Opera, Liberalism, and Antisemitism in Nineteenth-Century France

The Politics of Halévy's *La Juive*

Diana R. Hallman

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

http://www.cambridge.org

First published 2002

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Dante MT 10.75/14 pt *System* LaTeX 2ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Hallman, Diana R.
Opera, liberalism, and antisemitism in nineteenth-century France: the politics of Halévy's La Juive / by Diana R. Hallman.
p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in opera)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0 521 65086 0
1. Halévy, F., 1799–1862. Juive. 2. Opera – France – 19th century.
3. Antisemitism – France – History – 19th century. 4. Liberalism – France – History – 19th century. I. Title. II. Series.
ML410.H17 H35 2002 782.1 – dc21 2001052446

ISBN 0 521 65086 0 hardback

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

1 | The collaboration and rapprochement of the authors of *La Juive*

EARLY NEGOTIATIONS AND ARTISTIC RELATIONSHIPS

As Halévy set about composing *La Juive* during the fall of 1833, he undoubtedly approached Scribe with a certain apprehension, for the dramatist and librettist held extraordinary power and was even known by some to be a "great tyrant" in musical collaborations of the previous decade.[1] Others viewed Scribe as an amiable, conciliatory collaborator. Without letters to trace composer–librettist exchanges during the genesis of *La Juive*,[2] few details of artistic interactions can be gleaned (music and libretto sources offer hard evidence of various stages of the opera's creation, but little about the balance of power or motivations for alterations). Basic facts about the early dealings and professional status of the primary authors suggest that the librettist wielded greater authority, at least at the beginning of the collaboration – but the picture is far from clear. Scribe's initial hesitancy in selecting Halévy to write the score, together with the composer's comparatively junior position, points to an imbalance of power: seemingly if any conciliation was called for, it would have been Halévy's place to acquiesce.

Among the produced works to the composer's credit were the opera semiseria *Clari* (1828), the ballet *Manon Lescaut* (1830), the *ballet-opéra*

[1] Louis Marie Quicherat, *Adolphe Nourrit: Sa Vie, son talent, son caractère, sa correspondance*, 3 vols. (Paris: L. Hachette, 1867), vol. 1, 53.

[2] No letters have been found pertaining to the development of *La Juive*; none appears in archival collections viewed by this author, nor in Marthe Galland's *Fromental Halévy: Lettres*. It is possible that unseen, privately held letters contain pertinent clues (for example, one or two of the letters itemized in the "Fichier des lettres vendues," F-Pn, Mus., although the dates and annotations do not suggest relevancy), but just as likely that composer and librettist did not correspond while working in such close proximity. Furthermore, Halévy did not make notes directly onto libretto manuscripts, as Meyerbeer did, for example, on the *Huguenots* prose draft (F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22502, vol. XXIII, 2°:2°).

La Tentation (1832), and several *opéras comiques*, *Le Roi et le batelier* (1827), *L'Artisan* (1827), *Le Dilettante d'Avignon* (1829), *Attendre et courir* (1830), *La Langue musicale* (1830), *Les Souvenirs de Lafleur* (1833), and *Ludovic* (1833), which he partially wrote after it had been left incomplete by Ferdinand Hérold (1791–1833) at his death.[3] While his one clear success at this point was *Dilettante*, his completion of *Ludovic* and replacement of Hérold as *premier chef de chant* clearly enhanced his status at the Opéra. Halévy had in fact already worked with Scribe on *Manon Lescaut*, writing music to the ballet's dramatic plot developed by the librettist and Pierre Aumer. But with such a comparatively paltry record against Scribe's hundreds of dramas and operas, many of which were public triumphs, and with his prior contacts dictated by the subservience to librettists and composers built into his role as *chef*, it is hard to imagine a different artistic dynamic.

Halévy had eagerly negotiated for the "poem," soliciting the help of both director Véron and publisher Maurice Schlesinger (1798–1871), who wrote to Meyerbeer a few days before Scribe signed the Opéra contract on 25 August 1833 – a contract that stipulated payments and deadlines for completion of the libretto, but excluded the name of a composer.[4] (See the contract's transcription and translation in

[3] According to Léon Halévy, *Sa Vie*, 19, Hérold had written the overture and most of the first act of *Ludovic*; Halévy contributed a quartet to the first act and composed the entire second act. Mark Everist offered further detail of attribution in "Halévy, opéra comique et naissance d'une carrière," presented at the Colloque Halévy, Paris Conservatoire, 16 November 2000, and soon to be published. In these early works Halévy's collaborators included the librettists Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges, P. F. A. Carmouche, de Courcy, and his brother, as well as the Italian poet P[ietro] Giannone on *Clari*, performed at the Théâtre-Italien. With others, he had written four early unproduced works, *Les Bohémiennes*, *Marco Curzio*, *Pygmalion*, *Les Deux Pavillons*, and an incomplete *Erostraste*.

[4] This exclusion suggests further that the composer had not been chosen by the time of the contract's signing, as many *traités* of the 1830s included composers' names. It is possible, however, that Halévy was already approved by 25 August but went unnamed because he was an Opéra employee. According to M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, such an omission would represent a continuity of the practice of the 1820s, when composers with Opéra affiliations were rarely included in contracts (private communication). See Gerhard's comments on the comparative status of librettist and composer in these and later decades, *The Urbanization of Opera*, 36–7.

1 Portrait of Fromental Halévy (1799–1862) by Belliard (Cliché Musée de Carnavalet: © PMVP/Moser)

Appendix C and a rough chronology of the opera's stages of development in Appendix D.) Schlesinger alerted Meyerbeer, who seemed to be on the verge of returning the partial libretto that Scribe had sent him – most likely a detailed scenario and some draft verse – and gingerly reported Halévy's interest in securing it. In a letter of 21 August, Schlesinger tiptoes carefully as he mentions Halévy's report of Véron's contacting him about writing the score for *La Juive*.

