

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

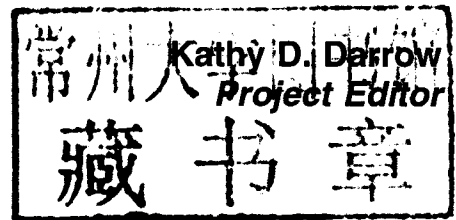
TCLC

264

Volume 264

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1999,
from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations**



**Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Vol.
264**

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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

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Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (TCLC) has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. TCLC has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as TCLC. In the words of one reviewer, “there is nothing comparable available.” TCLC “is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own.”

Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, TCLC helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in TCLC presents a comprehensive survey on an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of TCLC is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, (CLC) which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between CLC and TCLC.

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A TCLC entry consists of the following elements:

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

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- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it originally appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included. Criticism in topic entries is arranged chronologically under a variety of subheadings to facilitate the study of different aspects of the topic.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Gale, including *TCLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

A **Cumulative Topic Index** lists the literary themes and topics treated in *TCLC* as well as other Literature Criticism series.

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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale also produces a paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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Kuester, Martin. "Myth and Postmodernist Turn in Canadian Short Fiction: Sheila Watson, 'Antigone' (1959)." In *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations*, edited by Reginald M. Nischik, pp. 163-74. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2007. Reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Vol. 206, edited by Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau, 227-32. Detroit: Gale, 2008. The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a works cited list set forth in the Modern Language Association of America's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (New York: MLA, 2009. Print); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

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Georg Brandes

1842-1927

(Full name Georg Morris Cohen Brandes) Danish critic, essayist, literary historian, biographer, and autobiographer.

The following entry provides information on Brandes's life and work. For further discussion of Brandes's career, see *TCLC*, Volume 10.

INTRODUCTION

Brandes is widely acknowledged as the most influential European literary critic of his time. Critics credit him with ushering in a new era in Scandinavian literature known as the "Modern Breakthrough," characterized by a blossoming of philosophical thought and literary achievement in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. He is also viewed as instrumental in bringing the work of Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, and Friedrich Nietzsche to the attention of the mainstream literary community. Despite Brandes's notable contributions to twentieth-century European literature, his work has fallen into relative obscurity outside of his native Scandinavia.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Brandes was born on February 4, 1842, in Copenhagen, Denmark, to middle-class Jewish parents. He was accepted to the elite Det von Westenske Institut of Copenhagen in 1849, where he proved to be an excellent student. He was a prolific reader—a practice that served him well as a critic and literary historian—and his literary tastes were diverse. He was also exposed to Christian religious education, and spent some time studying the Bible. In 1859 he entered the University of Copenhagen, where he began studying law in compliance with his parents' wishes. Soon, however, he switched his focus to aesthetics, literature, and philosophy. During his college years, Brandes was influenced by the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard, particularly his critique of religious institutions. Brandes was to remain a skeptical agnostic for the rest of his life. While attending college Brandes also formed key friendships with men who would later become leaders in Danish society. His relationship with one of his instructors, philosopher Hans Brøchner, was a pivotal one in his career. It was Brøchner who would later advocate for Brandes's appoint-

ment to the prestigious position of chair of the aesthetics department at the University of Copenhagen. In 1864 Brandes received his master's degree in aesthetics, and the young scholar was honored with special distinction for his academic achievement. He began to write reviews for several Danish periodicals, and quickly established his reputation as an exceptional literary critic. His first major book, *Dualismen i vor nyeste philosophie*, was published in 1866 and stirred up controversy among Danish intellectuals for its brash exploration of the relationship between religious faith and science.

