

© 2013

Devin John O'Neal

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

REWRITING ORTHODOXY:
GERMAN ROMANTIC MYTHOLOGY AND
THE AESTHETICS OF A PANTHEISTIC EDUCATION

by
DEVIN JOHN O'NEAL

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Program in German

Written under the direction of

Martha B. Helfer

And approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October 2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Rewriting Orthodoxy:

German Romantic Mythology and the Aesthetics of a Pantheistic Education

By DEVIN JOHN O'NEAL

Dissertation Director:
Martha B. Helfer

In my dissertation I investigate literary representations of mythological and religious tropes in select prose German-language texts of Classicism and Early Romanticism dating from 1787-1812, and explore their use in questioning the prevailing religious views of the time. My overarching analysis has three goals: (1) to extract certain mythological traits and tropes from these texts and compare them to the original stories or figures on which they are based; (2) to explain the function of these mythological and religious rewritings within each narrative; and (3) to explain the function these rewritings have in relation to the Romantic concept of religious *Bildung*, especially concerning the standard Judeo-Christian monotheistic and patriarchal view of spirituality.

The presence of rewritten myth has led me to focus on four prose texts in particular – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795/96), Friedrich Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* (1787-89), Johann Ludwig Tieck's *Der Runenberg* (1804), and Ludwig Achim von Arnim's *Isabella von*

Ägypten (1812). I argue that these texts, to varying degrees, recognize the possibility that spirituality and religion may have qualities beyond the monotheistic framework set by standard religious belief. My readings of these texts as literary forms of religious enquiry stem from the developing Romantic aesthetic theory of the period, which not only began to challenge the artistic limitations imposed by Classic aesthetic ideals, but also attempted to call into question the reason-based arguments for standard monotheistic beliefs that were prominent in the Enlightenment period.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my thanks go to Martha Helfer. Through my years as both an undergraduate and graduate student, she has been a strong educator and a tireless supporter. Her encouragement, guidance, and continuous patience were always appreciated. She remains the role model I can only hope to imitate.

I am very grateful to Charlotte and Bob Craig, whose generous support to both the department and its students has allowed me to complete this project.

Thanks also go to the faculty of the Rutgers Department of Germanic, Russian, and East European Languages and Literatures for the vibrant and encouraging atmosphere they have created; thanks to my fellow graduate students in the department, for all the years of camaraderie; and final thanks to Simon Warburton-Pitt for his support and patience over the course of this project.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1.....	29
Chapter 2.....	56
Chapter 3.....	89
Chapter 4.....	117
Conclusion.....	154
Bibliography.....	157
Curriculum Vitae.....	170

Introduction

Ich denke eine neue Religion zu stiften, oder vielmehr sie verkündigen zu helfen [...]. (Friedrich Schlegel, Letter to Novalis, December 2, 1798)

Der romantische Imperativ fordert die Mischung aller Dichtarten. Alle Natur und alle Wiss[enschaft] soll Kunst werden – Kunst soll Natur werden und Wissenschaft. (Friedrich Schlegel's Literary Notebooks, Fragment 582)

In my dissertation I investigate literary representations of mythological and religious tropes in select prose German-language texts of Classicism and Early Romanticism dating from 1787-1812, and explore their use in questioning the prevailing religious views of the time. My overarching analysis has three goals: (1) to extract certain mythological traits and tropes from these texts and compare them to the original stories or figures on which they are based; (2) to explain the function of these mythological and religious rewritings within each narrative; and (3) to explain the function these rewritings have in relation to the Romantic concept of religious *Bildung*, especially concerning the standard Judeo-Christian monotheistic and patriarchal view of spirituality.

The presence of rewritten myth has led me to focus on four prose texts in particular – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795/96), Friedrich Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* (1787-89), Johann Ludwig Tieck's *Der Runenberg* (1804), and Ludwig Achim von Arnim's *Isabella von Ägypten* (1812). I argue that these texts, to varying degrees, recognize the possibility that spirituality and religion may have qualities beyond the monotheistic framework set by standard religious belief. My readings of these texts as literary forms of religious enquiry stem from the developing Romantic

aesthetic theory of the period, which not only began to challenge the artistic limitations imposed by Classic aesthetic ideals, but also attempted to call into question the reason-based arguments for standard monotheistic beliefs that were prominent in the Enlightenment period (Beiser 2).

Definitions and Traditional Uses of Religious Myth

It is within this monotheistic Judeo-Christian tradition that German-language writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including those connected to the Romantic Movement, were producing their works. Although the eighteenth-century is often associated with the rise of secularism, it was a culture saturated with the Judeo-Christian religious traditions, and consequently familiar with the myths and folklore of these faiths. In fact, the Enlightenment philosophies that dominated the latter part of the eighteenth century partially grew out of a pious desire to “justify morality, religion, and the state” (Beiser 1, see also Mauthner 161). Philosophers, critics, and writers of this period sought to prove – through the use of reason – that the beliefs and traditions that had defined much of their culture for centuries were, in fact, true facts and not merely statements of faith. It was a devotion to the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, along with its respective beliefs concerning God, humankind, and eternal life that compelled the thinkers of this time to seek out supporting reasons for the validity of these beliefs.

However, for most of religious history, understanding of spirituality was not achieved through reason and argument. Instead, the nature of the spiritual realm and of religious dogma was presented through the use of myth.

Since the presence and alterations of religious myth play such an important role in my analysis of these texts and of Romantic theory itself, a review on the definitions and uses of myth is needed. Admittedly, this is a difficult task, as many scholars and folklorist find it difficult to pin down any definite meaning to the term *myth* and its function in various historical periods and cultures (Dundes 2, Honko 41, Kirk 58). Other critics, such as Roland Barthes, have attempted to reevaluate myth and identify its usage in contemporary times, often separate from the religious aspect.¹ However, Honko notes that although “myth can cover an extremely wide field,” traditionally a “myth expresses and confirms society’s religious values and norms” (Honko 41, 49). Bascom notes that these religious myths are typically prose narratives (Bascom 9).

Karen Armstrong develops this definition, noting that historically, mythological stories have played a vital role in both demonstrating and preserving various social, institutional, and spiritual standards. Stories and parables within religious traditions often exist as fictional representations of a group’s or society’s respective religious beliefs and social standards. Armstrong writes:

[A]ll mythology speaks of another plane that exists alongside our own world, and that in some sense supports it. Belief in this invisible but more powerful reality, sometimes called the world of the gods, is a basic theme of mythology [...]. The myths gave explicit shape and form to a reality that people sensed intuitively. (*A Short History of Myth* Chapter 1)

¹ See Roland Barthes *Mythologies*.

