

LIBERAL AFFECT AND LITERARY CULTURE: THE POLITICS OF FEELING
IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY GERMAN FICTION

Erik J. Grell

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Approved by:

Jonathan M. Hess

Eric Downing

Konrad H. Jarausch

Thomas Pfau

Gabriel Trop

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ABSTRACT

Erik J. Grell: *Liberal Affect and Literary Culture: The Politics of Feeling in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Fiction*
(Under the direction of Jonathan M. Hess)

Liberal Affect and Literary Culture: The Politics of Feeling in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Fiction, develops a new model for understanding the role of literature in the formative years of German liberalism. Traditional narratives about the emergence of liberal ideology in nineteenth-century Germany frequently stress political failure by way of arguing for a *Sonderweg* approach to German modernity. In partial dissent from these accounts, I explore how German liberalism is significant for what it *does* achieve, and not only as a result of its failures. Against the grain of teleological accounts of German political development and their narrative of political and institutional miscarriage (e.g., Mommsen, Fischer, Wehler), my research engages the diverse and far-flung culture of popular prose fiction between 1830 and 1860 as a site where German liberalism succeeded during its formative years. In so doing, I am mindful not to conflate liberal success entirely with bourgeois success, an impulse that tacitly informs the basis of Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn's seminal work. Insisting on the distinctness of the political and the social, my dissertation emphasizes their complex entanglement within literary form and culture, ultimately revealing literature as a crucial site for constituting early German liberalism as a form of *Gemütsstimmung* (attunement).

While a variety of discourses and institutions played a role in the formation of a German model of liberalism, such as philosophy (e.g., Kant, Hegel, Bauer), historiography, and legal theory, this project explores its development by cultural proxy. Following on the heels of

increased book production and rising literacy rates, narrative prose fiction developed into a pillar of German culture during the nineteenth century. My project examines several key texts and genres written with an intent to intervene within this culture at the level of politics, including Karl Gutzkow's social critique, *Die Zeitgenossen* (1837), Heinrich Heine's fragmentary novel, *Florentinische Nächte* (1827/35), Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1843), an anonymously published serial novel, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin: Aus den Papieren eines Berliner Kriminalbeamten* (1844), Adalbert Stifter's canonical novella, *Brigitta* (1844), and Theodor Mügge's historical and adventure novel, *Afraja* (1854). By appealing to this broad collection of texts and genre concepts, my project sheds light on an equally broad collection of political concerns, disclosing how literature helped readers negotiate Jacobin and Anglo-Saxon political influences, the concepts of *Volk*, *Nation* and *Bildung*, and a number of eighteenth-century literary and cultural traditions. In particular, I scrutinize these political themes within the context of an eighteenth-century affective model of sensibility, the legacy of which has been inadequately explored by literary scholars and historians alike. I show how early German liberalism appropriates, adapts, and repurposes this model, with each of my chapters locating the historical significance of prose fiction in the way it engaged readers as a form of emotional attunement (*Stimmung*) with themselves and larger communities. By investigating the figural strategies, including allegory and synecdoche, within these individual works as well as reconstructing their broader historical reception, my dissertation illuminates a tension between literary and historicist modes. My research reveals how the effort to foster politics through literature betrays a fundamental ambivalence at the level of affect and literary form, which necessarily informs the political work performed by nineteenth-century prose fiction.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature and Politics: Early German Liberalism as a “Stimmung des Gemüts”

In 1837, a small Stuttgart publisher began releasing installments of a work titled *Die Zeitgenossen: Ihre Schicksale, ihre Tendenzen, ihre grossen Charaktere*.¹ Critics of the first two volumes were quick to note the work's strange form, something that can only be described as a mixture of journalism and polemical diatribe, social commentary and political banter. A reviewer in *Die Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* remarked, “In der That ist auch Alles durcheinander wie Kraut und Rüben; politisch- philosophisch- ästhetisch- nationalökonomisch- philanthropisch seinsollende Sätze wimmeln wie ein Ameisenhaufen durcheinander.”² While the cover page identified the work as a translation from the English of E.L. Bulwer (1803 – 1873; known after 1844 as Bulwer-Lytton), the same reviewer doubted that Bulwer could write such “bombastisch-sentimentalen Unsinn” or that he could forget he was an Englishman. Whoever authored *Die Zeitgenossen* was clearly trying to imitate and capitalize on Bulwer's widespread notoriety as a social critic, politician, and author of popular prose fiction. Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* (1830), in which he coined the phrase “on a dark and stormy night,” *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), and *Pelham, or The Adventures of a Gentleman* (1829), were widely translated in Germany, as was his social critique *England and the English*, which appeared in three different German translations between 1833 and 1836. Similar to Bulwer's analysis of English character and customs, art and politics, religion and society, *Die Zeitgenossen* offers a comparative sociological model for understanding continental Europe. It thus seemed plausible the author was

¹ Bulwer, E.L [Karl Gutzkow], *Die Zeitgenossen: Ihre Schicksale, ihre Tendenzen, ihre grossen Charaktere* (Stuttgart: Der Verlag der Klassiker, 1837). Verlag der Klassiker is perhaps most famous for issuing *Don Quixote* in the same year, which included a preface on Cervantes' work by Heinrich Heine.

² *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, unsigned review of *Die Zeitgenossen*, by E.L. Bulwer, no. 120 (April 30, 1837), 485.

a German, and a disgraced one “dessen Namen nicht mehr Credit hat.”³ By appealing to the literary and political clout of an English author and politician, the pseudonym was intended to tap into a transnational form of cultural capital and secure the interests of a German reading public.⁴

If the fictitious persona and overwrought conceit of *Die Zeitgenossen* were not enough to raise questions about authorship, the discussion of liberalism in the section titled “das Jahrhundert” must have brought further puzzlement to politically astute readers. The author writes that liberalism is and remains “der gefürchtete Feind der Restaurationsperiod”; it is a term one associates more with “Freisinnigkeit” than with “Neuerungstrieb,” and it has lost its “politische Farbe,” coming to resemble less a principle of action and more a “Stimmung des Gemüts.”⁵ Though liberalism has always resisted clarity of definition, especially during its formative years in Europe when liberals struggled to define themselves, this particular characterization is puzzling on a number of accounts. For one, the term “Restauration” was a continental referent, a term borrowed from the French to describe political changes resulting from the Congress of Vienna. In 1830s Britain, the term referred to Charles II’s Restoration of 1660. And Bulwer, who served as an MP in the House of Commons from 1831 to 1841, would not have felt liberalism had lost its political color in the 1830s. The decade was decidedly eventful for the British parliament: Tories, Radicals, and Whigs had overcome ideological differences to legislate sweeping reform. Following on the heels of the Catholic Emancipation

³ Ibid., 486.

⁴ As Heiko Postma notes, Bulwer “war der in Deutschland meistgelesene britische Gegenwartsliterat” (69) during the early liberal era. While Dickens and Thackeray were widely read in Germany during the 1830s, their perceived dominance is more a function of late-nineteenth century literary histories. See ““Was war, ist immer”: Leben und Werk des viktorianischen Romanciers Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)” in *Zettelkasten* 27, Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft der Arno-Schmidt-Leser (2009/2010): 67-99.

⁵ Bulwer, *Die Zeitgenossen*, 88.

Act of 1829, parliament passed the Great Reform Bill of 1832 and the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, the former expanding the electorate by 50 percent and the latter attempting to rectify poverty relief. Contemporaries might not have described these acts as “liberal,” in the same manner we would today, but they did form an important cornerstone in the invented tradition of British liberalism in the 1850s and 60s.

Also remarkable is the author’s description of liberalism as a “Stimmung des Gemüts,” an expression found throughout eighteenth and nineteenth-century German literature. Friedrich Schiller begins his twenty-second letter of *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* with the expression,⁶ and Wilhelm Humboldt repeatedly employs it in his famous discussion of Goethe’s *Hermann und Dorothea* (1797).⁷ His brother Alexander even speaks of a “Stimmung des Gemüts” in the opening remarks of his treatise on nature and science, *Kosmos*.⁸ Furthermore, the term was used to describe and historicize German literary culture in the mid-nineteenth century. The Protestant theologian and Orientalist Johann Gottfried Eichhorn invokes the same phrase in his discussion of Klopstock’s poetry in one of the earliest exemplars of literary history,⁹ and G.F.W. Hegel invokes the phrase in his *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik* (first

⁶ Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (Stuttgart: Cotta Verlag, 1860), 79-80: “Wenn also die ästhetische Stimmung des Gemüts in einer Rücksicht als Null betrachtet werden muß, sobald man nämlich sein Augenmerk auf einzelne und bestimmte Wirkungen richtet, so ist sie in anderer Rücksicht wieder als ein Zustand der höchsten Realität anzusehen, insofern man dabei auf die Abwesenheit aller Schranken und auf die Summe der Kräfte achtet, die in derselben gemeinschaftlich tätig sind.”

⁷ Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4 (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1843). The term appears about 10 times in his analysis.

⁸ Alexander von Humboldt, *Kosmos: Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1845), 20.

⁹ J. G. Eichhorn, *Geschichte der Litteratur von ihrem Anfang bis auf die neuesten Zeiten*, vol. 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1808), 902.

published a year after *Die Zeitgenossen*).¹⁰ The German icon with whom the term is perhaps best associated, however, might be Immanuel Kant, who famously wrote of *Stimmung* (“attunement”) and *Gemüth* (“mental state” or “disposition”) in the context of “play” in his *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (1790). As a primal phenomenon that facilitates a subject’s rational attunement to the world, Kant understood “play” to be an integral component to the project of *Bildung*. Attunement through play grounds individual and collective identity, serving as the basis for what one scholar describes as “the source of intellectual and social personhood.”¹¹ The author of *Die Zeitgenossen* does not share further insight into his understanding of how a liberal identity or ideology might take shape through this process, but the choice to describe liberalism in this manner – coupled with the work’s conceit – encourages readers to think about oppositional politics in different, comparative contexts. That this message is further delivered in prose fiction even suggests an additional context of its own for discussing liberalism – one less concerned with laws, rights, institutions, or free markets, and rooted more in culture.

At a very basic level, the society and political culture where *Die Zeitgenossen* debuted had very little in common with Bulwer’s home country – a circumstance readers would have likely registered. The lack of a nation-state and absence of centralized structures for political representation (regardless of how exclusionary Britain’s own structures were) ensured that any political or social reforms in the German-speaking world in the 1830s would come from the top down, and scattered about, if at all. There was not much of an electorate to expand, nor much of a burgeoning male middle-class to enfranchise. And there was very little resembling the growing

¹⁰ G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, ed. H.G. Hotho (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1838), 448: “Am vollständigsten lyrisch ist in dieser Rücksicht die in einem konkreten Zustande konzentrierte Stimmung des Gemüths, indem das empfindende Herz das Innerste und Eigenste der Subjektivität ist, die Reflexion und aufs Allgemeine gerichtete Betrachtung aber leicht in das Didaktische hineingerathen, oder das Substantielle und Sachliche des Inhalts in epischer Weise hervorheben kann.”

¹¹ Thomas Pfau, “The Appearance of *Stimmung*: Play (*Spiel*) as Virtual Rationality,” in *Stimmung. Zur Wiederkehr einer ästhetischen Kategorie*, ed. A.K. Gisbertz (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2011): 101.

pauperization of industrial England. In the mid 1830s freedom of speech and press were also largely unrealized in Germany, a circumstance which Bulwer never had to contend with. And it's not just that the conditions of possibility for a political liberalism in Germany were absent, they were also actively stamped out. In fact, to be a German author with political aspirations similar to Bulwer's in 1837, one might have felt his or her situation to be the complete opposite of the Englishman's. Perhaps for all of these reasons, readers of *Die Zeitgenossen* might have gathered who its *real* author was, Karl Gutzkow, and why he chose Bulwer as a pseudonymous alter ego. In addition to his role as a prominent literary critic in the early 1830s – he co-edited Wolfgang Menzel's *Literaturblatt* and founded the *Deutsche Revue* – Gutzkow was an aspiring author, and one of the first who sought to earn a living solely on account of his writing. He was also caught up in the political turmoil of the decade, which frequently expressed itself in his early writings. Emboldened by the July Revolution of 1830, Gutzkow used the occasion to write *Wally, die Zweiflerin* (1835), a novel highly critical of bourgeois morality, the Christian doctrine of revelation, and the institution of marriage. As a result, and regardless of his intents, Gutzkow became a figure-head of the so-called Young German movement, and in the closing months of 1835 not only were his past present, and future writings banned (along with those of Heinrich Laube, Ludolf Wienbarg, Theodor Mundt and Heinrich Heine) but he was also handed a prison sentence. While Bulwer was riding a wave of political and literary successes, Gutzkow was locked up in Mannheim's county jail.

The publishing history of *Die Zeitgenossen* mirrors a similar constellation, a kind of ironic reversal of literary and political fates. Bulwer's unprecedented successes allowed him rather famously to hassle, exploit, and bully his publishers, whereas the man behind Gutzkow's work, Friedrich Gottlob Franckh, was also serving a jail sentence in the 1830s. In the book world, Franckh had achieved fame and fortune by issuing cheap, pirated editions of Walter

Scott's historical fiction. Between 1827 and 1829, his Stuttgart-based publishing house produced over three million volumes. But similar to Gutzkow and so many of his German contemporaries, Franckh, too, was emboldened by the revolutionary events in mid-century France. He spent time radicalizing in Paris and even participated in the Hambach Festival of 1832 before becoming implicated in a republican conspiracy to overthrow the monarchy in Württemberg. *Die Zeitgenossen* was printed by the "Verlag der Klassiker," a small subsidiary publishing house he inaugurated by proxy while in jail. And although Gutzkow's text never found commercial success, it was not because Franckh did not try. The work was initially published in the "Livre des cent-et-un" format in an effort to secure readers already subscribing to Bulwer's works from three other publishers. The title page of the bound volume not only feigned Bulwer's approval of the translation, but carried the message that readers of Bulwer's other works had to own this volume for their collections to be complete. Perhaps the ultimate irony came in the 1870s, when Gutzkow, who had found *Die Zeitgenossen* important enough to rewrite it twice over the course of his career, remarked that the text would have found the success it deserved had it been translated into English.¹²

In light of this complex *Entstehungsgeschichte*, there are myriad ways of approaching the relationship between Bulwer and Gutzkow as well as the much larger political and literary discourses intersecting their lives. Here, however, I would like to focus on four broad ramifications at play that will help illuminate the scope and approach of the present study. First, despite Bulwer's and Gutzkow's prominence in nineteenth-century European literary culture, both writers have received scant attention by scholars. In the case of Bulwer, his writings were largely overshadowed by those of "Boz" (Charles Dickens) during the long nineteenth and

¹² Karl Gutzkow, *Die Zeitgenossen: Ihre Schicksale, ihre Tendenzen, ihre grossen Charaktere in Gutzkows Werke und Briefe*, vol. 3, ed. Martina Lauster (Münster: Oktober Verlag, 2001), 666. There were also many positive reviews of *Die Zeitgenossen*, with Heinrich Albert Oppermann describing it as the "Faust" of the nineteenth-century.

twentieth-century process of canonization. As a result Bulwer's role in founding the Newgate school of crime fiction and his relevance to nineteenth-century reading cultures have been largely overlooked. In the case of Gutzkow, his own exclusion from the circles of sustained, critical inquiry may be even more complex. On the one hand, his own journalistic and literary writings contributed to the canonization and historicization of German classical culture, including the much more famous surname beginning with "G" in German cultural history: Goethe. The privileged attention Germanists have given to a small body of texts, with this great cultural icon at the forefront, has significantly shaped scholars' expectations and attitudes about literature over the last 200 years. Thus even when an author like Gutzkow did receive increased scrutiny during the sociological turn of the 1960s and 1970s, a work like *Die Zeitgenossen* could continue to be overlooked on the grounds that it did not conform to a preconceived set of literary standards. In reality, however, its formal qualities and content might serve as a significant site for exposing the complex relationship between literature and politics during a period where anything printed constituted literature.

In this vein, the sheer messiness of Gutzkow's text, which critics immediately picked up on, speaks to a larger entwining of literature, journalism, politics, and transcultural exchange very much constitutive of print culture in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s. To be sure, *Die Zeitgenossen* is an exercise in essayistic analysis; it sheds lights on Gutzkow's own politics while exemplifying what Martina Lauster calls an "enzyklopädistische Poetik."¹³ But as a calculated intervention within a broad culture of print, the text also taps into a larger literary tradition that appealed to nineteenth-century readers.¹⁴ Gutzkow was banking on Bulwer's fictional

¹³ Gutzkow, *Die Zeitgenossen*, 666.

¹⁴ Pondering why this particular text of Gutzkow's has been ignored for so long, Lauster suggests the overwhelming focus on narrative fiction is ultimately to blame. I would argue that it is less a desire to focus on one formal medium

achievements in Germany, which up to 1837 rested on a wide selection of Newgate novels (works that dramatized the lives of criminals), historical novels (works partly invigorated by the writings of Walter Scott), and Dandy novels (works that glamorized the cult of selfhood).¹⁵ When Gutzkow refers to the *Last Days of Pompeii* as “meinem Romane,” when he slyly alludes to *Pelham* as his artistic creation, or when he discusses his plans for the next “Parlamentsitzung,” his alter ego betrays a hidden political and literary fantasy, one which readers were tuned into through their exposure to Bulwer’s narrative fiction. Thus the English façade offers a metaphor for the strategy in the text as a whole, it is part of an effort to develop a German political culture by proxy and with an appeal to fiction. The reciprocal relationship between literature and politics embodied here thus comes to express itself in both the form of Gutzkow’s prose and also in the larger literary-print culture in which he participated.

A third but related point concerns the self-conscious rhetoric of Gutzkow’s text, the conceit of using England to further his own complex agenda, and the implications for the critical study of German politics and culture more broadly. Gutzkow’s work is emblematic of a long tradition in German culture that persistently compares Germany’s political and social development to England, France, and the USA. This dynamic has received ample attention in scholarship, but Gutzkow’s text sheds additional light on why academic studies in the English and German worlds clung to normative approaches for so long. Put more acutely, academic cultures of the last several decades inherited a tradition inaugurated by Germany’s own liberal

at the expense of another, but the tendency to simply think of the forms as separate, rather than attempting to understand their mutual entanglement.

¹⁵ German translations of Bulwer’s complete works appeared already in 1843 (and again in 1849), but his fiction began circulating in Germany as early as 1822 via multiple German publishers. The most popular fictional works and their initial dates of publication include: *Die letzten Tag von Pompeji* (1822), *O’Neill, der Rebell und Ararmanes* (1827), *Pelham, oder Begegnisse eines Weltmannes* (1829), *Der Verstossene* (1829), *Falkland* (1831), *Eugen Aram* (1833), *Die Pilgrime am Rhein* (1834), *Devereux* (1834), *Paul Clifford* (1834), and *Rienzi, der Letzte der Tribunen* (1834). Two non-fictional works enjoying multiple printings and widespread popularity included *England und die Engländer* (1833) and *Der Gelehrte: Aus meinen Papieren* (1835).

intelligentsia, one which fetishized Germany's perceived *illiberalism*. It is thus not without a considerable amount of irony that the long historiographical tradition steeped in the rhetoric of a nineteenth-century German *Sonderweg* – the notion that Germany followed an aberrational model of development because its middle classes failed to challenge aristocratic values and privilege – has its origins with liberals themselves. In this sense, Gutzkow's elaborate metaphor mixing his identity with Bulwer's can also be read as emblematic of the deceptive and idealized notions of historical development read back onto this period, notions which misleadingly, however conveniently, conflated liberalism, industrialization, and bourgeois democracy. Once again, a work like *Die Zeitgenossen*, if read with an eye to the culture that produced it and probed even at a basic level for a more nuanced use of language, speaks directly against simplistic historical narratives of German political development. Much more, it invites further wonder by speaking to a formative phase in German political development and a liminal period within liberalism's gradual ascent in Germany.

And so, finally, Gutzkow's contemporary experiment raises the implicit question of how one might go about defining, describing, and otherwise understanding oppositional politics in the patchwork of German states and principalities during the period before the rise of liberal party politics.¹⁶ What exactly is early German liberalism and within which context(s) might we best grasp its essence? While there is no dearth in studies examining German liberalism's institutional frameworks, social and economic dynamics, religious confrontations, legal formulations, political-philosophical manifestations, or its embodiment in any number of other discursive fields, Gutzkow's approach to cultivating a political imaginary by appealing to popular fiction, coupled with his description of liberalism as a "Stimmung des Gemüts" suggests a *context* of its

¹⁶ For reasons of prose, I use the term Germany throughout this dissertation to describe the large collection of states, duchies, and principalities comprising the German-speaking lands during this period.

own. Gutzkow and Bulwer, together with their publishers, were just two players among many partaking in a European-wide expansion of the book market, harnessing the popularity of novel-reading for political and commercial purposes. Though scholars have long disagreed about the specific role of literature in historical change or social and political formation, there is no denying that the nineteenth century witnessed a veritable explosion in both literacy and popular forms of reading. Germany was no exception, where the reading lists of a small, but growing *Bürgertum* (about four to five percent of the overall population between 1830 and 1860) included popular foreign authors such as Bulwer, Dickens, Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, Alexandre Dumas and Eugène Sue, as well as domestic authors such as Berthold Auerbach, Charles Sealsfield, and Luise Mühlbach.¹⁷ It might be said of Gutzkow's book that it offers a blueprint of and hidden insight into a much larger phenomenon, in which nineteenth-century readers engaged narrative prose fiction as a social and cultural form of imaginative play, as a mediation of *Stimmung*, and in the process negotiated political identities. Whether this process was conscious or deeply subconscious, or whether the relationship between politics and literature performed other functions below the radar of ideology remains to be seen, but Gutzkow's book hints at what might be called *literary liberalism*, a term expressing the interdependence and interrelatedness of prose fiction and politics in the era of early liberal formation.

At the Interstices of History and Literature: Existing Approaches to Fiction and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany

Perhaps no topic within German studies better reveals the fundamentally different approaches to scholarship by historians and literature scholars than that of German liberalism

¹⁷ Jürgen Kocka, "The European Pattern and the German Case," in *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Allen Mitchell (Oxford: Berg, 1993): 4.

and nineteenth-century culture, society and politics more broadly. Both disciplines have long sought to better understand nineteenth-century developments by appealing to their respective strengths. And the highly politicized nature of the topic, which very much intensified after the Third Reich, further adds to the stakes in any project looking to intervene within this complex and multifaceted discourse. This study limits itself to the relationship between early German liberalism (1830-1860) and narrative prose fiction, yet because scholarship continues to struggle with the interdisciplinary demands for understanding the connection between these two discrete, yet overlapping domains within the field of cultural history and literary studies, it is necessary to briefly elucidate the various positions from which scholars have approached the context I hope to illuminate. Both disciplines, I would argue, have faced specific and unique challenges, which have largely constrained their ability to relate politics and literature during this period in convincing ways. Before elaborating more on the strategies I employ to mitigate these challenges, I first explore the concrete issues, concerns, and problems historians and literary scholars have encountered when approaching this topic.

For their part, historians of Germany's early liberal era have largely confirmed the political pains Gutzkow likely felt, just as they have long shared in his own struggles to define the specific attributes of liberalism during the years before and after 1848. Early post-war studies such as Rudolf Stadelmann's *Soziale und politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848* (1948) and Theodor Hamerow's *Restoration, Revolution, Reaction* (1958) demonstrated the social and political causes leading the liberals' mid-century struggles.¹⁸ These works bolstered the widespread charge of liberal failure that found more concrete expression in seminal studies like Hans Ulrich-Wehler's *Das deutsche Kaiserreich* (1973) and Fritz Stern's *The Failure of*

¹⁸ Rudolf Stadelmann, *Soziale und politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848* (Munich: Münchner Verlag, 1948); Theodor Hamerow: *Restoration, Revolution, Reaction: Economics and Politics in Germany 1815-1871* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).

Illiberalism (1972).¹⁹ Characteristic of these works is an emphasis on institutional developments, social configurations, and economic practices. Similarly, the focus of many historical studies lies in the second half of the nineteenth century, the period of liberal party politics and state formation. There are classical studies by historians, however, that look to the intellectual and more cultural origins of German liberalism as well. Leonard Krieger's *The German Idea of Freedom* (1957) remains a seminal account of German liberalism, important for the way he demonstrates the Kantian and Hegelian philosophical roots that grew so deep within the nineteenth-century intelligentsia.²⁰ His study, however, overlooks the role of these intellectuals within German literary culture.

In many ways, the long-standing indictment of liberal failure in Germany and the manner in which one chooses to define liberalism have played a decisive role in the larger discourse on German politics for quite some time, and not least because of a tendency to diagnose a nineteenth-century liberal deficit as condition of possibility for Nazism. The seminal work, Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn's *The Peculiarities of German History*, questioned many of the assumptions that went into early definitions of liberalism, helpfully challenging the notion of a German *Sonderweg*.²¹ But even in the wake of their findings, historical studies examining liberal politics in Germany are still constrained by a need to explain later events and they continue to employ a conceptual vocabulary beholden to this very need. James Sheehan's *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* and Dieter Langewiesche's *Liberalism in Germany* – the

¹⁹ Hans Ulrich-Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973); Fritz Stern, *The Failure of Illiberalism: Essays on the Political Culture of Modern Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

²⁰ Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom: History of a Political Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

²¹ Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

most comprehensive monographs on the topic of German liberalism to date – have convincingly shown how German political models are highly complex and bear little in common with French and English counterparts. Even so, their studies, and many others, nonetheless remain focused on understanding why 1848 did not result in some form of democratic participatory politics, or why later periods in history resulted in more extreme forms of authoritarian rule. These two particular studies also overlook literature as a site where nineteenth-century readers negotiated political identities or how popular literary forms helped mediate liberal political self-understanding.²²

It would be misleading, however, to diagnose historians as blind to the relevance of literature in the nineteenth century; the issue at stake is how they tend to regard literature, viewing it more as an addendum to society and politics, as an index for larger concerns. Thomas Nipperdey's admirable account of German history, culture, and society between 1800 and 1866, for instance, notes how literature during this period "took on a greater social relevance," it "struck a chord with the public," and it "voiced the preoccupations of the age."²³ More concretely, the *Zeitroman* "undertook a mixture of contemplative observations and politically committed social critiques of the times."²⁴ The *Dorfgeschichte* "played an important role in prose as counter-images to the bourgeois world."²⁵ And the historical novel "served to orientate life" as it emphasized "the consolidation of a regional or national past; the romantic, imaginary depiction of foreign lands; [...] the realization of liberty or national unity and glory; critical images to

²² James Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978); Dieter Langewiesche, *Liberalism in Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). Although Sheehan does not examine literature as a specific carrier of political meaning, he does rely on metaphor as the best means of defining the ideology. He also *begins* his study by pointing to "a dramatic quantitative growth in cultural consumption" and "new books" as the clearest evidence of a new public sphere and corresponding liberal intelligentsia.

²³ Thomas Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck*, trans. Daniel Nolan, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 504.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 511.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 517-518.

counter present reality; motifs of escape, and hopes for the future, whether progressive or conservative.”²⁶ While these statements contain truths (many of which my own readings complicate), there is a strong tendency in his analysis to see literature as a postscript. Such an approach identifies the major literary movements of the era as well as individual literary works as mere expressions of political events and ideas. For Nipperdey, literature contains, expresses, mirrors, reflects and shows. Rarely, if ever, does literature constitute political meaning.

No doubt, a number of discourses and institutions played a key role in the formation of a German model of liberalism during the years before and after 1848, including philosophy, historiography, economic and legal theory, agricultural thought, and religion, to say nothing of a growing political culture itself. Gutzkow’s *Die Zeitgenossen* may well serve as a testament to these messy conditions underpinning liberalism’s development, for he investigates all of these areas within his social critique. Literature itself, however has been strangely overlooked as its own discourse, a circumstance that persists. Larry E. Jones and Konrad H. Jarausch’s anthology *In Search of Liberal Germany* critically evaluates the state of historical scholarship on liberalism, calling for increased investigations of liberalism’s regional differentiation and convoluted contexts. Of the fourteen contributions in the study, none probes literature or literary culture even as they “address specific deficiencies in secondary scholarship.”²⁷ This same oversight extends to the most convincing historical investigations appearing in recent decades, including Dagmar Herzog’s *Intimacy and Exclusion*, Michael Gross’s *The War Against Catholicism*, and Brian Vick’s *Defining Germany*, which offer complex and sophisticated arguments, very much

²⁶ Ibid., 518.

²⁷ Konrad H. Jarausch and Larry E. Jones, *In Search of a Liberal Germany: Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the present* (New York: Berg, 1990).

attentive to recent theoretical shifts wrought by the so-called “cultural turn.”²⁸ By no means are these works flawed for not having examined prose fiction. It is worth asking, however, how our understanding of the broader patterns of cultural interaction that defined liberalism (and thus recent scholarship) might benefit from an attentiveness to literature.

Scholars of German literature have faced an altogether different set of challenges when it comes to evaluating literature’s role in German political formation. First, they have been conditioned by the habit of interpreting and reinterpreting a literary canon, often leading them to focus on a discrete group of seminal texts, which do not always shed light on broader trends within a larger culture. Georg Lukács’ *A Theory of the Novel* (1914-15) and *The Historical Novel* (1936), which examine the canonical writings of Walter Scott, J.W. von Goethe, and Gustav Flaubert, among others, as a means of illuminating and critiquing bourgeois-liberal society, are brilliant works of criticism.²⁹ And the Marxist approach to analysis that emerged in the early twentieth century continues to influence scholarship. Frederic Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981) remains perhaps the most nuanced expression of Marxist dialectics to date, and the work many literary scholars turn to as a blueprint for analyzing the complex relationship between literature and politics.³⁰ These classic

²⁸ Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Michael Gross, *The War Against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Brian Vick, *Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

²⁹ Georg Lukács, *A Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974); *The Historical Novel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

³⁰ Frederick Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982). The seminal post-war sociological and cultural-historical work of Jürgen Habermas and Raymond Williams confirms the reach of Marxist thinking as well; their important analyses of nineteenth-century society and culture, respectively, have long influenced the manner in which other scholars approach the period. See for instance Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991) and Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780 – 1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958). Though Habermas is more interested in a literary public sphere and certain types

studies, which no doubt have influenced my own in unfathomable ways, may not however offer the best framework for grasping the broader historical and literary complexities of mid-nineteenth century German literary culture. These are works that privilege the role of the twentieth-century critic as someone with special insight into the fraught relationship between art and politics, and given their focus on canonical works, their methodologies stand partly at odds with efforts to understand broader trends. It is the result of literary criticism's lofty perch in the 1980s that Georg Büchner (1813-1837), virtually unknown until his late-nineteenth and twentieth-century resurrection, has received much more scholarly attention than Karl Gutzkow.³¹

From an historical point of view, one of the great accomplishments of the social turn in literary studies of the late 1960s, 70s and 80s, which brought renewed attention to a writer like Gutzkow and shaped the work of Nepperdey, Wehler, Eley and Blackbourn, was to examine previously overlooked aspects of the lives and society of our nineteenth-century cousins, including the literature they read. Rudolph Schenda's groundbreaking *Volk ohne Buch* (1970), for instance, analyzes the modes of production, dissemination and consumption of reading material during the nineteenth century.³² By exploring the history of reading, reading publics, and popular forms of leisure reading, Schenda shifted focus away from the intensive reading of canonical texts to the extensive reading of *Unterhaltungsliteratur* or *Trivallliteratur*. For Schenda these two pejorative terms reflect easy accessibility for readers, a potential social impact resulting from wide distribution, and a frequently negative status attributed to linear and recycled

of domestic fiction, Williams looks more broadly at the idea of culture and literary arts to understand how these domains mediated a "way of life" that shaped social, moral, and political judgments.

³¹ Ironically, it was Gutzkow who first recognized Büchner's talent, publishing *Danton's Tod* in his literary journal *Phönix*.

³² Rudolf Schenda, *Volk Ohne Buch: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der populären Lesestoffe 1770-1910* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988). See also Wolfgang Schemme, *Trivallliteratur und literarische Wertung* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1975); Günter Waldmann, *Theorie und Didaktik der Trivallliteratur* (München: Fink, 1977).

plots, black-and-white moral worlds and kitschy, sentimentalized drama. Nonetheless, the scrutiny brought to these works mitigated against the view of literary history as a collection of highly esteemed, canonical texts and it was under this guise that a largely forgotten literary giant like Gutzkow resurfaced in critical studies. Synthesizing and criticizing many of the socio-literary arguments of the 1960s and 1970s, Peter Uwe Hohendahl's *Literarische Kultur im Zeitalter der Liberalismus* (1830-1870) reveals how German culture ushered in the institutionalization of German literature during the mid-nineteenth century.³³ His focus is less concerned with writing a social history of popular reading forms, than in charting the rise of literary culture itself: including the formation of literary canons and histories, the impact of professional critics, and the kinds of ideological structures that created the nineteenth-century tradition of "literature." It's unsurprising that Gutzkow appears throughout his study, for he was more implicated in literature's institutionalization than most.

A related problem literary scholars have faced in trying to shed light on this larger culture of print, including popular genres, texts, and authors, concerns political and historical periodization. Recalling Gutzkow's own description of liberalism (which appeared in a dynamic literary text), it is surely of interest that he does not invoke the term *Biedermeier* or *Vormärz* in his characterization of the contemporary political atmosphere, as countless historical and literary studies have done and continue to do. Of course, how could he? These two anachronistic referents have come to shape our understanding of the period in complex ways, as evidenced by the title of Friedrich Sengle's seminal study from the 1970s, *Biedermeierzeit*, or even the cutting

³³ Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Literarische Kultur im Zeitalter der Liberalismus, 1830-1870* (Frankfurt: C.H. Beck, 1985).

edge of research today, but they also partially obscure what they claim to designate.³⁴ The alleged retreat from the political into the non-political that characterizes a *Biedermeier* mood seems ill-fitting given Gutzkow's political inventiveness, as well as the widespread politicization of German culture that historians have exposed. And to understand the broader set of cultural and political attitudes, trends, and tendencies as teleologically moving towards 1848 goes against the grain of Gutzkow's injunction that "Unsere Zeit emanzipiert nicht zur Revolution, sondern aus der Revolution." In describing how the nineteenth-century mentality differs from the previous century, Gutzkow claims his contemporaries are not at all interested in reliving the social and political turmoil of the French Revolution their parents' generation suffered. On the contrary, Gutzkow's meliorist outlook understands the nineteenth century as a time to bring order to a lack of order, to rebuild and attune society to a new disposition.³⁵

In a broad sense, this dissertation aligns itself with the tradition in literary scholarship that stresses the importance of studying the book market, the morphology of genres, and the reading cultures that emerged around narrative prose fiction. As my individual chapters will show, however, the chief limitation of these types of studies is that they are not designed to expose the complex relationship between literature and politics that I am claiming as essential for nineteenth-century society and culture. I see a marked need to examine the literature German readers read, rigorously historicizing it while also submitting it to close careful readings. Though similarities between Schenda's and Hohendahl's work should not be overstated, characteristic of

³⁴ Friedrich Sengle, *Biedermeierzeit*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971). The *Forum Vormärz Forschung*, not insignificantly housed in Bielefeld, shares this pre-1848 descriptor with dozens of other academic studies on the politics of 1830s and 1840s Germany.

³⁵ Gutzkow, *Die Zeitgenossen*, 61. If there were certain trends involved in the historical development of liberalism before 1848, there were also countertrends, which at the very least raises the prospect for different outcomes. This line of thought finds credence in "Restaurationsperiode," Gutzkow's label, which orients itself towards the past, gesturing to the restoration of a previous order (and perhaps a different literary culture). There is a conservative tenor to the term, not a radical progressive one.

both their approaches is a direct avoidance of close textual analysis. Most importantly, I am interested in exposing the complex cultural, social, and especially political work individual texts performed for readers, a question we can at least partially answer by exploring a work's reception within literary culture. In literary studies and its various subfields, this type of reception-driven argument, which involves the tedious process of churning through nineteenth-century periodicals and balancing multiple literary reviews, is a recent focus in the field and one still very much being worked out.³⁶ Many arguments concerning the relationship between politics and literature continue to privilege a "symptomatic" approach to nineteenth-century literature, which looks to uncover hidden meanings, and in a certain sense, "correct" nineteenth-century art by restoring to it an overlooked political dimension.

Nancy Armstrong's Foucauldian and psychoanalytical-driven argument in *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism 1719-1900*, which posits a link between a liberal individualist ideology and literary form, offers perhaps the most forceful and eloquent articulation of this model.³⁷ Armstrong sees a deep affinity between the history of the modern subject as it is theorized in eighteenth-century moral philosophy (Locke, Smith, Hume et. al) and the manner in which novelistic representations come to conceive of that individual over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the center of her argument lies a restless, desiring

³⁶ Exemplary studies from the field of German studies include Lynne Tatlock, *German Writing American Reading: Women and Import of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State, 2012) and Jonathan Hess, *Middlebrow Literature and Making of German-Jewish Identity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

³⁷ Nancy Armstrong, *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism, 1719-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press), 2005. Armstrong is hardly alone among English scholars linking liberalism to literature. Lauren Goodlad, employing New Historicist methods for examining the formation of modern subjectivities, argues "Britain's distinctively liberal path to modern governance [...] developed in and through literature." See Lauren Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 24. And drawing on the more recent and fervent critiques of liberal ideology, Elaine Hadley argues that novels written during mid-century English history, "attempt to narrate politically liberalizing lives," in other words, "they depict their characters' thinking as liberal individuals in politicized domains." See Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010), 33. See also Amanda Anderson's work.

subject, who tries at once to maintain the illusion of a self-enclosed identity, while also striving to attune him or herself to society at large. From Defoe to Austin, and Dickens to Stoker (Armstrong skips over Bulwer), the history of the novel reveals how that subject never quite closes the gap between the fictions of both autonomy and community, resulting in the Freudian neuroses we have come to expect from the fundamental paradox of individual desire. For Armstrong, the only way to escape the trap she describes is to abandon the ideological core of the novel, which means abandoning the novel and its project of liberal individualism. She limits her study to British literature, but extends her claims to the entire novelistic tradition, presumably that of nineteenth-century Germany as well. Despite the clarity she brings to an understanding of how narrative fiction helped contextualize political and cultural concerns, her study is not willing to admit much agency into the lives of nineteenth-century readers. *How Novels Think* wants us to understand the novel and its sub-genres as the quintessential medium for instilling a deep subjectivity and internalized repression to the middle-classes.

Armstrong's book might be the most compelling articulation in a long tradition of deep-seated suspicion towards narrative prose fiction and its relationship to nineteenth-century politics and society. Jürgen Habermas was wary of the psychological novel and domestic drama, even while these genres contributed to an understanding of a "literarische Öffentlichkeit" as central to nineteenth-century conceptions of social and political organization.³⁸ Raymond Williams' reading of the industrial novel draws attention to how its economic criticisms went hand in hand with establishing the general structure of feeling underpinning the nineteenth-century conception of good relationships, but he also argues such relationships were infused with widespread class

³⁸ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 43-50.

indifference precisely as a result of their fictional grounding.³⁹ And D.A. Miller not only sees the novel as confirmation of readers' liberal subjectivities, but claims that a reader most clearly recognizes himself as a liberal subject when he "forgets or disavows his functional implication in a system of carceral restraints or disciplinary injunctions."⁴⁰ Nineteenth-century novels, for Miller, are a narcotic that perform this very inebriation. Read against these classic and important critical insights, there does not appear to be much room for Gutzkow's conception of liberalism as a strategy of attunement. On the contrary, to the extent fiction assisted readers in the negotiation of their individual and collective identities in nineteenth-century Germany, this tradition within scholarship would have us think it did so by imposing the violent modes of social control inherent in the *Bildung* process, thereby removing the possibility of agency altogether.

Mindful of these seminal approaches to both liberalism and literature advanced by historians and literary scholars alike, this dissertation organizes itself around an altogether different tack. Rather than attempting to uncover how literature unilaterally initiated readers into hidden disciplinary regimes, I am interested in a broader, if at times related problem: namely, what special role did literature play in helping readers negotiate political identities and ideologies? To answer this question, I adopt a multi-faceted approach that draws on models from a number of critical traditions, including transnational studies, psychoanalysis, gender studies, and emotion studies as well as recent methodological approaches within the fields of literary studies and cultural history. The primary apparatus at work here, however lies in incorporating reception history (extra-literary evidence including book reviews, periodical discussions, and print-history data) into close readings that probe a text's figural content, as part

³⁹ Williams, *Culture and Society*, 87-109.

⁴⁰ D.A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1988), x.

of a more “symptomatic” approach to reading, as well as a text’s “surface” content.⁴¹ I recognize both the need to explore German literature from this period as a disguised way of talking about something else, but also a need to simply evaluate the transparent material presented in a work, including its themes, patterns, plots, and formal features. By blending these approaches one arrives at a more complete picture of how a literary text functioned as a carrier of political meaning. Such a model is arguably of more import to the German context, because on the one hand, literature was, simply put, a key site for the displacement of political concerns (e.g. Gutzkow’s Bulwer conceit). Nineteenth-century authors employed self-conscious figural strategies like allegory, symbolism, and synecdoche to talk about politics. On the other hand, I am attentive to how the historical reconstruction of a literary context necessitates an analysis of form and content, the social context mediating literature’s production, and the topoi and patterns appearing across genres and multiple texts. There is much on the surface level of a text that for scholars today, has also gone largely unnoticed, just as there is no need to search for latent, hidden political meanings everywhere.

In terms of the relationship between literature and politics, I seek to show how the formal qualities and content of particular genres and texts – canonical and non-canonical – actively and reciprocally shaped a political discourse by contributing to a literary model of liberalism. This model, though certainly implicated in shoring up the identities of individuals, is more remarkable and more historically relevant, I argue, for the way in which it helped readers negotiate politics at the level of affect and feeling. As Terry Eagleton has shown, the aesthetic played such a prominent role in middle-class development because it allowed an emergent bourgeois social

⁴¹ This term was brought to my attention in a recent article in the *Chronicle Review*. Jeffrey J. Williams, “The New Modesty in Literary Criticism” (January 9, 2015): B6-B9. The term was first used by Sharon Marcus in her book on female friendship in the nineteenth-century novel. Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 3.

order to stage a political, ideological program elsewhere. Art could be about art, but it could also be about “freedom and legality, spontaneity and necessity, self-determination, autonomy, particularity and universality” or any number of other factors that speak to the middle-class struggle for political hegemony.⁴² Within this context, the bourgeois social order came to express its power through aesthetic artifacts and the habits, customs, pieties, sentiments, affections, and feelings expressed in and through those artifacts. As Eagleton further reminds us, however, inscribing a political program, such as liberalism, into a non-political domain, such as prose fiction, will always be occasioned by a profound degree of ambivalence. Indeed, the problem of distinguishing between an aesthetic ideology working to undermine a specific political program or one working to support it is one of the primary reasons a writer like Gutzkow was jailed. And when it comes to activating readers emotions, the ambivalence is perhaps more palpable. The far-flung qualities of affect suggest it can easily and surreptitiously serve both sides of the political spectrum.

As a result, this dissertation is chiefly interested in how nineteenth-century prose fiction helped readers negotiate a dual anthropology: it reveals liberal political discourse during this period to be just as fundamentally concerned with cultivating, channeling, and disciplining our passions, inclinations, and emotions as with the individual’s alleged ability to make rational judgments. Far from facilitating rational individuals in the traditionally understood sense of liberal ideology, literature, I argue, could and very often did perform just the opposite. Its broad appeal lay in performing work under the radar of a political ideology altogether, creating communities of emotionally connected readers who accessed politics through emotions. This is not to say that readers and authors did not look to literature and print culture in affirmation of a specific political-ideological outlook, only that the results of a literary model of liberalism

⁴² Terry Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 3.

needn't share in the same affirmation. In this context, we shall see, there is also no reason to presume a correspondence between an author's professed politics and the content of his or her novels, or that the work performed by a literary text could not altogether transcend political lines. Readers of Fontane's *Unwiederbringlich* (1892) will recall how Graf Holk first tells his servant not to pack any books before his journey from Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark in 1854 ("Was wir hier haben, paßt nicht nach Kopenhagen"). But he then changes his mind: "Oder nimm ein paar Bände Walter Scott mit; man kann nicht wissen, und der paßt immer."⁴³ Fontane's witty reference in his politically and erotically charged historical novel from the end of a liberal era in Wilhelmine Germany, is not merely suggesting that conservatives and liberals alike take pleasure in Walter Scott's fiction, it is also an admission of the kind of cultural capital literature could bring to a social and political matrix. It is a testament to the role of popular historical fiction in a transnational context, even as it foreshadows Holk's character flaws and future infidelities. By creating a character who fails to read attentively (Holk's wife describes him as "unliterarisch"), Fontane underscores how the very notion of literariness could serve as a basis for judgment. And as Holk's own life unfolds like a tragic historical romance, his flaws are turned back on him. Walter Scott might not "fit" everywhere after all, for it depends entirely on how he is read.

The question of how nineteenth-century readers read narrative prose fiction is an incredibly complex one, and no single analytic approach can do justice to the myriad individual acts of reading brought to any given text. In this context, I have found Roland Barthes distinction between the "readerly" and "writerly" to be a useful analytic tool in approaching nineteenth-century readerships and balancing contemporary criticism, including issues related to

⁴³ Theodor Fontane, *Unwiederbringlich*, (München: Deutsche Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1990), 57.

canonicity.⁴⁴ The “readerly” text, for Barthes, is a text that encourages us to be passive consumers of finely crafted fiction. Readerly texts incite pleasure by adhering to the style, forms, and content of a dominant culture. They may be critical of that culture, but the narratives and conventions they employ nonetheless condone the dominant culture on account of their tendency to limit the potential meanings they produce. By contrast, a writerly text works to reveal the very conventions a readerly text tries to disguise in bad faith. Instead of attracting passive readers to stable narratives, the writerly text unsettles complacent readers through ambiguous ones. The ultimate goal of a writerly text is to foster a multiplicity of meaning, encouraging readers to view the text from the writer’s point of view, as an occasion for producing multiple meanings, not embracing a singular meaning. Though readerly texts constitute the vast bulk of texts we encounter and writerly texts are difficult to find in our culture, Barthes believes that through interpretation we can arrive at an ideal text that blends both. This blending of readerly and writerly distinctions through interpretation, I hope to show, best describes how nineteenth-century readers approached their literature. And it is also this logic that drives my use of the term popular. For the purposes of this dissertation popular texts are those that sought to influence or shape literary and political culture by appealing to readerly attributes. This broad definition allows me to include works with both highbrow and lowbrow ambitions, works that were widely read and works whose authors wished they had been more widely read. It also allows me to focus on those particular texts that appeared at critical junctures in the political landscape, texts that responded to the popularity of other texts, and texts which significantly attracted the attention of literary critics. It is my hope that by looking to a broad sampling of popular literature, trying to grasp how it was read, discussed, and consumed, and considering why a text attracted the kind of attention it did, we can arrive at a more complete understanding of early nineteenth-century

⁴⁴ Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 4-5.

German politics as well. Only this model will do justice to the disparate voices comprising the formation of nineteenth-century literary liberalism.

Perhaps more controversially, I hope to demonstrate how this model sheds light on a means by which German liberalism partially succeeded during this period. I measure success on two levels. First, a literary model of liberalism goes against the grain of historical narratives preaching institutional miscarriage and political failure. Literature was a place readers turned to in effort to define their political understandings, by no means the only place, but a significant once accorded new prominence on the heels of technological innovations and increased readerships. The literary public sphere, where works were critically evaluated and readily consumed, was not a secondary domain within German politics, but a primary one, crucial for shaping the discourse on liberal issues. Second, and perhaps more importantly, literature was an effective site for *Stimmung* or attunement in early liberal discourse and practice. As a form of virtual play engaging readers' dual anthropology – their reason and their inclinations – literature functioned as an event for readers, shaping their social and political identities within larger collectives while also fostering an ideal of self-cultivation. The inheritance of this eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse on *Stimmung* promulgated by Kant, Schiller, and Goethe, thus reveals itself in and through nineteenth-century narrative fiction and the readerly mentalities brought to that fiction.

Chapter Overview: Narrative Prose Fiction and Literary Liberalism

For a period when liberal political aspirations could for the most part only find concrete expression in and through culture – thanks to the largely autocratic conditions of governance still in place throughout Central Europe – it seems like a common-sense move to probe literature as a vehicle for shaping cultural attitudes and liberal identities. The challenge for such a project lies

in the vast amount of fiction nineteenth-century readers consumed and in deciding which texts, genres, and authors offer the most representative force for an argument that is at once general and specific. Of course, narrative prose fiction cannot be said to have a monopoly on nineteenth-century literary culture, but it was the novel and its various sub-genres that have been credited with fueling the explosion of the book market, amassing more readers in such a short time than any other genre in history.⁴⁵ It was in the mid-nineteenth century when the terms “fiction” and “novel” became nearly synonymous largely as a result of this burgeoning book-trade.⁴⁶ Again, this is not to say that the lyric or drama did not play a special role in fostering the kind of political formation described in this dissertation, or that these literary modes existed separate and apart from narrative prose fiction. As we will see, for a writer like Heinrich Heine, his choice to publish a fragmentary piece of narrative fiction in 1837 was directly linked to his critique of the popular political poetry of the period. And for Berthold Auerbach, his choice to publish a collection of relatively short village tales only came after his lengthy novels failed to find commercial success. Attentive to the formal diversity within traditional conceptions of the novel as both a container of prose fiction (noun) and something novel (adjective), the popular or popularly conceived texts examined here represent a broadly conceived understanding of narrative prose. I consider a traditional historical/adventure novel (Theodor Mügge’s *Afraja*, 1854); an anonymously published serial novel written in the tradition of Eugène Sue’s *Les Mystères de Paris* (*Die Geheimnisse von Berlin: Aus den Papieren eines Berliner Kriminal-Beamten*, 1844), a novella (Adalbert Stifter’s *Brigitta*, 1844), a village tale from Berthold Auerbach’s collection of *Schwarwälder Dorfgeschichten* (“Ivo, der Harjle,” 1842) and a

⁴⁵ The staggering growth of the novel during the nineteenth-century receives a stunning visual treatment in Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (London Verso, 2005), 19 and 23.

⁴⁶ Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 134-135.

fragmentary work written in the tradition of Boccaccio's *novelle* (Heinrich Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, 1827/35). Only this broad approach to such a diffuse and prosaic culture of prose can begin to grasp the complexity of nineteenth-century reading cultures and the ways they turned to narrative fiction as a means of grounding, negotiating, and exploring their political identities.

In theory and practice, there are a host of authors, texts, and genres that could support the argument advanced here. Karl Gutzkow and his early novels, such as *Briefe eines Narren an eine Närrin* (1832) and *Seraphine* (1837), would fit in this project, along with authors like Heinrich Laube, Ludolf Wienbarg, and Theodor Mundt – the other notables comprising *Junges Deutschland*. Though largely forgotten today, Laube's *Das junge Europa* (1833), Wienbarg's *Aesthetische Feldzüge* (1834), and Mundt's *Madonna* (1835) all politicized art in complex ways. Exemplars of German-language adventure fiction set in North America, such as Charles Sealsfield's *Der Legitime und die Republikaner* (1833) and Friedrich Gerstäcker's *Die Regulatoren in Arkansas* (1846), would also fit into this project. Similarly, Wilhelm Hauff, Luise Mühlbach and Willibald Alexis, three names closely associated with German readers' infatuation with historical fiction, fit within the milieu under consideration here, inspired as they were by Bulwer and Scott. Other key works indispensable to the popular literary culture between 1830 and 1860 surely include Karl Immermann's *Die Epigonen* (1836), which has been credited with influencing the subsequent generation of writers, and Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* (1854) – the most popular novel in the second half of the nineteenth century, with content wrought largely by experiences from the first. Reviewing the literary production of any of these authors, one can see that “novel production” comprised only a small fraction of their writings. Non-fictional travelogues, political tracts, social commentaries, lyrics, dramas, historical studies and literary reviews, complement the novel output of these writers. Like Gutzkow's *Die Zeitgenossen*, the

lines between these modes of writing frequently bled together, suggesting the need to consider them in tandem, rather than isolating particular texts and estranging them from a larger whole.

My first chapter investigates Heinrich Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, one of three attempts by Heine to craft a work of narrative prose fiction. Admittedly, this particular tale reached far fewer readers than Heine's *Buch der Lieder* (1827) or even the *Reisebilder* (1826). Despite having been published in both French and German and in both serial and manuscript form with content Heine described as "popular, für alle Classen berechnet," it was not nearly as popular as Heine might have hoped. And as the first literary work by Heine to appear after the December 10, 1835 ban on his writings, the challenges of reaching German-speaking audiences were quite formidable. Censorship may not have been enforced throughout much of the 1840s, but when *Salon III* appeared in 1837 (which consisted of a preface poking fun at Wolfgang Menzel, *Elementar Geister*, and *Florentinische Nächte*) Prussian and Bavarian authorities were quick to confiscate copies. Even over the course of the nineteenth century as Heine's political divisiveness intensified, the publishing record for this work remained marginal at best. As a result, I include it here primarily for its representative value, for the way it addresses larger concerns at stake in this project, and for reminding readers that Heine lived in the nineteenth century, not the twentieth. Indeed, there might not be a more politicized figure in German literary history than Heinrich Heine. The 2014 issue of the *Heine-Jahrbuch*, which catalogues 50 of the statues commemorating his likeness around the world, forcefully reminds us of this fact: liberals and conservatives, radicals and reactionaries, socialists, Marxists, democrats, and monarchists can all be said to have laid claim to Heine's writings.⁴⁷ Academic scholarship in particular bears the stamp of what Jeffrey Sammons calls "a zealous desire to appropriate Heine as new and

⁴⁷ Christian Liedtke, "Heines Denkmäler, 1891-2012. Ein kommentiertes Verzeichnis," in *Heine Jahrbuch* (Heinrich-Heine-Gesellschaft, 2014).

modern, even as our contemporary, and as an ally of our own purposes and convictions.”⁴⁸ But how was Heine read and understood in his day? And how does Heine’s keen insight into the relationship between politics and literature shed light on liberalism in the 1830s? What were the implications for his readers of the extreme political ambivalence scholars now commonly attribute to him? By taking up Sammons’ implicit challenge to do a better job historicizing Heine, what new perspectives might we glean?

At a more abstract level, I hope to show how Heine anticipates the need for moving beyond the “ideological core” of the novel identified by Nancy Armstrong by dint of his ironic critique of past and present literary traditions. As a study of prose and an exercise in prose (Latin *provertere*, to turn forward; cf. *Prorsa*, *Prosa* as midwife), *Florentinische Nächte* is about giving birth to a new conception of art and politics, a post-bourgeois, post-liberal conception. Fascinatingly, and less abstractly, the germ for this vision manifests itself at the level of form – chiefly Heine’s use of allegory – and content – the staging of an erotics as both affect and hermeneutic. As I will show, Heine’s nineteenth-century readers understood this text as a politicization of the reading of allegory. However, far from offering a reductive political allegory expressing some ideal for freedom (what many critics claim) or a hollow form of “genteel pornography” (to quote Jeffrey Sammons), the work uses allegory to problematize the relationship between social persona and inner subjectivity, undermining the assumptions of a rising liberal culture Heine and others identified with the rhetoric surrounding *Junges Deutschland*. Heine distinguishes himself from other writers in this way, while supplying a powerful commentary on the role of narrative prose fiction in political formation.

⁴⁸ Jeffrey Sammons, “Heinrich Heine and his publisher, Julius Campe,” in *Publishing Culture and the “Reading Nation:” German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Rochester: Camden House, 2010): 224.

Shifting gears, my second chapter analyzes a story about a young Catholic-initiate in Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1842). In contrast to Heine's fragment, Auerbach's nine village tales ranked among the most popular works of fiction in nineteenth-century Germany. Until the appearance of Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* in 1854, there was not a more popular author or work than Auerbach's proto-realist depictions of his hometown. These sentimental depictions of village life found commercial success, I argue, by mixing politics and a sentimental tradition in the literary topos of the German peasant. By repurposing elements from two highly popular eighteenth-century novels, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) and Johann Martin Miller's *Sieggart: Eine Klostergeschichte* (1776), I show how Auerbach adapts a critical tradition of sensibility to fit his own political project in the 1840s. This project includes articulating a literary model for a non-atomistic, community-oriented nationalism as well promoting an Enlightenment model of universalist piety. Furthermore, Auerbach uses the concept of empathetic identification to intervene in Badenese debates about Catholic revival in an effort to bridge a perceived gap between religious confessions.

This approach to Auerbach significantly departs from recent scholarship, which threatens to read the village tales as a mere index of social, religious and political change during the *Vormärz*, or would have us not "read" them at all. Franco Moretti's 2005 book *Graphs, Maps, Trees* encourages an approach to the genre that foregrounds "distant reading."⁴⁹ Instead of close textual analysis or a focus on the village tales' reception, Moretti maps a selection of texts in an effort to understand how the formation of the genre reflects larger social trends. By mapping intra-local markers (cities and distinct locations mentioned in the tales) Moretti uncovers three different spaces which structure narrative content. Moretti shows how the conflict between national and local loyalties portrayed within the village stories reflects this form, suggesting the

⁴⁹ Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 49-53.

genre fundamentally concerns itself with the formation of nation-states and the conflict between national and local loyalties, an us vs. them, *Heimat* vs. *Vaterland* antagonistic drama that plays itself out geographically and literarily within the genre. While Moretti's approach is fascinating, complex, and useful in a certain context, my findings suggest his model may not be the best suited for understanding Auerbach's historical and political relevance. As I will show, the figurative aspects of language and the strategies by which Auerbach employs empathy as a political project cannot be mapped in Moretti's system. As a result, my research suggests the village tale ought to be understood more as an active intervention within a political culture, which though concerned with questions of nationalism and regionalism, sought to shape readers' sentiments for other purposes (social, religious, literary) as well.

The presence of sympathy (*Mitleid*) in popular literary representations also comprises the focus of my third chapter on the anonymously published *Geheimnisse von Berlin: Aus den Papieren eines Berliner-Kriminalbeamten* (1844). Unlike Auerbach's fiction, which critics praised for its originality, this particular work found success as a highly derivative adaption of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842). As a German response to Sue's melodramatic call for urban activism, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* taps into the literary tradition of the *Räuberroman* to offer a response to the social question of the 1840s and the related problem of moral neutrality. Contrary to arguments that see social realism and liberal disinterestedness as the condition of possibility for voluntaristic philanthropy, I argue that *Geheimnisse von Berlin* sheds light on the problems and limitations of such approaches to social relations as an exercise of literary culture, instead appealing to emotion – not reason – as the basis for human political relations. As contemporary readers noted, this is a strategy for political organization that was not without problems, but it suggests literature had a very important role to play in shaping readers' attitudes about poverty relief.

By most accounts, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* would likely be considered “bad” literature today, as it often was in its own day as well. It lacks the felicitous prose of Heine, as well as the prosaic politics of Auerbach. Its 800 plus pages teem with unresolved plot conflicts, vulgar kitsch, and utterly predictable characters. These attributes notwithstanding, the author’s preface and afterword betray an overwhelming sense of political responsibility and a sincere effort to understand social problems. This responsibility, however paradoxical or problematic it may be by our standards, not only extended to the literary text itself, but was registered by communities of readers for whom the relationship between fictional crime and real life found congruity in acts of reading. As readers anxiously awaited the next installment of *Die Geheimnisse*, they were forced into Berlin’s imaginary urban world by speculating on the unknown (a condition underscored by the author’s anonymity and crime’s inherent contingency). This mid-nineteenth century novel was a way of life that deepened the nexus between literature and living, politics and emotion, while also hinting at innovative ways narrative prose fiction could intervene in socio-political discourse.

My fourth chapter extends the scope of German literary and political culture to German-speaking regions and an intellectual milieu hardly considered liberal in the 1840s. *Brigitta* (1844/47), an early novella by the Austro-German writer and Habsburg tutor Adalbert Stifter, allegorizes liberalism’s ethno-national problems and the debate about how to define Germany’s territorial limits (*Kleindeutschland* or *Grossdeutschland*). By appealing to the Italian legacy of classical *Bildung* and its investment in homosocial desire as a form of disciplined sociability, Stifter uses the dual structure of androgyny to discipline the revolutionary sentiments of his liberal readers, reining in their nationalistic rhetoric and offering a reform-oriented politics of compromise in its stead. *Brigitta* also charts new territory on account of its realist aesthetic. It is a text concerned as much with its literariness as its politics. As a result, I show how Stifter’s

political vision also corresponds to his literary one in the way he crafts a new mode of realism that inscribes ideology onto nature for an agenda both inclusive and exclusive, political and non-political.

By way of conclusion, I offer a brief reading of a post-1848 historical-adventure novel by the Berlin-based author and journalist Theodor Mügge. Known for his popular romance fiction, travelogues, and political journalism, Mügge offers insight into the fate of literary culture after the failed revolution of 1848. A cursory look at his most widely read novel (*Afraja*, 1854), will show how the themes, topoi, and politics investigated in the preceding four chapters did not die in 1848, but fed right into a resurgence of liberalism in the 1850s. In fact, in the realm of novel reading, 1848 may have been a very insignificant date in the long-term rise of liberalism as a form of literary and emotional habitus. Much like Karl Gutzkow and E.L. Bulwer, Mügge did not make his way into the literary canons. Even if he had, however, it is unlikely that a “thick description” of a novel or a “close reading” of his passages would reveal much about his historical importance for literary culture and political formation. His import, also much like Gutzkow’s and Bulwer’s, Auerbach’s and Sue’s, lies in his broad appeal and the way he adapted existing literary traditions.

Perhaps the most salient common denominator shared by all five of these authors and texts, regardless of their canonical status, literary merit, or historical popularity, is a self-conscious understanding of the special affinity between literature and politics, or, liberalism and prose fiction. Though their goals, methods, and styles vary significantly, these writers all turned to narrative prose as a resource for exploring both the problems, challenges, and limitations of aesthetic and political reciprocity, but also its efficacy and uniqueness. This process of wedding literature to politics, and vice-versa, was never realized without recourse to earlier literary traditions. In the case of Heine, his fragment offered readers a further politicization of an already

fraught relationship between German literature and political development. His eclectic story of *Bildung* gone awry amidst a struggle to come to terms with a post-Classical, post-Romantic literary heritage shrewdly identified (German) liberalism's challenges during the mid-nineteenth century, even while he distanced himself from Germany's cultural icons. Auerbach harnessed a similar group of literary interlocutors, but deployed their legacies for an altogether different purpose. Writing during a period of sustained and heavily publicized distrust among disenchanted Badenese liberals and a politically active Catholic clergy, Auerbach tapped into a transcultural tradition of sentimental fiction to offer his readers a utopian vision of community. A similar kind of idealism underlay the plain-spoken goal in the adaptation of Eugène Sue's novel, but instead of dispelling conflict between religious and secular authorities, the author sought to draw attention to Berlin's urban poor by way of the *Räuberroman* in an effort to foster sympathy. Adalbert Stifter's early novella stands as perhaps the most complex articulation of the relationship between literature and politics in this collection. By appealing to the Italian legacy of classical *Bildung* and its investment in homosocial desire as a form of sociability, Stifter sought to discipline the revolutionary sentiments of his readers, reigning in their passions and nationalistic rhetoric, offering a cautious model of liberalism in its stead.

The other major element shared by these authors and works, and one which stands in direct relation to concerns about literary tradition and the itinerant relationship between literature and politics, pertains to the political function of affect and the figural strategies by which affect is promoted (or as we will see, blocked). At a basic level, reading prose fiction was an enjoyable, pleasurable past-time, in the 1830s as much as it is now. When readers are drawn into imaginary worlds, they are encouraged to share in a character's experiences, they become wrapped up in plots, imagery, and other strategies of representation. This process always involves some form of figural engagement. In Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, the dangers of identification are exposed,

the fictional processes involved in literary and political identification are subverted and critiqued in and through allegory. In “Ivo,” Auerbach employs a mostly symbolic figural strategy in support of his protagonist, hinting at a fusion of sentimentality and Romantic idealism – the very concepts ironized in Heine’s texts. In *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, the author relies on synecdoche (part-whole relationships) to facilitate his social model of sympathy. And Stifter, too, crafts a narrative that is dependent upon a political allegory realized through the conflict between desire and love. The broader point is that *Stimmung* in the way Gutzkow likely conceived it, was not only about attuning readers to an emergent form of rationality, but it was also directed at their sentiments and feelings, too. This is the domain where nineteenth-century prose fiction achieved perhaps its greatest successes, in the way it drew on a legacy of sentimental agency, while adapting, critiquing, and repurposing it to shape readers’ sentiments as a form of liberalism. There is no doubt novel reading promotes individual identities as a specifically modern project, but it also reveals the fiction of an autonomous subject by connecting readers through the shared social aspects of emotion.

Where’s Büchner? Where’s the *Bildungsroman*?

One corollary of adopting an approach that emphasizes literature firmly implicated in the production of a literary culture (i.e., literature readers actually read) has meant that certain long-standing texts, authors and critical traditions within the academic study of German literature and politics have been relegated to the margins of my analysis. Of all the authors and genres one might expect to find in a dissertation on mid-nineteenth-century German literature and liberalism, Georg Büchner and the *Bildungsroman* might appear at first glance to be necessities. The former has achieved notoriety largely on account of his dramatic works: *Woyzek* (1836), which still attracts audiences today, and *Danton’s Tod* (1835). Similarly, the so-called

Kunstgespräch in his novella *Lenz* (1836) has attracted significant attention as an early programmatic articulation of poetic realism, and his *Hessische Landbote* (1834) led to his own ban along with the other authors of *Junges Deutschland*. In reality, however, hardly anyone living in the 1830s would have associated the name Büchner with radical politics or literary achievement. *Woyzek* was not staged until the late 1870s, when Karl Emil Franzos rediscovered it, and *Danton's Tod* did not premiere until 1902. Büchner, we can say, was certainly a product of the culture under investigation here, but not an seminal producer of it. He is a writer more appropriate for an approach looking to promote an understanding of fatal nineteenth-century developments in modernist terms. He is a reminder of how bad things can get, not how things monolithically were.

The *Bildungsroman* presents an altogether more interesting challenge for a project concerned with nineteenth-century literary culture. If modern literature and German liberalism fundamentally concern themselves with the formation of modern subjects, with the politics and aesthetics of self-cultivation and self-acculturation, then the *Bildungsroman* should embody the literary expression of this process better than any other genre or subgenre. Truly, there could be no genre more ideally suited for examining the content of liberal discourse than the genre that enacts and critically examines the content and form of the liberal subject as content and form itself. But as Jeffrey Sammons has shown, genre categories often function heuristically, not ontologically, and the *Bildungsroman* is quite “insecure” as an actual genre.⁵⁰ Apart from the fact that only a handful of particular instances exist, there is little evidence to suggest Stifter’s *Nachsommer* or Keller’s *Der Grüne Heinrich* garnered anywhere near the kind of popularity achieved by Auerbach’s *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* or Mügge’s *Afraja*. That is not to say

⁵⁰ Jeffrey Sammons, “The Mystery of the Missing *Bildungsroman*, or: What Happened to Wilhelm Meister’s Legacy,” in *Genre* 14, no. 2 (1981): 237.

these works would not bolster my argument or expose other fascinating aspects of it. All of the discourses that make nineteenth-century literary and political culture so complex come together in these novels in ways that make them worthy of attention. But the *Bildungsroman* as a genre concept is largely an academic construct of the twentieth-century, a kind of “phantom formation” to employ Marc Redfield’s term.⁵¹ As a result, I feel (reluctantly) inclined to exclude it in this particular project. Nonetheless, my own work intersects with *Bildungsroman* scholarship in interesting ways, given that its status as a phantom genre must be balanced with the consideration that Karl Gutzkow, Heinrich Heine, Berthold Auerbach, Adalbert Stifter, and Theodor Mücke *did read* novels within this “invented tradition,” especially *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. For this reason, I propose understanding the *Bildungsroman* in the context of adaptation; its historical merit for this project lies in the way authors such as Auerbach, Stifter, and Mücke appropriated its tropes and topoi within their own works.