In 1866 Brandes also embarked on an extended tour of Europe. He landed first in Paris, where he began to study French literature in earnest. His inveterate curiosity also led him to study new approaches in the fields of natural science, psychology, biology, and politics. The exciting intellectual debates transpiring in Europe affirmed his belief that Scandinavia was isolated and backward in relation to its European neighbors and stirred his resolve to bring about a literary and cultural renewal in his native land. He returned to Copenhagen and began his Ph.D. studies, which were completed in 1870. He then went on a second trip to Europe, visiting France, England, and Italy. These trips proved vital for his studies of European literature, politics, and culture that later informed the renowned lectures he gave at the University of Copenhagen upon his return to Denmark in 1871. These lectures were published in six volumes between 1872 and 1890, and are known collectively as *Hovedstrømninger i det nittende aarhundredes litteratur* (*Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature*). *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature* catapulted Brandes to the forefront of Danish intellectual debate, as critics were either excited or threatened by his call for a Scandinavian literature that would instigate social and political change like that which was happening in other parts of Europe. One of the consequences of the controversy surrounding Brandes's lectures was that he was denied a position at the University of Copenhagen. Another was that he was branded a radical by many in the Danish intellectual establishment.

In 1872 Brandes traveled to Germany to escape the controversy in Denmark, a voluntary exile that lasted several years. In 1876 he gave a lecture tour in Sweden and Norway on Kierkegaard's philosophy and its reception in Denmark. A year later, Brandes's *Søren Kierkegaard* was published and is credited with being the first

scholarly study on the philosopher's life and work. In 1877 Brandes settled in Berlin, where he found a receptive audience for his ideas and a supportive group of intellectuals, politicians, and artists. In 1883 he returned to Copenhagen. He was one of the founders of the daily newspaper *Politiken*, which remains a leading newspaper in Denmark. In 1886 he embarked on a trip to Poland and Russia to give a series of lectures. The tour resulted in *Intryk fra Polen* (1888; *Poland: A Study of the Land, People, and Literature*) and *Intryk fra Rusland* (1888; *Impressions of Russia*), a survey of each country's literature, history, and society. Brandes later went on to publish similar studies of Iceland, Armenia, Czechoslovakia, and the Netherlands. Brandes is also credited with bringing the work of Friedrich Nietzsche to the public. In the next few decades, he published well-received studies of William Shakespeare, Ibsen, Wolfgang Goethe, Voltaire, Julius Caesar, and Michelangelo. His neutral and pacifist views on World War I were attacked by many politicians and intellectual figures in England and France who viewed his stance as support for Germany, where he had lived for many years. In the years before his death, he continued to publish books and critical essays as well as give lectures and travel. Brandes died on February 19, 1927.

MAJOR WORKS

Brandes was a prolific writer whose essays, literary criticism, histories, and literary biographies introduced his native Denmark to other European literatures as well as the achievements of emerging philosophers and thinkers of the time. His best-known work is the six-volume *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, which began as an influential lecture series at the University of Copenhagen. Conceived as a comparative literature study, the books explore the literature of England, France, and Germany within their political, social, and historical contexts and discuss authors from each literary tradition as instigators of social and political change. With the volumes in his *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Brandes is credited with facilitating the "Modern Breakthrough" of Scandinavian literature and culture, a period characterized by the rejection of romanticism and a move toward realism and modernization. The first volume in the series, *Emigrantlitteraturen* (1872; *The Immigrant Literature*) examines the work of French emigrant authors, including François René de Chateaubriand, Etienne Pivert de Sémancour, and Madame de Staël, and elucidates revolutionary aspects of their work. *Den romantiske skole i Tydakland* (1873; *The Romantic School in Germany*) explores the work of Rudolph Haym, Karl Goedeke, and Madame de Krüdener, and traces the evolution of German literature in that period. The third volume, *Reaktionerne i Frankrig* (1874; *The Reaction in France*), offers a study of the work of Alphonse Marie Louis de

Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Vigny. *Naturalismen i England* (1875; *Naturalism in England*) deals with the work of William Wordsworth and Robert Southey and the ways English literature was transforming. In the next volume, *Den romantiske skole i Frankrig* (1882; *The Romantic School in France*), Brandes considers the work of Henri de Saint Simon, Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, Alfred de Musset, George Sand, Stendhal, and Charles Augustin Saint-Beuve. The last volume, *Det unge Tydakland* (1890; *Young Germany*), discusses Heinrich Heine, Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow, and Heinrich Laube.