Myth allows the listener or reader to relate to this other plane of existence or reality – a reality that is distinctly separate from our own. By re-presenting the unfamiliar in familiar terms, myth functions as a tool in the education of a human subject in relation to the spiritual realm beyond the borders of our current physical universe. But a further point to consider is that by depicting this separate dimension through fictionalized portrayals of human experiences, myth becomes a specifically aesthetic tool in this spiritual education of the human subject: stories and themes must be crafted by a storyteller.²

As a religion, standard monotheistic Christianity is no different from the vast array of spiritualities in the world in that it has also used mythology and parables to demonstrate and legitimize its teachings to followers. In fact, Christianity is intriguing in that it arguably has myths within myths. The gospel accounts of Christ's life found in the Christian New Testament describe him telling numerous parables and mythical stories to his followers, many of whom remain well known in contemporary times, in order to reveal to those disciples his perception of the spiritual realm. Following the definition of myth as a way to

² Although most myths in use by spiritualities and religions are indeed fictions and parables, this does not mean that there cannot be real-world source material on which the myth in its current fictional form is based. Armstrong notes that oftentimes a myth is "an event that – in some sense – happened once" (Chapter 6). But this real world event is not what is important. Rather, it is the transformation of this real event into an identifiable fiction for a religion's community of believers. As Armstrong continues: "An occurrence [in the real world] needs to be liberated, as it were, from the confines of a specific period and brought into the lives of contemporary worshippers" (Chapter 6). As an example, Armstrong brings up the story of the Jewish Exodus, noting that "[w]e do not know what actually happened when the people of Israel escaped from Egypt and crossed the Sea of Reeds, because the story has been written as myth. [But] the rituals of Passover have for centuries made this tale central to the spiritual lives of Jews, who are told that each one of them must consider himself to be of the generation that escaped from Egypt" (Chapter 6). In other words, it does not matter if the story has been fictionalized into myth, but whether that fictional myth has the ability to effectively educate the religious adherent concerning his or her religion's fundamental ideas and themes.

make the unknowns of the spiritual familiar, Christ's fictionalized stories, depicted in his biographies, allowed those who followed him to visualize and relate to a different religious dimension.

Yet even these biblical biographies of Christ have themselves become mythologized. Much of standard Christian dogma and belief stems from the writings of Paul, whose texts make up the majority of the customary Christian New Testament. Yet as Armstrong notes, Paul was not primarily concerned with "the events of [Christ's] earthly life" (Chapter 6).

What was important was the 'mystery' [...] of [Christ's] death and resurrection. Paul had transformed Jesus into the timeless, mythical hero who dies and is raised to new life [...]. Jesus was no longer a mere historical figure but a spiritual reality in the lives of Christians [...]. (Chapter 6)

Just as Christ had used stories to educate listeners and make the spiritual familiar, so too did Paul mythologize Christ and turn his own life into a myth, in order to instill in the adherents of the developing Christian religion better understanding of their beliefs and a fictionalized touchstone in their attempt to access the spiritual realm.

Ultimately, myth in its traditional religious usage, including within the Western Christian tradition, can be defined as fictional or fictionalized accounts utilized to make the other-worldly spiritual realm understandable and relatable by humans in the current physical world. Myth forces us as humans "to go beyond our experience" and to seek to understand a reality that is outside the borders of our own notions of what is true (Armstrong Chapter 1).

Enlightenment Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy

As previously noted, Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a culture defined by Christian culture, beliefs, and practices. People of this period were familiar with the myths of their religion. But with the beginning of the Enlightenment some sought to base their beliefs in reason, rather than solely on myth. Reason was not meant to alter what myth had taught to be religiously true, but was to be a new mechanism used to explain in reasonable terms what myth had explained in fictional form.

Of course, that is not to say that the thought experiments of the Enlightenment period did not arrive at some unforeseen conclusions. The rise in deism is a prime example of this. Often viewed as the religious sentiment most associated with Enlightenment thinkers, deism maintains that the supreme being/intelligence/deity that created the universe and initiated life on Earth still exists, but now no longer interacts with nature (Bristow). This being the case, the deists often disregarded both the use of miracles within religion and the divinity of Christ. Additionally, some disregarded the use of divine revelation as a legitimate means of understanding this supreme being. Notice, however, that the adherents of the deist religious argument continue to associate themselves with the Judeo-Christian religious tradition – deism is not a rejection of Christ, merely of his miraculous powers and the inerrancy of the biblical scriptures.

In a similar vein of questioning rigid dogma, but not belief in a supreme being, the so-called Religion of the Heart promoted a “natural religion.” In this belief system, often described as a subset of deism, religious adherents seek an

eternal deity not through “coldly rationalistic” methods, but through means that are grounded “in natural human sentiments” (Bristow). The term “revelationist Deist” can be applied to this subcategory, since qualities of the supreme being may be revealed through methods that do not include logical reasoning.

However, what should be noted from both of these variations within eighteenth-century religious beliefs is the perpetuation of at least one dominant religious dogma: the belief in the existence of a single godhead, stemming from the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. Concerning deism, the Encyclopedia of Religion states:

In its principal meaning, *deism* signifies the belief in a single God [...]. No sharp dividing line can be drawn between Christian or revelationist Deists and Deists who recognized no revelation. The former often accepted Christian revelation precisely because it accords with natural or rational religion and sometimes advocated allegorical readings of scripture in order to secure this agreement, while the latter often disavowed any “mean esteem” of Christian scriptures and expressed admiration for the inspiring way in which the truths of natural religion were presented in them. Further, *there is no sharp line separating Christian Deists and orthodox Christian theologians* (such as Thomas Aquinas or Duns Scotus) who maintained that some parts of Christian doctrine can be known by natural reason. (2251, emphasis added)

Ultimately, two important and overlapping qualities must be taken from this description of the religious denominations of the Enlightenment: (1) Each maintains strong Judeo-Christian religious connections, with virtually no distinction from “orthodox” Christian thought and (2) each perpetuates the existence of an eternal monotheistic godhead within that Judeo-Christian tradition.

Before I continue with this outline of religious beliefs during the Enlightenment, it is important to define and elaborate on the terms “standard

belief,” “orthodox” and “orthodoxy,” since they are labels I use throughout this analysis. Simply put, orthodoxy is defined as “correct or sound belief according to an authoritative norm” (EoR 6909). This concept of acceptable beliefs within Christianity began in the religion’s infancy. Throughout the Christian New Testament the apostle Paul writes at length about what should be considered true Christian beliefs and behaviors and distinguishes his own concept of correct faith from the many versions of early Christianity also in existence at the same time. At the time of Christianity’s establishment as the single state religion of the Roman Empire and the later importance of the Catholic Church as a unifying force in both religion and politics, the idea of acceptable belief became highly influential in social and political maneuvering. In this dissertation I use the term orthodox to signify the sort of spiritual beliefs that do not question the monotheistic, male personhood of the Judeo-Christian God. Any sort of belief that *would* question these attributes would be considered atheistic and blasphemous. These sorts of beliefs I label as “unorthodox” or “anti-orthodox”.

