The Cult of the Duel

Giving Satisfaction at the University of Vienna and in the Joint Army, 1867-1914

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Abstract

In the Habsburg Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, dueling was a crucial way for university-educated men, as well as Joint Army officers, to assert the value of their own honor. It was a terrible insult when, in 1896, German-nationalist university dueling fraternities (*Burschenschaften*) in Germany and Austria passed the Waidhofen Resolution, officially declaring Jewish men unable to give satisfaction in a duel and therefore incapable of possessing honor. This article argues that the passage of the Waidhofen Resolution was not an isolated incident of bigotry but an evolution of the German-nationalism of the *Burschenschaften* as they increasingly valued an exclusionary definition of what it meant to be "racially German," and that the *Burschenschaften*'s definition of honor fought against the more inclusive (and pragmatically self-serving) definition of honor espoused by the army.

Article

Introduction

"A half-dozen duels," wrote Theodor Herzl in 1893 to the Society for Defense against Antisemitism, "would very much raise the social position of the Jews."[1] In his diary, Herzl fantasized about what those duels might entail. He, alone and unaided, would bravely challenge one of the three most influential leaders of Austrian antisemitism. Perhaps he would die a martyr in the duel, his death proof of Jewish honor. Or, if that failed, when brought to trial for murder (and illegal dueling), Herzl, in an impassioned speech, would "[compel] the court…to respect his nobility," and, by implication, to understand the horror of antisemitism.[2]

But Herzl's fantasy required that one of these great antisemites would agree to duel him in the first place—something antisemites were increasingly unlikely to do. Three years after Herzl planned to use the duel to defeat antisemitism, *Burschenschaften*—Pan-Germanic dueling fraternities based at universities throughout Austria and Germany, all part of the same organization—passed the Waidhofen Resolution. The Resolution banned Jewish students from joining *Burschenschaften* and forbade *Burschenschaft* members from dueling

[1] Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 160.
[2] Schorske, *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna*, 160.

Jewish men, claiming they were unable to give satisfaction.[3] Individual *Burschenschaften* had declared members of Zionist dueling fraternities to be unable to give satisfaction even before the Resolution, but this uniform, international, bureaucratic stance against Jewish students was new and hotly contested even among *Burschenschaft* members.[4]

The cultural importance of dueling rested on the idea that a man could possess an inner honor so valuable that, if he was insulted, he should take up a sword to defend that honor. Public recognition for private offenses was his right. But it was thought that only an elite group of men had such priceless honor; only those men were able to give satisfaction. By announcing that Jewish students were unable to give satisfaction, the Resolution proclaimed that all Jews, on the sole basis on being Jews, lacked the honor which other *Burschenschaft* members naturally possessed. It was a piece of gross, institutionalized antisemitism.

This new stance of the *Burschenschaften* on university students' honor—a stance decided by Pan-Germanists in Austria and Germany—directly opposed the stance taken by the multiethnic Habsburg Empire's Joint Army. According to the army, every single male university student in the Empire could duel, no matter his religion or ethnicity—as long as he had completed his year of training to become a reserve officer. *Gymnasium* graduates had only one year of compulsory military service, at the end of which they would be recognized for life as an officer in the Joint Army. Men not lucky enough to have received such an education spent three years as common soldiers.[5] Rather than naming religion and ethnicity as the basis for honor as the *Burschenschaften* did, the Joint Army—which enlisted men from throughout a very diverse empire—made army rank the determining factor for honor. Officers, whether reserve or career, possessed sufficient honor to have to duel to protect it. Their status as officers gave *Gymnasium* graduates like Theodor Herzl the right and obligation to demand satisfaction for insults in duels. It was a shrewd move on the part of the army. The ability to give satisfaction added a touch of mystique to the Empire's reserve and career officers, elevating their reputation, and it also (in theory) created a lifelong loyalty to the Empire and to the Kaiser in the university-educated reserve officers.