Brandes is also recognized for his literary biographies of emerging and established literary and political figures. His 1877 study of the life and work of Søren Kierkegaard traces the influences on the Danish philosopher's development and offers an assessment of his work. Like the literary biography of Kierkegaard, *Benjamin Disraeli* (1878; also published as *Lord Beaconsfield*) also focused on the English politician's development and offers an analysis of the relationship between Disraeli's life and work. Brandes followed with literary biographies of several other figures, including Anatole France, Wolfgang Goethe, Voltaire, Julius Caesar, and Michelangelo. His study of William Shakespeare was particularly acclaimed, and the English translation of the multivolume work garnered attention in England as well as the United States. At that time it was considered to be one of the most authoritative analyses of the playwright's life and work. Brandes was considered to be influential in promoting the work of two of Scandinavia's most acclaimed writers, Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, and was also essential to the career of Friedrich Nietzsche. His 1889 essay, "Aristokratisk radikalisme" ("Aristocratic Radicalism") pioneered analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy and styles and garnered criticism for its lack of critical objectivity and devotional approach.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

During his lifetime, Brandes inspired a mixed reaction from critics: his work either garnered high regard or open hostility. As Henry J. Gibbons states: "Most of what was written about him during his lifetime was partisan and polemical, and falls into two neatly divided categories: the hagiographies by convinced Brandesians and the denunciations by Brandes' numerous enemies." Critics trace much of that hostility from conservative critics to Brandes's call for literature to effect social and political change and his study of European authors and political figures who revolutionized and reformed politics and culture. Despite his impressive accomplishments, commentators note, Brandes has fallen out of the critical spotlight. Although several of the authors he

brought to the attention of European critics and readers, such as Kierkegaard, Ibsen, Strindberg, and Nietzsche, are recognized as some of the finest writers and thinkers of world literature, Brandes is not fully appreciated for his achievements and is relatively unknown outside of Scandinavia. More recent studies, however, have investigated the influence of Brandes's Jewish heritage on his life and work, particularly the unrelenting anti-Semitism to which he was subjected during his career. Additionally, many present-day scholarly analyses of Brandes's works conclude that his role as literary intermediary between Scandinavian and European literature and instigator of the Modern Breakthrough merits wider critical attention and study.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- Dualismen i vor nyeste philosophie* (criticism) 1866
Den franske aesthetic i vore dage (criticism) 1870
 **Emigrantlitteraturen* [*The Immigrant Literature*] (criticism) 1872
 **Den romantiske skole i Tydakland* [*The Romantic School in Germany*] (criticism) 1873
 **Reactionen i Frankrig* [*The Reaction in France*] (criticism) 1874
 **Naturalismen i England* [*Naturalism in England*] (criticism) 1875
Danske digtere (criticism) 1877
Søren Kierkegaard (literary biography) 1877
Benjamin Disraeli [*Lord Beaconsfield*] (biography) 1878
 **Den romantiske skole i Frankrig* [*The Romantic School in France*] (criticism) 1882
Det moderne gennembruds maend [*Eminent Authors of the Nineteenth Century*] (criticism) 1883
Intryk fra Polen [*Poland: A Study of the Land, People, and Literature*] (essays) 1888
Intryk fra Rusland [*Impressions of Russia*] (essays) 1888
 **Det unge Tydakland* [*Young Germany*] (criticism) 1890
William Shakespeare. 2 vols. (criticism) 1895-1896
Henrik Ibsen (criticism) 1898
Samlede skrifter. 18 vols. (criticism, essays, and biographies) 1899-1910
Anatole France (criticism) 1905
Levned. 3 vols. (autobiography) 1905-08
Reminiscences of My Childhood and Youth (autobiography) 1906
Friedrich Nietzsche (criticism) 1909
Wolfgang Goethe. 2 vols. (criticism) 1914-15
Françoise de Voltaire 2 vols. [*Voltaire*] (criticism) 1916-17
Cajus Julius Caesar [*Julius Caesar*] (biography) 1918
Michelangelo Buonarroti 2 vols. [*Michelangelo: His Life, His Times, His Era*] (biography) 1921
Sagnet om Jesus [*Jesus: A Myth*] (essay) 1925
Selected Letters (correspondence) 1990

*These works are collectively referred to as *Hovedstrømninger i det nittende aarhundredes litteratur* (*Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature*).

