



## Professor Unrat

*Heinrich Mann*

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## Professor Unrat Heinrich Mann

Der vorliegende Roman gilt neben Heinrich Manns Werk "Die kleine Stadt" als eine der besten Schöpfungen aus der Frühzeit des Dichters. Er erschien erstmalig im Jahre 1905 und schildert die makabre Geschichte eines professoralen Gymnasiastenschrecks, einer Spießereexistenz, die in später Leidenschaft einer Kleinstadtkurtisane verfällt und aus den gewohnten bürgerlichen Bahnen entgleist. Mit diesem Roman, dessen Verfilmung mit Emil Jannings und Marlene Dietrich unter dem Titel "Der blaue Engel" zu einem der wenigen wirklichen Welterfolge des deutschen Films wurde, gelang Heinrich Mann eine meisterhafte Karikatur der Wilhelminischen Zeit.

## Professor Unrat Details

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## From Reader Review Professor Unrat for online ebook

### Smarti says

Seltsamerweise scheine ich Heinrich Mann mehr verfallen zu sein als seinem jüngeren, bekannteren Bruder Thomas Mann. Von letzterem habe ich bis jetzt lediglich die Buddenbrooks gelesen: große, ja großartige Literatur. Von Heinrich Mann kenne ich mittlerweile allerhand: Die beiden Henri Quatre Bände, der Untertan, und jetzt auch Professor Unrat. Heinrich Mann ist viel politischer als sein Bruder und seine Kritik an der Wilhelminischen Gesellschaft ist hier, wie auch in seinen anderen Büchern, ausgesprochen scharf. Meiner Meinung nach steht Heinrich Mann seinem Bruder, was seine literarische Qualität angeht, in nichts nach. Meine Vermutung ist deshalb, dass Thomas Mann den Nobelpreis erhalten hat, während er Heinrich verweigert wurde, da Thomas viel geschmeidiger und annehmbarer für das Bildungsbürgertum war.

Die Geschichte vom Aufstieg und Fall des Professor Unrat wurde so zunächst auch einmal totgeschwiegen. Erst durch die Verfilmung mit Marlene Dietrich (1930) wurde sie berühmt. Mich hat das Buch sehr an Der Untertan erinnert: in beiden ist der Protagonist ein unsympathischer Tyrann, der alle seine Möglichkeiten nutzt um seine Umwelt zu pisacken und selber so weit wie möglich in der gesellschaftlichen Hierarchie aufzusteigen. Anders als der Untertan weißt dieses Buch jedoch auch viele charakterliche Brüche auf. Die anderen Personen sind teilweise so unsympatisch, dass einem der Professor Unrat schon wieder ans Herz wachsen kann. Aus diesem Grund wusste ich am Ende auch nicht, ob ich über den Fall des Unrat zufrieden sein sollte oder nicht. Es ist also ein sehr ambivalentes Werk, das den Wilhelminismus in all seiner Verlogen- und Verschrobenheit zeichnet.

Vom Leseerlebnis her gefallen mir die Henri Quatre Bände immer noch am besten. Deshalb "nur" vier, allerdings vier starke Sterne für den Herrn Professor Raat und den ungeliebten Bruder Heinrich.

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### Truehobbit says

I hardly know why I 'really liked it' - for some reason it kept me on the edge of my seat. And that even though it has a number of structural flaws as well as a less-than-clear message (although that might have been part of the fascination).

The title "Professor Unrat, or the End of a Tyrant" makes you expect the Professor to be the bad guy but (at least for my taste) everybody in this book is equally bad, with the exception, perhaps, of the actress Fröhlich, who only has loose morals but no ill-will. Unrat is a misanthrope because he has never had any positive experiences with other humans, and he suffers from a dangerous mix of inferiority complex and paranoia. Everybody else in the small town knows he's the one to hen-peck - and the more his insecurity tickles people's urge to peck, the more this feeds his paranoia and re-inforces his insecurity. He is, however, a high-school teacher - the wrongest job he could have possibly had - and as such believes it his right to rule every aspect of his students' lives - which his position in town as well as his complexes of course prevent him from doing other than in his imagination. (The name is an insult derived from his actual name: in translation you might say his real name was 'Tash' and everyone calls him 'Trash' - students and citizens alike say things like 'smells like trash' when he goes by.)

