use. It is even possible that Heine's 'Elemental Spirits' of 1837 gave Wagner the idea for 'The Ring'. The title of 'Götterdämmerung' dates from a Heine poem of 1832. No doubt about it. Wagner called Heine a talent 'which few in Germany can equal' and 'which with more favourable care would have attained to the level of the greatest names of our literature'. He was 'the great awakener of the German mind'. However, he was later hugely offended by Heine's 'Tom Cat's Concert for Poetry-Music' which was inspired by Wagner's theories about the relation of music and poetry. In part it runs:

The Philharmonic Tom-cat's club

Is starting to believe

In artless Music, in its

Fashion primal and naive.

It wants poetic music now -

Roulades, not quavers kissing,

Poetry less instruments -

A voice with music missing

It wants the reign of genius, though

It may botch things outright,

But in the arts, oft unawares,

It soars to the greatest height

It honours genius that keeps

To nature as its king,

And doesn't boast great learning, as

It hasn't learnt a thing.

It is hardly surprising that Wagner took objection to this and fell out with Heine as he fell out with Nietzsche. Heine was now a 'highly gifted poet-Jew versifying with the airs of true poesis. His wit he got from Voltaire, his style superficially stolen from other German poets'. A footnote to do with posthumous existences - Cosima, after her husband's death, controlled performances of his music with an iron fist. One result of this was to prove Heine right. Singing went out of the window and was replaced by declamation, 'the emphasis must be placed on the language'.

This still leaves the question of the 'Flying Dutchman'. Wagner had once acknowledged his debt to Heine's version of the story which is called 'The Memories of Herr Schnabelewopski'. He wrote, 'The treatment of this Ahasuerus of the Ocean, taken by Heine from a Dutch theatre piece, gave me everything to hand'. However, by the time he came to write 'My life' in the 1860's no single word of this influence remains. Could this have been because Heine thought of the wanderer as a symbol of the eternal vitality of the Jews while for Wagner he represented a kind of eternal zombie in search of redemption in a Christian world?

The original idea for the story came from a legend current on the island of Nordeney and it was Heine who sketched out a drama based on the legend after a visit to the place. This describes the curse on a sailor who has asked for the Devil's aid in rounding a dangerous cape and is doomed, in a horrible posthumous existence, to sail the seas forever. The Dutch captain refuses redemption offered him by a series of faithful women and always returns to his ship to avoid marriage. He finally meets Katharina, the daughter of a Scots captain, but then, at a crucial moment in the plot, spots a girl in the audience with whom he leaves the theatre for an hour's dalliance only returning in time to catch the final few minutes of the action. This scene Heine added to the original legend. The captain is redeemed by the love of the adoring Katharina who calls out in a loud voice, 'I was faithful to you until this moment and I know a sure means of remaining faithful unto death'. At these words she hurls herself into the sea and the curse of the Flying Dutchman is lifted. He is saved and we see the ghostly ship sinking beneath the waves. However, Heine's treatment is certainly not tragic or even serious. His moral is that women should be careful not to marry flying Dutchmen and that men may come to grief through even the best of women.

Heine's treatment of the story is ironic and subtle yet there was something in this tale of the eternal outsider that caught Wagner's imagination, something that brought it into line with one of the recurring sub-plots of European writing, that of the wandering Jew, a plot that had been endemic in European literature since the Middle Ages. It is