CRITICISM

Henry J. Gibbons (essay date 1980)

SOURCE: Gibbons, Henry J. "Georg Brandes: The Reluctant Jew." In *The Activist Critic: A Symposium on the Political Ideas, Literary Methods and International Reception of Georg Brandes* (*Orbis Litterarum*, Supplement 5), edited by Hans Hertel and Sven Møller Kristensen, pp. 55-89. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1980.

[In the following essay, Gibbons investigates the impact Brandes's Jewish identity had on his life and the critical and public reaction to his work.]

Few figures in Danish intellectual history have inspired such uncritical admiration or provoked such unremitting hostility as Georg Brandes. Most of what was written about him during his lifetime was partisan and polemical, and falls into two neatly divided categories: the hagiographies by convinced Brandesians and the denunciations by Brandes' numerous enemies.¹ Since his death in 1927, most Brandes scholars have tried to avoid the extremes of adulation and derogation. Responsible writers such as Paul V. Rubow, Harald Rue, Henning Fenger, Gunnar Ahlström, Elias Bredsdorff, and Bertil Nolin, to name only a few, have created a body of sober scholarship free of the barren wranglings over Brandes' personality and private life so characteristic of the earlier works.² The result has been an enormous and unquestionable gain in our understanding of Brandes and his ideas.

Fear of jeopardizing that gain contributes to the noticeable reluctance of Brandes scholars to deal with one of the most controversial aspects of Brandes' life, namely, the fact that he was a Jew. This reluctance is understandable. The subject of Brandes' Jewishness is a painful and sensitive one, especially in light of the terrible events of the 1930's and '40's, and its discussion threatens to disturb the hard-won temperateness of recent Brandes scholarship. His Jewishness aroused so much bitterness and animosity during his lifetime, and poisoned the discussion of his ideas for so long, that it is easy to see why most scholars treat the matter gingerly.

This wariness is as misguided as it is understandable. To study Georg Brandes without examining his Jewishness and the problems it created for him is to neglect a central theme in his life. One need not subscribe to any

theory of racial or national character to see that there are things about Brandes' life and thought which cannot be explained without reference to the fact that he was a Jew. In this paper I propose to show how Brandes and his contemporaries dealt with that fact.

Brandes was fond of saying that if he had not been continually reminded of it, he would have completely forgotten that he was a Jew.³ There was no danger of that happening. His Jewishness was a matter of public discussion in Denmark for sixty years, a discussion which was more often brutal than benign. Brandes was very nearly alone in insisting that the matter was of little importance. "All my life," Brandes noted in his memoirs, "my ancestry has hypnotized the Danes."⁴ His contemporaries—Jews and Gentiles, Zionists and anti-Semites, radicals, conservatives, and moderates alike—all agreed that, in one way or another, Brandes' ancestry was a crucial element in his personality and work. That near-unanimity made it impossible for Brandes himself to avoid the issue. The Danes would not forget his birth, so he could not. And so, much against his will, what Brandes regarded as an irrelevant biographical detail became a major force in his life.

Brandes' contemporaries and early biographers made much of the fact that he had been brought up in a Jewish family.⁵ Brandes repeatedly denied that his home was in any meaningful sense Jewish, and there is no reason to doubt those denials. As he recalled in his memoirs:

At home there was never any discussion of religious faith. Neither of my parents had any relation to the Israelite religion; neither of them attended synagogue. Since the Jewish dietary laws were observed in my grandmother's home, where they had different dishes for meat and dairy, and a special set for Passover, Orthodox Judaism came to represent for me a collection of old superstitious prejudices, especially with regard to food.⁶

