CHAPTER - V

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Most nations in the world have certain myths about them which clever and ambitious politicians have exploited to the maximum to further their desires. They make all-out efforts to make the people believe that the myths are realities. Once the multitude takes them as realities the leaders can direct them to any course they choose without much resistance from them. The ruler-ruled relationship will become stronger than ever before.

As has been pointed out in page 86 Miss Porter has categorically stated that all her writings are "based on real experiences either her own or others". Through her clear observation and careful analysis of whatever she experienced she came to the conclusion that there was an attempt by evil forces "to put the human spirit in a mould..., to compress the individual into the lowest common denominator in human life". ‘Race’ was an effective tool in the hands of many leaders during the pre-war days to create mass hysteria and spread hatred to those who belong to other Races.

The veiled charge that Miss Porter herself is guilty of holding some anti-Semitic views is untenable. In her speeches and fictional works she had exposed the devilish attempts of Hitler to unify the Germans, propagating the Nordic superiority theory. Moreover the point that she was not an anti-Semite gains validity when we find that Miss Porter herself had said about her feeling when she had seen Hitler marching down a Berlin street.

I knew instantly, the minute I put my face in the place and saw Hitler going along in that great six wheel wagon of his down the street, standing in the middle while people went right upto him throwing rose petals and violets and confetti and screaming at him with hysterical joy. I stood there and I knew - I went through five revolutions in Mexico, what was happening².

To Henry Allen also she had spoken about her aversion to the racism of Hitler. "One time in Berlin, I was the only American woman around, so I got invited to dinner by the Correspondent for the Chicago Review and the guests were Hitler, Goring and Goebbels. They all arrived late, each with his beautiful blond Aryan body guard".³ The expression ‘blond Aryan body guard’ is neither a compliment nor an agreement. These statements of Miss Porter may help us in warding off the misconception that she herself was an anti-Jew.

² Josephine Noak, "Katherine Anne Porter Makes a Feast of Life", Katherine Anne Porter : Conversations, p.178.

³ Ibid., p.166.
Some of her statements and stories may create an impression that her attitude to the Blacks was not always without prejudice. To Roy Newquist she said in 1965 about the American works shown in Europe in 1952:

What did we send? Four saints in three acts - or are the numbers the other way around? With a Negro Company, can you imagine, this as representing the American arts?... The Negroes were extremely good singers and dancers, and it was an amusing little show; but was that the best we could send?.

This is actually the moral indignation of an artist of high calibre and to read between lines will be twisting the truth.

She has written short stories where Black characters play an important role. They live among the Whites mainly as servants. Their personalities and behaviour are of interest chiefly in the way they reflect and to some extent influence the lives of the Whites. Nannie and her husband Jimbilly in 'The Journey' are two ex-slaves. Old Nannie is the 'Black shadow' of Sophia Jane, who pathetically asserts herself only after the mistress is dead in 'The last Leaf' by moving out of the 'Big house' to a cabin of her own. "Uncle Jimbilly, her husband of convenience tries to return to her, but she could not spend the rest of her life waiting on him".  

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4 Josephine Noak, "Katherine Anne Porter Makes a Feast of Life", Katherine Anne Porter: Conversations, p.103.

5 Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick Katherine Anne Porter, p.45.
The characterisation of the Black girl Dicey, who is little Miranda’s nurse in ‘The circus’ is memorable for her individuality and her insight into the typical psychology of the Negro servants. There is a trenchant criticism of Southern White paternalism, the conventional hypocritical pretence of the masters that they regard the Black as real members of the family. "The hideous institution family" even in comparatively enlightened households like that of Miranda’s deny the Blacks full human dignity. It may be because Miss Porter, like Miranda, was raised in a way that prevented her from knowing any ‘Negroes’ during her formative years except on terms dictated by the system of social caste. "Miss Porter never attempted a full scale characterization of a Black, who is interesting primarily in his or her own right".6

Only in ‘Magic’ Miss Porter distinctly identifies with the Black women. Here too, the Black consciousness is not directly explored, and she has to evaluate her fortune in terms of the White households in which she serves. But in the story she is in complete control of the situation. The White woman, to whom she is talking to is interesting only for her reactions to the words of the Black.