The final religious belief that is sometimes associated with the Enlightenment, atheism, stands out from the others due to the fact that it fit this definition of unorthodox. Unlike the other forms of Enlightenment religious belief, atheism is different in its rejection of the Judeo-Christian monotheistic system of faith. Atheism denies the logical or revealed validity and authority of Judeo-Christian faiths. But – and this is an important point – we should not confuse our modern day definition or associations with the term “atheism” with those of the past. In today’s vernacular, “atheism” can often mean a complete rejection of

spirituality and/or of a supernatural realm, including the denial of any sort of deity or supreme being. It “is the doctrine that God does not exist, that belief in the existence of God is a false belief” (EoR 576). Of course, this closely matches the very literal meaning of the term – a negation of theism or belief in a deity. However, this stands in contrast to a more traditional definition of atheism, which was very often applied to anyone who did not follow the standard beliefs of the dominant religious group. Atheism, therefore, in this traditional sense does not necessarily mean a rejection of spirituality as a whole, but could be a protestation against a vital trait of another religion’s orthodoxy. As an example, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes that even the ancient Romans used the term “atheist” for “theists of another religion, notably the Christians [...] merely to signify disbelief” in the Roman pantheon (Smart). In other words, an atheist could be someone who believes in the spiritual realm or in a deity, but simply a different spirituality or godhead than another religion’s adherents.

According to these definitions, therefore, it could be argued that the previously discussed religions of the Enlightenment – deism and natural religion – could have been seen as “atheistic” in that they did promote different and radical forms of Christianity that varied from the established orthodoxy that had been put in place centuries earlier. And indeed, certain Enlightenment thinkers and deists were wary of further developing their logical course towards understanding the Christian God, in fear of ultimately undermining Christianity’s authority (Beiser 2). However the fact remains, as previously mentioned, that deism and its variants developed out of accepted forms of Christian belief and

remained faithful to core religious beliefs. It did not question the existence of the personified, male, monotheistic status of the Judeo-Christian godhead, but merely sought to understand this God through different means. Furthermore, most deists were never accused of being religiously unorthodox. This being the case, deism, while different, should not necessarily be considered atheism. It is only when a belief begins to question these specific patriarchal, personable, and singular aspects of the Christian God that it should be considered as a type of atheism within eighteenth-century European Christianity. Fichte's famous *Atheismusstreit* must be understood within this context.

The controversy began with Fichte's publication of *Über den Grund unsers Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung* (1798). Fichte, who for a few years had been working as a popular, albeit controversial professor of philosophy at the University of Jena, was faced with an unprecedented uproar against his work. While he had always been suspected of "alleged democratic and antireligious tendencies," the publication of this essay finally forced him to resign his post in Jena – the same city that served as the focal point of German Romanticism. While I will not go into detail or a full analysis of Fichte's essay, a basic differentiation between its content and Christian orthodoxy, deistic or otherwise, is necessary. By pointing out what sorts of beliefs during this time period were labeled as atheistic, we as readers gain historical understanding for one of the functions of a new Romantic mythology: connecting unorthodox philosophical views to and concealing them within an orthodox mythological tradition, in order to avoid charges of religious atheism.

It is important to emphasize once again the distinction between the modern-day definition of “atheism” and the usage of the term in previous centuries. Fichte’s essay, when read according to the current definition of the word, would certainly not be considered atheistic. Fichte does not question the existence of a supernatural order or a universal moral standard that guides all sentient beings. In fact, Fichte did not label himself anti-spiritual at all, but merely anti-orthodox.

He [Fichte] rejected many conventional religious notions, such as a divine creation of the world, the substantiality and personality of a deity, and the temporal or eternal retribution of a supreme being. Nonetheless, by his own terms, he was neither an agnostic nor an atheist [...]. [Furthermore] his concept of God presupposed a divine relation to man, so his position was not deistic; and it precluded a divine personality, so his position was not theistic. (Estes 5)

These characteristics distinguish Fichte from the standard forms of Christian belief, including deism. His unorthodoxy, and thereby the accusations of atheism, stems from his questions concerning the orthodox belief in the *single, personable* God of the Judeo-Christian religion. For Fichte, God is not a knowable figure, but rather a depersonalized force for morality that interacts with humanity. Where deism and its variations merely questioned how humankind can understand the Christian God, Fichte questioned the very substance of that God.

It is this basic feature of questioning the personalized figure of a monotheistic godhead that unites many of the religious controversies that sprouted up in the eighteenth century: the Spinozism dispute, the atheism dispute, and the pantheism dispute all center around the underlying substance of

a spiritual godhead, rather than the means of knowing him.³ Judeo-Christian orthodoxy – within all mainstream Catholic and Protestant denominations – calls for belief in a singular, male divinity. Any movement that questioned this basic belief left itself open to accusations of unorthodoxy and atheism. And accusations of atheism could mean social ostracization.

Romantic Pantheism

I suggest that the theory of Romantic *Poesie* or aesthetic creation, counter to the religious orthodoxy of the period, perceives spirituality, including Christianity, to be pantheistic. Therefore, it stands out as unorthodox when compared to conventional Judeo-Christian monotheism. This then leads to the question: how did the Romantics portray this unorthodoxy without risking the social punishment of being labeled as atheists? In order to answer this, a review of the unorthodox characteristics of Romantic poesy is needed.

My primary source for both this Romantic notion of pantheism and the theoretical importance of creating mythology is Friedrich Schlegel's *Gespräch über die Poesie*. This text, a fictionalized portrayal of the beliefs and practices of Romanticism, is arguably a primer of the movement. It is especially significant in that it was created by the Early Romantics themselves. Therefore, it is an original

³ Many of the religious controversies of the period often use interchangeable or related terms. For example, Spinozism was often a synonym for pantheism (For a more detailed definition of pantheism itself, see footnote 7). In fact, the Pantheism Controversy grew out of a debate centered on the philosophy of Spinoza. While the exact nature and definitions of Spinoza's philosophy are still debated to this day, his assertion that "God is not a being but being itself; nature and God constitute an indivisible unity," along with his reception as a "cheerful pagan" did lead to trouble for those who may have followed his thoughts (Gerrish 443). This is exactly what happened following the death of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in 1781, when he was posthumously accused of being a Spinozist – practically the same as a pantheist or atheist – by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and subsequently defended as merely a deist by Moses Mendelssohn.

source for their own theories concerning not only aesthetics and poetic creation, but also their very outlook on the nature of reality itself.

As a fictionalized dialogue, the text is self-reflexive – and as an artistic representation of the movement's concepts and understanding, the text could also be categorized as a myth itself. Furthermore, as self-reflexive discourse and as myth, the *Gespräch* attempts to understand and define *Poesie*⁴ and poetic production through poetic production itself. This is done not only to present an example of the theory, but also because the theory itself *requires* it. Schlegel writes in the introduction to the text that one “läßt sich auch eigentlich nicht reden von der Poesie als nur in Poesie” (166). According to its own theory, the text must use poetry as a means for defining poetry. Such reflexivity and self-representation is found throughout the *Gespräch*'s development of aesthetic theory. This is due to the fact that on a basic level, Schlegel's definition of *Poesie* is that poetry is a representation of poetry itself. *Poesie* is the universal whole – the substance that both is and inhabits the world. As such, I suggest that the early Romantic concept of *Poesie* –the process of not only aesthetic and scientific production, but also the beliefs and mythologies that bind together humankind's relationship to the universe – is substantively pantheistic. It is a universal force that is simultaneously separate from and above humankind's experiences, but that is also innate to all natural objects and beings.