When he gets involved with Rosa Fröhlich, it's the first time he idolises another person - and she, in addition to being inclined to encourage anyone with money, is flattered enough by his idolising to develop a certain real liking for him. They get married and after setting up a house find themselves becoming the centre of attention of the whole town. All males vie for Rosa's attention, guests come to gamble, and Unrat finally



## Scott says

Extremely readable, compelling tale of one miserable human being. Taking place in the time during which it was written, early 20th century in a small town in Germany, it follows Professor Mut, whose former and current students typically refer to as "Mud." The nickname comes from Mut's toxic attitude towards everyone whom he feels is inferior, which is virtually everyone around him. Mut is a true tyrant, and he exercises his authority during every waking second in his life and job as a high school instructor. Things take a strange shift, however, when he tracks several of his students to a seedy theater in an effort to catch them up to no good. Though he does spy a trio of students there, he meets Rosa, a young dancer and singer. Mut grows besotted with her, leading to several strange turns in the hateful man's fortunes.

I was reading an English translation, which seemed to be rather good, if one realizes that it was being translated into British rather than North American English. With German being closely enough related to English, I feel safe in saying that Mann had a very accessible writing style, and one that brings readers into the characters' essences, through both their thoughts, their words, and Mann's overall narration. There is a certain depth to many of the characters which is revealed in their interaction and reactions to the noxious professor and his mission of cruelty.

There is some context that can be difficult to grasp, due to the fact that the story takes place in Germany of over a century ago. This naturally leaves certain questions for a modern reader like me that are never quite answered. This particular edition could perhaps have used a more thorough and updated introduction or appendix of some sort, just to clear up a few little details.

I enjoyed the book, and it is an easy one to recommend to those who enjoy fine European literature from the turn of the previous century.

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## Greg Brozeit says

More than thirty years ago, I saw *The Blue Angel* with Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich for a college course and, after reading German comics and soccer magazines my whole life, the first complete German novel I ever read was Heinrich Mann's *Professor Unrat*, on which the film was based. A recent viewing of *The Blue Angel* spurred me to pick up the book again. I had forgotten how different each was from the other. What I also realized is how much more I liked the book, which was probably due to the experience of age.

The story is age-old and versions of the plot can be traced back to Greek mythology. An older, established professor at a German gymnasium, a lifelong bachelor, who mistakes rote memorization with learning and fear for respect, decides to track down three of his students who have been secretly seeing a dancer at an illicit cabaret. Once he tracks down the dancer—to him, the "artist"—winning her becomes a contest between him and his students. The relationship leads to the end of the professor's career. It is here where the film and the book depart. In Mann's story the professor and the artist marry and both enter worlds previously closed to them. He leaves his boarding house to become the head of a bourgeois household. She is elevated to social standards she never dreamed of reaching. But the inevitable overspending leads them both toward a predictable, pathetic fate.

*Professor Unrat* is a harsh critique on Wilhelmine Germany, exposing hypocrisies in education, society, privilege, and caste. The story reminded me a bit of Zola's writing. But as a companion film, I think the changes made in the film *The Blue Angel* are more of a critique of Weimar Germany. A better film pairing would be Michael Haneke's *Das Weisse Band* (The White Band). Together they form a picture of the Wilhelmine age built upon an underlying cruelty that seemed to pervade every corner of social life.

## Jönck says

This comment won't be very helpfull.

I liked it, even better than thomas mann's: death in Venise. I know, it's a stretch.

The writing is fluid, clear, easy but intelligent ( not pretentious ).

The only down note i'd put in is that i wasn't very content with the developpement of the characters.

I was very into the book in the beginning, sufficient in the middle, disapointed in the end.

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## Lio says

mhh hmm yeaah idk

had to read this for german and idk..It wasn't entirely bad but i also didn't like it? I had to skim read most of it

1.5 because it was okey i just didn't wanna waist my reading time on this

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## Philippe Malzieu says

Vor der Kaserne

Vor dem großen Tor

Stand eine Laterne

Und steht sie noch davor

So woll'n wir uns da wieder seh'n

Bei der Lanterne wollen wir steh'n

Wie einst Lili Marleen

How to forget the suave voice of Marlène Diétrich in "The blue angel". In the family Mann I knew Thomas. It is because of Marlène that I discovered the older brother. With turbulent Heinrich, whose Nazis burned the books, we are far from "Death in Venice".

It is the history of a forfeiture. A professor psychorigide give up everything by love. It dimensioned biblical there. Lola-lola the temptress is Eve by whom misfortune arrives. It is the most beautiful portrait of femme fatale.