mentioned in Germany by Goethe, Schubart, A.W. Schlegel, von Brentano, Chamisso and Gutzman, in England by Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth, and in France, by Edgar Quinet, Béranger and Gérard de Nerval and Alexander Dumas. In 1847 Sue's book, published, as you will not have forgotten, in the year of Nietzsche's birth, was dramatised for the theatre and put on in 1851 at the Opera to music by Halévy. Earlier, in 1834, a journal had come out with the express intention of reporting the progress of this creature, 'The wandering Jew is the Jewish race, dispersed eternally amongst the nations, without merging with them, without becoming a brother to them, alone amongst the peoples of the earth, thus fulfilling the prophecies of the divine curse'. It is the tale of a representative of the Jewish people, driven into exile as an eternal punishment for their repudiation of Christ. Like Cain he had been sent to wander the earth for the murder of a brother. He was the Judas Iscariot of the western world, the man who betrayed Christ with a kiss, so unlike the kiss that Heine, in his own posthumous existence, was unable to give. And there he is even in O'Henry's story 'The Door of Unrest' where Michob Ader turns up looking 'like Father Time's younger brother' who tells us, 'I saw Jerusalem destroyed, and Pompeii go up in the fireworks; and I was at the coronation of Charlemagne and the lynching of Joan of Arc. And everywhere I go there come storms and revolutions and plagues and fires. 'Twas so commanded'. Each individual Jew, a stranger in his adopted land, therefore, was cursed in the eyes of his Christian neighbours not because of anything he had

done but because of what he was, exiled into himself from himself. No final catharsis to this story unless it be the state of Israel whose second biggest city is Los Angeles.

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The Encyclopaedia gives us

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1844-1900) German philosopher. His first book, 'The Birth of Tragedy' (1872), argued that Wagnerian opera was the successor to Greek drama. Nietzsche rejected Christianity in favour of the "will to power". In 'Thus Spake Zarathustra' (1883-92), he praises the man who is free, titanic, and powerful, an ideal adopted by the Nazis. After 1889 he was permanently insane.

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A few births and deaths to keep the cycle turning in 1844, on 15th October, Nietzsche was born. In July 1846, Elisabeth Therèse Alexandra Nietzsche was born. In February 1848 Joseph Nietzsche was born and the following September Karl Ludwig Nietzsche died mad.

His father, Karl Ludwig, was a minister of the Lutheran Church as were both of his grandfathers. One of these, Friedrich August Ludwig, rose to become superintendent. The mother of this superintendent had been born of a line of pastors which went back to the early seventeenth century. All the ancestors of both sexes were solid German citizens who had borne solid German names. Nietzsche was called Wilhelm Friedrich after the king of Prussia who was little more than a figurehead for Bismarck's ruthless

regime which created the Greater Germany and, because of its industrial backbone and organising abilities, led step by step to the wehrmacht.

1848 was not only crucial to the life of Nietzsche but to Europe as a whole as it was the Year of Revolutions which saw serious rioting in fifteen European capitals. The bourgoisie hoped to gain a say in government. The trouble was that their example encouraged the working classes to show that they also had aspirations. This threat from below frightened the middle classes and they put themselves in league with the monarchies against the aspirations of the workers. It was the end of William IV's liberal leanings in Prussia. Both there and elsewhere new constitutions were imposed from above and, at the end of the day, the ruling families were stronger than ever.

1848 saw the meeting of the Frankfort Assembly which Marx called 'an assembly of old women'. They elected a regent in the person of Archduke John but talked themselves out of their jobs. When Schleswig and Holstein revolted against Denmark, Prussia came to their aid but was forced by the other European powers to withdraw its troops and sign the Convention of Malmöe. When Schleswig and Holstein then appealed to the Assembly they agreed to ratify the Convention and this resulted in an insurrection in the streets of Frankfort. Two deputies were murdered by the mob. The rising was crushed by troops from Austria and Prussia and any prestige which the assembly might have had was destroyed. They had lost the support of the

people by calling on foreign troops to suppress a popular uprising. In this year a list of ministers was drawn up and Frederick William IV wrote beside Bismarck's name, 'Only to be employed when the bayonet governs unrestricted'.

History went on its jolly way. In 1849 Austria was excluded from the German Federation. It had taken half a century for the Germans to wriggle out from under the hegemony of the Hapsbergs. Frederick refused the Imperial Crown saying of himself that 'I am not a great ruler'.

