ANALYSIS IN DETAIL

Ship of Fools (1962)

Katherine Anne Porter

(1890-1980)

Part I

Embarkation

When do you sail for happiness?

Baudelaire

Porter indicates in her introductory note that *Ship of Fools* is a "moral allegory" using the "almost universal image of the ship of this world on its voyage to eternity." This puts it beyond the intellectual range of Postmodernist critics (1960-), who are unable to cope with the complexity of Modernist works, reduce all allegory to merely a system of *signs* and are unable to see the religious vision of the book. *Ship of Fools* is a realistic allegory of *symbols*, the most difficult form of fiction to write and mastered by only a few other American writers, mainly including Hawthorne, Faulkner, and O'Connor. The dominant tone of the prose in *Ship of Fools* is satirical Realism very rich in irony and humor, the texture of the narrative is symbolic, and the structure of the novel is a triple allegory of a voyage by (1) the ship of the world; (2) the ship of state; and (3) the ship of the individual soul. This general allegory contains smaller allegories, most importantly the relationship between the dying faith healer and his abusive nephew. The novel cuts from one subplot to another like a film, narration slides from omniscience to interior monologues and back, scenes are united by continuous themes, successive scenes often juxtapose opposite types of characters, and contrasting perspectives generate multiple ironies.

In listing the characters, Porter's prevailing objectivity is evident in describing the most truly religious character, Herr Wilibald Graf, as "a dying religious enthusiast who believes he has the power of healing." So was Christ on the cross. Porter editorializes only when she calls Herr Baumgartner a "hopeless drunkard," but this becomes obvious. The more obvious the faults of a character become through their dialogue and behavior, the more the tone sharpens into satire. The first sentence of the novel initiates the mode of Realism with concreteness, introduces the religious vision by describing Veracruz as a "purgatory" to travelers, and satirizes human pride by saying "the people who live there are very fond of themselves and the town they have helped to make." The residents of Veracruz are typical of human nature: They "carry on …with a pleasurable contempt for outside opinion, founded on the charmed notion that their ways and feelings are above and beyond criticism." This turns out to be true likewise of the passengers on the *Vera* who feel superior. The disparity between self-perception and truth is a traditional theme of Realism and generates irony and satirical humor throughout *Ship of Fools*.

That human nature is much the same everywhere is another Realist theme of the novel, a caution to the reader not to regard Germans as uniquely fascist. The Mexicans of Veracruz, for example, are said to treat outsiders with "methodical brutality." In truth it is a "typical port town, cynical by nature." The history of violent ethnic displacement is evoked by the presence of "a small emaciated Indian" sitting on a bench in the town square, and the class system by the professional beggar: "The men at the table glanced at him as if he were a dog too repulsive even to kick." Their attitude is much the same as the prevailing attitudes toward the poor workers in steerage on the ship. People often treat other people like animals and behave like animals themselves, as Porter implies by describing the behaviors of a dog, a cat, a monkey, and a parrot. Characters are compared to monkeys throughout the novel. Abused himself, the Indian on the bench kicks the dog for stumbling over his feet. In the tradition of literary Naturalism, people are compared to animals as if there is no escaping their lower human nature, whereas Porter is always moral by implying that people should try to transcend their animality.

The world was in great disorder in 1931 and getting worse—it was a time of depression, strikes and revolution that led to the Spanish Civil War and World War II. Adolph Hitler came to power in 1933. The farcical futility of most violence is a major theme introduced by the newspaper photograph of a corpse disemboweled by a bomb, an innocent young Indian servant boy. The bomb exploded at the Swedish Consulate—a grievous mistake, as the Swedish Consul "had proved himself a firm friend of the city, the most civilized and respectable of all its foreign residents. The bomb in fact had been intended for a rich, unscrupulous landlord who lived next door; by some fatal error…the explosion had taken place in the wrong house." Implicitly, violent revolutions are usually mistakes. The rebellious workers of Veracruz regret their mistake but go ahead with their festival of celebration "in spite of the awkward failure." One of their landlords complains that he hasn't collected any rent from them for more than a year. "Why hadn't we got fifty machine guns to turn on that celebration last night?" This "compulsive violence" of reaction and revenge was to drive Germany from one World War into another.

The people of Veracruz exploit travelers while expressing contempt for them with prejudiced attitudes and stereotypes. Foreign women "were always the same, no matter of what freakish nationality: middle-aged painted scarecrows too fat or too thin: and young flat-chested loud-voiced things with cropped hair… All strangers as such were odious and absurd. The people of Veracruz never tired of the pastime of ridiculing the looks of the foreign women…their wild unwomanly ways--the North American ones more especially." Establishing a context of social conflict, Porter characterizes groups unsympathetic and even hostile to each other—workers versus management, locals versus travelers. The travelers are fearful. "The very smell of violence was in the air… One could easily be murdered for an irrelevant word or gesture… Their porters came back at unexpected times to heckle them, giving wrong advice and demanding more tips for correcting their own errors." Although they are forced to associate with each other in a group, "Each chose to maintain his pride and separateness within himself."

Porter introduces and differentiates her main characters with vivid and memorable descriptions as if her voice is now from a perspective within the group, that of a traveler surveying fellow passengers. This transcends the objective voice and allows for subjectivity and judgments: We see "the unreasonably fat woman with legs like tree trunks, her fat husband in the dusty black suit and their fat white bulldog…. The ridiculous woman had kissed the beast on his wet nose…" These are the fat Huttens and their bulldog Bebe. The human characters are not named at first, so as not to overwhelm the reader with information all at once. The first impressions given of the many characters exaggerate selected features like cartoons to imprint each of them distinctly in the memory of the reader. The childless Huttens baby their Bebe. Some characters extensively dramatized remain somewhat flat because they are dominated by one of the Seven Deadly Sins: the fat Huttens (Gluttony), the sex-obsessed Denny (Lust), the socialist Swede Hansen (Envy), the vain and pretentious Frau Rittersdorf (Pride), the complacent priests (Sloth); the piglike Herr Rieber (Greed), and the vindictive Mrs. Treadwell (Wrath). The simplification of some of these characters serves both the allegory of signs and satire. All the characters come increasingly to life through dialogue, interior monologues and dramatic scenes. This combining of a moral allegory of signs within a realistic allegory of symbols is a prodigious intellectual feat of great distinction.

After the fat Huttens, "A tall thin young woman—a leggy 'girl' with a tiny, close-cropped head waving on her long neck, a limp frock flapping about her calves—strode in screaming like a peahen in German at

her companion, a little dumpling of a man, pink and pig-snouted." These are two of the most obnoxious characters in the novel, Fraulein Lizzi Spockenkieker the hedonistic liberated businesswoman and Herr Sigfried Rieber, a publisher and the incarnation of Nazism. Rieber is consistently described as piglike to make him an allegorical personification of self-indulgence, bigotry and greed. He and the demonic children Ric and Rac are depicted as inhuman in behavior through Expressionist exaggeration of their looks, to make them stand out from the other characters as incarnations of evil in order to define the moral/religious allegory. Porter is able to bring five characters vividly to life in one paragraph. After Rieber, at least eight different characteristics of the Swede named Arne Hansen are conveyed in one sentence.

It is August in Mexico and the "delicate-looking" small boy Hans Baumgartner is described as suffering in the heat, "heaving and sweating in a Mexican riding costume of orange-colored leather." His insensitive domineering parents have imposed an inappropriate costume on him, like the parents who were to force their young sons to put on Nazi uniforms, take up arms and die in the final defense of Berlin. "His sick-looking German father and sad, exasperated German mother urged him along before them." The boy resists going but the mother bullies him and his father pulls him along. Herr *Baum*-gartner is sick because he is always getting bombed. Observing them, a clerk remarks to a waiter, "Dressing a child in leather in August, making a monkey of him!" The waiter then calls attention to the inappropriate outfit of a young American woman, "which she had lifted without leave from the workday costume of the town-dwelling Mexican Indian: "Speaking of monkeys, what do you call *that*?"

This monkey turns out to be Jenny Brown, who is imitative and inauthentic. Her black hair (which differentiates her from the author, though they have some traits in common) is parted in the middle and twisted into a bun, "rather old-fashioned-looking in New York, but very inappropriate still in Mexico." Overhearing an insult from the clerk, Jenny and her traveling companion David "stared at each other like enemies. 'I told you to put on a skirt here,' said the young man." David thinks he is superior and Jenny tells him to shut up. Jenny and David are the closest to being the major characters in the novel. The two self-absorbed young Americans are both pretentious artists of mediocre talent, represent modern changes in relations between the sexes and are introduced as having a love/hate relationship, always quarreling and making monkeys of themselves and each other.

The hostile environment is evident in bullet holes that pock the walls of Veracruz. Against this backdrop the group of Spanish dancers gets by far the longest introduction, because they represent corruption and aggression in popular culture, they drive the plot of the novel, take over the *Vera* (truth) and correspond by analogy to the group of fascists who would soon take over Germany. They are a crime family of gangsters in the guise of entertainers. Porter's depiction of them throughout the novel is vivid high art comparable in style to contemporary Mexican painting and as detailed as a film: The women wear "sleazy black skirts too tight around their slender hips… They…sat on the terrace in a huddle eating fruit and scattering the rinds, their urgent Spanish chatter going on noisy as a flock of quarreling birds…. Their eyes flashing and their hips waving in all directions, they grew more disheveled by the moment…" The dancers generate chaos and get what they want by acting as a mob, a tactic of the Nazis: "Finally, rushing upon the terrace, they clustered tightly around one table, beat their fists upon it and shouted at the waiter, all screaming their orders at once, the children joining in fearlessly." The children Ric and Rac are in fact the worst of all. The more evil the adult Spanish dancers do throughout the novel, the more clearly the children become demons in the moral/religious allegory.

Mrs. Treadwell does not tread well in her introduction, one of four successive paragraphs on the theme of charity, as she fails the first in a series of moral tests of characters spaced throughout the novel. She looks well enough, conventionally dressed and "rather pretty." However, when approached by a beggar woman with "eyes aimed like a weapon," she recoils. "'Give me a little charity at once in God's name,' the beggar woman said threateningly, rapping the foreign woman sharply on the elbow." Charity is essential to Christianity, but Mrs. Treadwell is offended by demands upon her, refuses the beggar and takes pleasure in "righteous anger." In response to her scorn, the beggar woman reaches out and pinches her arm--"nails biting into the skin." She pinches the penny-pincher. Characteristically, Mrs. Treadwell tries to deny that something unpleasant has happened to her. The pinch becomes symbolic as it is gradually revealed that she is bruised in a general sense. The fat Huttens also fail to be charitable when they sit down on the bench at the opposite end from the Indian with a "shrunken stomach." They eat from a lunch basket, feed morsels to

their fat little bulldog, and leave unfinished food on the bench. The Indian is too proud to touch it, but a self-mutilated male beggar crawls over and eats it.

When the emaciated Indian is taken away by other Indians with rifles, "the travelers watched the scene with apathy." People in the modern world tend to behave like travelers without charity in a foreign land. "'Don't trouble your head,' said the pig-snouted man to the green-clad girl… 'They're only going to shoot him, after all!…Why should not other people sometimes have a little trouble, too? Why must it be always the Germans who suffer in these damned foreign countries?'"…. The Germans about stirred uneasily…that is the kind of German who gives us all bad reputations in strange lands." Another German says "'Politics it may well be. There is nothing else here. Politics and strikes and bombs'." It is ironic that a German should make such a complaint about another country when his own is torn by politics and is about to launch a war against the world--one of many ironic prefigurations in the novel. Prefiguration is an old literary technique but is unnoticed by Postmodernist critics who see no plot in this novel, like the travelers who criticize what they do not understand. The prefigurations of the Nazi regime and the war to come proliferate in this novel like the bulletholes in the walls of Veracruz.

As the passengers board the ship, "two Mexican priests, much alike in their grim eyes and blue-black jaws, walked briskly around the slow procession and gained the head of it." The priests represent the social authority and religious leadership of the Catholic Church, which in Mexico has supported the status quo against revolution, the landed aristocracy against the poor, as Porter dramatized in her most famous story, "Flowering Judas" (1930). These priests pace the decks of the ship (the Truth) with "their dark trap mouths locked, their relentless eyes fixed on their breviaries." Secure in their status, they are complacent in their piety, priests of Jesus in form only. When confronted by evil in the form of the prostitutes walking past them "the fathers ignored or perhaps did not see them." Father Carillo says Mass on the steerage deck for the suffering workers, but "severely and hastily, placing the wafers on the outstretched tongues expertly and snatching back his hand. He ended the Mass in due form but at top speed, and almost instantly began to pack up his altar as if he were removing it from a place of pestilence." He contrasts with the old faith healer who wants to touch and comfort the suffering workers. When atheist radicals—implicitly Communists—cause a fight to break out, Father Castillo ignores it rather than trying to make peace. Father Garza says Mass for the troupe of Spanish dancers who pretend to be Christians: "The Spaniards knelt closely together, their bitter faces closed smugly." The lazy priests accept the evil under their noses. Later in the novel, the priests are said to be "striding like ostriches."

The perceptive Dr. Schumann is not absolutely reliable, as when he notices the bruise on the arm of Mrs. Treadwell and misdiagnoses it as "most likely the result of an amorous pinch." The Modernist technique of multiple points of view is an extension of Realism in dramatizing the relativity of human perception and generates abundant ironies that contribute to satire. It is comical that the inhibited Mrs. Treadwell is seen as having "a slightly ribald look." To be appreciated, many such ironies require a second reading of the novel, which is characteristic of a masterpiece. As a European gentleman, Dr. Schumann sees the American girl Jenny Brown as immodest, with an unpleasantly "bold, airy manner." Porter here is taking up the international theme of Henry James, contrasting traditional Europeans who lack naturalness with liberated Americans who lack manners.

By far the most truly ill-mannered American passenger is William Denny, the tall crude Texan modeled on Porter's abusive first husband. We should note that Porter is confessing, implicitly casting herself as a fool for having married such a man. Denny is introduced following the Spanish dancing girls "with what could only be described as a leer." He is so obsessed with sex he becomes an embodiment of lust in the moral/religious allegory. In contrast, a young bride and groom board the ship as allegorical figures of true love, the Spirit—the opposite of Denny, the Flesh. The purity of true love is symbolized by the detachment of the lovers from everyone else. True love is self-sufficient, transcendent, spiritual and the ideal value in the novel. Love is scarce or nonexistent among the other passengers, but the love of the newly married couple survives the temptations and disruptions of the voyage, which is clearly evidence of Hope, contrary to the claim of some hopeless critics that *Ship of Fools* is hopeless. There is no hint that this marriage will fail, as so many do. Also, Dr. Schumann recalls that in his youth he had relations with a number of girls who went on to be "happily married" to someone else. One of the Spanish dancers tries to seduce a young

officer, but he resists: “A plain red-gold engagement ring shone on his left hand, the hand he raised almost instinctively as if to ward her off.”

The cruise of the *Vera* from Veracruz suggests there is no escape from the truths revealed in the opening of the novel. In truth, human nature is the same on land and sea. Rebellion as the popular solution to human problems is personified by “an inhumanly fat Mexican in a cherry-colored cotton shirt and sagging blue denim trousers, waving an immense stein of beer…his swollen face a deeper red than his shirt… With a wide-armed sweep [he] tossed the stein overboard.” At this time, the most popular revolutionaries are the Communists—Reds—fools intoxicated by their cause, inhuman ideologues corrupted by fascist methods and greed for power (fat). Braggioni is an example in “Flowering Judas.” They are essentially thieves who take other people’s property (the beer stein), consider it their own and throw all property rights overboard. The act of throwing something overboard links the revolutionary to the demonic Ric and Rac, who delight in throwing overboard things belonging to other people, including a pillow, a pearl necklace and a bulldog, causing the death of the woodcarver.

Arne Hansen the Swede is a Socialist, not as extreme a radical as a Communist but a fool as well. He carelessly takes a deck chair assigned to the piggish Herr Rieber. When Rieber claims it, Hansen does not apologize, he says “I am a Swede” as if this entitles him. “Is that a reason you should take my chair?” says Rieber. “Well, in such things, I can be a Swede too.” Rieber has conspicuous characteristics of a typical member of the National Socialist Party in Germany, mocked by Porter with contempt: “His pace was triumphant, he was a little short-legged strutting cock.” The pun links fascism to lust. Rieber pursues Lizzi Spockenkieker the liberated woman who screams and shrieks throughout the book: “Ah, you men,” she screamed joyously, “you are all alike!” Rieber likes to frolic with “wicked” women. “She rose and pranced along the deck. He rolled out of his chair and bounced after her.” Coyly she leads him on in one farcical scene after another, but she really has nothing to give and frustrates him in the end.

Lust becomes a more serious issue when the seductive play of Rieber and Lizzi is followed by Denny leering at two Cuban prostitutes with a “mean cold little smile.” They stare back with “contemptuous eyes.” The prostitutes in the novel behave like fascists in relation to clients, indifferent to their humanity. Denny is typical of the clients in feeling superior to the prostitutes and like them he reduces humanity to negative stereotypes: “Chili Queens. He knew their kind.” His sense of superiority extends to everyone different from himself. “He had always relied simply on his natural superiority of race and class, backed by law and custom…. He had taken the proper white man’s attitude.” Denny sounds and acts like Pap Finn. His ugly thoughts are filled with such ironic delusions about himself he becomes comical: “He had begun by feeling broadminded: after all, this was their country, dirt and all.” But he is on guard against being disrespected. He tries to outsmart the prostitutes on the ship and use them on his own terms but only makes a fool of himself. He avoids intelligent women like Jenny—“that bitchy-looking girl.”

Yet even Denny has decent moments: “Though his ticket called for berth number one, plainly, Denny with a decency that surprised David, offered the lower berth to Herr Glocken, and Herr Glocken accepted with eager thanks.” Glocken “was the most terribly deformed human being Denny had ever seen, except perhaps the maimed beggar in the square at Veracruz.” Unlike the beggar who maimed himself, Herr Glocken was born severely deformed, yet he made a living for himself with a newstand in Mexico City. He is a model of good character, a better man than either of his cabin mates Denny or David. All the other characters are implicitly measured against the standard set by the poor hunchback and most are to some extent spiritually deformed. This moral inversion of common social perception is traditional in satire, as when Mark Twain turns the hierarchy of social status upsidedown by making Jim the most admirable person in *Huckleberry Finn.* Glocken is implicitly celibate, the opposite of Denny, who is reading a form of illustrated porn, *Recreational Aspects of Sex as Mental Prophylaxis, A Guide to True Happiness in Life*. In rebuttal, Porter juxtaposes her own implicit guide to true happiness: “’Jesus,’ said David. Ironically, David is an atheist, rejecting the guide who would save him from his own inauthentic life.

David and Jenny embody the cultural rebellion and bohemianism of many young Americans during the 1920s, in particular the liberation of women from Victorian constraints represented at their worst by the likes of Denny and Herr Baumgartner. The couple is not married and doubt they ever will be. Supposedly they have an “open” relationship. No sooner does he leave his cabin for the first time than David sees Jenny

strolling on deck with a strange man. “He noted with a pang that the man was good-looking in a detestable sort of way, like a sports jacket or whiskey advertisement, with a typically smug, conceited German face. Where and how had Jenny picked him up in this short time?” She greets him in passing, “absentmindedly with a vague air of imperfect recognition.” David and Jenny continue to have an imperfect recognition of each other. They keep moving on past each other, strangers to themselves as well as to each other. “Even when Jenny seemed intelligent, or sincere, he still distrusted her female mind, crooked and cloudy by nature: she was no doubt asking questions designed to lead the man to talk about himself, meaning to trap him into small confidences that later she could use as a weapon against him when needed.” They had “violent quarrels” over whether to go to France or to Spain “and then compromised on Germany, which neither of them wanted to see.” That is where the war is about to begin.

Similarly self-absorbed, Mrs. Treadwell has tea with Frau Otto Schmitt, a widow in mourning whose “pale blue eyes asked frankly for pity.” Again Mrs. Treadwell is uncharitable to a beggar. She complains about getting pinched because she refused giving alms, “thinking for the first time how unusually selfish and stupid that refusal sounded, just told flatly. No decent person refused a beggar in Mexico.” Yet now she is grudging in her attention to the grieving widow and uncharitable in thinking of her as sentimental, fat and stupid—a “dull little thing.” Mrs. Treadwell soon makes her “escape.” She occupies herself arranging her things on “the narrow shelf of her small closet”—narrow and small like her heart—“shaking out pleated silks and setting gold and silver and satin slippers in a row,” like a princess who has given up on a prince. Smiling again into her garments she invokes the name of God, recalling Daisy Buchanan idolizing Gatsby’s shirts. Mrs. Treadwell’s cabin mate is her opposite, the flirtatious tease Lizzi Spockenkieker, “the tall girl with the shrill voice—playmate of that dreadful little fat man.”

Frau Baumgartner is an abusive parent uncharitable to her son Hans, refusing to allow him to take off his suffocating leather clothing in the heat: “’She loosed her wrath upon him. ‘Be quiet, or I’ll punish you!’ She raised her hand, flat and threatening…. He collapsed sobbing… ‘I’m dying,’ he told her…” She mocks him “contemptuously.” Finally she lets him take off his jacket, but she goes on ridiculing him, calling him a crybaby and “beginning to enjoy her cruelty, the pleasant feeling that she could hurt his pride even if he had won in the matter of the jacket.” This is not legitimate parental discipline. She complains about her own discomfort and is competitive with her own child, just as David and Jenny are competitive with each other. Wanting to win is the opposite of love, wanting to give. The child is “yearning for kindness, hoping his beautiful good mother would come back soon. She vanished in this frowning scolding stranger, who blazed upon him when he least expected it, struck him on the hands, threatened him, seemed to hate him.” Then, “as if she had never been cross, she smiled upon him most lovingly.” Nazis tortured victims to death in the morning and petted their dogs in the evening.

Frau Rittersdorf is introduced establishing “control” over her cabin mate, the timid little Frau Schmitt, an echo of Frau Baumgartner in relation to her child. She takes the berth assigned to Frau Schmitt. Then she sets out “two enormous floral offerings she had sent herself,” with cards attached supposedly from former suitors now dead. “God remember them both. She crossed herself several times although she was a Lutheran. It was a gesture she felt becoming to her, and it warded off bad luck.” Like Mrs. Treadwell she is possessed by a dead past. Like others on board she thinks she believes in God but she is uncharitable, deceptive, pretentious, vain and preoccupied with appearances. She crosses herself because she feels it makes her look good and she believes in luck rather than grace. “Taking her mirror, she regarded her profile with approval. She had many times been called a beauty and she deserved it.” She uses her belief in her superiority to cope with being rejected by a wealthy Mexican, seeing “the all-guiding Will of my race in it. A German woman should not marry into a dark race.” She is a bigot who closes her mind on principle, like politically correct liberals today: “She knew well there is ever and always only one true way of looking at any question [contrary to the multiple points of view presented by Porter in the novel], and she had always looked at everything exactly as she should, as she had been taught.”