This article explores what dueling culture in the *Burschenschaften* at the University of Vienna and among officers in the Joint Army reveals about ideals of honor in Austria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is especially interested in comparing the two institutions in terms of to whom they granted honor. While both had narrow definitions of honor, the Joint Army accorded honor to any male citizen who was a reserve or career officer, while the *Burschenschaften*'s privileging of Christian Austro-Germans created a system where just a narrow sliver of the population was properly able to give satisfaction. After 1896, only the Joint Army granted Jewish men the necessary honor to duel. The official exclusion of Jewish men from Austrian *Burschenschaften* also came at a

[3] Lisa Fetheringill Zwicker, "The Burschenschaft and German Political Culture, 1890-1914," *Central European History* 42, no. 3 (2009): 402.
[4] Lisa Fetheringill Zwicker, *Dueling Students: Conflict, Masculinity, and Politics in German Universities, 1890-1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 42 and 403.
[5] Arthur Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, trans. Catherine Hutter (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc, 1970), 82.

time when antisemitism in German-speaking lands became ever more grounded in an idea of racial difference.[6] This article argues that the passage of the Waidhofen Resolution was not an isolated incident of bigotry but an evolution of the German-nationalism of Austrian *Burschenschaften* as they increasingly mythologized what it meant to be "racially German", and that the *Burschenschaften*'s definition of honor fought against the more inclusive (and pragmatically self-serving) definition of honor espoused by the army.

Historiography

The history of *Burschenschaften* in Germany has been explored by a few historians, including Lisa Zwicker and Kevin McAleer. This scholarship has been helpful for this particular study, especially when it tangentially refers to Austrian *Burschenschaften*, since similarly detailed English-language scholarship on Austrian *Burschenschaften* is lacking. This article is careful, though, to distinguish information about German *Burschenschaften* from information about Austrian *Burschenschaften*. *Burschenschaften* became slightly more conservative in Austria, since unlike German students, Austrian students had no aristocratic, apolitical alternative fraternity system like the corps.

Burschenschaften came into existence at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in the lands that became Germany. As student organizations, they were a reaction against the aristocratic dueling corps, whose members were usually wealthy and titled. Promoting the honor of all "virtuous men," no matter their class or creed, the *Burschenschaften* existed within a strong tradition of German nationalism and Protestantism.[7] Long before there was a unified German state, there were *Burschenschaft* members clamoring for a Großdeutschland. In Austria, where *Burschenschaften* were founded after 1848, *Burschenschaften* Pan-Germanism came to imply rebellion against the Catholic Habsburg Empire, and often against its multiethnicity.

Every single member of the Austrian *Burschenschaften*, which were so publicly antisemitic, was also a reserve officer in the Joint Army. If he was not a reserve officer at the time he entered university, he became one within only a few years. In the existing secondary scholarship, there is no acknowledgement of the tension these competing identities caused other than in the 1915 "Guide for Reserve Officers" quoted by István Deák, specifically in the anecdote of the *Burschenschaft* member stripped of his army rank for failing to duel his Jewish fellow officer. Yet in his autobiography, Arthur Schnitzler, a well-known Viennese writer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, explains as a matter of course that for many antisemitic students, it was a constant struggle to make "officer honor" agree with "student behavior."[8] There were strong ideological clashes between *Burschenschaft* members' race-based, Pan-Germanic definition of honor and the Joint Army's rank-based, multiethnic definition of honor.

The *Burschenschaft* Member

[6] Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 23, no. 1 (1978): 39.
[7] Zwicker, *Dueling Students*, 32.
[8] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 129.

Antisemitism had been a part of the ideology of many *Burschenschaften*, Austrian and German, long before 1896. Ever since the establishment of *Burschenschaften*, debates had raged over whether Jewish men should be admitted, and many Jewish members found only an uneasy welcome among their new brothers. As a student, Theodor Herzl joined *Burschenschaft* Albia at the University of Vienna because of his strong belief in Pan-Germanism. But he resigned in protest in 1883 after the *Burschenschaft* rallied behind a member who led a student ceremony in commemoration of the composer Richard Wagner's death, a ceremony so antisemitic that the police intervened.[9] Herzl expected an apology and to be begged to rejoin his *Burschenschaft*; instead, his *Burschenschaft* shrugged and let him go. For supporters of an ideology that hoped to unite all German-speaking peoples, Pan-Germanists often had specific ideas about how Germanic manhood should look and behave.