Schlesinger's wording makes clear that both publisher and director hesitate to endorse Halévy until they are certain that Meyerbeer, whose *Robert le diable* continued to reap profits, has completely relinquished the project. Speaking of Véron's apprehension, Schlesinger gently appeals to Meyerbeer to come to Paris and help settle the matter: "[Y]our presence here, were it only for twenty-four hours, could be most beneficial."[5] The visit was apparently never made, and Meyerbeer, absorbed in completing the score of *Les Huguenots*, returned Scribe's poem.[6] Edouard Monnais (1798–1868), a writer and editor who became acquainted with Halévy at the Villemain salon in the early 1830s, emphasized more strongly than Schlesinger that the director had encouraged the young French composer to ask Scribe for the libretto.[7] Véron, aware of Meyerbeer's delay in finishing *Les Huguenots*, was undoubtedly nervous about having a new opera ready to produce.[8]

When Halévy broached the subject with Scribe, the librettist's initial condescension is palpable in a sharp rebuff conveying that he was busy with many profitable ventures and not to be bothered with trivialities. As Halévy had reported to Monnais, Scribe remarked: "'Is it urgent?' – 'Why yes, answered the musician,' and the poet once again, thinking about the usual fee: 'If it is urgent, you know, it is more expensive;

[5] Letter from Schlesinger in Paris to Meyerbeer in Frankfurt in *Giacomo Meyerbeer: Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, ed. Heinz Becker, Gudrun Becker, and Sabine Henze-Döhring, 5 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1960–99), vol. II, 330–31. Herbert Weinstock, *Rossini: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 160, claims, without evidence, that Rossini was offered the libretto. My dating of Scribe's early work on the scenario renders this claim doubtful. Véron, *Mémoires*, vol. III, 177, mentions that Rossini was first offered *Gustave III*, with no similar reference to *La Juive*.

[6] While the collaboration on *Les Huguenots* began in 1832, Meyerbeer wrote to Scribe on 2 July 1834 about changes to the libretto. *Giacomo Meyerbeer: A Life in Letters*, ed. Heinz Becker and Gudrun Becker, trans. Mark Violette (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1989), 56–7, 62–4, and *Giacomo Meyerbeer: Briefwechsel*, ed. Becker, Becker, and Henze-Döhring, vol. II, 376–8.

[7] Edouard Monnais, *F. Halévy: Souvenirs d'un ami pour joindre à ceux d'un frère* (Paris: Imprimerie Centrale des Chemins de Fer, 1863), 9, 13–14.

[8] Katharine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et gazette musicale de Paris, 1834–80* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 184, comments on the sluggish pace of Meyerbeer's collaboration, noting that "his demands on various directors of the Opéra were such that a work could take several years to reach the stage."

I have several works already begun, collaborators who are waiting.'"[9] In Halévy's own memoirs, there is no hint of early negotiations or struggles – only the composer's warm reminiscence of the moment when Scribe told him the story of *La Juive*. The early wariness of Scribe, and of Véron and Schlesinger, implies that Halévy's authority did not approach that of Meyerbeer. Contemporary descriptions of Halévy depict an affable, diplomatic, and peace-loving man who, one could speculate, would have easily bowed to Scribe's will in making decisions about the developing work.[10]

Viewed in another light, Halévy's creative authority may have been greater than his status would suggest. Weighed against implications of a power imbalance are Halévy's later influence and role as "acting director" under Véron's successor Edmond Duponchel, Scribe's long experience in collaborating, and the librettist's own reputed conciliatory manner and willingness to cede control to creative partners. As a seasoned writer for many Parisian theatres by the early 1830s, Scribe often relied on other writers, even to work out text destined for non-musical theatre, which would not entail adapting to fit a composer's needs. Collaborators for operatic and non-operatic theatre who were recognized as co-authors include Germain Delavigne (1790–1868), Casimir Delavigne (1793–1843), Charles Duveyrier-Mélesville (1803–66), Jean-François Bayard (1796–1853), and Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges (1783–1855); others went unnamed, acting as contributing "ghost-writers."[11] The librettist himself explains that he was not simply being pragmatic in seeking the help of others. In a preface to an early edition of collected works, written as a homage to his co-authors,

[9] Monnais, *F. Halévy*, 13–14: "'Est-ce pressé?–Mais oui, répondit le musicien'; et le poëte de reprendre, en songeant à la prime d'usage: 'C'est que, vous concevez, si c'est pressé, c'est plus cher; j'ai des ouvrages commencés, des collaborateurs qui attendent.'"

[10] Véron, *Mémoires*, vol. III, 174, described Halévy's diplomatic advice in the handling of singers – for example, in deciding whether Dorus-Gras or Falcon was to sing the role of Alice in *Robert* on a particular day. Halévy was also consulted about who could go on in place of Nourrit when the tenor was injured during a performance of *Robert*, but Halévy left this decision to the director.

[11] F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22584, vol. XXXIV, fol. 64^{v}. Karin Pendle, *Eugène Scribe and French Opera of the Nineteenth Century* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1977), 13–16, notes that Scribe worked with approximately 130 literary collaborators.