The dinner bugle blows while the fat Huttens are babying their fat bulldog, who is seasick and vomiting. They are worrying about missing a meal, though Frau Hutten is so fat she cannot get up off the floor. “The Professor hooked both his forearms under her armpits [and] hauled her up with the expertness of long practice.” To the fat Huttens a meal is the equivalent of salvation: “Ah, my God, there goes the bugle, we shall be late”--as if it is Gabriel in heaven blowing his horn. The comedy also consists in their treating a

dog like a human baby and their behaving like children themselves. The pompous rhetoric of Professor Hutten, the self-important former head of a German school in Mexico, conveys that he is inflated in every way—a typical education administrator. He realizes that their child—the dog—is "going to be a problem …if not a complete nuisance, as always, he could see that. A hard thought which the Professor rebuked himself for innerly, but could not deny." For a moment he resembles Frau Baumgartner resenting her child and his resentment gives him a guilty conscience.

The wealthy Lutz family peer down through an iron grating at the poor people in steerage eating their dinner. The Lutzes owned a hotel in Mexico and are returning to their homeland in Switzerland to buy another hotel. "'Well, God bless us,' said Herr Lutz." His God is money. He sees not the people below him but their food. He acknowledges that their food is cheap, but it is still too good for them in his view: "'Why, how can they make any profit if they set a table like that?'" His wife "observed the scene with her habitual expression, long ago settled into a blend of constant disapproval and righteous ill-humor. 'It is only to make a show in the beginning,' she remarked. 'They will begin to economize on all of us before the trip is over'." She expects to be cheated and she reproaches her husband for not cheating people himself. He justifies himself by referring to their wealth. "'I no longer care what you think,' said Frau Lutz. She also dislikes her daughter Elsa's cabin mate, the American girl: "'Pantaloons in the street, imagine! And is she really traveling with a man who is not her husband?'" Frau Lutz is outraged by unconventional appearances while advocating dishonesty and opposing charity.

The guests at the Captain's table—all German except the wealthy Lutzes--are called "the chosen ones," in ironic allusion to the Jews, who are scorned in Germany for their traditional claim to that distinction: Dr. Schumann with his dueling scars, the fat Huttens, the piglike Rieber, the dizzy Lizzi, the vain Frau Rittersdorf, the simpleminded Frau Schmitt, and the handsome oil man Wilhelm Freytag, seen by Mrs. Treadwell as "the only presentable-looking man on the boat." This group is a sample of the German upper class that would soon follow Adolph Hitler into war for the vindication and glory of their "mystic Fatherland." They exult in feeling superior. "The wine was brought, real Niersteiner Domtal of the finest label, so hard to find in Mexico so expensive when found, so missed by them all, so loved, the beautiful good sound white wine of Germany, fresh as flowers. They sniffed their chilled goblets, their eyes moistened and they beamed at each other. They touched brims lightly, clinking all about, spoke the kind round words of health and good fortune to each other, and drank." Their feelings of unity are conveyed by their unanimous movements, by their coordination, by their nationalistic sentiment, by their moistened eyes and by the rhythms of the prose, with a perfectly timed pause before "and drank."

In contrast to the unity of the chosen ones, David and Jenny have not even chosen each other. "When he made love, Jenny knew he forgot who she was." They cannot agree on their destination or whether to stay together. As Jenny says, "This would be such a nice voyage if only we knew where we were going!" Skepticism about whether they have any future together at all is a thematic motif throughout the novel: "He reflected that she probably would not become Jenny angel to him for several days more—if ever. How much simple fraying of the nervous system can love survive?" Of *nine* couples significantly characterized in the novel, including the Jewish wife of Wilhelm Freytag who is not on board, that of David and Jenny is the major one and could make a novel all by itself. This is one of the most insightful analyses of modern gender relations in literature.

Also in contrast to the Germans at the Captain's table, to her credit Jenny the American girl chides her partner for racism and stereotyping, when in his jealousy he criticizes Freytag for having a German face. "David darling, shame on you!" At the same time she lacks charity when she complains about being "stuck in the same cabin" with Elsa Lutz, who wears an old-fashioned corset and speaks five languages though she is only eighteen. Jenny recalls when she visited Veracruz alone once in her youth: "It *was* lovely, David, and I loved it." Like the bride and groom now on the *Vera*, she preserves her romanticism by separating herself, telling David, "I really don't know whether I am going to be able to sit at this table with you the whole voyage or not. At least I'm glad we have separate cabins." "'So am I," said David, instantly, a cold fire in his eyes…. The quarrel between them was a terrible treadmill they mounted together and tramped round and round until they were wearied out or in despair'."

As Americans, they do not compromise their independence, they fight for it against each other. “He did not forgive her, he would take her by surprise someday in turn, as he had done often before, and watch her face turn pale; she always recognized revenge for what it was.” Without charity, they lack true love. “David regarded her weeping as simply another female trick.” When they drink a toast to happiness, the epigraph from Baudelaire, famous for his *Flowers of Evil*, applies: “They were both ashamed of the evil natures they exposed in each other; each in the first days of their love had hoped to be the ideal image of the other, for they were desperately romantic, and their fear of exposing themselves, of showing and learning unlovely things about each other, made them dishonest and cruel.” They lack self-knowledge and think they are what they pretend to be. Romanticism is the primary target in the Realist movement that prevailed from the late 19th century to the 1960s, when liberals began to monopolize education. In their disillusionment, liberals turned into politically correct fascists, dishonest and cruel like David and Jenny. By the 1980s the liberated women who took revenge on all men were being called Feminazis.

Frau Rittersdorf evokes the transition from Victorianism to modern Feminism: She is a Romantic in believing that “the crown of womanhood was suffering for the sake of love.” When passing a mother and child on deck she “took the liberty of a *true woman* who though childless herself and never ceasing to be thankful for it, still appreciated instinctively the glorious martyrdom of motherhood as enjoyed by others.” [italics added] She still is able to “adore the divine mystery of life.” By the late 20th century, Feminists throughout society were in a collective rage attacking the Victorian “true woman,” advocating atheism, “demystifying” the divine, demeaning mothers, and selling baby parts. As a Realist and a liberated woman herself, Porter shows that Frau Rittersdorf romanticizes children and motherhood. Her view of what children are by *nature* is expressed in her depiction of Ric and Rac the demonic twins. This “divine” baby may grow up to be monster: “El Generalissimo opened his eyes, waved his fists and yawned divinely.” The mother says, “If you could imagine the trouble we have with him—colic and all!” Frau Rittersdorf feels rebuffed and recovers her sense of superiority by presuming that the mother is “probably not particularly intelligent, perhaps not even particularly well bred.” Later offended Feminists would go farther and denounce the mother as stupid and in need of “consciousness raising.”

The female Spanish dancers on board are prostitutes who tempt the young ship’s officers. “It was fairly noticeable that romance of a sort seemed to be simmering around them.” Their moral evil is made enticing by the romanticism of easy sex. A young officer is free to “avail himself of opportunities freely offered so long as appearances were preserved. In this particular case of the Spanish ladies, appearances obviously could not be preserved but must be disguised if possible…. They all wore…engagement rings.” The young men are unfaithful even before they get married, learn to use women as subordinate sex objects to satisfy their desires, and turn from innocents into cynics. In contrast, the big Swede Arne Hansen takes a naïve fancy to the sexy Spanish dancer called Amparo and is romantic in thinking he can win her affections. The socialist radical is unrealistic and fails to fulfill his desire. As a socialist Hansen envies the rich, as a sexual predator he envies more successful men. The most important point here is that the moral evil of prostitution is tolerated and even supported on the ship.

Herr Baumgartner the lawyer “lost three important cases in the Mexican courts” because of alcoholism, another common social evil. The drug is destroying his happy marriage and his life. According to his wife, “He had given her love of the kind she understood as love: faithful and pleasant every day, every day in the year, and thoughtful.” Ironically, she is glad their money is “safely invested in Germany since the mark was restored and business was flourishing and all promised well in that country.” The Baumgartners will probably lose everything in the coming war. Her name is Gretel and their son is Hans. The names allude to Hansel and Gretel, the children in the fairy tale who escape evil by pushing the witch into an oven. The allusion to the famous fairy tale evokes (1) the plight of innocent people in a Germany bewitched by Hitler; (2) the Nazi program of gassing and burning people in ovens; (3) the possible death by fire awaiting the Baumgartners when Germany starts getting bombed.

Herr Lowenthal is the only Jew on board. Had the author made him an entirely sympathetic victim, as Stanley Kramer does in the film adaptation, Porter would have been a sentimentalist rather than a Realist. She would have been Politically Correct, but the reader would learn nothing. Lowenthal embodies most of the traits that alienated Germans from Jews, just as Rieber embodies most of the traits that alienated Jews from Germans, but the prejudice on both sides is inherent in their religions and their belief in their own

racial superiority. The German religion is a fascist nationalism that has displaced Christianity. Lowenthal is admirable for his personal integrity, courage, endurance, and success in a world mostly hostile to him. Rieber is in no way admirable. He is a pig. But they must share the same cabin space. Lowenthal "had known some very decent Gentiles. Maybe this would be one." He greets Rieber with courtesy "almost before he got a glimpse of the fellow." Rieber responds with "a deep look of repulsion." "'Good evening,' he said, with immense, cold finality of dismissal." Only then does Lowenthal become insulting: "He looks like a pig even more than a Gentile." Porter agrees with Lowenthal's view of Rieber as piglike and repeats his insult throughout the book.

Herr Glocken the hunchback is a pathetic figure strolling the deck alone and dodging a young woman who "darted forward to touch his hump for luck." As if he is inhuman, even less than a freak. Yet he is more a gentleman than most of the males on board. After Jenny is rude to him, he compliments her nonetheless to David: "She is delightful." In return David insults him. Glocken keeps "smiling like a gargoyle." Gargoyles were placed on medieval cathedrals to ward off evil spirits. Herr Glocken is not approached by the prostitutes, nor do they approach Denny the lustful Texan, they avoid him as if he is as repulsive to them as the poor hunchback. In an allegorical scene, the evil Spanish twins Ric and Rac "shriek and hoot and run circles in a kind of demon dance around the wheel chair of the small sick man, until the golden-haired boy pushing the wheel chair drove them away with loud curses in German." The dying old man, Herr Graf, is an allegorical personification of true faith who contrasts with the complacent priests. As a faith healer, he is representing Jesus. As a true Christian he reaches out in an effort to help people, he is harassed by evil spirits and he is misunderstood and persecuted--even by his own nephew. As a symbol of true faith in the modern world, he is old and dying because so many people are like his nephew and want him to die.

During their port stop in Havana, the American couple David and Jenny take a tour in an old car driven by an aged black man. "They leaped away like a kangaroo in flight, saw all the monuments in flashes." The driver races at an "appalling speed" past government monuments he explains in a series of unintelligible set speeches--"in fragments of loud croaks and low mutters as they whirled along the splendid white road beside the sea." It is comical how little they see or understand, a theme throughout the book. The reason for their blindness in general is evident when they have drinks and Jenny says "Let's have a wonderful private life that begins in our bones, or our souls even maybe…" Doubtful herself about whether the soul exists "even maybe," she "hesitated and then spoke the word 'soul' very tentatively, for it was one of David's tabus, along with God, spirit, spiritual, virtue—especially that one!—and love…. Now and then in some stray warmth of feeling she seemed to need one or the other; but David could not endure the sound of any of them." David represents the shift in liberal American culture from belief in God to atheism. As a result, he hates the idea of virtue and even the word *love*. He is free to be a cold, dishonest, selfish, unloving bastard. He is also willing to sell out, because he does not really believe in art either. Fiction by Postmodern atheists exposes their spiritual and intellectual vacuity.

The Havana tour guide, like the locals in Veracruz, is prejudiced against tourists: "'And there,' he said, in rather smugly censorious tones, 'is the famous Casino, where rich North Americans gamble away, before the eyes of the starving poor, hundreds of thousands of dollars every night'." Jenny loves the Indians in Mexico and she and David have gone primitive themselves by refusing to wear watches, which actually complicates their lives because they have to keep asking people what time it is. David says of the Indians, "They hate us in a bunch simply as members of the other-colored, oppressor race…. I'm sick of this sentimental yap about them…. Let's not go fake primitive." Jenny replies, "I wasn't looking for a new religion, either." The countercultural movement of the 1920s began the popular liberal pursuit of a new religion that would be easy and not hold selfish hedonists accountable for anything. By the 1960s, fake primitivism was popular and the new religion was politics. In one of the great ironies of American history, the righteousness of the liberal counterculture that claimed to champion free speech in the 1960s led to their imposing Political Correctness by the 1980s—Nazi-like suppression of speech, demonization of dissenters, prejudice against selected groups, hypocritical sexism and racism.

The first shocking prefiguration of the Nazi regime is Herr Rieber's declaration of how he would solve the problem of caring for the miserable workers boarding in Havana: "I would put them all in a big oven and turn on the gas." Lizzi Spockenkieker laughs at this proposal, but little Frau Schmitt, "whose tender

heart was plainly to be surmised in her soft pink face," is dismayed: "For shame, I don't think that is funny!" Rieber is encouraged by liberated Lizzi, who is "indulgent, indeed more than forgiving." Later, Rieber makes a joke out of his death threat when Lowenthal asks him for the time: "Time to stop all Jewish watches." Lizzi thinks Rieber's call for mass extermination is "very witty." Fat Professor Hutten advocates less stringent measures--the segregation of Jews, Gypsies, Spaniards, blacks, Gentiles married to Jews, and other undesirables on ships and all public transit: "They should not be allowed the run of things, annoying other people." The Captain concurs. Seeing Herr Glocken the hunchback, Frau Rittersdorf advocates in her notebook that all "defective" babies be killed "at birth or as soon afterward as it may become evident they are unfit." The "unfit" would of course include Jews. Costumed as a clown, Herr Baumgartner leads a parade of pre-Nazi children, "twirling a stick like a drum major, doing the goose step, the children goosestepping after him in shrieking disorder"—like Ric and Rac.

The miserable workers in steerage are victims of the world marketplace: "Cuban sugar, because of international competition, had fallen in price until the sugar planters could no longer afford to gather and market their crops. There had been strikes and riots too, and demands for higher wages at the very moment of crisis as always, due to the presence of foreign labor agitators among the workers. The planters were burning their crops in the fields, and naturally this had thrown thousands of sugar workers in the fields and refineries out of employment." If the foreign labor agitators—Communists—had stayed out of the crisis, the planters might have been able to negotiate a deal with the workers that would have preserved their jobs and the crops would not have been wasted. On the *Vera* the fat man in the cherry-red shirt who insults the religion of the workers exemplifies the foreign agitator.

Porter's narrative perspective has expanded from fellow passenger to omniscient, increasing the moral authority of her voice. She calls the miserable workers "eight-hundred and seventy-six souls," affirming the existence of the soul in contradiction of David. The workers are "herded" like animals and the aloof Frau Ritterdorf reduces them to "creatures." She is inclined to complain about them to the Captain, presumably hoping to have them all kicked off the ship, because "There is a great danger of infectious disease among such creatures." Herr Baumgartner agrees: "I was thinking the very thought. I was thinking, you can almost smell the diseases among them." This was one of the Nazi rationalizations for their extermination camps. As the affluent Germans look down upon the workers below them in steerage, the fat Frau Hutten averts her eyes, like the many Germans who lived near the camps and after the liberation were forced by Allied soldiers to confront the grotesque piles of skeletal corpses. "Her comfortable fat quivered with some intimation of suffering, but she could not bear to think of it."

Even selfish William Denny has compassion for the workers, but only because the newspaper says they are not Communists: "'Poor devils, they don't deserve it,' he said, almost tearfully. 'After all, why should they be kicked out? They're not dirty Reds, the papers said so'." Mrs. Treadwell considers Denny "odious" and will later take the opportunity to attack his face with her spiked heel. When she asks him to defend his language, Denny suspects her of treason: "Are you a Red?" He "inspected her as if she were a horse he was thinking of buying. His gaze ran like a hand…over her breasts, down her thighs…but he would not look at her face." She returns the insult: "Do you know the meaning of the word?" Then she retreats. "To tell the truth, she did not know the meaning of the word herself—it was just that she resented that stupid Denny to the point where she could have enjoyed slapping him." Denny reveals that he too feels superior enough to inflict violence based on his prejudice: "'I know what I'd do to them if I were running the government,' he said, in a heavy rage, peering into the front of her blouse." As in Henry James, having no manners is often evidence of having no morals.

Wilhelm Freytag plays a key role in the novel, the German oil man who sits at the Captain's table and is considered by Mrs. Treadwell to be "the only presentable-looking man on the boat." From a Lutheran family, he considers himself "as Christian as they come," and yet, on the contrary, he lacks charity: "He had a moral aversion to poverty, an instinctive contempt and distrust of the swarming poor spawned like maggots in filth, befouling the air around them. Yet, he thought, moving on with a reluctant tinge of pity, they are necessary, they have their place, what would we do without them?" He is an exceptional German because he married a Jewish girl "against terrible opposition from both families." His virtuous wife Mary offsets the mostly negative portrayal of Lowenthal and his tolerant Jewish mother-in-law even more so, contradicting the stereotype of Jewish mothers as overbearing—"bless her! he thought with gratitude, what

a good heart. And he remembered they had all three begun to be proud of themselves and each other for being able to throw off stupid prejudices."

Part I of the novel ends hopefully with the account of true love between a Gentile and a Jew, balanced by the realistic perspectives on love of Jenny and Elsa Lutz, and contrasted to the violent relations among the Spanish dancers. While in their cabin the two young women overhear a vicious verbal fight outside between two of the Spanish dancing troupe, the prostitute Concha and her pimp Manolo. "Concha did not for a moment question Maolo's right to the money if she had it to give… Their voices joined again and crashed like breaking crockery, then stopped dead to the sound of a ringing slap." Elsa says "I don't understand a woman who lets a man treat her like that," but Jenny, who lets David abuse her emotionally, yawns and accepts the physical abuse of a man by a woman as their business.

Elsa confesses, "My father, all my life, told me to believe in love, and to be loving, and it would make me happy; but my mother says it is all just make-believe…. It seems to me that my father knows more." Jenny says "he probably does," apparently siding with the father's belief in love, whereas Elsa goes on, "I am afraid I am like my mother… She never has laughed at a single one of my father's jokes, and yet he will keep making them…. I think there must be something wrong with me or the boys would ask me to dance." Her father clearly loves her mother, for when she refuses to dance with him, instead of dancing with some other woman, he dances with a broom, an image by which the author suggests that the mother is something of a witch in her lack of charity toward her husband.

Elsa's mother is cynical: "She thinks love is all nonsense, but she wants me to get married. She says it is what women are expected to do." She is opposed to two of Porter's most affirmative themes: (1) true love is an ideal sometimes attained and (2) women should have independent minds. Jenny is sympathetic with Elsa but "What hope was there for the discouraged young face with its double chin, the crease of fat like a goiter at the base of the throat, the oily skin, the faded gray eyes without the light of spirit, the dull thick hair, the heavy haunches, the gross ankles…no sparkle, no lift at all in that solid mound of not very appetizing flesh." Jenny sees Elsa realistically but gives her hope anyway and encourages her to get married like her mother: "This time, I feel your mother is right. Let me tell you I never knew a girl who wanted to marry who didn't get married, sooner or later." But Elsa is realistic too: "'Oh, I have,' said Elsa, rejecting the half-truth and the pity it offered with bitter pride and honesty." She worries that she may never fall in love and that no one will fall in love with her. Ironically, at the end of Part I both young women, although very different, are worried about the same possibility.

Dancing is a metaphor of relationship in the novel. Jenny is a good dancer but not good at love. Elsa is a beggar for love and by refusing to learn how to dance she is like the beggar for charity at the opening of the novel who maims himself. Since she is rich she may attain her goal of marriage anyway, but since she is like her mother and will not laugh at her husband's jokes or dance with him, she lacks charity. Her husband will probably dance with someone else, and lacking charity Elsa may turn into a witch like her mother. Charity and love are Christian values affirmed in response to all the prevailing evils revealed in Part I. Contrary to the critics who found no love in the entire novel, at least eleven of Porter's characters express true love: Herr Graf, the woodcarver, the young bride and groom, Dr. Schumann, Frau Schmitt, Herr Baumgartner, Frau Hutten, Herr Freytag and his Jewish wife, and Herr Lutz.

Part II

High Sea

No House, no Home…

Song by Brahms

Part II adds *faith* to *charity* and *love* as the major affirmative themes of the novel, the Christian answer to the epigraph from Baudelaire, "When do you sail for happiness?" Those three are the increasingly scarce qualities of character essential to happiness. Introducing the theme of faith, Part II begins with religious allegory contrasting Evil and Good.

Popular culture is a source of demonic evil worldwide and is embodied in Ric and Rac, the twins who named themselves after cartoon dogs that "made fools of even the cleverest human beings in every situation, made life a raging curse for everyone near them, got their own way invariably by a wicked trick, and always escaped without a blow." The twins are "twined together," both genders equally implicated in evil. They spill black ink on a carpet, toss a pillow overboard, and throw a sandal down onto the steerage deck that hits a woman holding a baby. A young officer pushes them away with a threat, "If you do such things again you will be locked up for the rest of the voyage." But they are never stopped or locked up and evil runs wild. The most allegorical moment is when "They almost collided with the dying man in the wheel chair being pushed along like a baby in a carriage by the tall angry-looking boy… They dodged around him, putting out their tongues."

The evil twins torment the poor in steerage, whereas the dying man in the wheel chair stops to look down upon them with "pity in his face in the presence of so much misery." He identifies with them, speaking to his hateful attendant, his own nephew and heir who wants him to die: "We must all earn the blessing of death at a great price, Johann." Unlike the complacent priests, he loves these poor souls: "The dying man spread one hand out in the direction of the steerage in a gesture of blessing. 'God, heal them, give them health and virtue and joy….'" Unlike the Germans on the upper deck, he does not recoil from the poor in disgust and suggest they are diseased and should be exterminated, Graf wants to join them: "If only I could touch them, Johann… You must help me down there among them, to touch some of those sick; they must be eased, it is not right to let them suffer." This is what Jesus did. Graf is the only character who wants to go down and minister spiritually to the poor and touch and comfort them. Some perverse critics of *Ship of Fools* inferred that the Christ-evoking figure wants to molest women. Unlike the other passengers who hold grudges and take revenge, Graf is also Christlike toward his attendant who hates and abuses him: "I forgive you, nephew Johann, I forgive you your hard heart and evil will."

Atheist critics are so prejudiced against God they are uncharitable to believers, even as characters in fiction. They do not see the spiritual in the universe or in a novel. The critic Darlene Unrue, for example, sees the Christ-evoking healer, the embodiment of pure religious faith, Herr Graf, as a "sexually repressed sadist and a religious fanatic" with "perverted piety"! She identifies herself in effect with his evil nephew Johann who wants him to die. She acknowledges that Herr Graf has the same last name as one of Porter's favorite artists, the religious Renaissance painter Urs Graf, but she claims he is the moral opposite. Like atheist screenwriters in Hollywood, she inverts the truth and slanders Christianity. It is not enough that she turns Graf into a "religious fanatic" just because he is intensely religious, she must turn the poor dying man into a "sexually repressed sadist." On the contrary, Johann is the sadist. The old faith healer is the exemplar in the moral allegory. All the other characters are implicitly measured against his example of charity and divine love—the example of Jesus. The corrupted nephew Johann urges his uncle to "die and let me go home." In Christianity, the ultimate Home is Heaven. The epigraph to Part II from a song by Brahms suggests that we must enter the House of God in order to go Home.