Generally her treatment of the Black characters is realistic and sympathetic notwithstanding the fact that some readers may find a patronising tone in some of her observations. It is true that she does not vehemently oppose the treatment

6 John Edward Hardy, Katherine Anne Porter, p.41.
meted out to the Blacks by the Whites. Just before accepting an appointment as the Regent’s Professor at the University of California at Riverside Miss Porter told a *Time Magazine* reporter (July 28, 1961) that she wanted to write about two wonderful old slaves who were her grandmother’s companions. But she would not do it because some unreasonable people might say that she was in favour of treating the Negroes as second rate citizens. When Barbara Thompson pointed out to Miss Porter that "[she] seemed to have felt little of the peculiarly Southern preoccupation with racial guilt and the death of the old agrarian life" Miss Porter replied:

.... I belong to the guiltridden white-pillar crowd myself, but it just didn’t rub off on me. Maybe I’m not just Jewish enough, or Puritan enough, to feel that the sins of the father are visited on the third and fourth generations. Or may be it’s because of my Europen influences — in Texas and Louisiana. The Europeans didn’t have slaves themselves as late as my family did, but they still thought slavery was quite natural.... But, you know, I am always restless, always a roving spirit.7

An unprejudiced reading of her fiction and similar statements of the author exonerate Miss Porter of the charge of Racism. Deliberate belittling of the human personality of the Blacks or torturing them in the name of Race cannot be seen in her fiction.

7 Barbara Thompson, "Katherine Anne Porter : An Interview", *Katherine Anne Porter; Conversations*, p.83.
Miss Porter’s voyage to Germany and her meeting with Hitler and Goebbels convinced her that Germany was trying to convert the myth of Nordic superiority to a reality through seemingly rational arguments and continuous propaganda. Her experience as a journalist helped her assess the situation correctly and foresee what was in store for Germany and other European countries. Miss Porter was not a ‘War novelist’, but she knew it for certain that ‘race’ was going to be a major cause of confrontations during the critical years ahead.

The term ‘Race’ is used by different people in quite different senses. When it is used to denote one of the major divisions of mankind like Black and White or to specify the actual human material of a particular country, it is harmless. But it is absolutely meaningless and dangerous to equate a nation with a race in unequivocal terms and this was exactly what the Germans did. A nation is a group of people with a common tract of country bound together in a common state by common history, common sentiments and common social organisation. So to equate a race to a nation is illogical. The inhuman racist tendencies the Germans developed was the result of an attempt to justify nationalism on a non-nationalistic basis.

*Ship of Fools* testifies that superiority of any Race is only a myth and self-exaltation and persecution of others are bound to result from that. The German way of propagating themselves to be the only pure race was illogical and dangerous to the entire humanity. A cultural reorientation of the nationalist ideal
alone can save humanity. In the first part of the novel itself she gives the reader certain clues about the racist tendencies of the Germans.

A young Indian boy is killed by mistake in the bombing of the Swedish Embassy. It makes almost no impression on the travellers, and they are not at all concerned about the Indian arrested by police. According to Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick, "Herr Rieber predicts the man will be shot, but his pre-Nazi mentality is not to be trusted — he wants all inferior races shot or put into gas ovens". Racial obsession starts unfolding itself and as the journey progresses we see how it takes hold of many others.

The S.S. Vera is a German ship with a German Crew and German Officers. Germans form the largest ethnic group among the cabin passengers. Captain Thiele is a racist who firmly believes in the racial superiority of Germans. In the early part of the voyage itself he exhibits his feelings of racial superiority and anti-Jewish sentiments. When the Germans salute him, he returns the courtesy. When Lowenthal, the Jew rather nervously ventures to salute him the Captian looks straight through him. The Captain had already made arrangements that Lowenthal should be given a table separately for his dinner and should not be accommodated on the Captain’s table. Through this despicable character Miss Porter clearly

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8 Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick *Katherine Anne Porter*, p.115.
intends her readers to recognise the kind of Germans in authority on whom Hitler was principally to depend for his political success.