The generational progression in the passage is significant. Brandes' grandmother belonged to the last generation of Danish Jews to have experienced the restrictions imposed on Jews prior to their emancipation in 1814, his parents to the first generation to have enjoyed the liberties which emancipation brought with it.⁷ For many Jews of his parents' generation, the ceremonies of Orthodox Judaism were indelibly associated with the oppression the older generation had endured. They were in no hurry to re-affirm their Jewishness just when the possibility of civic equality was being extended to them.⁸ On the contrary, in their eagerness to establish themselves as full-fledged Danes, many cheerfully sloughed off the outer trappings of Judaism. Small wonder, then, that Orthodox Judaism should have appeared antiquated and musty to so many Jews of Brandes' own generation.

If Judaism played any role at all in Brandes' home, it was probably as an object of his mother's scorn. Brandes later jokingly called her an anti-Semite, but his mother's opposition to Judaism was genuine enough.⁹ Emilie Brandes, fiercely intelligent, coldly rational, and defiantly anticlerical, lumped Christianity and Judaism together and despised both. During the First World War a friend of Brandes', the writer and publisher Peter Nansen, published a reminiscence in which he was incautious enough to refer to the atmosphere in the Brandes household as "tinged with Jewishness"—*jødisk farvede*. Brandes indignantly rejected this description. "How is it possible," he thundered in a letter to Nansen, "to describe *the* house in the city which more than any other bred opposition to Judaism (both in its Jewish and in its so-called Christian form), and not least because of [my mother's] personality, which I inherited, as having a 'strong Jewish tinge'?"¹⁰

One suspects that Gentile visitors to the Brandes home found it "Jewish" precisely because they went there expecting to find it that way. In fact there was little in Brandes' home which could have nourished any positive sense of Jewishness. The best proof of the atmosphere of cool skepticism which prevailed in Brandes' home is found in his own letters. At the age of twelve, Brandes confided to his friend Simon Warburg: "I have come to believe a little more in Judaism than I did before, and that makes me very glad."¹¹ The remark indicates that Brandes, to say the least, did not begin with a deeply-engrained childhood faith. That impression is confirmed by another letter to Warburg written the following month. "It has now been decided," Brandes wrote, "that I shall be confirmed not this spring, but next. God knows how I'll do with the religion I'm preparing; I think that when the priest asks me at confirmation whether or not I believe, I will have to answer, 'It depends upon the circumstances; sometimes I do, sometimes *not*, and most of the time not.'"¹² Clearly Brandes did not acquire at home any strong sense of Jewishness or any commitment to the Jewish faith. When he was confirmed at the Copenhagen Synagogue on May 17, 1857, he was merely undergoing a *pro forma* ritual. It was perfectly consistent with his upbringing that, when he went through a severe religious crisis in 1862, he was wrestling with Kierkegaardian Protestantism, not Judaism.

But of course one does not live only at home, and Brandes learned early that to be a Jew in nineteenth-century Copenhagen was to be somehow different from other Danes. In a famous passage in the first volume of his memoirs, he described the experience:

Occasionally, taking a walk with the governess, I would hear someone shout behind me. And turning about, I would see a little fellow with an unfriendly face and clenched fists, grinning at me. For a while I ignored

these incidents, but as the shouts were repeated, I inquired of the governess as to their meaning. 'Oh nothing,' she replied. When I persisted, she said, 'It's a bad word.'

Once, upon hearing the word again, I was determined to find out its meaning, and coming home I asked my mother. 'Jew,' Mother said, 'Jews are a kind of people.'

—Repulsive people?

'Yes,' said Mother smiling, 'occasionally repulsive enough, but not always.'

—Would it be possible to see a Jew?

'Quite easily,' replied Mother, and lifted me to the mirror hanging over the sofa.