The opposition of Good and Evil is so obvious at the beginning of Part II it is astonishing that academics who presumably have been trained to analyze novels could possibly miss it, let alone miss the goodness of the dying old man. Perhaps if Porter had described Ric and Rac as having horns on their heads and the old man as having a halo over his, the Postmodern critics, lacking a moral sense, would see the intended moral allegory. But they do not want to see it because their academic careers depend upon their being Politically Correct secularists who avoid God. They are like the young bride who is frightened by the old man when he tries to touch her because she is afraid of death. Her groom persuades her that the old man was not trying to molest but only to bless her. Academic liberals are afraid to touch the subject of God in fear that they might be suspected of religious faith. Consequently Postmodernist analyses of classics are superficial and often grotesquely false, throwing the truth overboard like Ric and Rac. David is a Postmodernist liberal in rejecting God, spirit, virtue, and love.

The old man repeats his forgiveness of his evil nephew Johann, who agreed to care for his uncle on this one trip to visit his homeland before he dies, but is reneging on his promise. "I renew my promise to leave you everything in my will, though you do not deserve it, you have not merited it; for charity and kind behavior were part of your agreement." Their agreement is comparable to that made by Christ with those who want to inherit eternal life: serve Him with charity for the short time of this life. The old man is acting

like Jesus, who promises to give the sinner "everything" even though he does not deserve it. But Johann wants only money and sex—immediate gratification of his appetites. He even berates the dying man as "a beast of selfishness" for needing his help. Herr Graf finally relents: "Yes, leave me alone. God will take care of me. He will not let me suffer by your cruelty."

Herr Glocken the hunchback is another unappreciated moral exemplar. "A good-humored twinkling little man," Glocken is always courteous and cheerful, "though he "was never altogether without pain." Yet "Almost everyone avoided him. He scared people off; his plight was so obviously desperate they were afraid some of it would rub off on them." He stays out of the way while Denny the clumsy Texan scums up the communal wash basin, infuriating David, who is so intolerantly fastidious and alienated from Nature he takes offense at colors. The opposite male types Denny and David compete without charity, alike in their misogynist arrogance. Lusting after the dancer Pastora, Denny wants to "get her cut out from the herd" like a cow, while David is proud of having stifled Jenny as a painter: "Little by little he had succeeded in undermining her confidence"; "He did not believe in her talent for a moment"; "There had never been a really great woman painter." He deliberately hurts and frustrates her: "When she was in a loving tender mood, he felt himself beginning to grow cold and defensive, to hold her off and deny her…. She was never happy with him, and when they slept together, they quarreled."

The fat Huttens are both pathetic and laughable as they coddle seasick Bebe like a human baby and dote upon him when he vomits on the deck. Although they are both teachers, their love for their dog is so sentimental they are clearly immature themselves. Frau Hutten sees her husband as "no more than a willful child." This makes the fat professor more comical in being pedantic and pompous, his inflated manner of speaking parodied. Porter excels at dialogue that both expresses and satirizes a character. The professor postures as superior to others in knowledge of the world yet does not know himself and is frequently a fool, like so many professors today. The Spanish dancing troupe mocks and laughs at the Huttens babying their little dog, in effect encouraging Ric and Rac to throw Bebe overboard. "Their teeth were disclosed and they were making those gruesome sounds of merriment." In descriptions of the Spanish dancers Porter's images, especially teeth, are selected to evoke their animality and malice. The reader is supposed to laugh at the Huttens too, but with understanding--with charity rather than contempt. The Professor is a true German in his discipline of students and his ironic hopes: "Oh, that the whole world of men might be so orderly…so virtuous in its basic principles…making him feel he was a part of a great universal movement towards the betterment of mankind." His faith in his country is as misplaced as his comical faith in Bebe as an attack dog: "He will never fail us." When he gets seasick himself like Bebe it suggests that when he gets home and discovers how the Old Germany has changed, he may vomit.

Frau Rittersdorf was a teacher like the Huttens, "a governess with a country family in England." She believes that she speaks better English than the English—more pure--and she is also a German racial purist with a prejudice against Americans for interbreeding with "the steerage sweepings of Europe and the blacks…. In that monstrous country all the relations of life are so perverted, more especially between the sexes, it is next to impossible to judge them by any standards of true civilization." It is symbolic that she is slightly deaf and "extremely nearsighted." Her self-importance is satirized by her recording of trivia about herself in a notebook that she considers so wonderful she feels inspired to quote herself in a conceited letter to "her dearest friend": "Stupid little Sophie's head would spin as always, trying to follow her brilliant schoolmate's mind." Frau Rittersdorf sends herself flowers. That she worships herself is suggested by her "carrying the journal between her hands as though it were a prayer book." She also worships an idealized memory of her dead husband Otto, a purist like herself: "Even during the most passionate of her husband's embraces, a pure woman never permits herself an impure thought." Her belief in her own moral purity, despite her pride, racism and lack of charity even toward her dearest friend, exemplifies the attitudes of superiority prevailing in Germany that rationalized the extermination camps.

On deck sketching, Jenny is seen by Frau Rittersdorf as "one of these advanced, emancipated young women of the Bohemian world, no doubt." The romantic Jenny, enduring a "long famine of love," first sees the handsome and charming Wilhelm Freytag "through a rainbow dazzle of light." David compared her painting to "fractured rainbows." She and Freytag stroll together past some of the Spanish troupe and Jenny the romantic defines a theme in the moral allegory, underestimating evil: "They are exactly as dangerous as we allow them to be." As it turns out, the Spanish troupe is allowed to take everything it wants, just as the

Nazis would be allowed to take over Germany. Freytag tells Jenny that if America had supported Germany in World War I "the whole future of the world would have been changed for the better!" As a German nationalist, he considers his country so superior that it should rule all others. Contrary to the impression made by Jenny upon the reader and upon Frau Rittersdorf, in the company of a conservative Jenny sees herself as conservative: "I've never caught up with my generation…. My radical friends look upon me as a youthful fossil. They can pronounce 'lady' as if it were an indecent word."

Freytag speaks happily of his wife "as he always did sooner or later in any conversation." Jenny decides that "David's kind of conceit was really much worse than Freytag's kind, which had a little warmth and generosity in it: poor David! Sitting in himself like a hermit in a cave, peering out, determined not to share the parings of his nails with *any*body." She sees that Freytag is happy but she does not realize it is because he has a loving marriage. She also envies the young bride and groom, but Jenny sees marriage as a liberated American woman, projecting her own competitive spirit in relation to David: The Mexican groom "would be the intelligent one of the two, with the undisputed moral upper hand from the beginning." Both she and David are representative Americans in always trying to gain the upper hand.

At her "flinty" tone Freytag feels an "odd contraction of dislike" for Jenny, which chills and confuses her thoughts: "Maybe I shall fall in love with you, maybe I am in love with you already…and I'll fall out again as if I were falling off a cliff. I'm glad I don't know anything about you, except that you have the kind of looks I like…and that you are married and anxious for me to be sure that you love your wife…. And if I knew you better I might not like you at all—in fact I don't even like you now. And I can tell *you* now that you aren't ever going to like me—you will hate me in fact…. If we could sleep together without too much trouble and lose ourselves together for a little while, I'd be easy again, I'd be able to see better…. My man won't share with me, he wants everything to himself." If they do sleep together it is clear that Jenny will be using this man for therapy, as she has used others, not much different than the men using prostitutes, but free and easy. Instead she offends Freytag and returns again to being a liberal, to thoughts of David, "enslaved as she was to her notions of what life *should* be, her wish to shape, to direct, to make of it what she wished it to be…. It was very hard to admit to herself that she was a fool." She realizes that she is allowing David to shape, direct, and make of her what *he* wished her to be. Her drawings are no good. "All her feeling had gone into self-indulgence, self-pity… In self-defense she abandoned herself to fury and hatred against David."

Looking the wrong way, the liberated woman Lizzi Spockenkieker runs "full tilt into Captain Thiele," the patriarchal authority who steers and governs the ship. She seems to be running wild, somewhat like Ric and Rac, offending the Captain. "His face was that of a pompous minor god: a god who had grown somewhat petulant and more than a little mean in his efforts to maintain his authority." The collision symbolizes the careless romantic excess of the liberated woman in relation to the Patriarchy: "Lizzi almost overturned him in her *career*, slipped, and would have fallen if the Captain had not braced himself… He threw an arm about her stiffly…and Lizzi, blushing, whinnying, cackling, scrambling, embraced him around the neck wildly as if she were drowning." [italics added] Dependent on the Patriarchy to keep from falling on her face, she makes a fool of herself. "The Captain glared at her bitterly," accepts her apology and "moved on majestically annoyed."

In this mood the Captain passes Herr Lowenthal, who salutes him respectfully, but the Captain "looked straight through him. Lowenthal, thinking himself snubbed, was cut to the marrow, his heart broke, the very nerves of his back teeth began to ache, and this state went on for hours…. He retired into the dark and airless ghetto of his soul… The inspired core of his being began to search for its ancient justification and its means of revenge. But it should be slow and secret." In contrast, the Nazi revenge against the Jews was horribly rapid and public. In one small incident Porter evokes the vulnerability and suffering of the Jewish people, and the reflexive desire of many for revenge. It is ironic that in this incident, the Captain did not intend to insult Lowenthal, but it is natural that the Jew inferred that the insult was intended. Moreover, the Captain delivers a greater insult when he dismisses Freytag from his table for having a Jewish wife. To his credit, Lowenthal is cheered up by the approach of another Gentile, the American Herr Denny. The reader has already been exposed to the ugly racist thoughts of Denny, but Lowenthal is not prejudiced here and accepts Denny as a man who seems "perfectly friendly and harmless."

The conversation between Lowenthal and Denny satirizes both of them and all mankind for uncharitable prejudices. The American is impressed by the Jewish businessman's cosmopolitanism and knowledge of the world, but the reader may become uncomfortable at the cynicism of Lowenthal's sole motive for selling religious articles to Catholics: "There's money in it." Denny confesses that he despises Catholics and their common prejudice bonds them, briefly. "With relief he seized upon this common sympathy between them, and they spent a profitable few minutes putting the Catholic Church in its place." Jewish prejudice is paralleled to prejudice against Jews: "He remembered his revered grandmother's exact words: "The dirty cannibal Goyim—they even eat their own brothers—the pigs! Then they turn into pigs when they die and eat little Jewish boys!" Their "common prejudice" implies that in his own way, Lowenthal can be just as ugly as Denny, who frowns, "I think that one religion outghtn't to make fun of another. I don't believe in any of them so I can say what I please." This is a form of Political Correctness: You shouldn't say that, but I can say whatever I please. It is ironic that Denny, an atheist hypocrite with more prejudices than any other character on board, should speak out against prejudice. Despite his disappointments, Lowenthal is still hoping to socialize and be friendly with Gentiles.

Common prejudice based on race is juxtaposed to common prejudice based on gender, continuing the theme of charity. Although she has always uncharitably refused to dance with her husband, Frau Lutz advises her daughter Elsa to dance with "nice men.": "There was no harm in a little modest dancing with a good partner." Her judgment is comical: "Herr Hansen is a man I would trust. He is the kind of man a girl may depend upon to be a gentleman in whatever circumstances." But Elsa tells her that she saw Herr Hansen giving money to the prostitute Amparo. Her mother is shocked, apparently not by the prostitution or even by the true character of Hansen, but by her daughter's exposure to reality: "You are not supposed to see such things!" Elsa droops: "The prospect of following Amparo in Herr Hansen's affections somehow was not attractive." Porter is great at comical understatement. Here poor Elsa suggests to the reader the thought of the horny Swede turning for pleasure from the alluring sex professional, the hot Spanish dancer, to the cold unattractive virgin wallflower who cannot even dance. Her mother thinks that all her daughter needs is some face powder. Over morning beers she tries to interest Hansen in Elsa, but "Hansen glanced at [Elsa] briefly as if she were an inanimate object of no interest whatever, and away."

Instead, over their beers Hansen talks business with Elsa's father. "Elsa, discouraged, was sure that Hansen did not talk about the butter business to Amparo." She rationalizes that "She was glad she did not like him, never had; she did not want him to like her, either, yet she was deeply wounded by his neglect… He was too old, anyway—at least twenty-eight." Instead she is attracted to the tall young Cuban student "who went leaping madly around the deck at the head of the line" of students singing a song of revolution. "His glance had shot like arrows into her eyes and he had gone on leaping and singing. That was the one for her." He comes into the bar like Ric celebrating the symbol of revolution, the "mystical cockroach"—*'La cucaracha, la cucaracha,'* chorused the others, as instinctively malicious as monkeys." They identify the cockroach with a prisoner on board who turns out to be La Condesa. The judgment of men by the inexperienced romantic girl is even worse than the judgment by her conventional mother, both of whom are misled by appearances and superficial characteristics.

Seating at the Captain's table is symbolic, with Dr. Schumann opposite the Captain, "turning his water glass about absently." As if he would rather be absent. Both men are bound by decorum in their different roles and rise to their feet when the *ladies* approach. Ironically, the liberated *woman* Lizzi Spockenkieker is the first to accept the conventional homage, though she rejects a traditional female role and does not follow convention herself. She flirts with the Captain, "eyeing him with a coy intimacy," then she speaks to him "indiscreetly." As is politically apt, Lizzi is seated on the *left* of the Captain, whereas the conservative Frau Rittersdorf is seated on his *right*. Noting her gauche impropriety, "Frau Rittersdorf gave Lizzi a guarded look of warning and social censure." Lizzi is in the ladies' garment business and Herr Rieber publishes a ladies' garment trade magazine, so they have much in common. They cavort but never consummate. They compete at everything and play vicious games of ping-pong. "It was a matter of life and death to win." She tosses her head "like an unmanageable mare" and when she loses, "she cracked the triumphant Herr Rieber over his bald head with her little paddle."

Fat Professor Hutten delivers a pedantic lecture on mathematics and all seated at the Captain's table welcome the interruption when handsome Wilhelm Freytag "was heard again as usual to refuse the

delicious Westphalia ham as appetizer." It is Lizzi who urges him to try some pork. When Freytag admits that he never eats pork at all, "Frau Rittersdorf exchanged a lifted eyebrow first with the Captain, then with Frau Hutten, then with Herr Rieber, and her fleeting thought was returned to her in the quick gleam of their eyes from all three." Is Herr Freytag a Jew? Herr Rieber remarks, "Aha! Observing the dietary laws, I suppose." Everybody takes it as a joke and they laugh.

The mysterious La Condesa enters the dining room and "Everybody in the room turned to stare at her." She represents the defeated aristocracy and is seen from various perspectives. David confesses to Jenny that he has a Marxist bias against the rich: "I'm so blinded with prejudice against people who can afford to buy pearls." The Cuban students who treat La Condesa with respect were victimized when the revolutionaries got the University of Cuba shut down, forcing them to study abroad. Although they act like revolutionaries themselves they actually are upper-class adolescents who use La Condesa for entertainment. The Captain says "I was told she is a dangerous revolutionist, an international spy… My own opinion is, she is one of these idle rich great ladies who like excitement, who get into mischief and make more mischief without in the least understanding what they do—this is always true of women in politics of any kind!" The Captain reinforces his role as patriarchal authority in all three coinciding allegories in the novel by condemning all rebellion, presumably including that by the liberated Lizzi sitting to his left: "It is all disorder of the most senseless kind, naturally, and should have been suppressed long ago without hesitation and with every necessary severity"—with bombs, tanks, extermination camps, and gas chambers. "As for revolutionaries, they are a species of animal." Such people as the Captain considered Jews threats to "pure Germans" and depicted them as rats in Nazi propaganda hate films.

Dr. Schumann is set apart by his profession and by his heart condition. Everything he does is dramatic because "He had a very ordinary kind of heart trouble and might drop dead at any moment." He has an authority of his own as the ship's doctor, but he is soft, the opposite of the Captain. He is indignant when he sees that his orders concerning a patient are being disregarded but he does nothing about it. As is often true in literature, his weak heart is ironic because his moral heart is superior. He distinguishes himself when he risks his life to save a cat—an animal he disliked--showing the capacity for self-sacrifice exhibited by the woodcarver later when he jumps overboard to save a dog. Schumann joins the faith healer, the hunchback and the woodcarver as the moral exemplars of the novel because they express the most charity, the most capacity for self-sacrifice.

When Ric and Rac lift the cat to the rail and try to push it overboard, "Dr. Schumann fairly leaped forward and seized the children back from the rail." He sees the evil in their eyes "with dismay at their blind, unwinking malignance, their cold slyness—not beasts, though, but human souls." He does not reduce them to animals as the Captain would, but sentimentality, pity for their souls "loosens his hold" on them and he lets them escape. Previously an officer saw them throw a pillow overboard and threatened to lock them up. Had Dr. Schumann reported this incident to the Captain the officer would have backed up his report and the authoritarian Captain would surely have constrained Ric and Rac for the duration of the voyage, preserving the life of the woodcarver. Instead, Dr. Schumann considers whether he should have put iodine on their cat scratches.

Few characters in world literature are as complex as Dr. Schumann, whose name alludes to the famous German composer, Robert Schumann—a Romantic. As a Realist, Porter exposes the negative effects of his Romanticism and sentimentality, in particular in his relationship with La Condesa. Dr. Schumann's dueling scars are a visible sign of his identification with the Romantic Old Germany. Although he is not always right, he brings the most circumspect and active conscience of any character to bear on most of the moral issues in the novel. For example, comparing people to the cat he saved, he laments their susceptibility to seduction, people who cannot resist their "favorite hot thrill of the flesh—drink, drugs, sex, food…though it might be his own death." He sympathizes with the people in steerage, treats their wounds and delivers their babies and criticizes their treatment as a "disgrace." After the faith healer, Dr. Schumann is also the most religious character: "Dr. Schumann believed in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and the Blessed Virgin Mother of God finally, in a particularly forthright, Bavarian Catholic way." He crosses himself, holds a rosary, meditates on death and repeatedly exclaims "My God."

Dr. Schumann has an “unwilling admiration” for the beautiful La Condesa, but he observes the way she corners and apparently propositions young men “with a good deal of moral disapproval.” She scares them away. “Her gestures shocked him deeply, modest man that he was. She stroked her own breasts and thighs, patted the face of her listener, laid her hand upon his heart.” But when she shows no interest in Dr. Schumann, he assumes she thinks him too old and he is uncharitable, blaming older women in general for “innate perversity, turning back to youth for sexual satisfactions.” He overhears her talking to some of the Cuban students, identifying with the revolutionaries even though she is an aristocrat. In this as otherwise, she is self-destructive: “They were right to revolt, they were right, my children, even if they die for it, or I must die, or be in exile.” La Condesa is facing death like himself. He responds to her call for aid and finds her in bed. She tries to seduce him, like a drug: “How I love drugs, any kind of drug… I adore them all.” He confiscates as much of her ether as he can find, but injects her with another drug, then he watches her fall into sleep “as into the bottomless pit” of Hell. She seems “devil-possessed.”

Like the uncharitable Frau Lutz, whose husband had to dance with a broom, and like her daughter Elsa, David “did not dance, and he had a not-heavenly name for dancing, a byword of contempt which offended Jenny, who had danced a distance perhaps twice around the globe.” Dancing makes her happy. Unlike the loving Herr Lutz, Jenny does not dance with a broom but with the handsome Wilhelm Freytag. The proud David feels that sexual jealousy is beneath him, but does feel “that familiar hot wave of repulsion against Jenny’s lack of discrimination.” His sexual jealousy is displaced by his conceit. His attitude of superiority is self-destructive, just as Elsa’s attitude of inferiority is self-destructive. He wants an ideal love such as he sees in the Mexican bride and groom, but he is too selfish to be loving—he won’t even dance with Jenny. David is comparable again to his cabin mate Denny, who wants sex with one of the Spanish dancers but “He would not buy them drinks, he would not come to any terms with them—he wanted his pleasures for nothing.” The Spanish girls flip their petticoats from the back at him, they had so low an opinion of him. They also plan to pick his pockets.

The handsome Wilhelm Freytag in effect comments on the novel in which he is a character as if he were one of its negative critics: “You might learn something about one or two persons, if you took time and trouble, but there was not time enough and it was not worth the trouble; not even that American girl Jenny Brown was interesting enough to try to know better.” Porter took the trouble for 20 years to portray over 40 different persons in detail. Like some of her negative critics, Freytag is a snob. “What he preferred from strangers was a friendly indifference, a superficial pleasantness.” He loves his Jewish wife, but even their happy marriage is sometimes sustained by a “superficial pleasantness.” Ironically, he himself expresses the prejudice of a Gentile: “it was the Jews who drew the line and refused associations and friendship.” Seeking friendship, the lonely Lowenthal is even willing to tolerate Denny. Freytag resembles Lowenthal in his alienation and feeling of persecution, and when he says “The whole world had been for him merely a hunting ground, a foraging place, a territory of profitable sojourn until the day should come when he would go home for good, never having been away in his soul.” Also ironically, Freytag expresses the same attitudes that are causing his exile--the persecution of Jews in Germany--when in his mind he says to his wife, “You are no longer a Jew, but the wife of a German; our children’s blood will flow as pure as mine, your tainted stream will be cleansed in their German veins.”

Freytag has breakfast with Mrs. Treadwell, whose thoughts are a “warm bath of self-pity” as she recalls, “my husband preferred sleeping with any chance slut than with me, though I tried hard to be slut enough to please him.” This explains her later painting her face like a harlot. When Freytag lets it slip that his wife is Jewish, Mrs. Treadwell sympathizes with their having to leave Germany. But then she agrees when he says “I should never say anything about it.” If more people had said more about it, public opinion might have shifted and the number of Nazi atrocities might have been reduced. The issue creates a tension between them and “Mrs. Treadwell moved away again, from the threat of human nearness, of feeling.” She dreads empathy, the beginning of love. She does not want to “identify herself with the other, take on his griefs and wrongs, and if it came to that, feel finally guilty as if she herself had caused them; yes, and he would believe it too, and blame her freely.” The timid Mrs. Treadwell may be multiplied by the millions to explain why more people did not speak out against anti-Semitism. Ironically, she is the one who speaks out too much when unintentionally she gets Freytag dismissed from the Captain’s table.

David is always closing the door on Jenny emotionally, but after he gets drunk and pushes between her and Freytag while they are dancing she slams her cabin door on him. Elsa Lutz thinks this is love: "I think it must be divine to have a man so much in love with you. It seems to me so sad that you must shut him out." Ironies such as these sparkle throughout the novel. Jenny is having nightmares that recall a scene she witnessed from a bus in Mexico, an Indian man and woman embracing while they fight to the death with knife and stone. Their faces turn into David and herself, killing each other. Rather than the hyperbole of nightmare, Feminist critics have seen this as a paradigm of relations between the sexes, and perhaps it is—with respect to Feminists. No other couple in this novel is fighting to the death. Even David and Jenny will break up before they care enough to kill each other. "We aren't going to kill each other because I mean to get away before that happens"; "She was going to separate from him at the dock in Bremerhaven, and go straight to Paris."