The significance of this process finds expression throughout my dissertation, but mostly in its book ends, in my analysis of Heinrich Heine’s *Florentinische Nächte* and my concluding chapter on Stifter’s *Brigitta*. Heine’s fragment ironizes Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister*; it is a calculated, parodic response to Goethe’s novel that problematizes the relationship between social persona and inner self Wilhelm ostensibly achieves. Because it seems unlikely Heine would have misunderstood Goethe’s own ironic treatment of the *Bildungsprozess*, the critical thrust Heine’s work performs vis-à-vis *Bildung* concerns the reception of Goethe in the 1830s – the political uses to which his life and writings were deployed. As we will see, Heine’s use of allegory in the Mignon-like figure of Mademoiselle Laurence might even be consistent with a non-organic Goethean model of *Bildung* at work in *Wilhelm Meister* – one devised to frustrate symbolic modes and simple political temperaments. Stifter’s *Brigitta* is interested in *Wilhelm Meister* for

⁵¹ Marc Redfield, *Phantom Formations: Aesthetic Ideology and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1996).

different, though related reasons. In particular, I argue that his representation of an androgynous woman in the figure of Brigitta partakes in important precedents established in Goethe's novel. The figures of Therese and Natalie were certainly characters readers of Stifter's novella would have been familiar with. Though completely lacking Heine's sense of humor and no doubt troubled by any form of sensualism in life or literature, Stifter in some ways appeals to Goethe in a manner similar to Heine's in that he uses prose fiction and a novelistic tradition to challenge readers' politics.

Ultimately, this dissertation identifies *Bildung* (and the related concept of *Stimmung*) as a key element to a German model of literary liberalism, because German readers generally did themselves. Again and again, nineteenth-century prose fiction showcases the inability to move away from Goethe and a classical culture more broadly. Nonetheless, in the process of critiquing, adapting, appropriating and repurposing existing literary traditions, nineteenth-century German literary culture did create its own fictional spaces even as those spaces stood in Goethe's shadow. Heine created an ironic, post-liberal erotic fantasy, Auerbach constructed an empathetic liberal community, and Stifter enlisted *Bildung* in his effort to discipline nationalistic passions. Thus very much tied to Karl Gutzkow's description of liberalism as a "Stimmung des Gemüts," one can identify a strong basis for understanding German political opposition between 1830 and 1860 in terms of attunement through literature. By no means does literature claim a monopoly on this process, and many nineteenth-century developments likely stunted it, but for a time and place when political expression was largely rooted in culture, literature did constitute a very important domain, one deserving more attention than it has received by nineteenth-century scholars of German politics.

CHAPTER ONE

Political Allegory and Erotic Desire in Heinrich Heine's *Florentinische Nächte* (1827/36)

At the same time Karl Gutzkow was beginning to write his far-flung social critique *Die Zeitgenossen*, Heinrich Heine was vacationing in Boulogne, finishing up his second attempt at a novel.¹ *Florentinische Nächte*, like *Die Zeitgenossen*, was conceived during a period of deliberation on how best to respond to the increasingly tiresome interventions by censors and how to circumvent the ban on past, present, and future writings recently imposed by the German Federal Assembly. Both texts were the first literary works to appear by their respective authors following the Dec. 10, 1835 ban, which is to say, they appeared amidst a concerted politicization of literature in German-speaking lands. While Gutzkow's text makes use of a more outwardly polemical mode of social critique qua print journalism (and appeals to narrative prose fiction in the process), Heine's text does the opposite. *Florentinische Nächte* relies on narrative prose to fashion a wide-ranging social critique (just as it seeks to undermine a literary culture of print journalism more broadly). This turn to different modes of interdependent writing has much to do with the ire both authors brought about through earlier works. In the wake of the *Wally*, *Die Zweiflerin* scandal, Gutzkow probably did not feel inclined to write another novel, whereas for Heine, his own extensive political and social critiques from 1835 – *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* and *Die Romantische Schule* – helped facilitate his inclusion

¹ Manfred Windfuhr identifies the dates of composition as October 1835 to February 1836, though it seems likely some of the content in *Florentinische Nächte*, particularly portions of night one, was written as early as 1827.

within the group of writers outlawed. In an effort to overcome the threat of confiscation and censorship, Heine planned to write a “kostbares welterfreuliches Buch [...] populär, für alle Classen berechnet” with “amüsanten Inhalts [...] [sodass] kein Censor in der ganzen Welt wird etwas dran aussetzen haben.”² Throughout his correspondence with Julius Campe, his publisher, Heine mentions some half a dozen times how all objectionable political and religious content was removed from *Salon III* – the manuscript in which the novel fragment appeared.³

For Campe, excising politics must have seemed like a dubious proposition in light of Heine’s previous writings, but the subject matter and storyline of *Florentinische Nächte* appear to corroborate these declarations. Maximilian, an authorial alter ego, narrates a series of stories over two nights to the consumption-ravaged and dying Maria. From an early childhood kiss with a statue in his mother’s garden, to his expressed love for dead and imaginary women, the descriptions of Maximilian’s paraphilic love exploits culminate in his piquant affair with Mademoiselle Laurence – a mysterious dancing street performer he discovers in London and stumbles upon in Paris after the July Revolution. The final scene depicts Maximilian and Laurence in her decadent Parisian bedroom where the mysteries of her past are divulged. Punctuating these morbid love stories is a succession of ironic and satirical descriptions of salon-culture and its affinities for music, theatre, and opera. True to Heine’s claims, *Florentinische Nächte* lacks an overt political commentary, but on this account it is interesting to note once

² Heinrich Heine *Säkularausgabe*, ed. Fritz Eisner, vol. 21 (Akademie: Berlin 1970), 115 and 129. Whether or not these statements refer to *Florentinische Nächte*, *Elementargeister*, or both remains uncertain and has caused a bit of a riff in scholarship. Windfuhr concludes that Heine wrote both works at the same time, hence Heine’s remark to Campe on October 11, 1835: “Ich habe die Dummheit begangen an zwey heterogenen Thematis zu gleicher Zeit zu arbeiten” and on December 4, 1835 “ich triebe jetzt in der Literatur die doppelte Buchhaltung.”

³ Existing autograph manuscripts indicate Heine made content changes in the final stages of composition, suggesting the Dec. 10 ban exacerbated his desire to curtail interventions. The specific passages cut – there are four – are skipped in my reading, because they were not a part of the German edition and unavailable to readers. For detailed descriptions see Windfuhr’s commentary or Susan Ringler, “Heines 'Florentinische Nächte': the autograph manuscript,” in *Heine-Jahrbuch* 25 (1986): 42-60.

again a similarity with Gutzkow's *Die Zeitgenossen*. Both works rely on elaborate lies and false authorial personae to entice readers. One senses a greater degree of political expediency at play in Gutzkow's pseudonymous selection of Bulwer, perhaps because he engages political matters in a more direct way, but Heine's use of an authorial alter ego in the figure of Maximilian is markedly intensified. As one scholar notes, "the identity of the author and persona is nearly complete."⁴ Perhaps the most palpable upshot of this particular literary strategy is the way it fosters a search for hidden meanings and relationships within the text. Readers picking up *Florentinische Nächte* knew who Heine was, and they knew why he was controversial. As a result, the political and literary context in which the fragment debuted – to say nothing of its structure and content – encourages decipherment and an allegorical reading.

It thus comes as little surprise that scholars and literary critics have probed the text for a deeper, hidden political meaning. The first major recorded effort at deciphering a political subtext came in 1895 from Wilhelm Rudow, who suggested a simple set of allegorical associations: Maximilian (Heine); Maria (Germania); the doctor (the Bundestag); the castle (foreign-occupied Germany); the garden statue (poesy); Very (Romanticism); and Mademoiselle Laurence (the Revolution) comprise a massive allegory.⁵ Although Rudow's claims have been rejected or ignored, in part because he provides scant evidence, subsequent and more defensible readings for concealed messages have also equated the fictional-narrator persona with an authorial alter ego while focusing the most attention on Mademoiselle Laurence.⁶ For Albrecht Betz, Maximilian's "only living" love-interest is an allegory for freedom, a reading which finds a

⁴ Sammons, *Elusive Poet*, 329.

⁵ W. Rudow, "Ein noch nicht erkläertes Werk Heines," in *Internationale Litteraturberichte* 2 (1895): 346-47.

⁶ Sammons calls Rudow's declarations "a series of entertaining identifications" which amount to "a lot of hilarious non-sense." Sammons, *Elusive Poet*, 328.

cautious degree of support from Rolf Hosfeld and Elvira Grözinger, both of whom argue for an interpretation of the tale that, at the very least, incorporates political implications.⁷ By far the most impressive allegorical reading hails from Ralph Martin, who argues that the work's allegory exposes a lack of sensuality as the primary aesthetic *and* political problem of the Restoration.⁸ This lack, which Heine describes in other writings, was the result of a tradition that failed to correctly interpret the function and primacy of "Sinnlichkeit" in ancient Greece. Thus in *Florentinische Nächte*, Heine self-diagnoses an affliction with the disease of Romantic sentimentalism and romance ideology in the figure of Maximilian. The marble statue he kisses, which has a disguised political origin in Napoleon's defeat, serves as the symbol of a sick epoch and a key to unlocking the larger allegorical dimensions of the text, including hidden critiques of the Catholic Church, Charles X, and Louis XVIII.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the overwhelming majority of scholarship on *Florentinische Nächte* has argued that the text is not in need of much political decoding at all. Excising discussions of politics, most critics tend to read Mademoiselle Laurence – once again the figure who attracts the most attention – strictly within aesthetic discourse. For Benno von Wiese she is an "unbegriffene Signatur des tanzenden Universums" and a "körperhafte Darstellung eines surrealen, poetischen Geheimnisses."⁹ Henriette Herwig writes, "Laurence ist keine Allegorie der Freiheit [...] Maria ist keine kranke Venus [...] Mit beiden Figuren stellt der

⁷ Albrecht Betz, *Ästhetik und Politik: Heinrich Heines Prosa* (München: Hanser, 1971), 101; Rolf Hosfeld, "Nachgedanken: Heinrich Heines *Florentinische Nächte*," in *Signaturen: Heinrich Heine und das neunzehnte Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Argument, 1986), 73-90; Elvira Grözinger: "Die "doppelte Buchhaltung." Einige Bemerkungen zu Heines Verstellungsstrategie in den Florentinischen Nächten" in *Heine-Jahrbuch* 18 (1979): 73.

⁸ Ralph Martin, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter Griechenlands: zur Entstehung des "Hellenismus"-Gedankens bei Heinrich Heine* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1999), 139-216.

⁹ Benno von Wiese, *Signaturen* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1976), 87.

Text die Frage nach der Vereinbarkeit von Leben, Erinnerung und Kunst.”¹⁰ Similarly, Barbara Thums not only cites the text’s open ending as evidence of a lapsed figural strategy necessarily disavowing any allegorical reading, but for her the work represents an extension of the so-called “Kunstperiode,” whereby Heine articulates the potential for a new aesthetic that conforms to the conditions of the present.¹¹ Even Manfred Windfuhr, who ranks among the most accomplished Heine scholars, has been decidedly dismissive of any secret political meanings: “Für eine durchgehende Doppelstruktur im geschichtsphilosophischen oder frühsozialistischen Sinne erbrachte die Textgeschichte keine Anhaltspunkte.”¹² The most recent scholarship buttresses this claim by foregrounding everything but politics.¹³

Perhaps the chief limitation in studies that ignore Heine’s political nuances, and those that overstate them, is a failure to grasp Heine’s rejection of aesthetic autonomy and his ambivalent amalgamation of politics and aesthetics. Thomas Pfau has shown how, for Heine, art was never beholden to politics, nor was politics something above art.¹⁴ Realizing the separation of the two spheres always maintains the political status quo by isolating producers of culture as “specialists of the negative” (Julia Kristeva), Heine shrewdly understood that writers who represent specific political concerns become easily identifiable and excluded from society, the

¹⁰ Herwig, Henriette, “Intermedialität : Musik, Bild, Tanz und Literatur in Heines "Florentinischen Nächten" in *Übergänge* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007): 193.

¹¹ Barbara Thums, “Ende der Kunstperiode? Heinrich Heines ‘Florentinische Nächte,’” in *Heine-Jahrbuch* 46 (2007): 46-66. See especially her footnote on Ralph Martin, 66.

¹² Manfred Windfuhr, “Zensur und Selbstzensur nach Bundestagsbeschluss,” in *Das Junge Deutschland* (Hoffmann und Campe: 1987), 235.

¹³ Hirt (2010) and Wietersheim (2009) focus their inquiries on aesthetics, avoiding politics altogether. The notable exception within scholarship is John Hamilton, who argues the novella can be read as both a political allegory and a “resigned capitulation to the censor decree of 1835,” for it is these antithetical readings that lend the novella its “narrative energy and import.” See John Hamilton, “Sinnverwirrende Töne: Musik und Wahnsinn in Heines Florentinische Nächte” in *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* 126 (2007): 505.

¹⁴ Thomas Pfau, *Romantic Moods* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2005), 384.

harmony of which depends on their abjection.¹⁵ As far as Heine was concerned, all art before him – especially German Classicism and Romanticism – was politically impotent while practitioners of operative art unwittingly contributed to their marginalization within a larger political culture. No doubt for Heine, the relationship between politics and aesthetics came under intense and necessary scrutiny prior to and in the aftermath of the Dec. 10 ban, and *Florentinische Nächte* offers a decisive elaboration on this particular problem. It seems rather unlikely that Heine would offer his readers a simple, decipherable allegory, one that might easily identify his persona with a particular ideological agenda or cultural critique. It also seems unlikely he would extend an art epoch (*Kunstperiode*) he deemed ineffectual and impotent, or which may have never existed in the first place.

Characteristic of scholarship on Heine more generally, existing interpretations of *Florentinische Nächte* also rehearse what Jeffrey Sammons calls “a zealous desire to appropriate Heine as new and modern, even as our contemporary, and as an ally of our own purposes and convictions.”¹⁶ Reading Mademoiselle Laurence as a cipher for political or aesthetic freedom identifies Heine as a champion for human rights and emancipation, even if such a view stands partly in contradiction with a mode of art Heine found troubling and partly at odds with Heine’s political ambivalence. Perhaps nowhere is this tendency more evident than in the manner by which scholars reductively approach the trope of allegory. A paradigmatic example can be found in Manfred Windfuhr’s claim above; Windfuhr finds no evidence of allegory in part because the text does not conform to a preconceived expectation of what an allegory might look like. But why should we expect a proto-socialist manifesto in this particular text or any text of Heine’s? If

¹⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia, 1984), 97.

¹⁶ Jeffrey Sammons, “Heinrich Heine and his publisher, Julius Campe,” in *Publishing Culture and the “Reading Nation:” German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Rochester: Camden House, 2010): 224.

Heine were to write an allegorical literary work, why would it only consider matters pertaining to historical-philosophical discourse? To clarify, existing allegorical readings or objections to such readings mustn't be understood as either right or wrong, but if we are serious about understanding the relationship between literature and politics in Germany during this early formative phase, it makes sense to investigate how Heine was read and understood in his day. We must be open to more fluid forms of allegory and we must explore how his readers responded to the extreme political ambivalence scholars now commonly attribute to him.

A more vigilant approach to *Florentinische Nächte* must accommodate both the unique historical circumstances of its composition and reception (the ban, censorship, the literary and political culture of *Junges Deutschland*) while exploring how its fusion of aesthetics and politics lie in the very fabric of Heine's writing itself, in his stylistics, language, allusions, citations, voices and repetitions – and especially his use of allegory. Pursuing this tack, Lucia Ruprecht has shown how the work “undermines censorship by integrating it into the creative process.”¹⁷ For Ruprecht, Laurence's dance is an allegory of allegorical speech; it is a weapon that Heine employs against the Metternichian regime: “When the censors look for a distinctive, contestable signature of their victim, they get hieroglyphs which disconcert because they cannot be pinned down.”¹⁸ Building on Ruprecht's reading, I am also interested in reassessing allegorical modes in *Florentinische Nächte*, but doing so with an eye to the literary and political culture in which the work was written and received. In addition to better understanding Heine's use of allegory, I want to reconstruct how his nineteenth-century readers might have approached this particular text as narrative prose fiction, as an intervention within literary and political culture. Such an

¹⁷ Lucia Ruprecht, “Heinrich Heine's 'Florentinische Nächte:’ A Tale of Transgression,” in *Field Studies: German Language, Media and Culture* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 139-155.

¹⁸ In other words, the text's “allegorical imagery is not the expression of a stable, abstract linguistic content, or an underlying story, but a figurative language of its own, an abstraction of its own.” Ruprecht, “Transgression,” 152.

approach becomes all the more pressing for an eclectic text like this one, precisely because it resonates rather strongly with Heine's other writings.

Owing to the fact that *Florentinische Nächte* appears thematically similar to the Italian *Reisebilder*, philosophically related to *Die Romantische Schule* and temporally close to *Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, the work has naturally been read against their backdrop. This is a methodology, however, that sees a work of prose fiction as a container of Heine's views expressed elsewhere, and might not be the best method for uncovering how this text impacted readers as a unique intervention within a broader culture of narrative prose fiction. In this context, it is worth considering the other works of literature Heine's readers engaged alongside his own, for much in *Florentinische Nächte* marks it as a typical piece of writing from the period. The work seizes on the idea of the artist as a figure well-suited for exploring social problems in a way similar to Georg Büchner's *Lenz* (1836); it stages troubled adolescent love alongside the familiar features of a *Schlüsselroman* much like George Sand's *Leila* (1833); it shares many of the same themes popularized in Balzac's serial fiction from this period (sensualism, passion, transgression) just as it studies the social character of post-Revolutionary France in a journalistic, expository style reminiscent of Börne's *Briefe aus Paris* (1831) and Gutzkow's *Die Zeitgenossen*. And if the work does harbor hidden allusions to revolutionary sentiment and Napoleon, it shares this with dozens of academic histories on the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte.¹⁹ From a German perspective, the work shares similar themes and motifs with the popular fiction of *Junges Deutschland*, including Karl Gutzkow's *Wally, die Zweiflerin* (1835), Heinrich Laube's *Die Poeten* (1833) and even Theodor Mundt's

¹⁹ These histories, all of which consisted of multiple volumes, began appearing in the late 1820s (particularly in the wake of Scott's historical fiction) and reached epic proportions in the 1830s and 40s. Examples of German-language original texts and translations include: Jean-Josef Ader, *Napoleon: Seinen Zeitgenossen gegenüber* (Quedlinburg: G. Basse, 1827); William Hazlitt, *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (London: Hunt and Clark, 1828); Friedrich Buchholz, *Geschichte Napoleon Bonaparte's* (Berlin: Enslin, 1829); Walter Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (Exeter: J. & B. Williams, 1836).

Madonna (1835) – all of which consider matters of socio-political relevance through love stories depicting the aestheticization of women. Coupled with this far-flung group of texts one must also invariably account for the dozens of literary references and citations found within *Florentinische Nächte* itself. These include seminal works in the Western tradition, such as *1001 Arabian Nights*, *The Decameron*, and *Don Quixote*, but also works from the German tradition, including Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and Eichendorff's *Das Marmorbild*. In fact, given the utter verbosity of Maximilian's stories and the deeply citational nature of his story telling, there does not appear to be a major literary text that goes un-cited in *Florentinische Nächte*. The question then becomes why would Heine write a work of popular prose fiction – a genre he admittedly despised²⁰ – while presenting his readers with the most hackneyed and pervasive literary scheme in nineteenth-century prose: the staging of erotic desire as affect and hermeneutic? Why do other seminal works of prose fiction figure so prominently within the work's referential system? And, to what extent do both these aspects of the work relate to the strangled political references, which may or may not be present?

Taking up these questions in the rest of this chapter, I hope to show how, at its core, *Florentinische Nächte* is a work intended to critique, disturb, and undermine the mechanisms, predispositions, and desires of popular literary and political culture in 1830s France and Germany (though my focus is limited to the later).²¹ I uncover how Heine politicizes the reading of allegory in *Florentinische Nächte* in an effort to fuse politics and aesthetics through a hermeneutics of erotic desire. I show how Heine inscribes both the aesthetics and politics of the

²⁰ See, for instance, his May 3, 1836 letter to August Lewald: "Aus dieser 2ten florentinischen Nacht werden Sie vielleicht ersehen, dass ich nöthigenfalls, wenn Politik und Religion mir verboten werden, auch vom Novellenschreiben leben könnte. Ehrlich gesagt, dergleichen würde mir nicht viel Spaß machen, ich finde dabey wenig Amusement. Man muss aber alles können in schlechten Zeiten" (HSA 21, 155).

²¹ A much more ambitious project might also examine Heine's French interlocutors within this text, particularly his critique of Germaine de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1810/1813).

Kunstperiode (night one) and *Junges Deutschland* (night two) onto representations of women, challenging readers in the exercise of literary and political competency while ironizing a ubiquitous topos in German literature concerned with *Bildung*: the aestheticization of woman. As deeply allegorical topoi in their own ways, death and femininity in *Florentinische Nächte* reflect a more wide-ranging critique of *Bildung* as a process fundamentally concerned with a disciplining of male desire. By politicizing the reading of allegory, and challenging his readers' literary and political competencies, Heine offers a kind of textual erotics that informs his model of cultural critique and that generates energy and pleasure by amalgamating politics and aesthetics, ultimately fashioning a post-bourgeois, post-liberal vision for readers.

Naturally, there is much that Heine does with allegory that speaks quite directly to a postmodernist conception of this seminal literary trope. Indeed, one of the qualities long attracting scholars to Heine has been his felicity of language coupled with a robust use of metaphor. Already by 1829 (at the latest) Heine was offering allegories of allegorical speech, using hieroglyphs to frustrate hermeneutic processes, and problematizing Romantic theory's "allegorical model of emotion."²² *Florentinische Nächte*, far from breaking with this tradition, offers a decisive continuation of it, using allegory to explore the processes of political subject formation. As we will see, Heine simultaneously stages allegory as a coherent and incoherent mode of meaning-making, foregrounding both the way it conceals the rupture between sign and signified, and the way in which it diagnoses language and forms of expressive communication as acts of failure. When Maximilian proclaims in the closing pages of night two – "Aber ist es nicht Torheit, den inneren Sinn einer fremden Erscheinung ergründen zu wollen, während wir nicht

²² Pfau, *Romantic Moods*, 62. To clarify Pfau's use of "allegorical" here, the term is being employed to demonstrate how feeling (as Kant and Novalis conceived of it) is a social phenomenon for the Romantics, and as such, can only be recognized when it is "exiled from the solitary individual" and "transposed into the intersubjective domain of aesthetic work." In this sense, all affect and emotion is accessible solely in the work of art, and is thus allegorical.

einmal das Rätsel unserer eigenen Seele zu lösen vermögen!” – he is deliberately problematizing the relationship between affect and abstract models of modern selfhood, between emotion and the fictions posited by both literature and political liberalism. As a literary trope ideally suited for exploring the human being’s inherent sociability, allegory is central to this critique, for its very presence performs the transition from an experience of otherness as a unifying phenomenon (i.e., where an inexpressible emotion can be represented in a sign or aesthetic artifact) to the experience of otherness as total collapse (i.e. where it is impossible to know what someone else is feeling). The process of allegorical identification in *Florentinische Nächte* disturbs and alienates readers in this way, frustrating their affective commitments to literature and anticipating the important theory of allegory pioneered by Walter Benjamin and extrapolated upon by Paul De Man.

But allegory is Janus-faced in *Florentinische Nächte*, and as helpful and interesting as a Benjaminian or a deconstructionist approach to allegory might be in this context, I want to probe its presence in slightly different terms. Specifically, I read Heine’s use of allegory as intimately connected to the work’s “readerly” libidinal economy. Allegory, simply put, is implicated in the work’s erotic structures. To read with an eye to the text’s allegorical tendencies is to be drawn into the text’s structures of desire, just as experiencing or identifying with the text’s desire is to be drawn into Heine’s use of allegory. Allegory and erotics share in a reciprocal relationship that cuts across the political, because for Heine and for his nineteenth-century readers, the very act of reading was a political and politicized event. Far from mirroring or echoing politics, reading was understood as a primary experience in the 1830s, that shaped political attitudes, ideologies, and identities. As a result, the formal qualities of allegory in this text participate in the process of politicization, but far from constituting stable political identities, Heine aims to uproot them. His use of allegory does not have identity as its end, but instead a critical hermeneutic that actively

engages politics by challenging traditional polarizations and binaries. Thus when Heine conceives of allegory, he does so with an eye to a deeply politicized literary culture, not a (post)modernist approach to reading, even if these two phenomena overlap. The distinction is important because *Florentinische Nächte* does not offer a mere “emancipation of the flesh,” but much more an erotics of allegorical reading that challenges ideological frameworks and the basic assumptions of both political and literary culture in the 1830s. The reciprocity between allegory and erotics thus not only informs Heine’s critique of *Bildung*, but in its way, also offers its own model of *Bildung* as a form of allegorical reading. It is this particular strategy we must examine to understand how Heine fuses politics and aesthetics in an effort to furnish an ambivalent post-bourgeois, post-liberal vision for his readers in the 1830s.²³

Framing Provocation: The Pleasure, Pain and Poetry of Narrative Prose Fiction

Before investigating the presence of allegory in nights one and two, and examining the process by which allegory becomes wrapped up in a textual erotics with political overtones, it is necessary to consider the context in which readers approached this particular work. This means probing the preface accompanying the manuscript version of *Florentinische Nächte* as an important response to the Menzel controversy (elucidated below), but also as a tool for shaping readerly expectations. If this text is ultimately a calculated intervention within a broader discourse concerning the politics of reading, then Heine’s rhetoric in “Ueber den Denunzianten” and his choice to write a work of narrative prose fiction must inform the logic behind such an intervention. Additionally, it will prove worthwhile to read the opening pages of *Florentinische*

²³ Though it remains to be seen if what we identify as “post-liberalism” was not a significant counter-trend in German political and literary culture during the 1830s and 1840s. Perhaps the negotiation of political identities in and through literature has always posed a powerful challenge to traditional discussions of liberal political theories that privilege the individual’s disinterested capacity to reason.

Nächte within this literary and political context, paying careful attention to the self-conscious foregrounding of a frame narrative that sets up the readerly questions and motifs governing the work as a whole. Upon closer analysis, one can see how the opening scene is carefully caught up in complex structure of binaries that frame every facet of the work – including allegory and erotic desire. In spelling out the political implications of this work for readers, one task will involve tracking this binary structure and understanding how it is supported, disturbed, and uprooted at the level of allegory and erotic reading.

The controversial appeal of *Salon III* was largely ensured by its preface, “Ueber den Denunzianten,” which reads mostly as an overwrought diatribe against Wolfgang Menzel (1798-1873). A member of the Württemberg diet and editor of the *Literaturblatt* for Cotta’s Stuttgart-based *Blätter für gebildete Stände*, Menzel was a very prominent critic in the 1820s and 30s, who started a highly acerbic campaign against the writings of Karl Gutzkow starting in 1835.²⁴ Pointing to *Wally, die Zweiflerin* as evidence of a loss of moral bearings and irreverence for religious institutions, Menzel’s harshly worded and well-circulated critiques against those stylized as *das junge Deutschland* were largely understood to be a precipitating factor leading to the Dec. 10 ban by members of the group. As the most skilled writer among the authors targeted, Heine was seen as a leader, an appellation he himself rejected.²⁵ Heine did, however, come out strongly against Menzel, labeling him a coward and “literarische Mouchard,” while systematically dismantling the arguments made against the young Germans.²⁶ Like Wienbarg,

²⁴ The description of Germany as a land of “Dichtern und Denkern” hails from Menzel, an indication of just how prominent Menzel was in the 1830s as a literary critic and historian, to say nothing of the lasting impact this designation has had on the discipline of German studies.

²⁵ In Heine’s words, “ich sei das Haupt einer Schule, welche sich zum Sturze aller bürgerlichen und Moralischen Institutionen verschworen habe ...” (DHA 11, 155).

²⁶ DHA 11, 157.

Börne, and Gutzkow, who published writings against Menzel, Heine's invective was intended to provoke a duel with Germany's "Literaturpapst" by exposing the discrepancy between his cowardliness and alleged patriotic fervor.

As an exercise in political maneuvering, the preface (and *Salon III* more broadly) must also be understood as an effort on Heine's behalf to separate himself and his literature from a popular mode of German politics shared by many of his contemporaries on both sides of the political spectrum. Self-described secular, liberal writers like Laube, Gutzkow, and Mundt felt that literary values were essential for advancing their politics, which broadly speaking entailed an opposition to absolutism, a call for the separation of church and state, and the emancipation of Jews. The conservative critic Menzel felt that literature could and should be called upon to promote a different political ideology. Both approaches follow an operative notion of art, the former seeking to subvert and the latter seeking to defend a status-quo political system.²⁷ Heine is not so much entering into an ideological debate with liberals or conservatives, but undermining the culture creating the circumstances setting them in opposition with one another in the first place. In this context, it is worth noting Heine does not decry the traditional enemies of political liberalism in his preface – the monarchy and the church – but instead places blame on Menzel's prescriptive and exclusionary model of Christian nationalism fused with German patriotism, while problematizing literary culture itself.²⁸ Citing the widespread circulation of Cotta's *Literaturblatt* Heine writes, "Ich lasse es dahingestellt sein, ob es das Talent oder das

²⁷ So as to underscore the slippery nature of political referents during this period, however, Menzel had branded himself a liberal in the 1820s, just as he had maintained professional friendships with Gutzkow and Heine. His break with them in 1835 marked the onset of an intensely nationalistic, pro-Christian, Francophobic, and anti-Semitic presence in German literary culture.

²⁸ Rhetorically asking who is to blame, Heine writes: "Nicht die Fürsten; denn, ein Anhänger des monarchischen Prinzips, ein Bekenner der Heiligkeit des Königtums, wie ich mich seit der Juliusrevolution, trotz dem bedenklichsten Gebrülle meiner Umgebung, gezeigt habe, möchte ich wahrlich nicht mit meinen besonderen Beklagnissen dem verwerflichen Jakobinismus einigen Vorschub leisten" (DHA 11, 156).

Blatt war, wodurch die Stimme des Herrn Menzel so weitreichend gewesen, daß seine Denunziation so betrübsam wirken konnte, daß beschäftigte Staatsmänner, die eher Literaturblätter als Bücher lesen, ihm aufs Wort glaubten.”²⁹ In short, Heine decries the culture by which a piece of divisive literary criticism becomes the basis for politics more broadly. In this framework, it is telling that Heine had *Florentinische Nächte* serialized in both Cotta’s *Morgenblatt* and in the *Revue des deux Mondes* before publishing it in *Salon III*.³⁰ This was a work intended to critique the political culture of a particular audience, which is why he goes to great lengths to encourage a certain readerly approach to *Florentinische Nächte*.

The deep ambivalence Heine betrays, which makes situating him within any particular political-ideological framework extremely difficult, also extends to the content and formal qualities of the *Vorrede*. First, he accentuates *Salon III*’s absences (“das was es nicht enthält”) and explicitly claims further installments of *Florentinische Nächte* cannot be shared with the public.³¹ This is unfortunate, Heine notes, because it is in these unwritten episodes where “mancherly Tagesinteressen ihr Echo fanden.” This echoed absence is coupled with a reassurance that “alles was in Gebieth der Politik und der Staatsreligion hinüberspielte, ward gewissenhaft ausgemerzt.” In the end, *Salon III* consists of nothing but “eine Reihe harmloser Märchen, die, gleich den Novellen des Dekamerone, dazu dienen könnten, jene pestilenzielle Wirklichkeit, die uns dermalen umgiebt, für einige Stunden zu vergessen” (DHA 11, 154).

²⁹ DHA 11, 157.

³⁰ Cotta serialized the German edition in his *Morgenblatt* between April 6-16 and May 12-25, 1836. The French edition was published in the *Revue des deux mondes* on April 15 and May 1, 1836. Both editions were subject to textual changes against Heine’s will. In a January 1837 letter to Cotta, Heine complained that the second night had been “so kläglich verstümmelt worden, dass mir für neue Zusendungen aller Muth fehlt” (HSA 21, 180). In particular Heine was upset that Cotta’s editor, Hermann Hauff, had toned down the text’s erotic passages.

³¹ The preface was not printed in the first edition of *Salon III*, but distributed separately with the volume. While it would have been unavailable to Heine’s *Morgenblatt* readers, the issues it addresses were just as pertinent in April 1836 as they were in July 1837. It also seems plausible that *Morgenblatt* readers would have re-read *Florentinische Nächte* in *Salon III*, as Maximilian Heine claims to have done in correspondence with his brother.

Autograph manuscripts indicate this line was the occasion for much editing. Three earlier versions read “[...] Märchen, welche sich vielleicht das ¹patriotische [²liberale] Publikum ergötzen wird [...]” and “[...] womit ich vielleicht jetzt eine zeitgemäße Unterhaltung biete [...]” (DHA 11, 838). There is an undeniable antipathy Heine displays towards his readers in these lines, but antipathy does not imply a lack of decency. Heine is demonstrating how questions of literary form are inherently cultural, and hence political. The fairy tale genre and patriotic fervor reinforce one another, making politics and culture two sides of the same coin. This is not a stance aimed at showing how literary production is about uprooting a dominant ideology over a suppressed one, it is more about overturning all ideology. Heine offers his readers a challenge in literary and political competency, judging their abilities, not their identities. In this way, Heine prepares readers for harmless fairy tales devoid of political content, while paradoxically introducing them to the very opposite, deeply political and dangerous fairy tales.

Perhaps nowhere in the *Vorrede* is this aesthetic and political ambivalence more evident than in Heine’s own politicization of the debate over prose versus poetry:

Die Zeit der Gedichte ist überhaupt bey mir zu Ende, ich kann wahrhaftig kein gutes Gedicht mehr zu Tage fördern, und die Kleindichter in Schwaben, statt mir zu grollen, sollten sie mich vielmehr brüderlichst in ihre Schule aufnehmen....Das wird auch wohl das Ende des Späßes seyn, dass ich in der schwäbischen Dichterschule, mit Fallhütchen auf dem Kopf, neben den Andern auf das kleine Bänkchen zu sitzen komme, und das schöne Wetter besinge, die Frühlingssonne, die Mayenwonne, die Gelbveiglein, und die Quetschenbäume. Ich hatte längst eingesehen, dass es mit den Versen *nicht mehr recht vorwärts ging* und deshalb verlegte ich mich auf gute Prosa. Da man aber in der Prosa nicht ausreicht mit dem schönen Wetter, Frühlingssonne, Mayenwonne, Gelbveiglein und Quetschenbäumen, so musste ich auch für die neue Form einen neuen Stoff suchen; dadurch gerieth ich auf die unglückliche Idee mich mit Ideen zu beschäftigen, und ich dachte nach über die innere Bedeutung der Erscheinungen, über die letzten Gründe der Dinge, über die Bestimmung des Menschengeschlechts, über die Mittel wie man die Leute besser und glücklicher machen kann, u.s.w. Die Begeisterung, die ich von Natur für diese Stoffe empfand, erleichterte mir ihre Behandlung, und ich konnte bald in einer äußerst schönen, vortrefflichen Prosa meine Gedanken darstellen...*Aber ach!* als ich endlich im Schreiben so weit gebracht hatte, da ward mir das Schreiben verboten (DHA 11, 154-55, my emphases).

The nineteenth-century literary debate over verse and prose, while hardly new, became an increasingly impassioned topic of discussion during the 1830s, arguably culminating in Theodor Mundt’s *Kunst der deutschen Prosa* (1837). For a long time, conservatives accorded prose very

little artistic value, for with the rise of literary journals and pamphlets it implied current relevance and contemporaneity – natural enemies of the status quo. Verse tended to evoke associations with the aristocracy, while prose was gradually seen to be a vehicle for progressives, liberals and radical democrats. Here Heine politicizes the two modes of writing, putting them into a relation of difference and blurring their conventions all at once. His goal is not to encourage a view that favors one over the other, but to show how both require close attention to content and form. He achieves this by drawing attention to repetition, progression, and interruption as formal qualities within literature. He repeats the nature themes of the Swabian poets, turning a stylistic pattern of repetition and symmetry of logic – perhaps the most obvious formal features of poetry – into a tedious, prosaic passage that belittles the Swabian school of poets (which included Wolfgang Menzel).

Heine further inverts the etymological meaning of prose in this passage by interrupting himself with “Aber ach!” From the Latin verb *provertere* (to turn forward), prose is related to the notion of forward movement and progression. It relies on what is ahead of itself, whether the next clause, sentence or plot element. And as Na’ama Rokem notes, it also shares a linguistic base with the Latin goddess *Prorsa* or *Prosa* invoked as midwife to help women have a successful labor in which the fetus spirals outward, headfirst.³² The Dec. 10 ban on Heine’s future writings figures here as a kind of abortion, a failed artistic effort to give birth to a work of art with Menzel and an inferior school of poets to blame. Prefiguring *Florentinische Nächte*, this moment of (self)-interruption has strong implications for the frame narrative and the reader’s relationship to the text itself. Not only do a series of narrative suspensions, delays and abortions define Maximilian’s and Maria’s strangulated relationship – Maria interrupts his storytelling at

³² Na’ama Rokem, *Prosaic Conditions: Heinrich Heine and the Spaces of Zionist Literature* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), xiv.

least a dozen times – but interruption as narrative suppression transforms censorship into a formative process that in turn displaces readers. It is no wonder this work provoked such aversion or why Heine could be so easily misunderstood. Not only does Heine turn notions of aesthetic autonomy on their head by integrating politics into his creative production of art, but he also supplants his own readers by undermining the integrity of narrative fiction.

With knowledge of this context, readers must have been stimulated by the curious scene that opens the work, not least for how it prescribes silence as a rationalized form of medical treatment, expressive mode of communication and thematics all at once. Maximilian finds a doctor putting on a pair black gloves and rushing to leave his patient (“Ich bin sehr pressirt”). The doctor implores Maximilian to keep Maria silent by telling her crazy stories, and Maximilian placates his worries: “Ich habe mich ganz zum Schwaetzer ausgebildet und lasse sie nicht zu Worte kommen. [...] Aber wie lange wird sie noch leben können?” (DHA 5, 199). The *in medias res* technique raises several questions about character and plot, while introducing a third figure in a way suggestive of previous knowledge and understanding:

Die schwarze Debora, feinöhrig wie sie ist, hatte schon am Tritte den Ankommenden erkannt, und öffnete ihm leise die Türe. Auf seinen Wink verließ sie ebenso leise das Gemach, und Maximilian befand sich allein bei seiner Freundin. Nur dämmernd war das Zimmer von einer einzigen Lampe erhellt. Diese warf, dann und wann, halb furchtsam halb neugierige Lichter über das Antlitz der kranken Frau, welche, ganz angekleidet, in weißem Musselin, auf einem grünseidnen Sopha hingestreckt lag und ruhig schlief (DHA 5, 199).

The servant’s ability to recognize suggests familiarity and repetition, echoing Maximilian’s self-praise of his narrative skills, while her muted communication reverberates a thematic of silence and stillness.³³ Finding voice and embodiment in a sensualist, highly visual and colorful language, the antithetic quality of speaking silence is underscored by the shrouded, shadowy

³³ In a letter to Campe, Heine had even proposed naming *Salon III* “Das stille Buch.” “Wie gefällt Ihnen der Titel: “Das Stille Buch”? Gefällt Ihnen dieser Titel nicht, so könnten Sie das Buch ‘Märchen’ titulieren. [...] Die Hauptsache aber ist, dass dieses Buch gar keiner Censur, und am allerwenigsten einer preußischen Censur unterworfen wird” (HSA 21, 142).

image of the room, which also extends the text's enigmatic imagery. Embodiment and hermeneutics become linked in the next paragraph where Maria's body (a necessary element to non-discursive/sensualist language) provokes curiosity and recollection:

Schweigend, mit verschränkten Armen, stand Maximilian einige Zeit vor der Schlafenden und betrachtete die schönen Glieder, die das leichte Gewand mehr offenbarte als verhüllte, und jedesmal wenn die Lampe einen Lichtstreif über das blasse Antlitz warf, erbebt sein Herz. Um Gott! sprach er leise vor sich hin, was ist das? Welche Erinnerung wird in mir wach? Ja, jetzt weiß ich's. Dieses weiße Bild auf dem grünen Grunde, ja, jetzt... (DHA 5, 199).

Despite receiving assurances Maria is clothed a few sentences earlier, that clothing takes on the opposite function. It proves erotically stimulating. For Jeffrey Sammons, scenes like this are indicative of how *Florentinische Nächte* “panders to ‘alle Classen’” with an attempt at genteel pornography.³⁴ Though perhaps true, this claim overlooks a complicated layering of fantasy, erotic desire and hermeneutics, (not to mention a foregrounding of the unconscious) permeating throughout. It also overlooks a persistent and recurrent symbolic structure that leads the reader to observe a large number of dualities and antitheses. Returning to these first two paragraphs, one notices the interspersion of phonetic consonance and dissonance from clause to clause (“d-, sch-, hatte...erkannt”). Even the syntactic structures express a kind of double-sidedness (“dann und wann” / “halb...halb”), not to mention a preponderance of almost adjacent double-lettered words – especially double m's. The first two paragraphs alternate between present and past tense until Maximilian's future-oriented inquiry (“Aber wie lange wird sie noch leben können?“). Though at this point readers are not necessarily aware there are only two nights, they have been alerted to the potential for two different and interrelated levels of narrative. Maximilian's stories (inner narrative) are supposed to keep Maria alive by keeping her silent (frame narrative).

This peculiar structure of twos – spatially underscored by two different rooms (“Vorzimmer” and “Gemach”) – becomes perhaps most bewildering when Maximilian is no

³⁴ Sammons, *Elusive Poet*, 327.

longer alone and the silence is suddenly broken. The aposiopesis (from the Greek meaning “to be silent”) following Maximilian’s “ja, jetzt...”, his probing questions and the gesture towards an answer leads directly to Maria’s stirring:

In diesem Augenblick erwachte die Kranke, und wie aus der Tiefe eines Traumes hervorschauend, blickten auf den Freund die sanften, dunkelblauen Augen, fragend, bittend... An was dachten Sie eben, Maximilian? sprach sie mit jener schauerlich weichen Stimme, [...] An was dachten Sie eben, Maximilian? wiederholte sie nochmals [...] Um Gott! rief Maximilian, indem er sie sanft wieder aufs Sofa niederdrückte, bleiben Sie ruhig liegen, sprechen Sie nicht; ich will Ihnen alles sagen, alles was ich denke, was ich empfinde, ja was ich nicht einmal selber weiß! In der Tat, fuhr er fort, ich weiß nicht genau was ich eben dachte und fühlte (DHA 5, 199-200).

While the sight of her on the sofa awakens a memory in him which is captured in an image, Maria interrupts his daydream by waking precisely at Maximilian’s moment of recollection. In other words, the sequencing suggests she is waking up from his dream. That there are no quotation marks here, or anywhere, adds to the confusion about who is speaking, and feeds into a blurring of self and other all the more telling when juxtaposed to the antitheses permeating the passage already: night/day, sleeping/waking, mobility/stasis, sickness/health, life/death. The doctor’s black gloves and Maria’s white muslin already alert readers to this symbolic structure, while the enigmatic quality of the initial frame sequence is amplified by a strange mixing of semantic and cultural codes that find tension in the plural meaning of the word “weiß.” Just as Maria’s white muslin reveals more than it conceals, white is a color loaded with a cultural imaginary of purity, cleanliness, health or virginity. Here, however, Maria’s external appearance betrays her internal affliction with the white plague just as Maximilian’s earlier insistence that he is able to grasp the signature of the image (“Ja, jetzt weiß ich’s”) is countered by a recantation that he actually doesn’t know what he is thinking or feeling.³⁵ Maximilian’s admission of self-alienation – both affective and epistemological – raises concerns about his reliability as a narrator and his selfhood by embedding the enigma of Maximilian’s erotics into a framework of

³⁵ This Romantic disease, commonly dubbed the *mal du siècle*, was notoriously embraced by artists, but in *Florentintische Nächte* readers begin to recognize consumption as a disconcerting cliché.

the unconscious and the repressed. Thus readers are already confronting Maximilian's fantasies as much as his realities. To distinguish the real from the fictional is one of the challenges at stake, so too is the task of defining the terms of the relationship between Maximilian and Maria.

In this light, one can begin to approach the text's play with the symbolic modes of allegory. At its most basic and reductive level, allegory says one thing and means something else, thereby undermining the normative expectations of language. As Angus Fletcher notes, the word itself ("speaking other") is premised on inversion – from the Greek *allos* (other) plus *agoreuin* (to speak openly/publicly).³⁶ Heine inverts the linguistic meaning of allegory once more, by composing a text that ironically foregrounds the self (*autos*) as the other. Given the curious logic of inversion in the opening passage, the possibility is formally raised for reading Maria as Maximilian's double. That she is a woman confirms the antithetical strategy at play, just as the letter "M" – the emblematic capital letter of their names – is a mirror image of itself.³⁷ Most tellingly Maria represents a hidden and repressed aspect of Maximilian's erotic self, initiating a hermeneutic vested in the relationship between the literal and the figural, the real and the fictional. Needless to say, Heine encourages his readers to read Maria's consumption and her silence as a metonymy for censorship, the institution responsible for producing a new, corrupted form of language.³⁸ The doctor's advice signals the twisted, grotesque correspondence between life and death and fictional storytelling, hinting at a symbolic power struggle, a conflict between Restoration authorities, reading publics and producers of culture. Of course, Maria does not need

³⁶ Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 2.

³⁷ Names in *Florentinische Nächte* harbor a high degree of instability and one runs into trouble if one tries to read too much into them. In earlier manuscripts, Maximilian was named "Henriko" and "Enriko," while Maria bore the name "Mathilde." Critics usually cite Heine's last minute editorial changes to underscore the work's biographical content.

³⁸ As Angus Fletcher reminds us, the "political overtones of the verb *agoreuein* need always to be emphasized, insofar as censorship may produce devious, ironical ways of speaking." Fletcher, *Allegory*, 2.

to be read metaphorically, her illness can be read literally, even if its “literal surface suggests a peculiar doubleness of intention.”³⁹ In this way, Heine generates textual plurality and challenges readers’ literary competencies to consider the processes of literary encryption, the inference of literal and figurative meanings.

At this point readers are also in a better position to (re)assess the title of the work and its convoluted relationship to Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. In addition to the easily discernable inversions, Heine significantly restructures Boccaccio’s erotic symbolism.⁴⁰ *Decameron* is nicknamed Prince Galahalt (another instance of doubleness), which functions as an enigma and metaphoric guide for readers.⁴¹ It refers to part five of Dante’s *Inferno*, where Francesca and Paola make love after reading the tale of Lancelot and Guinevere. The fictional Galahalt encouraged their affair and so the Italian nickname (Galeotto) became a metaphor for the pander, ultimately suggesting Boccaccio’s text as a pimp.⁴² Though Heine’s work also shares in this ability to structure erotic feeling with latent content, the effect is quite different. Heine frames the inexpressible essence of Eros in a Gothic context to emphasize resentment towards the beloved and the danger of fiction as a political sickness of the Restoration era. His readers experience *Stimmungsbrechung*, confronting their self-estrangement. Far from an emancipatory

³⁹ Fletcher, *Allegory*, 7.

⁴⁰ Boccaccio’s ten storytellers spend their days telling stories and their nights resting outside the city of Florence, while Heine’s solitary storyteller speaks at night and from somewhere within the city. Similarly, Boccaccio’s storytellers all survive their ordeal to return to Florence, while in Heine’s novella everyone appears to be already infected. Boccaccio’s characters tell stories with a distinctive beginning, middle and end, whereas Maximilian’s stories tend to run together, lacking a clear temporal logic and even spatial order.

⁴¹ Although the German editions from the 1830s omit Boccaccio’s cognominal title page, it seems likely Heine would have been familiar with the idea of the pander from Dante.

⁴² Boccaccio’s preface relates how women are silenced subjects restricted to their rooms where thoughts “fanned by the flames of desire” can lead to “some black mood.” The stories in turn are offered up as a means of enlivening them.

sensualism, Heine advances a discordant erotics that formally manifests itself in Heine's second major titular reference.⁴³

The pestilence in *1001 Arabian Nights* is the endless killing of women (or, depending on one's perspective, inexorable female desire), and Scheherazade's storytelling provides the remedy that saves herself and the polis from King Shahriyar's executions. Scheherazade's narrative presence, especially her ability to interrupt her own stories, is crucial for delaying her own death.⁴⁴ The stories emancipate and empower Scheherazade (and by extension her kingdom), while silencing and undermining the king's authority. At the same time, however, *1001 Arabian Nights* sets into motion two levels of simultaneous narrative that never temporally coincide, for if they did, Scheherazade would be executed and the stories would cease to exist. This eye towards survival storytelling, in turn, begs the famous question of what happens on the 1001st night when Scheherazade can no longer interrupt her stories. Some editions present Scheherazade's final night as an unambiguous pardon, but such an ending means the 1001st night would stand outside the pattern of repetition and logic established in the narrative. Daniel Heller-Roazen sees this "complex relation of difference" as a kind "poetry of narrative" (Jean-Claude Milner's term) in which a narrative limit is set in opposition to a non-narrative limit, much like a poet sets syntactic limits in opposition to non-syntactic limits using enjambment.⁴⁵ In a certain sense, *Florentinische Nächte* can be understood as an elaboration and provocation on this

⁴³ If Heine's title is not enough to invoke the reader's association with *1001 Arabian Nights*, then the prominent role of Maria's green "Sopha" (an oriental word and ubiquitous prop in oriental tales) certainly is.

⁴⁴ Each tale ends with some variation of the same interlude: "But morning overtook Scheherazade, and she lapsed into silence. Then Dinarzade said to her sister, "What a strange and entertaining story!" Scheherazade replies, "What is this compared with what I shall tell you tomorrow night if I stay alive." *The Arabian Nights*, ed. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Princeton University Press, 2010), 19.

⁴⁵ *Arabian Nights*, xi.

quandary.⁴⁶ Heine deliberately politicizes and poeticizes his own life and death struggle as a writer in the figure of Maximilian, with the caveat that his stories are not only about dead, aestheticized women and aesthetic artefacts, but they threaten to take Maria's life as well.

Regardless of how nineteenth-century readers related Heine's *Florentinische Nächte* to these seminal texts of the Western tradition (if they did at all), the preface and opening frame narrative alert readers to a complex structure of binaries – a precondition for reading allegory – while also broadly drawing their attention to literature, literary culture, and politics' investment in both. The details of the frame narrative and the historical context in which *Florentinische Nächte* emerged support this binary structure, while Heine's subtle and less-subtle references (to fairy tales, to the *Decameron*, etc.) encourage reflection on the nature of his own literary intervention. The nature and logic informing the interaction of these binaries is by no means straightforward, not least because everything in *Florentinische Nächte* has been subjected to ironic transformation. Subverting traditional artistic ideals, problematizing linguistic conventions, and satirizing existing works of literature: these features mark *Florentinische Nächte* as typical Heine, helping him achieve political and literary uncategorizability. But the preface and opening scene have also set the stakes for a much broader intervention in literary and political spheres. As readers ponder the presence of allegory and pose questions concerning politics, they become wrapped up in a work of narrative fiction premised on modes of inversion. As they approach the inner narratives of nights one and two, and the stories of desire and (un)displined desire they relate, they begin to read allegory and erotics together.

⁴⁶ The presence of both *1001 Arabian Nights* and *Decameron* in the literary imaginaries of readers is not merely coincidence. Both works were an important part of German and French reading cultures at the time, though it appears that Boccaccio's work was less popular than *1001 Arabian Nights*. Zinserling's translation of the French edition (Galland) appeared in 1823/1824. It was followed by the first German translation from original Arabic sources by Gustav Weil, published 1837-1841. *Dekameron* was reprinted in the early 1840s by multiple German publishers, when excerpts of *Florentinische Nächte* appeared in literary journals.

“Die Beresina der Liebe”: Fairy-Tale Affliction and Gentle Allegory

Allegory in the first story of night one is about absence and lack, it's about Heine's diagnosis of what's missing politically and aesthetically in the literature of German Classicism and Romanticism. In many respects, night one elucidates Heine's earlier diagnosis in writings like *Die Romantische Schule*, but as narrative fiction the text's allegorical tendencies perform their own political (and erotic) work. There are two interdependent levels of allegory at play that require analysis. First, there is a very conscious effort on Heine's part to allegorize a French revolutionary heritage as well as the political atmosphere of the Restoration in the story of Maximilian's problematic childhood. The manner in which allegory unfolds, however, compounds political ambivalence, suggesting a highly nuanced understanding of the relationship between, art, historicity, and literary form. Allegory does not relate a description of contemporary issues, its presence is more complex, a circumstance feeding into a further level in which the trope operates. Because Heine's political critique contains an erotic component, allegory necessarily becomes wrapped up in the idea of erotic engagement, and thus comes to govern the readerly questions that structure the work's textual energy – that is, the way the text suspends, blocks, and interrupts (political) meaning. The manner in which Heine fuses politics and erotic desire through the use of allegory becomes central to the unfolding of the work's larger libidinal economy, the manner in which the text reveals and obscures itself. Allegory in *Florentinische Nächte* thus stands in a close-knit, dialectical relationship with politics and erotics, challenging readers to grasp the hermeneutic in Heine's text.

True to Heine's *Vorrede* declarations, Maximilian's first tale bears resemblance to many of the topoi invoked in classic nineteenth-century fairy tales. As Maximilian relates his muddled “Bilder aus der Kindheit,” readers learn he was twelve years old when he traveled with his

mother to her childhood home for the first time.⁴⁷ Though their journey through a dark forest (a classic fairy-tale trope for socialization outside of society) is geographically bereft of markers, attentive readers will grasp how an ironic allegory slowly and subtly begins to take shape through both historical and cultural codes:

Es war meine erste Reise. Wir fuhren den ganzen Tag durch einen dicken Wald, dessen dunkle Schauer mir immer unvergeßlich bleiben, und erst gegen Abend hielten wir still vor einer langen Querstange, die uns von einer großen Wiese trennte. Wir mußten fast eine halbe Stunde warten, ehe, aus der nahgelegenen Lehmhütte, der Junge kam, der die Sperre wegschob und uns einließ. Ich sage ›der Junge‹ weil die alte Marthe ihren vierzigjährigen Neffen noch immer den Jungen nannte; dieser hatte, um die gnädige Herrschaft würdig zu empfangen, das alte Livreekleid seines verstorbenen Oheims angezogen, und da er es vorher ein bißchen ausstäuben mußte, ließ er uns so lange warten. Hätte man ihm Zeit gelassen, würde er auch Strümpfe angezogen haben; die langen, nackten, roten Beine stachen aber nicht sehr ab von dem grellen Scharlachrock. Ob er darunter eine Hose trug, weiß ich nicht mehr (DHA 5, 200-201).

Breaking the odd details in this passage down, one can see how the forest motif of socialization outside of society serves as the catalyst for a kind of time travel into a liminal period. Heine's fairy tale recollects a French revolutionary heritage, before staging a shift from the Napoleonic era to the Restoration.⁴⁸ This shift is evidenced in the description of the servant's clothing, the actant, or magical helper, who grants access into the mother's home. His red legs are consistent with the symbolism of political colors at the time (i.e. Stendahl's *Le Rouge et le Noir*), but more crucially Maximilian can't remember if he was wearing pants. This political detail designates a *sans-culottes*, the left-wing, lower-class partisans and chief constituents of the Revolutionary army. Perhaps more telling, the servant puts on an ostentatious ("grell") dusty "Livreekleid" belonging to his dead uncle, implying that uncle harbored a revolutionary past as a Jacobin. Because the servant wanted to put on stockings, but did not have time, the details suggest that the inheritance of a revolutionary past, not the nature of that past, is the object of representation here.

⁴⁷ Maximilian's age was of considerable importance to Heine, enough that he changed it from nine to twelve, thereby heightening his proximity to adolescence. Nine and twelve are also iconic fairy tale numbers that significantly reappear in night two.

⁴⁸ Victor Turner, "The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," in *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation* (Peru: Open Court), 3-22.

An additional detail supporting such a reading comes when Heine interrupts his narration to explain to Maria why he refers to him as “der Junge,” signaled by his switch to present tense. If one assumes the servant to be 40 years old at the time of composition, his birth year would have been around 1794 or 1795 – very close to the period when the Jacobins started turning against the more radical factions in the National Convention, eventually losing power themselves. As Maximilian notes, the details of this distant childhood memory are fuzzy, but there are subtle allegorical referents that speak to the generational challenge of inheriting revolutionary and counter-revolutionary tensions.

As the story progresses, readers begin to see a subtle correlation between the mother’s rundown home and subsequent political events. That is to say, this childhood memory allegorizes the ambivalence of Napoleon’s absence and defeat which paved the way for a repressive political climate. The rundown house and dilapidated garden are described in such a way as to evoke images of a postlapsarian world. It was a “kummervolles Bild der Vergänglichkeit” with “hässliche Spuren der übermütigsten Soldatenwirtschaft” and the “trostlosesten Anblick der Zerstörniss.” Giant trees are “verstümmelt” (the same word Heine uses to describe the work of censors), weeds abound, and statues have been beheaded. The only object that remains “unverstümmelt” is a marble Venus lying in green grass. The troubled Oedipal tensions structuring the passage, coupled with Maximilian’s increasingly fervent scopophilia solicited by the statue, can be at least partly explained by a lack of father and a melancholic mother. She reenters the narrative right after Maximilian’s first glimpse of the statue, thereby equating the mother figure and the Venus in the reader’s mind. Maximilian finds his mother standing by a window, crying and lost in thoughts. She embraces him with “hastiger Zärtlichkeit” and apologizes for the lack of beds. “Lass mich allein!” are the final words spoken by Maximilian’s mother in the passage. Unable to sleep in his makeshift bed and riveted by a “kindische[s]

Gefühl,” Maximilian resolves to visit the statue at night. The statuary kiss links the inner story with the frame narrative, the previously introduced enigma of Maximilian’s erotics with the image of Maria on the green sofa, all under the umbrella of typical Romantic motifs:

Im grünen Grase lag die schöne Göttin ebenfalls regungslos, aber kein steinerne Tod, sondern nur ein stiller Schlaf schien ihre lieblichen Glieder gefesselt zu halten, und als ich ihr nahete, fürchtete ich schier, dass ich sie durch das geringste Geräusch aus ihrem Schlummer erwecken könnte. Ich hielt den Atem zurück als ich mich über sie hinbeugte, um die schönen Gesichtszüge zu betrachten; eine schauerliche Beängstigung stieß mich von ihr ab, eine knabenhafte Lüsternheit zog mich wieder zu ihr hin, mein Herz pochte, als wollte ich eine Mordtat begehen, und endlich küßte ich die schöne Göttin mit einer Inbrunst, mit einer Zärtlichkeit, mit einer Verzweiflung, wie ich nie mehr geküßt habe in diesem Leben. Auch nie habe ich diese grauenhaft süße Empfindung vergessen können, die meine Seele durchflutete, als die beseligende Kälte jener Marmorlippen meinen Mund berührte... Und sehen Sie, Maria, als ich eben vor Ihnen stand und ich Sie, in ihrem weißen Musselinkleide auf dem grünen Sofa liegen sah, da mahnte mich Ihr Anblick an das weiße Marmorbild im grünen Grase. Hätten Sie länger geschlafen, meine Lippen würden nicht widerstanden haben... (DHA 5, 202-203).

The statuary kiss scene is an obvious parody of Eichendorff’s *Das Marmorbild* (1818), a story significant for how its protagonist, Florio, resists the erotic allure of a marble Venus.⁴⁹ Florio is a young nobleman romantically caught between Bianka, a girl whom he meets while travelling in Lucca, and a marble Venus who appears to him in different and increasingly tempting guises. Eichendorff’s tale reads like a psychomachia, with Florio being drawn towards Bianka by his singer-friend Fortunato and lured towards the Venus by the knight Donati. Needless to say, Eichendorff’s protagonist is saved by Fortunato’s “altes frommes Lied,” averting his embrace of the statue. Heine’s parodic reversal of the story has thus largely been read in the context of Heine rescuing the Greek gods exiled by medieval Christian Romanticism. If for Eichendorff the Venus represents unchecked sexuality for his Christian hero, for Heine it represents Hellenistic sensuality repressed in Eichendorff’s reading of Greek art.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Joseph von Eichendorff, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, ed. Karl Polheim (Tübingen: Niemeyer), 30-82.

⁵⁰ This is how Ralph Martin reads the Eichendorff parody. Additionally, his reading takes the scene a step further, accommodating a critique of Eichendorff’s professed aristocratic conservatism as well. For Martin, Maximilian’s mother’s home and garden represent the “Verlust der Statusillusionen des Kleinadels nach den Kriegswirren der napoleonischen Zeit.” Martin, *Wiederkehr*, 178.

Heine was known to have read *Das Marmorbild*, and a reading that focuses on Heine's ironizing of Romantic pathos makes sense. But it is important to note, that for Heine's irony to work the statue must come to signify Romantic pathos, it must be subjected to allegorical interpretation as part of a rhetorical process in which it is imbued with the conventions and ideals of Romantic feeling. There is nothing, however, to prevent readers from associating the marble Venus with Goethe's much more famous "Marmorbilder" from book three chapter one of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*?⁵¹ After all, it was in the *Die Romantische Schule* – a text partly responsible for his inclusion in the Dec. 10 ban – where Heine conflated cold lifeless statues with the childless ("unfruchtbare") impotency of Goethe's poems. As a result, it seems likely readers would have registered Heine's critique of the alleged political disengagement of both German Romanticism and German Classicism. He is attacking the insularity of Goethe's perceived commitment to aesthetic autonomy and Eichendorff's sublimated eroticism. Maximilian's kiss infuses his subject with liminality and instability, while staging erotic engagement as the answer for how to animate what is politically and aesthetically dead. It's an interesting inversion, because the loss of the mother usually marks the initiation into life, society and culture, but here it marks the beginning of a necrophiliac and narcissistic subversion. Heine is, in a certain sense, turning the *Bildungsprozess* on its head. The "grauenhaft süße Empfindung" that Maximilian feels semantically reflects this paradox, while exposing a perceived vacuity of political/erotic feeling in Eichendorff's and Goethe's art. Maximilian's paradoxical affect rejects the doxically real. As the product of an erotic encounter with an unproductive object, Maximilian comes to reproduce asocial expectations of behavior, he becomes autistic (a pathology echoed in his

⁵¹ "Kennst du das Haus? Auf Säulen ruht sein Dach, / Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das Gemach, / Und Marmorbilder stehn und seh'n mich an: / Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, getan?" Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Hamburger Ausgabe, vol. 7, ed. Erich Trunz, (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1977), 145.

mother's fateful works "Lass mich allein!"), and so this opening story is one of failed socialization through art, fiction, and citation.

Most scholars read this tale as the origin of Maximilian's deviant erotics. He becomes "geprägt" by the statue, in essence losing his virginity to it and becoming a necrophiliac. The emptiness and death of the statue have been effectively transposed onto Maximilian and it influences his subsequent relationships and behavior, which, with increasing absurdity and intensity inform the content of Maximilian's subsequent narrations. He claims to fall in love with Michelangelo's *Nacht*, a painting of a Madonna in Cologne, a Greek nymph he discovers nearby, imaginary women and dead women such as "die kleine Very." As far as living women are concerned, he likens their company to that of a French officer fighting at Berezina: "Ja, die Erinnerung an die Beresina der Liebe, die ich damals passierte, verleidete mir einige Zeit sogar die köstlichen Damen, Frauen wie Engel, Mädchen wie Vanillensorbet" (DHA 5, 206).⁵² The genitive construction ("Beresina der Liebe") grammatically embodies the reciprocity of desire and politics at stake in the work more broadly, while also linking Maximilian's dislike of the "real" with Napoleon's failures. His admission about living women also implies a link between his private memory and historical experience itself, widening the arc of the text's allegorical tendencies.

Given the succession of "texts" that constitute Maximilians's politicized erotics, it seems another way to view the statue kiss is to see it not as the *source* of Maximilian's problems, despite the formative role it may play in his erotic tastes later in life, but as an instance of textual

⁵² Berezina was the site of a horrific Winter battle in 1812 during Napoleon's retreat from Russia. In the 1830s, the word was a French synonym for disaster.

palimpsesting.⁵³ The palimpsest (Greek: *palimpsestos*, “scratched again”) is piece of manuscript parchment, which for reasons of thrift, was washed off, and reused. The text that was scrapped away, however, never entirely disappeared and a palimpsest could reveal multiple texts at once. As a metaphor, the palimpsest has been a key concept for post-structuralism and French semiotics, but it was in the mid-nineteenth century when scholars – aided by often destructive technologies – began attempting to decipher them. For Maximilian, then, the palimpsest reveals the diverse nature of his textual desire. After all, origins are tricky and to the extent Eichendorff and Goethe are under scrutiny here, they do not amount to stable references as much as utterances, citations, and intertexts in Kristeva’s sense of the term.⁵⁴ Maximilian’s desire is the result of a text. Just as Paola and Francesca love each other according to the sign of Lancelot and Guinevere, Maximilian loves the statue according to an ironic commentary on art (and politics). In the present of his childhood, Maximilian’s desire is constituted by the statue, but he always remains open to future inscription, and since the texts inscribed on a palimpsest share no necessary correspondence – that is, no single inscription needs to serve as the origin of more inscriptions – the statue does not describe the relationship between Maximilian and his subsequent lovers/women/texts, rather it reflects an additional layering of (il)legibility. This is not to say that Maximilian’s palimpsestic structure of desire is not haunted by the statue as a kind

⁵³ Given Heine’s earlier fusion of the palimpsest and physiognomies in *Harzreise*, it is surprising scholars haven’t identified this concept at work here as well. “Ihr Auge verriet einen krankhaft schwärmerischen Tiefsinn, um ihren Mund lag strenge Frömmigkeit, doch schien mir’s, als ob er einst sehr schön gewesen sei, und viel gelacht und viele Küsse empfangen und viele erwidert habe. Ihr Gesicht glich einem Codex palimpsestus, wo, unter der neuschwarzen Mönchsschrift eines Kirchenvatertextes die halberloschenen Verse eines altgriechischen Liebesdichters hervorlauschen.” Quoted in Norbert Altenhofer, *Die verlorene Augensprache: Über Heinrich Heine* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1993), 63.

⁵⁴ “Any text is the absorption and transformation of another.” See Julia Kristeva, “Word, dialogue, and novel,” in *Desire in Language: A semiotic approach to literature and art*, ed. Leon Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora and Alice Jardine (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66. A failure to grasp this textual process at play in Heine’s work has also been a cause for error in previous readings trying to determine the relationship between Maximilian’s lovers/erotic objects and the literary interlocutors they clearly point to. Scholars read these literary references, as precisely that, stable references when it is their instability and subversive qualities Heine foregrounds.

of encrypted trace, only that later inscriptions, which appear repetitive, are slightly different. The statue occupied him for almost four years (“fast vier Jahre beschäftigte es mein Herz” DHA 5, 203) and ever since he had a “wunderbare Leidenschaft” for statues, but he did fall in love with a painting even if that painting was quickly replaced by another marble entity (the Greek nymph). Similarly, he spent three days with a living Very before learning of her death and then later becoming reoccupied by her image at Frederick the Great’s former palace. That a palimpsestic structure of desire is decidedly problematic becomes discernable by the tormenting quality of his memories (“Nichts ist quälender als solches Herumstöbern in alten Erinnerungen” DHA 5, 204) in a garden supposed to be “without worries” (*sans-souci*). The metaphor reveals the inconsistent heterogeneity of Maximilian’s desire as a layering of fictions put together haphazardly.

As an organizing trope for Maximilian’s paradoxical desire, the palimpsest further obfuscates and destabilizes readers’ attempts to read the political allegory in a simple, reductive, and unilateral way. Just as Maximilian mixes French and German referents by struggling with his desire at Schloss Sans-Souci (a none too-subtle jab at Prussian fondness for French culture), there is a similar contamination between the personal memories of Maximilian’s desires and historical experience. Maximilian possesses a nostalgia for the past, but he is alienated from his own origins. He appears to critique Romantic and Classical conservatism, but he mourns the loss of both community and an aristocratic order at the same time. In a very real sense, *Florentinische Nächte* operates in between conservative and liberal poles of a contemporary political spectrum, resisting the anti-aristocratic affect of neo-Jacobinism popular in the 1830s while critiquing aristocratic culture at the same time. Moreover, Maximilian’s unchecked subjectivism has placed the individual’s primacy above that of the social collective, which with pathological intensity, shows politics to be a problem of the self. Perhaps Heine chose the name Maximilian because of its associations with Robespierre whose egalitarian desire fed a self-destruction that ultimately

gave birth to Napoleon. Thus Heine appears to be critiquing the conditions precipitating Napoleon's rise, while also mourning his absence.