Scribe modestly claims not to have had "the mind or the talent" to be a sole creator and, more significantly, describes collaboration a pleasure but working alone drudgery.[12]

Undoubtedly the nature of Scribe's artistic relationships varied with each personality and work, though some working habits remained constant. From his tyrannical dealings with musicians alluded to by Louis Quicherat, he was said to have been "converted" to accept the respective dominance of each art by the time of his collaboration with Auber on *La Muette de Portici* (1828).[13] In reference to changes in the role of Marcel in *Les Huguenots*, Meyerbeer portrays a very pliable librettist as he reminds Scribe of his earlier comments: "You responded that you would leave it up to me to make any changes I desired, with or without any mutual discussion of the matter. You also stated that you would allow me to make changes in the entire work provided that I request this of you only at a time when everything could be taken care of at once and when the score was complete."[14] In Alan Armstrong's careful examination of the Meyerbeer–Scribe creation of *Le Prophète*, he agrees with the general view that Meyerbeer exerted artistic control over the librettist, asking Scribe to rewrite to fit his rhythmic needs or dramatic concepts. Armstrong concludes that Scribe complied with most of Meyerbeer's demands, although he did not yield in several instances in which Meyerbeer stepped over Scribe's desires by rewriting the text himself or getting another writer to do so.[15]

In the collaboration on *La Juive*, Scribe appears both strict and flexible in accounts of opera insiders. As Halévy composed, Scribe took care that deadlines were met: Monnais recalls that, as each act was due, "the librettist came looking for the musician backstage in order

[12] Preface to the 1828 edition of his collected works, *Théâtre de Eugène Scribe dédié par lui à ses collaborateurs*, 10 vols. (Paris: Bezou & Aimé André).

[13] Quicherat, *Nourrit*, vol. 1, 53.

[14] Letter from Baden-Baden, dated 2 July 1834, in *Giacomo Meyerbeer: A Life in Letters,* ed. Becker and Becker, 63. Also see *Correspondance d'Eugène Scribe et de Daniel-François-Esprit Auber*, ed. Herbert Schneider (Sprimont, Belgium: Mardaga, 1998).

[15] Alan Armstrong, "Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*: A History of its Composition and Early Performances," 4 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1990), 192, n. 94, notes that when Meyerbeer altered the text, Scribe "retained his original version in the printed libretto."

to confirm that he was legally exact in his commitments."[16] In reworkings of text to comply with the composer's musical demands, according to Léon Halévy, Scribe proved quite malleable and even distanced himself from the intricate process of revision. In a rich account of the opera's complex history sketched in his 1862 biography of the composer, Léon emphasizes the librettist's ease in accepting others' contributions, while never questioning his role as primary author and approver of all revisions. Although undoubtedly a biased chronicler keen on securing Halévy's place in history (as well as his own), he suggests that the composer played a significant part in altering the text and drama, while he and Nourrit helped to make substantive and minor modifications. He writes: "How many times my brother and he [Nourrit] came to discuss and sort out with me these modifications agreed to by Scribe, who, understanding with exquisite tact the true role of the dramatic poet at the Opéra, would step aside in order to give way to the inspirations of the composer and to those of eminent artists, his interpreters!"[17] (See Appendix E for a fuller excerpt.)

Scribe's active schedule seemingly contributed to his collaborative pliancy. As Léon notes, because Scribe was typically overloaded with contracted pieces at several theatres at once, he preferred, or pragmatically chose, to concentrate on the initial preparation of a libretto rather than the year-long revisions that followed. In a similar vein, Quicherat points out that "nothing was more disagreeable" to the overworked Scribe than to revisit a piece while "the seeds of several others worked in his brain."[18] Léon explains that as *La Juive* developed Scribe welcomed his own contributions, in part because he felt indebted to him for having supplied documents and anecdotes for Scribe's acceptance speech before the Académie française. Scribe used these to prepare a tribute to his predecessor Antoine-Vincent Arnault (1766–1834), whom Léon had assisted at the Ecole polytechnique, and Léon claims that he never forgot this favor linked to such a significant event in his career.[19]

[16] Monnais, *F. Halévy*, 14: "le poëte, cherchant le musicien dans les coulisses, afin de constater légalement qu'il était exact à ses échéances."
[17] Léon Halévy, *Sa Vie*, 23.
[18] Quicherat, *Nourrit*, vol. 1, 197.
[19] Léon Halévy, *Sa Vie*, 25.

The younger Halévy downplays his own role, emphasizing that it was that of facilitator – or *coopérateur* – rather than *collaborateur*. He describes helping his brother with detailed alterations of prosody and verse length, without laying claim to the full text of any number in *La Juive*, as he did for "Pendant la fête une inconnue" in *Guido et Ginevra*, Halévy's *grand opéra* of 1838, and "Quand de la nuit l'épais nuage" in *L'Eclair*, the *opéra comique* that appeared the same year as *La Juive*. As he reports on the librettists' approval of his "ghost-writing" these numbers, he underscores a certain authorial distance on their part and implies that the composer, using his brother to realize his wishes, often had the final word.[20] Léon portrays himself as the composer's trusted