Burschenschaften routinely demanded such unquestioning conformity and loyalty from their members. In their first year, the pledges, or "young foxes," of most *Burschenschaften* were expected to meet with each other daily, immediately call each other by the informal "Du," and submit to general hazing—all of which forged quick and strong emotional bonds between the men.[10] *Burschenschaften* relied on regular pageantry to showcase the strength of their presence in the student body. In Vienna, Saturdays were an opportunity for the *Burschenschaften* to promenade down the city streets and in the university's courtyard in a *Farbenbummel* [parade of colors], showing off the caps and sashes adorned with the colors and insignia of their *Burschenschaft*—and sometimes showing off their willingness to fight.[11]

Brawls often broke out on these promenades, usually between *Burschenschaften* and Jewish and Catholic student organizations. *Burschenschaften* were frequently anti-Catholic in addition to being frequently antisemitic.[12] Taking their cue from the older *Burschenschaften* in Protestant-majority Germany, *Burschenschaft* members in Catholic-majority Austria looked down on members of Catholic student organizations, even though many Austrian *Burschenschaft* members were themselves at least nominally Catholic. The overwhelming dedication of these *Burschenschaft* members to their *Burschenschaften* is further demonstrated by the fact that the Pope had made dueling an excommunicable offense in 1867, and in 1890 even the *Mensur* was confirmed to count as a duel.[13] (The *Mensur* was a strictly-regulated student duel arranged between *Burschenschaften* which took place simply to show off *Burschenschaft* members' skill with a sword, not to avenge any insults.) It was a not uncommon cruelty in Austria to challenge pious Catholic reserve officers to a duel and force them to choose between their honor and their faith.[14] And yet

[9] Schorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna*, 151.
[10] Ernst Pawel, *The Labyrinth of Exile: A Life of Theodor Herzl* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989), 66. Zwicker, *Dueling Students*, 50.
[11] John Haag, "Students at the University of Vienna in the First World War," *Central European History* 17, no. 4 (1984): 300.
[12] John Haag, "Students at the University of Vienna in the First World War," 300.
[13] Zwicker, *Dueling Students*, 45.
[14] Kevin McAleer, *Dueling: The Cult of Honor in Fin-de-Siécle Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 154.

duels were so important to Catholic *Burschenschaft* members that they were worth defying the head of the Catholic Church. Duels meant the permanent, public, constantly visible confirmation of a man's bravery and honor—because they led to scars, called *Schmissen*. *Burschenschaft* members never armored their faces when they dueled, and most happily collected a few prominent facial scars. *Schmissen* were so desired that some men who were not members of a *Burschenschaft* sliced open their cheeks with razors and let the cuts scar.[15] As crucial as receiving the wounds in the first place was receiving the wounds without flinching. Routinely, pledges were ejected from *Burschenschaften* for failing to show the required stoicism (and therefore, honor) in their first duel.[16]

Duels were, in fact, illegal at this time in Austria (though that certainly did not stop them from occurring). The only permissible duel was the *Mensur*. But students did challenge each other to illegal duels for reasons of personal insult, and quite often. There was a hierarchy to these insults. Impolite behavior (like shining a light in someone's eyes) demanded only the less dangerous "light swords."[17] Verbal insults were more offensive and required heavy swords. Heavy swords were also needed for the most offensive type of insult of all: physical threats—blows or slaps, whether real or mimed—constituted a deeply mortifying "violation of another's physical integrity."[18]

In the eyes of Burschenschaft members at least, to fight by these rules and to fulfil all the many duties of a *Burschenschaft* member was to prove one's eliteness. This eliteness went beyond class (though *Burschenschaft* members came from families wealthy enough to support a university education and a *Burschenschaft*'s extra fees) and became about the soul. *Burschenschaft* members congratulated themselves on having untarnished honor, on being true men.