These are among the literary and political challenges testing readers' hermeneutic skills in night one, all of which contribute to the struggle to contain and categorize Heine and his fiction. But because Heine shows desire to be intrinsic to politics, and because fiction is double-edged (like allegory), it is possible that allegorical reading might also prove paradoxically stabilizing for readers. All critical reading is allegorical reading, and to the extent readers embrace Heine's challenge, they can equip themselves with the hermeneutic skills necessary for decoding the mystery in *Florentinische Nächte*. Once again, the trope of allegory draws readers into the process. If allegory in night one corresponds to a tale of absence and lack, if it betrays Heine's diagnosis of what is essentially missing from politics and literature (Napoleon and erotic engagement), then in night two, this lack finds fulfillment. Similar to night one there are two levels of allegoricity deserving attention: the allegorical referents commanding Heine's political critique and the formal properties by which those referents come to be articulated as part of the text's libidinal economy. In night one allegory articulates itself subtly, gently, and mildly, embedded as it is in a distant childhood memory and difficult to decipher. In night two, allegory explodes in the figure of Mademoiselle Laurence and her travelling troupe.

“Der getanzte Rätsel”: Mademoiselle Laurence and Psychological Allegory

As noted above, Mademoiselle Laurence commands significant attention in scholarly readings that explore *Florentinische Nächte*'s aesthetics and politics. The rich signifying potential of her dance, the curiosities of her past, and the subtle political referents punctuating her appearance have yielded dozens of divergent readings. Some see her as the penultimate

expression of an emancipatory politics, while others see her as Heine's vehicle for a pure poetic language above politics. She has been read as a secret weapon for undermining censors, and a cipher for the imaginary power of apolitical art. She has been called on to serve the notion that art is beholden to politics, perhaps its most potent weapon, but also the assertion that culture can and must transcend politics altogether. Given these seemingly contradictory attitudes evidenced in scholarship, it stands to reason that nineteenth-century contemporaries were just as baffled by her peculiarities and transgressive potential. It also seems likely that Mademoiselle Laurence generated a host of meanings for readers. For this reason, I find it prudent to explore an interpretation of night two that is at once attentive to Heine's use of narrative prose fiction as a genre, as well as to the existing terms of analysis established in both the frame narrative and night one: the binary structures and fairy-tale motifs, the foregrounding of erotic desire and political undertones, and especially the use of allegory. Such an approach grounds an interpretation of Mademoiselle Laurence in both form *and* content, putatively guarding against the tendency to appropriate Heine's fiction for something other than what it is. Naturally, this danger will always remain germane to a text fundamentally concerned with the politicization of reading itself, but at the very least, we might gain greater insight into the literary, political, and cultural processes that rendered Heine so transgressive in his day and ours.

My reading of Laurence emphasizes her role in structuring Maximilian's desire, drawing attention to the political and erotic ramifications of this role, both for Maximilian, but also for readers. As a figure embodying Heine's ambiguous amalgamation of politics and aesthetics to a tee, she is emblematic of Heine's politicization of allegorical reading in *Florentinische Nächte* and his eroticization of politics. In this sense, Laurence very much functions as a meta figure, shedding light on the political and erotic dimensions of critically reading this text. Allegorically, Laurence functions as an imaginary political and erotic fantasy, a wish fulfillment that embodies

Maximilian's palimpsestic structure of desire. Ultimately her figure, together with the act of interpreting Laurence's relationship to Maximilian, can perhaps be best understood as part of a post-bourgeois, post-liberal aesthetic and political vision on behalf of Heine's – a vision that challenges the wearisome polarities of the 1830s and exposes the various process of liberal subject formation. To be sure, nineteenth-century readers would not have used the language of post-liberalism to describe her, but to the extent they related her figure to existing models of political identification, aesthetic expression, and historical understanding, they would have faced a formidable task in trying to categorize her. Unlike existing readings that see her an allegory of individual freedom from absolutist régimes and orthodox religion, she might be better understood as part of a cautionary tale, an admission of the need for interdependence among individuals and institutions. Consistent with Heine's ironic transformation of Classical and Romantic literary traditions in night one, Laurence does not embody a wholesale rejection of historical tradition, but an understanding that how we come to terms with our individual and collective pasts shape our identities. These traditions require a transformation, a repurposing, not a complete repudiation. Furthermore, Laurence serves as a testament against a view of human nature that reduces individuals to singularities, whether that be self-interest, autonomy, or a privileging of rationalism at the exclusion of emotion. Subsequent chapters of this dissertation will also investigate this tendency in other literary texts and traditions, suggesting Laurence has something in common with a German model of literary liberalism in the way she offers a snapshot of man's messy dual anthropology while helping readers negotiate political identities through reading.

Mademoiselle Laurence is first mentioned by name in the frame narrative of night one right after Maximilian's Novalis parody.⁵⁵ Intrigued by Maximilian's atypical erotic interests, Maria asks, "war Mademoiselle Laurence eine Marmonestatue oder ein Gemälde? eine Tode oder ein Traum?" to which Maximilian replies: "Vielleicht alle dieses zusammen" (DHA 5, 207). Maria clearly possesses some previous knowledge of the woman, a detail echoed in the reading process itself as readers recall that Maximilian had been in the "Laurenziana" earlier that day. As the Medici family crypt of manuscripts and codices, Laurence's name thus harbors strong associations with texts and books, reminding readers that *Florentinische Nächte* carefully and dangerously straddles both the real and the fantastic. In fact, based on this early exchange, readers (and Maria) have no reason to believe Laurence is real. For his part, Maximilian appears to indicate she is an imaginary collection of composite texts – like the library. This is a crucial insight because scholarship has persistently viewed Laurence as the only living (and hence real) woman Maximilian embraces. As a result, Laurence has been tied to readings that elevate the singular sensuality of their relationship, thereby identifying *Florentinische Nächte* as work that reiterates the binary between sensualism over spiritualism Heine identified in his other writings.⁵⁶ But this view fundamentally misconstrues Laurence's relationship to Maximilian and Heine.

Maximilian's dramatic utterances and hermeneutic invitations such as "Was bedeutet dieses Weib?" and "Ich der sonst die Signatur aller Erscheinungen so leicht begreift, ich konnte

⁵⁵ Speaking of his "dream girl," Maximilian poses a rhetorical question to Maria and takes a final jab at Novalis: "Aber hatte ich nicht in ihrem Anblick ganze Ewigkeiten genossen? Auch kannte sie mich zu gut um nicht zu wissen, dass ich keine Wiederholungen liebe" (DHA 5, 207). Maximilian does not like repetitions, which not only underscores the palimpsestic structure of his desire, but it also draws attention to another binary at work in the text. The binary between *Langweile* and *Kurzweile*, which Kierkegaard identifies in the nineteenth-century artist and his need to create novel pleasures. See Downing, *Double Exposures*, 218-221.

⁵⁶ Ralph Martin offers two equations summing up the logic at work in his reading of the political allegory: military defeat = lack of freedom = spiritualization vs. military success = freedom = sensual love.

dennoch dieses getantze Räthsel nicht lösen” (DHA 5, 248, 231) are aimed at Maria, at readers, but also at himself. In this way, Laurence functions as a composite figure answering to the “law of the readerly,” helping complete the chains of causality by determining previous determinants.⁵⁷ Given what readers do learn about Laurence, she is much more suggestive of Maximilian’s palimpsestic, textual structure of desire than anything else. She is a psychological allegory, a projection of Maximilian’s psyche and thus pure and utter fantasy. Read politically, she figures as a fantasy, too, a wish fulfillment of the lacks exposed in the garden ruin scene from night one, but also as the key to Maximilian’s own latent desires that he tries to interpret and decode through his storytelling. Furthermore, her political message cannot be understood outside of this hermeneutic process and the manner in which Laurence conflates interpretation with erotics.

The first thing to note about Laurence in night two is how Maximilian finds her in England during a moment of profound despair (“schwarze Stimmung”). Gazing into the Thames at his reflection from the Waterloo bridge (a signal for Napoleon’s defeat and his narcissism), Maximilian claims that “eine sonderbare Musik“ woke him from his “dunklen Träumen” (DHA 5, 228). Interestingly, there is no indication here that Maximilian has ceased dreaming, only that the ominous content of his dreams ceased. Maximilian has already established himself as a daydreamer (the Paganini passage from night one is premised on the idea that music induces reveries and the sight of Maria on the sofa prompted a daydream that would inform the content of his first story). The immense detail he subsequently provides about Laurence and her troupe and their bizarre behavior reinforces the notion that the more inexpressible the latent desires, the more eccentric and peculiar the manifest content. The scene is certainly eccentric and peculiar: Madam Mutter, small headed, large-stomached and dressed entirely in black, is beating

⁵⁷ Barthes, *S/Z*, 181-182.

ruthlessly on a drum. Monsieur Türlütü, dancing around striking a triangle, is a dwarf wearing the costume of an old French marquis. Mademoiselle Laurence – about fifteen years old and resembling a Greek beauty – has her attention fixed on the fourth member of the group, a poodle who has managed to capture the audience’s delight by arranging a collection of wooden letters to spell Lord Wellington’s name together with “*Heros*.” As if Maximilian is trying to decode the scene for himself, his first description of Laurence’s dance is only able to decide what the dance is not:

Das war nicht das klassische Tanzen, das wir noch in unseren großen Balletten finden, wo, ebenso wie in der klassischen Tragödie, nur gespreizte Einheiten und Künstlichkeiten herrschen; das waren nicht jene getanzten Alexandriner, jene deklamatorischen Sprünge, jene antithetischen Entrechats, jene edle Leidenschaft, die so wirbelnd auf einem Fuße herumpirouettiert, daß man nichts sieht als Himmel und Trikot, nichts als Idealität und Lüge! [...] Es war ein Tanz, welcher nicht durch äußere Bewegungsformen zu amüsieren strebte, sondern die äußeren Bewegungsformen schienen Worte einer besonderen Sprache, die etwas Besonderes sagen wollte. Was aber sagte dieser Tanz? Ich konnte es nicht verstehen, so leidenschaftlich auch diese Sprache sich gebärdete. Ich ahnte nur manchmal, daß von etwas grauenhaft Schmerzlichem die Rede war (DHA 5, 230).

The scholarly consensus that the dance is a “symbol of protest against Classical and social dancing in favor of passionate, Dionysian improvisation” described in later works of Heine’s is certainly true.⁵⁸ Within the larger context of this work, however, it must be stressed how dance is an art form ideally suited for the complex structure of desire, repression and (lack of) discipline facilitating erotic equivocation. There is a link between the descriptions of dance and the mode of Maximilian’s storytelling, facilitating a reading that encourages their juxtaposition. Just as the adjective “grauenhafte” evokes associations with the statuary kiss from night one, Laurence’s dance lacks the formal features necessary for easily defining it (choreography, calculated repetitions, pantomime, unity, etc.) and embedding it into a normative discourse on dance aesthetics. Not only does this unmistakably enhance Maximilian’s desire to know and experience the dance, but it mirrors his own subversions. No doubt, the inability to discern its meaning

⁵⁸ Sammons, *Elusive Poet*, 330.

maximizes its appeal, which increasingly takes on an erotic, even orgasmic dimension – linking erotics with the work’s hermeneutic. Maximilian’s fixed position as spectator also recalls the other episodes in the tale where his scopophilia induces erotic excitement. That his second description is a retelling based on a mental recollection further conflates the idea that the dance and narrative itself share in some kind of a reciprocal relationship:

Als die Truppe sich wieder entfernt hatte, blieb ich noch lange auf demselben Platze stehen, und dachte drüber nach, was dieser Tanz bedeuten mochte? [...] Manchmal beugte sich das Mädchen zur Erde, wie mit lauerndem Ohre, als hörte sie eine Stimme, die zu ihr heraufspräche... sie zitterte dann wie Espenlaub, bog rasch nach einer anderen Seite, entlud sich dort ihrer tollsten, ausgelassensten Sprünge, beugte dann wieder das Ohr zur Erde, horchte noch ängstlicher als zuvor, nickte mit dem Kopfe, ward rot, ward blaß, schauderte, blieb eine Weile kerzengrade stehen, wie erstarrt, und machte endlich eine Bewegung wie jemand der sich die Hände wäscht. War es Blut, was sie so sorgfältig lange, so grauenhaft sorgfältig von ihren Händen abwusch? Sie warf dabei seitwärts einen Blick, der so bittend, so flehend, so seelenschmelzend... und dieser Blick fiel zufällig auf mich (DHA 5, 232).

For most critics, the enigma of the dance is linked to the enigma of Laurence’s past, which she relates to Maximilian in the final pages of the novella. The daughter of a nobleman who viciously abused her mother and buried her alive while pregnant, Laurence was saved from death by grave robbers looting her mother’s burial site. She was then raised by a ventriloquist who would scare her with stories about her mother’s awful fate and subsequent death. In fact, Laurence has no actual memory of her early years, only memories of the fictions she was told. Lucia Ruprecht’s lucid analysis probes Laurence’s ritualized dance for the expression of obvious psychic pain and pathological mourning associated with her mother’s death. The washing motion Laurence repeats, which Maximilian equates with the washing of blood, is akin to wiping away the guilt she feels for having been responsible for killing her mother – a blame-the-victim lie perpetrated by her ventriloquist step-father. In this way, her dance is a “semiotic process linked to somatic conditions,” it is a compulsion and ritual that reveals her anxiety.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Ibid.

These details also work to heighten the proximity between Laurence and Maximilian, further contaminating their psychic fates for readers. When Maximilian shares a mutual glance with Laurence during her dance, one becomes less inclined to read that glance as reciprocal love (Maximilian's autism renders him incapable of love), and more as a recognition of shared guilt. Just as Laurence engages in a process of working through her mother's fate, Maximilian's own psychic suffering is rooted in the Oedipal drama from night one – his mother's trauma. Note how the same adjective “grauenhaft” appears once again after the glance, invoking the same discourse of ruin from night one. Consistent with a recurring dream, Laurence's dance repeats itself over and over again in the streets of London, readers are told, just as Maximilian's stories begin to take on an eerie fairy-tale quality once again. In Maximilian's second description of the performance – there are three altogether – he repeats the word “wieder” six times; he watches the group for three weeks in London without ever speaking to them, just as he searches for three days before finally realizing they have vanished. The number three is an iconic number in fairy tales, so too is the number five, which is precisely the number of years that take place between London and Paris. Similarly, Madam Mutter dressed as a widow for 12 years before dying, the same age Maximilian was during his first visit to his own mother's home. This numeric symbolism in night two not only suggests overlap with night one, but it betrays the structural similarities between the two reconstructed narratives. Maximilian's structure of desire consist of an ironic web of fictions, parodies and literary citations just as Laurence's past is a web of fictional memories imposed upon her by a ventriloquist. The implications are clear: night two *is* a fairy-tale designed to help Maximilian work through *his* (political) trauma and Oedipal struggles.

In addition to foregrounding the challenges rooted in expressing and deciphering the origins of trauma, scholars have also read Laurence's dance as a coded allegory for the return of

revolutionary sentiments and Heine's Napoleonic ideal. As is well known, Heine was in London in 1827 and Maximilian guesses Mademoiselle Laurence to be about fifteen years old, making her birth year 1812 or 1813, which would equate to the same time the allies started to gain the upper-hand over Napoleon. That Maximilian first encounters her at the Waterloo Bridge and then rediscovers her in Paris after the July Revolution when she is married to a former-Napoleonic general, supports this reading. Similarly, Laurence's relationships with the other members of the traveling troupe – before the July Revolution and after – speaks to a political allegory. Martin reads Madam Mutter as the Catholic Church for her role as the “evil-step mother” of *Poesie* who beats the tempo to which Laurence must dance.⁶⁰ Similarly, Martin reads Monsieur Türlütü as an allegory for Charles X (1824-1830) and the “Bauchredner” as Louis XVIII (1814/15 – 1824), designations which I would concur with. Because all the members of the group die (or were already dead) when Maximilian goes to Paris, their absence indicates the revolutionary turmoil of 1830. Laurence's journey to Sicily with her Bonapartist husband at the end of the tale is further cited as evidence of revolutionary renewal because of its connotations with the Proserpina myth.⁶¹

Martin's reading carefully situates *Florentinische Nächte* within the context of Heine's biography and his other writings, offering a much more attentive reading of allegory than most.

One wonders, however, if the overall message in the work can ultimately be brought into

⁶⁰ This reading is based on a description of the Church as the “Mutter der Künste” in *Französische Zustände*.

⁶¹ Ralph Martin carries this political context one step further by also ascribing a poetological function to Laurence's dance. For a reader with knowledge of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, it is difficult not to see the similarities between Mignon and Laurence. Both are introduced as members of a troupe, both biographies are revealed at the end of the works, both have abusive stepfathers, and both Wilhelm and Maximilian are beguiled by the female gaze. Even Monsieur Türlütü, with his triangle playing and desire to fence, can be read as a parody of Wilhelm, Laertes and Felix. For Martin, Heine is adding a corrective to Goethe's conception of *Naturpoesie*. Where Mignon represents a geographically and temporally alienated *Naturpoesie* lacking “Natürlichkeit und Lebendigkeit,” the former is imprinted with the revolutionary stamp of sensual freedom. Most telling in this regard is the fact that Laurence doesn't die. Martin connects her journey to Sicily with Heine's political “Befreiungsgedanken,” both of which contain a necessary poetological dimension that strive for humanity's internal and external emancipation through poetry.

alignment with a particular political viewpoint or whether the assignment of one-to-one relationships undermines a more robust use of allegory. Heine's irreconcilable volatility is what distinguished him from other writers in his day, not his ability to craft coded and consilient political critiques. Thus linked to the content of allegory there must also be a formal elaboration of it, and at this level Heine deliberately problematizes a simple model of allegory positing such one-to-one correspondences. Far from offering a text that unilaterally confers a political point of view on readers, a process which would only ever lead to Heine's identification, containment, and exclusion, Heine's text is very much about complicating and politicizing a reading of allegory. Just as Madam Mutter, the Bauchredner, and the dog are iconoclastically killed off, Heine challenges his readers to read their deaths as a killing off of simple allegorical models of identification, too.

Indeed, no characters in *Florentinische Nächte* encourage an allegorical reading in the way that Madam Mutter, Monsieur Türlütü and the dog do. The simplicity of their behavior, their bombastic language and exaggerated gestures, their complete lack of psychological depth, and the violent deaths they suffer all betray a *sensus allegoricus*. Their identities as allegorical referents, however, are less important than their recurrent role within the narrative – that is the way they become temporalized. When Maximilian finds Laurence in Paris, he confronts her in a scene he describes as surreal (“mir war wie in einem Traume” DHA 5, 238). The moment is curious, because Maximilian only inquires into the whereabouts of the other troupe members before she disappears again. But given the logic of their relationship it makes sense. The first step in identifying the origins of (political) trauma for Maximilian is to recognize those origins in the “Künstlerfamilie,” because they held Laurence captive. In this way, the revenge fantasy in Paris precedes and already decodes the mystery of Laurence's past. In fact, the deaths of the

other members of the troupe prefigure the culminating bedroom scene, and continue to haunt it as a return of the repressed.

Properly speaking, the final bedroom passage and end of the tale begin like a fairy tale at midnight. Maximilian had just watched Monsieur Türlütü die, as he is pondering the ambivalent urge to find Laurence: “Ich war weder verliebt in sie, noch fühlte ich sonstig grosse Zuneigung zu ihr [...] Über dieses Gefühl nachdenkend stand ich einst, um Mitternacht, an einem entlegenen Eingang der großen Oper” (DHA 5, 243). When Laurence shows up out of nowhere, she once again shares the curious glance with Maximilian. “Die Stimme zuckte mir durchs Herz, der wohlbekannte Seitenblick übte wieder seinen Zauber, und ich war wieder wie im Traume, als ich mich neben Mademoiselle Laurence in einem weichen warmen Wagen befand.” The pretentious alliteration in this sentence, which comes before and after the word dream, consists of a repetition of the three same letters mirroring the proximity and sameness of Laurence and Maximilian. “W” is also an upside down “M,” corresponding to the inverted narrative logic at work throughout both nights.

Supposing Laurence’s improvised dance is a narrative about overcoming the pain of the narrative imposed upon her about her mother, then Maximilian’s improvised narrative seems to be a dance to much the same end. Narrative and dance are the same thing in *Florentinische Nächte* in the way they depart from traditional codes, and are instead structured by the unconscious. Laurence’s dance – in addition to lacking a rehearsed, memorized choreography – is an impromptu performance just as much about forgetting as it is remembering. She even says so: “Ja, wenn ich tanzte, ergriff mich immer einen sonderbare Erinnerung, ich vergaß meiner selbst und kam mir vor als sey ich eine ganz andere Person, und als quälten mich alle Qualen und Geheimnisse dieser Person...und sobald ich aufhörte zu tanzen erlosch wieder alles in meinem Gedächtniss” (DHA 5, 247). In Ruprecht’s words “her performing of a traumatic condition in a

transgressive dance is at once expression and exposure, challenging the category of a sovereign subject that masters the creative act.”⁶² But her dance *requires* Maximilian. Without him there is no dance as indicated by reports of her behavior at other salons (“sie verstünde nicht zu tanzen” DHA 5, 241). Conversely, Maximilian’s narrative requires a listener to help structure his own improvisations, digressions and insights into his latent desires. So too is his narrative all about forgetting and remembering. The amnesia Laurence suffers from finds a parallel in Maximilian’s early aphasia, his admission to Maria that he does not know what he is talking about (to say nothing of his frequent episodes of forgetting). His storytelling, like Laurence’s dance, facilitates the recovery of the forgotten.

The culminating scene in Laurence’s bedroom further eroticizes and politicizes the relationship between dance and narrative, while drawing attention to an inversion of functional roles. At the level of inner narrative, Laurence relates her past to Maximilian and Maximilian becomes a listener, an interpreter of her past (and himself). At the level of the frame narrative, this inversion is signaled by Maria’s drifting off to sleep (or into death), an indication Maximilian is narrating to Maria’s unconscious, and perhaps his own. This curious transposal precipitates the most paradoxical moment of the entire work, when readers learn Maximilian’s life is a fairy tale precisely because the mystery of Laurence’s past is not (“sey kein blosses Märchen.”) By appealing to the fairy-tale trope one final time, Heine not only encourages his readers to situate the work within a popular literary tradition, but he makes a broader appeal to contemporary fictions. Maximilian slips into the identity of “der alte General” (Laurence’s husband) and begins to relive the battle of Jena, he interrupts himself to ask Maria if she is sleeping: “ich brauche also nicht zu fürchten, dass ich Sie langweile, wenn ich die Möbel des Zimmers worin in mich befand, wie *heutige Novellisten* pflegen, etwas *ausführlich* beschreibe.”

⁶² Ruprecht, *Dances of Self*, 124.

Maria's final words as she drifts off to sleep: "Vergessen Sie nur nicht das Bett, theurer Freund" (DHA 5, 248, my emphasis). If Heine's ironic critique of classical and Romantic literary culture in night one was premised on the call for erotic engagement, then the detailed description of the bed Maximilian delivers offers a similar irony directed at a nascent form of proto-realism in the literary arts.

Erotics is key in both nights, in part, because Maria's request to remember the bed invites readers to recall the lack of beds from night one, completing the fairy-logic narrative logic. In night two the lack is filled by an imaginary bed from imperial times, again underscoring the historical and political function in Maximilian's tale. Given the room's obvious imagery – "feuerrothen Beleuchtung," "die Flammen des Kamines" and the bed's curtain of "rother Seide" (DHA 5, 248) – there is little doubt about what transpires in Maximilian's fantasy. And if it is true that every narrative leads back to Oedipus, then Maximilian finds his mother and father in Laurence and her husband.⁶³ Far from being a cuckold, "der alte Bonarpartist" is more of a pimp. He encourages their liaison and becomes Maximilian's "intimister Freund," suggesting his status as a Prince Galahalt figure. Martin subsequently argues Maximilian and Laurence become lovers as "die unheilvolle Einfluss der Niederlage Napoleons durch die Erinnerung an seine Siege aufgehoben wird," and in this way, the work speaks the political utopia Napoleon represented for Heine, what Sammons calls "the hopeless dream of the amalgamation of poetry, progress and power."⁶⁴ But such a view does not adequately accommodate the ambivalence at work here. In a very real sense, this scene might also support a reading in which (political) remembrance and

⁶³ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 47.

⁶⁴ Jeffrey Sammons, *Heine: A Modern Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 34.

repetition function as a burden or a problem.⁶⁵ In fact, the Proserpine reference Maximilian offers (“ich kam mir vor wie der Gott Pluto, der, von Höllengluten umlodert, die schlafende Proserpine in seinen Armen halt,” DHA 5, 248) implies Maximilian repeatedly imagines and becomes acclimated to Laurence’s rape. The language in the closing lines similarly betrays a logic of recurrence and repetition: “nach einigen Wochen” Maximilian has become used to Laurence’s closed-eye dance. Thus although she initially might have represented a revolutionary break with classical traditions, by the end of the tale her progressive potential has been subsumed into a model of circularity. Similarly, the members of her travelling troupe return as ghostly forms. The Church and Nobility, even Lord Wellesley, are not entirely eliminated, but rather inscribed into the narrative process of recollection.

This all might be Heine’s way of critiquing the French Revolution as an inaugural moment for modernity, his own critical commentary on the competition to control the narrative of the French Revolution. The 1830s witnessed some of the first efforts at historicizing the tumultuous period from 1789 to 1815, and harnessing the legacy of the French Revolution was critical for both liberals and conservatives in France and in Germany. The former hoped to mark the gains of a revolutionary legacy by appealing to a discourse of male enfranchisement and emancipation, while the latter hoped to stymie middle-class political gains by drawing attention to revolutionary excess and violence. Laurence and Maximilian come to terms with past traumas, but they never quite escape the memory of violence. In this sense, *Florentinische Nächte* offers a tabulation of costs and a critical evaluation of the synthesis between the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary ideals. As important as such a reading might be for marking Heine as one of modernity’s most significant literary thinkers, it offers a reading of *Florentinische Nächte* that situates Heine within the circles of political and philosophical theory, not the literary culture this

⁶⁵ Martin, *Wiederkehr*, 180-190.

particular work intervenes within. Such a reading also has little to say about how *Florentinische Nächte* makes use of erotics, and allegory, or how it self-consciously intervenes in existing literary and cultural traditions.

For German readers of prose fiction in the late 1830s, who felt the effects of the French Revolution and Napoleon; who were concerned with the legacy of a classical literary heritage; who read the works of Eichendorff, Goethe, and Gutzkow; and who understood politics less in terms of rights and more as a literary culture of *Bildung* (a “Stimmung des Gemüts”), it also seems plausible to foreground a reading of *Florentinische Nächte* concerned with investigating the processes involved in the formation of liberal identities through literature and literary traditions. In this sense, *Florentinische Nächte* becomes very much implicated in exploring the nature of political change as culture. The work insinuates that redeeming the dead (whether Napoleon or Goethe) through fictions invariably sustains the terms of attachment to whatever or whomever one is redeeming. One cannot offer a new model of politics or aesthetics if one continues to repeat the same fictions. The writings of *Junges Deutschland* are, after all, premised on something *new*. For Heine, and others, it was necessary to attack past traditions in an effort to create a new space, a new language unencumbered by the past, by the other. But instead of harshly repudiating the past, *Florentinische Nächte* stages such an attack by means of ironic transformation and a conception of politics grounded in allegorical reading as a form of erotic pleasure. In this respect, Heine strives to distinguish himself from both earlier literary traditions and the writings of his peers. Heine recognized that a radical rebellion against a cultural inheritance, cynically portrayed in the emancipatory strivings of Maximilian, can lead to self-destruction. As an ironic, cautionary fairy tale, Heine’s fragment encourages readers to forego the desire of an independent life completely free from the Other, and completely free from the past. By staging the return of allegory in the ghostly figures Madam Mutter and Monsieur

Türlütü, by incorporating the lost other and preserving it in an endless process, *Florentinische Nächte* embodies the predicament of being inhabited by otherness as a necessary precondition for one's own subjectivity. As a result, the work shares a structural similarity with allegory, which ambivalently speaks of the Other and itself at the same time. In fact, *Bildung* reveals itself as allegory in *Florentinische Nächte*. It suggests that the ideal of self-cultivation within social collectives might best transpire through allegory. To the extent readers engaged the work's allegory and erotics, they participated in *Bildung* as an exercise of allegory and allegory as an exercise of *Bildung*.

The broader implications for Heine's use of allegory are quite profound within the post-Romantic domain of literary politics. Within 1830s popular literary and political culture, *Bildung* was generally understood as a symbolic mode, not an allegorical one.⁶⁶ The organic and harmonious ideal of *Bildung* as a symbolic process, particularly its synchronic and direct representation of sign and signified, offered a more direct template for the development of both the modern subject and even the modern nation-state. And when the symbol becomes linked to a totalizing pattern of development with its own self-regulating telos and potentiality, even human violence can be explained in terms of organic growth. As a result, Heine's fragment is responding to the nineteenth-century politicization of *Bildung* in literary and political culture that reduced its complexity to simplistic models of symbolism. Heine's figural strategy undermines the political rhetoric surrounding Romantic symbolism and the non-critical idealism it fostered in individuals like Menzel, instead offering a different model of *Bildung*. The model Heine offers is more in line with the contingent, diachronic, and ephemeral model of *Stimmung* identified in my introduction. Heine's allegory disavows totalization and identity as its ends, calling instead for

⁶⁶ It would have mattered to very few, if any, of Heine's readers that the Romantics had actually revived the neo-Platonic model of allegory. Technically, Heine is using a model of allegory that frustrates older models of allegory, and significantly anticipates Benjamin's theoretical insights.

attunement through erotics, play, and a critical hermeneutic. The “pestilentielle Wirklichkeit” Heine decries in his preface is a reality that enacts a jaundiced form of idealism, rooted in a simplistic model of symbolism.⁶⁷

Such a reading invariably situates this work within the cluster of ideas which in today’s political idiom would likely describe some form of post-liberalism. Whereas classical liberalism posited self-interest as a guiding principle of human nature, Heine clearly critiques such a model with messy characters driven as much by inclination as reason. Whereas classical liberalism posited the autonomous individual as a basis for politics, Heine’s tale exposes the potential dangers and pitfalls of such a model. Particularly in the way *Florentinische Nächte* challenges polarities, left versus right, individual versus collective, and the way in which it conceives of tradition, favoring the actual over the abstract, the work complicates traditional political models of liberalism. The fact the work was simultaneously published for French and German speakers also speaks to a straddling of boundaries not typically associated with the rise of mass-politics along ethno-national lines during this period. Many works of literature become transcultural successes, but few during this period were self-consciously written as elaborations on transcultural literary and political exchange. This is not to say post-liberalism functions here non-ideologically. As much as the work raises the prospects for a non-ideological form of political participation by dint of critical reading and erotic engagement, it seems unlikely even a work of

⁶⁷ In this context, Heine’s critique of authors like Goethe and Eichendorff is aimed more at their reception in the 1830s, and the problematic political uses for which their complex aesthetic works were deployed. In fact, the ironic treatment *Wilhelm Meister* receives can be understood as an affirmation of a non-organic model of Goethean *Bildung*. As Thomas Pfau notes regarding *Wilhelm Meister*’s irony, “[n]ot only does play permeate virtually every moment of Wilhelm’s progressive socialization, it also shapes the novel’s symbolic and narrative strategies of *Darstellung*. Yet as soon as we expand the scope of play from a symbolic practice consciously engaged in and staged to include the (Kantian) meaning of *Spiel* – the dynamic presentation of the self’s cognitive “attunement” (*Stimmung*) vis-à-vis the world – it becomes all but impossible to disentangle the symbolic and the real.” Thomas Pfau, “Bildungsspiele: Vicissitudes of Socialization in *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*,” in *European Romantic Review*, 21: 5 (2010): 571.

Heine's could transcend ideology altogether. The reviews considered below confirm as much. But what might be post-liberalism for us today, might well have been a countertrend within the emergence of German liberalism more broadly, particularly if liberalism is understood as a literary phenomenon. Ultimately, Heine shows liberal formation to be intimately concerned with reading fiction. While much of this process relates to what fictions talk about (Goethe's *Bildungsprozess* in *Wilhelm Meister* or Eichendorff's erotic statues in *Das Marmorbild*) there is also an effort on Heine's part to identify aspects within fiction itself that share in political formation, such as allegorical reading, *Empfindsamkeit* or the role of erotics and empathy in the political imaginary. These issues will be taken up in subsequent chapters.

Reading *Florentinische Nächte* in the 1830s: “ungeheuer schön” and “malicieuse bonté”

The reading offered above raises several outstanding questions about how nineteenth-century readers engaged this particular text. Did they approach it with an understanding of the contemporary political context – including the ban, *Junges Deutschland*, and the Menzel controversy? Were they aware of the work's literary and political allusions? Did they grasp how the text employed erotic desire as both affect and hermeneutic? And, finally, to what extent, if any, did they identify the presence of allegory? In some ways, these questions will always remain unanswerable, and even if it were possible to bring a high degree of certainty to a historicized reading of this work, that might not be desirable. By their nature, literary texts resist monolithic interpretations. By posing these questions and allowing them to guide a reading, this chapter did not set out to limit this work's plurality, but to increase it; likewise, the goal of this chapter has not been to contain the text's literariness, but to compound it. Contemporary discussions of *Florentinische Nächte* reveal this special function of Heine's fragment, just as

they offer a strong impression of how this text both appealed to and disturbed readers, at the level of aesthetics and politics.

Within Heine's inner circle of family, friends and close acquaintances *Florentinische Nächte* garnered widespread praise. Consistent with the narrative's own play with a fantastical register, much of this praise was delivered with fairy-tale like language. Julius Campe liked night two the best, perhaps because it fit Heine's description of "amüsant" and "welterfreuliches" better than the rest of *Salon III*. August Lewald, founder of the first German newspaper with a feuilleton section (*Europa: Chronik der gebildeten Welt*⁶⁸), described both nights as "deliziös", while Johann Georg von Cotta was "ganz enchantirt davon."⁶⁹ Ludwig Wihl, a Jewish publicist who wrote for Gutzkow's Frankfurt-based *Phönix* and Hamburg-based *Telegraph* (and who notably visited Paris and London in the 1830s⁷⁰), touches upon a specific literary function for *Florentinische Nächte* not achieved in Heine's other writings: "Ihre florentinischen Nächte haben uns wieder einen neuen Sternenkrantz Ihres Herzens gezeigt. Alles, was von Ihnen kommt, übt einen eignen Zauber aus und gewinnt Ihnen selbst diejenigen Gemüther, die sich mit Ihrem philosophischen und politischen Glaubensbekenntniß nicht befreunden konnten."⁷¹ Though it seems rather unlikely Heine was at all concerned with making friends on account of his writings, (particularly not with Wihl, whose poetry he later scorned), Wihl suggests this text likely

⁶⁸ For the purposes of this dissertation, it is worth noting Lewald's newspaper published several of Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*.

⁶⁹ Rosa Maria Assing and Theodor Mundt both expressed similar views. Rosa Maria Assing: "Mit großem Gefallen habe ich im Morgenblatte eine Probe Ihrer Florentinischen Nächte gelesen. Zeitungen nach haben wir ein solches Buch zu erwarten. Das wird gewiss ein Buch das Freund und Feind recht sein muss." (HSA 24, 416); Theodor Mundt: "im deutschen Publikum finden die 'Florentinischen Nächte', die zum Besten gehören, das ich von Ihnen kenne, gerechte Bewunderung. In Hamburg, wo ich zuletzt nach meiner Rückkehr aus London verweilte, fand ich eine sehr gereizte Stimmung gegen Sie, besonders hat der eine Vers über die hamburgische Börse in dem Gedichte des Tannenhäuser dort jedes ehrliche Kaufmannsgemueth revoltirt." (HSA vol. 25, 80)

⁷⁰ After his travels to England and France, Wihl published a collection of poems, *Englischer Novellenkrantz* (1836).

⁷¹ HSA 24, 406.

appealed to readers on non-ideological grounds. Unlike Heine's more outwardly polemical, political-philosophical writings, the literary text, Wihl insinuates, is able to perform work that other modes of writing could not. And while it is true that the private praise in letters likely offers many exaggerated claims, it is worth noting that many of these same individuals expressed reservations or outright hostility in private correspondence with Heine in the aftermath of the Börne fiasco.

Maximilian Heine, Heinrich Heine's younger brother, and Pauline von Treuenhal, a friend and companion of Betty de Rothschild's, offer perhaps the most interesting private notes on the work. The former post-scripted his April 24, 1836 letter to his brother with a few lines in French: "J'ai lu les nuits florentins – c'est excellent – mais ce mot ne dit rien, on doit dire : ungeheuer schön! mais diable, qui est ce Mr. Maximilian? Je ne connais que deux Maximilian que tu aimes, ces sont: ton frère et Robespierre! (sic)"⁷² Pauline Treuenhal also shared her thoughts after reading the manuscript version in French: "Je ne puis résister au désir de vous exprimer le délicieux plaisir que m'a fait éprouver la lecture des nuits florentines, la dernière surtout: Mon Dieu que j'aime le portrait que vous faits de nos parisiennes, avec quelle malicieuse bonté vous les dépeignez, quelle touche fine et délicate!"⁷³ Maximilian's double adjective ("ungeheuer schön") and Treuenhal's compound noun ("malicieuse bonté") both employ antithetical grammatical constructions and semantic transgressions to express their reactions, not only capturing the mood of Heine's work, but also echoing Heine's own linguistic oddities that invert semantic form. In particular, one recalls the phrases like "grauenhaft süße Empfindung," "Bersina der Liebe" and "beseligende Kälte" peppering both nights. For these two readers, Heine encouraged the opposition of semantic limits while also operating within a transgressive space

⁷² Ibid., 395.

⁷³ HSA 25, 108.

between two international languages – both factors which speak to the various ways *Florentinische Nächte* precludes semantic totalization.

It also must be emphasized how this literary text was linked to socio-political content for both Maximilian and Pauline. In the same letter, Maximilian informs his brother that he is reading a recently published history of Napoleon and his reference to the Jacobin leader, while not necessarily encouraging an allegorical reading, does suggest the possibility for a more widespread association of *Florentinische Nächte*'s Maximilian with history's more famous namesake. On this account, one must consider the stark differences between Heine's treatment of the French Revolution and Napoleon and the kinds of historical treatments beginning to appear. The latter, no matter how much they desire to emphasize the supposed victory of youth and energy over age, tradition and hierarchy, would also unwittingly render Napoleon a dead object. By offering representations that historicize him, they consign him to the past. Heine's literary text, however, reanimates the dead. Through allegory Heine breathes life into Napoleon as a source of literary, political, but especially erotic creativity. Heine does not allow History to have an authoritative place in his prose fiction. Treuenthal appears to have been more smitten by the mirror Heine holds up to Parisian salon life, perhaps seeking to balance *Florentinische Nächte* as both a "text of pleasure" and a "text of bliss."⁷⁴ On the one hand, the work appeared to offer fulfillment and grant legitimacy to the culture she inhabited, but it also "maliciously" unsettled some aspect of that culture through a form of immanent critique. For a reader like Treuenthal, a critical reading of a work like *Florentinische Nächte* could function as a form of *Stimmung*, attuning an individual within a larger social collective. While this process need not be explicitly political, it certainly could be and was understood to be in the 1830s. As a result, Treuenthal's

⁷⁴ Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*, 14.

readerly involvement with the text can be seen as a form of political practice with widespread implications for female readers during a period when women were excluded from politics.

The pleasure and maliciousness of *Florentinische Nächte*, occasioned by the oxymoronic, contravening language used to describe the text and the manner in which it misdirects efforts to produce stable meanings, found expression well beyond Heine's immediate circle of friends and family; it also manifested itself in literary reviews and periodical discussions characterized as much by approbation as criticism. An anonymous reviewer in *Phönix: Frühlingszeitung für Deutschland*, Karl Gutzkow's literary periodical, praises Heine's artistic abilities, while rhetorically asking what use politics could be to a writer like Heine: "Wer verträumte nicht noch einmal mit Entzücken jene florentinischen Nächte, in denen die Poesie Heine's aus einem Fieberzustande erwacht, der zwischen Tag und Dämmerung, zwischen Ja und Nein, zwischen einem muthwilligen Droh'n und einem scheuen Bereuen die Mitte hielt? Wozu bedurfte Heine je der Politik?"⁷⁵ This remarkable description of Heine's fragment appeals to the binary structure identified in the opening scene of the work and the curious relationship between Maximilian and a fevered Maria described therein. By alluding to a liminal realm, this reviewer must be referring to Maria, her status between life and death, wakefulness and sleep. The reviewer even suggests that Heine's "Poesie" (Maximilian's stories) emerged from this fevered, liminal state. As a prominent topos within Western culture, the aesthetized image of a dead or dying woman has often been interpreted as a symptom of culture, a repression of both a desire for and anxiety of death.⁷⁶ But in Heine's text, Maria functions as much as a representation as she does a misrepresentation, a circumstance underscored by the model of allegoricity Heine inscribes in

⁷⁵ *Phönix: Frühlingszeitung für Deutschland*, unsigned review of *Salon III*, by Heinrich Heine (1837), 838-9.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

her and throughout the work. Just as her clothing reveals what it conceals, repressing and exposing all at once, Maria's liminality helps structure allegory. In fact, she embodies allegory in the way she signifies both herself and something else at the same time; she signifies both the calm allegory of night one and the explosive allegory of night two, she becomes suspended between life and death, constantly pointing to double meanings. But is there a political function at work in her figure, too?

The *Phönix* reviewer, quite likely Gutzkow himself, does not openly admit the presence of political allegory in *Florentinische Nächte*, wanting instead to see art as a realm divorced from politics. Nonetheless, his review identifies, praises, and politicizes Heine's use of erotics – raising the possibility for a reading that links erotics and politics through allegory. On the surface, the review clearly feels politics got in the way of art, noting how “die unglückliche Vaterschaftsklage” (the term Gutzkow and others used to describe the Menzel controversy) interrupted Heine's artistic endeavors. Anyone who has ever read *Buch der Lieder*, he notes, could never need anything more of Heine. Even worse, it is a “trauriger Anblick” to witness “den graziösen, leichtfüßigen Heine, der nie gerne Pulver roch, sondern stets mit den Pfeilen des spitzbübischen, uraltjungen Eros schoß und doch stets das Schwarze traf, gegenüber einer siebenfachen Hornhaut zu sehen.”⁷⁷ The reviewer even goes so far as to claim the “Haselstock” Heine uses to whip “den pensionierten Menzel” and “den Stuttgarter Narciß” is not half as worthy of such a target. In this context, it is worth noting that readers familiar with the Menzel controversy would have immediately picked up on *Florentinische Nächte*'s use of erotic imagery (especially Maria's clothing), in part because the controversy itself grew out of the use of sensualism in politically inspired prose fiction. Menzel's main objection to Gutzkow's *Wally, die Zweiflerin* concerned its sexuality, the moment when Wally exposed herself to Cäsar. The black

⁷⁷ *Phönix*, 839

imagery used to describe Menzel's Catholicism and the use of black imagery in Heine's fiction – especially *Madam Mütter* and the *Bauchredner* – share this link. Put simply, *Florentinische Nächte* and the work in which it appeared, *Salon III*, were infused with politics and erotics even before they were published.

Crucially, this reciprocal relationship also extends to the imagery the reviewer uses to describe the work. Identifying Heine as a “wunderliche[n] Baumeister,” the reviewer constructs an elaborate architectural metaphor for the entire manuscript. The preface, “Ueber den Denuzianten, is a “Polizeiwachstube,” the place where Heine needlessly dresses up as a policeman to whip Menzel. (Needlessly, because Börne had already stabbed Menzel with a thousand knives [“mit tausend Dolchen durchbohrt”] and *Elementargeister*, the works succeeding *Florentinische Nächte* are ghosts in a Rumpelkammer, an unfortunate necessity to increase *Salon III* from 10 to 18 “Bogen,” and in so doing avoid pre-censorship.⁷⁸ *Florentinische Nächte* is a “Zauberiosk” occupying the erotically productive middle:

Da baut er [Heine] aus Mondstrahlen den zierlichsten Kiosk, spannt einen florentinischen Himmel darüber, säet blaue deutsche Augen statt der Sterne darein, dekorirt den Kiosk mit dem vollständigen Amöblement der Königen Mab, sogar Biribis silbernen Topf nicht vergessend; da lässt er muthwillig Gedanken wie Träume, Träume wie Gedanken als Springquelle steigen und fallen, bevölkert ein Spiegelkabinet mit tausend ächten Heine's, denen der sehr edle und sehr wackere Cavalier, Monsieur Türlütü aufwartet, kurz, da zaubert er seinen Traumpalast auf derselben Stelle, von der geschrieben steht: Hier ist gut wohnen, hier lasset uns Hütten bauen.⁷⁹

Going against the grain of literary reviews more generally, this passage appears less concerned with describing a propositional message in Heine's work, than with evincing a productive,

⁷⁸ “[I]n die Rumpelkammer spuken die *Elementargeister*, welche aus alten Excerpten, wie ich selbst sie zu Dutzenden daliegen habe, ohne Höllenzwang beschworen sind, um die weißen Bogen von 10 bis 18 anzuschwärzen” (*Phönix*, 839). This comment in the first-person, along with the harsh invective against Menzel in the closing lines of the review, raises the strong possibility Gutzkow is the author of this review. (It also relies on the same black and white imagery at work in the opening scene). Although Gutzkow was hardly the only writer who published excessively long works in an effort to avoid the *Vorzensur* – a form of censorship premised on the idea that readers are less likely to deduce inflammatory political messages from longer works of literature – this is Gutzkow's literary journal and his own manuscripts from the period, such as *Die Zeitgenossen*, notably employ this practice.

⁷⁹ *Phönix*, 838.

creative, and erotic message itself. Most telling is the mention of Queen Mab, a likely reference to Mercutio's speech in *Romeo and Juliet* or Shelley's popular and pirated philosophical poem by the same name. If the reference is to the latter, then it is possible this reviewer was even aware of Shelley's utopian theory of non-violent revolution, but the Shakespeare reference is much more certain and no less relevant. Queen Mab is famously described as the fairies' midwife of dreams, who specifically travels through lovers' minds forcing them to dream of a decidedly infectious love ("O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream, /Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues"). The reviewer's language even betrays an affinity between dreams and erotic desire in the way he describes the rise and fall ("steigen und fallen") of dreams. In short, however much this reviewer desires to see art and politics as separate spheres, the presence of erotics in Heine's work, and even his own review, nevertheless readmits the political into his act of reading.

Accordingly, it should hardly come as a surprise that the *Phönix* reviewer calls on so much Romantic imagery – moonlight, Queen Mab, Biribi's silver pot, and the privileged site for expressing formalized feeling that writers like Eichendorff mastered: dreams. Appearing in 1837 (with portions likely written in the 1820s), *Florentinische Nächte* was situated on the cusp between Romanticism and proto-Realism, when the legacy of German Romanticism was becoming increasingly entwined in questions of German nationalism. A review by Dr. C in the Hamburg-based *Literarische und Kritische Blätter der Börsen-Halle* takes up this very issue in *Florentinische Nächte*, criticizing the way Heine deploys "Schauer Romantik" elements and topoi. Recognizing Heine's exceptional talent as a Romantic, the reviewer wants to like him, but therein lies the problem. Dr. C, who made the prudent choice not to identify himself, is unsure how to manage the juxtaposition of Heine's sentimentalized romanticism with the ironic makeover it receives, which leads him to eventually reject Heine on political grounds. Dr. C

wants to remain wedded to an expressive model of writing where he can identify with characters and their feelings. For him to accept Heine's literature at face-value would mean for him to reject a certain "structure of feeling," something he is unwilling to do. Instead, he rationalizes his way out of the quandary by appealing to the possibility for misuse: "Die ästhetische Wirksamkeit des Schauerlichen ist eine Höchst flüchtige, zumal wenn wie hier 'Missbrauch' und 'Überreizung' des Prinzips vorlägen."⁸⁰ He feels the historical moment does not require parody or irony – "Missbrauchter Geist und Witz ist doppelt schauderhaft" – allowing him to critique Heine for an unnatural approach to literature. By aligning Heine with the contingent, ephemeral and unnatural, Dr. C. writes him off as anti-German and pro-French, casting doubt on Heine's "Vaterlandsliebe" (910).

Regardless of Dr. C's political convictions (the likely reference to Menzel as "einer unserer besten Federn" leaves little doubt about those convictions), his review of *Salon III* affirms Heine's strategy of poking fun at Romanticism's symbolic procedures, just as his summary hints at the presence of politicized and eroticized allegory in night one:

Die Leidenschaft zeigt uns den wilden Wechsel der widersprechendsten Gefühle; in der Bewegung sollen wir die Einheit herausfinden und uns erbauen an ihr und durch sie erstarken; an die höher lenkende Hand sollen wir glauben lernen; so steht auf einer niedrigeren Stufe dieses hervorrufen der wechselnden Gefühle in den Contrasten des Schauerlichen und des Heimlichen das es ist eine Empfindung, wie wenn wir nach einem hässlichen oder wilden Träume im sicheren Kämmerlein erwachen; wir glauben uns dann fast aus großer Fährlichkeit errettet, beides ist Täuschung; aber eine unschuldige belebend erregende. So traumschaffend wirken diese Romantiker und so wirkt auch Heine; sein Maximilian erzählt einer sterbenden Geliebten seine phantastischen Liebesgeschichten; die dunkle Jugendliebe zur Statue in des Vaters altem Schlosses diese kann man allenfalls symbolisch nehmen, wenn man Beziehungen hinein legen will, obgleich es unnöthig seyn möchte, verschwendet nicht mancher seine glühendsten Jugendempfindungen, wenn nicht an kalten Stein doch an eben so kalte Herzen? Doch wir wollen den norddeutschen Schönen nicht das Leid anthun, die Allegorie auszuführen, der Dichter selbst spielt nur selten auf dieses nieschmelzende Eis, auf diesen niebeliebten Marmorstein an, warum sollten wir ihm dergleichen noch deutlicher in den Mund legen?⁸¹

⁸⁰ Dr. C, "Der Salon von Heinrich Heine," review of *Salon III*, by Heinrich Heine, in *Literarische und Kritische Blätter der Börsen-Halle*, No. 1412 (September 23, 1837), 910-912.

⁸¹ Dr. C, *Salon*, 911.

Like the *Phönix* review, Dr. C's discussion of Romantic affect latches onto dreams as the key trope for hiding and revealing formalized affect. It appears that, he too, must have been struck by the opening scene of *Florentinsiche Nächte* or Maximilian's fantasies in night two. Perhaps he even recognized Laurence for the dream she is. For Dr. C, the dream is Heine's chief weapon (misused, of course) in an arsenal aimed at staging the "mutability of affect" that so disturbed him and others.⁸² But he also identifies the garden scene as having a symbolic value, the allegorical commitment to which he wants to avoid. Appealing to the sensibilities of his north-German female readers as grounds for displeasure (perhaps on account of Heine's overwrought agalmatophilia, or Pygmalion-like behavior), but also citing allegory's infrequent use as a literary device, Dr. C refuses to take the allegorical bait. He is either unsure what Heine is allegorizing (and so wants to avoid the embarrassment of incorrectly identifying the allegory at play) or it is so obvious, that to mention it, would be to sanction it. Regardless, the description of allegory as "nieschmelzende Eis" underscores just how radical and subversive Heine's use of allegory actually was. Only a traditional and reductive understanding of allegory would be analogous to the stability of ice that never melts. In *Florentinische Nächte* allegory is constantly in a state of flux, it flows with the text itself, constantly challenging readers' competencies. On a final note, it is interesting how Dr. C rejects a symbolic reading of the scene and describes the castle as Maximilian's father's when readers are explicitly told it is his mother's. This is either an instance of inattentive reading or he was unwittingly drawn into Heine's curious Oedipal confusion. Perhaps he even identified the political symbolism at play as a function of familial ambivalence and erotic perturbation.

Because ultimately, the political and allegorical ambivalence in *Florentinische Nächte* shares in the libidinal and erotic ambivalence of Maximilian's relationships with Maria, the

⁸² Pfau, *Romantic Moods*, 394.

statue, Laurence and the other textual traces constituting his palimpsestic structure of desire. These relationships express themselves according to fairy-tale logic (the fulfillment of a lack) when Maximilian unites with Laurence and her Bonapartist husband, essentially reuniting with his mother and father. In fusing all three domains – politics, erotics, and allegory – within a work of narrative prose fiction, Heine's fragment actively uses literature to carve out a vision of eroticized politics, helping readers negotiate political identities through affect. No doubt, this very Heine-centric text was aimed at securing and articulating Heine's own political ambivalence, but it was also a forceful intervention within a polarizing political climate. When examined as a politicization of the reading of allegory, this work sheds light on many of the processes involved in the formation of political identities through fictions during this period, including a distinctively German component to political formation within a broader European context. Heine shows his particular political vision to be inseparable from engaging with classical and Romantic German literary traditions, and coming to terms with a model of *Bildung* fundamentally concerned with the disciplining of desire. Thus in its very form, *Florentinische Nächte* offers a messy treatment of human nature, exposing a propensity for inclination, emotionality, and spontaneity, as a corollary to reason, communication, or rational exchange. Readers can't help but bring a dual-anthropology to a reading of his text, trying at once to solve it, but also getting drawn into its erotic modes. Heine expects his readers to be allegorical, to occupy the middle in between two poles, challenging their political convictions, attitudes, and identities in the process.

CHAPTER TWO

The Uses of *Empfindsamkeit*: Liberal Community and Religiosity in Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1843)

Worin besteht die Haltbarkeit dieses Werkes, daß es heute so frischfarbig wie zur Zeit seines Erscheinens im März 1766, und trotz seines durch und durch national-englischen Charakters doch in fremden Völkern so wirkungssicher? Ist es der Inhalt, ist es die Formgebung, die solches zu leisten vermag?

Berthold Auerbach, February 25, 1865
Speech on Oliver Goldsmith's *Der Vikar von Wakefield*¹

In a short April 5, 1847 note to Heinrich Laube – a fellow writer barred from publication in 1835 and a long-time friend of Heine's – Heine compares his ill health to a collection of village tales and their author: "Liebster Laube! Mein Zustand ist noch immer derselbe – mein Kopf ist so schwach als wäre ich der Verfasser einer Auerbachschen Dorfnovelle – mein Magen eben so katzenjämmerlich sentimental und religiös-sittlich-flau wie eine dito Novelle – trotzdem will ich gegen 11 Uhr zu Dir kommen. Dein kranker Freund H. Heine."² The recipients of Heine's unflattering analogy must have been well known to both Laube and Heine. Entering their third edition by 1847 after appearing in literary periodicals as early as 1842, Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* were as widely discussed in Germany, France, and England as they were read. Auerbach, a German-Jewish novelist who committed himself to writing fiction after his plans to become a Rabbi were thwarted by the Burschenschaft activities of his youth, was enjoying the kind of mainstream popularity Young German writers like Laube,

¹ Berthold Auerbach, *Deutsche Abende, Neue Folge* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1867), 282.

² Heinrich Heine, *Säkularausgabe: Briefe 1842-1849*, ed. Christa Stöcker (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1971), 246.

Gutzkow and Mundt never really achieved in the 1830s. The relaxation of censorship laws, coupled with the increasing difficulty of enforcing existing ones, certainly played a role in facilitating Auerbach's success, but as Jeffrey Sammons notes, the Young German movement dissipated largely because of the nature of its prose writing, which "despite government nervousness about its accessibility to all classes of people was too abstruse, turgid and eccentric to reach beyond a narrow and esoteric fraction of the educated public."³ The number of readers who picked up a copy of *Florentinische Nächte* over the course of the nineteenth century pales in comparison to the number of readers Auerbach amassed with his proto-realist depictions of village life.⁴

The amusing antipathy Heine displays in his note to Laube, which incidentally foregrounds a connection between illness, fiction, and reality reminiscent of *Florentinische Nächte*, should come as little surprise to readers familiar with Heine's literary production during this period. In the years after publishing *Salon III*, Heine entered what has been described as his "radical phase," publishing works of prose and poetry that struck at the heart of mainstream political sensibilities and convictions, and frequently isolating himself in the process. His most contentious works were two narrative poems, *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* (1844) and *Atta Troll: Ein Sommernachtstraum* (1843), both of which undermined the utilitarianism of a politically progressive poetry dominating German literary culture in the 1840s. Indeed, where the more nationalistic and liberal strivings expressed in some of the writings of the Young Germans had failed to translate political goals into reality, poetry had stepped in as a "genuinely accessible

³ Sammons, *A Modern Biography*, 253.

⁴ According to WorldCat, Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* entered their fourth edition by 1848. They were translated into English in 1847 and reprinted by Bassermann again in 1849 with "Neue Folge." In 1852, Cotta published its first edition of the stories, which reached a tenth edition by 1869. By contrast, *Florentinische Nächte* did not appear on its own until the 1880s and it was only reprinted a handful of times during the 1840s and 1850s, always in *Salon III* or part of Heine's complete works.

genre of community-forming force, one that would not only give expression to the feelings and attitudes of a large portion of the public, but that could be easily understood, communicated and shared.”⁵ Wanting to distance himself from popular poets like Georg Herwegh, Ferdinand Freiligrath, and Hoffmann von Fallersleben, Heine objected to the adversarial idiom of patriotism and nationalism in their writings, an idiom which Heine understood to encourage an exclusionary and prescriptive model of cultural politics, such as that of Wolfgang Menzel.

Although Auerbach’s village-tale project was much more complex and nuanced than Heine’s jab suggests, offering its own elaboration on Enlightenment legacies and contemporary politics, there is a strong case to be made for reading the village tales as prosaic counterparts to the popular political poetry of the period. After all, both genres played a key role in producing a mass political culture through fiction. The village tales were a “community-forming force” and all nine of the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* published in the 1843 Bassermann volume were easily accessible, written with simple, unadorned language describing equally simple plots and characters.⁶ Auerbach deliberately avoids the hermeneutic complexities of a work like *Florentinische Nächte* and the overwrought subjectivism characteristic of the Young Germans’ Salon-inspired writings, choosing instead to focus on simple sentiments and German rural life. The shared culture of poetry and prose even finds expression in a twelve-stanza poem Freiligrath penned in honor of Auerbach’s tales. The poem offers perhaps the earliest and most well circulated literary genealogy for the *Dorfgeschichten* as a formal feature of his lyric. Citing

⁵ Sammons, *Modern Biography*, 253.

⁶ Auerbach’s first tale, “Des Schlossbauers Vefele,” was published in April 1842 in *Die Zeitung für die elegante Welt*. It was soon followed by “Die Kriegspfeife,” published two months later in the same periodical. In July 1842, two new village stories were published in different literary journals, “Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange” (in *Der Freihafen*) and “Der Tolpatsch” (in *Europa*). “Befehelers,” which was published in October 1842 in *Die Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, was the final story printed individually before the famous two-volume Bassermann collection appeared in Mannheim in October of 1843. For the manuscript version, Auerbach added four more village stories including “Ivo, der Hajrle,” “Die feindlichen Brüder,” “Florian und Kresenz” and “Der Lauterbacher.”

“Heinrich Stillings Jugend” (1777) as the first German village tale and “ein rechter Spiegel alter Bauerntugend” in stanza one, Freiligrath goes on to reference Pestalozzi’s *Lienhard und Gertrud* (1787), Brentano’s Annerl (*Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*, 1817), and the Oberhof episode from Karl Immermann’s collection of arabesques in *Münchhausen* (1838) before heaping praise on Auerbach’s Black Forest creations in the second person: “Als fünfter nun gesellst du dich zu diesen, / Die treu geschildert einfach kräft’ge Sitten; / Aus deines Schwarzwalds tannendunkeln Wiesen / Mit seinen Kindern kommst du froh geschritten / Und setzest ein das Tuchwams und die Flechte / In ihre alten dichterischen Rechte!”⁷ In addition to cementing an important friendship with Auerbach, Freiligrath’s poem gives expression to those aspects readers found most appealing. The tales faithfully represent “Sitten,” shoring up a national identity with regional representations while also participating in a German literary tradition spanning the Enlightenment to Romanticism.⁸ By repeatedly placing Jung-Stilling within this particular pedigree, Freiligrath indirectly connects Auerbach to Goethe and Herder, both of whom Jung-Stilling collaborated with in Strasbourg during the 1770s as well as a broader didactic discourse concerned with childhood.⁹ Most keenly felt, the village tales take real life as their object of faithful representation (“Das alles aber ist dir nun gelungen, Weil du dein Werk am Leben liebest reifen”).

⁷ Ferdinand Freiligrath, *Werke in sechs Teilen*, vol. 2, (Berlin: Bong, 1909), 31-33.

⁸ Ibid. “So geht es dir, so ging es jenen vieren! / Wie schön ihr dasteht in geschloßner Reihe, / Für ein Jahrhundert den Beweis zu führen, / Daß immer jung bleibt deutsche Sitt’ und Treue: – / Derb schaut mich an dasselbe Volksgesichte / Aus deinen Blättern, wie aus Jungs Geschichte!”

⁹ Goethe writes about his acquaintance with Jung-Stilling in part two of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, a text which many readers would have been familiar with in the 1830s and 1840s. As Goethe’s legacy became increasingly wrapped up in post-Napoleonic cultural politics, as evidenced in *Florentinische Nächte*, for instance, Goethe’s autobiographical writings received much more attention. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethes Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe, vol. 9 (Hamburg: Beck 1948), 413-414.

Clearly, Freiligrath's reading of Auerbach stands in tension with Heine's own. The elements optimistically embraced by the former receive a pessimistic treatment in the later. Heine conveys a suspicion toward sentiments in fiction, and by extension, the tradition of sentimentality in literature more broadly. Transposed onto the larger literary context of post-Napoleonic cultural politics in Germany, Heine further implies a suspicion towards the politicization of such sentiments or the political purposes sentimentality could serve. In light of Heine's other writings from the period, he would have been wary of any German claim to *Sitten* for the essentialist and exclusionary model such a claim potentially underwrites. Even if Freiligrath was an ardent supporter of Jewish emancipation, as he was, one inherent danger in any aesthetic project lies in being unable to control its reception.¹⁰ Freiligrath's endorsement further lacks the ironic transformation Heine considered essential for any contemporary aesthetic and political project. Unlike the political ambivalence in *Florentinische Nächte* delivered by means of a complex, critical hermeneutic and allegory, Freiligrath's embrace of a German classical and Romantic tradition risks reducing the complex aesthetic traditions of classicism and Romanticism to ideological watchwords and popular slogans, which, when deployed to serve in the ranks of a political opposition, could lead to identification, isolation, and subsequent exclusion. In Heine's view, such a process will invariably benefit an existing political order.

Regardless of Freiligrath's attitude about Auerbach's prose or the broader literary and political culture percolating in the early 1840s, it has been Heine's attitude that most consistently dovetails with the larger academic trends defining critical studies of both Auerbach and the village-tale genre more generally. Although dozens of nineteenth-century literary histories painstakingly devoted critical attention to his fiction, Auerbach never achieved the same kind of

¹⁰ This becomes a chief concern for Auerbach as well, whose 1846 *Schrift und Volk* sought to influence the reception of his own tales.

scrutiny from twentieth-century Germanists. Three interrelated factors can account for this dynamic. First, the anti-modern genre of *Heimatliteratur* that emerged in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in response to naturalism and advanced industrialization traced its origins directly back to Auerbach. Freiligrath's poem likely helped facilitate this link. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to cast judgments on the tradition of *Heimatliteratur*, but clearly it was not a genealogy one wanted to be a part of when humanistic inquiry returned to Germany in the 1950s. As a result, Auerbach has been largely excluded from the post-1945 literary canon that played such a significant role in shaping scholars' expectations and attitudes about modern German literature. Second, the attention Auerbach has received under the impetus of a sociological turn to literary studies starting in the 1960s and 70s inadvertently conflated the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* with the conventions characteristic of *Trivilliteratur* and *Unterhaltungsliteratur*. To be sure, social historians and literary scholars do not place Auerbach directly within these traditions, but their focus on dissemination and consumption during the nineteenth century not only resuscitated the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* alongside works they did place in this tradition, but encouraged a reading of Auerbach emphasizing easy accessibility, wide distribution, and the kinds of sentimentalized drama typically associated with the black-and-white moral worlds of melodrama. As a result, the village tales have rarely been subjected to close and attentive readings, but frequently situated instead in a broader sociological context emphasizing the book market, print histories, and the morphology of genres. And, finally, Auerbach's own tendency to publish theoretical writings alongside his fiction has yielded a scholarly focus on the former at the expense of the latter. His 1846 treatise on folk literature, for example, *Schrift und Volk. Grundzüge der volkstümlichen Literatur, angeschlossen an eine Charakteristik J.P. Hebels*, has been widely analyzed as a descriptor for the village tales, when it really served to influence their reception. Thus more recent scholarship which does recognize

Auerbach's historical relevance and centrality to nineteenth-century literary culture has tended to privilege what Auerbach said about his fiction or what he claimed of his fiction, while marginalizing, or overlooking, the fiction itself. Two of the strongest, most lucid contributions on the village tales to date operate within this methodological framework.

David Sorkin, who situates Auerbach's popularity within an 1840s political climate, reads Auerbach's aesthetic as a sociological response to the contradictions of German-Jewish life. And Given Auerbach's early literary experiments, this insight rings particularly true. Auerbach's 1834 biography of Frederick the Great (*Friedrich der Große. Sein Leben und Wirken*), his early writings on Judaism, *Das Judenthum und die neueste Literatur* (1836), and his commercially unsuccessful attempts at historical novels, including *Spinoza* (1837) and *Dichter und Kaufmann* (1840), reflect the boundary Auerbach straddled between the German and the Jewish, the past and the present, and religion and secularism.¹¹ Thus for Sorkin, Auerbach's (re)invention of himself as a *Volksschriftsteller* hoping to emancipate the German nation betrays his captivity to the legacy of German idealism and mainstream German culture. By staking out a platform based on *Bildung* and liberalism, Auerbach's literary output became a driving force for a secular culture in Germany, but throughout his life Auerbach remained blind to the way in which his "ideology of emancipation" was shaped by the ideals of a German-Jewish subculture.¹² In terms of Auerbach's perceived political import, Peter Uwe Hohendahl offers a parallel argument by claiming Auerbach sought "to abandon the contrast between the individual and

¹¹ Though beyond the scope of this chapter, Auerbach also published a work in 1842 entitled *Der gebildete Bürger: Ein Buch für den denkenden Mittelstand* (Carlsruhe: Bielefeld, 1842). Few scholars are familiar with the piece, because Auerbach did not want it included in his complete works, perhaps because much of it was plagiarized from a speech by William Channing. In the preface Auerbach notes, "Ich habe diesem Büchlein eine Rede des nordamerikanischen Geistlichen Channing in Boston über „Selbstbildung“ einverleibt, es ist mir erhebender Gedanke, die Worte, die weit über'm Ozean von einem edeln und weisen Manne gesprochen wurden, hier aufs Neue zu verkünden" (*Der gebildete Bürger*, 3).

¹² David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German-Jewry, 1780-1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 155.

community,” calling instead for “an organically structured society.” This vision, too, ultimately has its origins with German classical culture and an organic model of *Bildung*. Auerbach’s “sociologically undefined concept of the Volk,” however, mirrored the very problems of early German liberalism in general: his understanding of society failed to make room for industrialization and though he favored “the extension of political responsibility to all citizens, [...] his concept of the Volk was incompatible with the critical deliberations of an enlightened public sphere.”¹³ For Hohendahl, Auerbach’s project fails precisely because his descriptions of popular peasant culture and his liberal attitudes stand in contradiction to each other.

Both Sorkin and Hohendahl operate within a framework that presumes German liberalism’s failure, emphasizing the failures of Auerbach’s project in theoretical and institutional terms. While Hohendahl’s reading betrays an allegiance to a line of thinking that posits a critically informed industrial bourgeoisie as a necessary norm that Germany lacked, Sorkin’s reading is unwilling to grant a high degree of self-awareness to the German-Jewish subculture that allegedly produced Auerbach. Furthermore, both scholars stress the historical and intellectual problems and limitations of Auerbach’s fiction by grounding their arguments in Auerbach’s theoretical works, not the fiction itself. Texts like *Schrift und Volk* and “Vorreden spart Nachreden” (written in 1842 and published in 1843 in the journal *Europa*) certainly shed light on Auerbach’s political views and they are crucial for positioning him within political circles during the 1840s. But these texts on their own cannot directly account for the success of the village tales.¹⁴

¹³ Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Building a National Literature: The Case of Germany, 1830-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 278.