What David and Jenny are killing is their infatuation with each other and their romantic notion of sexual relationship. "They had agreed in the beginning not to marry because they must be free, marriage was a bond cramping and humiliating to civilized beings: yet what was this tie between them but marriage, and marriage of the worst sort, with all the restraints and jealousies and burdens, but with none of its dignity, none of its warmth and protection, no honest acknowledgment of faith and intention." David wants to be free but "he lived like a willful prisoner within himself." He is so threatened by Jenny's independence and limited talent that "He sulked when she was painting and could not do his own work." She confesses, "'Good heavens, David, of course there were men…. None of it meant anything at all, David darling,' she assured him over and over with earnest innocence, 'nothing lasted. It was just for the excitement, David. It wasn't love'." Therefore he distrusts her: "It should have been love, it was a disgrace to her that it was not love; and, he told himself with bitterness, it isn't love again, I expect…. If we go on together, she is going to be unfaithful to me, she is going to have 'affairs' as she did before."

At the Mass given by Father Garza, the complacent priest is content with ritual. To him the morals of the Spanish dancers posing as Christians are irrelevant unless they come to Confession. In contrast, the little widow Frau Schmitt is a sincere Catholic. She finds the fake Christians "repellent" because they are "swarthy," but she also detects the "spirit of evil in them that would not let each other be in peace. One man's desire must always crowd out another's, one must always take his own good at another's expense. Or so it seemed. God forgive us all." Simple though she is, Frau Schmitt defines the Spanish dancers as the spirit of evil in the moral allegory of the novel.

Herr Lowenthal, a religious man who says his morning prayers, is stuck in a cabin with Herr Rieber the anti-Semite. Rieber sweeps Lowenthal's toilet articles off the shelf onto the floor and pushes his belongings out of his way like trash, behaving as if the cabin is all his. He grunts rather than speak to Lowenthal and is a pig in every way. Rieber has reduced his humanity so much he has become a virtual cartoon of a human being. Among the Seven Deadly Sins he is Greed. He even removes Lowenthal's pajamas from the locker and drops them on the floor. "And all this, mind you, in the most confident insolence, as if he knew he could dare venture to any lengths without fear of consequence." Because his victim is a Jew. The Nazis set up their program of mass extermination because they knew they could get away with it. Lowenthal begins to think of Rieber as "that fabulous German household sprite of mischief, the poltergeist. No poltergeist could have been more persistent in malice." Like Ric and Rac, Rieber is identified with the demonic. Lowenthal rightly anticipates more evil to come from the racist Rieber. As a publisher, Rieber might well become a Nazi propagandist under Goebbels. In becoming so disgusted by all Gentiles that he spits at the Mass in progress, Lowenthal descends to the level of the Nazis becoming disgusted by all Jews. When the wind blows his spit back into his face, Lowenthal takes it as a sign and repents to God "with true piety." The Nazis tried at Nuremberg were not repentant.

This is a Sunday, but the catty Frau Rittersdorf does not attend any religious service nor read the Bible. Instead she records prejudiced observations in her notebook of trivia. She is uncharitable especially toward the unattractive young Americans. As to Jenny, "I should think she might have encountered difficulties in losing her virtue at any age." Frau Rittersdorf is offended by the sight of Lizzi the liberated woman and Rieber the pig scuffling near the rail. Lizzi is "pretending to tie a bow under Herr Rieber's chin, but she was really drawing the noose about his windpipe until he clutched for air and his beaming smile almost disappeared in a blue cloud of distended veins." Porter is satirizing the predicament of the Feminist in the

business world who for professional reasons must try to ingratiate herself, to an extent seduce, a pig she despises. This recalls the predicament of Laura in "Flowering Judas" who cannot allow herself to be seduced by the pig Braggioni even to save Eugenio and the other prisoners. Frau Rittersdorf disapproves of the "amorous persecutions" of Rieber by Lizzi, but "A positive thrill of sensual excitement ran through Frau Rittersdorf's frame as she tried to imagine what would have happened if ever she had, no matter how playfully, attempted to strangle" her dead husband.

The fat Frau Hutten suggests to Frau Rittersdorf that Lizzi and Rieber "may be a match." The notion of a love match between those two is hilarious, but they are a moral match—they are counterparts. The scenes of their competitive foreplay to failure are among the funniest in the novel, which ranges in tone from farce to tragedy. Frau Rittersdorf is a "true woman" in denigrating Lizzi for being a "woman of business"—a divorced woman who had kept her maiden name. "No wonder she no longer has a husband." The fat Frau Hutten is even more traditional than Frau Rittersdorf: "For me, I lived only to please my husband." She is proud of not having to work, whereas little Frau Schmitt is defensive about having to work because of her husband's poor health. She is moved to tears recalling her dead husband. Passing the old faith healer in the wheel chair, she is frightened by the intense look in his eyes. He sees her distress and takes hold of her sleeve, "'Are you in pain, my child?' he asked her. 'Let me help you. Come, walk with me and tell me your trouble." But Frau Schmitt declines, "You are very kind." He explains, "It is God who is kind through me, his instrument, his servant,' said the sick man. 'I, Wilibald Graf, can heal your sorrows by His grace if only you will believe…'" As a Catholic, Frau Schmitt is offended by his "blasphemous proposal." Frau Schmitt is uncharitable toward the faith healer and when she in turn unintentionally offends the Baumgartners, they are uncharitable to her, leaving her to lament, ironically, "How difficult it is to be good, innocent, friendly, simple, in a world where no one seems to understand or sympathize with another; it seemed all too often that no one really wished even to try to be a little charitable."

The riot in the steerage prompts the authoritarian Captain Thiele to declare that "if there was any more disturbance among that riffraff, for any cause, he would lay the troublemakers in irons for the rest of the voyage. He loved to see his small brig occupied." His class prejudice and the indulgence of his officers and the ship's doctor blind the Captain to the troublemaking by Ric and Rac and the whole Spanish troupe on the upper deck, until it is too late to stop it. The riot over religion down below, atheists against Christians, also divides the observers. The wary hunchback, who knows street people from his career operating a city newstand, suggests that if their grievances are not settled, "they'll be up here cutting all our throats." The wealthy Frau Lutz is so out of touch she thinks it was probably "a food riot," projecting her own complaint about the ship's food. The affluent oilman Freytag sees the violence as entertainment: "So they are fighting down there already? Good." Keep the rabble fighting among themselves. On the other hand, in the bar Arne Hansen the Socialist Swede, who supposedly identifies with poor workers, expresses his contempt for their religion in a "booming intolerant voice." By implication his intolerance of religion extends to religious Jews, and he unwittingly predicts the Nazi extermination program: "When they are all starving, in rags, shipped like cattle only not with such good care."

The angry Swede protests that the Captain has said that the fat man in the red shirt, the Communist agitator, will be put in irons for his opinions—rather than for inciting a riot. The purser corrects him: "The Captain has said only if the fat man makes more trouble he will." David claims superiority to both sides: "All the claims are just prejudice against prejudice; blind feeling fighting for the upper hand…. People love the right to hate each other with moral sanctions." His characterization of people who believe in God is bigotry, but his last point does apply to many of the characters in the novel, especially those of the German upper class like Rieber and Rittersdorf, but also to David himself. In fact the worst people on board are those with no religion and among the best are the most religious—Herr Graf and Dr. Schumann. Hansen reduces all religion to mere politics, like atheists today. Jenny takes a liking to Freytag when he disagrees with David and Hansen: "On one side at least I like to think it was something better than politics." Herr Baumgartner speaks up for "the power of true religion," but when he is challenged: "Which true religion?" he proves to be a sentimental liberal: "They are all true." His moral relativism produces a "tiny prolonged scream" from his wife: *"how can you say such a thing?"* Herr Baumgartner is prone to laxity because he is a "hopeless drunkard" and to relativism because he is a lawyer.

Jenny identifies herself as an American liberal when she says to Freytag, “I think if the fat man is in the brig we ought to picket the Captain and carry banners and make a big day of it.” She wants to feel good and have fun. As a liberal (1) she wants to protest what has not happened but does nothing about real evil, as when she witnesses the Spanish dancers looting shops; (2) she does not know the facts; and (3) she takes sides with the Communist, as liberals have been doing since the 1930s, especially among bohemians like Jenny and in universities and Hollywood. The liberal Jenny’s attraction to the conservative Freytag grows more ironic the more we see his thoughts: “Marriage tacitly gave to a man the legal right to abuse his wife up to a certain point…. A woman who allowed a man to mistreat her when he had no legal right to do so was a fool, or worse.” When she learns that the Communist is not in the brig, Jenny thinks it’s a shame “No injustice has been done.” Jenny is such a shallow liberal she thinks that “Nothing was incurable, not even human nature.” Freytag sees evil in the depths of everyone, whereas Jenny is content to remain on “the top surface.” She loves to join strikes, had picketed dozens of times, and she had been in jail several times, and really, it was just a lark!” She had never joined any “working women, really on strike.” Freytag thinks she sounds full of “childish nonsense” and he “could not take her seriously.”

Jenny is a Romantic liberal and Freytag has double standards. Although he loves his Jewish wife Mary, he acts as if having an affair is a husband’s privilege. Jenny reminds him of “half a dozen” other young women in his past who were enchanting, briefly. “It was always true love and it was always going to last forever.” Jenny likewise is open to an affair even though she thinks she loves David. Attracted by surfaces, Jenny “enjoyed Freytag’s good looks… Every man she had ever liked except David has been beautiful and vain as the devil. It had been her ruin, she decided, this weakness for handsome men.” Freytag is satirized for contemplating an affair with Jenny while telling her “he believed love was based on faith, complete loyalty its first attribute…. Any smallest betrayal of the loved one…was total betrayal… To be unfaithful even once was never to have been faithful at all.” No, says the liberal Jenny. “To be unfaithful once is to be unfaithful once, and you can be repentant and get back in the fold.” Freytag agrees that “men’s techniques of having it both ways had a comic side.” As he seduces her, “Jenny listened as if hypnotized. The dreamy voice was…a song her own wishful deluded heart sang to itself.” Then suddenly she awakens to what is “sentimental and false” in Freytag’s words and in herself and she turns cynical. “’I think it is a booby trap,’ she said, with a violence that made her shake all over. ‘I hate it and I always did. It makes such filthy liars of everybody. But I keep falling into it just the same’.”

Jenny repeatedly anticipates the end of her relationship with David: “David hates love worse than I do, even.” But she will pay a price: “I’ll be carrying David like a petrified fetus for the rest of my life.” Freytag thinks “She might have been lovely before she was maimed and perverted by her disordered life, her false notions of love and reckless waste of her womanly substance.” He has known girls like her before and their “lack of scruples had freed him from any sense of obligation to them.” He reaffirms to himself his true love of his wife Mary, then rationalizes yielding to his lust and leers at one of the Spanish dancers. “The first sign of returning sanity was that he damned Jenny freely for a teasing bitch.” Yet “he was certain that he was by nature the most singlehearted and faithful of men.” He vows to write Mary a long letter. After their encounter, Jenny feels “empty and sick” and Freytag feels guilty. In their self-indulgent sexual interplay both of them display a lack of (1) charity, (2) love, and (3) faith—the qualities essential to happiness and the major affirmative themes implicit throughout the novel.

Captain Thiele the authoritarian is the antithesis of charity, love and faith. He is a hypocrite who regards Christianity as an instrument of social control and does not practice it himself. “He had received the deported workers as so many head of cattle,” like the commandants of Nazi extermination camps. When one of the conservative priests warns him about “subversive elements” down in the steerage, the Captain disregards him because “He loathed Catholics on principle” and he sees no “human meaning or importance in the doings of the rabble in the steerage.” But then he begins to fear an uprising from below. He has “a riotous, violent imagination which now took possession of him.” He envisions a revolution “with lifeboats being lowered away into the heaving sea, himself still on the bridge somehow in full command of the situation, and completely calm.” Hastily overreacting—in reality not calm at all--he orders that all weapons “however insignificant” be confiscated from the steerage passengers. Symbolically, his overreaction to suppress a perceived threat to his authority gives him “gas pains,” a subtle prefiguration of Nazi gas chambers. “As Captain, he belonged to a larger plan.”

Little Frau Schmitt is the opposite of the Captain in her compassion for the people in steerage, weeping for a man below her who is crying. He is the woodcarver, crying because his knife has been confiscated. “Gone then for good were the hopes of that poor man, gone his happy occupation and his little knife, and so he cried, he cried like a baby.” Feeling superior as a European, however, Frau Schmitt has no charity for Americans at all: “They worship primitive things because they cannot understand better. They are corrupted by the Negro, of course.” The Captain is angered by pleas from the women to return the knife to the poor woodcarver, giving Frau Schmitt “a truly awful glare.” The sadistic Frau Rittersdorf enjoys her humiliation with a smile “just like a cat’s.” The Captain incarnates patriarchal prejudice against women in general—“their unbalanced female emotions, their shallow unteachable minds, their hopeless credulity, their natural propensity to rebellion against all efforts of men to bring order and to preserve rule in life.” The irony here is that self-righteous German males like himself were about to “bring order” by blitzkrieg, saturation bombing and mass extermination. Porter’s “feminism” is understated and egalitarian, in contrast to the many Feminists in Germany much like Lizzi who belonged to the Nazi Party.

God is the only true authority according to the old faith healer, whose relationship with his nephew Johann is an allegory of religious faith persecuted and dying in the modern world. Johann is the young generation who stands to inherit spiritual truths symbolized by money, as in Hawthorne and in Puritan tradition, but Johann does not believe in spiritual truths and is only interested in literal money. “His soul was sicker than any flesh could be.” The old man refuses to give him his inheritance prematurely, just as God does not grant eternal life prematurely: “I will not nourish your lusts and appetites.” Johann calls his uncle a “miserly old Jew” and continues to hate and humiliate him. That Herr Graf does not threaten to change his will in response to Johann’s abuse is evidence of his moral integrity. Atheist critics have implied that he is stupid, even insane, by calling him a “fanatic,” but Herr Graf was a teacher of philosophy who lectured before learned societies until he was “newly born” upon hearing the voice of God tell him to “go among the sick and touch them and counsel them and heal them in God’s name.” This is the same instruction followed by the first Apostles of Christ. “All his false wisdom had dropped away from him like soiled, outworn rags.” His spiritual rebirth is implied by the repeated comparisons of him to a baby and the tone of his recollections is authentic. Like Jesus, he has healed mostly the poor. “Oh, there were many.” Nothing in the novel hints that Herr Graf is anything but a true faith healer. He and the woodcarver are Christ-evoking figures in the moral/religious allegory.

Little Frau Schmitt was foolish to become so dependent on her husband that his death leaves her feeling almost helpless. Although she is a Catholic, it does not occur to her to talk to one of the priests on board, perhaps because she knows his perfunctory attention would be unsatisfying: “Where could she turn, to whom could she speak…?” Instead of a priest, she approaches Dr. Schumann, for he “reassured her sense of all that was right, good, and appropriate in every way.” Like her husband he has a noble dueling scar “she could have worshipped,” a romantic German symbol of courage. They are disturbed by the raucous Cuban medical students wildly escorting La Condesa and Dr. Schumann laments “the malignance of the young”—epitomized by Johann and by Ric and Rac. “We hear a great deal, do we not? spoken against the middle-aged, and too much of it is true—about our growing faults of sloth, of selfishness, of complacency, of despair.” Porter illustrates his points throughout *Ship of Fools*. Dr. Schumann continues, “They sin and they do not even know it; or they know it and they glory in it. They are shameless, cruel, and proud…they love themselves with a passion.” Frau Schmitt notices the way the doctor’s gaze follows La Condesa and is disillusioned when she intuits his own imperfection: “What a pity such a good man should fall in love with such a woman. And at his age too, and married.”

The protective love of Dr. Schumann for the decadent La Condesa is counterpointed to the antics of “the rather comic pair, the scrawny Lizzi and the little fat Herr Rieber.” The evil children Ric and Rac find the two childish adults huddled together on the deck “fighting, laughing, wrestling. He was trying to play with her knees, and she was pulling down her skirts with one hand and pushing feebly at him with the other… The bony girl broke away and shoved the fat man almost over on his back. The front of her blouse was open almost to the belt and the children remarked with distaste that there was really nothing to see.” The piglike Rieber “bounded here and there after them, aiming blows which landed in air.” Finally he yields to their extortion and gives them each a peso and “Ric snatched them both,” just as the adult Spanish pimps take away the earnings of their prostitutes. Ric and Rac crawl into a lifeboat and fight over the money with a sadism and masochism that also imitate the adults in their family: “The pain they inflicted on each other

had a strong undertow of pleasure." At the least, competition between genders is inherent. "Locked in what seemed to be a death grapple," the two wild children prefigure the Indian man and woman fighting to the death that Jenny later recalls seeing out a bus window in Mexico. A young officer catches the twins in the lifeboat engaged in "unspeakable" acts but decides "they were no worse than their elders. Let them do as they pleased. He loosed them as if he were throwing off vipers."

La Condesa is always indulgent, seeing Ric and Rac as "only perfectly natural little animals before they are brought under the whip." She confesses that she herself "was never innocent." Dr. Schumann confesses that "At the age of five I seduced my little girl cousin aged three, and at six I was in turn seduced by a little girl playmate age nine." He was so susceptible to seduction "I could be kissed into anything." Yet he does believe in sin and moral law, whereas La Condesa believes in pleasure. "'I had all the joys of sinning as you call it, without guilt,' she said, with a certain complacency." She "slipped her fingers between his." When she kisses him twice on the forehead he "looked very pleased," but he has never been unfaithful to his wife. He has an "unsteady heart" and tries to break free of temptation but the desperate woman steps before him and "he saw that her eyes were wild and inhuman as a monkey's." He is too indulgent himself to refuse her plea for a drug to help her sleep. "His personal feelings for her had intervened." He resolves that she "must be treated like a hysterical woman with no control over her own acts…. He intended to be merciful and consign her to a narcotic limbo, which was, after all, her notion of Paradise." He is enabling her addiction. On her bed when he gives her an injection, "They smiled at each other lovingly."

Opposite of the depraved seductress La Condesa, the inhibited Mrs. Treadwell is a figure of "hysterical solitude and general forlornness" sitting alone in her cabin playing solitaire. She is also contrasted to her cabin mate, the promiscuous business woman Lizzi Spockenkieker—who is also the opposite of the elegant and beautiful aristocrat La Condesa. The liberated Lizzi is rude, clumsy, insolent and boastful, with no manners and "an affected superior little air." In her attitude of superiority she is the new aristocrat of the modern world, the liberated Feminist woman—so-called. The traditional Mrs. Treadwell compares Lizzi's mind to "a caged monkey's." Lizzi "would come in steaming hot…with her hair like electrified strings and her pupils excited as a cat's in the small mean-looking irises…. The woman was, Mrs. Treadwell decided, the most entirely unattractive animal she had ever seen. Undressed, her ugliness was shocking. Yet she was possessed by the mysterious illusion that she was a beauty."

Lizzi wants to marry for money and boasts to the lonely Mrs. Treadwell, "When I left my husband, he accused me of going away to another man. 'Ha,' I told him, 'what do you take me for? There are five of them'." Lizzi the New Woman is even more vain than the Victorian Frau Rittersdorf, and more immoral. Most of her affairs were adulterous, with married men who "were all of them prepared to break up their domestic arrangements at any moment if she said the word. But she loved her freedom too well, that was her trouble." Ironically, she gossips against La Condesa by accusing her of promiscuity. Then she accuses the faith healer of groping women, spreading a lie. It is primarily from Lizzi the Feminist that politically correct liberals have adopted the grotesque notion that the Christ-evoking healer is a pervert. This slander is followed by Lizzi's amusement at Rieber's death threat against Jews when Lowenthal asked him for the time, "'Time to stop all Jewish watches.' Herr Rieber is very witty'." Lizzi and Rieber are primarily responsible for getting Freytag dismissed from the Captain's table for marrying a Jew.

The meek Mrs. Treadwell is compared to a "convent-bred girl" and is understandably bitter over her first love and failed marriage: "Was I really ever married to a man so jealous he beat me until I bled at the nose? I don't believe it….but I still bleed at the nose if I am frightened enough at anything." Until she was twenty, life "had been anchored fast yet always in slow movement, like a ship in harbor. She had fallen in love with the wrong man." Now after ten years of marriage and ten of divorce, she is at sea among other fools. "Nasty things have happened to me often and they were every one my own fault." Her honesty, vulnerability, humility and acceptance of responsibility make Mrs. Treadwell admirable. She loves "the simple kind of human pleasures" and her only ambition is to be a resident tourist in Paris. "I'm really no better than those American drunks at the Dome I used to sneer at with my French friends." On the contrary she is saintly compared to Lizzi, who is obsessed by prejudice against Jews, blames them for all problems in business and the professions, and agrees with Rieber that Jews are "poisoning German thought" and that they should be driven out of Germany. Like the politically correct liberals of today, Lizzi is a dictatorial

purist with respect to language as well as race and thinks herself more pure than the purist Frau Rittersdorf who she claims speaks with a "vile" German accent.

Mrs. Treadwell in her lonely sorrow consumes a whole bottle of wine, then tries to sleep, but she is kept awake by Lizzi in the upper berth delivering a lecture on purity in language, talking down to her. Lizzi is a politically correct German, like the liberals of today who are intolerant of everyone but themselves. She accuses Freytag of speaking a language "not really German." Worst of all, she and Rieber suspect that Freytag is a Jew. He does not eat pork and "When we speak of Jews we have observed a certain expression on his face. It is not the right expression for a good German." Such petty intolerance is routine on most American campuses today, where free speech and viewpoint diversity are suppressed and women and non-white students are taught by liberals to take offense at anyone who hurts their feelings. Mrs. Treadwell finally disagrees with Lizzi when she demands to know whether anything could be more scandalous than a Jew sitting at the Captain's table. "Through her maze of wine and sleep" Mrs. Treadwell contradicts her: "Easily…many things…. You are entirely wrong. It is Herr Freytag's wife who is Jewish, not he." As an American, Mrs. Treadwell seems unaware of the probable consequences of this information among racist Germans. It is ironic that Mrs. Treadwell does so much harm to Freytag by trying to defend him. Lizzi suspects her of tolerance: "Do you like Jews?" Mrs. Treadwell's response, "Not particularly," indicates that she has no particular feeling for or against Jews. Lizzi thinks her lack of prejudice is stupid: "Oh, you Americans who go through the world and never understand anything!"

Captain Thiele says grace at his table but he is not a charitable Christian. He sees the poor as "creatures little better than four-footed animals." Gazing downward at the families below him on the steerage deck, "he despised these filthy cattle." He sees the dark shapes of women and children "as heaps of refuse." He identifies them with "the elemental forces of darkness and disorder against the very spirit of civilization—that great Germanic force of life." They are more religious than the passengers on the upper deck and their singing and dancing provoke him to think they are showing "too much spirit." It "always disturbed the Captain, annoyed him, put him off, to see the lower classes enjoying themselves." Also unlike the affluent people above them, the lower class parents discipline their children: "Little boys who knew better than to open their mouths were allowed to sit in front of the women, but at a respectful distance from their elders to observe and take serious notes on the conduct becoming to the state of manhood." They contrast with Johann, and with Ric and Rac the offspring of the Spanish dancers. The poor workers do not allow the atheist Communist agitators to interfere with their religious services, whereas the Captain and all on the upper deck allow the Spanish dancers—"the spirit of evil"—to take over the whole ship. When one Spanish pimp flicks a lit cigarette down onto some dry cloth on the steerage deck intending to start a fire--it is quickly put out, whereas no one including the Captain stops the fiery Spanish troupe.