Male Jewish students, at least until the antisemitic Waidhofen Resolution was passed, were often enthusiastic participants in *Burschenschaft* life. They found the duel to be especially critical as a way to insist upon their honor. Peter Gay writes, "A *Schmiss* on the face of a Jewish student had a particular poignancy: the scar was a symptom of defense, a proof of bravery, an assertion of equal status and manly self-respect."[19] But it could be difficult to earn one. Even among the *Burschenschaften* at the University of Vienna that admitted Jewish students in the years before the Waidhofen Resolution, most were happy to edge their Jewish members out. Theodor Herzl's *Burschenschaft* Albia was in the 1880s "relatively more moderate than most of its rival saber rattlers" with "two other Jews and several converts on its active rolls, as well a fair number of Jewish alumni."[20] However, the Albia official record was extremely self-conscious about the religious make-up of the *Burschenschaft*. The record-keeper wrote, presumably after Herzl's resignation, that Herzl

[15] McAleer, *Dueling*, 147.
[16] Zwicker, *Dueling Students*, 41.
[17] Zwicker, *Dueling Students*, 42.
[18] McAleer, *Dueling*, 47.
[19] Lisa Fethergill Zwicker, "Performing Masculinity: Jewish Students and the Honor Code at German Universities," in *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender, and History*, eds. Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman, and Paul Frederick Lerner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 130-131.
[20] Pawel, *The Labyrinth of Exile*, 66 and 67.

was "unpopular with both his fellow tribesmen as well as with the far more numerous pure-blooded Germans."[21] As Jews became increasingly defined as racially other, Jewish students, however secular, became a threat to those who valued the "pure-blooded German[ness]" of their *Burschenschaft*.

The Joint Army Officer

The great majority of men in the Habsburg Empire, and an even greater majority of women, did not attend university. Attending university was in and of itself a conferral of social privilege, among other benefits allowing men to spend only one year in the military, anytime from when they left the *Gymnasium* until they reached their legal majority at twenty-five.[22] These university-educated reserve officers could quickly become career officers by retraining at a shortcut school. But men without university educations who wanted to attain the rank of officer had to spend years working their way up through a brutal system that demanded from them a very specific code of behavior.

Boys mainly trained to become officers during adolescence at military academies or at the less prestigious cadet schools. Reforms in military law in the Habsburg Empire in 1868 relaxed the intensity of the academies, which had been full of religious instruction, corporal punishment, and restrictions on students' movement and reading material.[23] Even with this new greater freedom, academies and cadet schools were rigorous and harsh, giving their students a technical and physical education as elaborate as the classical education of the *Gymnasium*. The boys came from all over the Habsburg Empire, and, as future officers, they were meant to shed their own personal nationalistic affiliations in favor of a sense of duty to the entire Empire.[24] The methods for achieving this could be psychologically painful. István Deák writes, "In the first year, a student was forbidden to speak his mother tongue, and some students were forced to relearn their native languages later in courses offered by the school."[25] While German was prized as the "universal language of command and service,"[26] officers were certainly not encouraged to value Pan-Germanism. Rather, they swore personal fealty to the Kaiser.[27] Career officers were raised in a hierarchical, claustrophobic environment, where their entire education was designed to create deep loyalty to the Empire as a whole, rather than to their own specific region of it. The Military Academy at Wiener Neustadt's famous motto was "*Treu bis in den Tod!*" (Loyal until death!).[28]

Officers had to remain especially loyal when their regiment was sent to Vienna for five years, as every regiment was. For officers, these years in Vienna were meant to be a time of

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[21] Pawel, *The Labyrinth of Exile*, 67.
[22] Arthur Schnitzler, *The Road into the Open*, trans. Roger Byers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 86.
[23] István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 88.
[24] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 184.
[25] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 83.
[26] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 28.
[27] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 4.
[28] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 84.

fun and luxury, full of balls, operas, and sex. It was also a time of strict and exacting etiquette rules meant to uphold the honor of the officer corps. An officer's pay was abysmal before the Compromise of 1867, when many nearly starved in order to afford the upkeep required for their uniform.[29] But even when their pay was raised to higher than a university-educated civil servant's, the army's "psychological pressure to 'enjoy life'" in the Empire's most expensive city plunged many officers deep into debt.[30] The Emperor sometimes personally bailed out "deserving officers," but the army's military funds and other money-lending operations imposed strict penalties on the officers who borrowed from them, as many officers did.[31] For these men, most of them raised in isolated academies and cadet schools where "no one had prepared them for the real world," as one officer complained, it was socially imperative that they take out ruinous loans to be able to afford signs of culture and affluence like sending their daughters to fashionable schools.[32] They were representatives of the Emperor and had to behave as such. Their rules of conduct were rigid and aristocratic: "Officers were forbidden to eat in a low-class restaurant, to ride an omnibus (at least until the twentieth century), to travel third-class, or to carry the smallest of packages (unless it appeared to contain chocolate or candies)."[33]