His obsession with purity of race drove him to make separate seating arrangement for Freytag, a German national with a Jewish wife. Almost all the Germans support the Captain in these inhuman actions. This social and psychological malady of the Germans makes it miserable for the members who belong to other ethnic groups in the ship.

Herr Wilhelm Freytag, a German Lutheran Christian has a Jewish wife Mary Champaigne. In all good faith he confided this fact to an American divorcee. Mrs. Treadwell. She is unforgivably careless and without thinking about the consequences speaks about it to Fraulein Lizzi SpokenKieker, a German racist. This gains circulation and reaches the ears of the Captain. Freytag is forced to give up his place at the Captain’s table. Nobody is willing to make any effective protest to the Captain. Instead most of them rally round the Captain and praise him for his inhuman action. Some of the Germans even air the opinion that this is too small a punishment for the crime of marrying a Jewish woman. For them by marrying Mary, Freytag was betraying the fatherland. The myth about the superiority and purity has completely blinded them to genuine human sentiments.
The racist Germans and Jews make Freytag's life miserable right from the beginning. On one occasion his pent up feeling finds expression. "Oh, God", said Wilhelm Freytag almost aloud. Then he smiled to himself a little grimly. 'God of Israel', he added 'where are you?' and turned into the passage leading to his cabin.  

German critics of course could not take the Freytag episodes as depicted by Miss Porter kindly. Norbert Muhlen in Der Monat for December 1962 complained that the German characters were cliches, and he objected to Porter's presenting Germans in 1931 as boycotting a German married to a Jew. "Americans had to be told, ... [that] about half of the Jewish marriages, were mixed marriages and that within the commercial society to which the character Freytag in the novel belonged, hardly any one was discriminated against because of a Jewish Wife." It is only natural that German critics have to defend their case as effectively as they can. But Miss Porter had no favourites and the Jews also are not spared by her.

Miss Porter describes this incident in detail through the eyes of many characters. She shows the reader that this unholy clubbing of nationalism and race was with the purpose of justifying the one with the help of the other. The evil

*Ship of Fools*, p.64.

10 George Hendrick, *Katherine Anne Porten*, p.103
doers have bravado and animal ferocity but people like Dr. Schumann with human considerations remain silent spectators.

The willingness to send Freytag away from the Captain's table because of his Jewish wife is a brilliant parable of the rise of Nazism and anti-Semitism. The pride in race, the self-satisfaction of the remaining Germans, the failure of the intellectual Doctor Scumann to defend Freytag — all are realistic and at the same time symbolic. 11

The Germans as they are depicted in the novel and in reality are the products of an authoritarian culture and hence authoritarian, autocratic and sentimental. Their conviction about Nordic superiority - German superiority at that-takes them to many dangerous extremes. To professor Hutten racial purity is an obsession and he carries it to a very ridiculous extent. He is proud of his bulldog. "It was a consolation to remember that Bebe was an English bulldog of Champion stock, of distinguished if not flawless ancestry; he had been awarded blue and purple ribbon without number in creditable shows. Now he was a trifle aged perhaps and out of training, but he was still able and willing to defend the master and mistress and incidentally himself against all attacks". 12 Though he is talking about a dog, it is again the feeling of superiority that exercises his mind. Being the member of the flawless German race he too can defeat his enemies and defend himself against any attack.

11 George Hendrick, *Katherine Anne Porter*, P.138

12 *Ship of Fools*, p.81.
Professor Hutten's thoughts have a representative significance in the novel. He commands the respect of most of the Germans and his views are usually endorsed by others. His anti-Semitic utterances are approved by them. He maintains that the Jews call themselves a race and it is absurd. Herr Rieber's conclusion that the "Jews are utter mongrels to the last degree from every dreg of every race and nation", 13 gets the endorsement of the Professor. Frau Rittersdorf gets encouragement from this and remarks: "It is only their God who chose them we must remember, we are under no obligation to emulate his poor tastes." 14 All this talk takes place in the presence of Freytag and the motive is to insult him. Herr Rieber also asserts that the German nation, the "blood stream of their race" shall be cleaned of the poison of the Jews. It is this purification theory which was put into actual practice by Hitler and his lieutenants.