The Captain is preoccupied with petty matters of appearance. He does not want to be seen as "listening to women's gossip." Nor as tolerating a Jew at his table. "The unsavory fact remained that women had started the whole thing: that American Mrs. Treadwell had told Fraulein Lizzi Spockenkieker some confidence she had got from Herr Freytag, and Lizzi had told Herr Rieber, who had passed it about freely until it had come to the ears of the Captain." Dr. Schumann "was not in the least concerned with whether Freytag was a Jew or not…and he thought the whole question beneath contempt…. He no longer felt able to fight with those strange senseless states of mind." Any fight at all might kill him. The doctor embodies Conscience in the moral/religious allegory of the rise of Nazism that led to another World War: He is good but flawed, especially by German Romanticism. He is easily seduced, weak, vulnerable, and afraid to assert his moral sense. Furthermore, in his professional role the doctor feels obligated to remain neutral. Under pressure by the racists at the table, Freytag grows annoyed by Schumann's "air of benevolent detachment." The best Conscience of Germans was represented by the heroic military officers who tried unsuccessfully to assassinate Hitler, who watched them hanged.

When Freytag declines to eat ham, all the pigs at the table begin to snort. Fat Professor Hutten gives a condescending speech arguing that Jewishness is merely "a state of mind," denying that Jews even exist, but referring only to "those who could easily have been mistaken for pure Germans." Lizzi angrily denies any similarity to a Jew and Herr Rieber calls Jews "mongrels to the last degree, from every dregs of every race and nation!" Freytag remarks that "we are all mongrels by now, I expect." Frau Rittersdorf explodes, "'Oh, speak for yourself, dear Herr Freytag…. It is their claim of Chosenness that annoys me…. It makes

God look so stupid, don't you think?'" The others are shocked by "this mixture of good sense and something too near blasphemy for comfort." Ironically, throughout the whole novel the "pure" Germans repeatedly express their belief that *they* are the Chosen people. And the haughty Frau Rittersdorf herself thinks she is the most chosen of all, except by a man.

To claim superiority, the "pure" Germans resort to blaspheming against God. The fat professor argues it was just a "primitive kind of god who chose that peculiar people." Herr Rieber cries out, "You are right!… It was Jahweh who chose the Jews, and he can have them." Frau Rittersdorf condescends to agree with her social inferior Rieber: "It is only their god who chose them… We are under no obligation to emulate his poor taste." Lizzi flies into a tizzy: "Imagine a handful of people…having such impudence!… I think it is that makes me most furious. Besides their manners, their tricks, their--" But of course, Lizzi has much worse manners than Lowenthal. Little Frau Schmitt is a voice of innocence: "I don't know any Jews, but I don't dislike them." Frau Rittersdorf demands to know what Dr. Schumann thinks about Jews and he reconciles the opposition: "I believe that we worship the same God."

Knowing that he cannot change the minds at this table, even if he dared to try, Dr. Schumann crosses his knife and fork in the form of an x in reference to the Cross of Jesus, and excuses himself from the table. Soon after, Freytag confesses with a tremor of rage in his voice that his wife is Jewish "and her name is Freytag, and she does it honor." He leaves the table "with a nasty smile" and he feels like slapping their faces. Yes, even Dr. Schumann, old hypocrite, who had got out without committing himself." The warning of Jewish contamination is sounded by Lizzi, "who embodied to the last trait and feature everything the Captain found most positively repellent in womankind; and…her besotted admirer Herr Rieber, who must surely be lacking in some indispensable male faculty, such as taste or judgment where women were concerned." Ironically, the Captain dislikes them as much as they dislike Jews.

As the narrative perspective shifts from one scene to the next, the major themes of charity, love and faith are sustained in comparisons, parallels and contrasts among the diverse characters. Likewise a subject of mockery and forcibly excluded, La Condesa makes a remark critical of Germans, angering Dr. Schumann, who expresses his own pride in being German. She replies, "Ah, yes… It's an incurable malady, isn't it? As hopeless as being a Jew." When she smashes the bottles of wine sent to her by the Captain, Dr. Schumann reduces her to another stereotype--of Women: "the sex that brought confusion into everything, religion, law, marriage… Who was La Condesa smashing, he wondered—himself, or the Captain, or both? Or another man, or other men." After he injects her and leaves her cabin, he admits to himself that "This bitterness has tinged his sinful love from the first, for he had loved her from the first before he admitted it was love…why did his love wish to degrade her?" He too is a fool, "at his age, a married man, running in his mind after that strange woman as if he were one of those pimple-faced students, yet denying his feelings to himself, blaming her for everything, and hating his own evil in her…." La Condesa is the sinful "dark lady" of literary tradition. Dr. Schumann displays the power of religious faith as he overcomes his anger, accepts responsibility for his feelings and consults one of the priests, whereas Freytag continues to be angry, blame others, and want revenge.

Freytag is so enraged that in passing them on the deck he rudely snubs the Baumgartners and "hurt their feelings badly." It is traditional in literary Naturalism that those who get hurt tend to hurt others, a theme that applies to the punitive Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I but provoked Germany into another war. Freytag degrades his victims just as he is being degraded: "Such abject bores did not really exist, they had no right to feelings." This is how "that pig Rieber" feels about Jews. In the dining room a steward directs Freytag to "a small table set near the service entrance against a blank wall [where] the Jew Herr Lowenthal sat by himself"—a multiple insult. Unlike the Gentiles, the Jew does not refuse to sit with him. "'Did anybody ask us?' He did not seem offended, but merely was mentioning an obvious fact." Ironically, Freytag himself has a prejudice against this "type" of Jew: "Even other kinds of Jews don't like him." Herr Lowenthal assumes that Freytag chose to move from the Captain's table: "No kikes wanted, hein? So we are in the same boat…?" After Freytag explains that his wife is Jewish but he is not, Lowenthal is accepting: "I don't blame you." But when he hears that Freytag's wife comes from "one of the very oldest Jewish families," Lowenthal is calmly frank with his opinion: "Any Jewish girl marries out of her religion ought to have her head examined…. Be ashamed, Herr Freytag—when you wrong a Jewish girl, you wrong

the whole race." Getting shamed by both sides, Freytag explodes, "Shut your foul mouth!…or I'll knock you away from this table!" Lowenthal shrugs, "Did I ask you to come here?"

At his table for lunch, the Captain is applauded for getting rid of Freytag, his guests "patting their palms together with genteel restraint." The fat Professor Hutten compliments the Captain as he might compliment a German general after routing the enemy, for his decisive action perfectly timed and "taking the enemy by surprise." Ironically, it is through the racist professor that Porter notes that this small event is actually very revealing and symbolic: "It is these apparently minor decisions that help to remind us most clearly of our principles, and to see whether or not we are in harmony with the great pattern of our tradition." The "pure" Germans at the table then proceed to express their "principles" in a harmony of prejudices against Gypsies, Spaniards and blacks as well as all Jews and Gentiles married to Jews. The fat professor advocates the segregation of such undesirables on ships and other public transit. "They should not be allowed the run of things, annoying other people." The Captain concurs and adds that if he had his way he would allow no Jews on his ship. "They pollute the air." Images of their eating evoke disgust (*objective correlative*) at what the racists are willing to swallow—open mouths, gulping, lapping, gurgling, chewing—"the powerful, the privileged, the right people." The Nazis. "All the faces were relaxed with sensual gratification, mingled with deep complacency." They smack their lips. "They set an example of how superior persons conduct themselves towards each other."

Little Frau Schmitt is an exception at the table in having a simple good heart, a capacity for charity, love and faith--she who "suffered at the very thought of the miseries of the world; who wished only to love and to be loved by everybody." She is humble and submissive, but when her resentment at being imposed upon focuses on her arrogant upper class cabin mate Frau Rittersdorf, she is inspired by her "blood kinship with her great and glorious race, even though she might be its smallest, its least considerable member." She is disposed by her feeling of inferiority to worship the Patriarchy, "the mystical male force which rules not only the earth and all its creatures but indeed, as God the Father, the universe." She is the opposite of Lizzi who feels superior and wants power for herself. She and Lizzi are poles of female foolishness. The Captain believes that "women were almost first among those who must be kept in their place"—"almost first" meaning second only to Jews?—yet Frau Schmitt "warmed and palpitated under the male dominance" of the Captain and accepts all his judgments: "Wrong, I am always wrong." On the contrary, however, to her credit she alone speaks up against Rieber's calls for extermination of the Jews.

Given his repeated expressions of hatred and calls for murder, it is ridiculous that the racist Rieber imagines himself a Christian. He "crossed his knife and fork carefully; knife across, fork up and down; his grandmother had taught him he must leave the sign of the Cross on his empty plate as a mark of gratitude to Our Lord for his food, and he never forgot." Ironically, Dr. Schumann had done the same when he left the table to *protest* the racism of Rieber and the others. The hypocrisy of racist Germans who colluded in the evils of Nazism yet considered themselves Christians recalls the hypocrisy of American Christians who supported slavery, provoking the scorn of Mark Twain. Like the Captain, Rieber follows religious tradition in form only and he does not think about what he claims to believe. Unlike little Frau Schmitt, the piglike Rieber has no conscience. He does what his grandmother told him "he must" do, just as he will do what the Nazi regime tells him he must do. Like others tried at Nuremberg after the war, Rieber will claim that he has no responsibility because he was only following orders. Thoughtless and dissociated from his soul, he is unable to understand his nightmares of being exposed naked in public and getting "hideously exposed in some grotesque forbidden act."

Rieber is further exposed when he tries to separate himself from the Jew in his cabin, becoming a victim of his own intolerance. He must direct his demand to the purser, who does not like him. The purser is a fat racial bigot like Rieber who resents having his nap interrupted because "he must be humoring this fool." Rieber refuses to share a cabin with the Swede because he dislikes him almost as much as he hates the Jew, then he objects "violently" to sharing a cabin with the hunchback. He is angered to hear from the purser that David and Denny jeered at the notion of sharing their cabin with him and prefer the hunchback—a delightful insult. Rieber thinks the pursuer is "clearly a traitor with Jewish sympathies himself; perhaps that Lowenthal had bribed him in the first place for the privilege of sharing a cabin with a German." He also blames David and Denny, "those foul Americans, who were probably part Jewish themselves." Ironically,

Rieber accuses others of racism, like the politically correct liberal academics today who claim to oppose racism while exalting some races and demonizing others.

Lizzi is so delighted by her social power in getting Freytag removed from the Captain's table that she is eager for Mrs. Treadwell to learn of her triumph: "'It is something so wonderful it makes me happy and I want to laugh.' She did laugh and Mrs. Treadwell heard it…thinking that if a hyena suffered from hysteria it would laugh like that." Mrs. Treadwell, lonely on her birthday, is looking forward to socializing with Freytag—"maybe even dance a little after dinner?" But he accuses her of "mean treachery, betraying my confidence, gossiping about my wife to that hag Spockenkieker, making me all this stupid trouble." Mrs. Treadwell is mortified and she "saw that she had fallen into the trap Lizzi had set for her." When she finally gets Freytag to tell her what has happened that is so horrible, his outrage is exposed as petty from her egalitarian American perspective: "He put me at the table with the Jew!" shouted Freytag "'Is that so bad?' asked Mrs. Treadwell, gently, as if she were humoring a madman. 'Do you really mind?'" She stands up to Freytag as he scapegoats and bullies her more vindictively than he has been treated: "I didn't know enough about you to guard your secret—though why you look upon it as one at this point I can't understand." Indeed. Freytag has collaborated with anti-Semites by keeping secret his marriage to a Jew, as if he is ashamed of his wife rather than throwing off "stupid prejudices."

Freytag attacks Mrs. Treadwell for revealing what he should have been open about himself. He makes her a scapegoat, just as German racists were doing to him and to Jews. In response, "Mrs. Treadwell was silent as a prisoner on trial"—an ironic inversion of the Nazis who remained silent at their war crime trials. The irony implies that Mrs. Treadwell is innocent. In fact, she thinks Lowenthal "sounds rather nice." She did not know she was doing Freytag any harm, making his accusation of "treachery" as false as Rieber's accusations. She proves her good heart when she accepts responsibility for hurting him without intending to and actually "admitted her fault." She is charitable, unlike Freytag: "You must try to forgive me." Freytag "had meant to insult her enough to satisfy his desire for revenge," but her apology moves him "in spite of himself" to apologize also, an example of the healing power of charity. However, Freytag lacks the faith of Dr. Schumann that helps him face his faults, cope with his problems and sustain his charity. Dr. Schumann goes to a priest, Freytag goes to the bar.

After they have drinks together, while agreeing to be friends Freytag and Mrs. Treadwell actually want to avoid each other. "In spite of what he had said, a bitter desire rankled in him to humiliate her further, to put her to shame in some public way, to teach her a good lesson." He takes out his frustration on Lowenthal: "He would not sit at the table with that Jew." He tries to persuade himself that "I have no prejudice against Jews… It is because of what has been done to *both of us*. But he will never acknowledge that any wrong has been done to anyone but himself." Freytag "felt corroded with guilt, heaping ridicule on one of Mary's people with this shallow girl…. He must put up with Lowenthal, must treat him decently no matter what he said or did—if for no other reason, he owed it to Mary. He also owed it to his own self-respect." Yet he does not treat Lowenthal decently by refusing to sit at his table. His insult is comparable to the refusal of those at the Captain's table to sit with Freytag. The Jew welcomes the Gentile to his table and is disappointed when he does not appear, but he shrugs it off. "Insults, threats, names, low jokes—what of it? They couldn't touch him; he wanted only one thing from them, and he had that already—their trade." He enjoys a good cigar and a joke: "He had heard about how that pig Rieber had tried to get him thrown out of the cabin, and had failed, because nobody wanted Herr Rieber either!" For her part, Mrs. Treadwell takes her revenge when a giggling Lizzi asks her what Freytag had said about being dismissed from the Captain's table because of Lizzi's gossip. Says Mrs. Treadwell, "He seemed to feel, on the whole, that it was a great change for the better—the company, he seemed to mean."

Jenny and David think dismissing Freytag from the Captain's table is "disgraceful" and "pretty nasty," making the stock responses of egalitarian Americans. But they are shallow liberals. Jenny identifies with the handsome flirtatious Freytag rather than with lonely Lowenthal when she says that "he must be horribly uncomfortable sitting with that funny little man." Frau Baumgartner is even more shallow than Jenny in admiring the Spanish dancers for not being visible alcoholics like her husband even though they are obviously gluttonous eaters. And "if the women do flirt, why, they are gypsies, after all." Her romanticism denies reality. She refuses to recognize that the Spanish women do more than flirt, nor does she listen to her husband: "What good does mere abstinence from alcohol do people who are so sunk in every other vice?"

She cares only about evil that affects her personally. Since the Spanish troupe becomes analogous to a mob of Nazis, Frau Baumgartner's inability to detect their "spirit of evil" might suggest that she will fully support Adolph Hitler because he is not an alcoholic.

Frau Rittersdorf believes that she is on the side of God in hating Jews, presumably including His only begotten Son. She disapproves of the Spanish dancers more on social than moral grounds and is mightily offended when one of them makes an "indecent proposal" that she dance with him. Tito the Spanish dancer is "evil" because he is low class, with "black eyes like a snake's gleaming wickedly." She considers herself a lady with the highest standards, but all at once she is "spirited away." The worst of it is that she enjoys the dance. However, she resists the plan of the Spanish dancers to put on a fiesta for the Captain because it is not "customary." She insists on maintaining her exclusive social status: "The Captain's farewell gala is by invitation of the Captain himself to his passengers, not the other way around." She remains aloof and refuses to buy a ticket from Tito, who responds with insults "in a rattling fire of Spanish: 'Whether you like it or not, you stinking German sausage made of old women's behinds, we are going to have our show and you are going to help pay for it'."

Lizzi the liberated woman enjoys witnessing this mockery of the very traditional lady Frau Rittersdorf: "They really are making fun of you, the little pigs…. Look at them, Frau Rittersdorf, did you ever see such impudence? They are all but thumbing their noses at you." Even her cabin mate little Frau Schmitt offends Frau Rittersdorf by taking longer than previously at the washstand and mirror, finally asserting her own rights. The satire of Frau Rittersdorf's arrogant upper class hypocrisy is humorous throughout the novel. Her first entry in her notebook on this occasion refers to Frau Schmitt as "that little mealsack…who has not one claim to any consideration whatever from anyone." Frau Rittersdorf is insulted by having to wait her turn, keeps looking at her watch, makes remarks about how late it is getting, then writes "Incapable as I am of rude behavior to anyone, I shall be forced to take steps to correct her bad manners… It is an offense against morality to overlook or condone insolence in an inferior."

In contrast to the offended lady, Herr Glocken the hunchback is charitable when his cabin mate Denny monopolizes the washstand. And when Denny gets alarmed over his pimples, Herr Glocken kindly assures him that they are not noticeable. David the liberal "detested Denny's vulgar habit of calling all nationalities but his own by short ugly names." To Denny ethnic slurs are just nicknames. Denny likes Lowenthal the Jew: "He's not a bad guy. I've talked to him." Which is more than David ever does. Denny says, "We didn't have a thing against Jews in our town—we didn't even have any Jews!" David the liberal feels superior to the vulgar hick from Texas: "Maybe you were so busy lynching niggers you couldn't take time out for Jews." This is nasty, far more insulting than the common ethnic slurs used by Denny, yet Denny is charitable enough to not get angry at David.

All the complaints by characters on the upper deck become trivial when set against the deformity of the hunchback: "I have had no life—I only exist." Yet he does have what is most important: "I had the soul." Denny believes all women are mercenaries with no souls: "Every last one of them after nothing in God's world but money." In his determination not to be cheated by any woman he gets cheated. "Pastora sold him two tickets for the raffle, at five marks a ticket—one mark more than the printed price. Denny paid for them and did not notice the deception until much later." Denny is a fool for thinking that he is so charming he can persuade a prostitute to have sex with him before he pays her: "He would string her along, but that was all…. He wasn't going to cross her palm with silver until after the ball was over." In fact, he decides, "I won't pay her." Denny's infected ingrown toenail is a metaphor of his infection by lust, pride and greed—opposites of love, faith and charity.

Little Hans Baumgartner is the innocent obedient child of a domineering mother, hence the opposite of Ric and Rac, the malicious unsupervised twins allowed to run wild. The twins already engage in incestuous sexual play, whereas Hans, though slightly older, has never even seen his parents undressed. The twins are so evil several characters see them as possessed by the Devil, whereas Hans says his prayers every night with his parents, who hug and kiss him and give him confidence. "Mama, today Ric and Rac told me they were going to throw me overboard, but I wasn't scared." His father is alarmed by this, whereas "his mother said sharply, 'Hans, you are not supposed to talk after you have said your prayers'." His father is shocked by her indifference: "Didn't you hear what he said?" But his mother cries, "Nonsense," and reprimands the

boy for "running off to play with those children." She could be one reason that Herr Baumgartner is an alcoholic. His self-absorbed wife left their child alone on the deck to be thrown overboard while she went to the hairdresser's and now she abandons him again by quarreling in defense of her negligence--never giving the child a chance to defend himself. "Hans saw they had forgotten him entirely." His mother has accused him falsely, as he protests: "'I didn't leave my chair…they came and stood there, and they said, 'We are going to throw you overboard. And everybody else too, and the bulldog'." His mother reacts to this by sympathizing with the dog. His father wants to speak to the parents of Ric and Rac, but his mother wants him to "ignore them as if they do not exist." Ignoring evil perpetuates it. Hans will soon be old enough to obey his elders and march off to war and probably die for the Nazis.

Herr Rieber finally loses patience and launches an offensive upon the body of Lizzi Spockenkieker in the funniest episode of the novel. Her coquetry has become insolence, like the resistance of France to Nazi occupation. "He gave his prey no warning, no moment in which to smack his face or flee, he seized Lizzi low around her shoulders, hoping to pin her arms to her ribs, and snatching her to him, he opened his mouth for a ravenous kiss. It was like embracing a windmill…. Her thin wide mouth gaped alarmingly and her sharp teeth gleamed even in the dimness. She gave him a good push and they fell backward clutched together, her long active legs overwhelmed him, she rolled him over flat on his back and for a moment her sharp hipbones ground his belly cruelly…. He braced himself to reverse the unnatural posture of affairs, and attempted to roll into the proper position of masculine supremacy, but Lizzi was spread upon him like a fallen tent full of poles, her teeth now set grimly in his jowl… She showed no sign of surrender… Never before had he encountered a woman who would not let herself be overcome properly at the correct moment." Lizzi is no France after all. "This was only another woman—there must be a way, and he would find it. He thought with some envy of the ancient custom of hitting them over the head as a preliminary—not enough to cause injury, of course, just a good firm tap to stun the little spirit of contradiction in them," but Lizzi has already cracked *him* on the head with her little ping-pong paddle.

Too competitive to love a man, Lizzi the liberated woman loves to win, especially against the traditional lady Frau Rittersdorf. She and Rieber mock the lady for dancing with the low class Tito as if the Spaniard is inferior to Rieber. "Pig-dog, thought Frau Rittersdorf…at least I am not reduced to dancing with you!" Lizzi's laughter at Frau Rittersdorf "was a long cascade of falling tinware." To her credit, Frau Ritttersdorf is the one who speaks up at the Captain's table against the "spirit of evil": "We are taking these Spaniards very lightly…for Captain, I believe those people are dangerous criminals. They are evil people, the kind who need to be controlled by the police, they are capable of anything." Lizzi mocks her: "Even to dancing with you?" And the Captain belittles her warning: "These seem to me rather ordinary little people of the rubbish-born class, not worth mentioning." His dismissive prejudice toward the lower class blinds him to evil that threatens the order of his ship.

As if no one knows better than he what is worth mentioning, the fat Professor Hutten then delivers a pedantic lecture on the history of philosophy, arguing for his belief in "the fundamental goodness of human nature." This from a German soon to smell the stench of burning human bodies from the extermination camps of the Nazi regime. Will the professor still be a liberal then? Even now his belief in "goodness" leads him to insist that "when discipline demands it, wield the rod without mercy, for true justice is stern and must be administered sternly. We do better in the long run to leave mercy to God." Despite his claim to believe in goodness, the professor is a totalitarian like the politically correct liberal academics of today who believe in punishing dissenters without mercy.