The sense that Joint Army officers should be not only defenders of their own honor but also of the Emperor's led to the onerous obligation of *Ehrennotwehr* [the urgent necessity to defend one's honor]. If an officer heard a civilian, in front of one or more other people, insult him, the officer corps, the military, or the Emperor and the only way to stop the insult was to use physical force, the officer was supposed to attack the civilian with his sword and, if need be, his service revolver.[34] As might be expected, an officer exercising the *Ehrennotwehr* was a legal nightmare and almost always resulted in anger from the public. The *Ehrennotwehr* required the officer to decide on the spot that there was no other option to avenge the insulted party—and also required him to challenge the civilian to a duel rather than simply attacking him if the civilian was able to give satisfaction. However, officers could be punished if they challenged a civilian to a duel if that civilian was unable to give satisfaction, because in that case they had failed to properly exercise *Ehrennotwehr*.[35] (The entire process also assumed that only a male civilian would think to insult any of these groups.) After unification, newspapers increasingly argued that officers should never be in a public place out of uniform or without their sword, so that everyone in the surrounding area would know to avoid insulting any group in front of the officer which would trigger the need for the *Ehrennotwehr* to be exercised. Officers were also advised to flee any social gathering where they sensed the possible need to exercise the *Ehrennotwehr*.[36] In contrast to the moral minefield of the *Ehrennotwehr*, a duel between officers was seen as ennobling. Though the army's criminal code forbade it, the army

[29] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 117-118.
[30] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 120-121.
[31] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 124.
[32] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 124.
[33] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 125.
[34] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism* 128-129.
[35] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 129.
[36] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 129.

expected its officers to duel and routinely looked the other way when it came to punishing them for it.[37]

Jewish men saw great social benefits from this practice of dueling in the army, which gave even reserve officers the right to demand satisfaction through a duel. There was a high number of Jewish university students in the Empire, and by 1900, over 18.3% of the reserve officer corps was Jewish.[38] A 1915 "Guide for Reserve Officers" warned readers that a refusal to duel a Jewish fellow officer could result in a humiliating loss of military rank. It described an incident where, insulted by a Jewish man and challenged to a duel, a *Burschenschaft* student (and reserve officer) refused to fight. He was stripped of his rank because, the guide states, he violated "the army's notion of honor."[39] But in contrast to the number of Jewish reserve officers, the number of Jewish career officers was few. Deák assumes this was the case both because the officer's lifestyle was "completely alien to Jewish tradition" and because of individual antisemites blocking the paths of interested Jewish men. [40] In 1901, the Viennese newspaper *Dr. Bloch's Wochenschrift* revealed that General Edmund Krieghammer, the new war minister, was "systematically denying study stipends to Jewish doctors interested in pursuing a military career," making it "nearly impossible for Jewish reserve medical officers to become career soldiers".[41] No Jewish career officer was ever advanced to a rank higher than that of a two-star general at a time when the highest rank was that of a five-star general.[42] Despite the Empire's multiethnicity, biases against various ethnicities and, likely, religions were rampant when admitting students to the elite military academies.[43] Yet even though most Jewish career officers did convert, conversion was not required. Furthermore, the highly decorated Feldmarshalleutnant Eduard Ritter von Schweitzer kept kosher and even received permission from the Emperor to keep kosher when dining with him.[44]

In exchange for a less bigoted attitude about who was honorable enough to give satisfaction, the Joint Army demanded a reverent loyalty from its officers, which they were meant to maintain even when they were no longer on active duty. Arthur Schnitzler was stripped of his rank as a reserve officer for his novella *Lieutenant Gustl*, a scathing portrait of a sex-obsessed and stupid officer who decided he must commit suicide after receiving a small insult from a baker, a man whose low status means Gustl cannot demand satisfaction. The insult—which translates as "fathead"—would have been equally offensive to a *Burschenschaft* member, prompting a duel necessitating heavy swords rather than light swords.[45]

A Student, an Officer, and a Jew: A Case Study

[37] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 130.
[38] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 133.
[39] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 133-134.
[40] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 176.
[41] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 176.
[42] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 177.
[43] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 188.
[44] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 177.
[45] Zwicker, *Dueling Students*, 42.