⁴ Beiser notes that “*romantische Poesie* designates not a form of literature or criticism but the romantics' general aesthetic ideal” (8). In fact, “any product of human creativity [...] is poetic” and could be extended to nature itself (16-17). *Poesie* designates a perception of (pantheistic) Nature and the means of analyzing and expressing such a reality.

In standard terms, pantheism is defined as “all is God” (EoR 6960). While this belief has common traits with other forms of theism, which also pronounce that God or a supreme being is an omnipresent and/or all-powerful creator of all, pantheism may be slightly distinguished in that it proclaims “God is identical with the cosmos, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God” (Mander).⁵ In other words, pantheism does not view the godhead as a monotheistic being. Rather, humankind and nature are part and parcel of a spiritual totality – which may or may not itself be a personable being. In any case, that being or totality is composed of innumerable smaller elements, which combine to create it. The individual parts may retain their respective distinctiveness, but ultimately retain a connection to all other members of said totality or godhead. For a pantheist, the godhead “is *in* the world, whereas the God of the deists [or other orthodox theists] is *out of* or *over*, the world, which he rules from above as though it were a separate establishment” (Gerrish 444).

⁵ Although my analysis focuses on Romantic *Poesie* and its similarities to a general definition of pantheism, I do want to make note that these are simplified and streamlined definitions of this religious belief. Pantheism is an ancient form of religious belief and therefore understandably has many subtleties and variations. One such prominent variant is the distinction between *pantheism* (“all is God”) and *panentheism* (“all is in God”) (EoR 6960). These two terms demonstrate slight variations within an otherwise united religious belief system. The latter still sees a divine personality, albeit one in which all of creation is part of and unified within. The former seems to disregard the more personable aspects of the deity and sees that deity as part of creation, rather than the other way round. Together these two beliefs are called pan-doctrines. While terminology in texts like *Gespräch über die Poesie* are interpretable as both pantheistic and panentheistic, certain members of the movement, such as Schelling, have been described as having specifically panentheistic beliefs. But of course, even these proclamations should be taken cautiously, since it “is still not notably clear” if he or other Romantics were entirely within one camp or the other (EoR 6963). Even so, Fritz Mauthner was adamant, in his characteristically blunt fashion, concerning the beliefs of the Romantics, stating that “[v]on Hause aus waren die Romantiker recht gottlose Pantheisten” (Mauthner 95). Ultimately, I have retained the use of the term *pantheism* in this analysis as it is the more familiar and popularly-used term for the belief, which both doctrines have in common, that God is *not* a monotheistic being, who is separated from nature and creation.

Since terms like “totality” and “individual parts” are used to define pantheism, it is no wonder that the Romantics were drawn to pantheistic-like beliefs. The *Gespräch* even suggests that one cannot truly be a poet without revering Spinoza (Schlegel 193). In the vocabulary of the time this is tantamount to proclaiming that to be a poet, one must also be a pantheist (see footnote 4). Indeed the entire Romantic philosophy – including its aesthetic, political, and scientific goals – mimicked a pantheistic universe, in that the Romantics believed all human knowledge should be fused into a new universal mythology.

The young romantics did not simply desire a new romantic literature and criticism to replace a neoclassical literature and criticism. Rather, they wanted to romanticize all the arts and sciences, so that there would also be a romantic painting, a romantic sculpture, and a romantic music, and so that there would be a romantic science as well as a romantic art. Furthermore, all these arts and sciences were then to be synthesized into a single work of art, which would be nothing less than the mythology of the modern age. (Beiser 19)

The so-called Romantic Imperative sought to educate the masses concerning this worldview, to let humankind know that “*all* forms of human creativity are simply appearances, manifestations, and developments of the creativity of nature itself” (Beiser 21). For the Romantics the goal was not simply to represent their movement’s philosophy through literature, but to create an entirely new framework for human consciousness.

The Romantic Imperative and *Bildung* through Mythology

While the creation of the poetic text was certainly a major aspect of Romantic output – and as Beiser argues, an aspect too often focused on by critics (21) – the Romantic Imperative is more than an aesthetic (i.e. textual,

artistic, scientific, religious) representation of Romantic philosophy. It is also a *pedagogical* mission to reveal to humankind the true nature of reality. The ideals of this endeavor are made clear within the *Gespräch*, where this new aesthetic and scientific mythology is described as a uniting force, able to bring all of nature under “ das eine Gedicht der Gottheit, dessen Teil und Blüte auch wir sind” (Schlegel 166). This is one example where the pantheistic characteristics of Romantic *Bildung*⁶ become apparent. All of nature and its subjects – including humankind – are part of a divinity and can be made aware of and united with one another, and with that pantheistic deity, through *Poesie*.

This connection between pantheism and *Poesie* is affirmed in the first paragraph of the *Gespräch*, where the process of poetic creation is described as the ultimate unifier to all those who love it, for *Poesie* “befreundet und bindet [...] mit unauflöslichen Bänden,” and “in dieser Region sind sie [alle Menschen] dennoch durch höhere Zauberkraft einig und in Frieden” (Schlegel 165). Further along the narrator states:

Unermeßlich und unerschöpflich ist die Welt der Poesie wie der Reichtum der belebenden Natur an Gewächsen, Tieren und Bildungen jeglicher Art, Gestalt und Farbe. (165)

Everyday objects and happenings contain this natural and untamed poetry, “die sich in der Pflanze regt, im Lichte strahlt, im Kinde lächelt, in der Blüte der Jugend schimmert, [und] in der liebenden Brust der Frauen glüht” (166). And just as natural objects and happenings have their own innate poetry, “so trägt auch jeder [Mensch] seine eigne Poesie in sich. Die muß ihm bleiben und soll ihm

⁶ The German word for education – *Bildung* – here simultaneously emphasizes the aesthetic dimension of the Romantic education (*Bild* meaning image or picture). Art and creation are literally part of the educational program.

bleiben, so gewiß er der ist, so gewiß nur irgend etwas Ursprüngliches in ihm war" (165).

From these few examples it is clear that the Romantic Imperative promoted within *Gespräch über die Poesie* defines poetic creation as a universal characteristic, common to all subjects of nature. Romantic *Poesie* – the *Gedicht der Gottheit* – is therefore (1) a universal, limitless, and specifically spiritual creative force; and (2) a spiritual force that has the potential to unify all of nature within itself. *Poesie* is a natural form of spirituality, albeit primeval in its pure state. Therefore, it requires an education that will fine-tune the poetic process: *Bildung* is inextricably bound up with the Romantic project. But in any case, poetry always "blüht [...] von selbst aus der unsichtbaren Urkraft der Menschheit hervor, wenn der erwärmende Strahl der göttlichen Sonne sie trifft und befruchtet" (166). Nature, the universe, the spiritual are all part of a spiritually pantheistic aesthetic, which the human subject wishes to represent through his/her own natural and individual poetry – through a new mythology.