[20] *Ibid*., 25–6. Léon writes: "Seated near Halévy at one of the rehearsals of *Guido*, hearing for the first time the romance 'Pendant la fête une inconnue' sung in such a ravishing manner by Duprez, he [Scribe] cried out with naive surprise and sincere joy: 'Ah! What an exquisite piece! But I did not write those words! Where is your brother so that I can thank him?' I will also do justice to [F. A. E.] Planard, to whom the Opéra-Comique owes such a great number of excellent libretti, and who wrote *L'Eclair* with M. de Saint-Georges, the skillful and fortunate collaborator of my brother. Never was a man more agreeably surprised than he when he heard, at one of the rehearsals of *L'Eclair*, a charming melody which had seemed tedious in a duet of the second act moved to the beginning of the third, set to new words that my brother had asked of me the day before and I wrote during the night. It was the celebrated romance 'Quand de la nuit l'épais nuage,' whose music has become so popular. The two authors of the verse shook my hand; they would have written well also, even better, no doubt about it: but I was there near the composer's piano, and when I was adapting my verse to his melodies, I believed I was taking down his dictation." ("Placé près d'Halévy à l'une des répétitions de *Guido*, et entendant pour la première fois la romance: *Pendant la fête une inconnue*, chantée d'une manière si ravissante par Duprez, il [Scribe] s'écria avec un étonnement naïf et une joie sincère: 'Oh! le délicieux morceau! mais je n'ai pas fait ces paroles-là! Où est donc votre frère pour que je le remercie?' Je rendrai la même justice à Planard, à qui l'Opéra-Comique doit un si grand nombre d'excellents poëmes, et qui a fait *L'Eclair* avec M. de Saint-Georges, l'habile et heureux collaborateur de mon frère. Jamais homme ne fut plus agréablement surpris que lui, lorsqu'à l'une des répétitions de *L'Eclair* il entendit une mélodie charmante, qui avait paru faire longueur dans un duo du second acte, transportée au commencement du troisième, sur des paroles nouvelles que mon frère m'avait demandées la veille, et que je lui avais faites dans la nuit. C'était la célèbre romance: *Quand de la nuit l'épais nuage*, dont la musique est devenue si populaire. Les deux auteurs du poëme me serrèrent la main; ils auraient fait aussi bien, mieux sans doute: mais j'étais là près du piano du compositeur, et, quand j'adaptais mes vers à ses mélodies, je croyais écrire sous sa dictée.")

work companion who sat at his side at the piano and "freed the fecund and ingenious writer from a great care"; in return, as he writes, "I deeply appreciated the freedom to contribute to the success of works that were dear to me."[21]

In assessing what appears to be a sincere and diplomatic autobiographical account of Léon Halévy's contributions, we must consider that he set down these words after the death of Scribe, when the librettist could not dispute them. Since *La Juive* remained the *chef-d'oeuvre* of Fromental, Léon's claims may have been motivated by a self-serving desire to gild his own reputation, diminished since his early years of promise. The hand of Léon Halévy, or other clear traces of his work on *La Juive*, is not evident in libretto and music sources, although future research may lead to new discoveries.[22] But his statements are largely backed up by Monnais, who worked with the composer at the Opéra after being hired as assistant director in 1839.[23] Although personal loyalties may also have biased his corroborations, Monnais speaks emphatically about Léon's unheralded contributions to the libretti of his brother's operas, including the text for the same *air* from *L'Eclair* cited by Léon as well as others that had become popular. The credited librettists were thankful for Léon's services, Monnais writes, "but the public knew nothing about them."[24] Other than the cantatas *Les Plages du Nil* (1846) and *Prométhée enchaîné* (1849), Léon was primary librettist for only one other large-scale vocal work completed by his brother, *Le Dilettante d'Avignon*. Monnais infers that his secondary role in Fromental's operas was not by choice, but because "strange

[21] *Ibid*., 25. See Appendix E.

[22] Of two notes containing libretto text (F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22502, vol. XXIII, 1°:1°) in unidentified hands, neither is in Scribe's hand, nor clearly in Léon Halévy's. One includes verse for the Act I chorus "Hâtons nous"; the other contains verse for the Act III numbers abandoned after the première (see pp. 112 and 228–30 below).

[23] Monnais, *F. Halévy*, 33. This account, dedicated to Léon Halévy, was intended as a companion piece to his own biography of the composer. At some point after *La Juive*, strong friendships developed between both Halévys and Monnais. At the composer's funeral in 1862, Monnais delivered a eulogy ("Obsèques de M. F. Halévy" [24 March 1862], F-Po, Dossier d'artiste: Fromental Halévy), and, under the pseudonym Paul Smith, wrote the article "F. Halévy," *La Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* 29, no. 12 (23 March 1862): 93.

[24] Monnais, *F. Halévy*, 33.

conditions that exist in the arrangements of the theatre" prevented Léon's being granted a larger, acknowledged role.[25] He hints that this lack of opportunity and lack of public recognition issued from the monopoly of power exerted by Scribe and other Opéra librettists and very likely implies that Léon's "tacit agreement" was intended to protect Scribe's authority as well as his royalties.[26] In one particularly emphatic statement, Monnais asserts Léon's artistic importance to the composer: "Throughout his career, your brother has known only three collaborators. M. de Saint-Georges and Scribe in public, and you in private."[27]

Contributions by Nourrit comprise his choosing and developing the role of Eléazar, originally destined for the bass Nicolas Levasseur (1791–1871), writing – or refining – the text of the famous aria "Rachel, quand du Seigneur," and determining its replacement of the choral finale planned for Act IV.[28] Moreover, he is credited with developing the *mise en scène* of *La Juive*.[29] Although this latter role goes unmentioned in the composer's memoirs, Halévy does confirm Nourrit's work on the aria, and Scribe's conciliation:

> Nourrit gave us excellent advice. There was a [choral] finale in the fourth act; he asked us to replace it with an aria. I wrote the music of the aria on the given situation; Nourrit asked Scribe for the authorization to write the words of the aria, whose music was written. He wanted to choose the syllables that were the most sonorous and the most suitable for his voice. M. Scribe, generous because of his wealth, lent himself with good grace

[25] *Ibid*.: "les bizarres conditions qui président aux arrangements de théâtre s'y opposaient toujours."

[26] For *La Juive*, for example, librettist and composer received equal royalties for performances.

[27] Monnais, *F. Halévy*, 33: "Dans toute sa carrière, votre frère n'a guère connu que trois collaborateurs. M. de Saint-Georges et Scribe pour le public, et vous pour l'intimité."

[28] The redistribution of roles is discussed by Léon Halévy, Monnais, Véron, and other contemporary writers – and by the composer himself. See Fromental Halévy, *Derniers Souvenirs*, 166–7, and Monnais, *F. Halévy*, 14; see also Appendix E.