The idea of Nordic Superiority was propagated by the leaders mainly to drive out and if possible to annihilate the Jews. Yet they wanted to hide the real motives, especially before Hitler took over as the Chancellor. There were attempts to hoodwink the outside world, saying that though the Jews belong to the Semitic race it was on extra-racial and economic grounds that they were against them.

13 *Ship of Fools*, p.228

14 Ibid., p.229.
Herr Rieber remarks: "I am not an anti-Semite at all .... I am very fond of Arabs. I lived among them once and I found them very good people". Hitler also used to say that Germans were against only the Jews and not against other sections of the Semitic race. But the fact remains that the Jews were the most powerful among the Semites and others like the Arabs were not of any real stature, politically or economically at that time. Moreover there was a feeling among many Germans that by frequent migrations to different parts of the world in the course of centuries, the Jewish blood has become impure and by marrying some German nationals they were polluting the purity of the German race. As has been pointed out earlier, for the Germans, the nation was synonymous with race.

Frau Rittersdorf's opinions are more ridiculous. She is a racist to the core and worse than many other protagonists of Nordic supremacy. In comparison with her, even the Captain appears to be a shade better. "A German woman should not marry into a dark race, even if the candidate is of high Spanish blood, of the ruling caste of sufficient wealth". Her contention is that Jewish and Moorish blood might have polluted the purity of Spanish blood. She is not only anti-Jewish but also against all dark races. It is significant to note that she writes her unreasonable and illogical conclusions on race in her diary as her avowed conviction.

15 Ship of Fools, P.231
16 Ibid., p.34.
History bears testimony to the fact that "Purity of race" was much capitalised by Hitler to come to power and sustain it. Frau Schmitt, the widow cursing herself though less intense in her attitude, follows the path of Frau Rittersdorf. It is a great consolation for her to observe that the majority of the cabin passengers belong to the "pure race" and she too belongs to that race.

The Captain rebukes her for showing sympathy to the wood-carver who lost his life in an attempt to save the bull dog thrown overboard by Ric and Rac. She feels proud in being rebuked by the Captain, a symbol of the supeior race. "Her heart expanded and swam easily in the wave of blood kinship with her great and glorious race, even though she might be its smallest, its least considerable member. Yet observe her many privileges." 17 It is worthy to note that in the earlier decades German women were not forthcoming like this on racial issues. By the time it came to the turn of Hitler, women had already started thinking on racial lines. He indoctrinated them further and converted the entire nation to a monolithic structure based on race-consciousness.

Miss Porter does not take sides and Lowenthal the Jew, a representative of the oppressed community also is presented as a fool. Miss Porter has extended her allegory to the universal human condition. She shows the racism of Lowenthal also. This Jew who trades on Catholic religious articles is a victim of German

17 Ship of Fools, p.248.
prejudice. But he has his share of unlimited folly. In fact there are not many redeeming features in him. He has many points of similarity to Shakespeare's Shylock.

For him everything is business and his only ambition in life is to make money. "There is money in it", Lowenthal says; it has nothing at all to do with religion, it is just business. In his hunt for wealth he is willing to throw ethics and morality to the winds. On his part, he has many of the despicable traits of the Germans. He is self-satisfied and brags about his work as Chaucer's Pardoner does. Some of his actions, utterances and private thoughts reveal that he is very mean. He is definitely not presented as a romantically conceived stage hero. The ill treatment he receives at the hands of the Germans will arouse the moral indignation of the reader. But the way the Jew conducts himself will not get the approval of the reader either.