The fact that the *Gespräch*, the outline of Romantic poetic philosophy, contains a *Rede über die Mythologie*⁷ emphasizes that the Romantics highly regarded the function of myth within their Imperative. Mythology in this section is defined as the "poem of poems," of sorts, through which all other art is created.⁸

Die neue Mythologie muß [...] das künstlichste aller Kunstwerke sein, denn es soll alle andern umfassen, ein neues Bett und Gefäß für den alten ewigen Urquell der Poesie und selbst das unendliche Gedicht, welches die Keime aller andern Gedichte verhüllt. (191)

⁷ The term "myth" comes from the Greek *mythos*, meaning speech. The *Rede über die Mythologie* is, therefore, a speech about speech. This is another example of self-reflexive discourse.

⁸ This new mythology and its definitions are patterned after Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*.

Mythology is the source of poetic production. It is a requirement for any aesthetic creation to truly be effective – effective in that, according to the Romantic Imperative, it must both represent the pantheistic universe and educate others about that characteristic. Through the development of a new “mythology of the modern age,” humankind is able to receive a new type of education – a new *Bildung* – concerning the nature of the pantheistic universe. But by creating a new all-encompassing aesthetic and scientific mythology to explain these ideals – ideals that explicitly mimic a pantheistic religious framework – the process of a Romantic education becomes specifically a process of religious *Bildung*. That is, Romantic mythology becomes a means of instruction – similar to the traditional use of mythology – that is used to educate others about the spiritual nature of reality (Dundes 1).

Unorthodox Christianity

The founding, or at least the development, of a new (poetic, pantheistic) religion and mythology was exactly one of the goals of the early Romantics. It is a theme that runs throughout the *Gespräch*, especially in the discussion of Dante. The medieval period – the time of Dante – was viewed by the Romantics as the perfect period where art/mythology and religion were fused in a new world order. Dante was seen as the epitome of the religious aesthete – and the model for all future poets – for he united religion and poesy (Schlegel 178).

Of course this admiration of an apparently orthodox Christian spirituality and poesy seems to contradict the pantheistic philosophy that the *Gespräch*

endorses. Furthermore the conservative religious tendencies of the Romantics – such as Schlegel's later conversion to Catholicism or Novalis' call for the re-establishment of Christian unity in *Die Christenheit oder Europa* – are focused on by critics. However, many subtleties are lost in the outright claim that these Romantics were traditional Christianists.

I suggest, in contrast, that the overt Christian tendencies, especially seen in the Romantics' later lives, were actually related to their concept of religious pantheism. Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism would outwardly seem to be a rejection of any sort of pagan, pantheistic spirituality. But the fact that he converted to the Catholic faith, with its focus on a pantheon of saints, is significant. Catholicism – the religion of Dante – and its respective dogmas grew out of an attempt to integrate and bind together the existing religious traditions of numerous peoples within a single spiritual framework. In doing so, the various gods and goddesses of many separate cultures were fused together into a new pantheon within a Christian tradition. The word “religion” itself stems from the term *religio*, meaning to bind or weave together. The spread of a catholic (i.e., universal) religion (i.e., binding together) of humanity, along with the pantheistic roots of Roman Catholicism – an *Urkatholizismus* – attracted Schlegel because it appeared “als die heidnischeste oder farbigste Form des Christentums” (Mauthner 97). It was a religion that mimicked the Romantic concept of combining numerous parts together into a single framework, but with each individual part retaining its identity within that overarching singularity. Dante himself mimicked this religious assimilation with his merging of religion and

poesy. Schlegel's conversion does not signify an abandonment of his concept of pantheism, but merely a redirection.

Similarly, Novalis' concept of a new Christian world order, put forward in *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, promotes a return to the Christian unity of the Middle Ages, when all knowledge and spirituality were bound together within a catholic (i.e., universal) faith. For Novalis, the rise of Protestantism fragmented this spirituality totality by assigning religious authority to the Christian Bible and promoting hermeneutical examinations of it. But for Novalis this is a perversion of true mystical and unifying religion. The Bible, although a legitimate esoteric spiritual tool, is simply "der rohe abstrakte Entwurf der Religion" and is not meant to be the final word on religious matters (Novalis 333). Furthermore, the inability of humans to truly dissect the biblical texts has led to a rejection and misunderstanding of religion in general.

Der anfängliche Personalhaß gegen den katholischen Glauben ging allmählich in Haß gegen die Bibel, gegen den christlichen Glauben *und endlich gar gegen die Religion über*. (336, emphasis added)

Novalis does not defend the corruption of medieval Christendom, nor is he completely against the rise of post-Reformation intellectualism. Rather, he regrets that a universal and unifying spirituality – the Middle Ages Catholic Church being the closest humanity has ever come – no longer exists. His notation that it is religion *in general* that has been rejected supports this: he desires a unifying (catholic) spirituality, which may or may not be found within the specifically Christian Roman Catholic tradition. This explicit unifying characteristic of Christianity is made clear in the essay's opening statements.

Es waren schöne glänzende Zeiten, wo Europa ein christliches Land war, wo *eine* Christenheit diesen menschlich gestalteten Weltteil bewohnte; *ein* großes gemeinschaftliches Interesse verband die entlegensten Provinzen dieses weiten geistlichen Reichs. (327, emphasis original)

The fact that Novalis himself emphasizes the *ein* – the oneness and unity – of widespread religiosity bound together within a single spiritual community demonstrates his approach to the literal meaning of *catholic*: universal. It is not orthodox Christianity *per se* that attracted these Romantics, but rather the possible underlying, pantheistic and unifying principles that drew them. As such, this perception of Christianity is much more along the lines of the *Urkatholizismus* that attracted Schlegel.

This approach to Novalis' and Schlegel's perceived traditional Christian tendencies allows for a much more nuanced view concerning their religious beliefs, and those of the Romantics in general. Rather than appearing to contradict their developing concept of spiritual *Bildung* or later dramatically converting to conservative religious ideals, the Romantics approached Christianity in a very different way. For them, pantheism and the Judeo-Christian tradition could themselves fuse into a new form of spiritual totality – a Christian pantheism.

Reevaluating these Christian tendencies as actually a new Romantic pantheistic Christianity much more closely matches the unorthodox religious tendencies of the early Romantics. I label these tendencies as unorthodox – or perhaps even atheistic, in the eighteenth-century meaning – because the philosophy of the movement began to question the standard male, personable,

monotheistic nature of the Judeo-Christian God. Schlegel, in particular, had developed “eine durchaus neue Ansicht” of God and spirituality (Pretz 138).