The 'Convention of Olmütz' was signed in November 1850. Here Prussia agreed to the dissolution of the Union. Three years after the revolutions of 1848 Austria was still the dominant power in Germany. Germany had been worsted by Austria because of her weakness. She learnt the lesson. While the Austrian monarchy had been built by marriages, the Prussian monarchy had been built by the sword. Prussian instincts were military and it was now prepared to lean on its strengths. Bismarck wrote, 'Woe to the statesman who in these days does not look around him for a reason for war which will hold water when the war was over'.

In 1861 William I succeeded to the throne of Prussia and the work of military reconstruction was seriously begun. His plan increased the standing army from two hundred thousand to nearly half a million. A year later, in 1862, the Prussian parliament refused Bismarck's proposals for reform of the military so he simply proceeded without their permission. Success silenced opposition. He wrote, 'We are a vain nation. We feel hurt as soon as we cannot swagger'.

War between Prussia with the aid of Austria against the Danes. We are in 1864. By the Treaty of Vienna Germany gained the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein and the possibility of constructing a canal to the coast and creating a new destiny on the open seas.

In 1866, after working for two years to create the right conditions, there was war between Germany and Austria. The conflict lasted just seven weeks and was, as Fisher summarises it, 'a revelation to Europe of the results which might be attained by the application of Prussian science and Prussian methods to the military art. The swiftness of the Prussian mobilisation, the precision of the Prussian movements, the excellence of the Prussian needle gun, the clever use which was [...] made of railways, portended the advent of an era in which the great decisions of history would be governed by the relative capacity of states to make use of their technical and scientific resources, and the direction of war would more and more resemble the management of a vast and intricate industrial business'. Or, to put it another way, Hanoverian muzzle-loaders against Prussian breech-loaders. The Prussians won the Battle of Sadowa against Austria and the minor German states which had sided with her. The Treaty of Prague created a North German confederation under the leadership of Prussia which gained the Kingdom of Hanover, the Electorate of Hesse, a part of Hesse-Darmstadt and the city of Frankfort. Bismarck knew where to stop and didn't demand the annexation of Austria which came somewhat later under a leader who didn't know where to stop. Austria

was now excluded from German affairs and Prussia, with an increased population of some four million souls, was undisputed head of a North German Confederation. In the Bundesrat Prussia controlled only 17 of the 43 votes but the real power lay elsewhere. William I controlled the army and foreign policy so the Bundesrat could chatter as much as it liked. Moltke thought that 'The war of 1866 did not take place because the existence of Prussia was threatened, or in obedience to public opinion or to the will of the people. It was a war which was foreseen long back, which was prepared for with deliberation'.

Napoleon III of France had hoped that the Prussian war against Austria would be long and exhausting and that he would be called in at the end to act as arbiter and that France would control the entire area. He was shocked at the rapid defeat of Austria. Bismarck had now consumed Hanover, Hesse, Cassel and the two duchies and dominated all of Germany to the River Maine, had added four and a quarter million new souls to the population of his country and had overturned the whole balance of power in Europe. Still, he was convinced that 'a Franco-German war must take place before the construction of a United Germany would be realised'. Bismarck commented, 'Let us get to work. Let us hoist Germany into the saddle. She will soon learn to ride'.

He did not take long. In 1870 Napoleon III was manoeuvred into declaring war on Germany and this resulted in the Franco-Prussian war which had been confidently predicted

by Bismarck and in which Nietzsche fought as a medical orderly. Bismarck was convinced that only a foreign and nationalist adventure would unite the whole of Germany while in France there was also a desire for a fight. Because they had not been humiliated in the war of 1866 Austria remained on the sidelines. The battle of Sedan was followed by the capitulation of Metz which was rapidly followed in 1871 by the Fall of Paris after a four month siege. Complete victory for the Prussians. The 'Peace of Frankfort' in February. Germany gained Alsace and Lorraine, Metz and a huge indemnity. The southern confederation joined the North German Confederation. The armies of a united Germany with kings and princes at their head met at the heart of France. On January 18th Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, accepted the nomination of the German princes as Emperor of a united Germany and was crowned German Emperor at Versailles although the ceremony was not performed in a railway carriage and there is no record of his dancing with excitement afterwards. Thus the establishment of the first German Reich. The ceremony which took place in the Hall of Mirrors ended with the playing of the Prussian hymn 'Heil Dir im Siegskranz'. The music had been composed by an American, Henry Carey, and is now the British National Anthem.