[29] Stéphane Wolff, *L'Opéra au Palais Garnier (1875–1962): Les Oeuvres, les interprètes* (Paris: Déposé au journal *L'Entr'acte*, n.d.). I have not yet found documents that trace Nourrit's work on the *mise en scène*.

2 Portrait of Adolphe Nourrit (1802–39) by Vigneron

to the desire of the singer, and a few days later Nourrit brought us the words of the aria "Rachel, quand du Seigneur la grâce tutélaire."[30]

[30] Fromental Halévy, *Derniers Souvenirs*, 167: "Nourrit nous donna d'excellents conseils. Il y avait au quatrième acte un finale; il nous demanda de le remplacer par un air. Je fis la musique de l'air sur la situation donnée; Nourrit demanda à M. Scribe l'autorisation de faire lui-même les paroles de l'air dont la musique était faite. Il voulait choisir les syllabes les plus sonores, les plus favorables à sa voix. M. Scribe, généreux, parce qu'il est riche, se prêta de bonne grâce au désir

Libretto sources appear to back up this account and suggest that Nourrit at least revised the aria's text.[31] Loyalty to the singer, particularly after his tragic suicide in 1839 (which many blamed on the Opéra administration), may have biased Halévy and other writers to give Nourrit more credit than was due him, yet reports abound of Nourrit's extensive artistic responsibilities that went well beyond his meticulous role preparation. As Halévy points out, Nourrit also developed the scenario of the ballet *La Sylphide* (1832) and adapted Shakespeare's *Tempest* for the ballet *La Tempête* (1834).[32] Quicherat writes of Nourrit's demand to change what he felt was an ineffective end to the fourth act of *Les Huguenots*, calling instead for a duet between Valentine and Raoul; despite Meyerbeer's willingness to respond to the singer's ideas, Scribe was reluctant and too fatigued to write new verse.[33] In this case,

du chanteur, et Nourrit nous apporta peu de jours après les paroles de l'air: 'Rachel, quand du Seigneur la grâce tutélaire.'"

[31] The draft verse in Scribe's hand (F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22562) includes text for the choral finale, but not Eléazar's aria. The aria first appears in the copyist's libretto, F-Pan, AJ^{13}202, in Act IV, Scene vii, beginning with the words "Lorsque d'un dieu puissant, la grâce tutélaire." Other manuscript evidence shows variants of early-layer text: the autograph, F-Po, A.509a, vol. II, 462ff., and a partbook for Eléazar, F-Po, Mat. 19^{c}[315 (13), fol. 145^{v}, include a variant of the initial words in the copyist's libretto, "Hélas lorsque de dieu," which was replaced by "Rachel, quand du Seigneur." This evidence does not prove definitively Halévy's claim of Nourrit's authorship of the entire text, but neither does it refute it.

[32] Fromental Halévy, *Derniers Souvenirs*, 153–4, 162. Concerning *La Tempête*, Halévy (162, n. 1) wrote that "only the title, the original idea, and several details of this ballet were borrowed from Shakespeare. All the rest was the invention of Nourrit" ("[l]e titre, l'idée première et quelques détails seulement de ce ballet étaient empruntés à Shakspeare [*sic*]. Tout le reste était de l'invention de Nourrit."). Janet Lynn Johnson, "Rossini in Bologna and Paris during the Early 1830s: New Letters," *Revue de musicologie* 79, no. 1 (1993): 73, claims that Rossini thought of Nourrit, his Arnold in *Guillaume Tell*, as his "poëte adjoint"; Johnson also notes that the composer gave Opéra director Emile Lubbert (Véron's predecessor) and the librettist the liberty to make cuts in *Tell* during his absence, provided Nourrit was consulted.

[33] Quicherat, *Nourrit*, vol. I, 197. Meyerbeer's respect for Nourrit's artistry is evident in a letter to Alexandre Dumas *père* dated 23 May 1832, when he wrote that "[t]ogether, you and Nourrit could write half an opera in three weeks." See *Giacomo Meyerbeer: A Life in Letters*, ed. Becker and Becker, 54.

Quicherat claims that he allowed Emile Deschamps to act as secondary librettist, although Nourrit may have helped as well.[34]

At various stages of the genesis of *La Juive*, a certain "territorialism" and creative opposition undoubtedly arose among the collaborators as their individual roles overlapped. (Véron speaks of the artistic battles surrounding suppressions and cuts that typically went on in the final meeting prior to an opera's première.[35]) Scribe held onto final approval of text revisions, as Léon Halévy reports, yet it cannot be assumed that Scribe did not bend to the composer's preferences: it appears that what may have begun as a librettist-led collaboration had developed into a relatively balanced and cordial partnership – even if Scribe's relinquishing of some control was due mainly to fatigue or disinterest. A glimpse of artistic exchanges between Halévy and Scribe several years and operas later shows the composer as a persuasive, confident negotiator: in Halévy's letter of 20 June 1848, he tells Scribe of director Duponchel's requests to rework the already shortened *Guido et Ginevra*, and asks the librettist to write "a beautiful scene" as denouement to the fourth and then final act. His suggestions indicate that he does not limit himself to musical ideas, and reveal his attraction (and undoubtedly Duponchel's) to climactic scenes: "Couldn't one have a beautiful spectacle there? A fire, whose idea begins to take root at the end of the fourth act? In the middle of this fire, the arrival of Médicis with troops, all his court, all the clergy, all the people. Be good enough to give us a magnificent denouement, with torches, tocsin and *arc-en-ciel* [rainbow]."[36]

The portrait of amiability among *La Juive* collaborators depicted by Léon is enhanced by the composer's own references to Scribe's generosity in accommodating Nourrit, and by the congenial manner in which composer and librettist addressed each other publicly and

[34] Quicherat, *Nourrit*, vol. I, 198. A letter from Nourrit to Scribe in F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22502, vol. XXIII, 2°:4°, includes text for the Valentine–Raoul Act IV duet in his hand, with a note saying, "Here is the duet as we are singing it" and indicating that he will meet the composer the following day to discuss it.