The only difficulty of this book, as for "Death in Venice", is to manage to be detached from the film. The style of Mann imposes his rhythm and its own images to us. Both are rather complementary. It is interesting to see again "Lili Marlene" film of Rainer Werner Fassbinder for the reflection on the posterity of the song.

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## Vittorio Ducoli says

### Un libro di rara potenza espressiva

La storia del Professor Unrat è stata resa nota da alcuni film, primo fra tutti *L'Angelo Azzurro* con Marlene Dietrich.

Leggere il libro è tuttavia una esperienza diversa, perché la prosa asciutta di Heinrich Mann conquista. La

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storia del professore che, umiliato da una grigia esistenza, odia tutti e, per incastrare i suoi allievi, incontra la cantante Rosa Frolich venendo risucchiato in una nuova esistenza dove saltano tutte le convenzioni morali è al tempo stesso una storia individuale e la metafora del decadimento della società tedesca prima della prima guerra mondiale.

Il professor "spazzatura", insieme a Rosa, smaschera la spazzatura morale ed il perbenismo della borghesia tedesca, trascinando tutto e tutti nella sua caduta. Solo l'allievo Lohmann, che si è nutrito di cultura, gli è superiore e ne provoca la condanna. Paradossalmente (o forse no), il libro si chiude con Unrat vittima dell'autorità costituita che aveva minato.

Una grandissima attualità traspare dal libro, se si traguarda all'attuale momento storico italiano.

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### **Nancy Oakes says**

Seeing the classic film of the same name is not at all the same experience as reading the novel. In the novel, Mann tells the story of a somewhat tyrannical figure -- one who has always been "zealous for all forms of authority" and lives by a "narrow code of ethics" -- intending to rid society of a woman he sees as a corruptive influence (there is another major reason as well, but read the book to see what it is), but who instead lets his obsessions run away with him and not in a good way. The old movie, made in 1930 and starring Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings (which I watched this morning and loved) has the same sort of focus on the obsession of the main character, but it takes him in an entirely different direction from the original novel.

You can read more about this book here; overall, *The Blue Angel* is a wonderful book that I'm adding to the list of those novels that are dark and simply unputdownable -- again, it won't be for everyone but it is one of those books that will float in my head for a long time.

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### **Cooper Renner says**

An interesting pairing of Mann's novel *Professor Rath* (here called *The Blue Angel*, because of the film) and the "continuity script" of the famous Marlene Dietrich movie based loosely on the novel. The two are very different, though the central character in each case is the professor who falls for a cabaret singer. I had never realized Mann wrote the novel (or that the movie was based on a novel) until I saw it mentioned along with Hesse's *Beneath the Wheel* and Musil's *Young Torless*. Mann's novel is different in that it focuses not on the student, but on the teacher.

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### **Hannah Bradley says**

Okay I know. One star is harsh but this was just bad. I don't know why there's so many good reviews on here. Up to page 136 was decent. After that is just jumbled mess that makes no sense. It was like pulling teeth trying to read this.

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## **Anna Iakovidou says**

one of the rare occasions where the movie is as good as the book

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## **Johann Guenther says**

MANN, Heinrich: „Professor Unrat. Der blaue Engel“, Hamburg 2008

Das Buch ist besser als der Film.

Ein Gymnasialprofessor namens Raat wird von seinen Studenten verunglimpft und Unrat gerufen. Er will sich rächen. Eine Barsängerin kommt in die provinzielle Kleinstadt. Drei seiner Schüler besuchen und verehren die Sängerin. Er stellt ihnen nach um sie zu verurteilen, verliebt sich aber selbst in die Dame. Aus dem Jagenden wird der Gejagte und letztendlich verliert er seinen Job. Trotzdem heiratet er die Sängerin und mit Schulden und Hypotheken führt er ein ausschweifendes Leben. Die Schuldner laufen hinter ihm her, er aber hat einen Club in der Stadt aufgebaut. Angesehene und weniger berühmte besuchen ihn und verlieren viel Geld bei Wettspielen. Der Ex-Professor rächt sich an allen Schülern, die ihn verspottet hatten. Nur an einem scheitert er. Er lässt ihn verhaften und hat ihn bezwungen. Gemeinsam mit seiner Frau, der Ex-Sängerin, wird der Ex-Professor abgeführt.