I screamed, and Mother put me down again on the floor. I was so upset that my mother regretted not having prepared me for it. In later life she referred to that incident from time to time.¹³

It was a brutal introduction to a harsh reality, not made any easier by Fru Brandes' psychological clumsiness. The chilling incident was Brandes' first intimation of the distance which still separated Jews from the orthodox Lutheran majority in Denmark. The hostility, the hurt puzzlement, Brandes' horror at the discovery that he was the object of undeserved hatred, all were to be repeated countless times in the future. For our purposes the incident is most significant because it illustrates so graphically that Brandes' sense of Jewishness was imposed upon him from without, rather than growing from within; Brandes did not know he was a Jew until anti-Semitic hostility taught him so.

Brandes' classmates were, apparently, as cruel as children everywhere, and their jibes and taunts hurt him deeply. Several times in his writings Brandes described the sufferings of Jewish children at the hands of their Gentile schoolmates, "a suffering which, in miniature, corresponds exactly to the sufferings of the Jewish people in the eternal, as yet unended darkness of the Middle Ages; for boyhood is a miniature medieval state."¹⁴ In his biography of Disraeli, Brandes devoted several pages to describing the tormenting of a Jewish child, pages which he later said were autobiographical.¹⁵ Brandes soon developed a way of dealing with the problem. "When I was at school," he confided to his friend Marie Pingel in 1870, "I used to make my quarrelsomeness a kind of test for my comrades. The few among them who, when we quarreled, did not use the word 'Jew' or 'kike,' I made up with and respected; the others I never forgave."¹⁶

More of his schoolmates passed his little test than Brandes indicated, however, and one should not overestimate the hostility he had to face as a child. As an adolescent, and later as a young man, he had a tightly-knit circle of friends, and his descent does not appear to have caused any difficulty between them at all. While it

is true that he felt a painful sense of exclusion from his Christian friends during his religious crisis of 1862, it is important to remember that the gap was between believer and skeptic, not between Gentile and Jew, and certainly not between Dane and Jew. When his friend Julius Lange earnestly (and embarrassingly) urged him to accept Christianity, he was addressing Brandes the non-believer, not Brandes the Jew.¹⁷

From the "medieval state of boyhood" Brandes grew into the world of Copenhagen's National Liberal bourgeoisie. As a young student in the 1860's, he moved freely in circles which still professed to believe in the ideals of 1848; whatever anti-Semitism may have existed was so muted as to be unnoticeable. As long as Brandes was philosophically, politically, and aesthetically at one with his surroundings, his being a Jew was neither a social barrier nor a hindrance to his career. In fact, during these years the whole matter seems not to have concerned him greatly at all. Except for infrequent, scattered references in his letters and notebooks, the fact of his Jewishness is nearly indiscernible during this period.¹⁸ His most serious problem in this regard was his uncertainty about accepting financial support from the Mosaic Congregation. He did not feel himself to be a Jew and did not want to accept the money under false pretences.¹⁹

The atmosphere in Copenhagen in the mid-1860's was as yet unpoisoned by the anti-Semitism which emerged in the 1870's and 1880's. In this relatively tranquil atmosphere, Brandes made his debut as an author by taking sides in the famous debate over faith and knowledge (*Tro og Viden*). Until he entered the arena, this dispute was essentially an argument among Christians about the status of Biblical faith in the face of the challenge mounted by modern science. Professor Rasmus Nielsen, Brandes' chief target in the debate, had worked out a scheme which, by radically separating the epistemological realms of faith and scientific knowledge, sought to preserve intact the sphere of religion. His solution to the problem did not please the traditional, orthodox theologians any more than it did the radical skeptics. What concerns us here is the fact that during the rather sharp polemical exchanges Brandes' ancestry was never dragged into the discussion. No one tried to disqualify him on grounds of birth, as later happened during the debate over *Emigrantlitteraturen*.²⁰

Between 1866 and 1871, however, Brandes came into increasingly sharp conflict with Danish society. Intellectually, he moved away from the orthodoxies then prevailing at Copenhagen University. He came under the influence of Taine and Sainte-Beuve, of Mill and Hamilton, of Renan, Feuerbach, and Strauss. In the Copenhagen of the 1860's, all of these thinkers were regarded as suspect and subversive. Socially, Brandes scandalized the city by his affair with an older, married woman,