[35] Véron, *Mémoires*, vol. III, 162.

[36] *Fromental Halévy: Lettres*, ed. Galland, 61–2. According to Galland, this reworked version was not realized at the Opéra.

privately. Although civil, deferent expression is a key feature of French correspondence, particularly formal correspondence, genuine warmth and respect exude from their post-*Juive* letters; Scribe and Halévy use such phrases as "Mon cher maître," "Mon cher voisin et collaborateur," or "Mon cher et illustre collaborateur," with Halévy sometimes emphasizing "cher" with "très" and adding "ami" to the phrase; he also ends one letter of 1848 with "votre dévoué et affectionné collaborateur, confrère et ami."[37] To Nourrit, Halévy appears rather intimate in letters of the 1830s, addressing him as "Mon cher Adolphe" or "Mon cher ami" and signing off, "Votre bien dévoué." (See Appendix 1–2.) Although Halévy would play a role in hiring the tenor Gilbert-Louis Duprez at the Opéra, an action which severely wounded Nourrit's pride, he cared deeply for the singer; Quicherat sensed a "great familiarity" when he saw them together.[38] Although future research will undoubtedly offer a more distinct portrait of this central creative team, its flexible division of labor and seeming collaborative ease allows for an enticing range of interpretations as we examine the opera's subject and contexts.

THE LIBERALISM OF THE AUTHORS AND THEIR GENERATION

Beyond this basic collaborative accord, the authors of *La Juive* shared generational ideals that touched and inspired their work. It is in the liberalism of their "Generation of 1820" (so labeled by Alan Spitzer and other historians) that the socio-religio-political meanings of *La Juive* took root. Maturing after the fall of the Empire, this generation demonstrated extraordinary cohesion in its opposition to the Restoration governments, ultraroyalist, clerical actions, and established elites, and

[37] See, for example, letters from Halévy to Scribe dated 1 May 1848 (F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22547, fol. 296), 20 June 1848 (n.a.fr. 22547, fol. 298), and 5 January 1849 (F-Pn, Mus., "Lettres autographes," vol. 1, No. 6); from Scribe to Halévy dated 3 January 1848, 17 January 1852, and 6 July (no year) (F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 14347, fols. 59–60, fols. 65–6, and fols. 89–90), and 6 December 1848 (F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22547, fol. 300); see *Fromental Halévy: Lettres*, ed. Galland, 60–62, 65–8, 71–2, 96–9.

[38] Quicherat, *Nourrit*, vol. 1, 230–31.

in its embrace of the principles of liberty, equality, and social progress.[39] Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804–69) sketched its rise to power:

> There is a generation composed of those born at the end of the last century, still children or too young under the Empire, which liberated itself to don manly garb in the midst of the storms of 1814 and 1815. This generation . . . who fought with virtual unanimity under the Restoration against the political and religious *ancien régime*, today occupies the summits of power and science in business, the Chambers and the Academies. The Revolution of 1830, to which this generation had so greatly contributed by its fifteen years of struggle, was made for it to a considerable extent and was the harbinger of its accession.[40]

Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850), one of the generation's most luminous members, captured its zealous idealism in *Sténie; ou, Les Erreurs philosophiques*, as he called on the "children of the century and of liberty, to speed the dawning of happiness among nations, to make the security of thrones coincide with the freedom of peoples."[41] Léon Halévy added to the self-affirmations, characterizing the period as "one of those epochs of sharp transition where the emerging generations are separated from their predecessors to such a degree that in the same country, in the same century, we exist as citizens of two nations and contemporaries of two eras."[42]

[39] Spitzer, *1820*, 3–4, 9. The specific designation of the generation varies, as well as its age span and makeup – with most historians defining it in terms of a brilliant group of educated, predominantly middle-class males. Spitzer's label corresponds to the "Restoration generation" preferred by some writers. See his references, 3–4, to Albert Thibaudet, "La Génération de 1820," in *Histoire de la littérature française*, part 2 (Paris: Stock, 1936), 105–292; Charles Bruneau, "La Génération de 1820," in *Histoire de la langue française des origines à nos jours*, ed. Ferdinand Brunot (Paris: A. Colin, 1968), vol. II, 103–15; Robert Brown, "The Generation of 1820 during the Bourbon Restoration in France: A Biographical and Intellectual Portrait of the First Wave, 1814–1824" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1979); Henri Peyre, *Les Générations littéraires* (Paris: Boivin, 1948); and François A. Isambert, *De la Charbonnerie au Saint-Simonisme: Etude sur la jeunesse de Buchez* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1966).

[40] Cited in translation in Spitzer, *1820*, 5–6.

[41] Cited in translation in *ibid*., frontispiece. Spitzer also includes characterizations of the generation by Félicité-Robert de Lamennais, François-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand, and Benjamin Constant (4–5).

[42] *Le Producteur* I (1825): 275, cited in translation in Spitzer, *1820*, 30.

The collapse of the Empire and return of the Bourbons stimulated powerful responses in the generation, but its collective *mentalité* was also galvanized by common schooling in *lycées* established under the Empire (the Imperial, Napoléon, Charlemagne, and Bonaparte, known as Louis-le-Grand, Henri IV, Charlemagne, and Bourbon under the Restoration), the Ecole normale, and the *collège* Sainte-Barbe; participation in literary salons and the founding of journals; and membership in such associations as the *normaliens*, students of the Ecole normale and other young intellectuals inspired by the political philosophy of Victor Cousin (1792–1867), the Carbonari, a group of political activists founded by Saint-Amand Bazard (1791–1852), and the Saint-Simonians.[43] For many of this generation, the 1830 Revolution was an epochal event and, as Sainte-Beuve wrote, the "harbinger of its accession." Although generational unity quickly dissolved as Louis-Philippe's government began to take on less revolutionary and more absolutist tones – as in the 1831–2 repression of republican resistance and workers' uprisings – liberal ideals continued to hold sway in the 1830s, albeit with increasing divisions of thought.