Arthur Schnitzler's disillusionment with the Joint Army grew slowly. When he served his required year in the army in the early 1880s while attending the University of Vienna, he enjoyed himself. Though this was more than a decade before the Waidhofen Resolution was passed, Schnitzler was an incisive observer of the pressures of honor and antisemitism which affected the lives of students at the university and in the army. His autobiography *My Youth in Vienna* provides insight into the way one man, at least, juggled the competing identities of student, officer, and Jew. A medical student pursuing his education half-heartedly, Schnitzler belonged to neither the *Burschenschaften* nor the Zionist dueling fraternities. He was, however, a practiced fencer long before his time in the army. *My Youth in Vienna* criticized his father for his aversion to letting Schnitzler join a variety of popular sports during adolescence, but Schnitzler said that "[f]encing was another story. Even my father had to admit that a future soldier and reserve officer should know how to handle a sword, so, with passing interest and without putting myself out in the slightest, I took a course with fencing-master Domaschintzky, a gray-bearded, genial, savage giant."[46] Serving in the army was both a way to gain honor and a requirement of citizenship, which was granted to Jews in 1867, only about fifteen years before Schnitzler served in the army. To train a future officer to handle a sword properly was a critical matter, even to a man like Schnitzler's father who otherwise had little use for sports.

For Schnitzler, joining the army just after passing his third-year exams meant taking on the posture of genteelly dissipated, aristocratic loitering an officer was supposed to evidence. Some of the more studious future reserve officers hurried back to the university to catch a few lectures during breaks, but Schnitzler considered his days in the army less a time for learning than for carousing: "[E]ven the hours from twelve to two, which was when my more diligent comrades went to hear Späth on obstetrics, I usually spent, with a few others, eating my lunch so that nothing could prevent me from wielding my billiard cue at two."[47] Schnitzler also took on the officer's stereotypical sexual prowess: "I had scarcely donned my uniform—it was as if I or my fate had been waiting for such a banal cue—when I began to aim more consciously for what is designated—all too heroically—as 'conquests.'"[48] Before serving in the army, Schnitzler had had several flirtations with varying levels of seriousness, but it was in the army, he implies, when he first began having sex. The ample unstructured time and lack of parental supervision allowed him this freedom. Schnitzler remembered with amusement the daughter of a Hungarian aristocrat, a major in the army, who had an affair with his friend and "would enter into intimate relationships only with army medical students—one finds specialization in every field"[49]—evidence, too, of the diversity of ethnicity and class in the Joint Army.

Despite the billiards and sexual conquests, Schnitzler's time in the army did not always go smoothly. Antisemitism pervaded this branch of the Habsburg military. Medical students serving in the army, many of whom were Jewish, were called, derogatorily, "Moses

[46] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 116.
[47] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 127.
[48] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 117.
[49] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 118.

dragoons."[50] Schnitzler writes that not only were there divisions between the Gentiles and Jews serving in the army, but his service came during a time of widespread debate over whether there were merely religious or also ethnic differences between the groups.[51] Schnitzler dealt with one instance of antisemitism by reporting an assistant doctor who wanted to punish Schnitzler and some (ostensibly also Jewish) friends for tardiness with several weeks of confinement to barracks. His senior medical officer had the request "quash[ed]," much to the assistant doctor's disgust.[52]

But Schnitzler was also very aware of antisemitism at the university, and what the duel could mean to Jewish students as a weapon against bigotry. Looking back on a conversation he had with some of his fellow future reserve officers, he writes:

> We were talking about dueling, and all of us, without exactly feeling that we were supporters of the tradition as a matter of principle, but more out of the general spirit of those student days and especially as inductees and future reserve officers, stressed our willingness to give satisfaction if it were demanded. Theodore was the only one who declared that under no circumstances would he duel, and in answer to our question: why, replied with a smile—because he was a coward. It was not so much the unestablished fact of his cowardice that astonished us, as the courage it took to confess it, something we weren't ready to admit at the time, not to him nor to ourselves. None of us were brawlers nor were any of us expert duelers, yet there wasn't one among us who would have tried to evade a student duel or any other kind of duel, if the prevailing rules of conduct made it unavoidable.[53]

Even though they were not members of a *Burschenschaft*, Schnitzler's friends felt the duel was deeply important. The idea of not fighting a duel when challenged—of not "giv[ing] satisfaction if it were demanded"—was unthinkable to them. Theodore's refusal to duel is something that he self-deprecatingly calls "coward[ice]," but that Schnitzler, thinking back, recognizes as a type of "courage."