Frau Hutten has been "the ideal German wife," always serving her pompous husband in every possible way—even carrying his books and parcels and suitcases like his valet—"with pride and love." Frau Hutten worships her husband: "She knew that her husband was a saint, too good for this world." True, she is embarrassed by his pedantic speeches that bore people like sermons, but "whenever her husband's face shone with domestic content and enjoyment, she could feel her very soul growing wings." She has been the equivalent of a Victorian "angel in the house." But she has also been a rigorous teacher with her husband in a German school in Mexico where she subdued rebellious students. At the Captain's table she and Dr. Schumann speak for the author on the subject of evil, contradicting Professor Hutten's liberal sentiments. Dr. Schumann is the opposite of the Professor in his humility and spirituality. He identifies himself as a Catholic and says "Our collusion with evil is only negative, consent by default, you might say….with nine-

tenths of us half asleep and refusing to be waked up." He once again crosses his knife and fork on his plate in reference to Christ on the Cross.

"Astonished to hear her own voice," Frau Hutten likewise disagrees with her fatuous liberal husband: "I do know well there are many evil people in this world, many more evil than good ones, even the lazy good ones; evil by nature, by choice, by deepest inclination, evil all through; we encourage these monsters by being charitable to them, by making excuses for them, or just by being slack, as Dr. Schumann says. Too indifferent to be bothered so long as they do not harm us… We do evil in letting them do evil without punishment. They think we are cowards and they are right. At least we are dupes and we deserve what we get from them." This summarizes the moral allegory in *Ship of Fools* and applies to the takeover of the ship by the Spanish troupe and to the takeover of Germany by the Nazis. At one point David remarks of the Spaniards, "They might as well be Germans." Dr. Schumann says, "They laugh up their sleeves at us, and call us fools…because they think we are too stupid to know what they are doing to us! And we do not punish them as they deserve, because we have lost our sense of justice."

Now Frau Hutten is mortified by having done something good--ironically. She has spoken out against evil, but has humiliated her husband, whose expression is that of a man "gazing into a pit of cobras." Her "public dissent was a most disloyal act." She blames herself for offending "against her husband's main conviction on which everything else in their marriage was based soundly: that a wife's first duty was to be in complete agreement with her husband at all times, no matter on what questions." This tradition inhibited women from speaking out against the Nazis. Here the only ones to speak out against evil at the Captain's table are all women—Rittersdorf, Hutten, and Schmitt. Little Frau Schmitt, as a widow, has nothing to fear from a husband: "I agree with you…we must not encourage people to behave badly to us. If we let them run over us, it's our own fault." The Jewish people were to agree as well, but the import of this episode is mainly in reference to the institution of patriarchal marriage.

Frau Hutten cannot resist evil in her own marriage, let alone in society as a whole. Rather than refuse to let her husband run over her, she succumbs to his "outburst of righteous wrath" and is overcome like Poland by German tanks. His traditional beliefs are a litany of misogynist prejudices against women. He thinks women are "merely children" who need "a taste of the rod now and then to keep them in order." Like slaves. "Other women seemed to agree, or submit, and most of the men she knew talked that way." When the Huttens find their cabin door wide open, Professor Hutten blames his wife. Blaming her for everything is a habit deriving from his misogyny. His obvious injustice to her in this incident reflects on his whole conduct as a husband. He knows himself so little, he is unaware of his own habits. When he finally realizes that he must have left the door open himself because of his courteous habit of letting her pass through a door first, he does not apologize to her. He blames the open door on "thieves, perhaps." Bebe their bulldog baby is missing. Frau Hutten cries, "'He has wandered out by himself because you left the door open!' The Professor censors her: "'I forbid you to say that!' he almost shouted." His refusal to accept the truth discredits his opinions and makes him one of the most obvious fools on board. This is exactly how liberal academics behave today.

The large unattractive Elsa Lutz is forced to dance by her father, but she despairs: "Nobody for Elsa—nobody, and there would never be." Encountering the old faith healer, she is "made tender and charitable by her own sufferings and feelings of being shut out from natural life." The dying old man "saw her distress and asked kindly" how she is feeling and why she is not dancing. She lies, saying she has a sore throat. He offers to heal her and reaches out, but she is "repelled by his corpselike nearness, death itself." She lacks faith, saying "first make yourself well." The same was said of Christ: "He saved others, let him save himself." The old faith healer compares himself to the early apostles and replies to Elsa, "If I could heal myself I should become selfish like the others; I should go about my own pleasures and forget my duty to the suffering ones. God wills it I should stay and suffer with others in houses of pain and death. Only in my own pain am I useful to Him."

The faith healer explains that to heal Elsa he must touch her. "Let me touch your throat…and say a prayer for you, and you will be truly well, body and soul." He reaches out and clasps her throat, "the curved fingers clung feebly for an instant and slipped away, sliding over her breasts and falling back upon his lap rug. He saw her face of horror… 'God forgive you, you hard-hearted girl,' he said sternly." He weeps and

Elsa runs away. Because she lies and lacks faith, he cannot heal her. Feminist critics have seen this event as a sexual assault. They seem to think that the dying man weeps because he is too feeble to grab her breast. In the interior monologues of the dying old man there is no hint of a sexual impulse, only religious thoughts. Porter includes the detail that his hand "slipped away, sliding over her breasts" as bait for the fools who see a Christ-evoking figure as a molester.

Mrs. Treadwell is the opposite of Elsa Lutz in being attractive, dancing with her preferred young officer, and withdrawal from feeling. "Since her late entanglements with Lizzi and Freytag, she wished more than ever not to touch or be touched, neither with hands or words." This echoes the reaction of Elsa to the touch of the dying old man and makes Mrs. Treadwell as much a fool as the squeamish girl in rejecting what could heal her. Jenny is opposite to them both in asking Freytag to dance. She put the blame for Freytag's indignation "squarely on the Captain because he was the one who could have stopped the nonsense with a word; instead he gave it shape and direction." Jenny is almost the only character to sympathize with the Jew: "Poor Herr Lowenthal was mistreated too, and Freytag never seemed to give this a thought—that was wrong of him." Unlike Frau Hutten, Jenny is a liberated American woman who "believed in hitting back, blow for blow and as many extra as you could manage to get in. Not to resist and punish an injury, to oneself or to anyone else, was to consent to the wrong, plain moral cowardice in her view, and there was nothing she despised more." Jenny is more courageous than Frau Hutten, but her combativeness exceeds a spirit of equality, as she believes in "as many extra" blows as she can get in. Her vindictive attitude makes her a Feminist, unable to love or to be loved consistently by a man.

Jenny dances with Freytag knowing it is making David jealous. Freytag suggests that they "give him something to be jealous about" and Jenny longs for an affair with him in order to "abandon the dream" of lasting love with David. "If only somehow somewhere on that wretched crowded ship they could find a place to spend a few nights together." Freytag talks incessantly about his wife, but Jenny does not care. The two liberated women, Jenny and Lizzi, are both adulteresses who use men and are indifferent to the hurt they do to them and to wives and families. They lack charity, love and faith. The cruel reckless dancing of Ric and Rac is hyperbole for selfish relationships like Jenny's with David: "They did not enjoy their game and they were too stubborn to stop until they succeeded in hurting each other in some way, it hardly mattered how." Ric and Rac dance like souls in Hell, trying to destroy each other. Their dancing is rendered in a vivid Expressionist style that emphasizes their evil in the moral allegory—hateful, malicious, violent, ruthless, savage. The relationship between the prostitute Concha and Johann, the attendant to the old faith healer, is entirely of the flesh, based upon money, good looks and lies—deliberately lacking in charity, love and faith. It too is "of the Devil," as diagnosed by Dr. Schumann. Lust leads to worse as Concha urges Johann to murder his old uncle to get the money to pay for her services.

Meanwhile the lost bulldog Bebe has been wandering through one scene after another, interrupting Lizzi on top of Rieber but mainly ignored. It is the old faith healer who reaches out to the lost dog and "patted him on the head and blessed him as he went by." Feminists may accuse the man of molesting the animal, but Bebe "wagged faintly in response." The faith healer justifies in advance the sacrifice by the woodcarver and identifies his saving hands with God: "'We are all God's children, safe in His loving hands,' he assured the dog." This promise links the faith healer with the woodcarver in the moral/religious allegory of *Ship of Fools*. The woodcarver loves animals and to him as to the faith healer the little dog is one of "God's children." His heroic sacrifice of his life is poignant and evokes the sacrifice of Christ. Yet the evocation is also satirical, in the spirit of Mark Twain, since the rather stupid lost dog is equated to the average human. The equation is explicit when Denny shouts "Well, I be dog!" Ric and Rac are most clearly demonic when they throw the little dog overboard—enjoying the "spirit of evil." The detailed rendering of resistance by the little animal—"waggling feebly…limp legs dangling, helpless soft belly heaving"--elicits compassion (*objective correlative*), preparing the sympathetic reader to identify with the woodcarver, which is to experience the spirit of Christ.

Sustaining the ironic tone of the novel, the first witness to the woodcarver's sacrifice is Denny, his selfish opposite in character. Denny is angry at failing to get a dance with Pastora, the Spanish dancer he is lusting after. He leans at the rail and consoles himself by "spitting through his teeth and repeating under his breath short nasty names for women—all women, the whole dirty mess of them, not just Pastora… One as much a bitch as the other, he decided." He throws women overboard at the same moment that Ric and Rac

are throwing the dog overboard. While thinking this garbage Denny notices a white "bundle" strike the water below him and supposes it is a "bale of garbage from the galley." When another bundle hits the water near the white one "there rose from the steerage a long hoarse bloodcurdling howl like a pack of coyotes" followed by "shrill high women's screams." Denny is susceptible to the collective human anguish and "in his drunken fog was filled with tears too. He put his hand over his mouth and began to cry." But he soon retreats to selfish isolation and responds to Frau Hutten's desperate plea to tell her whether he has seen her little Bebe anywhere "with a leer meant to be full of ridicule." Similarly, when Frau Hutten kneels beside the rescued dog on the deck and "wept aloud like a mother at the graveside of her only child," David is revolted by the spectacle of love. And Freytag moves away in disgust: "Ah, the drooling German soul." None of them pay any attention to the woodcarver, just as many pay no attention to Christ. Finally Herr Lutz suggests that Dr. Schumann be sent for to attend to the "nearly drowned man."

Walking slowly on his way to the main deck Dr. Schumann hears sounds of some kind of "panic or emergency," but he is in no hurry to respond because he is distracted at that moment by meeting La Condesa, whose debauched character is suggested by the monkey fur trim on her wrap. He feels guilty about giving her a drug and failing to pay more attention to her. Ironically, he is paying too much attention to her. "'God help me," he said, almost terrified at the evil he was discovering in his own nature." Again ironically, he has not discovered that he is in the act of doing a different and greater evil. "In this moment of possible danger" to the whole ship, he focuses on the seductive dark lady. Even when the ship turns and he realizes "There is surely something very wrong," he continues walking La Condesa to her cabin. He feels possessed by "this incubus fastened upon him like a bat, this evil spirit come out of her hell to accuse him falsely, to seduce his mind, to charge him with fraudulent obligations to her, to burden his life to the end of his days, to bring him to despair." Yet even after he leaves her he dallies in his cabin, preoccupied with distrusting the stewardess attending La Condesa. Finally he sets out grudgingly "in the hope of saving a nameless, faceless fool in the steerage who had been stupid enough to fall overboard." Ironically, he prays to Jesus and crosses himself, but he arrives too late to save the woodcarver. Frau Rittersdorf praises Dr. Schumann for his charity, but no one praises the woodcarver.

Father Garza might be expected to recognize a supreme act of Christian charity, but instead he condemns the woodcarver for "a deed of carelessness reprehensible to the last degree." He is appalled that the man would "throw away" his life to save a dog. Implicitly, the Church is no longer teaching the word of God. As a stewardess says of the woodcarver, "What did he get but a little dry wafer from that hypocrite of a priest, and a wicked parody of God's word?" Dr. Schumann recalls "his own rash act in leaping to save the ship's cat from Ric and Rac, and wondered what the priest would think of *that*." Despite Dr. Schumann's faults, his risking his life to save the cat proved his charity and puts him in the moral company of the woodcarver. Although Father Garza calls Ric and Rac "devil-possessed," he minimizes their evil: "They are only rather dull little sinners. I do not believe in making them feel self-important by calling them devils." The priest judges people by their social importance like the Captain. He colludes with the Devil by regarding evil merely as behavior, rather than as inherent in human nature. Father Garza has degenerated into a liberal. Merely posturing as a priest, he advises that all the twins need is a series of whippings, but he does not speak to them about it, nor to the parents or the Captain. His ministry is worthless. He represents a Church that in 1931 is supporting the political status quo and doing nothing to oppose the increasing evil in the world. In fact, he is colluding with that evil. Similarly, Father Carillo denies that the Communist agitator is important, more concerned about semantics than the evil of atheism: "He's a very ordinary type of low Spanish syndicalist…not a Bolshevik at all."

Dr. Schumann finds the Huttens "kneeling on the floor of their cabin, bowed like a sculptured Pieta over the prostrate form of Bebe, who now and then raised his head, retched and drooled more salt water." The Pieta is one of the most famous subjects for sculpture. The best known is the sculpture by Michelangelo, depicting with great pathos the dead body of Christ in the arms of His mother the Virgin Mary. Many people in the modern world deify their pets. Porter's parallel of the little dog to Christ ridicules turning an animal into a religious idol, one of the most common evils in the Bible. The pathos in the childless Huttens' posture is not the condition of the dog, who "will recover," but in their desperately sentimental need for a surrogate child, from which they will never recover. Yet at the same time, Professor Hutten resents the responsibility, seeing that Bebe would become a more and more onerous burden as time went on." The liberal Professor has no gratitude to his savior, only scorn: "Who could be such a fool?" He even claims

that the man who gave up his life was one of "those dangerous agitators"—the same allegation that led to the crucifixion of Christ. Frau Hutten is grateful enough to weep, but she assumes the woodcarver was motivated by a desire for financial reward and she declines to attend his funeral. In the end she is such a perfect German wife that she takes on her husband's burden of guilt for Bebe's traumatic experience, throwing the truth overboard like Ric and Rac threw Bebe: "I am certain I left the door open, it is all my fault, you are always in the right." He forgives her. He decides they should not report the "children" and blames only the woodcarver for his own death. They agree to try to forget him.

Elsa Lutz tells her cabin mate Jenny that her father said of the woodcarver's sacrifice, "It was a very foolish thing for him to do. He said it is stupid thoughtless people like that who make all the trouble for others." In contrast, Jenny is charitable enough to watch the funeral from above, though with a "lack of feeling." Both she and David are said to be "nearsighted," and now when she cries it is not for the dead woodcarver, but for herself. Also watching are Dr. Schumann, Frau Schmitt, and "even Frau Rittersdorf." Ric and Rac look down while perched on the rail and "not even a sailor passing by took the trouble to order them down." The Communist agitators attend the funeral only to mock religion: "Now and then the fat man would let out a loud belch, and with spread fingers would make the sign of the Cross with his thumb on the end of his nose." Arne Hansen the socialist Swede sides with the radicals, calls the religious mourners cowards and fools, and curses God. As soon as the body slides over the side into the ocean, "the devout men fell upon the blasphemous men with fury" and beat them up. By the end of the 20th century, however, the minority of atheists had purged God from the schools and established Atheism as a state religion in the United States. Here the fat leader of the atheist radicals is knocked out with a monkey wrench, including him in the motif of people who behave like animals—monkeys and pigs in particular. After conducting the funeral ceremony, the lazy Father Garza departs "with his characteristic promptness and detachment," ignoring the attack on religion as he says to Dr. Schumann, "'It's nothing serious, Doctor—you won't need me!' with a sardonic hoot that was nearly laughter."

When a trinity of passing whales are pointed out by Ric and Rac, the whales represent divine order and the twins human chaos, good and evil opposites in Nature. "Not one person could take his eyes from the beautiful spectacle until it was over, and their minds were cleansed of death and violence." To be "cleansed of death" is to be purified and reborn. This state—of the soul rather than of the mind--may become eternal through acceptance of Christ. The sight of the whales prompts a charitable reconciliation between Jenny and David. When the twins experience the divine order as momentary "ecstasy," they lose their balance and almost fall overboard themselves. "Not a single hand had been stretched to aid them, though a dozen were near…. Not one of them but would have found a sympathetic agreement with all the others that overboard, the deeper the better, would have been a most suitable location for Ric and Rac." But the twins "hung on firmly and lithely as monkeys, shouted and screamed and enjoyed themselves; enjoyed the funeral of the man they had killed." The most respectful and sympathetic reaction to the death of the woodcarver is by Lowenthal, in a chilling prefiguration of the inhuman treatment that would soon befall Jews in Germany: "Think of being sewed up in a sack and thrown overboard like a dog! Makes me sick…" Think of being starved and gassed and thrown into an oven.

Freytag is among those too self-absorbed to remember even the name of the "reckless" woodcarver. He consoles himself that when separated from his Jewish wife he has been able to enjoy the "divine privilege" of "being a member of the ruling class of the ruling race of the world." Yet now he is "writhing with wounded pride," feeling that he has made a fool of himself to those who humiliated him. He wishes his wife Mary were here to take revenge: "She would have made them positively entertaining with her ruthless humor and charming utterly heartless malice." He once said to her, "Why, Mary!… How can you be so cruel? Don't you belong to the human race?" She "shot him a keen sidelong glance, and said: 'No, not really—I am a Jew, remember?'" In contrast the friendly Lowenthal, "in spite of the unpleasant state of affairs—it was nothing new to him—was still quite willing to engage in a little conversation for sociability with almost anybody who came along, just so they kept off the subject of religion…. It didn't matter to him what the Goyim thought of him, whether they liked him or not. He didn't like them, so he was a jump ahead of them from the start…. 'I got no complaint, I'm used to being a Jew'." He is so disgusted by liberal stock responses—political correctness—that he offends Jenny when she offers him sympathy, proving that her charity is shallow: "Are you always so stupidly rude…?"

Stupid rudeness is epitomized by the Spanish dancing troupe and the Cuban medical students. “Where the zarsuela company merely stared bitterly at their victims and uttered their jeering laughter, which never failed to raise a responsive blush of anger or shame, the students thought of a method they believed more subtle and deadly.” They make frightening diagnostic remarks about people loudly enough to be overheard. “They chattered like monkeys.” The fat Frau Hutten is hurt and “tired of the unkindness of people to each other” while her husband the fat liberal Professor Hutten decides that after all, “There was such a thing as incurable love of evil in the human soul.” He vows to ignore it. “If they persist in their savagery,” he vows to “let them feel the sharpness of my rebuke.” This is like the appeasement foreign policy of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who signed a worthless pact with Adolph Hitler in 1938. The Captain of the *Vera* is preoccupied with the threat of more rioting in the steerage and he disregards the more dangerous threats on the upper deck from the Spaniards. Unable to determine who hit the fat Communist leader over the head with a monkey wrench, he laments, “I am astonished that Father Garza, who was so near, did not notice and identify the criminal…. Frankly, I get no help from the priests.”

The ship’s bulletin board is an example of public media. It provides some good useful information along with evil lies and mockery—tabloid journalism of a sort. According to a current poll, 70% of the American people do not trust the mainstream media. The insulting notes posted by the Cuban students are amusing to most passengers when they mock someone else, not so funny when directed at themselves. Rieber and Lizzi are a “pink pig” and a “peahen.” When Dr. Schumann is angered by a note mocking La Condesa and himself, he confronts the students, almost the only time anyone stands up to them. It occurs to the doctor that evil is often entertaining. The Spanish dancers for instance—“that gang of hoodlums.” He wonders why “this side of life was almost entirely the work of such creatures as these, a criminal league organized and managed by the lowest of the criminal world? Yes, even the outdoor, health-giving sports? They were all run by the same people who dealt in drugs and packaged sex and murder and every possible sort of monstrous cheat and forgery. The gauzy glittering surface of gaiety lay lightly over the foulest pools of evil.” This is human nature. “Dr. Schumann admitted, but only to himself that if hyenas were beautiful and could sing and dance, he would forgive them for being hyenas.”

These thoughts lead the doctor to confront his love for La Condesa, also a corrupt performer in her way. She is upper class, warm and soft like him, whereas the Spanish prostitutes are low class, coldhearted and hard. “He loved La Condesa because she was perverted, strayed, a taker of drugs, a woman who lived outside religion, outside law, outside morality, who was beautiful, willful, and he had no doubt, a born liar. In what way had he tried to help her? He had subdued her, caged her, shut her off from those ambiguous students…not by medical means or by human sympathy, but by abuse of his power, and by using against her the vice that harmed her most—drugs.” Like most people, “He had lived on flattering terms with the delusive wickedness of his own nature… She was a burden on his conscience he was condemned to carry to his death.” Had she been ugly, it is doubtful that he would have fallen in love with La Condesa. Satan was the most beautiful angel before his Fall. As the virtual Conscience of the book, Dr. Schumann is the character most aware of moral complexity and most troubled by his own conduct. He demonstrates the anguish that can be involved in trying to live a moral life and how even the most conscientious Christian can be seduced into evil. He is often wrong or inadequate in his perceptions, demonstrating that no human being is self-sufficient, and that whether they know it or not, everyone depends on God. When the doctor consults one of the complacent priests, in effect he is encouraged to continue giving La Condesa drugs, suggesting that the priest himself uses religion as a kind of drug. “Father Garza assured me that what I have done was not wrong.” Dr. Schumann is “not consoled or reassured.”

Herr Glocken the hunchback is a mirror exposing the souls of those who see him. His deformity makes him physically grotesque, the ironic opposite of his true character. People rush up and touch his hump for luck as if he is inhuman--an object. They are spiritual grotesques. Then he is touched by Dr. Schumann’s “rash” invitation to come to him for treatment. Even the doctor does not really want to see him: “Herr Glocken looked amazed and pitiably hopeful. ‘Now?’ he said, unbelievingly’.” The doctor’s reluctant charity is contrasted to the deliberate cruelty of Lola the Spanish dancer when she approaches the poor hunchback “swinging her skirts”--a brazen prostitute holding out her palm. “’Cross my palm with silver, little man,’ she said, ‘and I promise you a ticket with a lucky number, that will win you a beautiful lace fan to take home to your pretty German sweetheart!’” Of course, Herr Glocken will never have any sweetheart. And no woman, not even one of these predatory Spanish prostitutes, would have relations with him. He is

so convulsed by pain and horror he turns away. She "struck at his hump cruelly with her sharp fingers. 'For luck, that's the only thing you're good for!'"

The next morning Herr Glocken is mocked on the bulletin board: "If you are a hunchback, symbol of every kind of degeneration, you may be excused from behaving like a normal human being." Here it is the "normal" human beings who are degenerate. Most fellow passengers treat the hunchback well, they greet him and give him the time of day, but "They observed him without thinking of him, the moment he had passed they forgot him with the easy indifference of those who view a misfortune from which they feel themselves in no danger." Except for little Frau Schmitt, they have no empathy—"his bad luck was strictly his own." In response to the hunchback Frau Rittersdorf writes in her notebook as if anticipating the Nazi regime, advocating "a well-enforced law providing that all defective children should be given the blessings of euthanasia at birth or as soon afterwards as it might become evident that they are unfit." Today in the United States it is legal to abort a fetus whether "defective" or not, exceeding the dream of Frau Rittersdorf. Unwilling taxpayers are often forced to pay for abortions. Selling the body parts of aborted babies became a lucrative industry widely supported by liberals.