The generation's revolutionary, humanitarian spirit and anticlerical, anti-absolutist views influenced the authors of *La Juive*, although with varied nuances. Scribe, whose birthyear of 1791 places him slightly outside Spitzer's dating for the generation (the birthdates from 1792 to 1803 as *terminus a quo* and *ad quem*),[44] appears the most distant from the politics of this period, but he nevertheless shared many of its ideals. Both the Halévys and Nourrit fit its profile: the composer was born in 1799, the year of Balzac's birth, his brother and Nourrit in 1802, the year of Hugo's. Scribe attended the *lycée* Napoléon (Henri IV) and the *collège* Sainte-Barbe; Nourrit also attended Sainte-Barbe. Léon Halévy

[43] See Spitzer, *1820*, 3–34, for a more comprehensive discussion of the education, activities, and networks of this generation or "cohort." Its articulate *hommes de lettres* whose writings made a public mark in the 1820s included such men as Alfred de Vigny (1797–1863), Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877), Jules Michelet (1798–1874), and Auguste Comte (1798–1857).

[44] Spitzer, *1820*, 6, recognizes the arbitrariness of these dates and allows for some lack of clarity at these limits. He also refers to other boundaries – for example, the birthdates of 1795 and 1805 chosen by Peyre (4, n. 2).

studied at Charlemagne, winning its *concours général* in 1816–17 and thus a place among a brilliant elite.[45] Fromental's musical talents led him, from the time he was almost ten, to the Paris Conservatoire. Léon became a leading generational spokesman (one of the nearly 200 subjects used in Spitzer's study), a role that makes him a valuable informant for this study.

From Scribe's school experience emerged a lifelong association with important generational voices, particularly the brothers Casimir and Germain Delavigne, who as schoolmates with Scribe were nicknamed "the inseparables."[46] Casimir became a revered writer who was propelled into the Académie on the immense success of his poems mourning the fall of Napoleon, the *Messéniennes*. Memorized by countless youths who were "frantic liberals and frantic Bonapartists," Delavigne's poems gave him a reputation as a patriot and a god-like figure to French youths.[47] As a dramatist, he wrote works of political and philosophical import. Scribe collaborated with both Delavignes on theatre pieces, notably *La Muette de Portici* with Germain, and was influenced by both.[48] According to Ernest Legouvé, Scribe "confided everything" in Casimir,[49] who would remain a consultant and confidant even after their collaborative efforts ceased; moreover, Scribe's wife remembered that her husband never presented a theatrical work without having first read it before Germain.[50] (The brothers, particularly Casimir, also worked with Halévy on *Charles VI* of 1843.)

[45] F-Pan, Minutier central, Etude CXVII/1058, Dossier Halévy, letter of recommendation by Alexandre Dumas *père*, 20 October 1820, speaks of Léon's "brillantes études."

[46] Jean-Claude Yon, "Eugène Scribe, la fortune et la liberté" (Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1993), vol. I, 31.

[47] Ernest Legouvé, *Sixty Years of Recollections*, trans. Albert D. Vandam, 2 vols. (London: Eden, Remington & Co., 1893), vol. I, 16–17.

[48] Scribe worked with Germain Delavigne on *Thibault, comte de Champagne* (1813), the one-act *comédie Le Valet de son rival* (1816), and *La Somnambule* (1818). In 1819, he wrote a parody on Casimir's successful play of 1818, *Les Vêpres siciliennes* (which he would later rework as a libretto for Verdi).

[49] Legouvé, *Recollections*, vol. I, 30–31.

[50] Yon, "Eugène Scribe," vol. I, 31. As cited by Paul Bonnefon, "Scribe sous l'Empire et sous la Restauration d'après des documents inédits," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 27 (1920): 336, Scribe alludes to this close friendship in 1818, telling of a "charming season" of work and relaxation with the brothers in the country.

Among the watershed events that changed the lives of this generation, the return of the Bourbons produced a sharp reaction in Scribe and left a deep imprint on the Halévys. At the end of 1814, shortly after Louis XVIII came to power, the twenty-three-year-old Scribe displayed anti-Bourbon fervor, writing a brief but telling summation of the year: "This year . . . has not been happy, neither for me nor for France. The Allies have come; Paris has been taken; the country ransomed; the Bourbons established on the throne: all the misfortunes at the same time."[51] His anti-Bourbon feelings continue as he states his newly realized intention to make the theatre his profession in order "to be free and independent, and not to have to solicit jobs, help, or pensions from a government that I detest and despise."[52] In the biography of his brother, Léon describes more personal experiences during the 1814 surrender of Paris, which he cites as a major source of the brothers' mutual patriotism and love of liberty. On 30 March, as the British-led Allied forces pushed to defeat Napoleon, the young Halévys were thrilled to hear of the "heroic defense of Paris by the students of the Ecole polytechnique on the hills of Saint-Chaumont";[53] on 1 April, shortly after the surrender, they observed from a tiny window on the rue Michel-Lepelletier an enemy squadron of "savage-looking" Cossacks slowly marching past and sensed the mournful, silent pall that fell on the streets of Paris. As witnesses to this "painful" and "ill-fated" day, that would be followed by Napoleon's abdication and exile ten days later, the adolescent Halévys "never forgot the profound impression this scene produced."[54]