Schnitzler ends his recounting of this incident by saying, "The question was very topical at the time for us young men, especially for the Jews among us, since antisemitism was spreading rapidly in student circles."[54] By the time he was at university, Schnitzler explains:

> [The] *Burschenschafte*[*n*] had already started to expel all Jews and Jewish descendants, and conflicts during the so-called "promenade" on Saturday mornings, and during student carousals, also street fights, were not so rare in those days between the antisemitic [*Burschenschaften*] and the radical-liberal *Landsmannschaften*, formed by those coming from the same native areas, some of

[50] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 115.
[51] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 131.
[52] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 131.
[53] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 126-127.
[54] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 127.

> which were predominately Jewish. (Dueling corps with a solely Jewish membership did not as yet exist in those days.) Provocations between individuals in lecture halls, corridors and laboratories were daily occurrences….This was one of the reasons why many Jewish students considered it necessary to become exceptionally expert and dangerous fencers.[55]

A few of Schnitzler's details are inaccurate. There were, in fact, "dueling corps with a solely Jewish membership" during his time at university. Schnitzler entered university in 1879 and was there when the first Zionist dueling fraternity Kadimah was founded in 1882. Perhaps he intentionally altered these details—or was unaware of when Kadimah was founded, which might also show how small Kadimah's initial influence was. But this passage, however hazy it is on small details, makes it clear that for Schnitzler, the university was a literal as well as an ideological battleground. Any encounter with a bigoted fellow student could quickly go wrong and provide the pretext for a duel, the only way to force a recognition of Jewish equality—or even Jewish superiority.

With pride, Schnitzler writes:

> Tired of waiting for the opponent's effrontery and insults, [Jewish students] quite frequently behaved in a provocative fashion, and their superiority in dueling, which was becoming an increasing embarrassment, was certainly the main reason for the priceless Waidhofen manifesto with which the German-Austrian student body declared all Jews once and for all incapable of giving satisfaction. I have no intention of omitting the exact words of this decree; it went like this:
>
> Every son of a Jewish mother, every human being in whose veins flows Jewish blood, is from the day of his birth without honor and void of all the more refined emotions…He is ethically subhuman…It is impossible to insult a Jew; a Jew cannot therefore demand satisfaction for any suffered insult.
>
> This decree was not declared official until a few years later but the spirit that sponsored it and the sentiments it expressed existed at the time I am describing here, at the beginning of the eighties therefore.[56]

My Youth in Vienna was first published in German in 1968, thirty-seven years after Schnitzler's death. Schnitzler wrote this passage long after the Waidhofen Resolution was passed, and his supposedly word-for-word write-up of the Resolution contradicts the version which Lisa Zwicker consulted. Her version of the Resolution has an entirely different tone to it: the *Burschenschaften* "now have no Jewish members and do not plan to have any in the future."[57] The language of the Resolution she cites is dry, straightforward, and bureaucratic; the language of the Resolution Schnitzler cites is vitriolic racist rhetoric. Rather than questioning whether Schnitzler dramatized his version of the Resolution, or

[55] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 128.
[56] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 128-9.
[57] Zwicker, "The Burschenschaft and German Political Culture," 402-403.

whether there were many versions of the Resolution with different wording publicized in different outlets, or whether the Waidhofen Resolution was simply very long and varied in style, with the limited evidence available, it is most useful to explore how deeply the Waidhofen Resolution affected a man who never joined a *Burschenschaft* or even fought a duel at university. Schnitzler, decades later, was still intensely, personally furious with the Resolution. The Waidhofen Resolution passed after his time at university, but its antisemitism reflects his own experience with student duels and the Jewish students who trained intensely to gain their "superiority in dueling," only to have their accomplishments, as he felt, stripped from them by Austro-German students unable to put up with being bested by Jewish students. Even if the *Burschenschaften* were the ones who created and enforced the Resolution, Schnitzler thought that the entire "German-Austrian student body" was, at least ideologically, also behind the Resolution. If accurate, this paints a very bleak portrait of student antisemitism at the University of Vienna. Not only does Schnitzler's Resolution strip Jewish men of their honor, it strips them of their humanity. His version of the Resolution accuses them of being "void of all the more refined emotions," "ethically subhuman," and "impossible to insult"—and then Schnitzler goes on to say that this Resolution reflects the feelings of all the (Christian) Austro-German students.