[R]eligion as it had been known, articulated, and practiced in the western world was in trouble [...] In this situation Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis [and others] [...] wrestled, like Jacob with the angel (or demon), to see if religious affirmations could be wrested from the new conditions and, if so, of what sort. (Forstman xii)

It is from this possibility of new religious principles that the Romantic concept of Christian pantheism grew. The Romantics became aware of the restrictions of orthodoxy, the possible pantheistic structure of the universe, and the need for a new religious education to allow others to become aware of these revelations. “Jeder Mensch,” Schlegel writes, is “ein beschränkter Gott” (cited in Behler 47) – reminiscent of his perception of an innate and “ursprüngliche” divine Poesie in everyone that merely requires “die hohe Wissenschaft echter Kritik, wie [der Student] sich selbst *bilden* muß in sich selbst” (*Gespräch* 165, emphasis added). Each human subject has the potential to understand, relate to, and integrate with this higher poetic pantheistic spirituality, but must allow him/herself to be educated concerning it.

Fusing Unorthodoxy and Myth

Since this new perception of a pantheistic spirituality/Christianity requires an education, it is unsurprising that the Romantics also have a strong attachment to the idea of mythology. In fact, for the Romantics, mythology and *Poesie* “sind eins und unzertrennlich” (*Gespräch* 192). As I reviewed earlier, myth is used as a means of making the spiritually strange and unknowable, knowable. It is a way

to combine the many facets of a belief system or faith into a single story. But modern society lacks this unifying force.⁹

Es fehlt [...] unsrer Poesie an einem Mittelpunkt, wie es die Mythologie für die der Alten war, und alles Wesentliche, worin die moderne Dichtkunst der antiken nachsteht, läßt sich in die Worte zusammenfassen: Wir haben [heutzutage] keine Mythologie. (191)

In order to educate the world concerning their conception of the pantheistic makeup of the universe, the Romantics required a new mythology for two main reasons: (1) to explain the functions and workings of said pantheistic reality, according to the standard educational uses of myth; and (2) to use that new myth as a point of unification of all knowledge, art, and science. Everything created or discovered by humanity could fit into this new myth, this new way of explaining the universe – a literal Theory of Everything.

It is with this all-encompassing myth that Schlegel's "religiöses" and "biblisches Projekt" begins (Preitz 138). This project sought to create not simply a new literary work, but to develop a new religious mythology¹⁰ whose texts and words demonstrated a power able to fuse the knowledge of humankind into a singularity. Schlegel writes:

Meine Religion ist nicht von der Art, daß sie die Philosophie und Poesie verschlucken wollte. Vielmehr lasse ich die Selbständigkeit und

⁹ This Romantic concept of modern humanity lacking a core, mythological center and suffering from that lack could arguably be related to Schiller's idea of fragmentation. Schiller as well saw the ideal form of mythology and totality in the ancients – particularly the Greeks. However, in contrast to the Romantic notion of a naturally-occurring pantheistic totality, Schiller sees wholeness and totality as an illusion. Such unity does not truly exist, and aesthetics (including mythology) merely serve as a way to create a new totality – patterned on the lost totality of the Greeks. This is an important distinction. A desire for unity does place Schiller within the Romantic tradition. However, as I shall review in the first two chapters, both Schiller and Goethe stress the importance of maintaining a continuing education and limiting the student, rather than allowing the student to become more than a "beschränkter Gott" (Behler 47).

¹⁰ "Schlegel had already seen such syntheses of science and art in the mythology of the past [...]. The task for modern man was to recover the unity of art and science in ancient mythology; in other words, it was to create a new mythology, to write a new Bible" (Beiser 15).

Freundschaft, den Egoism und die Harmonie dieser beiden Urkünste und Wissenschaften bestehen, obwohl ich glaube, *es ist an der Zeit*, daß sie manche ihrer Eigenschaften wechseln. (cited in Preitz 138, original emphasis)

This new Romantic religion and mythology should fuse separate fields, while still allowing each to retain its individuality, once again emphasizing the pantheistic nature of the Romantic Imperative. It is also worth noting that Schlegel emphasizes twice that this project is not something “literarisches” but rather specifically “biblisches.” This is a crucial term. It not only stresses the “religiöses” dimension of Schlegel’s project (i.e. biblical, related to the Judeo-Christian Bible), but also underscores his *textual* goal (i.e. biblical, related to the actual definition of *bibliography*, meaning the creation or study of books). Schlegel intends to create a new religious text – a new religious story – and thereby situates himself within the great tradition of previous religious leaders/storytellers, and educates and empowers the people concerning this religion.

Daß dies durch ein Buch geschehn soll, darf um so weniger befremden, da die großen *Autoren* der Religion – Moses, Christus, Mohammed, Luther – stufenweise immer weniger Politiker und mehr Lehrer und Schriftsteller werden. (cited in Preitz 138, original emphasis)

By creating a new textual religious mythology and simultaneously setting his project within an established historical tradition, Schlegel legitimizes his own religious thoughts by connecting them to canonized religious writers and texts. Here he also notes the storytelling or mythological aspect of these religious traditions. The great prophets of history and religion are specifically *teachers* and *writers*. This is exactly the type of figure the Romantic educator should hope to emulate: one who educates concerning spiritual principles using storytelling.

Finally, this passage demonstrates the Romantic motivation in connecting its own new mythology to previous mythological traditions. By placing himself among the accepted religious leaders and founders, Schlegel attempts to legitimize his own project as merely a continuation of orthodoxy.

Rewriting Orthodox Myth

The appearance of orthodoxy is extremely important, for as I have demonstrated, the very basic perceptions of Romantic philosophy and poetic creation are decidedly unorthodox at the time of their development. This brings my analysis to one final function of Romantic mythology: rewriting orthodox myths according to Romantic philosophies. The texts I have chosen each address, at different levels, the issues concerning spiritual education and the student's relation to religious orthodoxy according to the developing Romantic Imperative. To do this, the texts adapt and rewrite the characteristics of various religious myths and stories within their own narratives, modifying them in such a way that the differences between the original myth and the new version portray the implications of Romantic philosophy. In doing so, the new myths dissuade any attempts at labeling them "unorthodox" or "atheistic" because they are actually a continuation of the established orthodox religious tradition. It is an amazing feat of discretion: masking any potentially controversial content by placing the new, and potentially unorthodox, Romantic myth and its meaning *within* the myths of orthodox religion itself.

Although each of the texts I have selected employs this technique of rewriting mythological or religious stories, the messages are very different. I have chosen two earlier Classical or proto-Romantic¹¹ texts to demonstrate the status of a conventional, orthodox religious *Bildung* and to serve as a contrast to the later unorthodox messages of truly Romantic texts. These earlier texts employ rewritten myths, but they use these source materials in a more traditional sense. That is, to reinforce orthodox belief. Specifically concerning the concept of a spiritual education, these texts demonstrate a hesitation with moving beyond traditional Judeo-Christian – or even Protestant – beliefs.