(Hinterbrühl, 27.02.2012)

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## **Monica says**

It was pretty interesting at first but then became incomprehensible. The characters actions started to make no sense and the reasons weren't explained, though it was laid out as if the reader should understand why and what was happening. It may be because of the major difference in time and place between myself and the author, resulting in very different cultural understandings of the world, or it could be a translation problem, or, the author fell of track. I was very interested in the book until half-way through, but then, sadly, it lost me and it wasn't worth it for me to go more than 50 pages deeper.

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## **Andreas Steppan says**

Selten habe ich ein Buch gelesen, das gleichzeitig so viel Hass und so viel Liebe für seine Figuren aufbringt. Irgendwo sind sie alle unsympathisch, böse und charakterlos - allen voran Professor Unrat, der zunächst eine Karikatur des hohlen preußischen Autoritätsstaats ist, dann zum Anarchisten und Amoralisten wird, stets aber von kleinlicher Rachsucht getrieben bleibt und bisweilen völlig skrupellos erscheint. Doch das Wunder des Buches ist, dass es auch seine hilflose Leidenschaft für die Barsängerin Rosa Fröhlich glaubhaft macht, ihm in einer alles akzeptierenden Liebe Größe verleiht und ihn in einigen sehr zarten, anrührenden Momenten zeigt. Zusammen mit der "Künstlerin Fröhlich", die zwischen kess und doof, zwischen berechnend und gutmütig genauso vielschichtig dargestellt ist, bildet der Professor - traun fürwahr, immer mal wieder - bestimmt eins der tragikomischsten, ungleichsten und menschlichsten Paare der Literaturgeschichte. Herrlich!

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## **Keksisbaby says**

Der Gymnasiallehrer Raat ist 57 Jahre und als Professor Unrat eine Legende unter den Schülern und Ehemaligem in dem kleinen Ort. Einem Tyrannen gleich herrscht er über seine Klasse, denn seine Welt geht nicht über das Gymnasium hinaus. Vom Leben außerhalb der Mauern der Lehranstalt hat er nur sehr wenig bis keine Ahnung. Jeder der ihm begegnet gilt als potentieller Feind, den es zu Fall zu bringen gilt. Ein Rachefeldzug gegen drei seiner Schüler die ihn verspottet haben, führt zu der schicksalhaften Begegnung mit der Kleinstadtkurtisanin Rosa Fröhlich. Zum ersten Mal verliebt er sich und wird dieser Dame fast hörig. Nach einer Heirat wird das Ehepaar berüchtigt und Professor Raat bekommt die Möglichkeit seinen zunehmenden Wahn auszuleben und sich an denen die ihn verspotteten zu rächen. Aber bald wendet sich das Blatt.

Ein Klassiker von Heinrich Mann verfilmt mit Marlene Dietrich unter dem Titel: "Der blaue Engel". Die ersten Seiten habe ich mich mit dem ungewohnten Ausdruck etwas schwer getan. Aber sobald man eingetaucht ist in die Geschichte eröffnet sich eine wundervolle Sprachmelodie, der man sich nicht entziehen kann. Mit jeder Seite hatte ich mehr Mitleid mit dem Professor und seiner beschränkten Welt, deren Grenzen er nie entkommt und sich dennoch als deren König dünkt. Ein Klassiker der deutschen Literatur, den man ruhig mal in die Hand nehmen sollte.

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## **Nicoleta says**

Profesorul Urât de elevi. Scâr?vie era traducerea pentru Unrat în carte.

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## **Deanne says**

Enjoyable book about a professor's obsession with a singer at the blue angel and his need for revenge on those he believes have slighted him. Old mud as he's known Isn't a likeable character and it's not easy to like Rosa.

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## **RebeccaErGlad MegetGlad says**

I mostly read this book because I found it on the pavement in Berlin. It's short enough to make the read be propelled only by your initial interest. Because the book in itself felt rather bland. A bunch of slightly uncharismatic and petty characters going through the motions. The main character, Mr. Mud, has a character arc of approximately null. Likewise with all the rest. There seems to be a slightly veiled belief that class really does define your personality, sort of: once a ..., always a .... This strikes me as rather odd, as Heinrich was apparently the more liberal, less conservative of the two Mann brothers. Reading this, then, is a little surprising. In this book everybody is a bit of an ass, though, in the end, the young "aristocrat" is portrayed in the most positive light. In my view.

Also, the author suffers from a bad case of tell, don't show. That pisses me off.

So, final verdict: bland. The only thing this has spurred in me is a wish to try my hand at Thomas Mann.

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