In the face of deeply entrenched antisemitism, the officer status of the Jewish students who had been through military training allowed them to push back against the Waidhofen Resolution. "[W]hen actual insults had been exchanged and especially when officer honor could not be made to agree with student behavior," Schnitzler admitted, it was not always possible "to apply the Waidhofen principles as strictly as their followers would have liked."[58] To refuse to duel a fellow officer, no matter his religion, would after all result in a stripping of one's military rank if the incident was reported.[59] Though it did so for its own reasons, the Joint Army stood behind its Jewish reserve officers, giving many Jewish university students a means of forcing other students to acknowledge them as equals.

Conclusion

The duel created a physical expression for the fraught issues of who was seen in Austrian society as equally honorable to whom. Its proponents elevated the duel to something more than a sport, a sacred ritual where honor was defended and courage forged, and these same proponents created a system by which very few people were viewed as having honor. In the army, a certain rank was required to possess honor, whether that rank had been won through years of military training or gifted as a consequence of a certain education. In the *Burschenschaften*, possessing honor required having a certain education, a certain ethnicity, and a certain sex. (Women might possess honor, but their honor was tied to a reputation which they could not, so the thinking went, defend for themselves.[60]) The 1880s and 1890s were a time when antisemitism was wielded in Vienna as a political weapon by demagogues like Georg von Schönerer and Karl Lueger. The Waidhofen Resolution was as much an expression of the era's political trends as of mere personal bigotry, but the

[58] Schnitzler, *My Youth in Vienna*, 129.
[59] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 133-4.
[60] McAleer, *Dueling*, 159.

Resolution had to fight against the more open definition of honor espoused by the Joint Army.

In June 1914, on the eve of World War I, the Waidhofen Resolution was revoked.[61] In 1917, duels were again banned in the armed forces[62], but this time the ruling was enforced more harshly. During wartime, a near majority of students at the University were women from Austria and Jewish refugees of both sexes from Galicia.[63] Many leftists at the university thought that the war meant the end of an era of for the *Burschenschaften*'s self-styled Pan-Germanic student aristocracy. But by June 1918, there were again antisemitic speakers at the *Farbenbummeln*.[64] By 1932, the *Burschenschaften* had officially allied with the National Socialists.[65] Arno J. Mayer wrote that "[i]t would take two World Wars and the Holocaust…to finally dislodge and exorcise the feudal and aristocratic presumption from Europe's civil and political societies."[66] But even after society at large turned away from the duel, the *Burschenschaften* clung to their ideal of an exclusive, easily-injured honor. The *Mensur* still exists in its original form today.

Even during the height of dueling's popularity, there were people who agitated against it. Vienna had an Anti-Dueling League founded in 1902 that was made up of a thousand members, including influential aristocrats, and organizations as disparate as the Catholic Church, the Freemasons, and the Social Democrats decried the duel as an institution.[67] But again and again, across political affiliations, men who had the training or education to socially qualify as worthy of gaining satisfaction took to the sword or pistol. Especially after the passage of the Waidhofen Resolution, the need to publicly prove their honor must have been especially strong for men struggling to negotiate the complexities of being both Jewish and Austrian. Sometimes grabbing a weapon and stepping onto the field of honor must have seemed the only way to meaningfully fight back.

[61] Haag, "Students at the University of Vienna in the First World War," 302.
[62] Haag, "Students at the University of Vienna in the First World War," 308.
[63] Haag, "Students at the University of Vienna in the First World War," 306.
[64] Haag, "Students at the University of Vienna in the First World War," 309.
[65] Zwicker, "The Burschenschaft and German Political Culture," 390.
[66] Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Verso Books, 1981), 329.
[67] Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 132.