The self-consciousness of the Jew makes him feel lonely in the midst of the crowd. He never makes any earnest effort to associate himself with others in a spirit of give and take. "A German ship, going back to Germany, and not a Jew on board besides himself. Instantly his blood, flooded his soul".\(^{18}\) He had opportunities to realize during his business transactions that there are some decent

\(^{18}\) *Ship of Fools*, p.50.
Gentiles. Yet his belief is that he is a member of the 'Chosen Race' and different from all others and hence all the Gentiles have to be detested.

It is true that his cabin mate Herr Rieber is a very mean German. Lowenthal's first observation about him is: "And yes, there is no doubt he looks like a pig even more than a Gentile". ¹⁹ This reveals a very despicable aspect of Lowenthal's character. His concern too is only with race and appearances. The use of the word "pig" by a Jew has many connotations and that is one of the nastiest words in the dictionary of the Jews. He is also intolerant like most of the Gentiles.

When the Holy Mass is going on in the ship the malicious Jew in him comes out again. "He restrained his impulse to spit until he has passed beyond the line of vision of the worshippers; then his mouth watering with disgust, he moved to the rail and spat like a landlubber into the wind which blew it back into his face". ²⁰ Miss Porter had no doubt that this attitude of the Jews was going to add fuel to the fire and bring calamities unto themselves and to others. Lowenthal can be taken as a representative of the Jewish community of that time. If the Germans can be charged with racialism, the same goes for the Jews as well.

¹⁹ Ship of Fools, p.21.

²⁰ Ibid., p.153.
There are two Jewish women introduced to the reader by Miss Porter in *Ship of Fools*. They are Mary Champaigne, Freytag's wife and Mary's mother of whom we learn mainly through Freytag. This subtle introduction of the two women who are not aboard is done by Miss Porter with a specific purpose. Through Frau Schmitt, Frau Rittersdorf and others she has shown the German women's racial prejudices. Through Mary and her mother we get to know the racial feelings of Jewish women. They are not as intense as the German women in their feelings. But it is not to say that they are a broad-minded lot.

Mary's mother is progressive with a motive. She was no more Jewish than she felt suitable to the occasion. "What she had feared in the marriage was scandal and ostracism from her family and friends, and she got plenty of both."\(^{21}\) Through these words of Freytag, Miss Porter directs our attention to the general attitude of the Jewish community. If Freytag is insulted and ostracized by the Germans, Mary and her mother are insulted by the Jews including their close relatives. In reality then both the Germans and the Jews are at fault. In the fight between the Jews and the Goyim, it might be the Jews who suffered more. But Miss Porter does not believe that the sufferers should be completely exonerated of their crimes.

\(^{21}\) *Ship of Fools*, p.64.
Mary is very affectionate to her Goyim husband. But she thinks that he is the only good man among them. About all the others she has nothing good to say. "All Goyim hate the Jews and those who pretend to like us are the worst, because they are hypocrites".²² This is an unwarranted generalisation. Freytag could very clearly understand that she would not discard this preconceived notion like most other Jews. The belief that no Goyim has any love lost to the Jews has taken deep roots in all of them. Against this background it was easy for Hitler and his henchmen to persuade the Germans to believe that the Jews had no national loyalty and they were living only for themselves. It should be remembered that Hitler cleverly made use of the anti-Semitic sentiment which was there even before he actively entered in to national politics. Miss Porter emphasizes in the novel that both the Jews and the Gentiles are fools.

Racial feelings are not the weakness of the Germans and the Jews only. Miss Porter sees this in some other nationals too. No doubt, the vast majority of the non-Germans are not very vociferous about race. During her journalistic career she had come into contact with some non-Germans with racist outlook. She was particularly aware that this menace was among some of the Americans also. At that time it was confined only to a very microscopic minority of the Americans. But the world has seen afterwards racialism becoming a very dangerous evil especially in the U.S.A. as in the case of Martin Luther King who was

²² *Ship of Fools*, p.303.
assassinated for championing the cause of the oppressed races. By giving an idea to the reader about this so early she proves herself to be a writer with prophetic vision.