The first example of an early Romantic or proto-Romantic text is Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. In this chapter I analyze the presence of the biblical King Saul and look at the connections between the novel's title character and the mythical king. The text draws strong parallels between the two figures and their respective educations, yet simultaneously contrasts their differences. Through this divergence we as readers see what Wilhelm might have become, had he not learned the core lesson of his *Lehrjahre*. Specifically, this lesson is that of submission: Wilhelm surrenders to his (spiritual) educators, while Saul does not.

I continue to explore this theme of surrender to a spiritual master in the second chapter, in which I review a second Classical text: Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*. Within this novel Schiller rewrites and expands the myths of the

¹¹ I label these earlier texts as proto-Romantic because these narratives do demonstrate some Romantic qualities and have often been categorized within or as leading up to the Romantic tradition. However, they fail to fully develop the Romantic notions concerning pantheistic religion and religious education, as I explain in the first two chapters.

Wandering Jew and the Catholic vampire, using the figures and their respective mythological histories to demonize any contact with non-Protestant spiritualities.

Ultimately, both this novel and *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* advocate a limited education. With a limited education, the students are either unaware of the spiritual boundaries around them or are discouraged from questioning those boundaries. Hence, these spiritual educations remain orthodox – the students do not challenge the authority or dogma of their respective religious circumstances.

Yet the Romantics did dare to look beyond this restrictive orthodoxy. My first example of a Romantic author who at least hesitatingly questions the spiritual boundaries of monotheistic Judeo-Christian belief is Tieck and his short story *Der Runenberg*. In this third chapter I analyze the text's rewriting of the figure of Christ and various events of his biography. By adapting certain life episodes of the center-figure of the Christian religion according to concepts of Romantic *Bildung*, Tieck demonstrates the developing notion of Christian pantheism.

In the final chapter I argue that this concept of Christian pantheism is further developed through Arnim's *Isabella von Ägypten*. I contend that the numerous mythological sources that are represented within the text mimic the creation of a new mythology – a mythology that fuses numerous traditions into a single, new overarching religious belief. As such it creates an alternative to monotheistic Christianity. The new myth appears more as a pan-Christianity: a new type of belief to which many different peoples and faiths can relate. Recalling Novalis' *Christenheit* text, this new myth allows for the possibility of a

fresh, catholic (i.e. universal) religious tradition made up of innumerable smaller parts.

In summary, each of the following chapters traces the development of an aesthetic and spiritual Romantic *Bildung* through the rewriting of religious mythology and examines the new mythology's relation to Judeo-Christian orthodoxy. As I have outlined above, the writers of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries see the potential of *Poesie* and an aesthetic education to expose a more pantheistic nature of the universe. While the earlier texts hesitated in overstepping the boundaries of orthodox belief, the later examples pursued the pantheistic and unorthodox implications of Romantic philosophy. In doing so, they present the possibility for all humankind to at last truly unite within a single spiritual mythology – a single “Gedicht der Gottheit.”

Chapter 1

“You have no choice.”: King Saul and the Consequences of Defying Religious *Bildung* in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*¹²

An initial reading of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* can leave the reader feeling lost and disoriented. On the surface the novel is a mire of perplexing figures and events, supposedly bound together through the adventures of the titular character. Yet there are events that do not seem related to the main plot; numerous named and nameless characters; and dialogues and narrations that are replete with relevant or perhaps irrelevant information. Essentially, the text is very intimidating – a biographical maze of relationships, education, art, and sexuality, all of which the title character experiences and learns about on the journey set before him by his educators.

Yet is it this very characteristic of confusion that presents, as the very title of the novel suggests, an opportunity for learning. As readers, we follow Wilhelm and share in his uncertainty, misunderstanding, and ignorance of certain events and people before we reach the end of the *Lehrjahre* (Ammerlahn 99). Not only does this trait of confusion combined with the theme *Bildung* place the text within the Romantic imperative – the desire to educate humanity concerning the pantheistic framework of reality – but the text’s complexity and density also *demand* an interpretation, compelling the reader to dissect the novel’s contents and decipher its meaning. My reading, based on the recurrent presence of the

¹² Quote from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. (Siegel, Don. 1956, Allied Artist Pictures.)

biblical King Saul, thematizes the novel according to mythology and *Bildung* and brings some semblance of order to the text's uncertainty.

From the very beginning of the novel and until literally the final page, the text contains various citations and slight hints of the Saul myth. Many of these mentions are made with a direct allusion to Wilhelm. In fact, since the references to the Saul myth occur at the very beginning and very end of the text, the entire story of Wilhelm's apprenticeship is framed *within* Saul's own story. Of course, we must then ask ourselves: Why? What is the purpose in creating a connection between these two very different figures?

I argue that in framing Wilhelm's apprenticeship within Saul's myth, and through various references to that myth scattered throughout the novel, Goethe contrasts the outcome of each tale. Specifically concerning *Bildung*, the outcome of Saul's story shows the reader what Wilhelm *might* have become, had he not learned the core lesson of his *Lehrjahre*. That core lesson, I suggest, is submission: Both Wilhelm and Saul set out on a similar learning process, but Wilhelm submits to the authority of his educators, while Saul, in contrast, defies the limits of his education. Yet, it is this very surrender on Wilhelm's part that undermines a Romantic reading of the text. That is, Wilhelm as student is given an aesthetic education – a primary requirement within the Romantic tradition – yet he is not permitted to truly move beyond the status of being a student. He remains a student, not permitted to fuse with a higher spiritual power, but must stay under the guidance of a dominating religious leader.

I. Previous Criticism of the Novel

Of course this Saul-focused reading highlights only one characteristic of the novel as a whole. Since its publication scholars have drawn on and interpreted the text's many other themes and motifs. One of the earliest critical reviews of the text came from Friedrich Schlegel himself, whose own analysis set Goethe's novel up as the standard of Romantic *Poesie*. In a separate mention of the novel, he sees it as one of the great points of revolution for the age (Athenaeum Fragment 216). For Schlegel, the text demonstrates the "Bildung eines strebendens Geistes" and chronicles the details of that education as it unfolds through the story's course of events (*Über* 143). Here, as is the case for the conception of *Bildung* discussed in *Gespräch über die Poesie*, Schlegel sees Goethe's work as a text that self-reflexively demonstrates the defining of aesthetics through the very representation of aesthetics. Yet even Schlegel admitted, in yet another fragment, that a definite interpretation of the novel was unlikely (*Kritische Fragmente* 120).

The degree of variation in critical scholarship devoted to the novel is certainly proof of this assertion that no one reading is final. To cite just a few examples, analyses include the status of the novel as the proto-typical *Bildungsroman* and the definition of that genre (Ammerlahn 25-46; Eigler 93-98; Pfau 567-584); the status and interpretation of art and theater within the novel (Broszeit-Rieger 105-120); the possible influence of the novel and its characters on later texts by other authors, like Jane Austen (Mucignat 21-38), Charles Dickens (Hösle 237-254), and Herman Melville (Duban 3-23); even the demise of

religion and rise of secularism and capitalism (Krings 161-176). The title of Krings essay, “Die entgötterte Welt: Religion und Ökonomie in Goethes ‘Lehrjahren’” conveys its overall argument that the manipulation of the Tower Society is ultimately about the “Ökonomisierung der Gesellschaft” and the “Aufhebung des Feudalsystems”; this simultaneously goes hand in hand with a disregard for anything religious as an unprofitable activity.