Jenny compares herself to one of the Spanish prostitutes who tries to intimidate her into buying a lottery ticket, refusing "with a good sharp voice and a stare she hoped was as steely as the other's." Both women are "righteously censorious." After the prostitute insults Jenny and slaps her inner thigh, Jenny imitates her obscene gesture when telling David about the encounter: "I had to see if I could do it too!" The comparison suggests that Jenny the liberated woman is becoming as crude and amoral as a prostitute or one of the Indian women who use the gesture. "'I think it is a wonderful gesture,' said Jenny." Her lewdness excites both her and David, "their blood surged up so hotly between them."

Ric and Rac run past La Condesa on the deck and Ric snatches her pearl necklace off her neck. When the lady reports this to the stewardess attending her, the stewardness not only does not report the theft, she denies that La Condesa was wearing the necklace and refuses to serve her any longer, colluding with the evil. In fleeing the scene, Ric bumps into Frau Lutz and she "seized him instantly by the arm, all her maternal instincts for discipline of the young aroused. 'Someone must teach you a little decent behavior,' she told him in her German-Mexican Spanish. 'I will begin.' She slapped him soundly." At last, cheers the reader. Ric drops the pearl necklace, Rac grabs it, Herr Lutz tries to seize her but she escapes and flings the necklace overboard. Frau Schmitt wonders what it was "those children had thrown overboard, though it was none of her affair." She is determined to say nothing anymore because "nobody cared." She has been intimidated into silence by her cabin mate the imperial Frau Rittersdorf. The purser questions La Condesa, finds her drugged and decides "the whole thing was a dream." Dr. Schumann alone believes her and the Captain orders a search.

Ric and Rac have criminals for parents, who set the worst possible example. These parents do not object to their children stealing, for they are thieves themselves. "The zarzuela company had planned to rob La Condesa, but not until the last moment, perhaps as she left the ship or just afterward; and here these unspeakable brats had ruined everything." Lola knows her twins stole the necklace and the Lutzes verify that Rac threw it overboard. Urged on by the other Spanish dancers Lola tortures her son for a confession by pressing down his fingernails, turning his eyelids back, slapping him and threatening to abandon him at the next port. Ric and Rac are incorrigible little monsters perhaps because they have never been truly disciplined, only abused, but also because they are inherently evil—bad seeds "possessed by the Devil." Ric and Rac refuse to confess their crime to their criminal parents and evil prevails. The pure evil of the twins makes the moral allegory in the novel stand out clearly. This strong allegorical dimension brings Porter into company with Hawthorne, Melville, and O'Connor.

Part III

The Harbors

For here have we no continuing city…

Saint Paul

David is a modern villain, a pseudo-intellectual in the tradition of Hawthorne, Melville, and O'Connor. In effect he identifies with the evil Spanish gang when he expresses admiration for "Spanish pride and hate, and Spanish cruelty—they're the only people who know how to make an art of cruelty." Now there is something you do not want to hear from your most intimate companion. All along David practices the art of cruelty himself, especially in his relations with Jenny. His behavior is natural for one who does not believe in virtue, love, spirit, or God. Figuratively throwing such valuables overboard, David is like Ric and Rac. Thematically, the harbors of the soul are love—if you can find it--and faith, as represented by Saint Paul, whose quotation refers to the lack of any truly Christian city on earth. Unlike the great King David of Israel, this modern David is a weak, isolated, ineffectual, petty, selfish, cowardly, untalented atheist unable to love. His best moment is when he sympathizes with the woodcarver as a fellow artist. Among characters in the novel Dr. Schumann is his most direct opposite.

Many of the poor workers in steerage disembark on Santa Cruz de Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands. They are more charitable, loving, faithful and joyful than the officers and upper class passengers who scorn them as stinking lowlifes. Dr. Schumann takes pains to protect the dignity of La Condesa, who is exiled from Cuba and will be a political prisoner at large on Tenerife. "Even now he refused to doubt that he had done, not right, perhaps—who could be certain of that, ever?—but the only thing possible." He tries to persuade her that she is fortunate to be exiled with freedom of movement on such a beautiful island. "Oh, my friend," she cries, "have you gone mad with virtue and piety, have you lost your human feelings, how can you have forgotten what suffering is?" Dr. Schumann gives her another drug injection. She asks if he came into her cabin last night and kissed her and called her his love. "'I did, I did,' he groaned, 'I did, my darling'." She wants to pretend they are both in love—"that innocent romantic love I should have had in my girlhood!" He embraces her again. "'I have not loved you innocently,' said Dr. Schumann, 'but guiltily and I have done you great wrong, and I have ruined my life…'"

When a gypsy reads Jenny's future in her palm, she is at least partly correct according to implications in the novel: "You are going to a country that is not for you, and the man you are with now is not your real man. But you will go soon to a better country, and you will find your man. You will be happy in love yet, don't be troubled! Cross my palm with silver!" Jenny denies the prediction, but she does not like Germany and elsewhere she plans to leave David. As a liberated woman she avers that "There are going to be a lot of other things much more interesting in my life than this man, or any other man." David for his part "had never known a girl he could trust, and Jenny was the last straw."

On the upper deck, Dr. Schumann encounters the dying faith healer, Herr Graf. It is a contrast between science and religion. From the doctor's perspective the old faith healer's "grudge against doctors and surgeons was soundly based on professional jealousy, the inspired knowledge that they were standing in his light, preventing his free exercise of God's will in the matter of the cure of souls and bodies. 'What good is all your materia medica if the soul is sick?'" Herr Graf challenges the doctor, whose soul is sick with guilt. Thinking himself superior, Dr. Schumann reduces the attitude of his rival healer to "professional jealousy." In his scientific mindset his rival is a "fanatic." But then he is "transfigured": "The Doctor's rescuing miracle took advantage of Herr Graf's all-too-human glance meant to tell the Doctor what a poor, inadequate, ill-informed and poverty-stricken sort of Christian he was, and the message went home like an arrow. The Doctor suffered the psychic equivalent of a lightning stroke…and he faced the truth." He has undergone a "moral collapse" in relation to La Condesa.

His new insight is that "he had tormented her with his guilty love and yet had refused her—and himself—any human joy in it. He had let her go in hopelessness without even the faintest promise of future help or deliverance. What a coward, what a swine, Dr. Schumann told himself, calmly, bathed in the transfiguring light of Herr Graf's contempt; but not only, not altogether, if he did not choose to be!" *This proves the authenticity of the faith healer,* who causes a miracle and reveals the truth. In the end the episode evokes the old adage, Physician heal thyself. Accordingly, Dr. Schumann does "penance": He writes a letter to La Condesa: "He was to provide for her and see that she was cared for and protected, that medical treatment should be available: she was to be watched and guarded and saved from her own suicidal romantic folly. It would be a blameless charity…his wife need never know." He even intends to find a way to have the poor lady set free. [italics added]

Dr. Schumann's depth of feelings is contrasted to the superficiality of "Fraulein Spockenkieker and Herr Rieber, randy and rowdy as usual, swinging hands and cackling." Another contrast is between the dissonant tourists laboring along the path and the beautiful island girls carrying water on their heads while tirelessly running uphill again and again in perfect harmony, turning common household work through the ages into a breathtaking performance that enchants all visitors to the island. The girls demonstrate the possibility of sublime human order just as the whales demonstrated the divine natural order. A local man says, "We take what God sends. All our girls are beautiful and chaste." This gives the island a quality of innocence, divinely favored and somewhat like Eden before the Fall. The lustful Denny is the first snake we see in the Garden, chasing one of the water girls, who runs circles around him—"me trailing after with my tongue hanging out." Porter's greatness as a stylist is illustrated by her witty use of style to satirize the satyric Texan: "Denny unexpectedly showed logic, and even dimly, remotely, some hint of a deep-buried sense of justice, even morals, even to strain a point, ethics. Or at least, common sense."

Having coffee, Frau Rittersdorf writes her observations of the Spanish gang in her notebook: "They are all over the shops, everywhere, like a pack of invading rats. I have watched them, and I know they are stealing right and left… They shed around them the true metaphysical odor of evil." Although she is right about their evil, she is wrong in most of her perceptions otherwise. She projects herself. Unlike little Frau Schmitt, she does not even bother to look around the island, she is too condescending: "There was, then, something to see?" Frau Schmitt replies, "For those who can see." Frau Rittersdorf does not see the beautiful island girls carrying water and even calls the Edenic place an "Island of the Dead" inhabited by "shabby tired-looking beings" who seem to her unworthy of life. She herself was born poor and barely escaped "the awful wallow of ignorance and poverty and brutish living," but that gave her a horrified revulsion toward the poor rather than empathy. Having risen from poverty herself, she feels superior to those who have not. Frau Rittersdorf has no empathy for anyone, not even her husband. Despite her idealized memory of her husband Otto who died "a hero's death" in World War I, she also faults him for getting killed, for his modest inheritance, for throwing his life away "for nothing." He had abandoned her—"what a selfish cruel thing to do to a wife who adored him! No, no. She would forget, and she would find another husband, a real one this time." At the same time, she knows she must prepare for "an old age of loneliness." She may be forced to work for a living again as a governess, "putting up with insufferable children." Glad to be childless herself, she is disgusted by a mother suckling her baby nearby and hastens away when a little boy almost pees on her.

Frau Rittersdorf is more interested in being clever writing in her notebook than in reporting the thievery by the Spaniards. No one else reports the Spaniards either. Jenny, David, Freytag, and Mrs. Treadwell all witness the shop woman "trying to find out what had been stolen from her." In another shop they watch the Spaniards ransack and steal all they can in a flurry of movement. There the oblivious Frau Schmitt believes it is good "to love one's fellow creature, to have mercy on the poor and the unfortunate." At the same time, as a German racist she faults Freytag for passing himself off as a Christian "when he was in fact married to a Jew." No one tries to stop the Spaniards, just as few Germans tried to stop the Nazis. "It went on, in other plazas, with other witnesses." Frau Hutten appeals to her husband that they should call the police, but the Professor makes excuses, condescending to his wife as Frau Rittersdorf is to everyone, believing that his wife's concern is an example of the "eternal female imbecility of faith" that something can be done to rescue the innocent and oppressed. "'Call the police,' she said, the dear idiot." Little Frau Schmitt is right when, feeling left out by the group that Freytag invites for drinks, she thinks "they were lighthearted careless people, thinking only of themselves."

Fearing for her merchandise a shopkeeper asks Herr Glocken the hunchback to come in and help her guard against the Spanish shoplifters. He follows her "not so much to be of help as for protection." When they come barging into the shop they start touching his hump for luck—"slapping him sharply with open palms, until he could bear no more." He escapes the shop in a panic. Outside he is chased by Ric and Rac until Mrs. Lutz "rose instantly to her duties as a mother: all in a breath, she tripped Ric with her foot and sent him sprawling, seized Rac by the arm, smacked her most satisfyingly, and spoke sternly to Herr Glocken: "'Why did you not defend yourself?'" Though she is hardly an ideal mother to Elsa, the virtues of Mrs. Lutz are the product of motherhood in contrast to the selfishness of sterile Frau Rittersdorf. She also sympathizes with La Condesa though she disapproves of her, lamenting that the aristocratic lady is being punished while "these worse criminals than she should escape without a scratch." At the same time, Frau

Lutz is insensitive to the frightened hunchback, who speaks up against the Spanish gang: “They were stealing everywhere today, they have been cheating on the ship all the time—that raffle!—those children, those little monsters, stole La Condesa’s pearls and threw them overboard!”

Herr Lutz makes excuses for Ric and Rac and questions whether the pearls were real. “Frau Lutz broke into cold indignant speech. ‘My husband is very nearsighted,’ she said, ‘or at least, he does not see well. He cannot possibly know what went on when those children collided with us on deck…. I did see, and I do know, and it was a pearl necklace with a diamond clasp, and those unnatural children stole it and the girl threw it into the sea.” But then Frau Lutz reverses her resistance to evil and capitulates: “It is by no means enough to disturb anyone, we are wrong to concern ourselves with such peccadilloes.” Since the Spanish gang is analogous to the Nazis, her indifference to obvious evil makes it likely that Frau Lutz will regard the extermination camps as “not enough to disturb anyone.” She is like the Germans forced by Allied soldiers to look at the horrible piles of bodies in the camps near their homes. Her husband insults her in return: “My poor wife has the highest principles, and no misdeed is too trivial not to call for hanging at least; I have never known her to overlook the slightest fault in anybody’s character but her own.” Herr Baumgartner the lawyer agrees with the nearsighted Herr Lutz in questioning the evidence against Ric and Rac: “You talk like a lawyer.” They both represent the legal profession in their focus on procedure, willingness to argue a case for anyone no matter how evil, and indifference to whether the accused is guilty or not. They are like the lawyers who defended the Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg.

Ironically, the hunchback becomes the judge. “Herr Glocken was suffering from his sense of failure, of having run away when he should have stood his ground, to witness the zarzuela company do their thieving, to denounce them, to have seen them all arrested and dragged away to the *juzgado*—instead of this heroic conduct, he had run, cravenly…. He had then seen the dancers leaving with their loot, and so had all the others, and yet they stood there, gossiping all around the subject and never once admitting guilt or complicity…. ‘We should have done something, that I know,’ he said to them all, and they all looked down at him with varying degrees of condescension.” This is a multiply ironic high point in *Ship of Fools*: It is ironic that (1) the hunchback feels guilty for not standing up to the gang when he is so handicapped and outnumbered; (2) he is the least physically capable of standing up to the gang yet the only one who feels he was morally obligated to do so; (3) the deformed shortest one is morally elevated above the “normal” ones who are spiritually deformed; (4) the irresponsible ones literally and socially look down on the most responsible one with “condescension”; (5) Frau Lutz accuses the hunchback of cowardice when he is the only one there who faces his moral responsibility. The many such ironies generated by the hunchback are comparable in abundance to those generated by Jim the escaped slave in *Huckleberry Finn.* Even so, all the witnesses of the thievery including the frightened hunchback—who is easy to excuse--collude with evil by not reporting it to the Civil Guards, the police who are readily available and would promptly arrest and jail the gang, preventing their takeover of the ship.

Even the government of the island colludes with evil. The gang escapes on the departing ship and when a frantic woman shopkeeper on the dock screams that she has been robbed, she is ordered to go away by a Civil Guard. “It was part of his duty to guard against such bad propaganda.” After ransacking the island shops, the Spanish gang display their loot without shame, as prizes in their raffle. Frau Hutten cannot wait to see what they got. “It’s all right if you like lace,” says David. Little Frau Schmitt views the stolen goods with disapproval: “For it was stolen, and those people should be denounced and punished. But who would denounce them? And to what authority?” Frau Schmitt shrinks from responsibility and surrenders her conscience, rationalizing that “This was a terrible, evil world and she was helpless in it.” She decides to buy some of the stolen linen. Denny thinks the thievery is all in fun and compares the gala of the Spanish dancers to “one of these hoedowns the greasers are always having around Brownsville.” Frau Baumgartner cannot understand why her husband is so frivolous as to want to attend a party given by such terrible people. He wants to entertain the children. His wife protests that Ric and Rac “threw poor Bebe overboard and caused that poor steerage wretch to be drowned.” He denies that there is any proof: “God must be their judge, not we.” Aptly, he dresses up as a clown—a fool.

Herr Baumgartner leads a parade of children, “twirling a stick like a drum major, doing the goose step, the children goose-stepping after him,” Ric and Rac beating a drum. The goose stepping evokes the Nazi soldiers soon to be parading through the streets of Germany. Jenny the liberal who loves demonstrations

joins the parade and "David held his breath for fear she would break into a goose step; she was more than capable of it." As they march around tables "swinging their legs straight up and out," Herr Baumgartner shouts "Why don't you join us?" Arne Hansen the Socialist, "as self-centered and frank as a five-year-old," makes a hero of the Communist agitator who mocked religion at the funeral of the poor woodcarver, but he is moral enough to object to the Spanish gang: "They blackmail, they cheat, they lie, they steal from everybody all over Santa Cruz, everybody sees, knows—what do we do? Nothing."

Mrs. Treadwell looks into the mirror with her "sixteen-year-old heart" and tries to face reality, not with her conscience as Dr. Schumann does, but with her ego—focusing on her looks. At age 46 she is convinced "It was true, she was old…. I am that unfortunate girl who couldn't grow up." She does not care about the morals of the Spanish gang. "Suppose they did steal the prizes and pick pockets besides?… I get so tired of moral bookkeeping… What do I care what they did, or what they may do? They dance well, they are good-looking…" David the liberal is "chilled to the marrow at this hateful indifference" and pulls away from her. He thinks Mrs. Treadwell behaves like Jenny. "He preferred Mrs. Treadwell's unpretentious rather graceful lack of moral sense to Jenny's restless seeking outlaw nature trying so hard to attach itself to any or at all points to the human beings nearest her: no matter who. It was just that he could not endure promiscuity." But then as soon as he sees Jenny he runs to her.

Herr Rieber is plotting to use the Spanish gala as a means to prevail over Lizzi Spockenkieker, who is determined that "any amorous frolics were only preliminary to a possible march to the altar." Rieber is secretly married with "a family of four who detested him and whom he detested," but he has a daydream of conquest: "After plenty of champagne and tender words, after long waltzing to soft music on deck, she would be melted and oozing like hot cheese on toast." The gala is a costume affair. Lizzi wears a mask and Rieber wears "a white baby bib, and a frilled baby cap sitting on his bald head with strings tied under the chin." He rushes Lizzi to a table that turns out to be assigned to Arne Hansen the big Swede, who is so rude that Rieber vows revenge. Hansen is seated at the same table as Herr Glocken the hunchback, who shows he is a good sport able to laugh at himself by wearing a pink necktie printed with the words "*Girls, follow me*." Lizzi feels insulted by Hansen and takes revenge on the hunchback: "'Will you look at that nasty dwarf,' she said… Why are such horrors allowed to live?'" Rieber says that he has published articles "advocating the extermination of all the unfit, at birth or as soon as they prove themselves unfit in any way…. Not only defective or useless infants, but the old as well—all persons over sixty, or sixty-five, perhaps, or let us say, whenever they lose their usefulness… Jews too, of course, and then all persons of illegitimate mixtures of race…" Lizzi is delighted, "'Then we would not have that dwarf around, nor that dreadful little man in the wheel chair either—nor those Spaniards!'"

The Captain does not stop the gala supposedly in homage to himself, yet he knows the Spanish troupe "were so obviously pimps with their prostitutes disguised as dancers in order to get proper passports, up to their shady tricks night and day…from scrounging money from passengers to stealing right and left from shops in Santa Cruz." He just wonders how they got themselves seated at his table. "What had he been thinking of, to let such disorder thrive under his very eyes, and to consider it of no importance…" Provoked and inspired by American gangster films, he daydreams of "turning one of those really elegant portable machine guns on a riotous mob somewhere, always from a splendidly advantageous position, swiveling it in a half circle, mowing them down in rows." The Captain wants another war. "He reveled secretly in the notion of lawless murderous fury breaking out again and again at any time, anywhere…always among people whom it was lawful to kill, with himself at the center, always in command and control. Nothing worthy of his hopes of violence had ever occurred." The Spanish "gang of petty knaves making themselves a nuisance: beneath his notice, yet he must deal with them."

Instead, the Spanish gang deals with him. They drive him out of the dining room with bravado, toasts, shouts and loud rowdy singing of revolution led by the Cuban students: "All over the salon voices joined in, a large untidy bawling at first which at once settled into a chorus, hands clapping…" Jenny joins in singing the increasingly ribald verses of *La Cucaracha!* until she is the only woman still singing and David is appalled. "Please, David, I can't help it. I'm just as much a prisoner in myself as you are in you. I think this whole thing is wild, and everything about it is crooked, we both know it; but I don't understand why, if you know it is all so wrong, you didn't do something about it—why didn't you let me speak to the police, or tell one of the shopkeepers in time? We saw these people stealing right and left." David says, like a

bystander to the Holocaust, “It was none of our business.” The band plays alternate German and Spanish dance music, evoking contemporary political history—the pact soon to be made between Adolph Hitler and Franco the fascist who would win the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), leading to World War II. Lola the prostitute makes a passionate toast to the “eternal friendship” between the two countries. The gala on the *Vera* likewise leads to assaults, battles, wounds, and retreats.

The unattractive Swiss girl Elsa Lutz is wounded and loses all hope of finding love because she has refused to learn how to dance, a failure of personal diplomacy in ironic contrast to her native Switzerland, which managed to dance out of the war through diplomacy. Also in contrast to pacifist Sweden, the big Swede Arne Hansen tries to seize Amparo by force and the prostitute counterattacks, wounding his foot, his jaw and his tongue. When he sees her dancing with another man, Freytag covets Jenny, “this strange girl who seemed to lack everything he required in a woman and yet disturbed him almost constantly with a sexual desire… He did not even like her.” Likewise the Germans did not like most of the peoples in countries they invaded. When Arne Hansen tries to trip the wildly dancing Lizzi, the boot of her partner Rieber “came down grinding cruelly into his toes,” then Hansen breaks his beer bottle over Rieber’s head, Rieber butts Hansen like a goat, the Cuban students cheer them on and Lizzi flees the scene “uttering the shrill cries of an anguished peahen.” Rieber already needed to get his head examined. A violinist tries to console the hysterical Lizzi, “who showed nothing but the most shameless ingratitude, who would scream ‘Don’t touch me!’ as if she were being raped, every time he tried to take her arm and guide her.” Lizzi is a precursor of Feminists on campuses today. David finds Jenny cuddling and kissing with Freytag and “murder rose in his soul.” Herr Baumgartner is drunk again on their anniversary and his wife tells him their marriage has been “A hell, a little hell on earth from the beginning.” He threatens to jump overboard like the woodcarver but his wife, who always rescues him, compares him to the dog Bebe.

The bride and groom encounter the faith healer being pushed along in his wheel chair, reading a Bible. “As he neared them, he lifted exalted eyes and raised a shaking hand towards them reaching to touch the bride. Her husband felt her shudder deeply and shrink against him. ‘God bless your marriage and make it fruitful,’ said Herr Graf.” The young bride is afraid of him. “Oh, he almost touched me.” Her husband reassures her that “He is only a poor dying man—after all, he wished us well.” The bride “repented at once of her uncharacteristic feelings, and being honest, she knew they were caused by her horror of age and ugliness and sickness and her fear of them, and her greater fear of death.” This dramatizes why people do not want to be touched by the old man, out of revulsion, not fear of being sexually molested. The husband clearly absolves the old man of any impropriety and the bride “repents” her reaction. Again in this scene some Feminist critics have accused the dying old man with “exalted” eyes reading a Bible of being a sexual predator, like the Nazis who condemned innocent people out of prejudice. These Feminists agree with the only accuser of the old man in the novel, Lizzi the liberated fool.

Johann pushes his religious uncle around “hoping he would die.” He is similar to the Feminists by inverting the character of the faith healer, claiming he “pretended to be such a saint and was pure devil.” To him as to the Feminists a devil is a man who refuses to give him what he wants: “I will take it, I will kill you if you don’t give me the money!” The old man pleads with him in anguish, “Don’t throw your life away, my child. Why can’t you be patient just a few days longer, when you have so many years to enjoy after I am gone?” The money (salvation) will be his inheritance from his (Christ-evoking) uncle after he is gone (crucified and ascended to Heaven) if he behaves according to their agreement (Christianity) for a short time (this life) and he will then be able to enjoy it for many years (eternity).