When Bismark began his rule in Berlin. Germany was the most populous country in Europe after Russia and, even including Russia, the strongest. The Customs Union was already secure and political union and national sentiment soon followed. Was it unnatural that these Prussian patri-

ots, throwing their minds back to the obscure origins of their state in a little military outpost of German speaking men in a sea of Slavs and seeing its ineluctable rise, should discern therein the workings of a peculiar and flattering providence? Was it unnatural that they should believe that the Prussian race, by its frugality, its hardihood, its stern application, its formidable and disciplined violence, was selected to accomplish an historic mission on earth. There were some even, who cast their minds forward and asked if there might not be a greater destiny reserved for them

Bismarck, whose genius had brought all this about, had done so with the help and even friendship of the Jews and was now denounced for his dependence on them and for accepting their money.

The Paris Commune erupted while the country was in the hands of the Prussian army. The revolution in the capital was put down by soldiers of the defeated French army during the 'Bloody Week' in May in which 20,000 Parisians died. Thiers to the fore in founding the Third Republic because the royalist groups argued hopelessly among themselves. However, Bismarck knew where to stop. He had no wish for a great empire overseas or for expansion to the east. He never threatened England on the high seas. He didn't make the mistake of a later chancellor of Germany. He did, however, after two attempts on the emperor's life, pass a law against the socialists which placed the natural rights of the citizen under the heel of the police. Obedience

was the watchword.

In 1876 Leopold II of Belgium was invited to Brussels for an international meeting of explorers and geographers to consider an expansion in the study of Africa and to work towards the elimination of the slave trade. This resulted in the Belgian Congo and the beginning of European colonialism. The Congo Free State was not free to the Congolese and freedom of trade allowed the place to be milked and its people enslaved in situ. Germany and others had to follow suit and within three years there were the beginnings of Germany's colonial empire. As the Germans could only think of their colonies as bits added onto the Reich, they could offer little more than slavery to the newly acquired conquests of the master race and thus they created furious antagonisms and finally failure.

Although Bismarck had already signed the Alliance of the Three Emperors in 1873, a contract of mutual aid between Austria, Russia and Germany, he went behind the Tsar's back six years later and signed the Dual Alliance between just Germany and Austria-Hungary. Germany now had two conflicting alliances, the second designed to protect her against a signatory of the first.

In 1882 Italy joined the Dual Alliance making it into another Triple Alliance creating the axis which was there in readiness for the Great War.

In 1887, still afraid of a war on two fronts, Bismarck approached the Reichstag with a request for an army of 700,000 men.

1888 was the year of the three emperors and the end of Bismarck. Death of Wilhelm I at the age of ninety. Crown Prince Frederick, was never given the chance to be great, dying of cancer in as many days as the years of his father's reign. His liberal tendencies were never given a chance. The crown passed on to Wilhelm II. He ruled fifty million subjects. and a united country that dominated the map of Europe. Germany dropped its pilot. Wilhelm was, to put it mildly, unstable and became increasingly bossy and theatrical building crazy dream castles and listening to Wagner. He began to make speeches about 'shining armour'.

In the final ten years of the century Germany had doubled her production of both steel and iron. In the last twenty her steam tonnage had increased seven-fold. She had coal in the Ruhr and iron in Lorraine and a hard working people and was rapidly becoming the greatest industrial power of the world. She established colonies in West Africa, in South-West Africa, in East Africa, in New Guinea.

At the turn of the century something like 150 million people living in an area of some 10 million square miles were governed by one or other of the European powers. Nationalism was being backed up by colonialism and the Christian missionary. The flag and the cross.

25th August. Death of Nietzsche.