¹⁴ *Schrift und Volk* was unavailable to Auerbach’s earliest critics, such as Hermann Marggraff, and the “Vorrede” was not published along with the village tales until the second Cotta edition in 1857.

Scholars who have paid closer attention to the formal features and content of the village tales themselves have uncovered several surprising elements in Auerbach's fiction that go against the grain of an image of political and literary irrelevance. Examining the role of Auerbach's narrator as a voice both a part of and apart from his object of representation, Arne Koch shows how the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* cultivated a national political life through regional representations. The narrator's supposed distance is a device meant to render his depictions of folk-life real, or at least authentic. Coupled with a "superregional audience," this dual narrative stance renders the village tale a kind of go-between, "a medium of communication" that could cultivate difference within unity without imposing homogeneity on the particular.¹⁵ Similarly, a recent study by Marcus Twellmann examines the role of bureaucracy and communal government in "Befehleres," to show how Auerbach's fiction crystalized a constitutive moment in the formation of folk resistance against impersonal forms of government.¹⁶ Though both Koch and Twellmann sideline Auerbach's critical reception in their arguments, and continue to privilege his theoretical writings at the expense of his literary ones, their findings resist larger trends keen on dismissing the *Dorfgeschichten* as politically unsuccessful, or worse, trivial.

My goal in this chapter is to recover a greater level of agency for contemporary readers of Auerbach's fiction by showing how the formal elements and content of Auerbach's fiction served as a crucial medium for negotiating German liberalism in its formative years. Building on elements from all of these previous studies, I show how Auerbach's village tales advanced a particular model German liberalism as literary habitus, as a structure of feeling rooted in the

¹⁵ Arne Koch, *Between National Fantasies and Regional Realities* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), 28-30.

¹⁶ Marcus Twellmann, "Literatur und Bürokratie im Vormärz, zu Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 86, no. 4 (2012): 578-608.

formal qualities and content of the village stories themselves. By situating my investigation within the context of a dynamic and complex 1840s literary and political culture, and by seeking to reconstruct that culture as a constitutive site for the production and reception of Auerbach's tales, I hope to find a middle ground between a reading such as Heine's and one such as Freiligrath's. On the one hand, I offer an interpretation very attentive to sentimentality in Auerbach's fiction, but I evaluate its presence in different terms, demonstrating how Auerbach draws on eighteenth-century models of sensibility to direct and channel affect for his own project. Specifically, I look at the way Auerbach repurposes plots and models of *Empfindsamkeit* from Johann Martin Miller's *Siegwart: Eine Klostergeschichte* and Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*. On the other hand, I also offer a reading grounded in the political work nineteenth-century readers identified within and expected from the village tales. My reading stresses the unique historical circumstances that gave rise to Auerbach's conception of politics, including an understanding of the political volatility of the *Volk* (and the need to control that volatility through literary representation), an investment in Enlightenment models of *Bildung* that intersect with models of sentimental agency, and a desire to define and give shape to liberalism against competing models within a specific religious context for middle-class Germans. Combining this focus on sentiment, affect, and feeling with discrete political concerns, the village tales explored emotional processes as political exercises for contemporary readers. Far from finding the seeds of political failure in Auerbach's prose, I show how he self-consciously latches on to "readerly" sentiments, politicizing them as a form of prosaic politics and helping liberalism succeed in the process. Though Auerbach's readerly qualities are almost diametrically opposed to Heine's writerly ones, my analysis will nonetheless disclose a self-reflexive process in Auerbach's fiction that deserve critical attention for the work it did perform.

Given the constraints of examining an entire collection of village tales on account of both their formal features and content, I have opted to focus my attention on a single story as representative of Auerbach's literary and political strategies in the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* more generally. "Ivo, der Harjle" was not only among the most discussed and lauded of the nine tales by nineteenth-century critics, but thanks to Auerbach's *Tagebuch aus Weilbach* (1842), which describes the vacation during which he wrote "Ivo," we have an additional layer of insight into the context of its composition. Furthermore, as the only tale from 1843 to thematize religion so prominently, it is more likely than not that it was this tale that Heine read and described as "religiös-sittlich-flau." There is no harm done if it wasn't (and we will likely never know) because "Ivo" shares in many of the elements and topoi found throughout the collection, while nonetheless standing alone by virtue of the way it self-consciously explores the reciprocal relationship between religion and liberalism in mid-nineteenth-century Germany as narrative prose fiction. Above all else, Auerbach achieves this by repurposing an eighteenth-century tradition of sentimental agency for a proto-realist, socio-political agenda, disclosing a reciprocal process by which readers negotiated political identities as an exercise in religiosity, and religious identities as an exercise in liberalism.

Owing to the historical and discursive complexity of German political formation during this time frame, a brief re-delineation of liberalism as it relates to the literature under investigation here is in order. The same large-scale events and phenomena Heine allegorizes in *Florentinische Nächte* – including the legacies of the French Revolution and Napoleon, Germany's perceived political impotence, publicized conflicts with the Church and nobility and a broader concern with *Bildung* as a cultural model for politics – inform the broad contours of Auerbach's fiction as well. But the relevance of a work like Heine's or Auerbach's for this project does not lie with its mere representation of macro-level historical events. Instead, the

literary ought to be considered as its own category of analysis, bestowing political significance on these works for their readerly qualities. And nowhere are these qualities more apparent than in the way these texts grapple with literary traditions while deploying, redirecting, and channeling affect to other structures, such as the *Volk*, the family, or the individual. Whereas Heine saw it necessary to ironize a classical and Romantic literary tradition, challenging readers in literary and political competency and staging erotic engagement as an antidote to a “pestillenizelle Wirklichkeit,” Auerbach adopts and repurposes a similar tradition (appealing to different literary texts), rendering that tradition not ironic, but prosaic. Thus, the legacy of *Empfindsamkeit* Heine satirizes in the high-strung, emotionally intense relationship between Maximilian and Maria, receives a much different treatment in the village tales. Auerbach seizes on it, deploying it for contemporary political purposes in a process, we will see, that is no less ambivalent in its prescription of an ideological agenda. Regardless of these different outcomes, however, there are strong structural similarities between Heine and Auerbach and their use of narrative prose fiction to help readers negotiate political identities. Both encourage participation in the project of literary liberalism as a form of attunement (*Stimmung*). Both authors turn to narrative fiction as a means shaping their readers’ attitudes, expectations, and understandings of oppositional politics during the Restoration period, appealing to the readerly qualities of fiction and encouraging readers to become producers of texts and political meanings.

Before analyzing “Ivo” and reconstructing the literary and political context within which Auerbach intervened, this chapter first considers an additional set of contemporary critical voices responding to the formal features and content of the village tales. Heine’s private ridicule and Freiligrath’s public poem offer important insight into the diversity of Auerbach’s reception, but they were only two voices among many. Building on a framework that privileges the importance of sentiments and literary tradition, I show how critical reactions, whether positive or negative,

displayed a committed concern with understanding how the village tales functioned as carriers of (displaced) political meaning. Throughout my analysis and contextualization of “Ivo,” I hope to let these voices resonate in effort to better situate the village tales within their historical context. To conclude, this chapter reflects on Auerbach’s legacy by considering three critical discussions from the post-1848 years. These reviews not only work to sanction the reading of “Ivo” I offer, but they also shed light on the continuing politicization of the religious aspects in the village tales and subsequent efforts to harness Auerbach for new political and religious terrains of the second-half of the nineteenth-century.

The *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* in the 1840s: Literary Culture and Politics

In a letter to Freiligrath dated from November 1843, Auerbach returns the public praise (“öffentliche Verständniß”) lavished upon his work and discusses his future literary plans against the backdrop of misgivings about contemporary liberalism.¹⁷ To begin, Auerbach affirms the centrality of Brentano’s Annerl and Immermann’s *Münchhausen* for his project, but he also describes how his project differs from these earlier works depicting the rural classes. Unlike Immermann, who appears to move from the city to the land and back to the city, Auerbach “wollte durchaus in der Gegenwart und unter den Bauern bleiben.” He chose to represent his own hometown, and although he had been away from Nordstetten for 20 years, the events of his youth appeared before him “hell u. klar.” Comparable to Maximilian’s reconstructed childhood story from night one of *Florentinische Nächte*, Auerbach admits a certain degree of bad faith in his realist reconstruction: “Viele Thatsachen sind aus däm[m]ernden Erin[n]erungen genom[m]en u. selbständig neu geschaffen, hatte ich einmal begon[n]en, ging die Geschichte fast

¹⁷ Berthold Auerbach quoted in *Berthold Auerbach, Schriften zur Literatur*, ed. Marcus Twellmann (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 250.

von selber fort.”¹⁸ In a certain sense, Auerbach’s fiction took on a life of its own, and he even mentions how the real Nordstettener were angry over their unflattering portrayal and the supposed lies Auerbach imposed on them (“lächerlich gemacht u. über sie gelogen hätte”). Despite criticism from locals, Auerbach ends his letter claiming he will nonetheless commit himself to writing for “das sog. niedere Volk,” because liberals were not doing enough for their cause: “Auf die sog. Liberalen ist dabei nicht zu rechnen, die haben’s stets bloß auf unmittelbar[e] Zwecke, Wahlen, Oppositi[on] u. dgl. abgesehen, gar viele wollen nur einen Wechsel der regierenden Personen, von Veredlung und Selbständigkeit von [wahrer] Freiheit der Menschen wollen sie nichts.”¹⁹ Auerbach views himself as the peoples’ champion, carving out a political space for literature about lower-class peasants and for lower-class peasants, giving them a voice – though not necessarily their own – that will empower them and their cause through prose fiction. This attitude underscores Hohendahl’s point, in that the classes Auerbach wanted as readers were illiterate and the paternalistic, didactic, and almost colonizing work performed by the village tales were utterly lost on their intended target. Instead of judging Auerbach’s fiction in terms of a readership he did not acquire, however, it makes more sense to evaluate his impact on middle-class readers in the 1840s by exploring the ways in which the *Volk* functioned as a mode of bourgeois and liberal signification.

Auerbach was hardly the only one to identify novelty in his writings while connecting the village-tale project directly to contemporary political discourse. An 1844 review by Hermann Marggraff in the *Blätter für Literarische Unterhaltung* praises the way the stories grant access to the “Kernpoesie des deutschen Gemüthes [...] unberührt von dem ausdörrenden Culturhauche

¹⁸ Ibid., 250.

¹⁹ Ibid., 252.

großer Städte.“²⁰ According to Marggraff, who was a friend of Theodor Mundt’s and a sympathetic supporter of the Young Germans in the 1830s, the major European metropolises naturally lend themselves to endearing literary creations by authors like “Boz” [Dickens] and Balzac, but most German cities – despite their high degrees of *Bildung*, commercial success, and historical flair – are “engherzig, matt und farblos gestaltet.” By turning to the countryside as a necessary source of artistic inspiration in the late-Restoration period, Auerbach is able to transcend a German literary culture steeped in “Salonromantik,” while ushering in a new kind of objectivity in his fiction, one deeply connected to a simple, unadorned treatment of rural life: “Er spricht nicht in seiner Subjectivität als reflectierender und erläuternder Chorus zu uns, sondern durch die rein natürliche Wirkung von Thatsachen, Personen und Situationen, die kaum noch erfunden, sondern gegeben zu sein scheinen.” Marggraff’s review – widely cited throughout the 1850s and 1860s – was among the first to identify the origins of a proto-realist aesthetic as a significant departure from the writings of *Junges Deutschland*. And like Auerbach’s own subtle admission of deceit, the language Marggraff employs to describe the “Wirkung” of Auerbach’s fiction – especially his use of “kaum” and “scheinen” – suggest a partial degree of bad faith. Be that as it may, he feels Auerbach has found a recipe for popular success, which is why Marggraff displays such an acute concern for how the “Dorfgeschichten” are to be read and understood as vehicles for advancing or hindering modern liberalism’s strivings.

Noting how Auerbach’s villagers obstinately cling to their rights and customs (“Rechten und ererbten Sitten”) while decrying the impositions of civil authorities (“dem verhassten Schreibervolke”), Marggraff chastises the parochial and provincial nature of their “instinctmäßige Opposition.” Modern liberalism, he argues, should strive to produce “eine große

²⁰ Hermann Marggraff, “Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten von Berthold Auerbach,” review of *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* by Berthold Auerbach, in *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, no. 237 (August 23-24, 1844), 941-43, 945-47.

Allgemeinheit für die vielen Besonderheiten,” while opposing aristocratic culture. Auerbach’s villagers do precisely the opposite, reinforcing their own particular differences and showing no concern for “das grosse Ganze.” With little doubt, “das grosse Ganze” to which Marggraff refers is German liberalism’s twin project in the 1840s, the desire for Germany to achieve national unification and potentially some form of constitutional state (*Rechtsstaat*). But it is worth emphasizing the disparate and competing voices that seek a claim to the correct form of politics, voices all prompted by reading Auerbach’s village tales. Contrary to Freiligrath, whose poem unquestioningly praises the representation of *Sitten* expressed in Auerbach’s fiction, Marggraff’s Hegelian understanding of *Sittlichkeit* has much more in common with Heine’s ambivalent attitude towards the question of how a classical German literary tradition and its supposed investment in organic models might support a contemporary political project. Moreover, Marggraff rejects the very model of organic *Bildung* Auerbach ostensibly supports:

Der Liberalismus kann aus diesen gesunden, aber beschränkten Zuständen für jetzt noch keine Nahrung saugen, und erst, wenn er aus seinen krank- und krampfhaften Zuckungen zu einer organischen Bildung durchgedrungen und nicht mehr auf das Lesen und Schreiben der Journale beschränkt sein wird, möchte es ihm gelingen, auch diese bäuerlichen Besonderheiten in sich aufzunehmen als einen ihm vielleicht sehr nothwendigen, wenigstens heilsamen und neue und gesunde Kräfte zuführenden Beisatz.²¹

For Marggraff, and no doubt for Heine, Freiligrath and Auerbach as well, the key issue at stake in contemporary fiction concerns a literary and cultural legacy and the role fiction should play in negotiating that legacy for political purposes. Although Marggraff and Auerbach would both agree that contemporary liberalism faces severe problems, the former wants to cut ties with organic models of *Bildung*, signaling a Börne-like rejection of Weimar classicism. The latter still finds something of value in that tradition and Heine, as we saw, wants to ironically transform it.

While Marggraff’s voice may have been one of the more sophisticated treatments of Auerbach’s fiction – he was certainly one of Auerbach’s earliest, most prominent critics – he was

²¹ Marggraff, *Blätter*, 946.

hardly alone in displaying a strong interest in the village tales, even despite his reservations about the image of politics contained therein. In his eight-volume *Encyclopädie der deutschen Nationalliteratur* published in 1847, Oskar Wolff links the village tales to an Enlightenment tradition of humanism, “wahre Religiosität,” and “Menschenliebe.” Regardless of how Auerbach might have helped or hindered liberalism’s call for political action, his stories depict “ein tiefes Mitgefühl für die Leiden der Menschheit” according to Wolff, who draws a line straight from G.E. Lessing to Auerbach.²² For Wolff, a German Jew like Auerbach, the village tales evoked less of a sense of Germanness enshrined in apparent *Sitten* than they did a rich legacy of a German Enlightenment and its literary production. Others, however, were much more caught up in the village tales’ apparent Germanness. Robert Prutz, a prominent and highly censored liberal poet and later a professor of literature at Halle, concludes his *Vorlesungen über die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart* (1847) by praising Auerbach as the future of German poetry: “Hier ist deutscher Boden, deutsche Sitten, deutsche Schicksale, deutscher Geist und deutsches Herz!” The perfect ingredients for popular literary success in Prutz’ view was Auerbach’s depiction of “nationales Leben” coupled with “volkstümliche Wirklichkeit.”²³ Like most of Auerbach’s German critics from the early 1840s, Prutz never mentions Auerbach’s Jewishness in his public discussion of the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*.

Not all reviews from the 1840s are so approbatory, but even negative indictments reflect a concern with how the village tales relate to a broader, frequently liberal, political discourse.

Victor Huber, the famous social reformer known for his conservative fidelities in the 1840s (he

²² Oskar Wolff, *Encyclopädie der deutschen Nationalliteratur: oder, biographisch-kritisches Lexicon der deutschen Dichter und Prosaisten; seit den frühesten Zeiten nebst Proben aus ihren Werken*, vol 8 (Leipzig: Wigand, 1847), 13-14. Wolff, it is worth noting, stood in frequent contact with Heine during these years.

²³ Robert Eduard Prutz, *Vorlesungen über die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Gustav Meyer, 1847), 348.

drafted the first conservative party program in Germany) revised his favorable opinion of Auerbach only three years after the village stories were published:

Auch Auerbach, der in seinen Dorfgeschichten noch einen gewissen Sinn für die tiefern, edlern Elemente christlich deutschen Volkslebens zeigte, ist seitdem durch eigene Eitelkeit und fremde Schmeichelei auf die Wege gerathen, wo nur das Katzengold liberaler Tendenzen zu finden ist, und unter der Menge dahin gehöriger Versuche, welche sich durch die belletristische Presse schleppen, ist keiner, der auch nur die Vorzüge lebendiger Auffassung und Darstellung hätte, welche Auerbach nicht abzusprechen sind – wer aber daraus schließen wollte, dass sie dann auch nicht destruktiv wirken werden, der vergisst, dass es eben nichts Destruktiveres giebt als Frivolität, Platttheit, Trivialität.²⁴

Though it is unclear what prompts the change of heart (probably the strong praise Auerbach received from foreigners and aristocratic circles), it is significant that Huber identifies at least two liberalisms: a “real” German liberalism, one which has something to do with German Christian *Volksleben* that Auerbach struck upon with his realistic representations, and a false liberalism associated with foreign elements. He too, displays a concern for the political aspects of Auerbach’s writing, but tends to see his liberalism as linked to the *Tendenzliteratur* of the 1830s, not separate and distinct from it. It is further telling that opinions about literature and opinions about politics were fluid enough during this period that they could undergo paradigm shifts in three years’ time. This circumstance underscores the importance of Auerbach’s reception and the public discussion of his tales. Huber, then, is really responding to the literary culture surrounding the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, and his review, like all the others considered here, is a crucial window through which to view the relationship between Auerbach and the reading public that he engaged with his fiction.

In England, Ireland, and France, where the stories gained a wide readership on the heels of Meta Taylor’s and Max Buchon’s translations, readers were naturally less interested in the debate about how the village tales promoted or undermined various models of German nationalism or German liberalism. What is striking, however, is the way foreign reviews identify

²⁴ Victor Aimé Huber, *Janus: Jahrbücher deutscher Gesinnung, Bildung und That*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Besser, 1846), 856.

similar formal elements, suggesting the village tales mixing of sentiment and politics need not necessarily be related to a perceived Germaneness. An 1846 review by Saint-René Taillandier, first published in the *Revue des deux mondes* and reprinted in *Der Grenzboten*, bemoans the condition of literature in Europe and fawns over Auerbach as one the only writers who has turned a dire situation (“diese Verschmelzung des Nationalcharacters mit dem Bewusstsein der neuern Zeit”) into something positive.²⁵ Taillandier emphasizes the social features and concealed didacticism in Auerbach’s village tales, but also the pervasive “volkstümliche, liberale Gefühl” permeating throughout. *The British Quarterly Review* and *The Dublin Review*, both of which printed long passages of the tales, placed Auerbach in the company of Mary Mitford, Oliver Goldsmith and the Waverly ballads of Walter Scott, remarking on his style of “extreme...simplicity.”²⁶ A critic discussing “Der Tolpatsch” notes that “Auerbach contents himself with simply telling what Tolpatsch *did*, and leaves the reader to infer from his artless narrative what he *felt*.”²⁷ And another critic, who forewarns readers they won’t find a supernatural or Gothic fix in Auerbach’s forests (unlike in the brothers Grimm’s *Children and Household Tales*), claims “we hardly know of any more gratifying evidence of the revolution which has been quietly effected in the literature and literary tastes of the new generation in Germany, than is supplied in these exquisitely simple tales.”²⁸

Although all these reviews speak to a broad and diverse range of responses, German and non-German, positive and negative alike, many critics placed the village tales in dialogue with

²⁵ Saint-René Taillandier, “Über Roman und Kritik in Deutschland,” review of *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* by Berthold Auerbach, in *Die Grenzboten: Zeitschrift für Politik und Literatur* 3, no. 27 (1846), 24.

²⁶ “German Tales,” unsigned review of *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, by Berthold Auerbach, in *The British Quarterly Review*, vol. 6, (August-November 1847), 209. See also “Auerbach’s Tales of the Black Forest” in *The Dublin Review*, vol. 22 (March-June 1847), 354-288.

²⁷ *The Dublin Review*, 363.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 354-55.

contemporary political discourse, especially the discourse surrounding liberalism. Given the highly politicized function of literature in the 1830s and 1840s, this may not seem too remarkable. But unlike other more established genres sharing in a reciprocal relationship with politics, such as the novel or lyric, the perceived formal qualities and content of the village tales were not unilaterally understood by contemporaries as a their own genre per say. A genre is a literary category whose historicity is located in individual works thought to constitute a genre by authors, critics, and readers and in the specific reference individual works make to a “traditional normative presence of the genre expectation” (Swales, 11). As a result, genre concepts emerge over time, and they require a system that will lead to their long-term reproduction. Even if Auerbach’s fiction led to what might later have been understood as the “genre fiction” of regional literature or *Dorfgeschichten*, in the 1840s the village tales were received as novellas and novels. For this reason, I read the village tales as a genre concept in formation that drew on and modified the novel’s existing structuring principles.²⁹ And herein lies the value of the village tales for my argument: the plethora of critical voices rushing to assimilate this fiction, to categorize his proto-realist aesthetic within existing taxonomies (or to create new ones), sheds light on this fiction’s shared relationship with a range of contemporary political and cultural topics including the rise of bureaucracy, the legacy of classical literary traditions, Enlightenment tropes, nationalism, and a volatile *Volk*. It is as though the village tales coincided with the rise of early German liberalism, each helping to mutually illuminate and constitute the other. In making this case for such reciprocity, this chapter will now explore these implications by turning to one tale from the 1843 collection and framing it against a decisive issue for early German liberalism:

²⁹ As Martin Swales, notes however, “Any genre concept has validity insofar as it is allowed to function as a reservoir of potentiality, as a structuring principle that generates specific phenomena and that by that act of generation is then modified for its subsequent practitioners” (Swales, *Novella*, 15). A similar process is at work with the mysteries fiction examined in the next chapter.

the Catholic revival. It is hardly coincidence that one of Auerbach's most successful tales embodies both the formative tensions of an emergent genre and an emergent model of liberalism. And it is precisely these tensions which helped readers negotiate their political identities through literature.

The Odd Couple? Liberal Sentiment and Religious Piety in Southwest Germany

"Ivo, der Harjle" was not only one of the most revered tales among German critics (for Marggraff it ranked among "die schönsten der Sammlung"), but it was the first to be translated for English readers, with excerpts appearing in London's *Athenaeum* on Jan. 23, 1847.³⁰ Perhaps owing to this initial periodical appearance, English-language critics from the 1840s focus their discussions almost exclusively on "Ivo."³¹ The tale chronicles the various life stages of an eponymous Catholic initiate from boyhood to young adulthood. The son of Nordstetten's master carpenter, Ivo would likely have followed in his father's footsteps, but after witnessing the first mass of a recently ordained priest at the age of six, he desires to become a "Geistlicher." Readers follow each stage of his growth, from his entry into the "lateinische Schule" in Horb, his time spent at "das Kloster" in Ehingen, and his student years at "das Konvikt" in Tübingen. The narrative, however, never attends to the details of his theological training, but instead dramatizes Ivo's affectionate relationships with family, friends, and even animals. The narrator frequently juxtaposes moments from his educational sojourn with travel back to his native village, spatially

³⁰ "Ivo, a Village Tale from the Black Forest," unsigned review in *The Athenaeum: Journal of Literature, Science, the Fine Arts*, vol. 1044 (London: J. Francis, 1847), 91. Citations for "Ivo, der Harjle" are from the 1857 Cotta edition. Berthold Auerbach, *Gesammelte Schriften: Erste Gesamtausgabe* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1857), Vol. 1, 204-466.

³¹ Another index of "Ivo's" popularity within the English collection are the illustrations accompanying the manuscript. Of the four illustrations commissioned for the volume, two depict scenes from "Ivo," one of the titular character with Nazi, which inaugurates the volume, the other of Ivo and Emmerenz. This is significant, because Ivo was not the first story readers would have encountered, but one the last, when picking up the manuscript.

underscoring Ivo's desire to occupy two discrete worlds: the naïve and sentimentalized Nordstetten and a life committed to becoming an ecclesiastic. Ivo's divided self extends to his relationships, with his scriptural studies among the "Gelehrten" frequently pitted against his inclinations to spend time with his father's farm hand and mentor Nazi and his childhood crush Emmerenz. As Ivo begins to struggle with his scholastic pursuits, he takes refuge in his friendship with Klemens, a fellow seminarian and object of his affection. Their romance ends when Klemens eventually joins a Franciscan order in Bavaria and Ivo decides to quit his studies for good, reuniting with his paternalistic mentor Nazi, taking over his lumber business, and settling down with Emmerenz. As jarring as Nazi's name is, it was likely intended as a variation of Natsi or Naserl, and reflects the alternate spelling of "Nation" (Nazion) common in the nineteenth century.³²

Much marks "Ivo, der Hajrle" as a typical village tale within the collection as a whole. The story itself relies on simple prose and an episodic structure, the latter a feature Auerbach deploys in the longer tales such as *Der Lauterbacher*, *Florian und Kreszenz*, and his first tale, *Des Schloss Bauers Vefe*. At the level of form, readers find themselves guided by the same didactic narrator who frequently inserts his opinion as though it forms a naturalized component of the world he presides over. His presence throughout the tales, as Koch reminds us, supports his role as an intertextual mediator, alerting readers to characters and locations they have met and visited in other tales. In this way, the narrator serves as a localizing authority, discerning what counts as local and what counts as other. Language (or the narrator's representation of language) also serves as a form of geographical orientation. Many portions of the text, particularly dialogue between recurrent characters, rely on the use of local dialect. On occasion the narrator offers a

³² Uwe Baur's three-page discussion of "Ivo" does not even mention this crucial figure in the story. Uwe Baur, *Dorfgeschichte: Zur Entstehung und gesellschaftlichen Funktion einer literarischen Gattung im Vormärz* (Munich: Fink, 1978), 126.

gloss, but that is not the case for the title referent. The Swabian designator *Hajrle*, untranslatable, is a Badenese diminutive of “Herr,” perhaps best rendered as gentleman though it also carries a religious connotation. Crucially, the term signifies a process of becoming. At the start of the narrative, Ivo is only six, so it is a social role Ivo comes to occupy. This attention to the protagonist’s growth and maturation (*Bildung*) as a formal quality of the tale sets “Ivo” apart from the other tales in the 1843 collection.

Focusing as it does on the diachronic development of a single, male protagonist within a religious milieu, the distinctive episodes structuring the work feed into a larger narrative of individual growth and maturation rendering the novelistic mode of representation a constitutive aspect of Ivo’s life. The protagonist’s social relationships to family, friends, and seminarians occupy a key function in this sense, foregrounding the mother-father-son triad, the search for labor and love, and the various processes at stake in *Bildung* more broadly. Thus very much like Goethe’s paradigmatic *Bildungsroman*, “Ivo” is a story about the disciplining of desire just as Heine’s *Florentinische Nächte* is a story about undisciplined desire. “Ivo” further offers the thematic focus on religion, specifically Catholicism, as an important component to Auerbach’s representational régime and a strategy for affirming his commitment to Enlightenment principles.³³ As scholarship has shown, Auerbach’s key intellectual influences were Lessing and Spinoza, thus a story concerned with religion was hardly incidental for Auerbach, who had entertained hopes of becoming a Rabbi while openly embracing the principles of Enlightenment humanism. Ivo’s oft-cited triumphant announcement uttered when leaving the Church – “die Theologie verdirbt die Religion” (“Ivo,” 416) – echoes both Lessing’s message in *Nathan der Weise* by appealing to a non-dogmatic basis for religious life and Spinoza’s prescription for a

³³ The only other tale from the 1843 collection with a strong religious component is “Die feindlichen Brüder,” but its thematic focus concerns the reconciliation of two brothers.

secular rationalism as the basis for religious life as shared cultural experience.³⁴ Taken together, the narrative attention given to *Bildung* and the broader context of a critique of positive religion, these two factors suggest a reading of “Ivo” privileging Auerbach’s own authorial presence. Structurally similar to Heine’s use of an authorial alter ego in *Florentinische Nächte*, and even analogous to Gutzkow’s casting himself as Bulwer in *Die Zeitgenossen*, “Ivo” might be read as a kind of autobiographical *Bildungsroman*.

Hans Otto Horsch, one of the few scholars to discuss “Ivo” in detail, considers the tale in just this guise. Reading Auerbach’s Jewish biography into Ivo’s life, Horsch claims that “the debate surrounding Orthodox Judaism is mirrored in the opposition of a Catholic initiate who manages to resist the dogmas of positive religion with the help of enlightened universalist piety.”³⁵ While this is no doubt true – particularly in consideration of Auerbach’s known pro-Geiger, pro-Reform attitudes and his own failed plans to become a Rabbi – it overlooks that Auerbach might actually have been interested in writing about Catholicism, and not simply using Catholicism as a veiled means of talking about competing ideas of Judaism. Is “Ivo” just another *Spinoza* in disguise, a historical novel repackaged as a village tale? Does it address old concerns of Auerbach’s, or does it impact readers in other ways and draw on other literary traditions with different political implications? How would contemporaries have approached the work? After all, few even knew who Auerbach was when picking up the village tales for the first time in the early 1840s. Someone who had by chance read his earlier writings would have been familiar with

³⁴ In a letter discussion of Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise* Auerbach writes: “Das ist nicht ein Evangelium der Toleranz, Toleranz ist nichts Positives; was dieses Stück und Lessing überhaupt lehrt, ist der Glaube an die Menschen, ihre Guete und Reinheit. Davon ist jedes Wort erfüllt.” Berthold Auerbach, *Briefe*, vol. 1, 184.

³⁵ Hans Otto Horsch, “Berthold Auerbach’s First Collection of Dorfgeschichten appears” in *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096 – 1996*, ed. Sander Gilman and Jack Zipes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 161.

Auerbach's interest in religion and Enlightenment philosophy, but few readers would have been in a position to understand the character of Ivo as a cipher for Auerbach's Jewish faith.

A German reader in the 1840s would, however, have immediately registered several highly publicized religious and political issues – Catholic and liberal ones – hinted at or broadly thematized within the story. First, the narrative focus on the socialization, education, and erotic development of a male Catholic initiate discernibly intersects with contemporary debates on priestly celibacy and the struggle between reformist and orthodox elements within the Catholic church. Ivo's bond with Klemens, which readers are led to believe is the result of loneliness, isolation, and a desire for human proximity after embarking upon an alienating path of seminary study, reverberates with the trenchant rhetoric surrounding long-standing debates on human sexual relations and Catholic clerics.³⁶ While these debates transpired in Germany wherever Catholics could be found, they were perhaps most palpable in the Grand Duchy of Baden where opposition to Catholic dogma received support from an early form of institutional liberalism. As Dagmar Herzog has vividly shown, the effort by liberal statesmen and reformist Catholic leaders to eliminate celibacy on the grounds that it restricted freedom, violated natural rights, and fostered immoral and/or unnatural sexual behavior found a new outlet for expression in Baden's dual-chamber *Landtag* – one of the few quasi-democratic political institutions in the German states during the 1830s and one that aroused significant attention throughout the otherwise autocratic German-speaking world. Liberal progressives tried to cast a historically internal matter of church dogma as a danger to the state by virtue of the ultramontanist sympathies celibacy

³⁶ This chapter will investigate Ivo's homoerotic relationship with Klemens below, but it is worth noting how the narrator's language casts Klemens as a kind of refuge from the Church with a third-person possessive thereby heightening the proximity between them: "[Ivo] war in der Fremde nicht mehr fremd, das Kloster war kein Ort des Zwanges und des unerbittlichen Gesetzes mehr, er that alles willig, denn sein Klemens war ja bei ihm" ("Ivo," 342).

allegedly reinforced. How could Catholic Germans entertain an allegiance with a foreign Pope as well as a German monarch, nation, and citizenry?³⁷

Together with priestly celibacy, the other major subject to strike at the heart of political and religious order in southwest Germany concerned mixed marriages. While the state hoped it could unite its Protestant and Catholic populations through the practice, it met opposition in a “galvanized neo-orthodox Catholic conservatism” that frequently – and for liberals, irritatingly – harnessed the discourse of freedom, liberty and rights to advance its own agenda. The 1830s and 1840s witnessed the gradual removal of reformist (liberal) Badenese Catholics who held positions of authority within the Church (especially in Freiburg) and their replacement with leaders loyal to Rome, leaders looking to redefine church-state relations by attacking the institution of mixed marriages. The whole matter, which cultural historians have shown to be essential to the formation of religious and political identities during this period, receives a comic treatment in Auerbach’s tale when “Ivo” returns home to Nordstetten during a break in his studies. Drinking with friends in a local bar, singing folksongs about romantic love, and characteristically brooding about his choice to study theology, Ivo switches from cold wine to warm wine, and his friend Konstantin remarks to the bartender, “Bärbele, bei dir geht's nicht wie bei dem Wirt zu Emmaus, du gibst zuerst den guten und dann den schlechten, du hast da lutherisch und katholisch untereinander gebracht, der Wein ist eine gemischte Ehe” (“Ivo,” 400). The scene culminates when an intoxicated Ivo returns home to find a sleeping Emmerenz, whom he subsequently kisses in blatant violation of his religious vows.

The debates over priestly celibacy and mixed marriages, which were by no means limited to southwest Germany during this period, struck at a much broader clerical *and* lay question

³⁷ Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). This discussion draws mostly on her introduction, 3-18.

about the content of Christianity and the role of religiosity among the predominately illiterate, uneducated, and non-secular rural populations. After all, the *Volk* was understood as a politically volatile social group that could swing either to the left or the right, hence the desire to control them through representations. Ivo's illiterate mother, Christine, embodies this social group better than any other character. Noted by *The Dublin Review* as "thoroughly religious," and with a name unambiguously signifying her devotion, Auerbach weaves a number of subtitles into the fabric of her pious character.³⁸ The "Rosenkranz" she gives to Emmerenz prior to her seven-hour walk from Nordstetten to Tübingen contains a piece of wood from Mt. Lebanon which she received from her forebears on pilgrimage. While such a detail can easily be understood in the context of Auerbach's frequent use of biblical iconography throughout the village tales – King Hiram built the Temple of Jerusalem with cedar wood from the Mt. Lebanon – it also carefully intersects with nineteenth-century debates on clerical and lay attitudes towards popular piety and pilgrimages. As Jonathan Sperber has shown with regards to northern Germany's Catholic regions, pilgrimages, religious processions and public religious festivals of all kinds (such as the "Primiz" which opens "Ivo") proved a contentious issue for Catholic practice and clerical mindsets, one which historically divided more traditional, orthodox doctrines from their progressive, Hermesian challengers.³⁹ The former, which found broad support in common pious people, like Christine, and sought to retain popular traditions, was largely opposed to what it considered the influence of local governments seeking to suppress superstition and rowdy festivals in favor of public order and sobriety. Conversely, Catholic clergy willing to engage an

³⁸ *Dublin Review*, 313.

³⁹ Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 3-38.

Enlightenment ethos not only tended to be disdainful of perceived superstition, but they were willing to work with local officials.

For his part, Auerbach, like many middle-class intelligentsia interested in the relationship between religion and secularism, was aware of the issues described above. “Ivo” (composed in 1842 like Stifter’s *Brigitta*) emerged at the height of the conservative revival in southern Germany when most liberal Catholics had been replaced by loyal Catholics.⁴⁰ Unlike his other village stories published in 1843, all of which were written in Mainz, “Ivo” was written in the village and local *Kurort* of Weilbach (near Frankfurt am Main) where Auerbach was vacationing.⁴¹ His daily journal from the trip, later published in *Der Freihafen*, takes up the issue of religious revival and even extends his critique to pietism. After learning from a local that Weilbach’s “Pfarrer” converted his private cook from a Protestant to a Catholic (to which the local commented, “hätte Gott gewollt, dass sie katholisch sein solle, hätte er ihre Eltern katholisch geboren werden lassen”), Auerbach writes:

Es ist jämmerlich, dass wir nun wieder mit den Pfaffen zu kämpfen haben sollen, mit den Pfaffen in ihrer krassesten Erscheinung, mit pietistischen und ultramontanen. Die ganze grosse Zeit seit Lessing, der sittliche Aufschwung unserer Nation wird stets abermals von Betrogenen und Betrügern gehemmt. Ich war immer der abgesagteste Feind aller Pfaffenriechei, es erschien mir als eine veraltete Tendenz, als ein Kampf mit Gespenstern den anerkannten Widersinn aufs Neue zu widerlegen; die Bahnen der neuen Nationalbestrebungen liegen auf anderen Gebieten als dem bloß theologischen, und man glaubt so gerne, dass das geschichtlich fortgeschrittene Volksbewusstsein nicht mehr von Aberglauben und kirchlichem Hochmut ergriffen werden können.⁴²

⁴⁰ Herzog, 34. In the early 1830s liberals-reformists apparently dominated the Catholic church, but a decade later they had been largely replaced by conservatives loyal to Rome. In fact, the publication of “Ivo” coincided with the popularity cult of Hermann von Vicari, a conservative appointed archbishop of Freiburg in 1842. He helped facilitate Catholic dissention by travelling throughout Baden and supporting local parish life. Opposed to Josephinism, he sought to curtail civil influence in church matters, particularly in terms of priesthood training. He eventually established a seminary school for priests and a theological college in 1842. In 1845, he even established a seminary for young boys. See Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion*, 46.

⁴¹ Here, too, Auerbach deliberately tries to politicize peasant life in the hopes of raising national consciousness: “wenn das Auge für die grosse Thätigkeit des National- und Staatslebens fehlt, wie können da die unscheinbaren Lebensäußerungen eines Dorfes Aufmerksamkeit erregen. – Liegt uns ein nassauisches Dorf nicht näher am Herzen als China?” Auerbach, “Tagebuch aus Weilbach” in *Der Freihafen*, Nr. 1-2 (Altona: Hamerisch, 1843), 37.

⁴² Berthold Auerbach, “Tagebuch aus Weilbach,” 38. This passage mirrors a similar statement about religion Auerbach makes in his “Vorrede:” “Daß Mißstände des katholischen Clerus berührt wurden, liegt einzig in der

Distancing himself from the dogmatic nature of positive religion in this passage, Auerbach's reference to Lessing is pivotal for understanding how he conceives of religion as a moral state of humanity, as a form of *Nächstenliebe*. The reference to pietism is also important, because it suggests Auerbach does not necessarily distinguish between Catholic and Protestant models of perceived religious radicalism. In his letter to Freiligrath, Auerbach in fact only references Pietism's influence on the *Volk*: "[B]ei unserer sonst so reichen Lit. hat man das eigentlich sog. Volk den Pietisten u.a. dgl. überlassen, ich will einmal sehen was ich vermag, ich will die Religion dieses Grundwesen des deutschen Volkes nach Kräften in ihr markiges Recht einsetzen."⁴³ Instead of a theological basis for religion, Auerbach's Spinozist and Lessing-inspired model of religiosity would, in theory, bring all individual faith traditions into a religion of humanity that transcends both the State and the Church. Such religious coordinates naturally raise profound questions for a tale depicting the troubled life of a Catholic initiate.

For readers identifying a proto-realist aesthetic and alleged objectivity, Auerbach's rejection of positive religion poses serious questions and interpretive problems that complicate the process of evaluating the village tales as carriers of political meaning. On the one hand, he cannot realistically portray Nordstetten in its entirety without representing the Church (though he could have selected a plot less likely to intersect with questions of religion, as he did in the other eight tales). And at the same time he clearly does not want to alienate the very audience for whom he is writing. On the other hand, those aspects of the Catholic faith practiced in Nordstetten which clash with Auerbach's vision of universal piety – including dogma and

Örtlichkeit. Ich verwahre mich ausdrücklich dagegen, als ob solche nur im katholischen Clerus stattfänden; in protestantischen Gegenden finden sich andere in anderen Erscheinungen. Das religiöse Leben, hier zunächst als kirchliches, bildet ein Grundelement im deutschen Volksthume; es ist das historische Bewußtsein des Unendlichen, in seiner Ganzheit feststehend, den Charakter erfüllend." Auerbach, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, vi.

⁴³ Auerbach quoted in Twellmann, *Schriften*, 252.

radicalism – cannot receive unadorned praise. And naturally this breeds a series of tensions within his literary representation. For instance, according to the narrator, the primary issue Ivo faces during seminary is the lack of outdoor work he is used to: “Das Widerstreben Ivos gegen das geistliche Studium hatte noch ganz andre Grundlagen, die ihm jetzt immer deutlicher wurden; die alte Lust nach einem thätigen Leben regte sich in ihm” (“Ivo,” 413). In the midst of his studies, Ivo becomes obsessed with the notion of labor in the field: “Arbeit! Arbeit! Nur das Tier lebt und arbeitet nicht, es gehet aus, um seine Nahrung zu suchen, und bereitet sie nicht; der Mensch aber greift ein in die ewig schaffende Kraft der Erde, frei mitwirkend in der Thätigkeit des Alls erringt er den Segen der That, kommt Ruhe und Friede über ihn” (“Ivo,” 414). For Ivo, work facilitates self-esteem and psychological improvement. It is a form of secularized salvation, disinterested in wealth or class advancement. Work and labor serve as the basis for Ivo’s Nordstetten identity and he finds something quite distasteful about not being physically productive. The other major Church issue troubling Ivo is the lack of community he discovers in his studies of Catholic theology. This lack receives figural explication in Bartel, a fellow Nordstettener who enters the convent at the same time as Ivo as a kind of false double, suffers a psychological breakdown and eventually commits suicide. It remains unclear what exactly troubles Bartel, but based on the narrator’s description he appears to suffer onanistic guilt.⁴⁴ Catholic critics were displeased by Bartel for obvious reasons, but the primary problems issued

⁴⁴ “Der gutmütige Jüngling hatte sich seit lange im voraus einem geheimen Laster ergeben, das seine ganze Körperkraft unterwühlte; er kaute immer an den Nägeln und dann rieb er sich wieder die Hände, als ob es ihn friere, sein Gang war schwankend und unstät, die Farbe seines Gesichts war weißlichgrün, eingefallene Wangen, eine rote Nase und der stets weit aufgerissene Mund machten den lang aufgeschossenen, lendenschwachen Jüngling zu einer Schreckgestalt” (“Ivo,” 429).

forth in the narrative for Ivo – the lack of work and the lack of community – raise a curious antithesis.⁴⁵

Work and community correspond directly to Catholic practice, theology, and social values more broadly. “Ora et labora” (work and pray) was after all the motto of St. Benedict. Nor could Auerbach be opposed to motto of the Franciscans, “Pax et bonum” (peace and the good).⁴⁶ This ambivalence occasioned by literary representation is partly why an attitude of Catholic dismissal cannot be easily distilled from “Ivo.” In fact, Auerbach’s literary representation of Catholicism appears less interested in maligning the priestly profession or the Catholic faith than in mediating between confessions and seeking to resolve conflict between liberals and Catholics by appealing to the common cultural ground of both. He is turning both flashpoints of politics and religion into matters of culture. This means removing questions of theology from the equation all together, and “mixing the wines” to use Auerbach’s metaphor. There is no introspective effort of Auerbach’s to examine the theological basis of any faith traditions. He could have vilified Catholicism by painting an uglier portrait as Eugène Sue does in *Les Mystères des Paris*, but he seeks a conciliatory tone. Though different in intent and delivery, Auerbach shares with Heine an understanding of the importance of a Catholic ethos in the

⁴⁵ The *Dublin Review* objects to Auerbach’s treatment of Barthels and further considers the manner by which the narrative passes over the details of Ivo’s religious training a “series defect” for it “destroys the reality and the consistency of the narrative.” The figure of Clemens is described as “a painful and unnatural conception” and “represented as a compound of weakness and fanaticism.” Interestingly, this presumably Irish-Catholic reviewer is most upset by Auerbach’s “cold and harsh” description of ecclesiastical training, which “violates the realities of the student-life, notoriously the happiest and most joyous in the career of the ecclesiastic.” See *Dublin Review*, vol. 22, unsigned review of *Village Tales of the Black Forest*, by Berthold Auerbach, translated by Meta (March-June, 1847), 373-88.

⁴⁶ Auerbach’s rejection of Pietism offers perhaps an even greater paradox for his project, in that he reduces highly complex religious phenomena into ideologies themselves, overlooking the important impact these faith traditions likely had on his own model of Enlightenment universalist piety. See for instance Hans-Georg Kemper’s study on the relationship between Pietism and *Empfindsamkeit*. Hans-Georg Kemper, *Deutsche Lyrik der frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997).

nineteenth-century as well as an appreciation for the Church as institution that mediates social and cultural norms. Take for instance a didactic passage by the narrator in “Ivo:”

Es liegt eine tiefe Macht in der allverbreiteten Sichtbarkeit der katholischen Kirche: wohin du wanderst und wo du dich niederlässest, überall stehen hohe Tempel offen für deinen Glauben, deine Hoffnung, deinen Gott, überall kniet die Gemeinde, andächtig nach denselben Heiligtümern ausschauend, dieselben Worte im Munde, dieselben Zeichen führend, überall bist du unter Brüdern und Kindern des einen heiligen, sichtbaren Vaters zu Rom (“Ivo,” 291).

A staunch liberal-nationalist might draw attention to this passage as problematic for the way it showcases obedience to a foreign power, but there is nothing ominous about it. It intersects more broadly with Auerbach’s own paternalistic vision, thus turning the presence of positive religion into a political exercise of culture, perhaps in an effort to show his readers how they can be non-Catholic Catholics, German Catholics, and liberal Catholics, a message invariably aimed at Protestants and Jews as well. Passages such as this may also help to explain why German Catholics could be both critical but also highly receptive to a work like “Ivo.” A critic writing for the *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* draws attention to a sentimental scene when Ivo sits by his mother’s bedside as she awaits surgery for a broken arm. With one hand she holds a rosary, with the other Ivo’s during the operation. The critic praises her courage which he understands as evidence of “die tiefe Macht, die in der katholischen Religion liegt, unumwunden anerkannt, so wie die freudige und trostreiche Erkenntniß, “daß die Offenbarung fort und fort durch die Menschheit gehe [...].”⁴⁷ Clearly, this is a reader whose devotedness to Catholicism was not completely undermined by “Ivo,” suggesting Auerbach’s representation of positive religion – though distanced, ambiguous, and potentially adverse – invoked a wide range of responses. Furthermore, if Auerbach’s literature carries the assumption that life and literature are linked through an understanding that the literary can affect the living (this is essentially Auerbach’s argument in *Schrift und Volk* and also a component of his realist

⁴⁷ *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland*, unsigned review of *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, by Berthold Auerbach, vol. 22 (Munich, 1848), 135.

agenda), then literary conventions could become a way life. How many other German-Catholic readers discovered this scene and recalled its message when clutching their own prayer beads?

The same critic for the *British Quarterly* mentioned above strikes at the heart of Auerbach's project in "Ivo" when he notes "the sentiments are, at times, such as might become a devout Romanist; while occasionally we have a degree of free thinking about Romish institutions and teaching, that would imply a wish to abate their influence over the minds that may have been subjected to them."⁴⁸ Likely unfamiliar with the specific religious and political climate of southwest Germany during this period, this critic nonetheless identifies the clash between Catholic piety and liberal ideology (understood as *Freisinnigkeit*) as a curious feature within the text's emotional régime. To better grasp this tension and fully appreciate its political function, we need to examine how Auerbach intervened within existing literary contexts and traditions in a way that made him popular. In terms of explaining "Ivo's" individual success within the collection as a whole, it may have Auerbach's most important insight to have found and repurposed a popular eighteenth-century literary tradition in which religion and sentiment already structured both the form and content of that tradition.

(Re)purposing *Empfindsamkeit* in the 1840s: Sentimental Legacies and Prosaic Politics

With little doubt, nineteenth-century readers recognized how "Ivo" discernibly intersects with the popular eighteenth-century tradition of sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*) deeply concerned as it was with issues of pietism, religion, virtue, and sentimentality in fiction.⁴⁹ This was not only a tradition that enjoyed popular critical favor in the mid-to-late eighteenth-century, but it was one

⁴⁸ *British Quarterly*, 212.

⁴⁹ The tradition need not carry with it religious themes, but frequently did given its strong Pietistic background in Germany.

that writers like Auerbach wanted to see thrive in the nineteenth-century as well. As we will see, Auerbach not only associated this tradition with German high-culture, including the likes of Goethe, but he was deeply invested in the way it grappled with sympathy in narrative prose fiction. Instead of merely citing, referencing, or alluding to this literary heritage, I argue in the following section Auerbach self-consciously appropriated and adapted it for his own literary project by capitalizing on two of the most popular sentimental novels of both the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries: Johann Martin Miller's *Siegwart: Eine Klostergeschichte* and Oliver Goldsmith's *Der Vikar von Wakefield*. Auerbach places "Ivo" in dialogue with these particular works in part because he understood them to have performed a similar kind of work as his own, albeit in vastly different historical contexts. But the primary terms of engagement lay in the way these two works deal with the tradition of sensibility and complex forms of narrative empathy they sought to provide readers. The challenge for Auerbach, who clearly recognizes the conflicted tradition of sensibility in the eighteenth-century, was to devise a method for ensuring narrative empathy's success for his project, which is why he turns to these popular novels. Throughout this section, I show how the appeal of *Siegwart* lay chiefly in its plot, but also its representation of Catholicism and homoeroticism. As part of an key eighteenth-century discourse on German aesthetics, and a significant element in major texts from Weimar classicism, homoeroticism was very much *part of* the eighteenth-century discourse on sentimentality as well and a key ingredient in Auerbach's own adaptation.⁵⁰ The appeal of Goldsmith's *The Vikar of Wakefield* was much more acute for Auerbach – he thought so highly of the novel's enduring value for nineteenth-century readers that he delivered a speech on it. And departing significantly from *Siegwart*, Auerbach was struck by the novel's use of irony and its innovative narrative form. This section will now explore in greater detail how these elements and texts intersect with

⁵⁰ My chapter on Stifter's *Brigitta* will examine this discourse in greater detail.

“Ivo” and its nineteenth-century readers, that is, how they helped shape Auerbach’s prosaic politics.

The *Klosterroman* genre was an eighteenth-century favorite, and it is easy to see how Auerbach reinterpreted the classic motif of the troubled *Geistlicher* for a literary project in the 1840s concerned with securing labor, love, and universalist piety for middle-class readers. Diderot’s *La religieuse*, written between 1760 and 1780 and first published in 1796, remains the paradigmatic Enlightenment example of clerics suffering under the oppression of Church doctrine, but in Germany, it was Johann Martin Miller’s (1750-1816) 1776 sentimental thriller that rendered the genre famous.⁵¹ *Siegwart: Eine Klostergeschichte* was the second most popular novel in Germany during the eighteenth century (Goethe’s *Werther* the first) and similar to “Ivo,” the Swabian protagonist in Miller’s tale decides to become a priest at an early age after visiting a Capuchin monastery with his father.⁵² Like Ivo, Xaver Siegwart matriculates at various seminaries and quite openly explores questions of sexual heterodoxy. The key difference, however, is that Siegwart enters a monastery upon falsely learning his lover, Marianne, is dead. The tale culminates in melodramatic tragedy when Siegwart recognizes the gravely sick Marianne, and after her prolonged death, dies of his own grief while sprawled over her tombstone. Though just as non-ambiguous as Diderot’s tale in its depiction of convent life as a threat to marriage and bourgeois values, Miller’s tale more acutely displays the fusion of sentimentality and cloister life within a popular literary tradition.

⁵¹ Diderot’s *La religieuse* features a tortured woman as its protagonist, demonizing the habits surrounding the social and cultural processes that drive women into nunneries while critiquing the unnatural clerical vows religious institutions require of their adherents.

⁵² There are major confessional differences in Auerbach’s “Ivo” and Miller’s *Siegwart*, the latter much more specific in theological detail. Auerbach’s tale is deliberately ambiguous in its depiction of actual intuitions and Catholic confessional groups, which supports his project by forcing readers to question and consider the content of his representation.

It is in Siegwart's homoerotic relationships where conspicuous displays of sentiment are most palpable, and it is ultimately in Ivo's own homoerotic relationship where we can witness how Auerbach appropriates, adapts, and reworks *Siegwart* for "Ivo." Recalling "Ivo's" plot, much of the narrative's descriptive energy is located in exposing and developing Ivo's relationships with characters who embody two possible outcomes: his entry into the community of village life, symbolized by Nazi, Emmerenz, and his parents, or his entry into the Catholic community elsewhere, symbolized largely by the other seminarists. Ivo's own homoerotic liaison begins in Ehingen when he is alone and in a foreign environment for the first time in his life, an aspect of the plot clearly borrowed from *Siegwart*. After meeting Klemens "[Ivo] war in der Fremde nicht mehr fremd, das Kloster war kein Ort des Zwanges und des unerbittlichen Gesetzes mehr, er that alles willig, denn sein Klemens war ja bei ihm" ("Ivo," 342). In the chapter called "Die Freunde" readers are voyeuristically drawn into their budding romance: "Mittags auf dem Spaziergange blieben Ivo und Klemens wie auf eine geheime Verabredung zurück, und hinter einer blühenden Schlehdornhecke, wo es niemand sah, fielen sie, ohne ein Wort zu reden, sich um den Hals und küßten und herzten sich inniglich" ("Ivo," 341). The terms of attachment between Ivo and Klemens is highly reminiscent of the emotional and physical refuge Xavier Siegwart finds in Kronhelm.⁵³ Their names even sound alike. That Ivo ultimately leaves the

⁵³ Johann Martin Miller, *Siegwart: Eine Klostergeschichte* (Leipzig: Weygand, 1776). Consider these two passages where Siegwart and Klemens bond: "Ein junger Edelmann von 18 Jahren, Namens Kronhelm, der am P. Philipp saß, zog Siegwarts Aufmerksamkeit besonders auf sich. Er hatte sanfte blaue Augen, hellblondes Haar, und etwas schwermüthiges in der Mine, das aber von der innern Seelenruhe, wie mit einem Schleyer, überdeckt war. Seine und Siegwarts Blicke begegneten sich ein paarmal, fuhren schnell zurück, wie der Blick eines Liebenden, und suchten sich unvermerkt wieder auf. Beyde Jünglinge schienen sich in der Seele zu lesen; jeder glaubte, den andern lange schon zu kennen; und stillschweigend faßten sie, in der ersten Stunde, ein Zutrauen zu einander, das nachher so sehr befestigt wurde" (180) and "Kronhelm sank nun wieder an sein Herz, und weinte. Kein Schauspiel ist auf Erden schöner, als die Aussöhnung zweyer Freunde. Der ganze Himmel freut sich über einen Sünder, der Busse thut; so freut er sich, wenn zwo Seelen, die einander werth sind, und sich eine Zeitlang misverstanden haben, sich wieder mit einander aussöhnen. Sie lieben sich nun stärker, wie zwey Liebende nach einer kurzen Trennung. – Siegwart wurde nun wieder vertrauter, und offener; er wagte es nun wieder, seinen Kronhelm frey anzusehen. Wenn er ihn lang ansah, ward sein Herz auf einmal weich, und ein unwiderstehlicher Trieb zog ihn in die Arme seines Freundes. Er schwur ihm ewige Treu, und versprach, ihm künftig die kleinsten Bewegungen seines Herzens zu

church and finds refuge instead in a paternalistic bourgeois family with Emmerenz not only serves as a critique of celibacy, but it endorses a model of heterosexuality praised in Auerbach's second eighteenth-century interlocutor.

Published a decade before Miller's Siegwart, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) was no doubt the Protestant and Anglo-Irish corollary to Miller's sentimental novel – at least in terms of popularity. Goldsmith's novel, also episodic like "Ivo," relates the trials and tribulations of the Primrose family. Dr. Charles Primrose, the eponymous protagonist and first-person narrator, together with his wife Deborah and their six children, live in a country idyll before a series of misfortunes interrupt and displace nearly every member of the family. After losing his wealth and being forced to move, the family suffers hardship after hardship. Their son's wedding is called off, the family's possessions are lost in a fire, one daughter almost drowns, another is abducted by their landlord (Squire Thornhill), another son goes to prison for dueling, and ultimately even Dr. Primrose goes to prison on account of not being able to pay his rent. Like most sentimental novels, the world described appears Manichean, and it is ultimately a friend of the family – Mr. Burchell, whose identity as the well-known benefactor Sir William Thornhill is disclosed in the final pages of the novel – who helps restore the family's fortune and bring justice to his nephew.

Widely regarded as the most popular eighteenth-century novel in nineteenth-century Victorian England, Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* enjoyed widespread success in Germany, too.⁵⁴ Herder famously introduced Dr. Primrose to the Germans and the young Goethe with his own translation, and in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe talks at length about

entdecken. Sie sassen bey einander, bis die Dämmerung anbrach; dann spielten sie ein Duett, alle Töne schmolzen in einander, wie ihre Seelen, und wurden Eins" (208).

⁵⁴ There are handful of different titles for the German translation of the novel, including *Landprediger*, *Pfarrer*, *Vikar*, and *Landpfarrer*.

Goldsmith's novel, noting rather famously, "Ein protestantischer Landgeistlicher ist vielleicht der schönste Gegenstand einer modernen Idylle."⁵⁵ This tradition was not lost on Auerbach. In an 1865 speech at the Berlin Sing-Akademie, Auerbach pondered why Goldsmith's novel fostered such appeal (see epigraph) and marveled over a century-long infatuation with it. He commenced his speech by quoting Goethe's own remark that he had never expected to leave Goldsmith's imaginary world for a real one.⁵⁶ In addition to offering insight into Goethe's love life, Auerbach was also struck by Goldsmith's representation of the *Pfarrer* and Goethe's reading of it as literary type, noting "wer fortan einen Landpfarrer schildert, muß ihm am *Pfarrer von Wakefield* messen lassen, denn dieser steht als Norm in der Seele jedes Lesers."⁵⁷ Such a statement naturally encompasses Ivo, for although Primrose was Protestant, in Germany, the term "Landpfarrer" could apply to Catholics and Protestants alike. No doubt, the clout of Goethe and the religious components were why London's *Athenaeum* encouraged English readers to accept Auerbach's "Ivo" in "pleasant return" for their own literary bestowal to the Germans.⁵⁸ But an even broader, more pronounced appeal, lay in the way all three works – Goldsmith's, Miller's, and Auerbach's – take their cue from the tradition of sensibility.

Drawing inspiration from the moral philosophy of John Locke, among others, the eighteenth-literary tradition of sensibility premised itself on the individual's capacity to take in bodily sensations, gain awareness of one's feelings and make sound moral judgments as a result

⁵⁵ Goethe, FA 1.14:465.

⁵⁶ The reference here concerns Goethe's infatuation with Fredericke Brion. Goethe writes, "Keineswegs aber hätte ich erwartet, aus dieser fingierten Welt in eine ähnliche wirkliche versetzt zu werden." And Auerbach notes in response: "Er tritt aus dem Kreise des Pfarrers von Wakefield in das Pfarrhaus zu Sesenheim und liebt Friederike Brion. Dichtung und Wahrheit stossen in einander." Auerbach, *Deutsche Abende*, 282.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 287.

⁵⁸ *The Athenaeum*, 91. A German periodical reporting on Auerbach's reception abroad even made note of this remark in the London periodical. "No title," *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, ed. by J. Lehmann, no. 20 (Feb. 26, 1847), 80.

of that self-awareness. At its core, sensibility concerns one's susceptibility to emotional change, and hence moral change. The individual who learns to cultivate feelings of sympathy towards others is thought to be predisposed towards acts of benevolence and universal goodwill. As a practice of selfhood, sensibility thus involves reforming sentiments in an effort to foster moral improvement, and during the period in the eighteenth century when it enjoyed critical favor, the sentimental novel was considered by some to function as a vehicle for this practice, producing moral subjects by generating sentiments. By arousing complex emotional responses, such as empathy, sympathy, and pity, the novel could in theory simulate the sentiments required for ultimately arriving at moral judgments. It goes without saying, that as a literary tradition, the sentimental novel was as much in the process of formation in the 1760s and 70s as the village tale in the 1840s and 50s. In the wake of Goethe's *Werther* (1774), whose self-destructive protagonist no doubt marked the boundaries of sensibility as a technique of selfhood, very few authors or critics actually drew straight lines from moral philosophy to literature, or from representations of sympathy to virtuous actions in real life.⁵⁹ Throughout the tradition, there was a critical understanding that sentimental fiction could undermine its claim of fostering a virtuous life. J. H. Campe, for instance, – the uncle of Heinrich Heine's publisher Julius – penned an essay in 1779 ("Ueber Empfindsamkeit und Empfindelei in pädagogischer Hinsicht") in which he distinguished between sensibility as a dual-anthropological process engaging readers' reason and emotions, and a pernicious form of sentimentalism that encouraged the consumption of fiction as a departure from reality and literature as a potential medium of emotional contagion.⁶⁰ Taken to its logical extreme, when everyone engages in self-interested weeping it becomes

⁵⁹ It is worth noting that Goldsmith's novel is cited in Goethe's *Werther*.

⁶⁰ See Anna Richards, "The Era of Sensibility and the Novel of Self-Fashioning" in *German Literature of the Eighteenth Century: The Enlightenment and Sensibility*, ed. Barbara Becker-Cantarino (New York: Camden House, 2005), 235.

difficult to separate an ethics of benevolent virtue from the very circumstances that might inhibit or otherwise delimit that ethics in the first place.

The critical component to the culture of sensibility is likely what led many critics to vilify a novel like *Siegmund* – especially its highly sentimental ending, but it is also why in the *Vicar of Wakefield* readers encounter one of the more sophisticated satires of the sentimental tradition ever written, one that precedes Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* while going great lengths to probe the relationship between ethics, virtue, religion, and sentiment. In the figure of Dr. Primrose, Goldsmith ironizes the concepts of disinterestedness, universal goodwill, and especially the idea that virtue is a reward in and of itself – no doubt taking aim at one of the most successful novels of sentimentality, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded*. Goldsmith also importantly ironizes the idea of Christian piety. One scholar's particularly careful reading of Primrose's character and actions has shown how the novel actually participates in a Stoicist ideal (usually thought to be antithetic to sentimentalism) by showing how self-interest constantly works to undermine virtue in the novel.⁶¹ These particular concerns and compositional details within the novel were not lost on Goethe, who identified Goldsmith's irony as a key formal feature in the work, nor on Auerbach who likely sought to better grasp Goldsmith's humor on account of Goethe's reading. Turning now to Auerbach's published speech on Goldsmith's novel, I want to explore those aspects of Auerbach's reading that confirm its importance for "Ivo," including the way it identifies an approach to sentimentality that links it to a process of narrative empathy, but also the broader recognition that sentiments supporting self-

⁶¹ See Margret Andersen, "Stoic constructions of virtue in *The Vicar of Wakefield*," in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 69, no. 3 (July 2008): 419-439. Andersen argues Goldsmith employs "Stoic constructions of virtue to make disinterested benevolence sustainable. To Goldsmith and others, the same tenets that rendered the Stoic model impractical also constituted its appeal, because the Stoics, in advocating boundless, impartial sympathy, offered the strongest opposition to theories of self-interest" (422).

interest can undermine virtue, while sentiments conferring on readers an appreciation of our social bonds need not be problematic.

At first take, it appears Auerbach regards the novel as a Job story put in the service of Enlightenment humanism. “Die große Lehre dieses Buches heißt: Laß dich nicht verbittern und verhärten, und es wird dir wieder gut gehen nach allem Leid und allem Fehl. Der Glaube an der Menschheit muss zur Erfahrung werden.”⁶² With regards to the relationship between religion and virtue, such a reading raises the question of how to interpret the ending of the novel. Is the Job-like perseverance Dr. Primrose exhibits the result of a Christian belief in divine justice or is it poetic justice? And if the ultimate message of the novel concerns itself with maintaining self-composure through hardship, does that not undermine the novel’s ironic effort to undercut self-sufficiency and self-interestedness? Although these are questions Auerbach himself does not directly raise, he nonetheless notes the presence of irony as a crucial character trait in Primrose: “Die Vortragsweise seines Gedichtes ist die humoristische, aber der Humor ist hier nicht Form allein, er ist Lebensprinzip. Nach Inhalt und Ausdruck ist hier eine Mischung von Empfindsamkeit und Heiterkeit, von naiver Hingebung und Selbstironie [...] während der Held in Drangsalen steht, stellt er sich durch den Humor immer wieder darüber, und der Dichter erzählt nicht nur humoristisch, er ist es.”⁶³ Thus, although Auerbach seems less concerned with analyzing any apparent inconsistencies in the text’s message regarding virtue, hardship, and ethics, the mixing of sentimentality and self-irony in the protagonist confirms his awareness of a relationship between them. Auerbach identifies irony and sentimentality as a way of life in Goldsmith’s novel (“Lebensprinzip”), which clearly has implications for the relationship between fiction and potential human action. The combination of sentiment and irony allows

⁶² Auerbach, *Deutsche Abende*, 297.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 303-304.

Primrose to act the way he does under adverse circumstances, revealing man's inherent sociality through irony, and passing that message on to readers.

But if this was one of sensibility's literary strategies available and exploited by Goldsmith, Auerbach sees it as too dated for the 1840s. In the closing lines of his speech he decides Goldsmith's "Familiengeschichte" belongs to a bygone era, concerned not with man's ability to change or act, but with "die Bewährung des geschlossenen Naturells als Kernpunkt." In fact, lamenting the Josephinist period before the French Revolution, Auerbach reads Goldsmith's novel as an occasion for nostalgia:

Doctor Primrose ist ein letzter Repräsentant jener morgenfrischen, heiter gespannten Stimmung vor dem heißen, gewitterschweren Tage. Voll umfassender Gedanken und voll Einfalt zugleich schaut hinter seinem gramdurchfurchten Antlitze noch das harmlos vertrauende Kindergesicht hervor; er ist sittlich ernst ohne Rigorismus, er zweifelt, ohne je zu verzweifeln, er kennt die Resignation und hält die Hoffnung aufrecht, er hat einen Balsam für alle Wunden; *Humor und Sentimentalität* zugleich lassen ihm die Freude am Kleinen, und das große Gesetz heißt: Was ihr in der Geringsten Einem Reines erkennt, das ist das Höchste, denn es ist die im All verbreitete Gottesidee (my emphasis).⁶⁴

Situated on the cusp of Auerbach's modernity, marked by the reign of Kaiser Joseph and the start of the French Revolution, Goldsmith's novel is representative of a different historical mood, one that could combine irony and sentiment. Since then, Auerbach notes "die optimistischen Geister [sind] verscheucht, und der Humor bringt es mehr zur scharfen Herausarbeitung der Gegensätze und Zwiespältigkeiten, als zur Versöhnung."⁶⁵ Whereas Goldsmith could effectively combine sentimentality with humor to produce great art, this literary strategy is no longer possible in a post-Revolution world. Auerbach, of course, is echoing Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* which offered a similar genealogy while bemoaning modernity's turn to prosaic reason. Intriguingly, Auerbach's village tales traffic in a different mode of the prosaic. He fuses the prosaic with

⁶⁴ Ibid. 305-306.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

inclination, sentiments, and visceral emotions which complicate any one-sided understanding of reason as the guiding principle of nineteenth-century modernity.