William Denny is a young Chemical Engineer from Texas going to Berlin. He is an incarnation of many evils and his conception of race is in tune with his general nature. He believes that people of other races are there only to be exploited and humiliated. In his thoughts he is a barbarian with absolute perversion. He indirectly approves of the racist mentality of the Germans because he himself is one.

"In the small town of the border where his father was a prominent citizen, Mayor for many years and rich from local real estate, the lower classes consisted of Mexicans and Negroes, that is, greasers and niggers, with a few polacks and wops but not enough to notice and he had always relied simply on his natural superiority of race and class backed by law and custom". 23 His arrogance and intolerance spring from the feeling of natural superiority of his race. The Negroes and native Indians are looked down upon by him.

At the time when Miss Porter conceived the plot of the novel "race" was not a major issue at all in America. Yet she could realize that there might thrive many more Dennys, the counterparts of Thieles and Huttens and unsettle the peace of the nation. That Denny does not restrain himself even in the midst of the multiracial society of the ship shows that these racists can make the lives of the entire humanity miserable. Among the cabin passengers, he is the one who gets beaten by a woman. It was his feeling of invincibility based on the natural superiority of race that prompted him to go to any extreme for private gains. This landed him in trouble and he got his just desert though from a different hand. There is no indication in the novel that he is likely to change his mentality.

There are no wholly admirable characters in the novel and Miss Porter has not shown any overenthusiasm in defending anybody in particular. This does not mean that she has cleverly blacked out the positive qualities of the characters for better effect. Freytag becomes a victim of German prejudices. "Herr Freytag, another German is not without dignity; he is worth redemption, if by no means assured of it." In regard to race, though he becomes a sufferer, he himself has some very strong prejudices. "No matter what he might say for the sake of politeness about his mixture of nationalities, he knew he was altogether German, a legitimate son of that powerful German strain able to destroy all foreign bloods in its own veins and make all pure and once more; and the whole world had been

24 *Ship of Fools*, p.123.
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, having never been away in his soul". 25 That is why Miss Porter does not go out of the way in defending Freytag though she has shown sufficient sympathy for him.

"Collusion of good and evil" is a favourite idea for Miss Porter. In the heart of Freytag himself this collusion takes place. His love for Mary is unquestionable and that definitely is goodness. But he himself does not come out of the clutches of racism totally, though he is better in this regard than most other Germans. He stupidly believes that any other blood can be purified by the superior German blood. This amounts to an arrogant and unconvincing justification of his marrying a Jew. Captain Thiele and Professor Hutten also are believers in the purity of the race. Freytag wants it but without any harm to himself. Maybe he is more dignified than the other racists, yet he too has the element of the racist in him though he has suffered much at the hands of his compatriots.

Meticulous observation of human activities has convinced Miss Porter that some are less foolish than the others in matters related to race. Jenny Angel does not entertain any prejudice in this respect. In a German ship she cannot play any effective role. But Jenny takes particular pains to make Freytag happy, when his own people ostracize and insult him. "She put the blame squarely on the Captain

because he was the only one who could have stopped the nonsense with a word; instead he had given it shape and direction."\textsuperscript{26} So she decided to give him company and invited him to her table to cheer him up.

Though she does all these she knows that Freytag is at fault in entertaining some racist ideas. "Poor Herr Lowenthal was mistreated too and Freytag never seems to give this a thought; that was wrong of him".\textsuperscript{27} Jenny is broadminded and impartial. Unfortunately her sympathy for Lowenthal only makes him more angry. "I have been out all along" ... I got no complaint, I am used to being a Jew".\textsuperscript{28} He distrusted all the Goyim and Jenny is not exempted.

Mrs. Treadwell is indiscreet in disclosing the truth about Mary Champaigne’s community to Lizzi. Yet she is one of the few cabin passengers without any racial feeling. All misfortunes of Freytag start only after the revelation about Freytag made by Mrs. Treadwell. With utmost sincerity she apologises to him. She is always willing to make amends for it in all possible ways. Though in the beginning Freytag had doubts about her sincerity, later he realises that she is not malicious by nature. She is mentally tolerant and capable of at least a

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ship of Fools}, p.304

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p.304.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p.305.
provisional sympathy even for some of the most unlovable of her fellow passengers. In this respect Mrs. Treadwell is like Jenny.