During the Restoration, the anticlericalism that arose in opposition to the increased influence of the Church touched Scribe and the Halévys. All expressed anticlerical sentiments linked with views of individual and political freedom espoused in liberal newspapers of the day. In his travel journals, Scribe makes a number of statements that are overtly anti-absolutist, anticlerical, and revolutionary in spirit; he

[51] Bonnefon, "Scribe sous l'Empire," 327.
[52] *Ibid*., cited in Pendle, *Eugène Scribe*, 4.
[53] Léon Halévy, *Sa Vie*, 12: "l'héroïque défense de Paris par les élèves de l'Ecole polytechnique sur les buttes Saint-Chaumont."
[54] *Ibid*.: "n'oubliâmes jamais l'impression profonde qu'avait produite sur nous cette scène."

also laments over inhuman conditions that he witnesses or that are brought to mind by historical relics seen during his journeys.[55] As he describes a visit to the church and abbey of St. Gall on 31 July 1826, Scribe characterizes the priests as "uneasy and unruly prelates who have always sown disorder among the Swiss people."[56] In writing of Avignon in 1827, and again in 1846, he condemns past abuses of the Church and wonders whether this early violence had set a precedent for more recent tragedies among the Avignonais, including the mutilation of sixty-six "unfortunates" by "the good inhabitants of the Midi" during the Revolution and the 1815 assassination of the Napoleonic marshal Guillaume Marie-Anne Brune by royalists.[57] Such "habitual ferocity" had been inherited by the Avignonais from ancestors who had sought asylum in Avignon when it was under papal control; in the 1846 entry, Scribe identifies these descendants as "the *légitimiste* Avignonaise population."[58] Although almost twenty years separate these visits, Scribe speaks passionately of tortures and massacres linked with Avignon on both occasions; during the 1846 visit, he remarks: "such is the ensemble of the minor measures of conviction that were used in earlier times to enlighten and convert those who refused to believe."[59] He concludes that "a temple to political and religious freedom" should be erected in Avignon, the site of so many injustices.[60]

[55] Writing in a journal of an 1827 trip to the South of France (F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22584, vol. II, fol. 33^{r}), Scribe deplores the sight of a procession of chained slaves: "What a horrible, dreadful sight! Four thousand galley slaves chained two by two passing as if in a parade . . . these condemned in perpetuity – in perpetuity . . . Ah! What a recollection! What degradation of human nature! I will never forget this awful scene and all day and all night in my dreams I saw marching past this long, immense column of infamy of all types." ("[O] l'horrible, l'effroyable spectacle! Quatre milles galériens enchainés deux à deux passant ainsi une revue . . . ceux condamnés à perpétuité – à perpétuité . . . ah! quel souvenir! quelle dégradation de la nature humaine! Je n'oublierai jamais cette horrible scène et toute la journée, toute la nuit dans mes rèves je voyais défiler cette longue et immense colonne de forfait de toute espèce.")

[56] F-Pn, Ms., n.a.fr. 22584, vol. I, fol. 16^{r}: "prélats inquiets et turbulents qui ont toujours jeté le desordre dans la suisse."

[57] *Ibid.*, vol. II, fol. 20^{r}.

[58] *Ibid.*, vol. II, fol. 20^{r}; vol. V, fol. 7^{r}.

[59] *Ibid.*, vol. V, fol. 7^{r}: "tel est l'ensemble des petits moyens de conviction employés autrefois pour éclairer et convertir ceux qui refusaient de croire."

[60] *Ibid.*, fol. 7^{v}: "un temple à la liberté politique et religieuse."

Scribe's interest in revolutionary heroes also inspired a portion of his travel agenda of the late 1820s. In Zurich, Scribe paid homage to Guillaume Tell, the Swiss hero so popular in contemporary dramas and soon to be memorialized in Rossini's opera (libretto by Etienne de Jouy and Hippolyte-Louis Bis) at the Académie royale. Scribe visited an arsenal (where he placed Tell's quiver on his shoulder) and the site on Lake Lucerne where Tell's chapel was erected. At the chapel, he was moved to write down an inscription expressing generational spirit: "[H]ere ended the tyranny of Gesler and began the freedom of the Swiss people."[61] (See pp. 110–12 and 114–16 below for further discussion of this travel commentary.)

Léon Halévy more directly and publicly condemned the Catholic Church and clerical factions. In his *Résumé de l'histoire des juifs modernes* (1828), he speaks, although with little elaboration, of the treatment of French Jews by the "parti-prêtre" (priest or clerical party), referring to "the hidden scheming and the active, pernicious influence by which the clerical party has constantly threatened their political existence, has encouraged apostasy and shameful defections among them, and, until today, has excluded them from public employment and especially from university offices."[62] In the latter statement, Halévy may have been recalling the purging of the clergy-led University of 1822, when professors and administrators believed to be liberal or anticlerical were dismissed, together with a portion of secondary school teachers. And he was undoubtedly remembering that his Jewish heritage prevented him from obtaining a teaching position,[63] despite his brilliant record at Charlemagne (but see pp. 105–6 below). Such an experience would have sharpened his awareness of the Catholic hegemony and undoubtedly fueled a desire to vent his frustrations.

[61] *Ibid*., vol. 1, fols. 11^{v}, 35^{r}: "[I]ci a fini la tyrannie de Gesler et commencé la liberté de la suisse."

[62] Léon Halévy, *Résumé de l'histoire des juifs modernes* (Paris: Lecointe et Durey, 1828), 317: "des sourdes menées, de l'influence active et pernicieuse par laquelle le parti-prêtre a constamment menacé leur existence politique, a encouragé parmi eux l'apostasie et les défections honteuses, et les a exclus jusqu'à ce jour des emplois publics et notamment des fonctions universitaires."

[63] *Ibid*., 82.