Although Auerbach's comments on Goldsmith's novel came more than 20 years after having written the first collection of *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, this historicization of an eighteenth-century literary and political landscape does help to explain why humor (Auerbach's term for irony) is largely absent from his tale of a young Catholic initiate. If "Ivo" self-consciously appropriates the plot from Miller's sentimental *Klosterroman*, rendering its melodramatic, tragic ending mundane, he appropriates Goldsmith's ironic model of sentimental agency, rendering it prosaic. Crucially, however, Auerbach does not depart from the established sentimental framework of both works. And nowhere is this process more evident than at the level of narration. The self-irony of Dr. Primrose is exchanged for the didacticism of a third-person narrator, raising a different set of challenges for Auerbach. As we have seen above, critics identified a new objectivity in the village tales as one of their key formal features. The narrator's supposed distance from his object of representation is a device meant to render his depictions of folk-life more real, or at least more authentic. But such distance also works ostensibly to reduce the level of sympathetic identification between readers and characters. As he describes the role of narrative in the *Vicar von Wakefield*, Auerbach asks his listeners to imagine what the novel would have been like without an "ich-Erzähler:"

Goldsmith beginnt mit Ich. Denken wir uns die veränderte Form, daß in der dritten Person erzählt würde, so veränderte sich nicht nur die ganze Dichtung, sie würde auch an sich fraglich. Wir müßten die Persönlichkeiten, die mithandeln, in ihren Motiven und psychologischen Grundlagen näher erkennen; ihre Umwandlungen bedürften einer Vertiefung, und die Unzuträglichkeiten und Gewaltsamkeiten würden noch schärfer hervortreten, ja, gewisse Situationen und Charaktere vielleicht unmöglich machen. Nun aber geht ein großer Theil der Handlung hinter der Scene vor, dem Leser rückt sich nur nahe, was sich der erzählenden Person nahe rückt, und für jenen Nachtheil, den der Ich Roman mit sich bringt — daß der Leser nicht klüger ist, als die handelnde Person, das heißt nicht mehr weiß, als sie — tritt der Vortheil der ausschließlich accentuirten Sympathie ein. Indem der Dichter sofort auf der ersten Seite bei der ersten Vorstellung seines Helden uns in Sympathie mit ihm versetzt — und dies ist Goldsmith wunderbar gelungen — gehen wir, wie das Sprüchwort sagt, mit ihm durch Dick und Dünn, und nicht sowohl, was er

erlebt und uns spannt, sondern weil er's erlebt und wie er's erlebt, führt unsere Seele mit: das Spannungs-Interesse, die Neugier nach dem Stofflichen, tritt zurück und die Sympathie allein wirkt [...].⁶⁶

Further noting how the Germans continue to remain “zaghaft” when it comes to the “Ich-Roman,” Auerbach not only demonstrates a strong awareness of literary form, but his imaginary description of the a third-person *Vicar* describes narrative form in his village tales. “Ivo’s” narrator faces the formidable task of relaying Ivo’s psychological split between Nordstetten and the Church; he is forced to explain and relate the motivations behind Ivo’s behavior; nothing at all happens behind the scenes in the village tales. The processes of readerly identification function in different terms. Whereas Primrose himself could directly elicit sympathy in readers, in the village tales sentiment is channeled through a third-person narrator, raising an important question: If the first-person narrator is better suited to accentuate sympathy, encouraging readers to partake in sympathy to a higher degree, what does or can Auerbach’s third-person narrator do to encourage sympathy as part of a realist strategy? Or put differently, to what extent can sympathy or empathy be an effect of a realist strategy at the level of form?

The terms sympathy and empathy share in a long, complex tradition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to say nothing of the myriad academic studies engaging them today. And concerning the process of demarcation, it certainly does not help that historical usage has rarely corresponded to etymological meaning. Introduced into English, in fact, as translation of the German *Einfühlung* in the early twentieth century, what is now understood as empathy was more commonly described as sympathy in Auerbach’s day, even as the terms tend to blend together. Sympathy more generally indicates the process by which one shares the feelings of another, though these feelings need not always be identical with the feelings of the observed. Sympathy is an emotional response resulting from the awareness of another’s emotions or state of being, and

⁶⁶ Auerbach, *Deutsche Abende*, 295-296.

thus can also foster feelings of pity or concern for someone else's well-being. Empathy (*empathieia*), on the other hand, indicates the process by which one gains access to the feelings of an outside source. Whereas sympathy concerns a subject-oriented process of identifying feelings and becoming emotionally involved with them, empathy concerns knowing, perceiving, and actually entering (*em + pathos*) into the feelings of another. Based on Auerbach's description of sympathy in the *Vicar*, he appears to be describing a form of narrative empathy (though such a model need not automatically exclude sympathy). The narrator places readers in sympathy with himself ("in Sympathie mit ihm versetzt") and readers follow along until all that remains is a sympathy that disavows its narrative artifice. The first-person narrative strategy, according to Auerbach, places readers in a better position to receive access to the protagonist's feelings and disposition. With a third-person narrator, again according to Auerbach's logic, it stands to reason the process of empathic engagement diminishes in accordance with distance. Thus at the level of form Goldsmith's novel offers heightened levels of empathic engagement, Auerbach's village tales – by virtue of a third-person narrator – would seem to offer less.

But this attitude does not necessarily reflect readers' attitudes about Auerbach's fiction. As we saw in the *British Quarterly* review, the supposed narrative distance to Auerbach's object of representation could make feelings feel more real, more accessible from the position of reader.⁶⁷ By this standard, Auerbach's realism could theoretically offers readers *higher* levels of empathic engagement, precisely because his proto-realist aesthetic drew readers deeper into his fiction by forcing them more deeply relate to the reality described. The process of inference is sure to be ambivalent, and the content of feelings among Auerbach's readers is likely too varied for us to infer ourselves. But it is clear that Auerbach understood the elusive and contingent

⁶⁷ This circumstance renders Auerbach's village tales, paradoxically, more fictional. The more realistic the realism, the deeper readers are drawn into the aesthetic qualities of a fiction.

quality of narrative empathy, and he likely anticipated the formal challenges at stake in his mode of narration. And this leads to perhaps his most surprising innovation as part of a repurposing of sensibility. At the level of narration, Auerbach links his self-aware narrator with the figure of Nazi, inserting him into the homoerotic plot of the tale. In other words, Auerbach was not only aware of his narrative strategy, but he conflates both the Catholic *Siegwart* and the Protestant *Vicar of Wakefield* in readers' imaginaries, betraying the very process by which he reworks a sentimental legacy. The best way to reveal this process is to examine the high degree of power and control the narrator (and Nazi) exercise when it comes to influencing the identificatory capacity of the fiction (and Ivo's erotic development). In "Ivo," the narrator constantly makes himself felt, which not only draws further attention to his artifice, but puts in to question his objective position vis-à-vis the characters' feelings as well.

As we saw above, "Ivo" borrows a homoerotic component from *Siegwart*, ultimately substituting the desire for his seminary friend Klemens for the heterosexual bond with his childhood sweetheart Emerenz. But the coordinates of the plot are such that to pursue a homoerotic relationship with Klemens is to remain wedded to the church, while the realization of a heterosexual bond with Emmerenz (seen as forbidden until his change in career paths) is to choose Nordstetten and a paternal family presided over by Nazi. Though no explicit erotic relationship between Nazi and Ivo ever develops, Nazi's feelings for him are presented somewhat ambiguously, and not without passion. One day out in the fields, before Ivo's Catholic schooling begins Nazi passionately embraces him and kisses his eyelids. "Gleich darauf aber schämte er sich dieser Zärtlichkeit und neckte und schlug im Scherze den Ivo" ("Ivo, 243). The narrator further exposes Ivo's feelings for Nazi in the way Ivo is described as actively seeking out Klemens when he is away from Nordstetten: "Mit erneuter Innigkeit schloß sich Ivo nach der Rückkehr ins Kloster an seinen Klemens an; er mußte ihm jetzt auch den verlorenen Nazi

ersetzen" ("Ivo," 355). The feelings for Nazi Ivo displaces onto Klemens are transferred back to Emmerenz at the end of the story, a function Nazi oversees and encourages. But Ivo's desires are suspect, in that they are the narrator's ideal, Nazi's ideal and Auerbach's ideal. By bringing the figure of Nazi into proximity with the narrative voice itself, the narrator heightens the level of emotional access readers are granted in understanding Ivo's own desires, while betraying his own investment in the process.

Other factors also speak to the process by which readers conflate the text's didactic narratorial presence with Nazi's own didactic presence in Ivo's life. At one point, Nazi presents Ivo with a whip. That it was not Ivo's own father underscores Nazi's role as a socializing force but also his disciplinary and paternalistic presence promoting the author's agenda. And the narrator's idealization of folk life – expressed through myriad asides within the tale – finds expression in Nazi himself. He is the quintessential rural type who enjoys the company of animals, rejects material wealth, and teaches Ivo folksongs and fairytales. The simple, unadorned prose critics praised in the village tales characterizes Nazi himself, blending form and content and naturalizing Auerbach's unnatural blending of that form and content. And bringing "Ivo" back under the sign of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the figure of Nazi shares a lot in common with Goldsmith's Burchell. Both characters share profligate pasts which they managed to reform; both disguise their identities; both are described as benevolent, performing acts of charity and good will; both are outsiders, friends of their respective families with whom they have a falling out and a reunion. Both figures also relate to trees, Nazi's motif is a walnut tree and Burchell's name is a variant of Birchell, reminiscent of the Birch tree. Both characters also sing ballads. Auerbach unambiguously makes Nazi his vehicle for promoting his conception of folk life, just as Goldsmith uses Burchell as a vehicle for his own literary criticism.

But just as Nazi is not the protagonist of “Ivo,” neither is Burchill the primary character in *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Instead, the process of appropriation and adaptation Auerbach employs ultimately announces its agenda in the broader legacy of paternalism passed down from Goldsmith and Goethe to Auerbach, and from Primrose to Nazi to Ivo. Auerbach notes in his speech how the *Vicar’s* narrative strategy carries with it a normative presence and oversight implicated in a curious mixture of subjectivity and objectivity: “Alles, was geschieht, ist von subjektiver Betrachtung begleitet, aber diese erweist sich als objektiv geltende Norm. Der Erzähler als Held ist auch Chorus und Bote zugleich.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, Goldsmith’s readers become children to a paternalistic narration. “Ein Vater erzählt. Der Leser steht ihm gegenüber wie ein Kind, wir sehen die Welt mit seinem milden Auge, und jeden Atemzug von ihm ist Liebe und Güte, er ist das glaubhafte Ideal eines in Wahrheit Alles versöhnenden Humanen.”⁶⁹ Just as Ivo becomes a surrogate child to Nazi, there is clear sense that Auerbach himself is scripting his life and literary pursuits according to this Classical heritage. After all, it is the literary representation of the “Pfarrer” that serves as the primary element Auerbach draws from both *Siekwart* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Regarding Primrose, Auerbach notes “[Goldsmith] schildert einen Geistlichen, kehrt aber nie das eigentlich dogmatische bei ihm hervor, das religiöse Gefühl ist Charakter geworden, nicht Dogma.” Just like Ivo, Dr. Primrose “trägt auch nicht die schwarze Kleidung.”⁷⁰ Ivo, Siekwart, and Primrose are all religious figures that substitute theology and the complexities of ecclesiastical life for a concerted focus on the character-forming qualities of sentiments. And in this way, Auerbach’s village tales mirrors an eighteenth-century Enlightenment call for universalist piety exposed through sentiments.

⁶⁸ Auerbach, *Deutsche Abende*, 283.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 290.

But the relationship between religion and politics is also the key marker separating these three figures, particularly with respect to traditions of *Empfindsamkeit* and the role of those traditions within the domain of narrative prose fiction. While they all fit broadly within secularizing trends in Western Europe, Auerbach's "Ivo" belongs to a very specific social, political, and national context of the 1840s. Ivo is quite simply prosaic, he is Auerbach's mouthpiece for a prosaic politics, and Nazi the custodian and curator of prosaic sentiments. Primrose and Burchell (really Sir William Thornhill), in turn, epitomize Goldsmith's model of ironic sentimentality, which Auerbach understood as belonging to a different era.⁷¹ And Siegwart may well have served Auerbach as a reminder of sentimentality's dangers and limits. Ultimately, Auerbach's village tale posits an altogether different basis for social and political order, one rooted in the consumption of literature, and other forms of aesthetic activity, that carried with it specific political purposes in 1840s Germany. But it is telling that traces of both Catholic and Protestant themed novels find their way into Auerbach's German-Jewish fiction. Given the enduring popularity of Miller's *Siegwart* and Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* during the nineteenth century, readers of "Ivo" very likely recognized the traces of these works in the village tales. Perhaps they would have even been struck by the blending of faith traditions in Auerbach's repurposing of a literary heritage.

Up to this point we have seen how Auerbach's critics read the village tales with close attention to political, national, and literary concerns and we have further seen how the historical context in which "Ivo" emerged also played a role in the manner the text was received. And, further, we have seen how "Ivo" offers an innovative literary repurposing of a sentimental tradition in both English and German prose fiction. On the surface, all of these elements even

⁷¹ In describing Sir William Thornhill's past (really his own), Burchell confirms the presence of this ironic model. He notes "seine Seele litt unter einer krankhaften Empfindsamkeit den Leiden anderer gegenüber" (23).

contribute to political meaning, but my goal here is to show how “Ivo” is much more than story about a young man’s struggle to choose between the secular life of Nordstetten and the ecclesiastic life of the Church. Certainly, the tale relates a conflict between secularization and religion that was a key pillar in the formation of nineteenth-century liberal ideology. And to the extent Auerbach identified as liberal, and to the extent readers read Auerbach’s tale as a liberal critique of Catholicism, then the text can certainly be read as a vehicle for advancing an anti-Catholic model of liberalism in the 1840s. But that is not what this chapter claims as central to the work “Ivo” performed for readers, nor does it explain Auerbach’s unique mode of literary liberalism. I now want to explore the specific manner in which “Ivo” imparted a political function for readers above and beyond the religious contextualization described above.

Allegories of Empathy and Selfhood: Family, Friends, and Animals

Perhaps the most important corollary of the discussion above concerns Auerbach’s self-conscious appropriation of eighteenth-century models of literary *Empfindsamkeit* as a strategy by which to influence his readers. Auerbach understood narrative prose fiction as a means for cultivating and channeling empathy not only within his fictional world, but outside it as well. And this has important ramifications for the relationship between literature and politics in his fiction. Auerbach did not write the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* to index, mirror, or reflect village life in the 1840s, he wrote them to shape and regulate his readers’ sentiments, attuning them to his humanistic Enlightenment values of universalist piety and “Menschenliebe.” It is within this context that Auerbach’s literary liberalism operates. The various episodes depicting Ivo’s development can be understood as exercises of selfhood for Ivo, which readers participate in through a process of narrative empathy. In this section, I explore three such exercises, examining Ivo’s affective relationships with family, friends, and animals. In all three of these

groupings, Auerbach self-consciously realizes Ivo's social relationships through sentiments, carefully regulating, directing, and even blocking them in the process. It should also come as no surprise that his choice of material in this regard intersects with both *Sieghart* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Ivo's male friends in seminary, which serve as a lesson in empathic distress, also hint at *Sieghart's* legacy and Auerbach's uses of animals to track Ivo's emotional development and block sympathetic identification has parallels in Goldsmith's text. Finally, it is worth noting that because all three exercises are concerned with Ivo's *Bildung*, they speak to a broader metaphoric structure and figural strategy in the text as well. In using family, friends, and animals to speak of something else entirely – Ivo's emotions, and readers emotions – these exercises can also be understood as allegories.⁷²

We have already seen the key role Nazi plays in Ivo's life as a paternalistic figure who merges with the narrator himself and how an undisciplined homoerotic relationship with Klemens threatens this role in key ways. It is worth looking a bit closer at Ivo's relationship to his family, to his mother and father, however, because they are crucial for generating affect between characters and among readers. Recalling Ivo's "thoroughly religious mother," Auerbach actually embeds the religious-secular conflict she embodies into the narrative of Ivo's primary socialization. In one particular episode, her penchant for superstition becomes the object of ridicule as the children of Oberamtman Rellings – a petty bureaucrat introduced in another tale – relate to their father how Christine keeps a horseshoe nailed to their door to ward off evil spirits. Rellings, who labels her "ein hirnloser Aberglaube" and who considers himself a "free

⁷² Herein lies my biggest objection to Franco Moretti's "distant reading" of the village tales as literary history. He defigurizes them, removing the concrete acts of reading that I contend were crucial to their historical importance. Moretti's model does not allow for a literary form of liberalism, in the way this chapter conceives of it.

thinker” casts his rejection of such practices as part of a secular project of *Bildung*.⁷³ Against the background of calls for the state to assume a heavier hand in religious matters (such as the selection of parish pastors and priests over whom they could exercise control), coupled with the broad popular support ultramontanists received from German peasants, this particular scene might have resonated with a reader looking to distill an agenda from Auerbach’s tale – and we know from the reviews above that nineteenth-century readers could and often did approach his fiction through such an ideological lens. So when the narrator notes how Ivo acquires hatred for Rellings (“einen gründlichen Haß”), readers attuned to Ivo’s emotional development experience a macro-level political and religious conflict as a function of a son’s relationship to his mother. In other words, the debate about the content of religion plays itself out through the affective economy encompassing an oedipal relationship.

Furthermore, the hatred Ivo expresses for Rellings appears to the reader as a judgment Ivo feels, made all the more noteworthy by Rellings’ own lack of feeling and unawareness. After the insults against his mother, “Ivo zitterte auf seinem Stuhle. Es schnitt ihm tief durch die Seele” (“Ivo,” 278). His bodily sensations suggest Rellings’s comments do not stand in accordance with Ivo’s values and well-being, in this case they clash with the understanding of his mother as a refuge of affection, not superstition. “Gegen den Oberamtmann aber faßte [Ivo] einen gründlichen Haß, er sah ihn grimmig an. Dieser schien nichts davon zu verspüren.” As someone who lacks the emotional intelligence to realize the visible anger of the person across from him, the narrator places Rellings outside of a community of feeling. The widespread dislike for bureaucrats in the village tales more broadly, which Twellmann suggests helped constitute a particular moment of “Volkswiderstand” in the 1840s, largely plays itself in terms of feeling in

⁷³ “Der Oberamtmann, der sich gern in religiösen Dingen als freidenkend zeigte, weil das nicht gegen ein ausdrückliches Verbot im Gesetze war, sondern sogar zur Bildung gehörte, sagte: »Was dummes Zeug! Das ist ein hirnloser Aberglaube. Laßt euch von einem einfältigen Bauernweib nichts aufbinden” (“Ivo,” 278).

the story of “Ivo.” Auerbach contributes to the formation of an emotional community opposed to everything Rellings embodies – including his supposed commitment to a purely secular model of *Bildung*, a privileging of reason at the expense of emotion, and a belief in the twin pillars of modernization and progress. In this way, the village tale can be seen to offer a collective emotional resistance to a certain social type.⁷⁴ Ivo’s negative feelings also shore up his relationship with his mother, regulating sentiment within a private sphere and opposing those sentiments to an impersonal civic space.

Forming a contrast to his mother’s “fromme und entschlossene” (“Ivo,” 256) nature, Ivo’s father Valentin represents public Nordstetten and its communal life, signaled chiefly by his carpentry business, monetary struggles, and concern for Ivo’s professional success. This is not to say he is irreligious, in fact, he supports Ivo’s studies and becomes upset when he decides to relinquish them for good.⁷⁵ But where Christine’s religiosity structures the affective realm of a private domesticity, Valentin’s religiosity is described in reference to public and cultural life in the village. He is the one who builds the altar, the physical structure for the Primiz in the first episode. There is no evidence to suggest his father is pious at all, and based on his description of what it means to be a priest, he appears somewhat shallow: “Das best' Leben hat doch so ein Pfarrer. Er kriegt keine Schwiele in die Hand vom Pflügen und kein Rückenweh vom Schneiden, und die Pfarrscheuer ist doch voll Frucht; er legt sich aufs Kanapee hin und denkt sich sein' Predigt aus und macht seine ganze Familie glücklich. Ivo, wenn du brav bist, kannst du auch

⁷⁴ It is also telling no other character garners Ivo’s hatred in the story. The myriad other interactions he shares with members of inside and outside the community of Nordstetten, including the priests controlling his life as a seminarian, evoke very different emotional reactions.

⁷⁵ Late in the story when Ivo comes home from seminary, unsure if wants to continue with his studies, he pleads with his father: “Lasset mich noch ein halb Jahr die Tierarzneischul' besuchen, und dann will ich mich als Tierarzt und Bauer schon irgendwo niederlassen” (“Ivo,” 432). Upset at having paid his education for the last eight years, his father grabs him by the throat and strangles him, and relents only when Christine asserts her affective influence and stops him.

Hajrle werden” (“Ivo,” 215). Because Valentin cannot possibly be referring to a Protestant “Hajrle,” the family Ivo is to make happy must be his parents. In this sense, Ivo’s parents function as a metaphor for Ivo’s selfhood, both as characters and in the way that Ivo’s constant search for their acceptance is a displaced way of trying to accept himself. Ivo’s search for self-esteem in the world at large is a metaphor for gaining parental love that plays itself out from episode to episode in a back-and-forth fashion. This point, too, offers an interesting inversion of Auerbach’s reading of the relationship between children and parents in Goldsmith’s novel where he notes how “Das grosse Thema vom Schicksal der Eltern durch die Kinder ist ein durchaus modernes Element der Poesie.”⁷⁶ In Auerbach’s “Ivo” it is the fate of the child that plays itself out via the parents, with Ivo ultimately finding their acceptance, “denn wenn es einem Menschen gut ergeht, beruhigen sich die Leute gern bei einer Änderung, die ihnen sonst verdammlich erschiene.” The change of profession that Ivo makes brings him happiness that extends to his parents as well, though it also helps that Ivo becomes like his father by entering into the wood-working business and marries a woman who shares in his mother’s piety.

In addition to the metaphoric aspects of his parental relationships, Auerbach also uses animals to reflect on Ivo’s capacity to sympathize. In the fourth episode, “Muckele und Wusele,” Ivo’s father brings home a pregnant cow, an Allgäuerin, who gives birth to a young calf. His father intends to sell the calf to be butchered, but at the last minute, at Ivo’s sympathetic behest not to have it killed, he decides to raise it as a draft animal. A similar kind of sympathizing plays itself out for a deer in chapter five of Goldsmith’s novel as the hunted animal serves a further ironization of sympathy.⁷⁷ But in Auerbach’s tale the cow is taken even further, becoming a motif that parallels Ivo’s own primary and secondary socialization. Readers follow the calf’s growth to

⁷⁶ Auerbach, *Deutsche Abende*, 292.

⁷⁷ See chapter five of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

the very end of the story when a forlorn Ivo, who has abandoned his studies and not yet reunited with Nazi, is sitting on a rock and pondering his fate just as he recognizes the brindle color of his cow leading a group of oxen: “Ivo sprang zu den Tieren und erkannte seinen Stromel alsbald an den aufgestäubten Haaren mitten auf der Stirne, es war ihm, als habe er gleiches Schicksal mit dem Tiere und ginge er gleich ihm dem Tode entgegen, aber er konnte und wollte nicht mehr zurück” (“Ivo,” 313). Building up to this point, Auerbach uses the cow as a recurrent motif to reflect on and track Ivo’s own affective development. This process begins with the calf’s mother (“die Kalbin”) who screams for three straight days with cries that “pierce Ivo’s soul” (the same language is used to describe the effect of Relling’s insults against his mother), and Ivo develops an emotional attachment to the cow, which the cow even reciprocates: “Ivo half nun oft dem Nazi der Kalbin die Füße verbinden, seine Demut und sein Mitleid, das er der Fremden bezeugte, war gar groß; sie erwiderte aber auch, so weit sie vermochte, seine Teilnahme” (“Ivo,” 234). This attachment extends to the cow’s offspring, which the narrator refers to as an “Erstgebornes,” just like Ivo.

The calf and Ivo both belong to narrative trajectories of development, with the cow destined to work and eventually be slaughtered and Ivo destined to acquire selfhood, but the two fates are entwined. Specifically, Ivo projects his ambivalent emotions on the calf which is signaled by the narrator as he describes how Ivo’s childhood affections for a toy wooden horse literally fade away with the fading of the horse’s colors. Those affections are transferred to the young calf signaling a new stage in Ivo’s growth. Upon learning that the cow was sold to Buchmaier for taming as a draft animal (“ins Joch eingewöhnen“), Ivo feels sadness, which he regulates by rationalizing the animal’s fate: “Ivo kannte den Fortgang im Schicksale der Tiere zu gut, um hierüber eine Betrübniß zu empfinden; er sagte daher nur: Beim Buchmaier hat er’s gut, der ist rechtschaffen gegen Mensch und Vieh, der wird ihm nicht zu viel zumuten. Er spannt ja

auch die Ochsen nicht ins Doppeljoch, da hat jeder sein besonderes, das plagt sie nicht so arg, da können sie sich doch regen" ("Ivo," 290). In addition to regulating his feelings of sadness by reasoning about the animal's fate, Ivo empathizes with the animal, by trying to imagine its physical constraints. Here empathy is an imaginary tabulation of another's circumstances. He realizes its well-being would be limited in the double yoke, it would be less free to move around. Although it is unclear if this judgment stems from his reason, his feelings or both, readers are subsequently encouraged to relate Ivo's schooling to the animal's taming. Right as Ivo enters the local Latin school the narrator informs readers that "auch mit dem Muckele eine große Veränderung vorgegangen [war], es stand nicht mehr so fröhlich im Stalle, denn es war zum Zugtiere gezähmt worden. Ivo glaubte, das Tier leide durch seine Entfernung vom Hause, und er war sehr betrübt" ("Ivo," 263). Clearly, Ivo is projecting his feelings onto the cow, for he is the one who feels sadness being away from home for the first time. He is the one being subjected to an *Erziehung* outside of his home.

This kind of narrative deceit also offers insight into the role of didacticism shared by the narrator and the Nazi. The narrator is very forthcoming in emphasizing a metaphorical relationship between Ivo and the cow, and Nazi is never far behind, overseeing this relationship at every turn.⁷⁸ When Ivo is older and returns home to Nordstetten during an ambivalent period at seminary, he sees the cow once again, but the cow no longer appears to recognize Ivo („das Tier aber schien ihn nicht mehr zu kennen, es beugte seinen Kopf unter dem Joch erdenwärts.“) Within the logic of their bond, however, the discourse suggests that it is Ivo who cannot recognize himself. To the extent that Auerbach rhetorically desired readers to see a connection

⁷⁸ Consider this passage: "Besondere Freude machte es dann Nazi, daß auch Ivo eine so innige Liebe zu den Tieren hatte; denn ganz alte einsame Leute oder Kinder, die beide mit ihrer Liebe nicht recht wissen, wohin, wenden ihre Neigung den Tieren zu. Diese machen keine Ansprüche, man hat wenig Pflichten für sie, und besonders erfährt man von ihnen nie Widerspruch, welchen sowohl die alten als auch die jungen Kinder nicht leiden mögen" ("Ivo," 223).

between Ivo and Musele and to the extent one reads a figural transformation into their narratives of development, one could perhaps even identify this trope as an allegory, an allegory of selfhood. Regardless of how one describes the relationship between the cow and Ivo, it is important for the narrator that the differences between them help shape Ivo's emotional intelligence. Auerbach carefully demarcates between humans and animals, limiting the reach of sympathetic feelings:

Ivo, der, mit einer besonders feinen Empfindung begabt, auf alles sein Gefühl übertrug, sah mit Schmerz, daß die Algäuerin, seitdem ihr Junges abgewöhnt war, sich gar nicht mehr um dasselbe bekümmerte. Er hatte noch nicht gewußt, daß die Tiere nur so lange mit liebender Sorgfalt an ihren Jungen hängen, als diese in unmittelbarer Abhängigkeit und in natürlichem Zusammenhange mit ihnen stehen. Nur so lange die jungen Vögel noch nicht recht fliegen und ihre Nahrung holen können, nur so lange ein Junges an der Mutter saugt, dauert das elterliche Verhältnis. Aus dem natürlichen Zusammenhange herausgerissen, oder ihm entwachsen, kennen die Eltern, und besonders die Haustiere, die Jungen nicht mehr. Der Mensch allein, der zu seinem Kinde nicht bloß in leiblichem, sondern auch in geistigem Zusammenhange steht, nur der Mensch allein erhält ewige Liebe für seine Sprößlinge („Ivo,“ 241).

Here the narrator identifies the parent-offspring relations among animals as harboring a kind of violence, at least when it comes to the necessary and natural removal of maternal and paternal bonds. As a result, he appears to indirectly admonish the extension of Ivo's sentiments to animals. Ivo is described as transferring his feelings onto everything, but the effort to distinguish between animals and humans implies the need to perhaps block or regulate the process of sympathetic identification. The narrator hints at an excess of sentiment in Ivo, suggesting his feelings are too strong, that he projects too much when thinking about the calf's mother. It is telling that by the end of the tale, Ivo has no feelings of pity for the cow on his way to the slaughter house. There is not even a sense of nostalgia, offering a glimpse of another extreme – the lack of feeling occasioned by Ivo's homelessness and uprootedness. And it is further telling this passage, and the “Mitleid” Ivo shares with the cow in general, precedes the episode with Oberamtmann Rellings, the moment when Ivo learns to hate. For as much as the narrator works to separate Ivo from the violence displayed in the analogous relationship with the cow, he cannot

hide the violence Ivo experiences as a result of needing his mother to be a loving, nurturing presence and learning that she might not be. What for the cow is an outward struggle with nature finds expression within Ivo as an Oedipal struggle with himself.

The broader interest Auerbach displays in figuring animals, witnessed in most of his tales and especially in *Der Tolpatsch*, always directs itself back at readers reminding them that critical self-reflection on our inclinations separate us from animals. This is perhaps why animals never amount to more than a motif, and humans occupy a more important role in Auerbach's plots. Thus if Musele can be understood as an exercise of *Mitleid*, charting Ivo's emotional capacity for sympathetic projection, while also subtly marking or disciplining the limits of such projection, then the story of Peter and Konstantin explores the possibilities and limits of empathic distress in a similar, yet even more self-critical way. As a subplot within the larger narrative of Ivo's socialization, their story might strike readers as superfluous at first glance. Its content is easily summarized. The two boys, who are also have plans to enter seminary, begin Latin school a year or two ahead of Ivo. They each pass their exams and are planning to enter the cloister at Rottweil (Ivo, alternatively, will attend the cloister at Ehingen) before an accident takes place. Peter is sitting on a castle wall trying to reach a ripened pear, when Konstantin throws a stone to knock it out of his reach. The stone hits Peter in the face instead and he ends up losing an eye. Peter's bodily imperfection means that he is no longer allowed to become a priest ("Ein Geistlicher darf keinen Leibesfehler haben"). The boys eventually reconcile, and readers catch a glimpse into how this comes about.

On the surface, readers might have approached this episode as a cautionary tale about the consequences of jealousy. Given the apparent biblical allusions it seems likely Auerbach intended the scene to illustrate some level of an archetypal fraternal discord and subsequent reconciliation. Such an agenda finds expression in Konstantin's self-reproaches, and his

muttering “Kain! Kain!” to himself every time he sees a stone. That a repressed desire for something other than the pear might have even been at stake for the two young men announces itself in the way the narrator frames their entry into adolescence (and hence readiness to embark on the path to priesthood). He juxtaposes the incident against the sexualized display of the vegetation in the castle garden where the incident takes place: “Das zweite Gras war im Schloßgarten abgemäht, die Zeitlose, bei uns Dirnenblume genannt, weil sie so schamlos ohne alle Blätterverhüllung erscheint, stand einsam unter dem bereiften Grase” (“Ivo,” 279). This thematic would be consistent with the disciplining of desire at work in Ivo’s relationships with Nazi and Klemens, and in this way, Peter and Konstantin foreshadow and mirror Ivo’s own narrative fate. The tragic event “hielt den Peter im Dorfe fest” while sending Konstantin on his way, two narrative trajectories predicting the protagonist’s own vacillation between Nordstetten and seminary.

For his part, Konstantin experiences some form of empathic distress as he tries to perceive Peter’s pain, which results in feelings of guilt, anger, and a sense of injustice over Peter’s loss. He cries bitterly and tries to imagine Peter’s circumstance: “er hielt sich immer mit der Hand ein Auge zu, um sich das Unglück Peters recht zu vergegenwärtigen. Weinend und stöhnend biß er sich die Lippen blutig” (“Ivo,” 281). Although the episode traumatizes Konstantin, there is also a sense that the emotions he exhibits offer a motive for improved moral behavior. In trying to replicate Peter’s blindness, Konstantin tries to empathize, but his subsequent efforts to find forgiveness suggest a tension within this process. “In der untersten Höll' kann man nicht mehr ausstehen, als ich ausgestanden hab'. Ich hab' unsern Herrgott oft darum gebeten, er soll mir mein Aug' nehmen und das deinige erhalten; ich hab' mir, wo ich allein gewesen bin, immer ein Aug' zugehalten, ich will nicht mehr haben als du; gelt, lieber, guter, herziger Peter, du verzeihst mir?” (“Ivo, 281). Konstantin then relates how he wishes he

had lost the eye so he would not have to become a priest. He even suggests Peter has benefited from the lost eye (“Sei froh, daß du nur ein Aug' hast, du brauchst nicht Pfarrer zu werden”). Thus what may have begun as a guilt-induced, other-directed effort to empathize with Peter becomes a self-directed form of personal distress. Empathic concern becomes self-concern, and the struggle to “slip into Peter’s shoes” and understand his pain achieves the opposite effect.

This is telling because the story has clear didactic consequences for Ivo. Three days after the accident, when Konstantin finally builds up the courage to visit Peter, he arrives at his bedside to find Ivo there as well. The narrator carefully frames Ivo as an observer of the reconciliation scene, with Konstantin asking him to go and Peter requesting he stay: “Geh du fort, Ivo, ich bleib' da, wir haben miteinander zu reden” [...] “Nein, laß ihn da, der Ivo darf alles wissen, sagte der Halbgeblendete.” As an observer of their exchange, Ivo appears structurally equivalent to readers, reminding them of their own engagement with fiction and replicating the text-reader relationship in the tale. In this light, the story of Peter and Konstantin is not so much an exercise in stimulating empathy in Ivo (and readers), but a thought exercise for Ivo (and readers) to reflect on the processes and circumstances under which empathy might emerge or might fail. As an allegory of empathy, the text is just as interested in managing the empathic engagement of its implied reader as it is Ivo’s own. This is key, because ultimately Ivo appears only able to sympathize, not empathize with Konstantin. “Auf Ivo hatten die Worte Konstantins [...] einen tiefen Eindruck gemacht. Oft, wenn er so einsam seines Weges nach der Schule ging, sagte er leise vor sich hin: “Sei froh, daß du nur ein Aug' hast, du brauchst nicht Pfarrer zu werden,” und er hielt wechselsweise ein Auge zu, um sich zu versichern, daß er nicht in dem Fall sei; den Konstantin konnte er gar nicht begreifen, und doch betete er eine Zeitlang für ihn in der Kirche” (“Ivo,” 283-84). From the point of view of Ivo’s self-awareness, the inability to grasp Konstantin’s outlook is an admission empathy blocked, he cannot imaginatively tabulate

Konstantin's perspective. The challenge of empathy presents itself as a cognitive and a readerly one. On the one hand, the effort to empathize presents itself as a pro-social phenomenon that can humanize people and bring them together. On the other hand, empathy also appears elusive, difficult to maintain, and contingent upon heightened levels of development. Simply put, it requires knowledge and experience. Sympathy, in turn, is more susceptible to contagion.⁷⁹ The entire episode can thus be understood as an effort to explore the manner in which narrative fiction cultivates and channels empathy for both Ivo's own emotional development, but also for readers.⁸⁰

The more readers Auerbach amassed the more readers he likely engaged at this level of affect. To clarify, this does not imply that all of Auerbach's readers unilaterally hated Oberamtman Rellings, pitied Musele, or shared in Konstantin's empathic distress. Such would imply a one-to-one correspondence between fiction and reality, a direct, unblemished line between text and reader. At the level of formalized affect, Auerbach certainly tapped into a widespread dislike of officialdom, a growing emotional and cognitive attachment to animals owing to a rise in animal societies, and the general traumas everyone has experienced as a result of accidents. More pointedly, Auerbach's fiction encourages readers to reflect on the processes at stake in emotive constructs such as empathy, sympathy, and pity. It does not claim or pretend to directly foster those attributes in readers, though it could and likely did. Auerbach explores the enactment and limits of emotionality as a function of social bonding. Within the overall context of the narrative, including Ivo's development, the key point lies in grasping how Auerbach uses a

⁷⁹ Ivo's inability to "grasp" Konstantin further compounds Auerbach's representation of Catholicism. Prayer, superstition, rituals, family and customs all count as positive pro-social attributes in Ivo's model of religiosity, and they all become the object of sentimental situations, widening the arc of what counts within the model.

⁸⁰ It is worth noting how Peter and Konstantin are two names that might have invoked a religious subtext for readers. Given the centrality of St. Peter and Emperor Constantine for the early history of Christianity, it seems plausible a reader might have connected their names to the two major centers of Christianity, Rome and Constantinople. It is even possible to read their reconciliation as a metaphorical bridging of the East-West Schism.

prosaic politics to help advance a model of universalist piety and to help readers negotiate competing claims against their identities, from faith traditions and nationalities, to professions, family and other social bonds. Few of Auerbach's readers were destined or on track to become priests like Ivo, but Ivo's divided self does stand as a reminder that secularization did not happen overnight, just as it speaks to those aspects of the *Bildungsprozess* that middle-class readers encountered in their own lives, especially the back-and-forth pendulum resulting from social interactions with family, friends, and institutions.

Auerbach's strategy of engaging affect and religious and political content together speaks to the active and formative function Auerbach and his contemporaries accorded literature. This was true in the 1840s as well as in the changing literary and political landscapes of the 1850s. In taking stock of the village-tale tradition and imitative phenomenon, three post-1848 discussions of the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* explicitly invoke references to "Ivo" while drawing attention to the issues examined in this chapter. But the continued importance of this tale does not lie solely in its relevance for the relationship between liberalism and Catholicism, though it would certainly be interesting to explore how this particular tale was received during the *Kulturkampf* of the latter half of the nineteenth-century. Its continued relevance pertains to the manner in which the story grapples with the processes at play within Auerbach's literary liberalism: the legacy of *Empfindsamkeit*, the literary representation of religion, and the formative aspects of the village tale within Auerbach's tales themselves. All three of these elements uncover the enduring work "Ivo" performed for its readers.

Auerbach's and "Ivo's" Legacy in the 1850s

In a review of Auerbach's historical tragedy about the Tirol Revolution, *Andreas Hofer, geschichtliches Trauerspiel* (1850), the actor and writer Emil Palleske notes how Auerbach "hat

sich...von unbewußter wie von bewußter Tendenz frei gehalten.”⁸¹ This was not the case for the village tales: “Den letzten Rest schwächlicher Subjektivität, wie sie öfter durch seine Dorfgeschichten träumerisch unklar hindurchblinkt, wie sie z. B. in ‚Ivo der Hajrle, mit Empfindsamkeit zwischen dem völlig unberechtigten Alten und dem allein berechtigten Neuen steht...hat er von sich gethan.”⁸² Against the grain of many critics in the 1840s, such as Marggraff, who claimed Auerbach transcended the *Tendenzpoesie* of *Junges Deutschland*, Palleske suggests the village tales could not quite escape a subjective presence with political, moral, ideological undertones. He singles out “Ivo,” which suggests he may have accorded it more importance than the other tales. And he also notes conscious and unconscious effects more broadly, further suggesting an attentiveness to the role of narration in Auerbach’s fiction, the principle vehicle straddling the boundary between subjectivity and objectivity in Auerbach’s third-person narration. Palleske also implies subjectivity and *Empfindsamkeit* work together in “Ivo” to advance an agenda. He attaches *Empfindsamkeit* to rhetorical language opposing the old and new, which in this context likely implies a confrontation between the “unjustified” dogmatism of the Church and the “legitimacy” of more progressive, liberal strivings. Most crucially, Palleske suggests “Ivo” vacillates between these poles at the level of sentiment. This aspect not only marks Auerbach as a proto-realist (indirectly raising the question to what extent, if at all, more mature forms of realist fiction are able to free themselves from subjectivity); it also speaks directly to the process that marks “Ivo” as an exercise in political and religious identity-formation.

⁸¹ The centrality of the Revolution of 1848 for the formation of political identities has likely been vastly overstated, but it did usher in a number of popular works of historical fiction that explored contemporary concerns by appealing to the past. Theodor Mügge’s *Afraja* (1854), also under scrutiny in this dissertation, is one such work, and shares this function with Auerbach’s *Andreas Hofer*.

⁸² Emil Palleske, review of *Andreas Hofer*, by Berthold Auerbach, in *Deutsche Monatsschrift für Politik, Wissenschaft, Kunst, und Leben*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Hoffmann, 1850), 127.

An 1854 entry on Auerbach in *Herders Conversations-Lexikon*, a publication designed to compete with the more liberal Brockhaus encyclopedia and a product of the politically inspired neo-orthodox Catholic revival of the post-1848 period, singles out Auerbach's representation of religion as a primary element in the tales. The entry further claims Auerbach dislikes the Church. "In den Dorfgeschichten zieht sich bereits als rother Faden die Abneigung gegen die Kirche durch und die Geistlichen müssen zu Porträten sitzen, in denen bald der Köhlerglaube, gepaart mit derbem Lebensgenuß, bald schwärmerische Bornirtheit oder kalter, berechnender Fanatismus die Grundzüge herleiht. Die Dorfgeschichten sind im Grunde, wie die meisten Romane von Zschokke, eine Empfehlung des Rationalismus für Katholiken, Protestanten und Juden."⁸³

Clearly at odds with the favorable reading of Auerbach's representation of Catholicism by the critic writing in the *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland*, this entry is just as selective in those elements it chooses to emphasize. It's unclear what basis this author has for claiming anti-Catholicism as a red thread permeating the village tales. Only "Ivo" could even remotely be claimed anti-Catholic, and as I've shown, it's attitude towards both Catholicism and Enlightenment tropes is much more complex. The only other tales from the 1843 collection to touch upon religion in any way are "die feindlichen Brüder" and "Florian und Kresenz." In the former, two feuding brothers finally find peace when a new "Pfarrer" forces them to respect one another by appealing to their common humanity (not reason). The story, in fact, omits any information that would help readers determine the "Pfarrer's" confessional status as Lutheran or Catholic. And in "Florian und Kresenz," the "Pfarrer" who commits adultery and reveals himself as Kresenz's father in the final lines of the tale is specifically described as "evangelisch" – the

⁸³ "Auerbach," unsigned review in *Herders Conversations-Lexikon*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1854), 322.

only marker of confessional status in that tale.⁸⁴ In this tale, too, it is not reason elevated over emotion that leads to reconciliation, but a sentimentalized vision of the bourgeois nuclear family.

Thus, it seems rather likely this critic never read the village tales at all, which places him in the company – perhaps at the front – of a long critical tradition emphasizing Auerbach's theoretical writings at the expense of his fiction. And that these assertions appear in an encyclopedia consulted by Germanists throughout the second half of the nineteenth century stands as even more problematic. Critical readings of Auerbach from the 1840s, which emphasize his use of sentiment and traditions of *Empfindsamkeit*, become marginalized or overlooked at the expense of encyclopedic knowledge. By moving further away from the voices of Marggraff, Wolff, Taillandier, we begin to lose sight of the special role Auerbach's fiction played in helping readers negotiate political and religious identities. Even Heine's voice, emphasizing Auerbach's supposedly pernicious use of sentiment and religious tedium, tells us more about the unique role of fiction than a blithe assertion claiming it recommends rationalism. Thus, we also lose sight of the formative context of early German liberalism, the trends and countertrends defining it, including its interest in emotion and inclination as vehicles of politicization. By trying to contain Auerbach's fiction and turn it into an ideological watchword, the very process by which liberalism took shape in the realm of literature, including the complex negotiation of political identities as religion and religious identities as politics, is overlooked.

One critic, writing in 1859, does appear to have read the village tales, perhaps even all of them. In a 15-page exposition on the village tale as a genre concept, Gustav Hauff takes stock of the nearly 20-year-old tradition, referencing the rich genealogy offered by critics like Freiligrath

⁸⁴ So as to underscore the importance of this descriptor, it comes in the closing lines of the work and in such a way as shock to readers given the already established Catholic-milieu of Nordstetten.

and Marggraff.⁸⁵ He peppers his review with elements from almost all of Auerbach 1843 tales, concluding that the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* might not have been so constitutive of the genre after all – to the extent one can even speak of a genre. To be sure, Auerbach “trat [...] als Columbus auf” popularizing the term “Dorfgeschichte” and spawning a vast critical and imitative tradition in his wake.⁸⁶ But in taking stock of the tradition that gave shape to the village tale as a genre concept, Hauff decides that much of the early praise directed at Auerbach was mostly political and aesthetic rhetoric from the 1840s. In this context, Hauff singles out “Ivo” as unique within the collection for the way its “Stellung zur Geistlichkeit” complicates efforts at institutionalizing the village tale as genre.

The key issue for Hauff is whether or not the village tales constitute an idyll, which as readers might recall, was not a large concern for Auerbach’s earliest critics. Hauff’s insistence in this respect stems from an 1857 claim Friedrich Theodor Vischer – perhaps Germany’s most well known literary critic at the time – who suggested the Dorfgeschichte is the modern equivalent of a classic idyll, adapted to fit the desires of reading publics, specifically their penchant for narrative. Noting how the idyll must be “frei von der Culturmüde... Zerrissenheit, Welt- und Kirchenschmerz,”⁸⁷ Hauff clearly sees how “Ivo” is not, which any critic or reader of the 1840s would have immediately understood. Once again invoking Goethe’s well-known definition of a modern idyll – prompted by his reading of Goldsmith’s novel – Hauff has no problem assigning the term idyll to other works from the era. Immermann’s Diakonus, for instance, is an “echt idyllische Figur; er ist durchaus Mensch mit Menschen, Bauer mit Bauern,

⁸⁵ Gustav Hauff, “Ueber Dorfgeschichten,” in *Deutsches Museum: Zeitschrift für Literatur, Kunst, und öffentliches Leben*, ed. Robert Prutz, Vol. 9 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1859), 537-551.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 537.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 549. “Der Vater der Idylle, Theokrit, ist noch frei von der Culturmüde; bei ihm ist, wie Vischer selbst bemerkt, noch kein Kampf des Bewußtseins. Die Idylle muß sich, wie die wahre Poesie überhaupt, von Zerrissenheit, Welt- und Kirchenschmerz freihalten.”

begeistert für das unsterbliche Volk, eingestimmt mit Natur und Schicksal.“ But Auerbach „hat... nie einen Geistlichen gezeichnet, der einen tiefern, nachhaltigeren Eindruck auf seine Gemeinde ausübte. Zieht sich nicht durch den ganzen „Ivo“ der Gedanke hindurch, daß die Lage eines katholischen und am Ende eines jeden Geistlichen eine unglückliche, verfehlte, unvolkstümliche sei?“ Hauff also recognizes the differences between a Protestant and Catholic milieu within the idyllic tradition, but still refuses to place Auerbach’s “Ivo” within it:

Nun spielen freilich Auerbach's Novellen in katholischen Gegenden und Goethe's Bemerkung bezieht sich auf protestantische Landpfarrer, wie denn auch der *Landprediger von Wakefield* sowie die Pfarrer in Voß' „Luise“, in „Hermann und Dorothea“ und die humoristischen, gastfreien und töchterreichen Pfarrer der O. Wildermuth protestantisch sind. Indessen fragt es sich doch, ob nicht auch ein katholischer Landpfarrer in einem patriarchalisch-traulichen Verhältnis zu seiner Gemeinde stehen könnte. Christoph Schmid hätte diese Frage unbedingt bejaht. Wenn aber Auerbach im „Ivo“ diese Frage unbedingt verneint, so mag diese Novelle eine Dorfgeschichte mit einzelnen idyllischen Zügen sein; aber eine „Idylle“ in Novellenform kann sie nimmer heißen.⁸⁸

In addition to reading “Ivo” against Goldsmith’s novel and paying attention to its religious component, Hauff’s effort to place “Ivo” outside of a perceived idyllic tradition sheds light on some of the larger issues at stake in reading the village tales as interventions with literary culture. Firstly, it should be noted that none of the early critics who have come up in this chapter sought to limit or even situate Auerbach in an idyllic tradition. Thus both Hauff’s and Vischer’s privileging of Goethe’s autobiographical writings have colored the lens through which he views literature and literary culture, as was the case for Auerbach, and Stifter, too, we will see. In this context, it is quite remarkable that Goethe’s presence cannot be escaped. The “Altmeister,” as Hauff refers to him, acts as gatekeeper for a genre concept that really only began to emerge a decade after he was dead. But one must also recognize the tentative language in both Goethe’s definition and even Hauff’s verdict. Just as Goethe claims a Protestant pastor “ist vielleicht” the most beautiful subject for a modern idyll, Hauff remains hesitant as to whether Auerbach truly discounts the possibility of portraying a Catholic priest in a paternalistic union with his

⁸⁸ Ibid., 548-549.

community. He relies on a conditional sentence and the modal verb “mögen” to express a potentiality. Furthermore, the certainty with which Hauff places Auerbach outside this tradition embodies a tension very much rooted in the contradiction of terms that a modern idyll is. On the one hand, Hauff can point to Ivo’s alienated relationship with his community and understand how the topos of a “Pfarrer” conceived in this way offers a window into the problem of secularization and “Weltschmerz.” But on the other hand, the “Pfarrer” Hauff references in this idyllic tradition, even Dr. Primrose, hardly constitute idyllic figures. In the case of *Hermann und Dorothea*, the myth of the modern idyll receive perhaps its most iconic and ironized treatment.

The larger point, however, pertains to the manner in which the village tales – especially Auerbach’s *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, and “Ivo” in particular – became the object of a literary culture looking to grasp, define and negotiate politics and religion. Ultimately, Hauff decides Auerbach finds himself in a dead end (“Sackgasse”). “Ivo” can be read as an index of modernity’s problems, but not an idyll. Based on Auerbach’s representation of a “Geistlicher” divided between the Church and Nordstetten, Hauff concludes “Ivo” belongs more to the genre of the novel. And that is precisely what “Ivo” is, a modern novel “voll von gemüthlich idyllischen Zügen,” but full of inner turmoil as well. Discussing Ivo’s character Hauff expounds, “Aber durch welche innern Kämpfe muß der Held hindurchgehen, wie theuer muß er sich diesen idyllischen Frieden erkaufen, einen wie breiten Raum nimmt die Schilderung seines innern Unglücks ein, wie wird der Keil der modernen Zerrissenheit hier schon...mitten ins Herz des Helden hineingetrieben!”⁸⁹ Readers identifying with Ivo are drawn in to this very process, they feel and share in his turmoil. In this way, Ivo’s priestly struggle serves as an allegory for readers’ own “Zerrissenheit.” Hauff overlooks how Ivo’s divided self has much less to do with presenting an idyllic image of “Geistlichkeit,” than serving as a larger trope for readers engaging religious

⁸⁹ Ibid., 539.

debates on piety and secularization or seeking to come to terms with modernity itself. For Jews, Protestants, and Catholics, German readers and English readers, “Ivo” functioned as an exercise in identity politics by self-consciously appealing to the formation of sentiments. The terms of readerly engagement lay at the level of sentimentality, not a theological or idyllic conception of “Geistlichkeit.” In this way, Hauff’s reading also overlooks the narrative strategy Auerbach does employ in “Ivo” to bring his “Landpfarrer” into a patriarchal relationship with his community.

The departure from the idyllic tradition as Hauff conceives of it *and* the novelistic aspects in “Ivo” reveal how the entire debate about what constitutes the genre of the village tale sheds light on (perhaps even indexes) the formation of early German liberalism within literature more broadly. In their efforts to describe the impact of the village tales, critics sought to give contours to a concept by identifying those aspects of Auerbach’s fiction that appealed to their own ideological frameworks. Auerbach found praise and criticism from liberals and conservatives, Catholics and non-Catholics, Protestants and Jews, Germans and Englishmen, even the French. The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the rise of a genre concept in formation, one that helped readers give shape to their own political and religious frameworks for understanding and negotiating the sweeping economic, social, and cultural changes during this period. And as Martin Swales reminds us, “any genre concept has validity insofar as it is allowed to function as a reservoir of potentiality.”⁹⁰ In no small way, the formal qualities and content in “Ivo” together with the reading culture Auerbach created gave shape to the content of early German liberalism as well. Auerbach’s “Ivo” helped readers give contours to their own political and religious identities. Against the backdrop of the public debates between Catholics and liberals, “Ivo” stands out as an altogether remarkable intervention for the way it appealed to literary traditions of *Empfindsamkeit* to appeal to issues of concern for both groups. And even if Auerbach’s

⁹⁰ Swales, 1977, 15

sentimental vision of a liberal community premised on Enlightenment values of universal piety betrays utopian thinking, this vision still nonetheless found its way into the imaginaries of countless nineteenth-century readers, in Germany and abroad.

CHAPTER THREE

German Crime Fiction and Literary Adaptation: Liberalism and Social Pity in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin: Aus den Papieren eines Berliner Kriminalbeamten* (1844)

In a September 1844 contribution to Albert Schwegler's *Jahrbücher der Gegenwart*, Karl Hagen offers a review of Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, providing familiar praise and placing the village tales within the context of contemporary literature. In particular, he notes a March 1844 discussion in the same yearbook by Wilhelm Zimmermann, who had used Schwegler's highbrow, academic periodical to analyze Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris*. Zimmermann had lauded Sue's novel for the way it drew attention to the lower classes through sentiments, and Hagen identifies the same process at work in Auerbach's fiction, reading the village tales as a "deutsches Gegenstück" to Sue's French fiction. It is at the level of shared affect where these two works converge: "Die Aehnlichkeit dieser Schriftsteller finde ich [...] in dem Bestreben, das Volk und zwar die untersten Stände desselben uns wieder näher zu bringen, unser Mitgefühl für sie zu erregen."¹ Incidentally, this might be the only element Auerbach and Sue have in common, because as Hagen notes, "in allen andern Stücken sind sie weit von einander verschieden, so weit, als sich nur immer zwei Romane von ähnlicher Tendenz von einander unterscheiden können."² Sue represents the evils of a "demokratisierte Grossstadt,"

¹ Karl Hagen, "Berthold Auerbachs *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*," in *Jahrbücher der Gegenwart*, ed. Albert Schwegler (Tübingen: Friedrich Fues, 1844), 810. Zimmermann's review of Sue's novel appears in the same volume on pages 199-219.

² Ibid., 810. In light of my discussion of genre in the previous chapter, it is worth noting Hagen refers the village tales as "Romane."

with all its crime, ugliness, pauperdom, and “Unsittlichkeit.” Auerbach, in contrast, reveals “den guten Kern” coursing through the “Volk.” The misery of Sue’s lower-class urban masses finds an antidote in the moral purity of Auerbach’s rural rustics. Given Hagen’s reading juxtaposing Auerbach and Sue, one wonders to what extent the alleged idyllic nature of the village tales was not in fact a product of this very juxtaposition and a response to Sue’s popular representations of an urban metropolis.³

Regardless of Auerbach’s foreign and domestic successes, the kind of popular response *Les Mystères de Paris* received placed Eugène Sue in a class of his own. Serialized by the conservative and state-subsidized *Journal de Débats* from June 1842 to October 1843, *Les Mystères de Paris* had an impact on both French and European literary culture that is difficult to overstate. It’s been estimated that the French book version of the novel had a print run of over 60,000 copies between 1842 and 1844, entering its seventh edition only two years after first appearing *en feuilleton*. Sue’s publisher, Charles Gosselin, even tried to compete concurrently with the newspaper by printing a version of the work in installments (*livraisons*). Outside of France Sue’s novel could not be translated, printed, and marketed quickly enough. In Germany, the work was most famously translated by August Diezmann, appearing in book form between 1842 and 1844 with both Otto Wigand (Leipzig) and Meyer und Hofmann (Berlin). The 1844

³ Hagen, Zimmermann, and Schwegler, three names that have largely escaped scholarly radars today, were highly prominent within 1840s literary and political culture, and not least because they brought Auerbach and Sue into such close proximity. Zimmermann was a close friend of Eduard Mörike – perhaps the era’s most distinguished poet – and author of dozens of historical studies. He was also a member of the 1848 National Assembly in Frankfurt. Hagen, a fellow historian and member of the assembly, wrote for Arnold Ruge’s *Deutsche Jahrbücher* as well as Karl Marx’s *Rheinische Zeitung*. Both were Young Hegelians, as was Schwegler, who edited the *Jahrbücher* from 1843 to 1848. The periodical was a principal platform for authors and scholars like F. T. Vischer, Ludwig Feuerbach, and J. G. Droysen, carrying a high degree of academic clout. Also remarkable is how Hagen, Zimmermann, Schwegler, Vischer and Feuerbach, all trained to become “Pfarrer” before pursuing different careers, making less surprising the superlative praise “Ivo” receives from Hagen (“am Glänzendsten”) and the attention it received from critics more broadly. The 1844 yearbook even includes eight diverse contributions from Adolph Stahr, one of the most influential critics of the 1840s and husband of Fanny Lewald. Stahr also studied theology in his youth at the request of his parents, before becoming a writer.

Leipziger Ostermesse-katalog, however, lists 10 different translations of Sue's novel.⁴ Given the state of the publishing industry in the 1840s – with its still developing modes of production, distribution and dissemination – this kind of popularity was remarkable. And unlike Auerbach's village tales, Sue's novel was deemed important enough by the editors of the *Jahrbücher der Gegenwart* to receive a "Nachtrag" in the same volume as critics began responding to the criticism the novel produced.⁵

The chief formal attribute of *Les Mystères de Paris*, its underlying structure of multiple, interwoven narratives, renders the work incredibly difficult to summarize. Most scholars, however, identify Monsieur Rodolphe – the grand duke of Gerolstein – and the search for his daughter Fleur-de-Marie as the primary plot. They encounter each other in the first episode of the novel, where he is living out his self-given mission to punish the wicked and reward the good and she is working as a prostitute in Paris, but their kinship remains concealed from characters and readers until much later. They eventually reunite, but Fleur-de-Marie (or Princess Amalie) is unable to live with the shameful memories of her past. She enters a cloister and dies of an unknown illness. The melodramatic milieu of this lost-child plot device borrowed from the aristocratic tradition of the family romance, overarching though it may be, could have been considered secondary to the dozens of other plots and subplots populating the novel. Indeed, the chief basis for identifying a primary narrative at all is retrospective and selective, reading the conclusion back into the unfolding of the narrative. Such an interpretive strategy stands partially at odds with the serialized form of the novel, which progressed along with readers' lives and did not always foreground the story involving the loss and recovery of a child. Partially, I say, because Rodolphe's exploits permit and authorize the other subplots. His movements serve as a

⁴ This report from the *Leipziger Ostermesse-katalog* appears in *Der Humorist* (No. 109, May 6, 1844), 436.

⁵ Zimmermann, *Jahrbücher*, 1844, 655 – 665.

catalyst for the representations of social types and urban poverty informing the content of his moral crusade, such as the attention accorded to the starving artisan family (the Morels), whose breadwinner maintains his dignity despite impoverishment, or the avatar-like grisette (Rigolette) whom Fleur-de-Marie meets in prison. Not unlike the third-person narrative presence in the village tales, which duplicitously merges with characters and the author, Sue's narrator merges with Rodolphe, offering frequent political apostrophes on contemporary social concerns (prison reform, poverty relief, charity) which Rodolphe unflinchingly brings to life. Readers have little choice but to conflate sympathetic character portraits in Sue's novel with the author's own ideological endeavors.

This chapter, of course, is only tangentially interested in Sue's novel and his literary recipe for alleged social intervention, its focus instead being on the broader literary culture of adaptation (*Nachahmung*) Sue's work inspired in Germany. Regardless of what one has to say about Sue or his novel, a frenzy of imitators across Europe took up Sue's template and began publishing adaptations of his Parisian mysteries, many of which began appearing even before the final installments of Sue's own.⁶ It was not long before every major metropolis could boast its own adapted version of Sue's tale in the local vernacular. Germany was no exception. In particular, German (and German-American) literary culture supplied one of the largest responses to Sue's work, one overlooked in the most recent study on the mysteries novels.⁷ By the mid-1850s, German-language "Geheimnisse" tales existed for at least 20 different cities around the world: Berlin (1844); Domau (1844); London (1844); Moabit (1844); Oldenburg (1844); St.

⁶ A review by Wolfgang Menzel, for instance, appeared while Sue was still publishing installments, forcing Menzel to withhold a final judgment on the text. Wolfgang Menzel, review of *Les Mystères de Paris*, by Eugène Sue, in *Literaturblatt* (No. 71, July 14, 1843), 281-282.

⁷ See Stephen Knight, *The Mysteries of the Cities: Urban Crime Fiction in the Nineteenth-Century* (London: MacFarland), 2012.

Petersburg (1844); Altenburg (1845); Düsseldorf (1845); Hamburg (1845); Magdeburg (1845); Rome (1846); Philadelphia (1850); St. Louis (1851); Stockholm (1852); Vienna (1852); Leipzig (1852); Pest (1853); Cincinnati (1854); and New Orleans (1854).⁸ An entry in the *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt* perhaps said it best: “Kaum kommt die *Mystères de Paris* von Eugène Sue zum ersten Mal erschienen, da kommt schon Nachdruck auf Nachdruck [...] Da kommen die zärtlichen Mütter und die sentimental Fräulein, die Ladenjungfern und die Kindermädchen, die Gymnasiasten und die Kaufmannsdiener und alle wollen die schrecklichen ‘Geheimnisse’ lesen.”⁹ In terms of an impact on print culture, the reach of Sue’s novel even extended to non-fictional works. It seems unlikely that self-help guides such as *Die Geheimnisse der Kunstgärtnerei in allen Zweigen* (1843) and *Die Geheimnisse der Porzellanmalerei* (1847) were oblivious to Sue’s inventive title.

While Sue’s text has received a fair amount of academic attention, largely thanks to Karl Marx’s famous reading, the adaptations it inspired have been mostly ignored.¹⁰ The goal of this chapter, then, is to offer an analysis of one such adaptation published for German readers in Sue’s wake with the hope of offering a more general, representative argument about the role of literary adaptation and the formation of German literary liberalism. *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin: Aus den Papieren eines Berliner Kriminal-Beamten* (1844), published anonymously in six volumes by Hofmann und Meyer Verlag, was actually one of three different adaptations

⁸ A detailed search on Worldcat.org will no doubt reveal additional German-language mysteries novels.

⁹ “Nachrichten: Literatur der Geheimnisse,” in *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* (No. 9, Feb. 24, 1844), 143.

¹⁰ Erich Edler offers strong summary of the Berlin adaptations, but he is less concerned with exploring the kind of impact these novels had on readers, than in reading them for evidence of a burgeoning social consciousness in Germany. See Erich Edler, *Die Anfänge des Sozialen Romans und der Sozialen Novelle in Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 98-104.

marketed for the city of Berlin.¹¹ The five-volume *Die Mysterien von Berlin* (1844) by August Braß and the twelve-volume *Mysterien von Berlin* (1844-46) by Levin Schubar (Rudolf Lubarsch), both of which draw more explicitly on Sue's title, could have also served the argument in this chapter. The *Königlich-Privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung von Staats- und Gelehrten Sachen*, better known as the *Vossische Zeitung*, ran advertisements for all three.¹² I have chosen to focus on the anonymously published text, however, because its formal qualities, content, and adaptive strategies offer a unique contribution to the terms of analysis at work in this dissertation. Furthermore, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* was the only Berlin-themed adaptation translated into English, which speaks to a larger transcultural relevance. It made its way to American and English readers from a German adaption of a French original, demonstrating both the transnational impact of its content, but also its international success *as an adaptation*.

Like *Les Mystères de Paris*, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* resists easy summarization, a circumstance owing to their shared formal features, which include similar plot devices and moral worlds, the same episodic form, and even replicated motifs. At closer glance, however, the differences between the two works are quite telling, and not only because Berlin has been

¹¹ Anonymous, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin: Aus den Paperien eines Berliner Kriminal-Beamten* (Berlin: Verlag von Meyer u. Hofmann), 1844. Subsequent references to *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* appear within the text and include both the volume and page number (e.g. GvB, 1.50).

¹² It appears *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* was the first Berlin-themed adaptation, with an advertisement appearing already on Dec. 30, 1843 (*Vossische Zeitung*, Nr. 306). Advertisements for later installments of Schubar's adaptation, for instance, appear in the *Vossische Zeitung* on March 27 and December 2, 1844. And, interestingly, an advertisement for Carl Blum's drama adaptation of Sue's novel, *Die Geheimnisse von Paris: Drama in 5 Akten*, appears on March 28, 1844, further underscoring the need for a comparative framework. The biographies of Braß and Lubarsch also shed light on the broader literary culture at stake in the German adaptations. Braß (1818-1876) was a journalist and author of political writings, as well as an active participant in the 1848 Revolution. After returning from exile he purchased and edited the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, one of the principle mouthpieces for Bismarck's politics. Lubarsch was also closely connected to literary circles, publishing widely on topics including Napoleon and the Revolution of 1848. He was also apparently well acquainted with both Theodor Mügge and Karl Immermann. See Manfred Laubert, *Studien zur Geschichte der Provinz Preußen* (Posen: Oskar Eulitz, 1908), 238-240.

substituted for Paris. In *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, the functions fulfilled by the Rudolphe/Fleur-de-Marie nexus have been distributed among several different characters and storylines, and as a result, it is even more difficult to distill a single, main narrative thread permeating the work. The novel's aristocratic-urban slum plot consists not of a father and daughter, but of Fürst Stephan's search for his lost brother Iwan, who was kidnapped by a gang of criminals in his youth. Perhaps anticipated by anyone familiar with the missing-person plot devices, Iwan turns out to be a petty criminal named Schmerles, and the brothers are reunited by novel's end. Tellingly, G.W.M. Reynold's *The Mysteries of London* (1844) also utilizes the brothers' motif as its chief narrative attribute. The two Fleur-de-Marie analogues in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* are Marianne – a captive of the criminal gang, prison inmate, and forced prostitute – and Marie Berthold, a kind of bourgeois false heroine. While the latter meets a tragic death, the former reunites with her father and marries Iwan in a climactic ending in which all the major surviving characters emigrate to America. All of the figures in the novel are highly derivative of Sue's, especially Auguste – a grisette who very closely resembles Rigolette – and the "Weber" family – a near equivalent to the Morels. As I show at various points throughout this chapter, however, the myriad ways *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* deviates from Sue's original were not incidental changes, but part of a calculated critique intended to educate and inculcate German readers in a liberal German politics. The author of the German tale clearly presupposed a reader familiar with the intricacies of Sue's text. His formal innovations and content changes attest to it, which suggests his adaptation is also a creative interpretation that links its political message to both process and product.

At this point it should be noted the various novels participating in the "mysteries" tradition did not constitute a stand-alone literary genre, at least not in 1844 and probably not ever. Like Auerbach's village tales of the same period, these works lacked the systematized

mechanisms of production, storage, and dissemination necessary for long-term reproduction. Instead, the mysteries novels intervened within existing generic contexts and literary traditions. Their political and literary value for this project, and more broadly I would argue, lies in the transnational culture of adaptation and appropriation constituting their formal qualities and content. I am hesitant to view this fiction as an established genre or subgenre, because doing so leads attention away from the formative qualities so crucial to the rise of early German liberalism and its social implications in the 1840s. I see it more as a cultural, social, and political forum within the broader context of the novel (and to some extent even the drama) which emerged to negotiate French literary and political influence and a Classical and Romantic literary heritage in the 1840s. I adopt this view in partial opposition to the most recent study of “mysteries” fiction, which presupposes a genre label, because as I see it, thematic foci, popular success, and an audience’s expectations do not constitute a genre on their own, nor did nineteenth-century literary histories rush to place this fiction within a newly established genre. Urban economies, new modes of crime and crime detection, social critique, serial forms, interwoven narratives: these elements can be found throughout nineteenth-century fiction, even if Sue was the first to link all of these elements in a wildly popular form. Stephen Knight’s study not only neglects the German response to Sue’s fiction, but it relies almost exclusively on an analysis of form and content, overlooking the debates and literary culture that lead to the adaptation craze. The limits of this approach reveal themselves in Knight’s erroneous claim that Paul Thiel authored *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*. Paul Thiel was the editor of a 1987 reprint; the actual author – according to the preface of the 1848 English translation – was F. Thiele, a clerk for the Prussian criminal court who after “exposing the operations of Secret Tribunals” in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* was removed from his post, and then reinstated thanks to his savvy knowledge of the law. But even this claim from the 1845 English translation must be treated with suspicion, given that

A.F. Thiele was widely known in literary circles for publishing a highly popular, non-fictional ethnography of Berlin's Jewish criminals.¹³ It is quite conceivable the translator of the English edition used Thiele's name in an effort to bolster his own sales by legitimizing his translation with a probable source. These details concerning authorship and literary culture are easily overlooked by approaches limited to analyses of form and content.