But young Johann is crazed by desire and rages, “’Damn God’s judgment.’ He besieges the old man without mercy and forces him to surrender. The faith healer spends the whole novel trying to bless people and to save the soul of his nephew. When Johann chooses damnation, the old man feels he has failed in his primary responsibility and prays in despair, condemning himself for his failure and giving up his own salvation as punishment: “Heal my sorrows in your darkness, O God, I am blinded in your light…. O God, let me die forever….” No one in the novel makes a greater sacrifice. Once he takes the money, Johann is like Judas. Then he is kind to his uncle, like Judas kissing Jesus, and spends his salvation on sex with a prostitute. He takes possession of Concha. “‘Don’t be such a German!’” she protests as he marched her across the deck. The prose style evokes an invasion: “She expected an onslaught, a violent blind fumbling brutality.” But his occupation of her cabin is peaceful and she collaborates.

The climax of the analogies between the coming war and current personal relations is the blundering drunken attempt by Denny to rape Mrs. Treadwell and her fierce revenge. After she dances with a young officer, Mrs. Treadwell enjoys his attentions while he walks her around the ship. She drinks six different kinds of liquor and kisses the purser fondly. "Her partner of the evening appeared to expect her then to kiss him," but she puts him off. Soon afterward he took her and "kissed her violently on her mouth." She feels like she is getting bitten and pulls away, provoking his anger. Politely, they part, but without his arm to lean upon, Mrs. Treadwell does not tread well: "She caught her sandal on the metal-edged tread and tore the heel off." Back in her cabin she "began to amuse herself with painting a different face on her own, as she used to do for fancy dress balls." She "drew over her rather thin lips a large, deep scarlet, glistening mouth, with square corners, a shape of unsurpassed savagery and sensuality." She imagines she could have "gone to the party masked as one of the zarzuela company." She reverts to playing the slut as she did in desperation to her unfaithful husband, having already behaved like one of the prostitutes by teasing the young officer. Rather than playing the slut with a man, she plays solitaire in her cabin, beginning to feel that her mask of sensuality is a "revelation of something sinister in the depths of her character…. There were depths in her, where were hidden all sorts of unpleasant traits she would detest in anyone else, much more in herself." Lizzi falls into the cabin drunk, escorted from the fight on the dance floor by a young member of the band who mistakes Mrs. Treadwell for one of the Spanish dancers.

Suddenly at the door there is a "ferocious beating and kicking, and drunken shouting." It is Denny making threats to Pastora the prostitute, "descriptions of the Gothic excesses he intended to commit upon Pastora's person, of which rape would be the merest preliminary." Taking her time, Mrs. Treadwell finally opens the door. Denny "surged forward and seized the front of her gown, wrung it into a rag and said, 'Come out here, you whore… I'm goin' to break every bone in you.' He gave a twist to her front, which wrenched her breast so painfully she almost went off balance." Denny persists in mistaking her for the Spanish dancer and she has to push him away and he falls down. "Mrs. Treadwell doubled her fist and struck him sharply, again and again, in the mouth, on the cheek, on the nose. The blows hurt her hand and seemed to make no impression on Denny. He moved as if he might get up. Feeling her sandal under her, she took it off and held it firmly by the sole and beat him in the face and head with the heel… The sharp metal-capped high heel at every blow broke the skin in small half moons that slowly turned scarlet, and as they multiplied on his forehead, cheeks, chin, lips, Mrs. Treadwell grew cold with fright at what she was doing, yet could not for her life stop herself." After all, "he might get up."

When a steward arrives with her other sandal, she lies and says she found Denny in that state, though it is clear that Mrs. Treadwell has tread well all over the face of her assailant. One heel deserves another. A critic from Texas in sympathy with a fellow Texan expressed dismay that she is excessive in punishing the rapist, but the steward who examines Denny declares that "It is not serious." Mrs. Treadwell's revenge is analogous to allied fire bombing of Germany during the war, criticized especially by Germans as excessive, except that it was deadly serious. The hip American novelist Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., who was a prisoner of war in Dresden, made that criticism after the city got leveled, though he admitted in interviews that the bombing might have been necessary to discourage Germans from starting a *third* world war for revenge. Mrs. Treadwell looks in the mirror and "smiled delightedly at her hideous wicked face in the looking glass. In her joy and excitement, she snatched off her bloodstained sandal and kissed it." Then she washes her face, throws her sandals overboard—as if disarming--ties her hair in her "Alice in Wonderland ribbon" and goes to bed "like a good little girl who has finished her prayers."

Dr. Schumann tends the wounded, but as the old faith healer said, he can do nothing for sick souls. "Nearly every woman still visible showed signs of having been recently in tears, or a temper, or both." Called to attend Herr Rieber, he finds the anti-Semite being cared for by his cabin mate Lowenthal—reluctantly of course, but humanely--"wringing out towels in cold water and laying them on top of Herr Rieber's head." Rieber the pig would not do the same for a Jew. After treating and medicating him, Dr. Schumann ironically says to Lowenthal, "I think you don't have to worry about him any more." In just a few years, Rieber will be among those with sick souls who might send Lowenthal to a gas chamber. The doctor tends Denny after the hunchback sends for him and he decides wrongly that the wounds on Denny's face were made by one of the Spanish dancers. The hunchback says, "Confidentially, dear Doctor, he is a species of monster, certainly not quite human." Ironically, this is what many people have been saying about the hunchback, calling attention to the fact that true monstrosity is not physical but spiritual. When the

exhausted Dr. Schumann is finally able to lie down himself and rest, he no longer cares for anybody, but then he "crossed himself" and with his Christianity he rejects his "bitter thoughts."

By the time the Spanish dancers start their show, the expected audience has all but dispersed. Watching one of them dance, Lowenthal is repulsed, but is contrasted to Denny in rejecting the argument that such a woman is "only just live meat." He is angered when he finds that Rieber has taken his bed. "Maybe for once I should like to come back somewhere and not find somebody pushing me out." Dr. Schumann faults him for "this show of selfishness" and accuses the Jew of acting like a martyr. To the Captain he laments that this voyage is a disaster, whereas the Captain continues to underestimate all the evil aboard his ship, calling all of it merely "misdemeanors." Even Dr. Schumann doubts that the pearl necklace was stolen and that the Spanish dancers robbed many shops in Santa Cruz: "Nothing is proved." This is the attitude that prevailed in the world toward the horrors of the extermination camps, until the liberation and the release of newsreel footage. Dr. Schumann's doubt is based on the fact that "At no time did anyone feel it was his business to interfere or even to take particular notice." The Captain, who is negligent himself, compliments the passengers for this: "That was very prudent." This is the self-protective attitude taken by most Germans toward the evils of the Nazis.

The ship authorities who most ought to be informed are misguided. The Captain attributes the attack on Denny to a shipboard romance, while Dr. Schumann is unaware that the attack on Rieber was provoked when the pig stomped on Hansen's toes. The steward who returned the heel of her sandal to Mrs. Treadwell knows she wounded Denny. He dislikes both of them and he wishes for a way to "get even with her" for acting superior to him. Ironically, the doctor is angered when the Captain says that he failed in his treatment of La Condesa: "I gather that her condition worsened very much in your hands"--exactly the accusation the guilty doctor has made himself. The Spanish gangsters fixed their raffle, one of the evil twins drew the tickets out of an open basket and the dancers won nearly all the prizes. Denny still thinks he got attacked by Pastora with "an ice pick" and the reader is glad that Mrs. Treadwell gets away with her revenge. With a bad hangover, David is "hunched and sick" both physically and spiritually when he leaves the frightened hunchback alone in their cabin with Denny. In his jealousy he decides to abandon Jenny also and get off the ship at the next port. "The only reason you stayed nearly faithful to me is that you were too drunk to be interesting to your seducer." Jenny blames David, taking no responsibility herself for their mutual sabotage of love. She calls him a monster—which he is, certainly more so than the hunchback--and claims that he welcomes a reason to abandon her. His thoughts later confirm her accusation, that "one day this won't matter either, it will help finish things off."

Mrs. Treadwell observes the faces of the Baumgartners and thinks "It was plain they too had suffered some sort of shabby little incident during the night." Her inference, the only italicized passage in the novel, applies to Herr Baumgartner, Jenny, David, the Huttens, Frau Rittersdorf, La Condesa, Elsa Lutz, and Mrs. Treadwell herself: "What they were saying to each other was only, *Love me, love me in spite of all! Whether or not I love you, whether I am fit to love, whether you are able to love, even if there is no such thing as love, love me!*" Mrs. Treadwell faces truths about herself as Dr. Schumann has, lamenting "her incurable grief over the failure of love." She regrets her "childish refusal to admit and accept on some term or other the difference between what one hoped was true [liberalism] and what one discovers to be the mere laws of the human condition? [conservatism] She had been hurt, she had recovered, and what had it all been but a foolish piece of romantic carelessness?" This passage expresses the main project of the Realist movement that began in the late 19th century, to debunk Romanticism.

The "laws of the human condition" include human nature, which is disposed to selfishness and other faults. In the Christian vision of this novel, humans are fallen beings in a fallen world and can only be saved by Jesus. In one of their occasional good moments together, Jenny evokes this vision when she says to David, "Darling, when you're like this, I could creep back inside and be your rib again!" This would be regressing to innocence without responsibility, to spiritual unity through love of each other rather than through love of God. As romantic liberals Jenny and David keep repeating the archetypal Fall of Adam and Eve because they remain immature in their egocentricity.

The slick oil man Freytag tells Jenny, "You haven't got anything to be sorry for." They were both too drunk for her to be unfaithful to David, which disappoints and makes her angry: "For all the trouble you've

made me, I should have had *something* out of it! Something more than trouble!" Now she snubs him and this annoys Frey-*tag* and he reduces her to negative characteristics: "Even after he reminded himself again that she was not really attractive, a little nobody not worth a man's attention, just a moody, shallow neurotic American girl pretending to herself she was an artist to give herself false importance—the whole series of belittling *tags* seemed inadequate to his sense of injury, his desire for revenge of some kind on her." [italics added] Ironically, the aggrieved Freytag himself exhibits characteristics of people who got him dismissed from the Captain's table. He feels superior, lacks charity, and is vindictive. And he is just as "shallow" as Jenny. Out of "pure lust" he would be unfaithful to his Jewish wife any time he feels like it. He resents Mrs. Treadwell for not approaching him again so that he can snub her, thinking "Maybe American women are all of them rude."

As the ship nears Germany, the Captain is already at war. "His contention, so the gossip ran, was that his was a German ship sailing through enemy waters." His defensive mindset causes uncertainty and confusion about where the ship is going next. Jenny and David, defensive with each other, have been arguing and changing their minds about where they are going next throughout the voyage. It is highly ironic when the Captain raises his voice to declare that "The French, the Americans, the British…they can do as they like, it is only the Germans who need not expect any justice, or rather, even decency at this point." Germany would soon initiate the most destructive war in history, an epitome of injustice, and go down in history for its atrocities as the most barbaric indecent modern nation. The passengers have no idea what is coming. "Their minds were closing in and folding up once more around their own concerns." Dr. Schumann tells Denny that it was not the Spanish dancer Pastora who attacked him but Mrs. Treadwell, "that modest and gentle lady whom you somehow succeeded in exasperating beyond bounds." She has disembarked for Paris and is out of danger from the vindictive Denny. Dr. Schumann has protected her by withholding this information, much as he tried to protect La Condesa. He also protects the steward who informed him by not divulging his name to Denny, "feeling a real glow of some kind of malicious satisfaction mixed with moral unction: for once justice was being done in the most roundabout and no doubt reprehensible way, but it did Dr. Schumann's heart good to see it at work." The reader is likely to agree with him, identifying in the end with the conscientious doctor.

Like most of its episodes the novel ends in ironic anticlimax, realistic understatement that expresses the prevailing unawareness of what is coming. The more a reader knows about the rise of Nazism and World War II the more ironic the ending. Jenny and David keep making plans. Elsa Lutz feels like she is going home to a kind of heaven. The German passengers think they are going to be able to go on with their lives as they intend, rather than be caught up and perhaps destroyed in a cataclysm. A dramatic climax would be melodramatic compared to the global war about to break out, making individual concerns seem trivial. The Germans disembark "as if they approached a lighted altar, they prepared to set their feet once more upon the holy earth of their Fatherland." They do not know their gangplank leads downward to the hell of Hitler. Freytag is diplomatic toward the two Americans, Jenny and David, shaking hands. Soon they will be on opposite sides in the war. Jenny and David are diplomatic with each other, likewise on opposite sides, both expecting to break up but trying to prolong their fun: "The sight of her weakness and defeat gave him pleasure like no other," while Jenny purrs at the prospect of sex.

In the last paragraph of the novel the ship's band plays "Tannenbaum" as the last passengers walk down the gangplank. This is traditional German music associated with Christmas, at a time when militant Nazis were heralding Hitler as a new Christ, the savior of Germany. The propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* opens with Hitler literally descending from the sky in an airplane, emerging in a white uniform and being heralded by trumpets, as the true Christ will be at the end of time. The final image in *Ship of Fools* is a boy in the ship's band with a trumpet "who looked as if he had never had enough to eat in his life, nor a kind word from anybody." He represents the innocent victims drawn into the war, the poor and the uneducated. Soon he will probably join the Hitler Youth, since he "did not know what he was going to do next." He stares ahead "with blinded eyes" because he loves and trusts his country. "God bless you," he says to this port of entry, "as if the town were a human being, a good and dear and trusted friend." Satire of the German upper class is replaced at the end by pathos and pity. Porter ends her novel in a spirit of charity toward the many innocent lower class Germans, like the Spaniards in the steerage of the ship, who would be victims of the coming war. The film adaptation of *Ship of Fools* shows the Nordic boy blow his trumpet with a banner

hanging from it of a large black swastika, as if proudly heralding the triumph of Nazism. In contrast, Porter ends by showing the innocent boy cleaning his trumpet and appealing to God.

REBUTTAL TO CRITICISM

The negative critics have been routed. Their ship has sunk. Over the years the accumulating analyses by many discerning critics have demonstrated that *Ship of Fools* is the last great masterpiece of Modernism—a landmark of literary history. One characteristic of a masterpiece is that it gets attacked for being original. Even *Moby-Dick* got mostly bad reviews. Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein hated *Ulysses* (1922), the most influential innovative fiction of the 20th century, and it got censored in the United States until 1933. Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's "The Waste Land" (1922), another masterpiece that got some terrible reviews, are the greatest achievements that mark the beginning of literary Modernism in America. *Ship of Fools* (1962) marks the end of the Modernist movement.

Ulysses is famous for its many correspondences between an ancient text and the present. *Ship of Fools* likewise contains many correspondences between an ancient text and the present, while also containing many prefigurations of the Nazi regime—pointing both backward and forward in history. *Ship of Fools* also became a bestseller, popular for colorful descriptions, vivid dramatic scenes, and brilliant characterizations. There are also many similarities between Porter's work and *The Magic Mountain* (1924) by the German Thomas Mann: Both are complex blends of Realism and Modernist symbolism, consistently ironic, with allegorical characters. Both works have been challenging to critics—over many of their heads in the case of Porter. Both use the metaphor of sickness, Mann to analyze the psychological sources of World War I in human nature and Porter to analyze the psychological sources of World War II.

One of only eleven American novels containing multiple coinciding allegories, *Ship of Fools* contains 3 coinciding allegories evoked by the metaphor of the ship: (1) the ship of the world; (2) the ship of state (the ship corresponds to the government of Germany in 1931 that soon got taken over by Captain Hitler); and (3) the ship of the individual soul in quest of salvation. Melville used this ship metaphor repeatedly in his fictions set at sea, but his *The Confidence-Man* (1852), set on a Mississippi River steamboat, is his novel most comparable to *Ship of Fools* in its pessimistic view of human nature—which is essentially the same as the Christian view: Humans are corrupted by selfishness, pride and other faults exposed in both novels. Liberals who do not believe they are ever wrong resent such affronts to their self-esteem.

Porter blends 6 traditional literary modes into an organic whole: (1) Allegory; (2) Realism; (3) Satire; (4) Confession; (5) Historical Novel; (6) Modernism. The most evident mode is Realism in the tradition of Henry James, deep and extensive psychological analysis of character, manners and morals. *Ship of Fools* is a model of Realism in its masterful dialogue, varieties of speech, accurate technical details, objectivity, and vision of life. The ironic tone has a sharp edge of Satire. The book is also a discreet religious Confession in the tradition of St. Augustine, as Porter purges her soul by projecting aspects of herself into at least one character—Mrs. Treadwell--bases other characters on former lovers and husbands, and declared "I am a passenger on that ship." In its time, settings, themes, and correspondences between some characters and real people, this is an Historical Novel. *Ship of Fools* is Modernist in its multiple points of view, interior monologues, analogies between the present and the past and future, correspondences to an ancient text, blending of diverse literary modes, cosmic vision, and varying of styles.

Discerning critics of the novel have compared Porter to Juvenal, Horace, Sebastian Brant, Dante, Swift, Sterne, Balzac, Dickens, George Eliot, Melville, Flaubert, T. S. Eliot, Joyce, Mann, Kafka, Faulkner, Camus, and to the artists Hieronymus Bosch, Albrecht Durer, Frans Hals, and Goya. All critics, even her detractors, allow that Porter is one of the greatest short story writers of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it became a commonplace among her detractors that the quality of her writing declined in her attempt at a long novel. On the contrary, in his analysis of style in *Ship of Fools*, Robert Heilman praises Porter for her "great range" and her "superiority in achievement." She has an "accurately analytical style that is the agent of a mature psychic and moral understanding." He praises Porter's diversity, virtuosity, elegance, clarity, precision, strength, grace, perceptiveness, vividness, detailed visualization, penetration, symbolism, inclusive sweep, and skill in compositional patterns. "Here is a writer…composing out of her own genius, and yet in her use of language exhibiting admirable qualities that seem akin to those of distinguished

predecessors" Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Tobias Smollett, and Joseph Conrad. Any reader sensitive to language should be able to enjoy *Ship of Fools* for the quality of the writing alone.

The word *purgatory* in the first sentence of the novel and the epigraph from St. Paul before the last section establish a Christian perspective ignored by Postmodernist critics, whose analyses are atheistic. The conscience is represented best in the novel by Dr. Schumann and Herr Glocken the hunchback. The doctor is a Catholic who calls the evil twins Ric and Rac demons possessed by the Devil—evoking the religious allegory of salvation. At the opposite end of the religious spectrum from the wild Ric and Rac are the two complacent priests who are "much alike" and personify the current ineffectuality of the Church in the world. Nobody can stop Ric and Rac just as nobody can stop Hitler. The priests do not even try. There are 5 major events in the novel: (1) the boarding of the ship by suffering workers; (2) the dismissal of Freytag from the Captain's table because he has a Jewish wife; (3) the woodcarver's sacrifice of his life to save a dog, evoking Christ; (4) the looting of shops by the Spanish dancers that is ignored though observed by many; (5) the takeover of the ship by the dancers. These events are moral tests that are all failed by nearly all the characters and by all the negative critics of *Ship of Fools*. Responses to each event express the souls of the responders. The negative critics also miss or grotesquely falsify the significance of the dying old Herr Graf, the most Christlike character, representing true religious faith. The critic Darlene Unrue calls him a "sexually repressed sadist and religious fanatic"! She is more wrong about him than any fool on the ship. The name of God occurs 176 times in the novel, twice in the final sentence. The recurrent expressions "God knows," "for God's sake," and "God help us" are religious motifs throughout. Most of the characters are headed from purgatory to hell on earth and Hell hereafter.

Critics who claimed there is "no plot" in *Ship of Fools* are less perceptive than most passengers on the ship, who at least detect the plot of the Spanish dancers. These critics miss both that plot and one of the most momentous plots in history: The takeover of the German ship by the Spanish dancers is analogous to the impending takeover of Germany by the Nazis, who are plotting to take over the world. A literary plot is a narrative that dramatizes causes and effects. *Ship of Fools* dramatizes the psychological and social causes of World War II and dramatizes the effects through analogy and prefigurations such as when Rieber declares of the poor steerage passengers, "I would put them all in a big oven and turn on the gas." The Spanish dancers propose a pact between Spain and Germany to the Captain, which evokes the pact between the fascist Franco and Adolph Hitler during the Spanish Civil War that began soon after the action of this novel. To evoke massive historical plots that were soon to overwhelm individual lives, Porter abandons the convention of a single protagonist so as not to exaggerate the importance of any one individual, and she frequently ends scenes with ironic emphasis on the mundane and petty. There are over a dozen individual plots involving diverse relationships and encounters among the passengers that generate suspense, most significantly those of David and Jenny and of Dr. Schumann and La Condesa.

Literary history contributed to making the negative critics of *Ship of Fools* look foolish. They postured as defenders of the highest literary standards, yet they belittled a masterpiece at the very time these standards were collapsing. By 1962 Postmodernism was replacing Modernism, as marked in 1963 by the publication of *V.*, the first novel of Thomas Pynchon—the most hip, popular, celebrated, elite, awarded and representative Postmodernist fiction writer in America. Porter the Christian got criticized for pessimism about human nature, whereas Pynchon the atheist cynic is pessimistic about everything. Blind critics saw no "soul of humanity" in *Ship of Fools*, whereas Pynchon does not even believe in the soul. Complaints were made about Porter's characterization—which is brilliant—whereas there is no characterization at all in Pynchon. All his characters are cartoon projections of his ideas. Complaints were made by inattentive critics that there is no dramatic tension in *Ship of Fools*, whereas in Pynchon there can be no dramatic tension because he writes intellectual fantasies without any real people in them. Complaints were made that Porter's realistic ending lacks force—missing the psychological forces of fascism evoked throughout the book and the implicit presence of no less a force than Adolph Hitler—whereas Pynchon delights in trivial open endings deprived of any force at all by ambiguity.

The dunce cap awarded to the Most Foolish Critic goes to Theodore Solotaroff for attacking *Ship of Fools* as if the author had once humiliated him by rejecting his advances. Such critics are like the most immoral passengers in their (1) prejudice and injustice, as by lumping all the characters together with negative generalizations as the Nazis do to the Jews; (2) dismissing the problems of others as tedious and

"dull"; (3) disregarding the significance of the woodcarver—a Christ-evoking figure—and his sacrifice of his life; (4) overlooking the dying old faith healer as the Christlike personification of dying religious faith in the 20th century. Secular critics are too prejudiced against religious content to see it.

The most ridiculous allegation by fools was that *Ship of Fools* is too negative and hopeless. These critics had no historical awareness. Everyone else knew that World War II was *very* negative, but that civilization was in fact saved in the end. Porter perfectly evokes the causes of the war and her novel derives great power from history—from the collective knowledge of what happened next in Germany and in Spain. Most of the negative critics are liberals who would prefer hopeful sentimentality to the truth. They would have improved the ending of the film adaptation of *The Diary of Anne Frank* by showing happy Nazi children pausing at play, waving goodbye to Anne as she is driven off to a gas chamber.

Michael Hollister (2017)