A study of the race theme in *Ship of Fools* cannot be complete without knowing the attitude of Dr. Schumann on this issue. He is less foolish than most of his compatriots. The real authority in the ship is the Captain, a racist of the first order. The idea of allotting a separate seat to Lowenthal the Jew is entirely the racist Captain’s. But when Freytag is separated from the Captain’s table for marrying a Jew, the Doctor inspite of knowing that the entire episode was beastly, does not protest effectively.

This cannot be taken just as a willing submission to the wish of the superiors in the German fashion. There is already an instance of the Doctor refusing to spy for the Captain on the activities of the steerage passengers. He considers it below his dignity to indulge in any type of spying. The silence of the Doctor during the Freytag episode can be explained only in one way. It is another example of collusion between good and evil. By remaining silent when it should protest, good is encouraging evil to have its way.
"In this and in various other episodes of the book Miss Porter shows her keen insight into the kind of unholy collusion of good and evil. To use Yeats's words, "the best lack all conviction" and "the worst are full of passionate intensity". This made it easy for Hitler to form his alliances with other Fascist states for world conquests and genocide. In every country of the world, believers in the equality and freedom of man uncomfortably compromise their consciences, and alternately dither in ineffectual anxiety. With intense mental agony Miss Porter foresaw the erratic direction in which the world would move. In her fiction she has not concealed the racist tendencies of anybody. There are more German fools aboard the Vera than Swiss or Spanish or American fools. "But qualitatively, Miss Porter plays no national favourites in her generally pessimistic representation of modern man and his situation".  

Josephine Herbert wrote to Alfred Kazin: "I never saw a bunch of more unloving, irritable touchy folks either on ship or land." She also objected to Porter's a historical treatment of Germans, Spaniards and Americans. Solotaroff objected her presentation of Lowenthal a Jew, saying that it is "historically misleading and morally vicious". Heinz Paechter in an article published in the


30 John Edward Hardy, *Katherine Anne Porter*, p.122

31 Ibid., p.31.

32 Ibid., p.31.
Deutsche Zeitung in October 1962 complained that Miss Porter saw the Nazi as a "too easy symbol"\(^{33}\) of human depravity and that this attitude resulted in her inability to characterise even the real Nazis in their depravity.

All these remarks have their genesis in her uncompromising exposure of racism she was able to discern particularly in Germans. But she does not spare any one whatever be his nationality. According to Glenway Wescott Miss Porter had once told him: "I promised to myself solemnly; in this book I will not load the dice, we do it. But this time, I resolved, every one was to have his say. I would not take sides. I was on every one's side".\(^{34}\) When we objectively assess her treatment of the racist attitudes of the passengers we are sure to conclude that she has done it dispassionately.

Once Miss Porter had a detailed talk with Goring. She told him bluntly that the Germans considered the Jews as "a kind of national sickness". His equally blunt reply was: "sickness comes from the Jew blood that has infected Germany". Full of conviction in what she said, Miss Porter responded: ![\(\Box\)]

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\(^{33}\) John Edward Hardy, *Katherine Anne Porter*, p.31.

\(^{34}\) Willene and George Hendrick, *Katherine Anne Porter*, p.100.
You'll not succeed, you will fail miserably in the end. Not only are your goals totally immoral and against every standard of human decency - but you are also ignoring history. Remember what happened to Spain when it expelled Jews, and look at what happened to England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when it decided to mistreat them. If you'll read your history carefully, Herr Goring, you'll soon realize that - aside from the moral implications - it isn't good luck to abuse the Jews. Theirs is a long tradition of survival.\textsuperscript{35}

What she disliked, she disliked and she disliked with ferocious intensity and clear conscience. Her fiction takes an accurate and deadly aim and the result is evident as in her condemnation of all sorts of racism.

\textsuperscript{35} Enrique Hank Lopez, \textit{Conversations with Katherine Anne Porter}, pp. 181-182.