Ultimately, this chapter argues that a culture of literary adaptation is not only implicated in the emergence of a liberal ethos of social pity in 1840s Germany, but that literature played a decisive role in shaping the discourse surrounding social questions of philanthropy, charity and attitudes towards the poor. Unlike in England where a parliament could debate pauperization, and unlike in France where a centralized government could more easily implement proposals, in Germany the national conversation surrounding the poor unfolded largely in the literary public sphere. And Sue's popular success offered a key facet to this framework, allowing German authors to consider and adapt his ideas for their own projects. By adaptation I am referring to the creative modes and means by which politically minded Germans harvested Sue's literary template, transforming it and repurposing it for their own ideological endeavors, their own literary culture. In the case of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, this involves an innovative appropriation of the *Räuberroman* (Schiller and Vulpius) as well as a self-conscious, engagement with Sue's novel. The entire process of adaptation underscores the hybridity of national (literary) culture, to be sure, as well as national political (liberal) culture in rather

¹³ Up to this point, I have found no independent evidence that verifies the identity of the author. The English preface, composed in 1845 by the translator, C.B. Burckhardt, appears to be the only mention of Thiele as author, which for the reasons disclosed above could be problematic. A.F. Thiele's privately published *Die jüdischen Gauner in Deutschland, ihre Taktik, ihre Eigenthümlichkeiten, und ihre Sprache* (Berlin, 1841) – a rather remarkable work of antisemitism – was controversial enough to have prompted a public response in the form of another manuscript.

complex ways.¹⁴ My interest here, however, lies in the literariness of the adaptive process and I limit my focus to a few key, interrelated elements: characterization, narratology, and a social-realist aesthetic. I have chosen to emphasize these elements at the expense of others, because they were the ones which contemporaries most remarked on and because they most tellingly speak to a larger politicization of fiction and social concerns during this period.

That social issues formed a cornerstone of European liberalism's political imaginary has been well documented. So too has the relationship between fiction, specifically social realism (e.g. Dickens) and the question of how it might facilitate or inhibit moral improvement. As we will see, *Geheimnisse* fiction – and nineteenth-century fiction more broadly – operated on the assumption that emotional responses wrought by fiction could help cultivate an ethics of virtue. Regardless of the origins of this inheritance in sensibility and Romanticism, it was a nineteenth-century commonplace that the literary could affect the living. That literature might have actually done this or that it might have fallen far short of its didactic intentions has been a central question for nineteenth-century studies (especially Victorian studies) for some time. Notable scholars, such as Martha Nussbaum and Gertrude Himmelfarb, have been adamant in their praise for the positive merit of literature, tending to read the long novel tradition as a form of liberal protest against the social order.¹⁵ Conversely, Foucauldian approaches championed by scholars such as Nancy Armstrong and Elaine Hadley argue for a deep-seated complicity in the novel

¹⁴ The kind of productive repurposing at play here would be very much of interest to the field of transnational studies, not least because Sue's protagonist was German and the author was influenced by a German literary tradition as well as French and English ones, but my object of investigation here is limited to the relationship between serialized crime fiction and the emergence of literary liberalism.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The De-moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (New York: Knopf, 1995) and Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

tradition in which readers are unknowingly inoculated into that same social order.¹⁶ Both approaches offer compelling insights into the challenge of understanding nineteenth-century fiction, and instead of overemphasizing the divisions between them, I am more interested in enlisting the support of both. Why? Because nineteenth-century literary culture was itself split on the question of what fiction should do and what it could do.

Die Geheimnisse von Berlin embodies the debate about the uses and abuses of fiction that was as much a characteristic of its reception as its form and content. The novel realizes that literature can cut two ways: that representations of suffering can result in heightened ethical awareness, but that they can also cordon off readers from real-world suffering. The close attention I pay to how adaptation is involved in questions of literary form, and the way literary debates informed the novel's reception, will demonstrate as much. As a self-reflexive literary text, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* is not a work that tries to foster liberal disinterestedness or moral neutrality (though its author might have insisted differently), nor is it one that claims liberal agency as a political ideal is even possible (though many German liberals in the 1840s probably did). Instead, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* is important for how it sheds light on the problems and limitations of such an approach to social relations and political subject-formation as an exercise of literary culture. This specific capacity of fiction to reveal its dual-sidedness might not be exclusive to a German literary tradition, but it is a defining characteristic of that tradition and the politics it promoted.

The argument advanced here deals with complex material, the novels under analysis are incredibly long and convoluted, and the critical academic studies about fiction, social realism, and empathy are far too numerous to synthesize in one chapter. For this reason, I've structured

¹⁶ Strong examples in this tradition include: Nancy Armstrong, *How Novels Think* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) and Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

the elaboration of my argument in such a way as to emphasize the elements most crucial for understanding how the *Geheimnisse* pandemonium helped contribute to the formation of the model of German liberalism I have been tracking throughout my dissertation. This chapter begins at the end of both novels by analyzing their epilogues. Though unavailable to readers during the unfolding of the narrative(s) – a crucial consideration for any serial form – these two authorial statements shed light on the works’ political reception and resonate with the apostrophic social claims persistent throughout both novels. The epilogue is also the place where fiction and reality meet, for once the story is over the question becomes: what now? This, too, is a crucial question in light of social realism’s educative claims for literature, because the end of fiction precipitates a call for real action. Alongside the epilogues I consider reactions to both novels in the French and German contexts in an effort to identify how middle-class readers responded to this fiction. What appealed to readers? What was cause for concern? How did German critics respond to Sue’s Frenchness? These types of questions are necessary because I read *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* as a creative (re)interpretation of Sue’s work, one which participated in the massive culture of critique the novel generated.¹⁷ After reconstructing the novels’ reception, I then turn to the novel itself and offer a reading of the text’s major narrative threads, formal qualities, and adaptive efforts. Here, too, my focus is shaped and guided by three patterns I have identified in contemporary readers’ observations. First, I look at how the author substitutes Paris for Berlin, paying special attention to how he uses synecdoche to promote sympathy among poverty-stricken classes. And, second, I explore the re-signification of Fleur-de-Marie and the presence of female sexuality as both a critique of Sue’s novel and a potential

¹⁷ As Linda Hutcheon reminds us, all adaptations reflect a double process of interpretation and creation, “adapters are first interpreters and then creators.” Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 18.

threat to the order established by the narrator. This threat also reveals itself, I argue, in the way *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* taps into and interprets the tradition of the *Räuberroman*.

As we saw in the previous two chapters, individual works of popular fiction (or works conceived in a popular tradition) performed complex cultural work within a broader literary and political culture. In the case of Heine, we saw how readers approached his novel fragment as a politicization of the reading of allegory that stages erotic engagement as both a literary and political exercise. In Auerbach's "Ivo," we saw how readers responded to his story as an intervention within debates on religion, one aimed at promoting an Enlightenment model of universalist piety. Both Heine and Auerbach harnessed earlier literary traditions for their respective projects, critiquing, undermining, and repurposing those traditions for different reasons and in different ways. We will see how a similar process is also at work in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, how readers were encouraged to consider this particular text as a continuation of an eighteenth-century tradition of crime fiction pioneered by Schiller's *Sturm und Drang* drama *Die Räuber*. But what sets *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* apart from the others under analysis here involves its unique effort to stimulate middle-class pity for the poor. Auerbach, despite his sympathetic portrayal of lower-class peasants, was not interested in fostering compassion for the poor *as* poor. His affective catalyst for social change was instead embedded in an Enlightenment form of humanism that claimed to disavow class distinctions in favor of a common humanity. It is this quality that Hagen praises in the village tales: "Mitgefühl" as means of awakening a higher moral consciousness. Thus the *Mitleid* at work in Auerbach's fiction was directed inward, not outward, it served to solidify the affective underpinnings of middle-class political identities as separate and distinct from the lower classes, even if the religious-cultural component in his message claimed universality. Although overlapping in sharing a similar heritage, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* performs a different

agenda even while it putatively shared the same readers as Auerbach. Drawing on and adapting Sue's template, it assists readers in discovering the poor by dint of sexualized criminality. The novel raises the specter of a secular Enlightenment humanism through romance ideology and crime fiction to bring attention to pauperization in Berlin. As we will see, this process both links and separates *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* from the other contributions in this dissertation and the only way to grasp its relevance for the model of literary liberalism explored in this dissertation is to reconstruct the culture that gave rise to it.

Epilogues and *Geheimnisse*: Fiction, Reality, and Debate in Paris and Berlin

Sue's novel appeared in 90 installments, dragging readers through a 17-month journey before learning of Fleur-de-Marie's death and witnessing Rodolphe's return to Gerolstein. No doubt, Sue and his newspaper publishers took advantage of a commercially lucrative form of literary production, selling more newspapers as Sue's story achieved higher levels of popularity. Though not the first serialized novel, Sue's was the first commercially successful implementation of it. As readers may recall, Heine employed a serialized form in the initial publication of *Florentinische Nächte* as well, but with very different goals. Where Sue and his publishers sought to turn readers into consumers of fiction, Heine looked to readers as producers of his text, offering further insight into his critical politicization of allegory. Contrary to the unambiguous ending of Sue's novel, readers never learn if Maria lives or dies. They are left in limbo, forced to reengage with Heine's text in the hope of discovering some clue that will shed light on her fictional fate. When *Florentinische Nächte* comes to end, the critical hermeneutic inspired in the work really just begins. For Sue's novel and for the German adaption under examination here, epilogues, occupy a related function though they are less concerned with

inspiring textual plurality than in homogenizing the relationship between fiction and reality. As a kind of liminal space in between the fiction of the text and the reality of living, all epilogues, by their nature, raise direct and indirect questions about the fate and reception of a literary text once readers reenter the world of the living. What happens once the story is over? What happens when the sensations elicited by reading stop? What happens when the narcotic supply has run out? Naturally, these questions might be put to a work of serial fiction after every installment, and for the works in question they help shed light on the purpose and function of an epilogue within the context of social realism, at once hinting at the possibility of reliving the suspense and sensations in fiction, but also authorizing (or distorting) what readers just read. In the case of social realism, a mode of writing with an edge of social critique premised on the faithful representation of reality, a commentary appearing after the text strives to link the boundary between fiction and reality – muddling both in the process.

In his October 15, 1843 epilogue to the *Mystères de Paris* – written to the editor of *Le Journal de Débats* – Eugène Sue praised the newspaper for its courageousness and “loyal impartiality” in having published “ideas” contrary to the paper’s own ideological platform. He quotes extensively from *La Ruche populaire*, a recently founded laborers’ newspaper said to be carrying on Rodolphe’s legacy “with as much propriety as moderation.”¹⁸ The workers’ alleged inculcation of bourgeois virtues aside, their newspaper not only offers strong praise of Rodolphe’s ameliorative outlook on life, but backs up that praise with stories about how the newspaper has been able to continue Rodolphe’s work by connecting would-be benefactors with unfortunate sufferers. One such needy recipient was the family of a house painter, who had fallen from the fourth story of building leaving behind a wife and several young children. Sue also

¹⁸ Eugène Sue, *The Mysteries of Paris: A Novel*, trans. Charles Town (New York: Harper, 1843), 31. It is worth noting that most English and German bound volumes of Sue’s novel from the 1840s do not include the letter to the editor, which raises the possibility that it was rarely read or limited to newspaper prints.

claims he received letters from “rich and compassionate persons” who were in the process of realizing Rodolphe’s vision of laborer loans. These outcomes, Sue notes, are great, but more social activism is needed: securing legal representation for the poor, lowering interest rates at a pawn-broker monopoly in France, administering guardianship for parents executed or sentenced to life in prison, and reforming the penal code. Regardless of the veracity of Sue’s claims or his visions of reform, he insinuates real people have become or acted like fictional characters.

Though short, Sue’s epilogue succinctly sums up his attitude towards society and politics while claiming a key role for literature in executing his agenda: Society has bred unfairness, the rich have an obligation to help the poor (*noblesse oblige*), and literature can foster the pity of the wealthy and privileged classes for the poor. Emotion – in the form of sympathy and compassion – wrought by reading is said to have encouraged reform and social relief. As historians have noted, the kinds of contemporary issues and proposed remedies Sue discussed in his epilogue and narrativized in his plot were hardly invented by Sue for the sake of fiction; they were hotly debated topics permeating all educated circles of French society during the 1830s and 1840s. By appropriating these issues and fusing social problems with popular literature, Sue’s fiction came to occupy a decisive role in French debates about pauperdom at a time when popular culture and its representations were not understood as homogenous entities, but as a highly contested terrain for influencing culture. As Christopher Prendergast notes, Sue’s novel appeared during a time of “transformations in the structure of the reading public accompanying and reflecting a profound shift in the nature of popular culture, broadly as a shift from a tradition based on ritual modes of ‘sociability’ to one based on a more anonymous, commercially manipulated culture of print.”¹⁹ In this context, Sue’s epilogue might thus be understood as a vindication for his success and a

¹⁹ Christopher Prendergast, *For the People, by the people? Eugène Sue’s Les Mystères de Paris* (Oxford: Legenda, 2003), 6.

means of discouraging readers from thinking Sue was only interested in making a living. It is a call-to-arms for readers, a plea that their own lives, or at the very least their actions, could and should come to resemble Rodolphe's. The epilogue is a plea for readers to become characters, to live the fictions they just read. Given such bold claims, it is no wonder this fiction attracted so much attention.

Generally speaking, Sue's novel garnered praise among progressives and disdain among conservatives – though it should be noted that published responses involved reasoned judgments, not a simple acceptance or rejection of the text. On the one hand, prominent French literary critics like Alfred Nettement and Charles Augustin Saint-Beuve argued that the novel disseminated revolutionary sentiments, going so far as to claim Sue's novel as a causal factor of the revolution of 1848. Indeed, most conservatives felt threatened by the novel's sympathetic representation of the lower classes. Orleanists interested in maintaining the political status quo and Legitimists who sought a restoration of the Bourbon dynasty appealed to long-standing artistic formal requirements as a means of debasing the novel as aesthetically flawed. On the other hand, republicans, Bonapartists, socialists, and communists, as well as a large liberal intelligentsia could find reason to accept Sue's discussion of the social question in France, even if his prescriptions did not go far enough in rectifying society's problems.²⁰ So for instance, the Fourierist Désiré Laverdant, who petitioned for a stronger civil society developed through peaceful reform, and the Saint-Simonist Eugène Faure, who wanted a complete reordering of society (he manned barricades in 1848), found common ground in Sue's insistence that the lower classes should be the recipients of humanitarian sympathy. These attitudes also appear to reflect Sue's own political attunement that emerged during composition. For what may have started out

²⁰ For an extensive discussion of Sue's reception in France and Germany see the introduction in Hegla Grubitzsch, *Materialien zur Kritik des Feuilleton-Romans: "Die Geheimnisse von Paris" von Eugène Sue*, *Atheaion Literaturwissenschaft* vol. 3 (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 1977), 197.

as a sensationalistic tour of lower-class city life branded as crime fiction increasingly became a work concerned with questions about the lower classes in society. As Peter Brooks argues, Sue in fact became a “socialist” in the process of writing the novel. The positive reviews Sue received from the socialist press (in periodicals like *l’Atlier*) spoke to an elective affinity between melodrama and reform, whereby “the sensationally melodramatic...led to an inquest into the system responsible for the melodramatic contrasts of urban life.”²¹

Given the “*Mystères*” fervor sweeping through France, it is no wonder that Sue’s work invited commentaries from nearly every literary critic, writer and public intellectual in Germany as well. Especially in the wake of the 1830 July Revolution, Germans at both ends of the political spectrum eagerly awaited news of developments in France while also keeping abreast of its literary culture. Indeed, it was within this very culture that Heine’s *Florentinische Nächte* sought its impact.²² Wolfgang Menzel, Karl Gutzkow, Theodor Mundt, Ernst Willkomm, Georg Werth, F.T. Vischer and Franz Zychlin von Zychlinski (Szeliga) all offer significant and extended discussions of Sue’s work. Dozens of other references appeared anonymously in local periodicals and lesser known publications, too, including the very same German-language newspapers which initially published translations of Sue’s novel. By far the most enduring review, and one which has heavily influenced many present-day readings of Sue’s novel, appeared in and Friedrich Engels’ and Karl Marx’s *Die heilige Familie, oder Kritik der*

²¹ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 152.

²² Once again Ludwig Börne’s popular *Briefe aus Paris* and the controversy that ensued with Heine’s critique of Börne’s radicalism took place just prior to the appearance of Sue’s novel. Even the review of Auerbach’s village tales by the French critic Saint-René Taillandier demonstrates the two-way street of German and French literary politics during this period.

kritischen Kritik: Gegen Bruno Bauer und Consorten (1845).²³ As their title indicates, Marx used Sue's novel as a means of critiquing *Junghegelianer* like Zimmermann, Hagen, and Schwegler, who drew inspiration from Bauer's neo-Hegelian philosophy. Marx identifies an obvious and problematic trajectory informing the novel's value system, in which Fleur-de-Marie moves from prostitute to sinner to nun to corpse. She is "saved" only in death. For Marx, the novel's conception of working-class life and potential social change is thus anchored in a narrative that will ultimately never produce change at all (though he took no issue with Sue's representation of exploited labor value).²⁴ No doubt, Marx's reading is lucid and insightful, even if it's true he never actually read the novel and was merely responding to the support it received from *Junghegelianer*. The import of his reading for this project, however, lies in its relation to the other voices shaping the cultural response to this fiction. It sheds light on the mysteries fiction as a forum for negotiating tangled social and political identities, disclosing the socialist basis to liberalism and the liberal basis to socialism during the 1840s. Like so many other critics, the anonymous author of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* took issue with Fleur-de-Marie's fate, only he rewrites her ending for his own liberal, Hegelian-shaped ideology. Marx's reading further proves that the mysteries novels were not understood as their own genre, but more as a genre in formation. As instruments of social control, genres replicate dominant ideologies by naturalizing them, but the critical responses to Sue's fiction are too varied to deduce a dominant ideology. As

²³ As the only published critique of a literary work by Marx, a circumstance that also indirectly speaks to Sue's profound impact, it is no wonder his review has received so much attention. Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *Die heilige Familie, oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik: Gegen Bruno Bauer und Consorten* (Frankfurt: Lit. Antsalt, 1845).

²⁴ Umberto Eco's and Franco Moretti's more recent readings find congruity on this point. Eco writes of a "sinusoidal" structure in the narrative. Umberto Eco, "Rhetoric and Ideology in Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris*," in *Social Science Journal* (UNESCO), vol. 19 (1967): 551-69; Franco Moretti compares Sue's Paris to Balzac's, noting the latter has more "social diversity of plot." Echoing Marx, Moretti writes Sue's novel depicts "not a social conflict but a moral crusade replicating itself at every new engagement." Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800 – 1900* (London: Verso, 1998), 101.

the myriad other cacophonous voices attest, the issues raised in Sue's fiction blur the lines between ideologies, they do not necessarily serve to demarcate them.

Although Marx's reading is helpful in the way it anticipates intellectual voices from the twentieth-century deeply critical of historical structures within society (e.g. Hannah Arendt), there is not much evidence to suggest it actively shaped literary culture in the 1840s. By contrast, we have seen how Wilhelm Zimmermann's review from the *Jahrbücher der Gegenwart*, which served as the occasion for Karl Hagen's discussion of "Mitleid" in Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, did shape discussions of literature during the period. Zimmermann offers a much more Hegelian and approbatory response to Sue's fiction. Specifically praising Sue's "Enthüllungen" of the working classes, he sees moral improvement as a way of life extending from the lowest to highest social circles: "Es ist ein reiner, es ist ein keuscher, es ist ein sittlichstrenger Geist, etwas vom Geist eines Tacitus, was durch diese Blätter alle weht und webt." He continues, "Und warum? wozu diese Enthüllungen? will Sue mit diesen Gemälden des Menschlichen Elends bloß rühren und weiter nichts? [...]" "Er will nichts als die Wahrheit aufdecken, weil er will, daß geholfen werde; nicht rühren, erschüttern will er durch die Wahrheit dessen, was er aufdeckt, erschüttern diejenigen, welche auf ihrer glänzenden Höhe die Nacht der Tiefen der Gesellschaft nicht kennen, oder welche der Reichthum hart, das Glück gefühllos für die Armen gemacht hat."²⁵ For Zimmermann, Sue's greatest contribution to both contemporary literature and society is revelatory. Sue reveals how society has corrupted the wealthy and prevented them from seeing the miseries surrounding them. He bemoans an alleged lack of sensibility in nineteenth-century culture. Interestingly, he even identifies German interlocutors in Sue's work. Like most critics he makes light of the fact Rodolphe is German, but he also

²⁵ Wilhelm Zimmermann, "Der Roman der Gegenwart und Eugen Sues *Geheimnisse*," in *Jahrbücher der Gegenwart* (1844), 204-205.

identifies interlocutors that draw attention to an eighteenth and early-nineteenth century tradition of Enlightenment and Romantic sensibility: “Sue hat sich auch von deutschem Geiste genährt: er hat an unseres Jean Pauls Herz gelegen und etwas Weniges vom Flügelschlag unseres Schillers abgelauscht; es schillert bei ihm hie und da.”²⁶ Schiller, Zimmermann notes, is a particularly helpful tool for a German project of social pity in the 1840s because he also wrote during a time when German lacked national unity, national life, and other successful literary models to copy. “Doch, unser großer, herrlicher Schiller hatte das auch nicht [a national capital], und doch ist er nicht nur ein Liebling seiner Nation, er ist ein Dichter der Menschheit; er war es im Leben und ist noch mehr im Tode.”²⁷ As we will see in the final section of this chapter, this discussion of Schiller operates on a much deeper level in the German adaptation, revealing a deep ambivalence in the novel’s *Mitleid*.

Given the prominent role accorded to discussions of Sue’s novel in academic circles, it is perhaps not surprising that Hegel’s philosophy is widely invoked in discussions of the novel. F. T. Vischer, the same critic who identified the *Dorfgeschichte* as a modern idyll and whose son would coin the term “Einfühlung,” offers a mixed reaction to Sue’s use of “Mitgefühl” by appealing to Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. On the one hand, Sue’s novel is an aesthetic nightmare with problems ranging from an “atomistische, unorganische Composition” to a “fabelhafte Herrschaft des Zufalls.” According to Vischer, things just happen without any sense of direction for unity and the characters are highly abstract, suffering from a lack of

²⁶ Ibid., 212.

²⁷ Ibid., 218.

individuality.²⁸ This problem reflects the larger issue of self-contradiction. “So unrein ist des Verfassers Verhältniß zu seinem Stoffe; [...] so grenzenlos widerspricht er sich selbst; Republikaner, Communist in der Gesamtstimmung, die seine Materie erregt, ist er Absolutist in seinen Grundsätzen; die ungleiche Austheilung des Vermögens, das unendliche Mißverhältniß zwischen Arbeit oder Arbeitsfähigkeit und Genuß, benutzt er als Hebel eines ungeheuren Mitgefühls mit dem Volke, und dieses Mitgefühl tröstet er aus Budget und Apanagen.”²⁹ On the other hand, Vischer is quite taken by Fleur de Marie (“verborgener Adel im Schmutz”) and finds her to be the most important character in the book. He cannot, however, forgive Sue for killing her off in a cloister and ending his novel with Catholic sentiments:

Ein Prinz hat sich in Amalien verliebt, sie liebt ihn auch, er wünscht ihre Hand. Jetzt sammelt sich alles Gefühl der Entwürdigung durch die Schande ihrer Vergangenheit mit solcher Macht in ihr an, daß sie verzichtet, ins Kloster geht und hier vom Schmerze aufgelöst wie eine Heilige stirbt. Daß sie stirbt, mag gut seyn, aber daß sie im Kloster stirbt ist sehr schlecht. Für Amalien gab es zwei Wege: entweder sie kann die Erinnerung an ihre Schande ertragen, der Geliebte verzeiht ihr ihre Vergangenheit, und sie löscht als musterhafte Gattin und Mutter das Geschehene reell im Bade einer edeln Thätigkeit aus. Hiezu bietet ihr die hohe Stellung einer Regentin doppelten Stoff. “Die Wunden des Geistes heilen, ohne Narben zurückzulassen.” Thätigkeit ist die wahre Form, Verbrechen gut zu machen. Ist aber ein Weib zu zart, um diesen Übergang zu finden, ist ihr Gefühlsleben zu tragisch gestört, um zu genesen: gut so sterbe sie. Nur nicht ins Kloster!³⁰

By sending Marie to the cloister, Vischer identifies a contradiction in the way Sue protests existing institutions (“alles Bestehende”) but then concludes his story by representing what he wants to transform. If the rational is the actual and the actual is the rational, such plotting simply does not make sense for Vischer (though for a French Catholic like Sue or for a reader drawn into the complex relationship between religion and politics in a tale like “Ivo,” the ending of Sue’s novel could have yielded different sentiments.) The appeal to Hegel’s philosophy is

²⁸ Quoted in Grubitzsch, 96. As I will show in the next section, I see this abstraction as an asset self-consciously deployed to support Sue’s ideology, enabling readers to more easily deduce social types and thus more easily relate the fictional to the real.

²⁹ Ibid., 92ff.

³⁰ Ibid., 98.

perhaps more of consequence because it reveals an approach to Hegel that is popularly grounded, not the kind of systems-philosophy for which Hegel is remembered today. Vischer identifies Hegel's dialectic of immanent critique as a means of self-improvement, which while not forgiving his attitude towards women, does help shed light on Hegelian philosophy in the pre-1848 years in addition to connecting literary criticism to the process of adaptation. One of the Fleur-de-Marie analogues in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* – Marianne, who suffers a similar fate as Sue's heroine – does not die in cloister, she emigrates to America with her criminal-turned-aristocrat lover. Her wounds heal, leaving no scars behind.

Of course, Sue's novel was also a cultural success well beyond the purview of political philosophy, and the mainstream literary periodicals of the period speak perhaps most deftly to the popular impact of the mysteries novels. The *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt*, for instance, used the occasion of Sue's popularity to bemoan the state of German literature and reprimand the publishing industry:

[H]at es so große Noth um die deutsche Literatur, daß unsre Buchhändler mit ihren Uebersetzern wie die Habichte über fremde Werke herfallen müssen? Sind unsere Schriftsteller so verarmt, daß sie vom Auslande die pikanten Titel borgen, um den Leser zu locken? Oder muß der darbende Schriftsteller dem industriellen Buchhändler zu Liebe Geheimnisse schreiben? Ist das der volksthümliche Geist, die schöpferische Kraft, die Würde der deutschen Literatur? Diese Buchmacherei zeigt weder Geist noch Kraft noch Würde.³¹

Given this rather stern attitude, which finds fault with Sue largely on account of his foreignness, not the content of his fiction, it stands to reason this critic would have been drawn to Auerbach's village tales for the way they depart from Sue by offering a German "volksthümliche Geist." The praise and critique lavished on both projects at the same time and the adaptations they spawned suggests a very strong urban-rural dialectic operating in the cultural imaginary of readers in the 1840s.

³¹ *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt* (Feb. 28, 1844, No. 9), 143.

The *Grenzboten* was the first major German periodical to simultaneously address the emergence of German adaptations while critiquing the culture of consumption it prompted. Noting how the very word “Geheimnisse” had become a metonymy for crime, social evils, and unrecognized human suffering, a contributor to the *Grenzboten* divides Sue’s readers into two groups, delineating them based on how they react to a Berlin-themed “Geheimnisse.”³² The first group, described as a “grosse fette Heerde der Philister” rejects the possibility that social evils exist in Berlin at all on account of a well-organized “Armenverwaltung” and a powerful Prussian police presence. The other group comprises readers like “der junge Sturtzer, der romantische Commis, der poetische Jüngling der guten Gesellschaft, [und] die Dame vom Stande,” all of whom devoured Sue’s *Mystères* with “unauslöschlicher Begierde.” Assuming the imaginary position of one such reader, the *Grenzboten* critic rhetorically juxtaposes Paris to Berlin: “Was ist gegen jenes romantische Aroma, jenes mystisch-phantastische Dunkel, mit dem die Verhältnisse der französischen Hauptstadt umgeben sind, die nackte Alltäglichkeit unseres prosaischen, glatten, abendteuerlosen Lebens, was könnte aus ihm Wohl ein Schriftsteller schöpfen, wie könnte es ihm gar Stoff zu jenen mysteriösen Geschichten geben, deren Lectüre uns so ergötzt und hinreisst.”³³ Going further, this hypothetical reader notes that if an author *were* to succeed in creating German stories of intrigue, that intrigue would remind readers of the novel’s conceit, precisely because their own lives are so prosaic. In other words, the first group of readers denies the reality of fiction on the grounds of a false confidence and the second group denies the fiction on account of reality, but both suffer from self-conceit.

³² A.F., “Die Geheimnisse von Berlin,” in *Die Grenzboten*, vol 3, no. 1 (Leipzig: Herbig, 1844): 13-20. It is not readily apparent who the contributor is, though his initials are A.F. and his 1844 contributions to the *Grenzboten* all concern issues pertinent to Berlin. This raises the possibility that A.F. refers to A.F. Thiele, which could potentially make him the author of this article, and if the English translation is to be trusted, the author of the novel.

³³ *Ibid.*, 14.

After arriving at this conundrum, the *Grenzboten* critic intervenes to claim that poverty, crime, and social ills do actually exist in Berlin, even if not on the scale one might find in Paris or London. In fact, he launches a five-page harangue at upper and middle-class readers in the informal second person, chastising their ignorance about the suffering around them by cogently describing the poor. By way of example, the critic juxtaposes readers' warm beds and full stomachs with the suffering of an "arme Bettler" before describing this poor, old woman:

Siehst Du, mein Freund, das ist auch eine und zwar eine der Hauptseiten von Berlin, Du aber kennst sie nicht, sie ist Dir ein Geheimniß; Du schwärmst für Pariser Geheimnisse und weißt Nichts von denen, die sich in Deiner nächsten Umgebung, dicht bei Dir, in der Stadt, in der Du bist und lebst, befinden. Sieh doch nur dort das alte, schmutzige, häßliche Weib mit den rothen, triefenden Augen, wie sie von den vorüberrasselnden Carossen [sic] bespritzt, so emsig und eifrig in der Gosse nach einem Stück alten Eisens, einem Knochen sucht, muß Dir nicht ihr ganzes Leben und Treiben ein Räthsel sein? Was mag wohl ihr Lebenslauf, ihr Schicksal sein? Hat sie vielleicht einmal in bessern Verhältnissen gelebt, oder ist sie in Hunger und Sünde grau geworden, immer Knochensammlerin, Diebeshehlerin, Kuppelweib gewesen oder vielleicht gar einst eine elegante, stolz einhergehende Dame, ein glückliches, heiteres Mädchen, nur jetzt ein Opfer unserer gesellschaftlichen Zustände?³⁴

Descriptions of the poor such this one fill the pages of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, deliberately conflating the poor classes with the criminal classes, and indirectly reminding readers of the bourgeois antithesis to social progress: social regression. Without being able to pass judgment on *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* on account of not yet having read it (it is unclear which of the three different Berlin-themed novels he refers to), the critic then notes how in recent years it has become literature's job to emancipate readers from their illusions, exposing real-world suffering through fiction. This revelatory role of literature, identified by numerous critics, even finds expression in the prose above as the critic repeatedly implores his readers to see what they have not seen before. But this discussion, together with the critique of Berlin's reading cultures, simultaneously betrays a highly conflicted role for literature signaled by the critic's resurrection

³⁴ Ibid., 17.

of the convoluted eighteenth-century philosophical and literary discourse on *Schwärmerei*.³⁵ Reading this “mysteries” fiction (no one described Auerbach’s readers as *Schwärmer*) hints at the possibility of greater forms of self-delusion, the mistaking of fictions for facts, and facts for fictions. In short, there is no guarantee literature will equate with action of any kind, a circumstance echoed in the way the *Grenzboten* does not ask its readers to help this poor woman, but only to look at her in awe.

In fact, the indifference and pacified image of readers critiqued in and generated by this *Grenzboten* review strikes at the very core of academic debates on European liberalism today, debates that have largely unfolded in the domain of English studies and intellectual history. Recent studies such as Amanda Anderson’s *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* and Elaine Hadley’s *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian England*, utilize literature (among other discourses) to scrutinize liberalism’s broader claims, such as its alleged capacity for helping individuals achieve the levels of impartiality and disinterestedness necessary for enacting social relief. Anderson argues that the cultivation of a subject’s detachment is not only possible, but also positive.³⁶ By way of extension, a critical reader of the *Grenzboten* might study the problem of pauperization and use those insights to serve communitarian needs. Hadley takes an opposing view, exposing what she calls liberalism’s penchant for “engaged disengagement” – her neologism to suggest that for all of liberalism’s perceived engagement with social issues, there was little actual engagement with society at all. Instead, liberalism’s interest in disinterestedness concerns “bodily comportment, modes of

³⁵ At about the same time philosophers began critiquing various forms of eighteenth-century sensibility, there was also an effort to distinguish between the pejorative *Schwärmerei* and the more desirable *Enthusiasms*. The negative connotation of the verb *schwärmen* persisted into the nineteenth century. See Anthony La Vopa, “The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*: On the Career of a German Epithet from Luther to Kant,” in *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850*, ed. Lawrence Klein and Anthony La Vopa (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1998), 87-115.

³⁶ Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

thought, and social organizations” with the prevalence of self-help societies being less a sign of a serious and sustained commitment to communitarian needs than a kind of “aloofness.” As a result, a need arises to formalize politics and rationalize government, not help the poor.³⁷ For his part, Berthold Auerbach would probably have agreed with Hadley’s critique (see his letter to Freiligrath where he complains about institutional forms of liberalism as ineffective). But instead of theorizing literature as a problem, Auerbach, and the anonymous author of the *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, were more interested in exploring and devising strategies that could help lead to literature’s success as a domain for promoting “Mitleid.” They were keen on taking advantage of what literature *could do* well and effectively, namely generate affect and channel it within a broader literary culture to promote Enlightenment values in the 1840s. This does not prove or disprove arguments about liberal agency, but it suggests the terms for a discussion of liberal agency within the realm of literature during this period might best be sought in the critical and creative ways literature grappled with liberalism’s challenges.

Perhaps as a result of both liberalism’s and literature’s publically contested function, the anonymous German author of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* may have felt even more compelled to publish an epilogue. In fact, his epilogue not only interprets Sue’s novel by reflecting on similar social issues, he appears to be mindful of criticism of Sue’s novel appearing in the German periodical press, and in this way offers his own perspective on the perceived role of fiction in politics. The author’s first order of business, however, is clarifying the basis for his literary adaption. Freely admitting his (or her) work suffers from the same “Nachahmungssucht” as every other “Geheimnisse” adaptation circulating in Germany, the author nonetheless feels his work is somehow exceptional. In making his case, he explains Sue’s importance with an idiom

³⁷ Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010), 4n. The term “engaged disengagement” is introduced in her footnote in response to Lauren Goodlad’s book *Victorian Literature*.

typical of many *Junghegelianer*: “Die große Bedeutung der Sueschen Mysterien liegt darin, ein unsittliches Element, das die tiefsten Grundlagen der Gesellschaft zu erschüttern droht, in der schneidendsten Schärfe aufgefaßt und veranschaulicht zu haben” (GvB, 6.182). In other words, Sue’s effort was initiatory and revelatory, he brought to light immoral social inequities previously concealed from the public. And as the author notes, these inequities extend well beyond Paris and France: “Die Nachahmungen seiner Mysterien sind es also in der Tat nur der Form nach, der ideelle Inhalt ist überall – leider! müssen wir hinzusetzen – gleich national” (GvB, 6.183). Identifying a transnational red thread permeating the novels, the author also holds a top-down understanding of what corrupts the proletariat: “der Kampf gegen die Unsittlichkeit des Reichtums, überhaupt gegen alle die Institutionen, auf welche das unverschuldete Elend des Proletariats zurückgeführt werden muß.” Furthermore, the author notes how all of the clubs, schools, and reading initiatives designed to spread *Bildung* are impotent in the face of an immoral aristocracy, because “schlechte Beispiele verderben gute Sitten” (GvB, 6.184).

From the author’s point of view, Berlin’s real criminals are members of the upper-middle class, the owners of production who have been corrupted by their wealth. Corruption is contagious, but unlike Sue, the German author does not criticize the aristocracy, instead taking aim at classes whose wealth derives from new relations within the economy: “Euer Geiz, ihr Gewerbetreibende, eure Wollust, ihr Wüstlinge, euer Hochmut, ihr Vornehmen – diese Laster sind es, die das Verbrechen unter den Unglücklichen erzeugt. Ihr seid die intellektuellen Urheber der Verbrechen” (GvB, 6.185). The repetition and invective against the wealthy classes is so potent here, it’s as if the author completely dissolves actual criminals of their agency. The understanding of how values, practices and beliefs are transmitted suggests an imitative logic which finds concrete expression in the author’s fiction: “Die Lebensgeschichten der Lumpensammlerin, der Rüthmann, der Marianne sind wirkliche Lebensgeschichten, das heißt

aus dem Leben selbst gegriffen, und leicht ließen sich hundert Beispiele an die Seite setzen. Sie alle waren die Opfer fremder Schuld!” (GvB, 6.185). The displacement of guilt moves from individual agents to institutions, impersonal forces, and wealth in and of itself. Forcing readers back into his fiction in search of examples authorizing his claims, the author uses the fiction readers just read as a means of legitimizing his non-fictional claims. The three narrative examples emphasized during this rhetorically embellished point of the epilogue also involve women’s sexual exploitation, not the characters suffering from hunger and labor disputes. We will see in the final section why this is so relevant for the work the novel claims to perform.

In strongly conflating social problems with morality, the author draws explicitly on Hegelian rhetoric prominent in Berlin during the 1840s. So, too, does his emphasis on state institutions as the best way of improving society. In fact, the novel begins and ends with a deference to the state. The title page displays an oft-cited quote by Johann Gottfried Seume (1763-1810), a travel-writer and soldier known for his commitment to humanitarian relief: “Der Staat sollte vorzüglich nur für die Ärmern sorgen. Die Reichen sorgen leider nur zu sehr für sich selbst.” And the author of the *Geheimnisse* concludes his epilogue by appealing to institutions:

Aber der Staat kann noch weiter gehen, indem er nicht bloß indirekt die sittlichen Mängel des Reichtums überwacht, sondern auch das sittliche Bewußtsein der Armut fördert. Dies geschieht zum Teil schon durch die Reform der Institute, die im Roman als schädlich bewiesen wurden, mehr noch durch positive Anerkennung der freien Tüchtigkeit, am meisten durch die Förderung eines freien und öffentlichen Lebens. Wenn wir Institutionen erschaffen, durch welche die Schäden und Übel ans Tageslicht kommen, bevor sie sich zu eiternden Wunden ausgebildet haben, wenn wir mit einem Wort *vorbeugend* einwirken, statt *straffend hinterdrein* zu kommen, dann dürfen wir erwarten, daß zahlreiche Quellen des Jammers und des Elends verschlossen werden. Manche Begebenheiten unserer Erzählung können dies nachweisen (GvB, 6.190).

All of these demands and aspirations were typical of political rhetoric before and after 1848, but this passage is unique in relation to Sue’s epilogue for being much more willing to see a direct correspondence between the suffering characters depicted in its pages and the real-life sufferers

elsewhere. In fact, the author summarizes the narrativized stories in his epilogue, relying on the suffering depicted in the novel to authorize political convictions and ideological assertions. Ideology and the aesthetic share in a reciprocal relationship in this way. For all of the author's claims about reform, freedom of public life, moral character and strong virtues, despite strong appeals to Christian morality, a Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* and a strong "Staat" that might bring an end to the "zahlreiche Quellen des Jammers und des Elends," the author concludes the epilogue with a reassertion that fiction authorizes reality. It is not the institutional apparatus of the state per se that does any of this, but first literature.

In terms of the broader literary-historical context for this analysis, it is important to keep in mind debates on fiction and reality were as much a critical commonplace in nineteenth-century Germany and Europe as academic debates about this literature today. And the idea that the novel might play a major role in shaping readers' opinions and activating their passions for the poor was hardly limited to France and Germany. In large part, it entered continental Europe via England. Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837–38), a work which likely inspired Sue's own lost-child plot device (Menzel claims as much), severely undermined the public image of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and the workhouse system, both of which were supported by Bulwer-Lytton. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), set in what may have been the epicenter igniting public debates about labor and poor, Manchester, encourages well-to-do readers to aid the poor, while simultaneously threatening them with revolution. And Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (1845), an avid exploration of the Chartist movement published the same year as Engel's *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, enlists the same didactic narrative voice found in both epilogues described above. Not only were these so-called "condition-of-England novels" translated into German, they were widely read and influenced an

entire generation of German social realists, including Gustav Freytag, the German “David Copperfield.”

The wide-ranging and far-flung social concerns expressed in the fiction from this period could also be found in many of the other imitations of Sue’s work appearing in Germany, as either German originals or translations of foreign imitations. *Die Geheimnisse von London* by G.W.M. Reynolds, which sold more than a million copies before appearing in bound volume form, adapts many elements from early-nineteenth-century Gothic fiction, while serving as a mouthpiece for Reynolds’ political radicalism. Similar to Bulwer-Lytton, Reynolds has been largely forgotten today but he commanded authority in literary culture in the 1840s, and was widely known for his political activism on behalf of the poor.³⁸ The first volume of his novel, which was twice as long as Sue’s novel with at least double the number of characters, includes both a prologue and epilogue sharing in the similar didactic claims about poverty and sympathy described above. He makes the virtues and vices associated with wealth and poverty the basis for both his form and content. And as readers finish the first volume, he encourages them to return with the promise, “we feel convinced that more than one will be enabled to retrospect over some good and useful sentiment which will have been awakened in his soul by the perusal of ‘The Mysteries of London.’”³⁹

Even one of the other Berlin-themed adaptations of Sue’s novel, *Die Mysterien von Berlin* by August Braß, touches upon these themes in his epilogue by noting, “Die sozialen Uebelstände...von denen wir in unserem Werke gesprochen, gehen von der gesamten

³⁸ A recent BBC radio documentary, which tries to overcome the Dickens-centric view of nineteenth-century Britain, explores Reynolds as the “other Dickens,” noting that he likely attracted more readers than his more-famous counterpart. Reynolds publically attacked Dickens for not engaging with the working classes enough, for not embracing “physical-force Chartism.” Simon Elmes (prod.), “The Other Dickens.” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01k9t7k> (last accessed June 20, 2015).

³⁹ G.W.M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London* (London: John Dicks, 1844), 416.

Gesellschaft aus; wie Alle müssen sie daher kennen lernen, wenn wir sie heilen wollen. Von diesem Standpunkte aus habe ich *die Mysterien von Berlin* geschrieben; mögen Kritik und Leser sie auch von diesem Gesichtspunkte aus betrachten.”⁴⁰ Braß even offers a broader reflection on the popularity of the genre and its impact on real life:

Das Erscheinen dieser und ähnlicher Werke ist ein Zeichen, ist ein Bedingniß [sic] der Zeit, das überall, in jedem Kreise gefühlt wird; — wir sehen sogar die Tendenz der sogenannten Mysterien-Literatur verkörpert hervortreten, und dies von einer Seite, die nicht so leicht durch angebliche Nebenzwecke verdächtig werden kann. Es ist dies die von Preußens Könige angeordnete Wiedereinführung des Schwanenordens. — Die Grund-Idee dieser Verbindung ist die, welche auch Sue in seinen Pariser Mysterien angesprochen hat: nicht durch Bestrafung des Bösen allein das Gute zu fördern, nein, auch das Gute selbst aufzusuchen, es zu fördern und zu belohnen.⁴¹

Established in 1443, the “Order of the Swan” was a medieval chivalric association with a strong religious component emphasizing devotion to Mary. Although the order was disbanded during the Reformation, Frederick Wilhelm IV had hoped to instill a “service-oriented ethos” in his nineteenth-century subjects by resurrecting medieval organizations under the guise of social relief, good works, and charity. The effort to revive the “Schwanenorden” appeared in directives between 1843 and 1844, but the project never materialized, for as David Barclay notes, “liberals and rationalists” were opposed to the King’s desire to see the Order reinstated. Even the Prince of Prussia considered the venture an “ill-conceived expression of his brother's overheated fantasy.”⁴² Though the entire episode owed more to Wilhelm’s impatient efforts to initiate Church reform, it is curious how the author of *Die Mysterien von Berlin* conflates the King’s own charitable efforts with the “Tendenz” expressed in the mysteries literature initiated by Sue. At the very least, Braß identifies a reciprocal relationship between his own fictional

⁴⁰ August Braß, *Die Mysterien von Berlin* (Berlin: Ferdinand Reichardt, 1844), 185.

⁴¹ Ibid., 185-186.

⁴² David E. Barclay, *Frederick William IV and the Prussian Monarchy, 1840 – 1861* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 91.

representations of suffering drawn from real life and political decisions made at the highest levels of government.

In an effort to further probe this clearly fraught relationship between prose fiction and reality, this chapter now turns to *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* itself, examining its intermingled stories of suffering and criminal intrigue within the context of the political, social, and cultural climate of the Berlin in which it emerged. Throughout this analysis, it is worth keeping in mind both the specific and general work performed by the mysteries novels, which were at once cosmopolitan, but like Auerbach's village tales, also marked by a strong local coloring. In the case of Berlin, matters of local politics and social issues (such as the activities of the King) would certainly have been of interest to German readers outside of Berlin, just as the transcultural representation of suffering among the lower classes could and did have a wide appeal beyond national borders. Stories, like "Mitgefühl," cannot be easily contained.⁴³ This speaks to the model of liberalism under examination here, which I claim as central to the literary and political culture of the 1840s. The liberalism at work in the mysteries novels consisted of feelings for the poor wrought by various forms of narrative empathy, feelings with a social and critical edge rooted in a culture of politicized literature that shaped middle-class identity through an appeal to Enlightenment humanism. Today, pundits might use the morose expression "bleeding-heart liberalism" to describe the emotional qualities displayed in this fiction, but regardless of nomenclature, these qualities became a prurient preoccupation of countless readers and authors, and apparently, the King of Prussia, too.

⁴³ James Brophy's research on popular culture in the Rhineland confirms this point. A carnival speech from 1844 criticizing Prussia made fun of the King's goal to reinstate the Order of the Swan. See James Brophy, *Popular Culture and The Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800 – 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 193.

Berlin and the “*Armenfrage*:” Synecdochic Sympathy in the Voigtland

The most obvious change from Sue’s novel concerns the setting of Berlin, foregrounding its localities over those of Paris. While the author of the *Geheimnisse von Berlin* frequently reiterates the same themes and motifs from Sue’s novel, there is also a subtle variation in the process. No doubt, what pleased readers of a German adaptation involved the way Sue’s novel functioned as a pretext for a new repetition that avoided derivation and replication. Readers took pleasure in seeing the names of their streets, parks, newspapers, and landmarks brought to life in a repetitive, yet different fiction. This section of the chapter traces this process against the backdrop of the novel’s engagement with Berlin’s lower classes. Historically, Berlin was not home to the same levels of poverty as London or Paris, but it did have enough displaced laborers and outbreaks of cholera to render poverty and crime an issue.⁴⁴ In fact, at the same time *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* appeared in bookstores and lending libraries (Jan. 1844), *Die Vossische Zeitung* ran a cover story titled “Berlin und der Pauperismus.”⁴⁵ And we will see below how non-literary voices, such as Bettina von Arnim’s social plea “...*dies Buch gehört dem König*” (1842-43) also drew attention to Berlin’s poor. The primary goal of this section then is to explore the novel’s synecdochic model of sympathy as it relates to these classes, specifically weavers. In particular, I highlight a tension between the didactic, empirical descriptions and moralizing claims of the third-person narrator and the need to elicit sympathy for the lower classes. This tension, I argue, is partially resolved by blending sentimentality with synecdoche, a literary trope allied with social realism’s mimetic claims of equivalency. In the final section of this chapter, we

⁴⁴ The January 5, 1844 issue of *Die Vossische Zeitung* offered an extended reportage on the issue of poverty in Berlin.

⁴⁵ *Die Vossische Zeitung*, no. 8, Jan. 5, 1844.

will see how this model is challenged by representations of women – the same women the author repeatedly appeals to in his epilogue.

While some contemporary critics of *Geheimnisse* adaptations suggested Paris was simply mapped out onto other urban ethnographies, the reading experience suggests several deviations from Sue's model. First, the novel foregrounds Berlin localities in such a way that draws attention to a distinctive spatial semantics structuring the larger social (and political) concerns of the story, which are decidedly German. "Berlin besteht eigentlich aus zwei Städten, einer grösseren, der wirklichen Residenzstadt, und einer kleineren, dem Voigtlande" (GvB, 1.19). Clearly, the author imagines a national audience unfamiliar with the city of Berlin, one to whom the Voigtland is foreign/other, which tellingly corroborates the claims of the *Grenzboten* critic.

The description continues:

Während man in der Residenzstadt und den übrigen Vorstädten fast nur drei- und vierstöckige Gebäude und schön gepflasterte Straßen mit blendenden Gaslaternen erblickt, sieht man im Voigtland nur schmutzige Oellampen, ungepflasterte Straßen, deren Koth ganze Armeen verschlingen könnte, und kleine einstöckige Häuser, welche ohne Kellerraum tief in die Erde hineingebauet sind, und in deren unförmliche Dachfenster jeder nur ziemlich ausgewachsene Mann bequem hinein schauen vermag (GvB, 1.19).

Though this sketch renders the assignment of class distinctions within these two spheres almost effortless, it is worth stating how the contrasting architecture within the city simultaneously reflects both the possibility for mobility and social advancement as well as the near impossibility of mobility and subsequent social stagnation. The roads in the Residenzstadt easily allow for horizontal movement and the houses indicate a positive potential for vertical mobility (and foreshadowing the potential for negative falling), whereas in the Voigtland all potentialities are drained of positivity. The mud could mire whole armies and the one-story houses form a single flat line, occupying the very same ground as the abject. These dwellings are also apparently conducive to supervision. The misshapen garret window lacking *form* contrasts with the full-grown (*formed*) man who becomes a literal spectator, comfortably observing a private realm

which can only fascinate him, and by extension, readers, because it is not his own. Thus while the rhetoric in this description strives to impart a foreign/other quality to the Voigtland, it stands in conflict with a desire to watch, know and possess this foreign space, to be in proximity with it. This tension between rhetoric and description is also subtly realized in the author's initial mention of the Residenzstadt as "wirklich," an adjective separating the actual, middle-class part of the city from its poor "other" part, while embedding it into realist framework. The part of the city readers are expected to know is real, the part of the city readers are unfamiliar with shares qualities with the unreal, the fantastical, the exotic.

But there is an even deeper function at work in the author's careful description of the poor district of Berlin. The Voigtland, as Berliners would have known, was usually referred to as the "Rosentahler Vorstadt," but the author self-consciously invokes the district's more politicized signifier throughout his novel. The name traces its origins to the mid-eighteenth century (1752) when Frederick the Great began to recruit laborers from the actual Voigtland (present day Saxony and parts of the Czech Republic) for summer construction projects. Recognizing the economic benefits of long-term residency, he had simple housing built for the workers, but with overcrowding and industrialization in the nineteenth century the area became a flashpoint for social critique. In the socio-political imaginary of the 1840s, Berlin's Voigtland (today the area around the Nord-Bahnhof, formerly Stettiner Bahnhof) functioned metonymically for the social misery of the laboring classes, a circumstance that found its most well-known articulation in Bettina von Arnim's (1785-1859) "...*dies Buch gehört dem König*" (1842-43).⁴⁶ Famous for her literary connections as well as her social engagement among Berlin's poor houses during the

⁴⁶ Erich Edler draws attention to von Arnim's book in relation to the Berlin mysteries adaptations. Bettina von Arnim, "...*dies Buch gehört dem König*," (Berlin: Arnim's Verlag, 1852). The granddaughter of Sophie von La Roche, von Arnim insisted on equality of political representation for women and Jews that was in many ways typical for a blending of *Frühsozialismus* and *Frühliberalismus* in Europe during the period.

cholera epidemic of the 1830s, von Arnim felt a strong state was the best means for helping the poor, which is why she pleaded directly to the King. The following passage is representative of the political ethos advanced in her book, and one shared in large part by the anonymous author of

Die Geheimnisse von Berlin:

Wer ist des Staates Untertan? Der Arme ist es! – Nicht der Reiche auch? – Nein, denn seine Basis ist Selbstbesitz und seine Überzeugung, daß er nur sich angehöre! – Den Armen fesseln die Schwäche, die gebundenen Kräfte an seine Stelle. – Die Unersättlichkeit, der Hochmut, die Usurpation fesseln den Reichen an die seine. Sollten die gerechten Ansprüche des Armen anerkannt werden, dann wird er mit unzerreißbaren Banden der Blutsverwandtschaft am Vaterlandsboden hängen, der seine Kräfte der Selbsterhaltung weckt und nährt, denn die Armen sind ein gemeinsam Volk, aber die Reichen sind nicht ein gemeinsam Volk, da ist jeder für sich und nur dann sind sie gemeinsam, wenn sie eine Beute teilen auf Kosten des Volkes.⁴⁷

The ideal state for von Arnim was chiefly monarchical (she desired a *Volkskönig*), which explains why her 1843 writings on social welfare appear as social critique built into a fictitious conversation between Goethe's mother and the king's mother. Her goal with the work was to enlighten Frederick Wilhelm IV and encourage reform, though unlike the mysteries novels, her didacticism was not mixed with sentimental romance or Gothic motifs. It reads more like a work of non-fictional social critique, similar to Gutzkow's *Die Zeitgenossen*. Indeed, the final section of the book, "Erfahrungen eines Jungen Schweizers im Voigtlande," consists of several dozen non-fictional biographies of Voigtländer written by Heinrich Grunholzer, a young Swiss ethnographer whom von Arnim met at a birthday party for Wilhelm Grimm. In describing weavers with no work, wood-cutters with broken legs, and families still feeling the devastating effects of the cholera epidemic, Grunholzer's discussion offers a candid portrait of life in the Voigtland. While there is no literary or extra-literary evidence to suggest the author of the *Geheimnisse von Berlin* was familiar with von Arnim's work, there is no smoking gun to suggest he was unfamiliar with it either. Both works seize on the issue of workless weavers, reference shared geographical markers (the Hamburger Tor, "Familenhäusern"), depict unfortunate

⁴⁷ Bettina von Arnim, *Armenbuch*, ed. Werner Vordtriede (Darmstadt, 1981), 101.

families and share a concern with portraying details, right down to the smallest *Groschen*.

Wherever the anonymous author of *Die Geheimnisse Berlin* discovered his material (and von Arnim's book was hardly the only one interested in the *Armenfrage*), the larger point is that both works participate in a culture seeking to inspire pity for the poor in a way that corroborates von Arnim's heartfelt proclamation commencing Grunholzer's account: "Vogtländer, bejammre nicht dein eignes Geschick. Beklage nur die, die kein Mitleid fühlen mit dir."⁴⁸ And there is also a notable difference from Sue's engagement with the social question, one that speaks to an adaptive process. Whereas Sue expects the rich to give to the poor on their own volition, von Arnim and Sue's anonymous imitator both appeal to the state as the primary agent for social relief, perhaps because of a partial recognition that an Enlightenment-inspired liberal ethos of disinterestedness and moral neutrality struggle to succeed on their own. Most importantly, both authors participate in a reciprocal relationship, using creative literary media to spread and promote their social ideologies, using literature to authorize reality, and reality to authorize literature. They render visible certain modes of representation for grappling with (or ignoring) social claims. Or stated more finely, their literature insinuates that readers recognized social realism was never just about reality, but about the high stakes of representing reality.

The didactic narrator of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* offers his own detailed urban ethnography of the *Voigtländer*, which similar to Grunholzer's implies a reader of at least middle-class status. The author first notes the aristocracy ("die Honoratioren") among the lower classes consist of "pensionirte Unterbeamte," "dürftige Wittwen" and "unbemittelte Hauseigenthümer" (GvB, 1.20), suggesting a continuum of social failure in which middle-class readers imagine these representations threatening to include them. Interestingly, this continuum is characterized by a lack of formation (*Bildung*): petty (*unter*) public servants living off of the

⁴⁸ Bettina von Arnim, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 6, ed. Waldemar Oehlke (Berlin: Propyläen 1920–1922), 456.

state, needy women presumably wishing they had pensions, and foreclosed home-owners (or individuals living above their means). The list of vices is long: alcoholism, seedy libel suits, a greedy consumption of coffee, hatred for tax-gatherers, a lack of education and child abuse, to name just a few. The more closely one reads the description of the *Voigtländer*, the more they come to resemble a failed *bourgeois* middle-class, precisely because the descriptions of their habits, values, and behaviors are rendered from the perspective of a bourgeois middle class. In short, the description of the poor inhabitants of the Voigtland is less about the “false consciousness” of the other and more about policing the middle-class identities of readers. It is middle-class readers who are fictionalizing their identities at the expense of an imagined other.

This becomes most apparent when middle class identity stands under threat from the lower classes. The author notes how “jeden morgen [ziehen] ganze Horden räuberischen Gesindels durch das Hamburgertor in die Stadt hinein und verbreiten sich wie die Pest, über alle Teilen derselben. Vom dem Leben und Treiben, welches in diesen Höhlen herrscht, in denen die tiefste Hefe des Volks zusammengepresst ist, vermag sich der Leser, welcher sich auf seinen weichen Kissen wohlgefällig streckt, kaum einen Begriff zu machen” (GvB, 1.24). The direct appeal to a [male] reader is important because unlike Sue’s novel, which also frequently medicalizes the lower classes with disease-like imagery of contagion, the criminalized world of the poor is not conceived of as separate or cordoned off from the rest of the city. In Sue’s novel, the dangerous classes were infectious, but limited to a small district in Paris. Berlin’s lower classes are even more infectious and more threatening. The rhetoric is taken to such an extreme that the novelistic representation is unable to control and monitor that which it is describing. Readers simply cannot imagine it and the frequent examples of criminals overpowering the police that populate the early pages of the book echo a failure to contain what is being described. The author repeatedly emphasizes how his exposition is not a fairy tale (“Es ist keine Fabel”) in

an effort to (re)inscribe the truth value of a purportedly unrealistic description of human existence, which not only suggests a literary genre he imagines as familiar to his readers, but further conflates human suffering with the unreal, fictional world of fairy tales. The unknown, unreal Berlin is made visible and real through fairy tales.

Given this description of Berlin's "other" residents in the first few pages of the book, one is struck by how imagery of the lower classes elicits no sympathy whatsoever. The novel has done nothing to foster pity for Berlin's poor. Instead, middle-class readers feel either physical revulsion and disgust, outright fear or a curiosity for the abject (all directed back at themselves). The text reads like an encyclopedic sightseeing tour like a trip to the zoo. The lack of sympathy here raises a broader point concerning prose fiction and third-person narration of the descriptive kind. Whether real or unreal, fictional or non-fictional, empirical descriptions cannot compete with the emotional connectivity to a given topic wrought by characterization and narration. There is a reason why so many historians living in the nineteenth-century wrote works of prose fiction in addition to more academic-oriented historical studies. Through narrative fiction they could render their subject matter more accessible to readers. A writer of prose fiction stood in a better position to create the conditions of possibility for a readerly position and the complex processes of attunement such fiction could potentially incite. The author needs narrative to inspire empathy, just as empathy appears most real when narrativized.

If readerly positions in *Florentinische Nächte* were chiefly allegorical, and if readerly positions in "Ivo" participated in a symbolic structure, in *Die Geheimnisse*, readerly positions can be understood as synecdochic (though we will see in the final section below how these positions could also be complicated by allegorical effects). That is to say, the readerly strategy at work in *Die Geheimnisse* – and the mysteries fiction more broadly – encourages practices that link individual characters to specific social types as a figural function of literature. Even an

empirical description like Grunholzer's can participate in a synecdochic structure, but what made this fiction a popular success was the way character types were deployed alongside popular devices endemic to the mysteries genre: including sentimental romance plots, sudden reversal of fates (*peripetia*), and complex revelations of *anagnorisis* that link previously unconnected plots. One can already see the contours of this process in the titles of the 103 installments that make up the novel. Characters are introduced and organized according to class groupings, starting with the lowest criminal and moving upward. Episodes three ("Das Voigtland") and four ("Die Erzählung der Lumpensammlerin") introduce the band of criminals and Berlin's criminal underworld. Episode five introduces Marianne, a Christian captive of the Jewish criminal gang whose middle-class origins are not revealed until episode 62. Episode seven ("Der Geheimrath") acquaints readers with the privy councilor Berthold, a libertine and inhabitant of posh Friedrichstadt. And, finally, episode eight ("Der Maskenball") reveals the world of Berlin's upper-classes and Fürst Stephen von Prominski, who is visiting Berlin in search of his lost brother Iwan. As we will see in the next section, the repurposing and resignification of the lost-child plot device with regards to the novel's women was very likely the quintessential element drawing readers into the novel and encouraging them to return for more installments, but other episodes and subplots also worked to foster a synecdochic model of reading. Perhaps the most palpable example concerns "Die Weberfamilie."

Properly speaking, the weavers – "Schlachtopfern der Zivilization" (GvB, 4.81) – are not introduced, but discovered by Lt. Carl Steinfort (Major Steinfort's son) and his grisette-girlfriend Auguste Strauss as part of the unfolding of the narrative. Pauperization reveals itself to readers thus through the erotic romance between a fallen woman and upper-middle class officer in the Prussian army. Readers steadily catch glimpses of their illicit love throughout the early episodes of the novel, a romance which Steinfort's father has forbidden and attributes to the evils of

sentimentality. Not until the appropriately titled episode, “Die Bekenntnisse einer Grisette,” do readers fully grasp Auguste’s origins. Noticeably borrowing Goethe’s famous title from book six of *Wilhelm Meister* (“Die Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele”), Auguste recounts a very different childhood experience that places her in the company of the Voigtländer described above. Hailing from poor, working-class parents who died when she was 14, Auguste’s story has several parallels with von Arnim’s book. And by addressing her lover Lt. Steinfort in the second person, Auguste’s language is directed at readers too: “Eine traurige Kindheit, wie Du vielleicht kaum zu denken im Stande bist, habe ich verlebt” (GvB, 4.27) The climax comes as she relates her struggle to survive and keep her virtue intact, an impossibility realized when her boss at a manufacturing plant where she had been lucky to find work rapes her. In response to her last-minute protest to preserve her innocence, her boss laughs and makes a keen observation that leads to an interjection that mixing narrator’s voice with Auguste’s. “Er setzte mir auseinander, daß, wenn ich wirklich unschuldig wäre, mich doch Jedermann für ein gefallenes Mädchen ansähe. Eine hübsche Wollsortiererin, die nur etwa zwei Thaler die Woche verdiene, könne gar nicht unschuldig sein. Ich war wie vom Donner gerührt. *Weil ich arm war, mußte ich auch schlecht sein!*” (GvB, 4.30) Then comes a switch to the imperative and a different form of address, which could be Auguste, but sounds like the narrator: “Ja wohl, Wehe Euch Reichen, Ihr macht die Armuth zur Verbrecherin, wenn Ihr von solchen Voraussetzungen ausgeht!” Auguste subsequently becomes a grisette, furnishing a comfortable lifestyle based on the realization that society, regardless of the reality, conflates her monetary deprivation with a susceptibility to sexual deviation. In other words, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* critiques the very mechanism it exploits to advance the author’s agenda. Middle class readers feel the pleasure of occupying the position of the rapist, but, because Lt. Steinfort – a paragon of goodness and virtue

– overcomes her past, seeing her confession as a sign of deeper love, readers are encouraged to make the moral choice by identifying with him instead.

Against this background, the weaver family enters the narrative. Auguste is at a pawnshop looking for shoes, when she recognizes “Weber Greif,” a family friend, pawning his yarn for money to feed his family. The pawnshop scene is a staple in mysteries fiction, with similar incidents appearing in both Sue’s and Reynold’s novels. Although Auguste tries to assist Greif by buying the yarn back, displaying heightened levels of empathy in the process, the pawnshop broker refuses on the petty point that she did not have the return ticket. The full extent of the Catch-22 for Greif is realized shortly thereafter when he receives a letter from his boss, a textile manufacturer, demanding a finished product. Appropriately titled, “Es ist leichter, dass ein Kamel durch ein Nadelöhr gehe,” the episode relates how the pawnshop dealer refuses to return the yarn, the weaver’s wife dies from illness and hunger, and the textile manufacturer, who rides in a Viennese carriage replete with oysters and Havana cigars, shows no mercy even in front of Grief’s starving children. When matters could not get worse, Auguste and Lt. Steinfort show up with the yarn and weaver Greif is able to preserve his name as an honest citizen, finishing his project. “Der Weber Greif,” the narrator notes, “ist nur die Bestätigung dessen, was wir oben von dem sittlichen Ehrgefühl der unteren Klassen gesagt haben – einem Ehrgefühl, das vielleicht bald ein stärkerer Träger der Zukunft werden muß, als es bis jetzt Uebermuth, Anmaßung und Selbstverblendung zugestehen wollen.” And in a moment making readers feel even more empowered, Steinfort gives the weaver 200 Thaler to ease his suffering and support his children, pronouncing boldly: “Ich will fortan die Armuth studieren” (GvB, 4.114)

Just how committed the author is in directing sympathy to the lower classes through this particular plot line comes at the conclusion of the romance between Auguste and Lt. Steinfort. Having fallen in love, Steinfort announces his plans to marry Auguste much to the chagrin of his

father, who forbids it, forcing them to marry in secret and make plans to flee for Italy. Major Steinfort attributes his son's antics to fantasy: "Er betrachtete die Pläne...seines Sohnes als jugendlich-romanhafte Verirrungen, denen die gereifte Erfahrung des Vaters ernsthaft entgegen treten mußte..." (GvB, 6.4). The narrator even claims the father is reasonable, equipped with a "Liberalismus der Gesinnung" and willing to see his son marry a "bürgerlich" or "adlige" woman, just not a fallen and disgraced one. Upon learning they married against his will, he throws Auguste across the room and she sustains a head injury, which after a protracted period of several episodes, leads to her death. Her dying wish is to reunite father and son: "Mein Leben hat euch getrennt, mein Tod wird euch vereinen" (GvB, 6.123). They reunite, reinscribing paternal authority into this subplot, but their reunion is short lived when with "wilde Leidenschaft" Carl takes his own life. The funeral procession for Auguste and Carl, described in the crimes and casualties section of the *Beobachter an der Spree*, also includes Greif for Lt. Steinfort had left a testament to care for him and his family upon his death. As all the suffering unfolds, the narrator makes no effort to hide that it is ultimately society's fault. The moral goodness and nobility of spirit exhibited by Auguste and Lt. Steinfort exists separate and apart from their social failings of prostitution and paternal disobedience. But, quite problematically, these good qualities they exhibit – the qualities readers are supposed to carry forth into the real world presumably – exist only by virtue of their deaths.

To be sure, the entire subplot of Auguste, Greif, and the Steinforts is rather overwrought in its prescription of a morality, investment in paternalism, and its use of sentiment. But when considered within a deeper literary and historical context, a few telling features stand out. First, the subplot reflects a need to take seriously sensibility's claims as they intersect with a liberal ethos of sentiment in the 1840s. Literature may have been but one context for debates about social relief within liberal discourse, but it stands out as an effective strategy for fostering a

socialist basis within liberalism and a secular form of charity for the disadvantaged. Condensing this story into a one paragraph summary also does not do justice to the process by which it unfolded along with the daily lives of readers, either. Right next to advertisements announcing new volumes of Berlin mysteries fiction, the *Vossische Zeitung* also included “Wohlthätigkeits-Anzeigen” requesting help from readers for various projects involving the poor.⁴⁹ The reading of periodicals and novels in periodicals was a primary experience for middle-class Germans living in the 1840s, not a secondary one. Sympathy, too, was both a process and product that emerged as a result of the close relationship readers shared with their printed materials. Second, it is also surely significant that it is weavers who serve as the objects of sympathy, especially considering the weaver uprising in Silesia of 1844 (which notably influenced the composition of Hauptmann’s *Die Weber*, 1892). Silesia is not Berlin, but parts of Silesia overlapped with the original Voigtland where Frederick the Great recruited laborers in the first place. And, finally, perhaps more germane to the literariness of the text at hand, the weaver as a laborer hints at a figural relationship between the dozens of interwoven stories comprising the novel’s plot and the generation of sympathy within those plots as a process akin to sewing and stitching. This is not my metaphor, but the novel’s own expressed by the implicit understanding that clothes make the man and sympathy makes his character. Clothing’s correspondence to class identity is what brought Auguste to the pawnshop in the first place, she needed to dress up with shoes to attend a ball with Lt. Steinfort, whereas “Weber Greif” belongs to those “Schlachtopfern der Civilization welche, fremde Schätze anhäusend, selbst nichts haben, womit sie des Leibes Nothdurft befriedigen sollen” (GvB, 4.81).

⁴⁹ The March 27, 1844 issue of *Die Vossische Zeitung* includes one such notice for those whose homes were burned down in Krebsjauche (Wiesenaue) as well as a call to support “die nothleidenden Spinner und Weber.”

Of course, studying poverty is not the same as actively fixing it, even if recognizing its existence – as claimed by the critics and epilogues above – is the first step combating it. Taken to an extreme, one can learn everything there is to know about poverty and without doing anything to fix it, and simply giving the weaver 200 Thaler does not necessarily offer a long-term strategy for fixing the skewed labor relations and social complexities responsible for Greif's hardships in the first place. Perhaps a reflection on these sorts of issues reveals why the author carried Lt. Steinfort's story even further after his death. Going through his belongings, his father finds among his papers "den sorgfältig ausgearbeiteten Plan eines Instituts...um Sittlichkeit, Arbeitsamkeit und Wohlstand und den arbeitenden Klassen zu verbreiten" (GvB, 6.173). And Weaver Greif – who possessed all the qualifications necessary – had been selected by Steinfort to lead the new society, so that members of the working classes could manage themselves ("selbst verwaltet zu werden"). This final act of Steinfort's might betray the author's literary and political agenda better than any other aspect of the novel. It reinforces paternalism and male hegemony, promotes Hegelian morality, labor, and prosperity, and spreads the liberal value of *Selbstbestimmung* (self-government) from one class to the next – all while tapping into readers' sentiments as a means of fostering secular help for the poor.

Rather than read this scene as an index of liberalism's problems or a positive embrace of liberal disinterestedness – approaches which both have value – I want to stress a different perspective from which to consider the resolution of this subplot, which it might be added, notably appears near the end of the novel when readers are faced with the prospect of returning to their prosaic lives. If we take seriously the implicit nineteenth-century assumption that literature could help foster an ethics of virtue, that reading about the suffering of others could cultivate an individual's moral worth through sentiments and sympathetic identification, then the commitment to negotiating both liberal and social claims through literature must also be taken

seriously here. This subplot offered readers a means for negotiating both the claims of reason and affect as they relate to political and social formation – the sympathy they felt for Greif could translate into something more. When read within the mode of social realism, which largely came about in the hopes of influencing the actual suffering it represents, this subplot reveals how reading literature was understood as a strategy for influencing the real world. Moreover, in also representing the antipode to narrative empathy, a novel like *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* shows the opposite to be true, disclosing fiction's limitations in the process of educating readers how not to read. The failure of narrative empathy in unsympathetic figures like the pawnshop broker or the textile manufacturer reveals itself to be much more than a critique of corruption, moral depravity, and societal ills, it is also an admission that sympathetic responses to fiction *and* real suffering need not come about at all. As we will see in the final section of this chapter, the figure of Geheimrath Berthold is a case study in how not to read and the author sets out to demarcate sympathy's limits. But in encouraging readers to view the weaver's poverty as an occasion for sympathy, the narrator hopes his readers will see a real world connection – a synecdochic connection – between Greif and others suffering similar afflictions. This does not mean that readers always made this connection, but at the very least, this process betrays a self-conscious exploration of the novel's own fictional claims vis-à-vis reality.

As a figural strategy self-consciously utilized and thematized in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, and the mysteries genre more broadly, synecdoche is a form of metaphor well suited to social realism's mimetic claims. It relies on synchronic knowledge and direct equivalences: A (the part) stands for B (the whole). The serial form of the novel, which rests on sequentially and contiguity, further serves to facilitate the effect of a mimetic illusion in a synecdochic relationship between the fictional and the real, making “the distinction between the story and plot

‘real’ in the first place.”⁵⁰ And like the narrator in “Ivo,” who encourages readers to situate his protagonist’s *Bildung* in a symbolic, organic, and idealist framework,⁵¹ the narrator in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* also encourages readers link text and reality into one homogenous whole. Taken to an extreme readerly position, this form of symbolism would erase the distinction between sign and signified altogether – rendering the difference between fiction and reality null. It is precisely in this context that Heine’s use of allegory proves so valuable as a readerly position. He produces a critical discourse that maintains the difference between fiction and reality by virtue of the heterogeneity and plurality a reading of *Florentinische Nächte* produces through the complex use of allegory. Of course, allegory, too, can be guilty of mixing fiction and reality in altogether dangerous ways. Heine, and as we will see, Stifter, would likely both agree that a simple, reductive allegory is just as bad as, if not worse than synecdoche. A simple allegory does nothing to challenge readers’ hermeneutic competencies, nor will it produce the *multiple* meanings necessary for a decent politics.

One of the curious features about *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* is the manner in which it too grapples with allegory, or more properly put, allegorical effects. To be sure, the anonymous author of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* sought to avoid a complex narration that would produce multiple meanings, which implies an avoidance of allegory. This is evidenced at least in part by the transparency of his didactic narrator and the ease with which one enters his authorial audience and arrives at his message, which blends the call for institutional reform with pity for the poor. But in the process of re-signifying Fleur-de-Marie – in populating his narrative with so

⁵⁰ Helmut Müller-Sievers, *The Cylinder: Kinematics of the Nineteenth-Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 107.

⁵¹ Recall this passage from “Ivo:” “Es geht mit dem Wachstum des Geistes, wie mit jedem natürlichen Wachstume: ein Tier, eine Pflanze wächst, ohne daß man es eigentlich im wahren Sinn des Wortes sieht. Man sieht stets nur das Gewachsene, nie das Wachsen.” Berthold Auerbach, *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1869), 270.

many women who move between and within social groupings by virtue of their sexualized bodies – *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* creates its own set of ambiguities that transcend its admitted figural strategy. In the final section of this chapter, I explore how crime fiction, narration, and representations of women form a special nexus in *die Geheimnisse von Berlin* that undermines the novel's use of synecdoche as a realist strategy. This challenge to the novel's figural form does not invalidate the sympathetic portrayal of the lower classes described above, but it does add a greater degree of complexity to our understanding of who receives sympathy and how they receive it, which in turn sheds light on the novel's adaptive strategies and its politics.

Narration, Crime Fiction, and Female Contagion: Reading *Räuberromane* in the Voigtland

Up to this point we have tracked critical responses to mysteries fiction and analyzed the primary literary strategies by which *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* reveals and sympathizes with poverty-stricken classes, but we have not considered in close detail how the novel works as crime fiction. In a self-conscious revision of Sue's tale, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* noticeably features a greater number of female characters, primary ones who advance plots. It also accords much greater attention to a police presence – both as an institutional force concerned with policing female crimes of a sexual nature and as a narrative presence. As I hope to show below, women in this novel are sexualized, criminalized, and ultimately domesticized or killed off because they harbor a threat to a homogenous genealogy of male interests and the novel's synecdochic figural strategy. By virtue of their sexualized bodies, women in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* offer an allegorical alternative to the symbolism of synecdoche, signaling a further need to contain their heterogeneity. As we will see, it is not that women are represented allegorically per se (in the way Heine or Stifter allegorize women) but more that the effort to

contain, control and regulate women within the narrative manifests itself as an unintended and allegorical effect of the reading process itself. These unintended effects reveal themselves in the way female narration and female sexuality contaminate all the various social groupings in the novel as well as in the novel's appropriation of an eighteenth-century genre of German crime fiction: the *Räuberroman*. In fact, the appropriation of the *Räuberroman* is best understood within the overall strategy of female containment the novel pursues, not only because the genre models this process itself, but also because the novel conflates questions of reading and authority with female contagion. As a result, the rest of this chapter analyzes the novel's policing presence in tandem with both representations of women and the novel's broader engagement with Friedrich Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1781) and C.A. Vulpius' *Rinaldo Rinaldini* (1797), the two most cherished eighteenth-century exemplars of German crime fiction.

Properly speaking, *Die Räuber* is a drama and *Rinaldo Rinaldini* is a novel, but both works were widely read *and* performed throughout the nineteenth century just as both works receive careful citations in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*. Schiller's drama, in fact, frames an entire episode when two members of the criminal gang are at a puppet theatre watching an adaptation of the play.⁵² And a reference to *Rinaldo Rinaldini* appears in the episode of the novel, when readers learn a police officer is reading Vulpius's novel. In some respects, then, the self-conscious presence of these works could be read as allegories of adaptation in the way they shed light on the adaptive processes of popular fiction in a novel purporting to be an adaptation. Schiller's well-known drama – which relates the fraternal conflict between Franz and Karl Moor – was in fact originally published anonymously and intended as a “Lesedrama” in its conception. And Vulpius's novel, a story about a successful robber captain in Italy, very much anticipated

⁵² The novel has two additional references to Schiller. A criminal sings an adaptation of “Das Lied der Glocke” and Auguste and Lt. Steinfort play “Ode an die Freude” following their nuptials.

the “penny-dreadful” mentality of the mid-nineteenth-century, though it too was performed as a theatrical piece.⁵³ Perhaps somewhat tellingly, all three works – Schiller’s, Vulpius’s and *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* – yielded successful film adaptations in the twentieth century. The key issue concerning the intertextual presence of these works in the novel under analysis here, however, concerns how they relate to the adaptation of Sue’s novel, and how on a much broader level their presence reveals an engagement with the role fiction plays within literary culture, society, and politics. At stake is how these works help thematize order, authority, and fantasy at the level of plot and narration, which we will see necessarily brings these works into proximity with the novel’s female protagonists.

The subtitle of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin, Aus den Papieren eines Berliner Kriminal-Beamten*, links the novel’s hermeneutic to a discourse of crime and its detection, its very form speaks to the function of a police specialist, one needed to decode interpretive tensions and combat crime. The self-reflexive narrator who appears in the novel’s opening sequence links an authorial perspective with readers’ imaginations, specifically male readers, as well as a policing perspective: “In jeder unserer freundlichen Leser, welcher das Glück, oder vielleicht auch das Unglück gehabt hat, Soldat zu werden, wird das eigenthümliche Bild kennen, welches eine Berliner Wachstube in einer kalten Winternacht darbietet” (GvB, 1.3). The telling of the tale from an initial military perspective already significantly departs from Sue’s novel, which accords perspectival priority to Rodolphe as a non-institutional, aristocratic figure of authority. Though a third-person narrator is at work in both texts, in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* there is a stronger identificatory impulse between the military/police as an impersonal power and the anonymous author, an impulse expressed through the character of “Polizeirath X” As a proto-detective who

⁵³ A report on the theatre in Posen during the early nineteenth century notes that Rinaldo Rinaldini was also performed. See “Das Posener Theater in südpreußischer Zeit” in *Zeitschrift der historischen Gesellschaft für die Provinz Posen* (1894): 71.

tries to capture the criminals and advances the plot, he is the structural equivalent to Nazi in “Ivo.” The issues surrounding police authority are even thematized in the first conversation between the military guard on watch and a Prussian police officer (“Königl. Preuß. Polizeibeamter”) who is requesting support for a police operation. Not only does the exchange speak to a formative period in the modern institutionalization of the police in Germany, echoed by the interchangeability of titles and designations for policing figures throughout the novel and their close proximity to the military, but it signifies the absolute sovereignty of the Prussian King in matters of law – a power-relation the text never challenges and frequently mimics. More broadly, the opening chapter in which a group of thieving criminals is captured, places the subsequent installments of the novel under the sign of a police authority, while framing representations of social relations within a discourse of criminality and its successful detection.

Ultimately, the policing presence embodied by “Polizeirath X” is implicated in solving what might be considered the novel’s central plot conflict: the attempt by Stephan – a prince from Poland – to recover his lost brother Iwan (Schmerles). Kidnapped by a gang of Jewish criminals at a young age, Iwan is unaware of his aristocratic heritage until he is reunited with his brother in the final volume of the novel. He was raised with the very group of criminals who took him, the criminals which the novel’s policing presence ultimately apprehend. And so by extension, the policing presence of the narrator is also implicated in reinscribing the social order threatened throughout the novel: Iwan’s hereditary rights are realized and the aristocratic family is made whole. The foregrounding of two brothers, a key departure from Sue’s novel, quite obviously draws on Schiller’s famous play. As Stephen Knight notes with regards to *The Mysteries of London* – a text that also ostensibly draws on Schiller – the “doubling of the hero” was a “motif that persists through the nineteenth century as a way of handling the conflicted forces found in the Romantic individual, both noble and savage, and it also responds to the

dialectical force of modernity, its necessary mix of disciplinary liberalism and acquisitive capitalism.”⁵⁴ But given all that we have seen so far, it seems rather unlikely the author of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* appropriated Schiller’s drama as a self-conscious effort to thematize the ambivalence of modern subjectivities. The reference within the novel speaks to a different phenomenon entirely. In fact, *Die Räuber* reference has less to do with post-Romantic world-order challenges and much more to do with popular fiction – and the dangers of fiction specifically for (female) lower classes as they relate to post-Romantic cultural politics. Schiller is serialized to control and command order, to discipline threats to that order. Only a close reading of the scene within the broader context of the novel and the details concerning the nature of the citation reveals this complexity.

The episode featuring *Die Räuber* within *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* begins at the drama’s end. In fact, the curtains fall right after Karl Moor kills Amalie – the woman over whom he spars with his brother. Though few details are provided, it is telling that this is not how the actual drama ends. In Schiller’s original, Karl Moor performs one final good work by allowing a poor day laborer to turn him over to the authorities, thus receiving the reward, which he can use to feed his eleven children. No doubt, when Zimmermann praised Sue’s novel by noting the presence of Schiller in *Les Mystères de Paris* he was referring to this scene, and Karl’s Enlightenment humanism more broadly. But this is not how the puppet show ends, instead it foregrounds Amalie’s death. And afterwards, this aspect of the play appeals to the predominantly lower-class audience of “Torfweiber, Holzhacker, Bücklingsmädchen, Wollsortierinnen, Obsthändler, Diebe, Grissetten unterster Klasse, gewerbsmäßige Trunkenbolde und anderes Gelichter” (GvB, 5.67) where it is performed. A “Torfmatrone” cries out in dialect, “ick weiß man nich, warum der Kerl det Mächen eigentlich dodtschießt, er könnte ja mit ihr auskneisen

⁵⁴ Knight, *Mysteries*, 70.

und anderwärts flott und fidel leben?“ In response, a young blonde remarks that the old “Torfmatrone” wouldn’t understand the origins of romantic love motivating Moor: “Glücklich allein is (sic) die Seele, die lübt, sagt ein gewisser Clauren. Ach der Clauren macht sehr scheene Geschichten.” The blonde, a minor character named “Streichholzmarie” introduced at this point in the narrative, is referencing the literary oeuvre of Heinrich Clauren (i.e. Carl Gottlieb Heun, 1771-1854) – one of the most popular authors of romance fiction in the early nineteenth-century.⁵⁵ Her own familiarity with his writings came about through a former lover, “welcher als Leihbibliothekar-Kaufbursche ihr unentgeltlich seine Romane verabreichte.” In terms of the plot, these details are inconsequential, but as an instance of self-reflexive reading they attend to the broader processes under examination in the novel and the foregrounding of the relationship between fiction and reality it discloses. In no small way, the author is appealing to a broader culture of fiction – which spans Sue, Schiller, and Clauren – and critiquing it at the same time. And, moreover, he is drawing attention to the way women relate to fiction, to the way they are corrupted or deluded by it.

This raises a number of questions, not least why would the novel self-consciously conflate reading and women? One answer may lie in the way women challenge the narrator’s own voice and the novel’s policing presence. Despite the presence of a powerful, third-person, omniscient and didactic narrator, who functions as a policing presence, invades the text in the figure of Polizeirath X, and converges with the anonymous author as a “real” police authority (*Kriminalbeamten*), the novel’s narrative economy nonetheless faces a threat from an additional narratorial perspective. An equally nameless female character in the work, “die

⁵⁵ Clauren did not escape Heine’s notice either, who sardonically notes in his collection of aphorisms, “Clauren ist jetzt in Deutschland so berühmt, daß man in keinem Bordell eingelassen wird, wenn man ihn nicht gelesen hat.” Heinrich Heine, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 8, ed. Rudolf Frank (München: Rösl, 1923), 88.

Lumpensammlerin,” narrates her miserable life story in episode four, exerting pressure on the subsequent narrative discourse in the way her past predicts the lives of the other women in the Voigtland. Like Polizeirath X, she advances the plot, given her role as a member of the criminal gang, but it is her narrative that appears to be most dangerous and most infectious – a metaphor expressed through the text’s effort to contain the effects of her depravity. Her story of suffering bears similarities to Auguste’s, though it is darker, and more self-consciously draws on fairy-tale motifs. As a child, her soldier-father commits murder, forcing the family to flee into the woods. Before long, a forester discovers the family in a gruesome scene witnessed by the children, rapes her mother. The “Lumpensammlerin’s” father accidentally shoots his wife during the struggle, manages to kill the forester, but is himself eventually captured and executed. The “Lumpensammlerin” then flees, grows up, and enters into her own troubled marriage with a soldier. She becomes a prostitute in Hamburg and later a “Verschickfrau” in an upscale brothel in Berlin, which much to the delight of Francophobe readers entertained even the likes of Napoleon, further underscoring the alleged moral depravity of the French. The key moment in the “Lumpensammlerin’s” past, however, and one influencing the future narratives, comes when she encounters a wealthy family in want of a child for their daughter who could not conceive. They offer the “Lumpensammlerin” money if she can find a mother willing to give up her child for a “bessere Zukunft” and the promise of wealth. The “Lumpensammlerin” finds such a woman and convinces her to give up her child, but in the end the “Lumpensammlerin” keeps the money for herself and the young, childless mother disappears.

For “light reading,” *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* is admittedly not very light at all, in part because all four of the major female characters in the text share in similarly terrible fates, they all exhibit the effects of the “Lumpensammlerin’s” narrative. Auguste, Marianne, Marie Berthold, and “Die Kunstreiteren” (i.e. Francesca) are either raped, forced by society to become grisettes,

or deceived (through *Verschickfrauen*) in their relationships with men. They live out and embody both the “Lumpensammlerin’s” sexual crimes as well as her dishonesty to varying extents. And of these four women, only Marianne escapes the narrative with her life. While the novel represents a wide spectrum of other riveting crimes, including murder, fraud, burglary, and extortion, its real narrative catalyst concerns the titillating threat of sexual crimes against innocent women or crimes by women. As a result, the formation of social pity in the novel shares in a very strong gendered and class component, but with a considerable “blame-the-victim” mentality. *Mitleid* rarely directs itself at these women on account of their virtues. Instead, it vacillates between acknowledging the social circumstances contributing to their downfall, and recognizing that pity requires their suffering and misfortunes. And, whenever possible, the narrative prefers men as the object of pity. Women, by contrast are placed more in the realm of bourgeois domesticity – which is where one learns to have pity for the poor. The death of Weber Greif’s wife, though described as unfortunate, receives a mere gloss compared to the threat posed by *his* loss of professional virtue. This is not say men escape villainous portrayals, but even their character flaws reveal themselves on account of women. This function is perhaps most forceful when the novel links sexual predation with the self-serving, bourgeois mercantile professional. Geheimrath Berthold is a libertine and sex addict, whose few good qualities disappear, “sobald ihm irgend ein schönes Gesicht, irgend eine gefällige Gestalt unter die Augen trat” (GvB, 1.96).

That women’s bodies should come to embody a tension within the novel’s affective economy is not surprising: they not only represent a crucial site for negotiating the discourse of bodily crimes and social transgressions (prostitution, sex outside the confines of bourgeois marriage), but they are strongly implicated in the emotionality and sensual inclination underpinning aestheticized power in the first place. The novel punishes women’s sexual passions and praises their reined in and channeled sentiments. It is thus at the level of affect, where class

interests (the bourgeois) and political interests (liberalism) come together. Specifically with concern to attitudes towards woman, the text reveals a convergence between bourgeois ideology and liberal ideology, one that is itself the product of literary adaptation: the re-signification of Fleur-de-Marie. As the only surviving analogue to Sue's lost child, the plot device that most attracted critics' attention, Marianne is a pivotal figure in the novel's exploration of sympathy and misery. Her life in fact resembles Fleur-de-Marie in almost all ways. She is captive to a group of criminals, she becomes a prisoner (in Berlin's first single-cell prison), she is drugged, raped, and forced to become a mistress, and she slowly rehabilitates herself through work with the help of Auguste, all aspects borrowed from Sue's novel. She is even reunited with her father, Major Steinfort (making Lt. Steinfort her brother), just as Fleur-de-Marie reunites with Rodlophe (Fleur-de-Marie was an only child). But unlike Fleur-de-Marie, Marianne marries and overcomes her past, exhibiting precisely what Vischer objected to in Sue's portrayal. And herein lies her ambivalence for the novel's adaptive strategy. In her marriage and her reunion with her father she comes to exhibit precisely what Berthold is never capable of: "die Heiligkeit einer reinen sittlichen Liebe" (GvB, 1.95), "die edle Bestimmung des Weibes durch das Band der Familie der Centralpunkt aller irdischen Glückseligkeit" (GvB, 1.96). The author could have killed Marianne off as Sue did, but instead he safely contains her within a Hegelian framework of male interests. Furthermore, she is brought under the sign of Schiller's drama through her marriage to Iwan – the criminal brother who rehabilitates himself through his love for Marianne. Thus when the narratorial policing presence reunites the two brothers at the end of the novel – which can in fact be read as an adaption (not mere citation) and Hegelian updating of *Die Räuber* to reflect a unified individual, not a fraught and divided one – he not only posits a genealogy of male interests rooted in a classical literary tradition, but he draws on that tradition for the way in which it contains women. Marianne does not die, but she is hardly liberated either. She even

stays with the same men! In other words, *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* remains true to Sue's original in the way it imagines a static, unchanging restoration of order, an order premised on female containment. The fact that Fleur-de-Marie's real name (Princess Amalie) and Schiller's heroine share the same name further hints at this process.

In many ways, containing Marianne within an aristocratic family laced with bourgeois family values becomes the structural equivalent of containing the Lumpensammlerin's story (and controlling where sympathy directs itself). This homology asserts itself through the figure of Marie Berthold – Geheimrath Berthold's daughter, and as her name indicates, another potential Fleur-de-Marie analogue. She, too, is lead astray sexually, though her deviation never owed to the challenges of prison or real material needs. Marianne was deceived *and* in need of food and shelter. Marie Berthold was simply deceived (by Francesca) into having pre-marital sex, which results in an unwanted pregnancy. Francesca, readers might have surmised, was a victim of Geheimrath Berthold's libertinism in her youth. He raped her, resulting in her own pregnancy and illegitimate child. She waits sixteen years (until his daughter Marie is of age) to plot her revenge against him: a reliving of the crime he visited on her through his daughter. And her plotting succeeds, only too well, because it is revealed to the surprise of readers and characters, that Francesca was the woman whom the "Lumpensammlerin" deceived into giving up her child. And it was into Geheimrath Berthold's household where the infant was brought as a result of his wife's inability to conceive. He had always assumed his daughter was adopted. Thus Marie is revealed to be the infant, Berthold the father, and Francesca the mother all at once, and Marie's suicide, which readers are led to believe is the social stigma attached to illegitimacy, precedes both Berthold's and Francesca's own. Thus even the misogynistic Berthold, who deceives countless women, can be read as a victim of the "Lumpensammlerin's" original narrative, a victim of lies, deception, and fiction. In no small way, then, the policing presence of the male

narrator is interested in containing the “Lumpensammlerin’s” story and its effects, countering those effects through the containment, sexual pacification, and bourgeois domestication of women. These narrative and readerly complexities shed even further light on the novel’s affective economy as it intersects with class interests and political interests. Not only do women’s bodies serve as a reminder that social mobility between classes must be blocked (e.g. Auguste, whose actual entry into the upper-middle class world of the Steinforts results in her death even despite her bourgeois values) but the single, surviving woman in the tale reinforces the notion that the bourgeois family is the proper site for sentiments.

The larger point to emphasize about the representation of women in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* relates to the readerly position they help implement. Though they are invariably invoked to support a synecdochic structure in which readers relate individuals to larger social classes, they also undermine that structure on account of their bodies. From Napoleon and the aristocracy to the lowest classes and the “Lumpensammlerin,” every class becomes infiltrated by female sexuality – a circumstance that equalizes class relations while blurring the synecdochic, part-whole distinctions regulating readers’ sentiments.⁵⁶ *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* is a story about homogenizing difference, and the effects of the “Lumpensammlerin” undermine this process. Her very name and its metaphorical links with interwoven storytelling betrays the heterogeneity she brings into the tale literarily and figuratively. Ultimately, readers never learn what actually happens to the “Lumpensammlerin.” She disappears from the narrative, her story left incomplete. This could have been an oversight on behalf of the author (critics frequently complain of incomplete subplots in many of the novels stylized as imitations of Sue’s) or it may have been intentional, which would signal a recurrent tension between female contagion and policing

⁵⁶ Even threatening male sexuality, such as Berthold’s, is cast in terms of female sexuality. The narrator insinuates his own agency is undermined by women, not the choices he makes.

crime, between two narrative perspectives at work in the tale. Thus, at the level of reading, the text can be said to produce effects that are inherently allegorical. They are allegorical in the way they produce instability for the mimetic illusions on which the text relies in its effort to advance a synecdochic model of sympathy premised on the synchronic knowledge rooted in a serialized form. In contrast, allegory's investment in diachronicity emphasizes the temporal experience of the reading process itself, following a narrative and being subject to its "stereophony of echoes, citations, references."⁵⁷ And if, by extension, liberalism is understood here as pity for the poor realized through the effects of social realism, the politics of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* faces a significant obstacle in women's bodies and the "Lumpensammlerin's" narrative.

To a certain extent, the inherent tension between a static, synecdochic mode rooted in equivalence and an allegorical mode of interpretation underscoring difference, not similarity, reveals itself through the early reference to Vulpius's *Räuberroman*. As with the reference to Schiller, Vulpius' novel serves as a source for the novel's adaptive strategies; its historical anteriority suggests its status as a pretext which readers juxtapose to the fiction in their hands. But there is no denying that it also shares in the broader tension between fiction and reality, the real and the exotic, mirrored in the Lumpensammlerin's narrative and the effort to contain it. Indeed, the narrator's professionalized language and realist register – two factors which tacitly support the association of the "real" with a policing order and a new disciplinary specialist – encounter a contradiction as readers learn a police officer is passing time by reading a fantastical work of adventure fiction. The 1797 penny-piece thriller by Christian August Vulpius – *Rinaldo Rinaldini, Der Räuber Hauptmann: Eine romantische Geschichte unsers Jahrhunderts* – was among the most popular works of fiction in the years before and after 1800 and Rinaldo Rinaldini ranked among the most famous protagonists of German popular literature well into the

⁵⁷ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 160.

twentieth century, thanks to frequent reprints and new editions.⁵⁸ Here, the author is likely alluding to an edition from 1837 or 1843 – possibly and ironically even a pirated one given how we’ve already seen the way texts (e.g. Clauren’s) could unscrupulously exchange hands.⁵⁹ And for what it’s worth, *Rinaldo Rinaldini* is even mentioned in Auerbach’s “Ivo,” a further indication of its prominence within reading cultures.⁶⁰ Unlike Schiller’s *Die Räuber*, which remains widely known and performed, *Rinaldo Rinaldini* has been largely neglected and forgotten on account of its perceived triviality. Indeed, it’s typically cited as constitutive of the new type of so-called *Trivillalliteratur* that emerges during this period.

Like *Die Räuber* and other works depicting noble, Robin Hood-esque criminals, such as Heinrich Zschokke’s *Abällino der große Bandit* (1793) or Carl Gottlob Cramer’s *Der Dom-Schütz und seine Gesellen* (1803), *Rinaldo Rinaldini* was a work of fiction that appealed to criminality for the way in which it could thematize other political and social issues. As one scholar notes, the *Räuberroman* rehearsed questions of “social disharmony, personal alienation and extensive immorality” all while self-consciously participating in a broader Enlightenment project of “educating humanity through the aesthetic.”⁶¹ Authors like Schiller, Zschokke, Cramer and Vulpius were interested in the major philosophical concerns of their day, and their novels (and dramas) participated in a popular philosophical tradition that encouraged readers to identify

⁵⁸ For more on Vulpius, see Robert Simanowski, *Die Verwaltung des Abendteuers: Massenkultur um 1800 am Beispiel von Christian August Vulpius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1998). Also speaking to the widespread cultural popularity of *Rinaldo Rinaldini* were dozens of musical, operatic and dramatic adaptations, quite comparable to the aesthetic response surrounding the *Geheimnisse* epidemic.

⁵⁹ According to WorldCat, the text was also published again 1845 and in English in 1848.

⁶⁰ The reference to Vulpius’s novel appears in a letter from Aloys (i.e. “Der Tolpatsch”) to his mother, a character from a different village tale who emigrates to Ohio. “Ivo” kindly reads the letter out loud for the illiterate mother, who learns that her son is an avid reader of crime fiction “Wir haben uns auch ein Ritterbuch kauft (sic), von dem Rinaldo Rinaldini, das ist ein' gar grauselige Räubergeschicht', und die haben wir schon mehr als zehnmal gelesen.” Auerbach, “Ivo,” 183.

⁶¹ Edward Larkin, “Christian August Vulpius’ *Rinaldo Rinaldini: Beyond Trivial Pursuit*” in *Monatshefte* 88, no. 4 (1996): 462.

with fictional narratives and draw lessons from them for their own lives. Put rather broadly, the *Räuberroman* explored the limits of individual freedom and an individual's relationship to society while raising profound ethical questions about law, morality and transgression during a period of heightened political change.

To be sure, *Rinaldo Rinaldini* and the countless other novels that repeated its conventions are hardly aesthetic or philosophical masterpieces. They are light reading, rehearsing the same conventions that made *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* a hit: excessively sentimentalized love affairs, secrets societies plotting to overthrow governments, and kitschy moments capitalizing on the melodramatic fanfare of concealment and disclosure. But *Rinaldo Rinaldini* is not just melodrama, and its eponymous protagonist strikes readers as rather complex on a number of levels – not least because of his libertinism. He became Italy's most famous robber captain after murdering a commanding officer (like the “Lumpensammlerin's” father) and embarking upon a life of adventure and crime, but his dark past does not yield the type of villain one would expect. He broods about his moral condition, is prone to fits of melancholia, and struggles in his relationships with women. As readers follow the story of his effort to reintegrate into society, he garners pity, and seems deserving of forgiveness in light of the way he treats the disadvantaged. In fact, the very notion of societal integration and moral redemption – and how best to achieve both – is what the novel probes.

So what then is one to make of the reference to *Rinaldo Rinaldini* in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*? First, the reference serves to orient readers within a different literary genealogical framework, one that abandon's Sue's Paris for a German Italy, a key destination for imaginary socialization scripted by Weimar Classicism (e.g. Goethe's *Italianische Reise*, Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, Stifter's *Brigitta*, and Seume's *Spaziergang nach Syrakus*, etc). In addition to different geographic coordinates, Vulpius's text was written in the ever-widening

aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, and consequently reflects a strong anti-French subtext. Rinaldini's toughest decision is deciding whether or not to help liberate Corsica from French rule, which he decides against, in an obvious appeal to Kantian political philosophy. Vulpius was likely familiar with Kant's famous essay, "Beantwortung auf die Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" (1784), intended as it was to reach a broad intellectual community. In elucidating the duties of citizens exercising freedom in public, Kant famously writes "räsonniert, so viel ihr wollt, und worüber ihr wollt; aber gehorcht!"⁶² Kant's essay preceeded the French Revolution, significantly foreshadowing the consequences of the lack of public order he feared most. For readers in the 1840s, the appeal to this legacy through *Rinaldo Rinaldini* speaks to an underlying adaptive strategy of responding to Sue's popularity. *Die Geheminisse von Berlin* stereotypically and semantically links the French with libertinism, sentimental excess and aristocratic moral corruption. The entire literary tradition of the *Räuberroman* understood as a critique of French, English, and even German Enlightenments serves to authorize *Die Geheminisse von Berlin* in this way, as do many more explicit critiques of French political culture. If Napoleon represented a synthesis of revolutionary ideals as well as an erotic infusion for a stunted German political tradition in Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, here Napoleon is emblematic of alleged French decadence and moral privation. His appearance as a brothel-frequenting *Randfigur* within "Die Erzählung der Lumpensammlerin" places him within a context of contagion as well. The French have literally and figuratively invaded Germany, bringing their vices with them.

The policing of sexual mores and Rinaldini's libertinism finds its greatest analogue in the character of Geheimrat Berthold. As noted above, his primary vice is the seduction of innocent women which renders him entirely unfit for bourgeois morality. He fails to understand the true

⁶² Kant's essay was frequently reprinted over the course of the nineteenth-century, even appearing in the mid 1840s. Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" (Potsdam: Stühr'sche Buchhandlung, 1845), 4.

moral worth of women, viewing them instead as “niedlich geförmter Thiergeschöpfe.” Women function as props for Berthold’s luxurious way of life: “Ein schönes Weib war ihm daher nicht viel mehr, als ein schönes Pferd, als ein kostbarer Jagdhund, oder eine schmackhafte Trüffelpastete.” (96) And this association of women with patrician French cuisine is hardly a coincidence, given that readers learn the “Unteroffizier” received his copy of *Rinaldo Rinaldini* from his lover, who happens to be the Geheimrat’s “dicke Köchin.”⁶³ Such a small, seemingly insignificant detail so early in the novel suggests the author encouraged his readers to link the drives, appetites and inclinations of reading *Rinaldo Rinaldini* to the character flaws of Geheimrat Berthold. This raises the interesting question of to whom the book belongs? It could be the cook, whose weight testifies to uncontrolled female appetites and whose professional skills feed upper-class excess inherited from the French, or it could belong to the Geheimrath himself, who after having become a widower, chooses to immerse himself in a lifestyle deemed immoral and criminal by the author. Alternatively, the book may belong to Marie Berthold, a literal consumer of fictions (reader of novels) and victim of lies. The fact that the book exchanges hands in the first place and the numerous other examples of self-conscious reading in the novel – whether serialized stories in newspapers or stories in bound form – hint at a larger commentary on the role fiction plays within literary culture, society and politics. Indeed, it’s not an overstatement to say that everyone associated with Geheimrath Berthold (and by extension *Rinaldo Rinaldini*) suffers profoundly as a result of (self-)deception. As we have seen, the major players in the subplot all commit suicide as a result of fictions and lies.⁶⁴ Although these

⁶³ “Der wachthabende Unteroffizier [...] las die Abendtheuer des Rinaldo Rinaldini, welche ihm seine Geliebte, die dicke Köchin des Geheime Rathes, nebst einer mächtigen Kanna Caffee noch spät am Abende in geschäftiger Eile gebracht hatte” (GvB, I.4).

⁶⁴ In terms of crude politicizing, the Geheimrath’s death also functions as a symbolic call for the promotion of more popular forms of institutional liberalism. After all, the organizing principles of political liberalism during this period

revelations and Oedipal disclosures come in some of the final episodes of the book, they certainly live under the sign of the initial act of reading depicted in the first chapter. In terms of a mid-nineteenth century literary imaginary the message in the novel conjures images of the frequently cited Goethe poem “Amerika,” which I cite here from one of Auerbach’s later works: “Benutzt die Gegenwart mit Glück! / Und wenn nun eure Kinder dichten, / Bewahre sie ein gut Geschick/ Vor Ritter-, Räuber- und Gespenstergeschichten.”⁶⁵

Ultimately, however, one must not overlook the fact the author placed *Rinaldo Rinaldini* in the hands of an “Unteroffizier” and any effects the novel has on other characters are derivative, the product of a contagion. This is precisely what the novel’s narrator and policing presence is trying to rein in and contain, and in this way the entire novel can be read as an investigation of the uses and abuses of fiction. The gendered component at work here further manifests itself in the way a male authority figure commits the act of reading *Rinaldo Rinaldini*. On the one hand, this speaks to a potential “ideal reader” as someone who may read for pleasure or to pass the time, but who also gives serious thought to the explicit didactic and educative offerings in the novel. On the other hand, the police officer is fundamentally concerned with containing crime: real crime in violation of some normative law but also the fictions surrounding crime, the types of stories that lead women astray from the author’s ideological agenda.⁶⁶ In this way, the novel uses the medium of popular literature and entertainment, not so much to indoctrinate readers into an ideology, but to expose the processes of social formation. Reading with an eye to the types of

such as constitutionalism, popular sovereignty, and a *Rechtsstaat*, stood at odds with a system of direct legislative influence by means of an appointed office – not least a “secret” one. Even if a Prussian Geheimrath exercised little to no real political power by the mid nineteenth-century, the very name signifies an older, aristocratic method of conducting politics, one which is under critique in the novel.

⁶⁵ Berthold Auerbach, *Das Landhaus am Rhein* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1869), 301.

⁶⁶ This is also somewhat ironic, because *Rinaldo Rinaldini* is not a book where the policing authorities meet with much success. He escapes capture at least half-a-dozen times.

intertextual relationships at play in this novel discloses this fundamental truth about *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* as adaptation and fiction.

Conclusion

The reading offered in this chapter has raised a number of complexities for our understanding of literary and political formation as it unfolds in a German adaption of popular French fiction. First, this novel sheds light on another domain within the rise of a proto-realist aesthetic, one drawn more from French and English models of social realism. (The realist effect in Stifter's *Brigitta*, also published in 1844, is markedly different, though their political messages are curiously similar.) The novel adapts and modifies this transcultural and transnational aesthetic project, making this mode of representation its own, in part, by linking it to a political project in 1840s Germany and a German literary tradition. This function bears significance for both the novel's reliance on a synecdochic model of realism as well as the broader genre of crime fiction in which it participates. On the one hand, the novel succeeds in advancing sympathy for the lower classes by means of a part-whole figurative strategy. This strategy, nonetheless, reveals its own exclusive tendencies in the way the narrative grapples with women and sexuality. The symbolic, idealistic processes of identification at stake in a synecdochic model are frustrated by the contagious effects of vice expressed through representations of female sexuality, through female bodies, and in the threat they pose to the male narrative presence. I read this threat as allegorical, because of the way in which it discloses the potential lack of congruity between sign and signified, between the symbolic and synchronic basis for part-whole relationships established in the text. In *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, women break the mimetic illusion responsible for obscuring the difference between the fictional and the real by disclosing that very difference.

As a result of this tension, I argue, the novel seeks to contain women, a process which sheds light on the novel's status as crime fiction. This is not a work that should be read as a proto-modernist exploration of the German underworld or a self-conscious work of detective fiction rooted in hermeneutics, because that is not how nineteenth-century readers understood the mysteries novels (at least this one).⁶⁷ Readers were much more likely to read this fiction alongside Schiller or Vulpius than Poe or Doyle. This is a novel about using crime – predominantly female crimes of a sexual nature – to regulate sentiments for contemporary political and social purposes. The temporal orientation of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* is less forward-looking than backward-looking. It is less about the future than about the present. A police officer reading a 1797 novel about crime in 1844 attests to this dimension, so too do the frequent references to newspapers as a popular medium. For these reasons, this novel is indicative of a formative period for the genre of crime fiction, one that above all else stresses its own status as an adaptation. Readers experienced this novel as a palimpsest precisely in the way Heine conceives of the palimpsest in *Florentinische Nächte*, as a collection of repetitive fictions each with a subtle variation. No doubt, this is exactly the kind of fiction Heine ironized in his fragment, which not only offers further proof of *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*'s effectiveness, but it also helps further explain why Heine would foreground allegory. The symbolic strategy in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* presupposes stable, totalized identities (even if the text undermines itself in this regard), but identity does not constitute allegory's end in Heine's text. Instead, his use of the trope emphasizes the difference between fiction and reality in effort to extend readers' critical competencies – with regards to politics.

⁶⁷ This claim is my primary objection to Stephen Knight's study, which by and large limits itself to a discussion of form and content while overlooking the complex culture of reception these novels engendered.

Although reading practices and interpretative strategies are always varied, the formal elements and content in *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, coupled with a broad understanding of the types of issues that engaged contemporaries, can help us understand how a novel like this contributed to the formation of early-German liberalism. Readers *were* drawn to this novel and others like it for its representation of poverty-stricken classes exposed through the combined representation of criminality, sexuality, and romance ideology. And even if, as I've shown, the nature of these representations offer more insight into the formation of a male, voyeuristic, middle-class identity than they do the lower classes themselves, pity for the poor nonetheless remains a component of that identity. Moving beyond the rhetoric that fiction automatically produced an ethics of virtue, this particular novel takes pains to disclose both the uses and abuses of fiction. In fact, the very double-sidedness of fiction – including its ability to incite action, but also the way it can cordon readers off from real world suffering– underscores the author's call for more stable, institutional forms of state-sponsored social relief. And, to be sure, the widespread Hegelian rhetoric attached to the critical reception of Sue's novel and his imitators would presuppose a call for institutions to be subject to reason and rational modes of thinking. But literature discloses its own procedures and processes at the same time by concerning itself with the literary effects of affect and inclination. In fact, literature in the 1840s could function as its own non-rational institution, spreading sympathy for others among the classes seeking political hegemony for themselves.

CHAPTER FOUR

Homoerotic Travel, Classical *Bildung* and Liberal Allegory in Adalbert Stifter's *Brigitta* (1844/47)

Up to this point, this dissertation has traced a model of German liberalism in a wide range of national, cultural, historical and literary contexts. Chapter one analyzed Heine's fragmentary work of serialized fiction, *Florentinische Nächte*, which in many ways owes to Heine's own far-flung travels in Italy and England, to say nothing of his French residency and the decisive role of French politics plays in the tale. Published in France and Germany, the transnational scope of the work reflects the multiplicity of his political project: cutting across literary and political boundaries to foster higher levels of critical awareness. Chapter two engaged Auerbach's decidedly German *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, but as confirmed in many reviews, these simple, novelistic depictions of village had a significant impact abroad, too. One of the implicit messages in Auerbach's prescription for an Enlightenment-based universalist form of piety was to imagine a collective unity of multiple particularities. And though this message was no doubt aimed Germany's own political fragmentation, its scope was clearly not limited to Germans per say. Chapter three investigated a German adaptation of Eugène Sue's popular serialized novel *Les Mystères de Paris*, which like Auerbach's regionally based village tales capitalized on detail realism. These local-color tales had a striking international scope as well, with adaptations published in numerous languages across any number of continents. Thus, whatever specific work *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* performed for Berliners, the culture it grew out of extended far beyond the banks of the Spree. My fourth and final chapter widens the geographic and literary

scope of this dissertation to include the Habsburg Empire and a hitherto unconsidered genre within this collection of narrative prose fiction: the novella. Adalbert Stifter's *Brigitta*, composed in 1842 and first published in 1844, appeared at the same time as Auerbach's village tales and Sue's adaptations, making it a timely text to include in this project.

As will become apparent over the course of this chapter, any discussion of German liberalism during the mid-nineteenth century – even one concerned with the far-flung nature of emotions and feelings – is incomplete without an investigation of Austrian literary and political culture. Throughout the 1840s, to say nothing of other periods in history, the question of what constituted “Germany” was a highly contentious one that often presupposed the understanding of a mutual entanglement between the descriptors German and Austrian. The political boundaries depicted on maps, which divided the Habsburg Empire from other German-speaking regions, were in reality quite porous, subject to change and transformation as a result of instable linguistic, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. The issue of borders and nationhood, in fact, proved to be a highly decisive issue during the Frankfurt parliamentary debates in 1848, for as Brian Vick notes, “Millions of Germans lived just outside the borders of the German Confederation, and millions of inhabitants who considered themselves something other than German lived within them.”¹ Perhaps the defining question of the assembly concerned the territorial limits of the German nation state (*Grossdeutschland* or *Kleindeutschland*) and one of the key impediments to the *grossdeutsche Lösung* – a unified state including Prussia, the German Confederation, and the Habsburg Empire – concerned the vast heterogeneous populations of eastern Europe. During this period of heightened anxieties associated with ethno-nationalism, the effort to manage a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual empire raised many challenges. And Hungary, the location of *Brigitta*'s

¹ Brian Vick, *Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 2.

plot, may well have served as the most palpable index for the struggles which would occupy the Habsburg's monarchy until the Compromise of 1867, and well beyond.²

Any discussion of German literary liberalism is also incomplete without a careful consideration of the privileged genre within nineteenth-century German high culture: the novella. Unlike the village tales or the mysteries fiction, the novella was very much an established genre in 1844 – and a decidedly German one thanks to the attention it received from authors like Goethe and Tieck. As Martin Swales has carefully shown, nineteenth-century literary culture paid close attention to the eighteenth-century discourse on the genre, with prominent critics like Marggraff and Mundt interested in defining its structuring principles.³ I have no need here to enter into debates about what constitutes a novella, and it suffices to say that the mechanisms required for its production and reproduction were in place long before Stifter wrote *Brigitta*. But one of the reasons Stifter's *Brigitta* has survived the test of time, coming to occupy a high rung in academic literary canons, can be explained by its unique intervention within it, just as the novella as a genre receives additional validation and authorization from Stifter's text. And given the affinities between German realism and the novella, the genre only gained in critical relevance

² To get a sense of the enduring cultural import generated by the geo-political quandary of Hungary one needs to look no farther than Freud, who in 1898 apparently dreamt of the problem: "Der Vater hat nach seinem Tode eine politische Rolle bei den Magyaren gespielt, sie politisch geeinigt, wozu ich ein kleines undeutliches Bild sehe: eine Menschenmenge, wie im Reichstag; eine Person, die auf einem oder auf zwei Stühlen steht, Andere um ihm herum. Ich erinnere mich daran, dass er auf dem Todtenbette Garibaldi so ähnlich gesehen hat, und freue mich, dass diese Verheissung doch wahr geworden ist." Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung* (Boston: Elibron Classics, 2005), 246. Freud's dream took place sometime after October 1898 as Count Thun struggled to unite the two halves of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Rejecting the Ischl formula as peace strategy, the Hungarian nationalists rebelled using the same obstructionist measures in their parliament German nationalists had employed in the Reichsrat one year earlier in opposition to pro-Czech legislation. In Freud's dream, his father Jakob is a peacemaker among Hungarian nationalists, traditional allies of Austro-German liberals and staunch opponents of the rigid Habsburg Empire. In his own dream analysis, Freud links the obstruction in parliament with the painful intestinal obstruction his father suffered before his death. Accompanying his father's paralysis, Freud remarks, were several "unehrbietigte" thoughts concerning incontinence. Thus the wish – or hidden desire – embodying itself in the dream: "Nach seinem Tode rein und gross vor seinem Kindern dastehen." Also see Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 198; William Johnston, *An Austrian Mind, An Intellectual and Social History 1848 – 1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 47.

³ Martin Swales, *The German Novelle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 16.

in the later half of the nineteenth century. Gottfried Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (1856), C.F. Meyer's *Das Leiden eines Knaben* (1883), Theodor Storm's *Der Schimmelreiter* (1888) have come to define the canon and the genre. That being said, the reception of Stifter's novella was not necessarily limited to high culture in the 1840s. Critical discussions of his work appeared next to those of Heine's, Auerbach's and even Sue's in mainstream literary periodicals. This is important to remember, because as with any collection of "writerly" texts, Stifter's oeuvre lends itself quite well to questions of a more aesthetic or theoretical nature. A critical focus that privileges aesthetics or theory at the expense of rigorous historicization, however, can easily overlook the literary and political culture that gives rise to a text. In the case of *Brigitta*, that literary and political culture was not only pivotal for the work's reception, but as I will show, it was a constitutive element to the aesthetic and theoretical strivings of the work.

In fact, the early reception history of Stifter's novella reveals three salient and interrelated tensions, which, in various ways, speak to the need for considering *Brigitta* as a literary text very much rooted in the early 1840s. First, readers recognized Stifter's skill at rendering realistic representations of nature, noting that these representations frequently functioned allegorically, speaking to something invisible, something beneath the surface of Stifter's realism. According to one critic, his landscapes illuminated "die Durchsichtigkeit und den Schimmer der Traumwelt."⁴ Just as the content and meaning of this "Traumwelt" remains undefined by most critics, so too does the question of which landscapes piqued their interest. As perhaps the only text from the 1840s to foreground travel to both Italy and Hungary, *Brigitta* occupies an unusual place in nineteenth-century prose fiction. Whether it was the Hungarian Steppe, Neapolitan topography, or both, critics were clear in describing how Stifter's realism departed from English and French

⁴ *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theatre, und Mode*, unsigned review of *Gedenke Mein! Taschenbuch für 1844*, No. 250, (December 16, 1843), 1997.

models while trying to grapple with the legacy of German Romanticism. One critic found Stifter's efforts in this regard productive, noting "einige Unwahrscheinlichkeiten sind nur äußerlich und helfen ein innerliches Wahres, Ganzes zu gestalten, umgekehrt wie bei den Franzosen, wo innere Lügen äußerliche Effekte spiegeln müssen. Stifter ist in seinen Novellen, was wir nur von Tieck, Hoffmann, Fouque, Brentano und Kleist sagen können – ein Dichter."⁵ Another critic, however, urged the promising author to be more cautious. A review in Vienna's popular periodical *Der Wanderer* warns Stifter against the "Scilla" of affectation and the "Charibdis" of artificiality, two romantic obstacles the realist writer must ostensibly overcome as part of a literary and cultural inheritance.⁶

The second tension identified by readers, which we will see corresponds to the allegorical mode of realism at stake in the first, concerned the novella's gendered aesthetics and erotic relationships. Leipzig's *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* draws attention to how the Major – the narrator's travelling companion in Italy, whose identity as Stephan Murai is disclosed in the final pages of the book – attracts both men and women.⁷ Though an outwardly minor detail in the work as a whole, it might complicate the novella's central mystery of understanding the motivations behind Stephan's relationship with his estranged wife: the ugly, eponymous androgyne Brigitta. Indeed, many critics were quick to note Brigitta's "amazonische" qualities, the amazon being a rather popular literary topos in German literature from this period, but one

⁵ *Sonntagsblätter*, unsigned review of *Gedenke Mein! Taschenbuch für 1844*, no. 48 (November 26, 1843), 1148. Quoted in *Adalbert Stifter im Urteil seiner Zeit*, ed. Moriz Enzinger (Vienna: Böhlau, 1968), 37.

⁶ "War es darum Aufgabe und angenehme Aufgabe der Kritik, den "Abdias" und die "Narrenburg" mit Freudenruf zu begrüßen, so ist es heute die ernstere, uns wichtigere, Stifter zu warnen, vor der Scilla Manieriertheit, hinzuweisen auf die Charibdis Unnatur, die dem kühnen Segler auf dem Meere fanatischer Romantik droht, die ihn, der im Gefühl selbständiger Kraft, so gerne aus der nicht zu überschreitenden Grenze der Realität lockt." *Der Wanderer*, unsigned review of *Gedenke Mein! Taschenbuch für 1844* (December 5, 1843), 1155.

⁷ *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, unsigned review of *Gedenke Mein! Taschenbuch für 1844* (December 22, 1843), 1431.

critic even suggested that multiple relationships in the text are subject to a system of natural development and hidden, concealed processes: “Nur schien es, daß die anfänglich *hingestreuten Beziehungen* auf magnetische, im Dunkeln waltende Kräfte, vielleicht doch nicht bloß zur allmäligen Verflachung, zu jener unangenehmen Verschollenheit führen sollten, weil die mißleitete Erwartung eine Lösung des angelegten Räthsels fordert.”⁸ The other relationship fitting such an assessment can only be that of the Major and nameless narrator given the depopulated nature of the novella, which raises questions about the nature of their renewed contact and the Italian origins of their bond.

The final tension apparent within contemporary critical reviews concerns the novella’s politics. The text both invited and repelled political readings at the same time it indulged in slow-paced landscape painting, mysterious character portraits, and amatory entanglements. Reviewing Stifter’s *Studien* version, a writer for London’s *Athenaeum* notes the volume was published in Hungary’s capital, “the city, of all others in the Austrian dominions, from which one would least expect many contributions to *German* literature.” The critic identifies *Brigitta* as “the only Hungarian subject in the collection” and further notes it will attract significant attention given the “recent political events” and nationalist strivings in Hungary.⁹ In flagrant contradiction, a German literary critic reviewing the same volume in *Die Gegenwart*, specifically praises the apolitical nature of Stifter’s writings.¹⁰ How are these competing views to be reconciled? Or put differently, might there be a basis for linking the allegory of Stifter’s non-mimetic mode of

⁸ *Wiener Zeitschrift*, unsigned review of *Gedenke Mein! Taschenbuch für 1844*, (December 16, 1843), 1997.

⁹ *The Athenaeum*, unsigned review of *Studien*, by Adalbert Stifter, no. 1087 (August 26, 1848), 851-853.

¹⁰ “Kein Schlachtruf einer herrschenden oder unterdrückt sich wähnenden Partei tönt von seinen Lippen; keine Zersetzung oder Umschmelzung unserer sozialen Zustände bildet den Schwerpunkt seiner Erzählungen.” *Die Gegenwart*, unsigned review of *Studien*, by Adalbert Stifter (June, 1 1848), 575.

realism with the characters' "hingestreuten" relationships, while also accommodating the text's (non)political pretensions and curious cultural geographies?

Such contemporary attitudes dovetail with much existing scholarship on *Brigitta*. Robert Holub's essay exposes how the work conceals both its didacticism and fictionality as an exercise of realism. In the process, the effect of the realistic aesthetic reveals itself to be premised on exclusions which constantly threaten to reveal the novella's artifice as a "normed discourse." Taking his cue from the oft-cited, quasi-philosophical discussion of inner beauty and external appearances opening the work, however, Holub's reading is framed by a focus on aesthetic concerns, not explicitly political ones.¹¹ Richard Block, in turn, has argued for more political nuance by reading the work as an allegory. For Block, the text's details align with historical parallels in Hungary during the 1840s. Block equates the fictional Stephan Murai with the historical István (Stefan) Szchenyi, a prominent public figure who sought to strengthen the Magyar population through moderate reforms. The historical Szchenyi was at odds with the more violent attempts at revolution organized by Lajos Kossuth, whose forces ultimately succeeded in delivering Hungarian independence in 1849, only to be violently returned to the fold of Habsburg rule (by the Russians) in 1851. Block draws a link between Hungary's troubled quest for national self-determination and the narrative's own "gentle law of beauty" which dictates the characters' lives and frustrates their attempts at "self-expression."¹² Framed differently, because Stifter represents Hungary's national strivings within a gentle, law-inducing model of realism, any stirrings for (national) selfhood must necessarily fail in their effort to transcend the order-imposing reality of Stifter's gently coercive aesthetic.

¹¹ Robert Holub, "Adalbert Stifter's *Brigitta* or the Lesson of German Realism" in *A Companion to German Realism, 1848-1900*, ed. Todd Kontje (New York: Camden House, 2002), 29-51.

¹² Richard Block, "Stone Deaf: The Gentleness of Law in Stifter's *Brigitta*," in *Monatshefte* 90, no. 1 (1998): 18.

This essay seeks to open up a different allegorical reading, one which accommodates many of the text's deliberate ambiguities and situates the work within a proto-realist political context of the early 1840s. After all, *Brigitta* was initially composed as early as 1842 for the almanac *Gedenke Mein! Taschenbuch für 1844* and rewritten again for the fourth volume of *Studien* in 1847. Most scholars consult this second, heavily edited version of the story, overlooking Stifter's early compositional influences and reading his conspicuous post-revolutionary conservatism back onto the text. But it was the *Gedenke Mein!* almanac that largely announced Stifter's literary presence in the German-speaking world and the version we must consult if we are interested in exposing the complexities of Stifter's intervention(s) within a specific literary and political culture of the early 1840s.¹³ As we will see, this was a work that sought to shape and respond to same literary and political culture that motivated Gutzkow's *Die Zeitgenossen*, prompted Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, and characterized the culture surrounding Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris*. *Brigitta* is a text that belongs to the early 1840s, not the later 1840s. To be sure, the novella anticipates many of the overtly conservative principles articulated in Stifter's famous *Vorrede* to *Bunte Steine*, which was written in 1852 in response to "die Erlebnisse der letztvergangen Jahre." With *Brigitta*'s unambiguous conclusion that privileges the norm-inducing role of the bourgeois family and its commitment to exposing the dangers of excessive passion, the novella can read much like a primer for an older, more politically conservative Stifter. But as Eric Downing has convincingly shown in his analysis of how Stifter describes his realist project in the *Vorrede*, distilling a potential political program by dint of his realism is no straightforward affair. This is most apparent, Downing notes, in the way Stifter foregrounds the tensions between "Liebe" and "Lust" as central to his realist (and political)

¹³ The critic from the *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* had not heard of Stifter prior to the publication of *Brigitta* (1430).

prescriptions. For while love might best facilitate the law-giving, social conventionality of “das sanfte Gesetz” – and Stifter’s preferred (political) reality – desire not only appears to threaten the supposedly peaceful order on which this reality is premised, but may in fact disclose itself as intrinsic to Stifter’s repressive and violent regime. And it is precisely here where *Brigitta*’s complex depiction of “Liebe” and “Lust” must be probed for political implications if we want to fully grasp how the text functioned as a proto-realist exercise for negotiating nineteenth-century political identities.¹⁴

Brigitta, I argue, harbors a political double speak that plays itself through the erotic equivocation defining the text’s central human relationships. Its allegorical mode explores the interplay between love and desire as a realist exercise, but also as a commentary on ethno-nationalism and German liberalism’s border problems. Responding to a politicized German literary culture of the 1830s and 1840s – especially the authors of *Junges Deutschland* – Stifter enlists a form of “realist allegory” to instruct liberal readers, to situate liberal ideology within a classical literary tradition so as to discipline, direct, and pacify it. To fully grasp the significance of Stifter’s intervention, this chapter will unfold in four parts, each building upon the next. First, I will discuss in more detail my use of allegory and liberalism as they relate to Stifter. Both these terms have appeared in previous chapters, and they intersect with the other texts in this dissertation in complex ways, but they require greater specification to arrive at the unique understanding Stifter brings to these concepts. My reading of the novella begins by analyzing the relationship between the narrator and Stephan Murai in the context of Weimar Classicism and against the kinds of critical insights raised by the reviewers above. In section three, I will approach the figure of Brigitta and the triangular relationship she shares with Stephan and the

¹⁴ See the chapter on Stifter’s “Vorrede” in Eric Downing, *Double Exposures: Repetition and Realism in Nineteenth-Century German Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 24-40.

narrator, carefully spelling out in more detail how this text functions as a liberal allegory. And by way of conclusion, I will consider the figures of Gustav and Gabrielle. Though minor characters within the novella's plot, Stephan's son and the woman with whom he shared a brief affair, both shed further light on political function of Stifter's text.

Allegory and Liberalism in Stifter's Realism and Stifter's Politics

On the surface, a term like "allegory" would not appear to have much in common with the forerunner of realist aesthetics in the German-speaking world. Indeed, a realist author will never outwardly admit the presence of allegory into his or her aesthetic, not least because it conjures images of Romanticism, the very tradition a realism purports to overcome. And given liberalism's need and call for transparency, allegory does not appear to fit with liberal politics. It is for this reason that Heine's use of allegory in *Florentinische Nächte* renders his text all the more ironic. It is worth recalling, however, that Heine also sought to undermine "heutige Novellisten" and the "pestillenzelle Wirklichkeit" he diagnoses with his use of allegory. His text cut two ways, critiquing the alleged idealism of Romanticism's figural strategy, and destabilizing the unity between fiction and reality posited by a proto-realist aesthetic. In a similar vein, one can read the effort to contain the allegorical effects of the "Lumpensammlerin's" story as a need to repress and cordon off Romanticism. Her past and fairy-tale like origins, pose a literary and figural threat to the novel's synecdochic structure. Of course, few, if any critics from the 1840s would have seized upon the term "allegory" to describe these processes (though Dr. C interestingly did). That circumstance, however, does not disavow the trope's presence. In the case of realism, a mode premised on a transparent unity of narration, scholars have long problematized the manner in which realism links ideology to normed discourse, suppressing other modes of thinking in the process. But realist texts, by virtue of their

mode of narration, necessarily talk about themselves. Through their representations, they draw attention to their own artifice. Holub's approach to German realism, specifically his reading of portraits, has exposed the allegorical tendencies in every realist representation, and specifically how the presence of allegory exceeds the terms of realistic representations thereby putting the entire project into question.¹⁵ Downing, in turn, has argued for an even more self-conscious use of realist allegory, whereby authors such as Storm, Stifter, and Keller inscribe the problem of realist aesthetics into the allegorical tendencies of their works. That is, realist texts "translate the terms and operations of their 'realist' representation into those of their characters and plots" in a process yielding self-reflexive "allegories" which speak to the tale as a whole and the representational strategies employed therein.¹⁶

In *Brigitta*, the problem of realism finds allegorical expression within the characters' social and erotic relationships, within the politicized discourse of desire that manifests itself in the narrator's carefully constructed story. Instead of allegorically assigning historical individuals to fictional characters within the text as Block does, however, I want to read the textual ambiguities that his reading suppresses as part of Stifter's politicized aesthetic, *as part of the allegory*. In other words, the murky ethnic identities and strangulated relationships Block's reading clears up reflect on political ambiguities, specifically liberal ones, for nineteenth-century German speakers. Thus, my goal here is not to offer a reading of *Brigitta* that will yield one-to-

¹⁵ See Robert Holub, *Reflections of Realism: Paradox, Norm, and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century German Prose* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 146-151.

¹⁶ Eric Downing, "Double Takes: Genre and Gender in Keller's *Sieben Legenden*," *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 73, no. 3 (1998): 225. In more concrete terms, the portrait of Marie in Storm's *Via Tricolor*, the discussion of butterflies in Stifter's *Der Hochwald*, or the change of clothing in Keller's *Sieben Legenden* all have clear allegorical implications for the characters involved in the tales. In his reading of *Der Hochwald*, for instance, Downing notes the presence of two "competing realities" that chiastically link desire and death, both within the novella as a whole, but also allegorically within the figure of Clarissa. See Downing, "Adalbert Stifter and the Scope of Realism," *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 74, no. 3 (1999): 237-239.

one correspondences, but instead to emphasize how Stifter inscribes the central challenges of German liberalism into his realism allegorically, fusing literature and politics in a way that challenged both his readers' literary and political competencies.

Similar to allegory, the political referent "liberal" hardly appears at first glance an appropriate descriptor for the tutor of Metternich's children.¹⁷ Indeed, given Stifter's attitude towards the popular liberalism of his day, especially the perceived radical rhetoric of *Junges Deutschland*, Stifter would not have identified himself as a liberal in any straight-forward manner. An oft-cited January 9, 1845 letter to his Hungarian publisher Gusztáv Heckenast sheds light on this position:

Das *junge Deutschland* habe ich am meisten gefürchtet, indem ich mit einer Schattierung desselben, die Tagesfragen, und Tagesempfindungen in die schöne Literatur zu mischen, gar nicht einverstanden bin, sondern im Gegentheile meine, daß das Schöne gar keinen andern Zweck habe, als schön zu sein, und daß man Politik nicht in Versen und Deklamationen macht, sondern durch wissenschaftliche Staatsbildung, die man sich vorher aneignet, und durch zeitbewußte Thaten, die man nachher setzt, seien sie in Schrift, Wort, oder Werk (17: 138).¹⁸

Stifter thought his literary success was the result of his "tiefe sittlich schöne Absicht," which was directly opposed to the sensationalism and sensualism found in the "shallow up-to-dateness" of Young Germany.¹⁹ In the same letter, Stifter even expressed dissatisfaction with the public praise he received in Gutzkow's *Telegraph* and Mundt's *Grenzboten*. And though it is tempting to read this statement as a blatant rejection of operative art and an unflinching commitment to aesthetic autonomy, the vexing issue for Stifter was not that politics had found its way into the literature of *Junges Deutschland*, but that authors like Gutzkow and Mundt were using literature as the

¹⁷ The publication of *Brigitta* overlaps with Stifter's instruction of Richard Metternich, November 1843 to June 1846. See Eric Blackall, *Adalbert Stifter: A Critical Study*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 232.

¹⁸ All references to Stifter's correspondence from this period come from vol. 17 of Gusatv Wilhelm's edition. See *Adalbert Stifters Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Gustav Wilhelm (Reichenberg: Sudetendeutscher Verlag, 1929).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.

mouthpiece for the wrong kind of politics. The literature of *Junges Deutschland* threatened to overthrow religious, social, and political order in the name of a something new, as signaled in its very name.²⁰ This was a disposition very much at odds with Stifter's Kantian-influenced views on civil society, and one that does not align with his own political posturing expressed in many of his writings from the later 1840s.

In a May 1848 political essay written for the "Constitutionellen Donau-Zeitung," Stifter notes that "die heiligste Pflicht, ja die größte eines jeden Bürgers ist, daß er die Ordnung aufrecht zu erhalten strebe [...]" (8.2: 29). For in the absence of order, insecurity comes to dictate the actions of individuals, paving the way for still greater insecurities, and greater evils. Similar political views can be found in a series of political essays published in the "Wiener Bote" on the topic of freedom, where Stifter castigates those who identify "Freiheit" with multiple choice ("daß man alles thun dürfe,") or a lack of self-restraint ("Wieder Andere glaubten, jetzt dürfe man gar keine Begierde mehr unterdrücken," 8.2: 68). The enemies of freedom for Stifter, are "alle diejenigen Menschen, welche mit heftigen Begierden und Neigungen behaftet sind [...]" (8.2: 75). Going against the grain of these popular attitudes, Stifter views true freedom as a regulative process demanding "die meiste Selbstbeherrschung, die Bändigung seiner Begierden" so that individuals will not impose on others ("daß man dem Andern nicht zu nahe trete") and the order governing society.

In this context, it comes as little surprise that Stifter might conflate the "liberal" nationalists of 1840s Hungary, especially the radical revolutionary Kossuth, with a dangerous strand of democratic politics threatening the existing geo-political order. Writing to his Hungarian publisher once again, Stifter laments "wie der Kampf in Ungarn in mein Gemut schnitt, können

²⁰ In this context, it is interesting to note that G.W.M. Reynolds, the political radical and author of the *Mysteries of London*, named one of his sons Kossuth Mazzini, the latter fronted Italy's "young" nationalist movement.

Sie nicht glauben; ein jeder Kanonenschuß ging ja eigentlich in Österreichs Herz selber.”²¹ In fact, the same language and imagery Stifter uses to identify the enemies of freedom at the micro level, he also deploys to undermine the revolutionary actors in Hungary on a macro level. In his pamphlet, “Ueber die Befürchtung eines unglücklichen Ausganges in Ungarn,” which was commissioned in 1849 by Schwarzenberg’s government to combat pro-revolutionary Hungarian propaganda, Stifter notes how the revolution has the potential to threaten the entire stability of eastern Europe:

In dem Heere der Ungarn kämpfen alle Elemente des Umsturzes, nicht etwa eine ungarische Partei, die nur ein erstes unabhängiges Ungarn will [...] sondern all jene Bestandtheile Europas, die das Aeüßerste wollen, um ihre verschiedenen Zwecke zu erreichen, Macht, Rang, Geld, *Befriedigung jeder Begierde*, und die Polen insbesondere Herstellung ihres alten Reiches. Wenn alle diese Dinge in Erfüllung gingen, müßte Oesterreich zerfallen, und müßte Rußland in die äußerste Gefahr kommen (8.2: 103, my emphasis)²²

Like most of his political writings, this text appeared shortly after the second publication of *Brigitta*, and one must approach anachronistic evidence with caution. But it is important to note that the highly publicized debates between Kossuth and Szchenyi on the question of Hungary’s modernization and political future within the Habsburg Empire date back to the 1830s.²³ Moreover, Stifter’s father-in-law and brother-in-law both lived in Hungary and he was constantly sending letters to Heckenast during this period, so it stands to reason he was aware of and interested in political developments in the Habsburg Empire’s peripheral regions.

Perhaps more importantly, Stifter was a pedagogue who posited a homologous relationship between the forms of restraint within a patriarchal family model and those within the

²¹ Quoted in Johann Lachinger, “Ein politischer Oberösterreich—Bericht der Wiener Zeitung: Die Presse 1849, Ein unbekannter Stifter Text” in *Vierteljahres* 3/4 (1987): 8.

²² The importance of Austria for preserving peace and order in Europe was a topic that also came up in Stifter’s published response to Palmerston’s speech to parliament from July 21, 1849. “[D]aß Oesterreich um Europa verdient sie, und daß die Existenz und Macht desselben als Bürgschaft des Friedens und Gleichgewichts Europas unerläßlich sei [...]” (8.2: 144).

²³ See George Barany, *Stephen Szechenyi and the Awakening of Hungarian Nationalism, 1791-1841* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), especially 244-373.

state, and this relationship is essential to the German tradition of *Bildung* that appears throughout his oeuvre.²⁴ In this context, one can probe Stifter's pre-1848 writings, including *Brigitta*, for a cautious model of politics, a model called upon to forewarn or mitigate the pending storm Stifter so shrewdly predicted, but also a model interested in exploring the paradoxes of autonomy (as self-restraint, as a disciplining of desire) within larger social configurations. *Brigitta's* intervention within the discourse of political liberalism (and allegorical realism) needs to be understood as an effort to help contribute to a restrained form of liberalism that would serve the larger goal of preserving the individual's sacrosanct integrity and fortifying the family's centrality as the privileged site of social regulation. The political events taking place in Habsburg-ruled lands during the 1840s and the increasing liberal rhetoric of ethno-nationalism spreading throughout German-speaking lands served as a crucible for examining this very issue.

In what follows, I explore how Stifter's double speak manifests itself in questions about the nature of realism and its reception as a "normed discourse that excludes otherness" (Holub, 17), and how this process is fundamentally concerned with politics. I am most interested in revealing how a German liberal paradox of inclusion and exclusion shares in a reciprocal relationship with a fluid and dynamic form of allegory embedded in *Brigitta* and by the end of this essay it should be apparent how realist allegory and Stifter's approach to liberalism become reflections of one another in the process offering profound implications for a number of binaries identifiable within the text. In fact, it is precisely because of a rich conception of allegory that the series of containments and repressions at the heart of *Brigitta's* politics and aesthetics find ways of resurfacing for readers. By approaching *Brigitta* from this vantage point, we can best comprehend the interrelated tensions the novella provoked among its nineteenth-century German readers in Leipzig, Vienna and even Hungary.

²⁴ See, for instance, his collected writings on statehood "Der Staat" from the late 1840s (8.2: 27-39).

Just “*Reisefreunde*”? Italian Pasts, Hungarian Hinterlands, and German Classicism

The narrator’s representation of his relationship with Stephan is a complex jigsaw puzzle. Details about their shared past and present are scattered throughout all four sections of the novella in a very calculated, deliberate and yet half-closeted manner. Formally, this is a strategy not unlike the representation of Nazi’s past in Auerbach’s “Ivo,” furthering underscoring both works’ indebtedness to the genre of the novella. But in Brigitta, the caginess that accompanies the narrator’s information sharing arouses even more suspicion in readers and so too does his deliberate inversion of the linear time sequence he must have experienced himself. As a compensatory move, the narrator frequently appeals to his own process of natural self-discovery, such as the excursus he makes in the middle of his narrative to relate the childhood story of Brigitta, but this raises the question why the narrator has chosen to present his story in the way that he does: omitting a comprehensible ordering of events and offering knowledge of Stephan through intermittent flashbacks.²⁵ While it would be a stretch to classify the narrator as unreliable from the outset, it is clear he has not gone out of his way to be forthcoming; he has purposely withheld information that would reveal his narrative ploy for what it is: an artificial structure and deliberate manipulation of events. This is, of course, typical Stifter. Readers familiar with his other works from the period (such as *Der Hochwald*, 1841) clearly recognize the central act of his realist aesthetic: denying the fictionality of his fiction. But how might this representational strategy influence the dynamics of the narrator’s relationship with the Major?

²⁵ The details of Brigitta’s childhood are preceded with the following rationale: “Wie ich zu so tief gehender Kenntniß der Zustände gelangen konnte, die im Folgenden geschildert werden, wird der geneigte Leser am Ende dieser Geschichte von selbst erkennen, ohne daß ich hier nötig hätte, vor der Zeit zu enthüllen, was mich selber so tief und bleibend erschütterte,” (234). Stifter emphasizes the process of natural self-discovery to an even greater extent in the *Studienfassung* where the final clause in the above quote reads “vor der Zeit zu enthüllen, was ich auch nicht vor der Zeit, sondern durch die natürliche Entwicklung der Dinge erfuhr” (445).

To begin, his act of covering up the excesses of narrative license mirrors a similar editing or censoring of his desire for Stephan. This becomes apparent as the narrator introduces the Major as an object of aesthetic affection, “das Ziel von manchen schönen Augen” (215), prompting readers to wonder: whose eyes? He places emphasis on the first time he laid eyes on the Major, “denn nie hat man einen Mann gesehen, dessen Bau und Antlitz schöner genannt werden konnte” (215). Here the use of an impersonal pronoun allows the narrator to hide behind a generalized aesthetic judgment, while not completely divorcing himself from that judgment. And later readers learn the Major’s charm, and the majesty that surrounds his movements, was such that it bewitched men too (“auch Männer bethörte” 215). Again the narrator employs language that offers a cover for his own feelings, and that also includes himself in the assessment. That the narrator’s realist aesthetic is implicated in the hidden discourse of same-sex attraction becomes more apparent in the narrator’s first description of his travels through Hungary. Clearly the subjective language used to describe the journey through the Hungarian steppe is enough to alert readers to his investment in the story, but it is worth recalling these are the very descriptions of nature that so strongly appealed to readers in the 1840s:

Anfangs war meine ganze Seele gefasst von der Größe des Bildes: wie die endlose Luft um mich schmeichelte, wie die Steppe duftete, und ein Glanz der Einsamkeit überall und allüberall hinaus webte: – aber wie das morgen wieder so wurde, übermorgen wieder – immer gar nichts als der gehauchte Zirkel, in dem sich Himmel und Erde küssten, da erlag das Auge, es war von dem Nichts so übersättigt, als hätte ich Massen von Stoff darauf geladen – es kehrte in sich zurück, und wie die Sonnenstrahlen spielten, die Gräser glänzten, so zogen melancholischen Gedanken durch das Gehirn, alte Erinnerungen kamen wimmelnd über die Heide, und darunter war auch das Bild des Mannes, zu dem ich eben auf der Wanderung war – ich griff es gerne auf, und in der Öde hatte ich Zeit genug, alle Züge, die ich von ihm erfahren hatte, in meinem Gehirne zusammenzusuchen, und aufzufrischen (214).

The sensuous language in this passage, particularly the verbs and participial adjectives (*schmeicheln, hauchen, küssen, übersättigen, erlegen, aufladen, spielen*) could just as well be describing the embrace of two lovers. But instead, the descriptions of nature belong to the narrator’s careful scheme of self-representation and his concerted effort to create imaginary,

affective links between the act of travelling through Hungary and the Major himself. Of course, desire and affect motivate his travels in the first place – “Da es Frühling war, da sich meine alte *Reiselust* gerade wieder *regte*” (214, my emphasis) – just as the narrator/ traveler spatially and temporally orients himself toward the Major. His stated goal is to reunite with the Major following their “Trennung” of some two years (a substantive which enhances the idea of an earlier attachment). As this passage progresses, desire as a retrospective act becomes fused with images of the Major to such a degree it appears as if they had never been apart. Travel and desire thus reinforce one another, and readers see here the role that retrospection plays for the already mature narrator, who is looking back on an earlier self and re-imposing a new sequence of order onto his formation as a desiring subject. In this way, a “realist” landscape description – perhaps *the* literary technique for which Stifter is most remembered – becomes further enmeshed in a literary strategy for concealing same-sex desire, while also unintentionally revealing its fictionality.²⁶

Of course, if *Brigitta* is a novella supposed to be depicting Hungary’s landscapes, readers hardly experience much of them in the first section of the novella. On the contrary, it is Italy that is referenced, remembered, and described so much during the narrator’s travels – always in relation to (desire for) Stephan – that the narrator struggles to remember where he is: “[ich] malte mir sein Bild mehr als einmal aus, und senkte mich so tief hinein, dass ich oft Mühe hatte, nicht zu glauben, ich sei in Italien, so heiß, so schweigsam wie dort, und die blaue Dunstschichte der Ferne spiegelte sich mir zum Trugbilde der pontintischen Sümpfe” (217). And given the way that nineteenth-century critics of *Brigitta* deployed a Greco-Italian cultural geography to discuss

²⁶ The relationship between realism and same-sex desire has also been explored in Thomas Mann’s short fiction. Mann was a known admirer of Stifter’s prose. See Robert Tobin, “Making Way for the Third Sex: Liberal and Antiliberal Impulses in Mann’s Portrayal of Male-male Desire in His Early Short Fiction,” in *A Companion to German Realism: 1848-1900*, ed. Todd Kontje, (New York: Camden House, 2002), 307-338.

Stifter's work (see the critic from *Der Wanderer* above who judged Stifter's realism as caught between Scylla and Charybdis²⁷), it seems fair to say that Italy exercised a certain power and fascination both within and without *Brigitta's* cultural imaginary. Italy, I argue, plays a key role in shaping the narrator's desire for Stephan by supplying the literary and cultural capital upon which German classical *Bildung* – with its vision of homosocial friendship as an aesthetic way of life – posited male-male desire as a crucial form of sociability.²⁸ Put differently, if Stifter was caught between Scylla and Charybdis, then his narrator is caught between the homosocial and the homoerotic. At stake is not whether they are “gay” or whether Stifter admits sexuality into their relationship. It is unlikely Stifter would, though also impossible to discern. The issue is that the cult of friendship the narrator *represents* and claims to inhabit with Stephan also necessarily claims to contain and exclude sexuality, and in its effort to contain and perpetuate the impermissibility of intimate relations, the narrator's desire for Stephan escalates even more. Moreover, and as we will see, the representation of his friendship is part of a duplicitous story ordering implicated in the concealment of a specific political intent, which once exposed, casts additional doubt on the innocuous nature of their bond.

Readers learn the narrator and Stephan first met on Mount Vesuvius, a symbolically over-determined location suggestive of male biological processes and closely linked to the tradition of German classical *Bildung*. Stephan is examining the geological formations and rock sediments,

²⁷ It is worth noting Victor Hugo deploys the same metaphor in *Les Misérables* (1862) to figure political relations in revolutionary Paris.

²⁸ See Alice Kuzniar, *Outing Goethe and His Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 1-33. Italy was very much on Stifter's mind during the composition of *Brigitta*. In a March 11, 1842 letter to his friend Ludwig von Collin, who was living in Switzerland at the time, Stifter relates plans to travel to Italy with his wife. Moreover, despite the hardships such a journey would occasion, Stifter implies his friend's tacit understanding of the motivation behind such a journey (“daß ich das Meer, Italien und den Süden sehen muß, werden Sie am ersten begreifen” 110). He mentions his plans to travel to Italy again in a September 21, 1845 letter to Heckenast, asking him to pay for travel costs and promising that “die Früchte erscheinen in Ihrem Verlage” (151) and also in a November 16, 1846 letter (181).

an activity Germany's cultural icon undertook during his own eighteenth-century travels to Italy. Goethe writes about his visit to the volcano with the painter Tischbein on 6 March, 1787 and while their time spent on top of the volcano is not remarkable in any scandalous way, the event does describe a socially acceptable site of male bonding.²⁹ Goethe's travel account from Italy was certainly a text that many readers of Stifter's works would have been familiar with, and as such, Stephan's and the narrator's *rendezvous* has connections with important cultural and literary precedents within a German classical tradition. This history begins with Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), who made Italy his adopted home and who played a highly influential role in the literary and cultural period of German Classicism.³⁰ Winckelmann was also quite famously known for his homosexual liaisons. When Goethe published a biographical essay along with several pieces of Winckelmann's correspondence under the title *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert*, he subtitled a section "Freundschaft" in which he famously alluded to the "Greek" nature of Winckelmann's sexual orientation. As recent scholarship in German studies has demonstrated, Winckelmann was important for German authors in how he infused aesthetics into homoeroticism and the homosocial. He created a semantics for Greek love that modified the related eighteenth-century discourse on male friendship and love. He was not only "someone who communicated to his European contemporaries an immediacy of art and a vision of antiquity" but he also provided "a cultured, and hence permissible, voicing of same-sex attraction."³¹ In short, he made it possible for like-minded men, or men interested in exploring

²⁹ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, Münchener Ausgabe, vol. 15 (München: Carl Hanser, 1992), 235-240.

³⁰ Winckelmann's most important works included *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke* (1755), *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1763), and his epistolary essay *Abhandlung von der Fähigkeit der Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst* (1763).

³¹ Kuzniar, 12.

the idea of sexual heterodoxy, to participate in the “European institutionalization of homosocial friendship *as* aesthetic education.”³²

The theme of sexual heterodoxy – including erotically charged relationships between men – appears in numerous and culturally influential works from the German classical and Romantic periods. Christoph Martin Wieland’s *Komsiche Erzählungen* (1765), Wilhelm Heinse’s *Adringhello* (1787), Goethe’s *Römische Elegien* (1795), and Friedrich Schlegel’s *Lucinde* (1799) are but a few works whose authors, influenced in some capacity by Winckelmann, explored the themes of sexual heterodoxy in their works. And as we have seen, Stifter’s *Brigitta* would not be the only work from the early 1840s that revived German classical culture – and its concomitant investment in male-male bonding as a socializing process – for political purposes. Even if Auerbach’s “Ivo” is more indebted to *Siegwart* than Winckelmann, there is no denying the shared legacy in which both texts participate. The narrator even alludes to this legacy when situating Stephan and himself within an aesthetic discourse. Describing their time together in Italy during which they remained “fast ungetrennt bei einander,” the narrator praises the Major’s “glühendste und poetischste Seele.” “Nie in meinem Leben,” readers are told, “selbst später nicht, als ich Gelegenheit fand mit unsern großen Dichtern und Künstlern zu verkehren, habe ich einen so empfindlichen Schönheitssinn angetroffen” (216). The narrator’s association with artists and poets, precisely those individuals implicated in aesthetic education, reinforces the connection between his travels in Italy, classical *Bildung*, and the charm and fascination Stephan exudes. And though one might retrospectively assume Stephan’s “empfindlichen Schönheitssinn” to be only connected to Brigitta, the overwrought superlatives make it seem as though the narrator secretly wishes this “empfindlichen Schönheitssinn” of

³² Simon Richter and Patrick McGrath, “Representing Homosexuality: Winckelmann and the Aesthetics of Friendship,” in *Monatshefte*, vol. 86, no.1 (Spring 1994), 46.

Stephan's were directed at him too. Such a view gains further credence as the narrator expresses his wonder and lack of understanding at Stephan's ability to attract so much attention from the opposite sex ("Glücke bei Weibern").

Stifter's familiarity with this classical culture has become a critical commonplace, but the prominence he accords this literary tradition in his vision of pedagogy – especially evidenced in his 1854 *Lesebuch zur Förderung humaner Bildung* – serves to underscore the privileged role of this tradition within his political outlook more broadly. And within Stifter's oeuvre, *Brigitta* is just one of many works rehearsing the complex codes of male-male bonding. The relationship between the "der alte Obrist" and Augustinus in *Die Mappe meines Urgrossvaters* (1842), the surveyor and pastor in *Kalkstein* (1847), the grandson and grandfather in *Granit* (1848), and the narrator and his future father-in-law Risach in *Nachsommer* (1857) all partake in this model to a certain degree.

The prominence of male-male friendships in Stifter's works, not to mention this broader classical culture he taps into, raises the explicit question of how central and relevant the narrator's relationship with Stephan actually is, or what larger purpose it might serve beyond a supposedly amiable friendship. That their bond belongs in the sphere of the *potentially* erotic appears self-evident, but the presence of "homosocial desire" – a term hypothesizing "the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual"³³ – need not be scandalous, so long as sexuality is contained and repressed. For Stifter, there would have been nothing problematic with a narrator who uses Winckelmann's Italy and its model of homosociality as a way of channeling desire, rendering it acceptable, and removing passion from the cement of social bonding. Homoeroticism of this kind would be consonant with Stifter's outlook just as it was for Auerbach's.

³³ Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 1.

But as so many critics of Brigitta have noted – including Holub and Block – the narrator strikes readers as untrustworthy, and to make full sense of his bond with Stephan, the political implications underpinning it must be examined. The strained power relations tingeing his travels must be teased out. If the narrator is simply reuniting with an old friend, why does he express such mixed feelings on his first night in Uwar: “So bin ich denn nun begierig, was ich in dieser Wohnung Freundliches oder Häßliches erleben werde?” Why does the narrator even see fit to lock the door, a telling change added to the *Studienfassung* (424)? The hesitancy of their reunion, which expresses itself at the level of repressed desire, also expresses itself at the level of politics. The narrator offers a model of disciplined desire (and reality) at odds with the wild desire (and alternate reality) he senses in Hungary and he wishes to impose his model on Hungary’s/Brigitta’s wildness, in an effort to contain it. The narrator calls upon classical *Bildung* to serve his agenda of Austro-German inner-colonialism. To explore this deeper political function, we must examine how the figure of Brigitta fits into this male-male relationship of homosocial desire, which Eve Sedgwick reminds us cannot be understood “outside of its relation to women and the gender system as a whole” (Sedgwick, 1). In what follows, I will spell out how a political allegory operates at the interstices of this triangular relationship between the narrator, Stephan, and Brigitta.

Austro-German Inner-Colonialism and the Allegory of Androgyny

When the narrator notes his time spent among great artists and poets, he attaches a curious possessive to those artists and poets: *unser*. Who exactly does that *unser* connote? Is it intended as a signal for readers, encouraging their identification with German artists and poets? And if so, which readers? The readers of the *Gedenke Mein!* volume published in Leipzig, or the one published in Vienna? Does it also encompass readers in Stifter’s Bohemian homeland? What

about Hungary, the site of its plot and the location of Stifter's publisher? Perhaps it hints at a narrative slip, whereby the narrator unconsciously collapses his own aesthetic interests with those of Stephan's. Whatever the case may be, the answer is impossible to pin down, because the referents which would allow readers to situate their relationship (and the entire narrative itself) along fixed temporal, spatial, ethnic and even erotic coordinates foster immense ambiguity. It is this kind of self-consciously deployed ambiguity that showcases Stifter's literary skills, but it also marks his text as a "writerly" one, placing it firmly within the company of Heine's perhaps even more abstruse text.

In the case of the narrator, readers never learn precisely where his home is. Leaving Hungary in the final pages of the book, he sees the "lieblichen blauen Berge des Vaterlandes" (257) as he crosses the Leitha river, the natural border between present-day Hungary and Austria. But the Alps stretch over at least three separate political regions whose peoples might identify as German: Austria, Switzerland, and Bavaria. That he identifies as "German" is clear in the way he refers to himself as a traveller arriving and departing Hungary: "Es mochte ein sonderbarer Anblick gewesen sein: der deutsche Wandersmann sammt Ränzlein, Knotenstock und Kappe zu Pferde" (221) and "Im Frühjahr nahm ich wieder mein deutsches Gewand, meinen deutschen Stab, und wanderte meinem Vaterlande zu" (257). The other markers of stability arise from the narrator's attempts to distinguish what is "German" from what is not. His narration draws attention to what he perceives as a Hungarian national consciousness ("ein wild nationaler Geist" 224) through references to language, statues of former Hungarian kings, weapons on the walls at Stephan's estate, or even traditional Hungarian garb. His physical surroundings also betray an otherness that can only be described by negative referents: "auch die Landschaft war nicht deutsch" (224).

The Major's ethnicity and national attachments are even more muddled, a fact underscored by the prominent novelistic attention accorded to his double role and dual identity as both Stephan Murai and a supposed military officer. He speaks German and Hungarian, which could imply either a German or a Magyar ethnicity, given the fact that many educated Hungarians spoke German as their native tongue during the nineteenth century. The text mentions that Stephan is from the capital, but this could refer to either Vienna or Preßburg (also known as Pozsony and Bratislava) which was the capital of Hungary until 1848. Murai, too, is a Hungarian surname, but he could have resided in Vienna as many nineteenth-century Hungarian nobles did. Thus the terms Hungarian, German and Austrian offer very little in terms of stable identities for the characters, which suggests that the deliberate ambiguity of ethnic identity must be a function of Stifter's political double speak. If one considers the narrator's indirect and manipulative mode of story-telling described above, together with his quasi-veiled affection for Stephan Murai, one can speak of a vaguely German/Austro-German figure who is pursuing Stephan Murai, an indistinct Austro-German/Austro-Hungarian figure captivated by the wildness and otherness of Hungary. Block sees the narrator in terms of a purely political policing force, "an envoy sent by the Empire to return Hungary to its fold" (Block, 30). But none of the characters' ethnic identities can be completely pinned down, which in turn complicates a reading that only sees the narrator in a one-directional colonial guise.

A more subtle reading places these suspicious identities alongside the *main* liberal issue dominating German and Austrian political discourse in the 1840s, and one closely linked to Hungary's ethno-nationalist revolutionary activities. Namely, the German question: What should a German nation-state look like? Under whose leadership – Prussian or Viennese – might a German political entity emerge? Would Austria and non-Habsburg lands band together into one greater German kingdom (*Grossdeutschland*)? Would the ethnically non-Germanic peoples in

the Habsburg Empire be included or excluded in such a state? Or should Catholic Austria remain entirely separate from a potential German polity (*Kleindeutschland*)? Clearly, the “plasticity” of the concept of Germany was for a German-speaking, Bohemian-born Austrian intellectual like Stifter, not just a reality, but a crucial dynamic feeding into the central challenge of political liberalism: figuring out how the achievement of self-cultivation (as a disciplining of desire) can be reconciled with both the bourgeois family and the emergent nation.

Taking into account their homosocial relationship conditioned by erotic undertones as the basis for a political subtext, the dynamics between an Austro-German “center” and a Hungarian “periphery” speak to the question of pan-Germanism and the related problem of German nation-state formation. The *Grossdeutschland* vs. *Kleindeutschland* dilemma can be figuratively mapped out on the triangular relationship between the narrator, Stephan and Brigitta. If the narrator travels to Hungary hoping to bind Stephan to a “homo” relationship, while discouraging a “hetero” (re)union with Brigitta, his intentions would imply a reining in of wild nationalist sentiments, and renewed commitment to the existing cultural and political hegemony of the Habsburg Empire. His actions would underscore the key issue for Habsburg politics during this period: managing a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual Empire in an age of heightened anxieties associated with ethno-nationalism. But a repression of Hungary’s wild, nationalist strivings, a containment of its otherness does not relate the full story. And herein lies the novelty of Stifter’s political agenda. The hetero (“other”) and the homo (“sameness”) of these two models do not oppose each other in a strict, rigid dichotomy. Nor must they yield a reductive allegory of simple, one-to-one correspondence. Instead, they reveal and reflect each other, simultaneously emphasizing both Italy and Hungary, *Grossdeutschland* and *Kleindeutschland*, inclusion and exclusion, *Bildung* and its antinomy. This is where Brigitta’s androgyny comes into play, as it structures and facilitates the allegory’s doubleness. If male homosocial desire and its Italian

legacy channels the narrator's desire for Stephan into a realm of aesthetics, rendering it safe, socialized and unthreatening, then it is Brigitta who becomes a functional equivalent to Italy when the narrator is in Hungary. As part of an erotic triangle between the narrator and Stephan, Brigitta channels and disciplines both of their desires; she becomes a condition of possibility for their homosociality, by rendering desire proper, socialized and safe.

That the narrator's journey to Hungary is more than just tourism finds ample expression in the ulterior motives already established in his duplicitous narrative techniques, but also in his anxiety-ridden descriptions of Hungary during his arrival. There are untamed dogs, haunting gallows, talk of wolves, and fever-inducing weather. Brigitta herself functions as the figural counterpart to Hungary in this sense. Not only does the narrator consistently employ the same imagery when describing Brigitta's and Hungary's physical appearance – both are semanticized as “schwarz,” “dunkel,” and “wild” – but the narrator's first human contact in Hungary, after having zigzagged his way across the eastern domains of the Habsburg Empire, is with Brigitta. In the colonialist imaginary, women were often depicted as boundary markers of Empire, the periphery of civilization. Borders were often represented as feminine, fertile, wild, and unknown.³⁴ During their initial encounter, the narrator even juxtaposes Brigitta with the lush vegetation and robust growth of the “hohen grünen Maisbüscheln” (219). Brigitta's gender indeterminacy intensifies her distinctive otherness and the narrator's consequential disorientation. From a distance, he thinks Brigitta is a man and surprised to find out she is a woman. She even speaks to him in German, which has the effect of further complicating national and ethnic referents while also carefully situating those referents within the framework of a gender binary. By bringing Brigitta's androgynous appearance into the realm of a wild and

³⁴ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 24-25.

untamed nature, by figuring her symbolic presence as Nature, as Hungary, and as an indeterminate Other, she embodies a “category crisis” for the narrator.³⁵ Moreover, her attachment to the land forms a striking contrast to the narrator’s (and Stephan’s) own mobility while heightening her appearance as a kind of dark continent in need of cultivation and enlightenment (*Bildung*). The lack of maternal love she experienced during her childhood is described in terms of a desert geography (“So ward die Wüste immer größer” 236) and after her failed marriage with Stephan she comes to inhabit an “öde Heide” (246). While it is true that Brigitta herself is engaged in Hungary’s land cultivation, she becomes all the more menacing as an object of attraction and repulsion, what Joseph Metz calls a “threatening Medusa and tamable beast” who is in a position to mimic male economic practices while simultaneously domesticating other Hungarians in the story.³⁶

Brigitta’s role as an ambivalent disciplinary and channeling force for male desire further manifests itself in the narrator’s second dream description, which stands in complete contrast to the earlier seductive dreams he shares of Stephan on Mt. Vesuvius.³⁷ Right before the story of Brigitta’s childhood and adolescence, readers learn of the narrator’s fascination and fear elicited by the woman: “Ich war sehr begierig auf Brigitta – und wie in meine von Schlaftrunkenheit verdunkelten Ohren durch die offenen Fenster noch immer das tausendstimmige Zirpen der Haidegrillen fiel, träumte ich fantastisch durcheinander, daß ich vor der seltsamen Reiterin stehe, daß sie so schöne Augen auf mich richte, mich banne, daß ich den Fuß nicht heben könne, und daß ich alle Tage meines Lebens auf der Haide bleiben müsse” (233-234). Just as the word

³⁵ Marjorie Garber. *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 16.

³⁶ Joseph Metz, “Austrian Inner Colonialism and the Visibility of Difference in Stifter’s *Die Narrenburg*,” in *PMLA* 121, no. 5 (2006), 1477.

³⁷ In the *Journalfassung*, the narrator recounts his dreams, which include the Major propping himself up on a sofa (“die schöne Hand of ein Sofakissen stürzen” 225). The image is reminiscent of the way Tischbein portrays Goethe in the Roman Campagna, propping himself up with his hand.

“begierig” can encompass both desire and anxiety, Brigitta’s petrifying gaze registers both entrancement and dread. Her Medusian side, which threatens to end the narrator’s mobility, suggests his need to tame and contain her wildness and androgynous alterity.

Unsurprisingly, the ambivalence associated with the narrator’s presence in Hungary and proximity to Brigitta extends to the strategy of duplicitous containment he employs within the text.³⁸ The most detailed descriptions of Brigitta – which take place during a moment of noted intimacy between the narrator and Major in his office – are prompted by a small, framed photo of her on his desk. As Metz remarks, the narrator’s description conveys a quasi-racialized and Orientalist, almost animal-like image, blending racial and gender stereotypes within the narrator’s Austro-German inner-colonialist imaginary.³⁹ Viewed as a cipher for a racially different Hungary as well as a figure occupying both the masculine and feminine spheres, the location of Brigitta’s childhood story in the *middle* functions as an act of (political) containment. And curiously, the narrative logic (and the narrator’s proposed reality) works to advance his own structure of desire. For just as the bond between the narrator and Stephan has a cultural precedent in the tradition of German classical *Bildung*, so too does the androgyny of Brigitta. Winckelmann posited an androgynous ideal (which manifested itself in adolescent boys on the cusp of adulthood) as a corollary to his project promoting sexual heterodoxy as aesthetic education.

Winckelmann saw the aesthetic value in an expanded “middle,” a middle that blends polarities

³⁸ Rebecca Steele mounts a parallel argument within a discussion of androgyny in nineteenth-century literature more generally.

³⁹ Metz, 1476. It is worth noting the racialized imagery is amplified in the 1847 version and less palpable in the earlier draft. In the *Journalfassung*, the framed childhood image of Brigitta reveals a “häßliches Mädchen [...] mit einem wilden starken Auge, wie ein Mann” (231). In the *Studienfassung*, her skin and physiognomy attract more attention: “die dunkle Farbe des Angesichtes und der Bau der Stirne waren seltsam” (440). By heightening the visual markers of race and rendering Brigitta more visibly other, Stifter might have intended to increase the potential for reading ethno-national rhetoric into the text, which was certainly on the rise in the second half of the 1840s. Perhaps this does not so much as a signal a change in Stifter’s thought, as it does a reaffirmation of his earlier intentions adapted to fit a changing political landscape.

and contains all extremes as possibilities.⁴⁰ The middle – the androgyne – thus figures as a space for the greatest potentiality. Classical German aesthetics subsequently became focused around the concept of the middle precisely because of this possibility.

No doubt, Stifter's readers could also have been expected to know and would likely have even related the figure of Brigitta to Goethe's famous Amazon in *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*: Therese. Both characters don male clothing, participate in yard work, and run their estates, activities which situate them within an image of nature and domesticize them at the same time. But Therese most resembles Brigitta because she is the "wahre" Amazon, not the "schöne Amazon" of Wilhelm's dreams, namely Natalie. As a true Amazon, Therese is in a certain sense more of a man, which makes her an unsuitable partner for Wilhelm. But precisely this quality of manliness is what marks Brigitta as ideal for the displacement of male homoeroticism. Thus the key difference between *Wilhelm Meister* and *Brigitta* lies in the triangular relationship that emerges in the latter and the role that Brigitta plays in stabilizing their homoerotic impulses, making them safe. This is not say the attraction resulting between Stephan, Brigitta, and the narrator must be thought of or understood in causal terms, but the allegorical effects Stifter employs partake in a *schema* of male-male desire. Neither must homosexuality serve as the only *telos* of a male-male relationship, but faced with all that readers learn about Brigitta (she is ugly, manly, wild, dangerous, other) she could be understood to serve as channel for the *potentiality* of their homoerotic relationship. In this way, Brigitta's gender ambiguity prepares the way for the sentimental ending of the novella, when Stephan reunites with Brigitta around their injured son Gustav in an image which MacLeod appropriately calls a "de-eroticized bourgeois family."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

The narrator, readers learn, returns home and adopts a family of his own. But these social relations harbor a political message, too. Brigitta's androgyny signals the disciplining of both male-male social relations within bourgeois social relations, for she is both masculine and feminine. Thus the allegorical tendencies, the political double speak at play within the work always manifests its dual nature in Brigitta's androgyny.

As an indistinct Austro/German figure in the text, the narrator employs a model of German classical *Bildung* as part of his own "peacekeeping" mission to keep Stephan – an indistinct figure of Austro/German, Austro/Hungarian ethnicity – from going native. He uses *Bildung* and its Italian legacy to render his desire for Stephan safe and socially acceptable. But when in Hungary, the narrator faces a threatening challenge to his identity in the figure of Brigitta, whom he attempts to contain and control by employing *Bildung* as a form of cultural imperialism. Ultimately Stephan does go native. He becomes reunited with Brigitta/Hungary in what amounts to an affirmation of the heterogeneity of Austro-Hungarian self-expression. But his going native – or his entry into a bourgeois, heterosexual, familial structure – can also be seen as an affirmation of *Bildung* and German cultural values. After all, all narrative trajectories of *Bildung* culminate in the bourgeois nuclear family. Reading Brigitta as Hungary suggests that Hungary itself does not change, but that its status within the Empire does. The rebellious wildness Brigitta/Hungary once exuded has been reined into a patriarchal system and tamed. In geopolitical terms, Hungary's continued submission to Austro-German Habsburg rule opens the door for an androgynous middle to accommodate the potential for both a *kleindeutsch* and *grossdeutsch* political solution to German liberalism's territorial challenge. The privileging of German classical cultural throughout the Germanophone world offers a sweeping inclusivist vision of German culture, which Hungary can be a part of, if it becomes German. By becoming German, however, Hungary is no longer Hungary, simultaneously necessitating its exclusion.

Disciplined Desire and Passionless Politics: Gustav's Body and Gabriella's Grave

An October 5, 1843 review of Stifter's contribution to *Gedenke Mein!* notes *Brigitta's* limited plot, but suggests the author's "glänzende Darstellung" compensates for "der Mangel an Erfindungsgabe." The novella's ending was the critic's favorite moment: "die köstliche Versöhnungsszene, in der mich nur die verrenkt gegebene Umarmung 'mit den hochgehobenen Händen eines Sturzes' befremdete" (*Der Humorist*, 800). And this critic is right. Stephan's and Brigitta's embrace stands at odds with the content of the narrative in the way it stages a gestural display of conspicuous sentiment by the Major, and in the way it violates the existing pattern of repression guiding relationships within the work. Still, it is a moment the narrator chooses to narrate. One can't help but wonder if this particular reader felt alienated by the narrator's physical exclusion from the happy ending, his status as third wheel? Though impossible to answer, one mustn't lose sight of Gustav's pivotal role in promulgating the German liberal legacy of exclusion and inclusion at stake in the text. His reunion with his father perpetuates the male-male model of homosocial desire privileged by the narrator. Gustav, in fact, displaces the narrator and comes to occupy his functional role.

For the narrator, Gustav is a visual sensation, depicted in strong contrast to both his mother Brigitta and the workers at Uwar. He attracts the narrator's attention with his looks, which are described as "ganz ungewöhnlich schön" (227). Important is that Gustav resembles his father and in this way belongs to a line of succession, perpetuating the mechanisms of male genealogy. Gustav also occupies an important role in the narrator's imaginary: "[S]ein dunkles sanftes Auge sprach so schön zu mir, und wenn er zu Pferde saß, so kraftvoll und so demüthig: flog ihm ganzes Wesen zu; denn es kam ein längst verlichesenes schönes Bild in meine Seele zurück, das Bild eines Jugendfreundes, der mir den Tod entrissen, und den ich einst mit tausend

Thränen beweint” (233). Here Gustav is portrayed as erotically tempting in a distinctly Winckelmannian manner: the boy on the cusp of adulthood. And just as the narrator was young and met an older Stephan in Italy, the bonding experience is transposed to a young Gustav and a now older narrator. The same feeling for beauty manifests in the narrator’s description, and that Gustav reminds him of a male friend who in his early years met early death, widens the arch of the narrator’s homosociality.

Gustav’s survival at the end of the story – and the male genealogy enacted through him – reflects the ultimate success of the narrator’s own investments in classical *Bildung* and his travels in Hungary. For though it would seem that the narrator fails in his attempt to bind Stephan to his model of homosocial desire, Brigitta’s androgyny does not disappear, a circumstance which at the very least will always cast doubt on Stephan’s (heterosexual) desire for her. Moreover, we have seen how the culminating image of the bourgeois family enacted in the text is still about the safe channeling of passions. The narrator’s own acquisition of a family mustn’t be read as a renunciation or abandonment of his homosocial or homoerotic impulses either. On the contrary, the family offers a natural model for the endorsement of constructed social relations, including the repression of desires. Such is the ambiguity of the mode of representation at stake in the work as well as the cultural referents of German classicism supporting the narrator’s agenda. Just as Brigitta is reinscribed into a patriarchal system with Gustav and Stephan, the narrator has drawn a valuable lesson from the model of social relations enacted through the reunion – he has come to live out his own narrative of *Bildung*. The lesson both Stephan and the narrator learn is not about “becoming” heterosexual, but rather how to balance male-male impulses within a family. In this sense, they both come to occupy the productive potentiality of Brigitta’s middle, of *Bildung*’s middle.

In counterpoint to Gustav stands the beautiful young woman responsible for disrupting the bourgeois family in the first place. Readers will recall Stephan and Brigitta were happily married with their young son, and Stephan's post-divorce travels to Italy only ensued after a flaring-up of passions with a local countess named Gabriella (in the *Studienfassung* she is a count's daughter). As the "wildes, herrliches Geschöpf" (243) who so strongly elicited Stephan's desires, Gabriella might appear to undermine any claim to homoerotic impulses on Stephan's behalf. But it is worth noting he is attracted to the very same quality in her as he is in Brigitta: wildness. Thus the premature death signified by her gravestone, which the narrator passes on his way back home, also speaks to the removal of sensualism and passion as a basis for human social relations (and by extension political ones). This finds congruity in the realist strategy more generally, which Holub describes as "the maintenance of an order without passion, without desire" (44) which Brigitta and Stephan mimic, but also in the narrator's moralizing claim of the closing paragraphs: "O wie heilig, wie heilig, muß die Gattenliebe sein, und wie arm bist du, der du bisher höchstens die trübe Lohe der Leidenschaft kanntest" (256). Here the narrator appears to be comparing himself to Stephan and Brigitta, which would place his own desires in a more wild, uncontrolled realm, while heightening the idea of *Bildung* as a disciplining of those desires. So while the figure of Gustav represents the androgynous middle and a privileging of German cultural values premised on disciplined desire, Gabrielle symbolizes the ultimate lack of self-restraint and self-discipline Stifter sees as pivotal for socio-political relations. By consigning her sensualism to the grave, Stifter may very well have intended to critique the kind of literary sensualism that elevated the writers of *Junges Deutschland* to popular success. The substitution of destabilizing passions for the stabilizing norms of a de-eroticized bourgeois family aligns with Stifter's cautious liberal outlook more broadly, which we recall, identified freedom with a

disciplining of desires and paradoxically privileged the maintenance of order and stability as a basis for safe political change.

Gabriella's grave thus becomes an allegory for liberalism in its repudiation of political passions, but also an allegory of realism, in that the passion and alternate reality she symbolizes is excluded by the narrator's discourse and preferred reality. The entire process is much less transparent than it seems. The same logic of exclusion that consigns her passion to the grave simultaneously threatens to reveal itself as a result of the work's allegorical tendencies. For Gabrielle's premature death conjures images of German Romanticism and the topos of the dead woman Heine so humorously ironized, reminding us that the primary cultural (and political) issues could not be separated from the negotiation of a German literary tradition, something Stifter's critics in the 1840s clearly recognized. Furthermore, the lesson the narrator eventually comes to learn, the message he retrospectively carries to readers on the other side of the Leitha river, is accompanied by "trüben und sanften Gedanken." He reiterates the very same adjective used to describe the plight of someone (himself) who does not yet know the joys of "Gattenliebe," someone ruled by the passions of youth. In a certain respect, it would seem his thoughts are "trüb" – a descriptor associated with water and fluidity as much as cloudiness and confusion – because he is no longer a part of a triangular relationship with Stephan and Brigitta, because his political mission is complete and his own pursuit of "Gattenliebe" awaits him. But this is also the very condition on which allegory thrives in his narrative, it harbors an ambiguity that cannot be pinned down. Thus, allegory is not a simple relation of text and subtext, but instead, a device for engaging multiple meanings, for complicating dichotomies. There is a certain fluidity within Stifter's use of the trope of allegory, it doesn't allow itself to be contained, in the same way the referents in *Brigitta* do not allow readers to comfortably contextualize the work within discourses of gender, aesthetics, ethnicity, or politics.

This function of allegory in *Brigitta* speaks to how Stifter delivers his pedagogical message by means of mobility. For to whatever extent the novella unambiguously embraces the legibility of heterosexuality and the de-eroticized love between a man and woman as part of a normed discourse for bourgeois social formation and preferred reality, it simultaneously manifests an undercurrent of homosociality rooted in the classical German tradition of *Bildung*. Such subtle volatility underpinning the disciplinary practices attached to desire reveals itself in simple actions and gestures, such as when the narrator unwittingly admits he reunites with Stephan in a state of undress (“Als ich mich endlich anleidete, waren wir schon so bekannt, als seien wir seit unserer italienischen Reise gar nicht getrennt gewesen,” 226), but also in sedimented forms that take shape over long periods of time. This is painstakingly disclosed in the Major’s study of andesite rocks on top of Mt. Vesuvius and the narrator’s curiosity to see how Stephan will appear in Hungary, for as he notes “ich hatte ihn nur in Gesellschaft gesehen” (217). By claiming Mt. Vesuvius as “Gesellschaft” the narrator implies an investment and interdependence in the social networks and cultural expectations of Italy, indirectly suggesting Hungary is not subject to the same system of sociability, a system rooted in the cultural, literary and aesthetic legacy of German classical *Bildung*.

Brigitta constantly grounds itself in dichotomies and binaries such as this (civilization vs. non-civilization, inclusion vs. exclusion, homo vs. hetero, *Kleindeutschland* vs. *Grossdeutschland*), but it also offers a third way of seeing through them, by seeing them both at the same time. This dynamic is very much the result of an allegorical realism that plays itself out beneath the surface of *Brigitta*’s erotic relationships – or in the words of the critic from the *Wiener Zeitschrift* above – in the “hingestreuten Beziehungen auf magnetische, im Dunkeln waltende Kräfte.” There is a way to see how both desire and love contaminate one another in Stifter’s novella. And it is also here, in the dark, where allegory and liberalism partake in a

reciprocal relationship, one that sheds light on Stifter's own complex and paradoxical political and literary attitudes before 1848. Wanting to preserve a political status quo by disciplining political passions, Stifter also offers a shifting and unstable agenda of his own. And looking to chart a new reality for literature by means of a new aesthetic, Stifter engages and negotiates a literary and cultural heritage threatening to undermine his project, but also one that paradoxically appears to advance it.

CONCLUSION

Theodor Mügge's *Afraja* (1854) and Post-1848 German Politics: Readerly Models for Literary History

Few Germanists today will have ever heard of the nineteenth-century author and journalist Theodor Mügge (1802-1861), but even a cursory glance in the periodicals, newspapers, and lending library registers from the 1850s uncovers the prevalence of his name. Given the fact his collected works – published in 1862 by Eduard Trewendt in Breslau – comprised over 33 volumes of narrative prose fiction and 16 volumes of non-fictional writings, one might expect as much. In addition to authoring dozens of historical novels, romances, and works of adventure fiction, Mügge wrote travelogues, *Sachbücher*, and contentious political tracts. Born in Berlin, he was one of the first Germans to travel extensively in Scandinavia and his travelogue *Reise durch Skandinavien. Skizzen aus dem Norden* (1844) single-handedly introduced continental Europe to Nordic life. At home, his *Censurverhältnisse in Preußen* (1845), which polemically argues for freedom of the press, was controversial enough to have him jailed – a fate he suffered multiple times. Mügge was also one of the founding members of the *Berliner National-Zeitung* (1848-1938), which with 10,000 subscribers by 1850 and a twice-daily print run, served as a central mouthpiece for liberal politicians maneuvering within the rise of Bismarck's Germany.¹ Similar to the biographies of so many critics and authors discussed in this dissertation, the diversity of Mügge's popular writings reveals the mutual entanglement of

¹ Heinz-Dietrich Fischer, *Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts* (Pullach bei München: Verlag Dokumentation, 1972), 177-189.

categories and descriptors when it comes to classifying his texts. The critic who described Karl Gutzkow's *Die Zeitgenossen* with the phrase "Alles durcheinander wie Kraut und Rüben" may have obliquely described the literary lives of Mügge and so many other writers of the period.

Despite the difficulty we might face in assimilating the literary output and professional career of a writer like Mügge, to contemporaries he was a pillar of a politicized literary culture during the 1850s. A review of his historical and adventure novel *Afraja* appearing in Otto Wigand's *Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, placed Mügge's text alongside Karl Gutzkow's *Die Ritter vom Geiste*, Otto Müller's *Charlotte Ackermann*, Fanny Lewald's *Wandlungen* and Wilibald Alexis' *Isegrim*.² When Mügge died in 1861, the author and critic Rudolf Gottschall wrote a four-page lead article on his life and writings in the *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, noting that "unsere neuere Literatur [hat] einen ihrer beliebtesten Erzähler verloren."³ And Stifter thought highly enough of Mügge's pretensions toward *Bildung* that he included one of his short stories ("Marchen und Halligen") in his *Lesebuch zur Förderung humaner Bildung in Realschulen und in andern zu weiterer Bildung vorbereitenden Mittelschulen* (1854). Right next to Mügge's contribution is a reprint of Goethe's *Novelle*, to say nothing of the rest of the volume which includes selections from the Brothers Grimm, Voss, Schiller, Uhland, Herder, Hebel, and Jung-Stilling. Thus in addition to commanding popularity within contemporary reading cultures, Mügge was also a writer implicated in Germany's eighteenth and early nineteenth-century literary heritage – including the culture of *Bildung* we have been tracking throughout this dissertation.

² Otto Wigand, ed., "Neue deutsche Romane," in *Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1854), 317-338.

³ Rudolf Gottschall, "Theodor Mügge," in *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, no. 34 (August 22, 1861), 613-617.

If there is one work of Mügge's that appeared to capture critics' attention the most, it was probably *Afraja*, which was published the same year as Stifter's *Lesebuch*. As a blend of historical, romance, and adventure fiction, the novel is long and populated with numerous characters, but its plot can be succinctly retold. Johann Marstrand is a Danish nobleman, forced to flee Copenhagen for Norway in the 1740s on account of his family's corrupt business practices.⁴ In search of wealth abroad, Marstrand sets out to establish a wood speculation business under the advice of a local and wealthy fish speculator, Niels Helgestad. The latter belongs to a feudalistic society of officeholders and merchants who have banded together to form a powerful elite. They engage in unscrupulous business practices, monopolize goods, and exploit the migrant Sami population. The primary conflict revolves around Helgestad's plan to steal Marstrand's newly acquired wealth, a plan thwarted by the title's namesake, Afraja. As the Sami religious and political leader, Afraja has his own plans to revolt against Helgestad, even enlisting Marstrand's help by offering him his Sami daughter, Gula. Marstrand, however, refuses to use violence, instead offering to plead on behalf of the Sami to the king in Denmark. The story concludes with a climactic trial in which Afraja and Marstrand are captured and found guilty of treason. Afraja is burned alive, but Danish royals arrive as Marstrand's banishment is being carried out. Afterwards, a royal proclamation grants the Sami the same equality as Denmark's other subjects. Like most works of narrative prose fiction from the nineteenth-century, the tale is inundated with interrelated love stories, but it ends with an unencumbered vision of the bourgeois family immersed in a rural-idyllic environment. Marstrand remains in Norway, weds Helgestad's daughter Ilda, and gives up his wood speculation business, turning to farming instead.

⁴ It is important to note Norway belonged to Denmark during the eighteenth-century. Marstrand is "der Sprössling eines edlen Hauses, dessen Besitzthum so ziemlich verthan war, nachdem Großvater und Vater arge Wirtschaft getrieben und unmäßigen Aufwand am Hofe Christians des Sechsten in Kopenhagen geführt hatten" (5).

On a very basic level, it is easy to see how Mügge's supposedly realistic depiction of Nordic life is actually an appropriation of early to mid-nineteenth century North American adventure fiction. All the popular themes, plot conflicts, and motifs found in a work by J.F. Cooper, Charles Sealsfield (Karl Postl), and Friedrich Gerstäcker find their way into Mügge's novel. From the hero's initiation and love triangles, to the exchanged (lost) child and the encounter with violent nature, Mügge self-consciously drew on these elements to great effect. In fact, Otto Wigand criticized the novel for the way it borrowed so invitingly from Charles Sealsfield. Taking place as it does in the 1740s, the work also appealed to readers for its clear associations with historical fiction. Gottschall even notes how "Mügge [erscheint] in *Afraja* als Walter Scott Laplands."⁵ His public tribute in the *Blätter* further indicates he was familiar with Mügge's other historical novels including *Der Chevalier* (1835); *Die Vendéerin* (1837); *Toussaint, oder der Negeraufstand in Haiti. Eine historische Erzählung für die Jugend* (1840); *König Jakobs letzte Tage* (1850); *Erich Randal. Historischer Roman aus der Zeit der Eroberung Finnlands durch die Russen im Jahre 1808* (1858); and *Der Vogt von Silt* (1858). Judging by the titles of these works, which treat topics as diverse as the overthrow of King James II, French revolutionary battles, and the Finnish War, Mügge's literary oeuvre casts doubt on the findings of a work like *History, Fiction, and Germany*, which argues that a German national consciousness grew out of historical fiction as readers learned to love Frederick the Great and villainize Germany's enemies.⁶ While there is no dearth of stories praising German heroes in the nineteenth-century, there are also hundreds of historical novels that have little to do with Germans at all. Gutzkow's appeal to Bulwer's historical fiction reminds us of this fact, and so

⁵ Gottschall, *Blätter*, 615.

⁶ Brent O. Peterson, *History, Fiction, and Germany: Writing the Nineteenth-Century Nation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005).

does *Afraja*.⁷ In fact, the way in which Mügge idealizes the Danish monarchy and weds bourgeois values with a reinstated aristocratic order at the end of the tale, provides even less reason to assume Mügge saw his fiction as a means of bolstering popular nationalism in Germany. Marstrand refuses to use violence to oppose his opponents, appealing instead to the authority of the state and the removal of the kinds of passions that will lead to disorder, placing him more in line with Stifter's cautious model of liberalism. This was also a period when the Schleswig-Holstein question continued to occupy Prussian and Danish politics, and the message in novel appears if anything to be mitigate the conflict, by sending Marstrand to colonize the north, not become implicated in the affairs of the south.

In many respects, Mügge's novel lends its well to the method of analysis at work in this dissertation, one attentive to the potential for a displaced political agenda concealed within the text, but also the model of critical, interpretive reading Sharon Marcus calls "just reading."⁸ Comparable to the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* and *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin*, distilling Mügge's implicit political agenda can be a straightforward affair. The challenge lies in historicizing it within a post-1848 political culture. If Auerbach was explicitly interested in religious themes, and *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* concerned itself with social conflict, then Mügge is chiefly interested in economics; his novel critiques *laissez-faire* practices and the growing *Wirtschaftsbürgertum* of post-1848 Germany. Over the course of the long nineteenth century the German states witnessed the slow rise of a class-based society and industrial capitalism frequently at odds with a predominantly agricultural and rural economy. These

⁷ A more convincing approach to the question of historical fiction and German nationalism will ground an argument in the processes and reading cultures of transcultural exchange that defined the genre's rise in the nineteenth-century.

⁸ Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 3.

changes did not happen over night, but one of the main social conditions exposed by the 1848 assembly in Frankfurt concerned the wide gap between rural (peasant and artisan) concerns and the liberal goals of a predominantly middle-class and professional parliament. Three out of every four members of the parliament held university degrees.⁹ There were only four handicraftsmen and one peasant. Indeed, craftsmen and artisans felt threatened by liberals' opposition to guild restrictions and support of free market forces. Mügge's *Afraja* appeared at a time when large-scale economic changes were beginning to exert pressure. To be sure, Germany still lagged behind Britain and France, but shifts in the patterns of production, improved communications, and the rise of railroads raised the prospects for new forms growth, new sources of capital, and a new burgeoning bourgeoisie.

Afraja is a work that tries to make sense of these transformations while also staging a critique of self-interested capitalist modes of production that often accompanied them. First and foremost, this process plays itself out through a male protagonist's *Bildungsreise* into the world of business.¹⁰ As a Danish aristocrat in the 1740s, Marstrand has no reason to leave Copenhagen where he can cultivate himself as a member of the upper crust. His father's money failings (perhaps gambling, perhaps a failed investment) *forced him* into the world of petty middle-class economic concerns. As he notes, "Ich komme in eine mir gänzlich fremde Welt, mein Glück darin zu suchen" (14).¹¹ Throughout the novel readers accompany his venture into the maze of trade and business speculation, with didactic advice embedded in the unfolding of the plot.

"Speculation ist die Seele des Handels," a local guild master warns Marstrands, "aber wer in's

⁹ Jürgen Kocka, "Bürgertum und Bürgerlichkeit als Probleme der deutschen Geschichte vom späten 18. zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert," in *Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987), 34.

¹⁰ In this context, it is worth noting Gusatv Freytag's *Soll und Haben* was published the same year.

¹¹ All references to *Afraja* come from Otto Müller's *Deutsche Bibliothek* edition. Theodor Mügge, *Afraja* (Frankfurt: Meidinger, 1854).

Blaue ohne Mittel spekuliert, geräth in Schwindel.” (197). Marstrand, of course is mislead and deceived by the corrupt cartel exercising political and economic influence in Trondheim, and readers along with it. And as part of this plot Mügge consistently links capitalist production with a violation of moral principles and a lack of sensitivity to humanity. Indeed, what Marstrand discovers in Norway and what is carefully removed from Norway by the novel’s end are the conditions of men in industrial production. Note the narrator’s highly subjectivist description of the thousands of fishermen working in the cartel’s fishery:

Mit ungeheuer Geschwindigkeit verrichteten die Männer ihr Geschäft. Die Lust des Tötens glänzte aus ihren Augen. Sie hielten die blutigen Messer zwischen den Zähnen, während ihre Hände in dem Bauch der sterbenden Tiere wühlten...Mit nackten Armen und weit offener, rauer Brust, ganz von spritzendem Blute bedeckt, sahen sie wie Kannibalen aus, welche ein schreckliches Siegesfest feiern. Gierig suchten sie nach den größten und stärksten Opfern (11).

Reacting to the scene, Marstrand describes a perceived lack of feeling among the workers:

“Welch rohes fürchterliches Volk, welch Abstreifen aller menschlichen Empfindungen!” Similar to Auerbach’s appeal to animals, Mügge is not advocating vegetarianism here, but linking the aggression and profit-oriented business elite of Bergen to the failure of sentimental agency. Not only has the cartel’s monopoly of the fishing bays left the local Sami population without access to fishing resources, but a lifestyle of human relations premised on the cash nexus has led to a disregard for communal obligations.¹²

It is in this context that Mügge’s appropriation of both adventure and historical fiction appears most pertinent to readers. Set in the 1740s, Mügge is appealing to a pre-industrial, pre-railroad, pre-Enlightenment world to offer an anti-modern critique of contemporary German

¹² Also of consequence is how Mügge uses this critique of the fish monopoly to implicate German-Catholic consumers and readers. Helgestad comments at one point to Mastrand, “Ein wahres Glück aber ist es, fuhr er dann mit seinem spöttischen Grinsen fort, dass es katholische Christen in der Welt gibt: in Portugal, Spanien, Deutschland und wie die Ländern weiter heißen...im Süden bei dem katholischen Volke ist es die Fastenspeise für Arme und Reiche.” (16).

economic practices. As an adventurer who travels to Norway – a new frontier in the German imaginary of the 1850s – Mügge/Marstrad uses a pre-modern, uncharted world to disclose the effects of unrestrained commercialism and unmitigated self interest. In this sense, *Afraja* questions the desirability of total economic freedom embodied by the laissez-faire liberalism of a certain strata of the *Wirtschaftsbürgertum*. It is a commentary on human nature and an admission that capitalist markets require oversight, control, and order – three attributes that a political radicalism in the mid-nineteenth century threatens. In short, Mügge uses historical fiction – arguably the most widely read novelistic subgenre in nineteenth-century Germany – as a displaced site for exposing the post-1848 political dangers of certain economic practices. *Afraja* reminds the German bourgeoisie of their moral and political ideals at a time when those ideals were increasingly challenged by societal transformations.

In addition to a surface reading of the novel, there are themes, tropes, and topoi within it that also work to facilitate Mügge's agenda. The novel's emphasis on a general common humanity is clearly a reaction to new social configurations in the 1850s, but it is ultimately the romance plots within the tale that do the most work in providing the kind of social and political stability Mügge sees as necessary for overcoming the idea of man as a specialized instrument of production. In order to lend credence to Mügge's vision of an organic utopia Marstrand requires a woman; his ideology needs generative potential. And Mügge's ambivalent representation of women appeared to attract significant attention of readers. An 1854 review criticizes the lack authenticity in the female protagonist Ilda (Marstrand's wife by the end of the novel) for the way she elicits "unangenehme Gefühle:" "Diese Sphinx unter den norwegischen Häringsschiffen scheint aus dem Salze derselben zusammengeschmolzen zu sein; so kalt, so starr, so herb, so – sauersalzig ist ihr Wesen. Wir können nie und nimmer an ihre wahre Liebe zu Marstrand glauben; sie rührt um diesen verratenen, betrogenen Mann doch auch nicht einen Finger [...]"

Dass ihr geliebter Marstrand mit dieser Liebe zufrieden ist, scheint uns mehr bescheiden als männlich.”¹³ No doubt, part of Ilda’s problematic character lies in the fact that Helgestad is her father, but the reviewer also criticizes Mügge for his lack of originality as well: “Bei Gula [Afraja’s daughter] hatten ihm Cooper, Chateaubriand sogar Goethe in Mignon und Immermann in Flämmchen schon so glücklich vorbereitet, dass es ihm doch auch nicht zu einer durchaus eigentümlichen und originellen Gestaltung glücken wollte.”¹⁴ One could easily add Mademoiselle Laurence to this list, which raises an interesting prospect. If Gula can be read as a Mignon-like figure, then Ilda and her androgynous features also shares literary predecessors in *Wilhelm Meister*.

Introduced as “ein großes starkes Mädchen,” Ilda “sah ihrem Bruder ähnlich. Es waren dieselben wohlgestalteten Züge, [...] aber Alles war so fest geprägt und so voll gebildet, dass der Mangel weicher weiblicher Form ein verwöhntes Auge leicht beleidigen konnte” (12). Marstrand notes in particular her manly clothing, which leads to the assessment she “sieht doch gar zu bärenhaft polarmäßig aus.” Given her manly qualities, it is more than possible Marstrand is attracted to her for those qualities, which sheds light on the critic’s suspicion of his desire for her. Unlike in *Brigitta* or “Ivo,” Marstrand does not become entangled with other men in the novel, but that circumstance does not change Ilda’s androgyny – which places *Afraja* within the pedigree of Weimar classicism and the cultures of *Bildung* explored by Goethe and others. Thus crucial for Mügge is the way women function as structural devices for channeling male desire and marking out a private, domestic position in the process. The figure of Ilda becomes further politicized as she moves away from her father’s domain – the world of exploitative labor and corrupt business practices – and gains entry into a new model of liberal community by becoming

¹³ Wigand, *Jahrbuch*, 334.

¹⁴ Ibid., 333.

Marstrand's wife. Mügge's organic liberal agenda is dependent on the ideal of an androgynous woman scripted from the *Bildungsroman*. His lack of originality might be understood less as a liability, than a self-conscious effort to participate in a German literary tradition – one that attracted Stifter for similar reasons well before the failed revolution of 1848.

Within the broader context of mid-nineteenth century literary liberalism Goethe's shadowy presence in *Afraja* suggests 1848 may have been a rather irrelevant date for the unique political culture of narrative prose fiction. As long as authors of popular prose fiction continued to traffic in eighteenth-century literary concerns, the reception of their literature continued to be marked by those concerns. In some respects, it is this characteristic of nineteenth-century liberal German authors that might mark them as elitist, but it is also what lends their own liberal politics a conservative tenor. All of the authors examined here would much more likely exhaust the possibilities for reform and public debate, before cutting the constraints that would lead to civic instability. The model of liberalism at work in this literature is not progressive. And for all the texts examined in this dissertation the entwined formation of liberal ideology (or liberal critique) with the forms of discipline (or lack of discipline) within the bourgeois nuclear family worked as means of privately exploring public politics. By rendering politics a question of habitus, by offering readers visions of *Bürgerlichkeit*, German liberalism could draw on the rise of the bourgeois nuclear family, as much as middle-class citizens could turn to literature and the politics contained therein to authorize their own social claims. The reciprocal relationship between these two spheres does not ensure the long-term success of either, but it does hint at their mutual entanglement within German literary culture in the nineteenth century. As we have seen, grasping this unique cultural and political work performed by *Afraja* and other works of prose fiction requires close attention to both the narrative, its figural relations, and the culture which produced and received a readerly text. And all three of these elements needed for

effectively historicizing this fiction are overlooked in Franco Moretti's empirical and quantitative approaches to the study of genre formation and literary history.

Recalling Moretti's discussion of the village tale in his 2005 book *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*, he argues the generic form of the *Dorfgeschichte* emerged as a result of the conflict between national and local loyalties. The village tale, for Moretti, is fundamentally concerned with the formation of nation-states and by mapping Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, Moretti reveals the *Heimat* vs. *Vaterland* tensions Auerbach's fiction literarily enacts. Moretti's map is right to stress the importance of concrete place and local detail in the village tale, in part because this formal element within the *Dorfgeschichte* generated its success while reinforcing the role of restricted space as a necessity for the compelling representation of an "Exaktheit des Bildes."¹⁵ If the countless Auerbach imitators who sought to bring village stories to their own local communities are indicative of Auerbach's reception, then the presence of concrete, "real" places was one of the most appealing features of regional literature like Auerbach's (and perhaps even Sue's imitators as well). But just because the village tale traffics in concrete spatial representations should not necessarily be seen as an invitation to restrict its importance to questions of liberal nation-formation. As my analysis of a single tale revealed, the complexity with which Auerbach engages the tradition of sensibility and the deep concern for spreading a universalist form of enlightened piety (to say nothing of his allegories of empathy), indicates a much more nuanced generic function for Auerbach's intra-local markers as well as his reception within reading cultures.

¹⁵ Sengle, *Biedermeierzeit*, 869.

Interestingly, Moretti's visual diagram of Auerbach's tales does not include the reference to Manchester in the tale of "Ivo."¹⁶ Moretti only maps places characters travelled to within the narrative, overlooking the kinds of places that might incite readers' imaginations. Auerbach goes great lengths to relate how Ivo's mother dressed him in clean Manchester linens for the "Primiz," and how at one point Ivo is even ashamed after getting his clothes dirty.¹⁷ Does this reference to Manchester – the only one in the entire 1843 collection – relate to a *Heimat* vs. *Vaterland* struggle? Or is it more telling that Manchester was a metonymy for industrial labor exploitation already in 1842, that it's only fifty miles from the West Yorkshire city of Wakefield, and that the affective economy shared between Ivo and her mother plays itself out through clothing, an external indicator of inner worth and virtue. I offer these specific details, in part, because the value of my approach to writing literary history necessitates attention to these details, details which pleased nineteenth-century readers and characterized a new realist mode of writing fiction. My approach, which necessitates a view toward the narrative and figurative qualities of single works cannot be explored in Moretti's system, because I place interpretive emphasis not on abstracted data, but in the myriad concrete acts of reading that constituted literary culture in the nineteenth-century.

This project ultimately set out to evaluate literature's potential role in the process of liberal political formation, carving out a distinct space for narrative prose fiction and nineteenth-century reading cultures often overlooked in traditional accounts of German liberalism. While a number of popular genres, texts, and authors could have worked within this historical

¹⁶ Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 50 (figure 21).

¹⁷ "Ivo wurde [...] von seiner Mutter schön angekleidet mit einem neuen Janker von gestreiftem Manchester und, wie ihm schien, silbernen Knöpfen und frisch gewaschenen, kurzen ledernen Beinkleidern" ("Ivo," 210). Later Ivo worries about sitting down "aus Furcht, seine Kleider zu verderben" and on the first day of school his new classmates "machten sich besonders über seine weiten Kleider lustig" ("Ivo," 259).

framework, the works analyzed here speak particularly well to the issues and topics most pertinent within 1840s literary and political culture. Gutzkow's pseudonymous *Die Zeitgenossen* attests to the widespread nineteenth-century perception of the German lands as a haven for illiberalism as well as the practice of censorship authors faced in the 1830s. Heine's *Florentinische Nächte* speaks to the complex relationship between French political culture and Germany's own by investigating a French revolutionary heritage and German cultural legacy in tandem. Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* foreground the politically volatile *Volk*, while also demonstrating the continued relevance of religious-secular issues for an emergent model of German liberalism. *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* seizes on and adapted popular French literature to promote a model of social sympathy for the urban poor, contributing to a growing homology between liberalism and the reduction of human suffering. Stifter's *Brigitta* responds to growing concerns over ethno-nationalism by offering a tale intended to diffuse the strong passions that might lead to instability and a lack of political order. And Mügge's *Afraja* offers a post-1848 critique of the very economic practices that long-standing Marxist critiques have shown to undermine the processes of attunement I claim this literature performed. Regardless of later outcomes, these texts all speak to a critical and influential role for literature within nineteenth-century political culture. And to the extent readers actively engaged this literature by reading it, discussing it, critiquing it and otherwise making it a part of their lives, then the case can also be made that narrative prose fiction – and the readerly – played a decisive role in the formation of nineteenth-century German liberalism.

If readerly texts offer potential access to the kind of balanced *Stimmung* necessary for a human being's emotional and rational understanding, then the readerly itself can function as a form of liberal political formation. Admittedly, this is a model of liberalism that significantly departs from Anglo-Saxon political-philosophical discourse on liberalism in the way it

foregrounds a dual anthropology as a basis for judgments. But it is this aspect of German intellectual heritage the nineteenth-century inherited from Kant, Goethe, Schiller, and Humboldt – one it self-consciously appropriated and adapted. This is highly evident in the self-reflective nature of this fiction, which extends from the most simplistic, to the most complex texts. Fiction was generally aware of its own potential pitfalls, working to block overwrought emotions and channel other emotions into areas where they could be politically productive. One sees evidence for this in the most critical and finely crafted writerly works from the period, including *Florentinische Nächte* and *Brigitta*, but also in texts where such results might be less expected. Auerbach's *altliberal* agenda characteristically channels emotion and reason into a paternalistic model of liberal community, carefully delineating where sympathy directs itself in the process. And *Die Geheimnisse von Berlin* actively polices readers' sentiments; the synecdochic model of sympathy it relies on is highly exclusionary. And by appealing to the *Räuberroman*, a genre known in the nineteenth-century for heating readers' imaginations, the novel fostered a self-reflexive awareness of fiction through fiction.

A further aspect of nineteenth-century fiction that helped foster *Stimmung* concerns its temporal orientation and the way readers considered present texts alongside past texts. To be sure, readers did not have to relate a figure like Ilda or Gula to the women in *Wilhelm Meister*, they did not have to consider German adaptations of Sue's urban crime fiction alongside the tradition of the *Räuberroman*, they did not need to read "Ivo" as a reworking of *Siegwart* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, nor did they need to ponder *Italienische Reise* as Stephan meets the Brigitta's narrator on top of Mt. Vesuvius. But many readers likely did make these kinds of connections given the retrospective orientation of German literary culture during this period. The larger point is that the forms of adaptation taking place between works of popular narrative prose fiction and eighteenth-century literary traditions such as the novel of sensibility, Weimar

classicism, and Romanticism were not merely forms of cultural capital authors relied on to substantiate their own literature. Instead, in crafting prose fiction that actively negotiated these traditions, at times appropriating them, at other times repurposing them as part of a larger process of readerly attunement in the mid-nineteenth century, they became implicated in the formation of German model of liberalism. But as this dissertation has hinted at again and again, literary liberalism must be highly ambivalent given the figural qualities in fiction.

Any social-historicist method for tracking literary liberalism encounters strong ambivalence in more literarily complex works. In the case of Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, readers do not encounter anything resembling the explicit model of transactional politics very much characteristic of nineteenth-century liberalism. Heine's text is incommensurable with the very notion of liberal transparency, just as it straddles a divide between *Stimmung* and *Stimmungsbrechung*. Stifter's realism, in turn, carries an incommensurability of a different though similar kind. By allegorizing erotics, Stifter produces something in excess of the text's realist claims, which is to say, the double speak at work in *Brigitta* undermines the aesthetic program on which it rests. As a result, both the stable and transparent qualities examined in this fiction and the figural and unstable qualities at work in this project speak to the possibility of literary liberalism as *Stimmung*. Both features of this literary culture, however, are necessary for offering a more complete picture of how literature and politics interacted during the nineteenth century. Both features speak to the inherent volatility of nineteenth-century German political and literary culture, while offering a window in the unique role fictions could play in shoring up and undermining liberal identities.

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