I disagree that the novel promotes the complete disregard of religion and will support this assertion by highlighting the Wilhelm-Saul connection and how it functions in the storyline as a whole. There has been insufficient analysis of this topos in the scholarship to date. Curran’s commentary contains various references to the Saul motif, but these are not bound together into any specific reading. Rather they are recognized as examples of Goethe’s use of biblical intertextuality (Curran 309). John Blair, on the other hand, goes into more detail on Saul’s presence within the novel. While also noting the numerous allusions to the figure of Saul, Blair, building on an earlier argument by Eigler, attempts to draw some meaning from the presence of the mythical character within the novel. In particular, he argues that the final comparison between Saul and Wilhelm in the last lines of the text calls into question the “happy ending” of the storyline (Blair 8, 80; Eigler 113), although this interpretation ignores the many differences between Saul and Wilhelm that the novel also emphasizes.

The most in-depth analysis concerning the function of Saul in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* comes from Lothar Bluhm, whose essay’s title “ ‘Du kommst mir vor wie Saul, der Sohn Kis’...’: *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* zwischen

‘Heilung’ und ‘Zerstörung’” calls attention to the presence of Saul in the novel and simultaneously emphasizes Goethe’s purposeful placement of the biblical within the text. Bluhm cites Goethe’s own “explanation” of the text’s theme as one being led “von einer höheren Hand” through folly and confusion (Bluhm 5). Bluhm then goes on to quote a later, more detailed explication by Goethe, which connects this theme of fate and destiny with Saul.

Und doch ist es möglich, daß alle die falschen Schritte zu einem unschätzbaren Guten hinführen: eine Ahndung [Ahnung, Intuition], die sich im *Wilhelm Meister* immer mehr entfaltet, aufklärt und bestätigt, ja sich zuletzt mit klaren Worten ausspricht: „Du kommst mir vor wie Saul, der Sohn Kis', der ausging, seines Vaters Eselinnen zu suchen und ein Königreich fand. (Bluhm 5; see also Blumenthal 432)

This is an incredibly informative bit of information from the author. It demonstrates that both Saul and the theme of fate are keys to understanding the text. While I will go into more detail in the following sections concerning these topics, Bluhm picks up on Goethe’s clarification and correctly connects the novel’s themes of divine-like control to the textual references to Saul. Noting arguments like those of Blair and Eigler, Bluhm initially interprets this as a pronouncement of doom on Wilhelm. Since Saul’s own life and legacy are doomed, so too must Wilhelm, if he is like Saul, be subject to some future life-ending tragedy (Bluhm 9).¹³ However, because Wilhelm does appear to avoid this fall from grace, Bluhm sees it as the text’s attempt to escape from writing within the biblical tradition. “Die literarische Erzählung schreibt sich nicht mehr

¹³ While my main focus is on the storyline and interaction of characters within *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, it should be noted that such a horrible calamity – at least one on the scale of Saul’s demise – does not appear to happen to Wilhelm even in the follow-up *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*.

nur in die biblische ein, sondern sucht sie insgeheim letztlich abzulösen" (Bluhm 10).

While I agree with Bluhm that the differences between Saul and Wilhelm call into the question their actual similarities to one another, rather than merely hinting at some possible future misfortune, I will take a different approach to the divergence of these characters. If Saul's story is connected to Wilhelm's, what sort of consequences, other than undermining the very source material that Goethe used to described the "theme" of the novel, can be read within the text? I argue that, quite the contrary to an attempted escape from the biblical tradition, the text actually reinforces the theme of obedience to divine destiny by contrasting the outcomes of Saul and Wilhelm.

II. Goethe and Religious Mythology: A Very Brief Overview

In order to present a comprehensive analysis of the presence of Saul within the novel, and connect it to my ultimate argument for the novel's innate religious conservatism, I must first present sufficient background information of both the biblical source stories and of Goethe's beliefs concerning biblical myth and its status within society. In this section, I will very briefly consider Goethe's religious background and knowledge, noting the important points that directly relate to his literary output and his attitude toward social religious orthodoxy. Although raised as a Lutheran Protestant, Goethe did not remain strictly faithful to his family's religious beliefs, often questioning and criticizing the legitimacy of institutionalized Christianity (Loewen 154). Biographers have noted that although

he, more or less, did believe in some sort of deity, he did not sweepingly accept standard religious dogma.

However he may have viewed the status of the Christian Church in society, his attitude specifically toward the sacred text of Christianity, the Bible, seems to be one of reverence. He writes:

Ich für meine Person hatte die Bibel lieb und wert: denn fast ihr alle war ich meine sittliche Bildung schuldig, und die Begebenheiten, die Lehren, die Symbole, die Gleichnisse, alles hatte sich tief bei mir eingedrückt und war auf die eine oder andere Weise wirksam gewesen. (MA 16, 298)

Jane K. Brown notes that Goethe thought biblical poetry to be perfect in its original form, so that subsequent poetry written by him or any other poet could only imitate the sacred texts (Brown 241).

This attitude toward Christianity, its beliefs, and scriptures signifies a man who, although religious, did at least question the status of orthodox European religion. Simultaneously, it also indicates Goethe's interest in using the Bible for his own poetic purposes. In this respect his poetic program arguably fits with beliefs of the Romantic Movement: he had a respect for the Bible as an inspirational text and for the influence of religion in society, but did not appear to completely follow orthodox spirituality. That is why Goethe's behavior during Fichte's so-called *Atheismusstreit* is so remarkable. The text Fichte published, *Über den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung*, caused a stir for its alleged atheistic content and ultimately resulted in Fichte leaving his position at the University of Jena. Hildesheim compares Goethe's reaction towards this controversy with his response to the French Revolution, noting that in the end Goethe was much more conservative towards a minor religious matter

close to home than toward a massive political upheaval in another land (Hildesheim 75). Goethe's passivity during this entire ordeal, when compared to his previously discussed religious nonconformity, seems especially odd. He appears to stand against the orthodox Christianity of the time. However, when faced with a local religious debate, particularly once concerning atheism,¹⁴ he seemed to retreat to a safe, conformist, and orthodox position. Such behavior will certainly become relevant later in this analysis, as I explore *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* status as a promoter of submission to religious orthodoxy.

Goethe's own personal religious convictions appear to be contradictory at times, varying between individualistic believer and a (passive) supporter of social religious orthodoxy. Despite his own beliefs, since he was raised in and then lived his entire life within an orthodoxly Christian European society, Goethe was fully immersed within orthodox Christian beliefs and texts (Sauder 103). Additionally, his own declaration about the presence of Saul in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, as discussed above, is just one of many examples indicating that he did indeed use the myths of Judeo-Christianity as inspiration in his own work.¹⁵ However, it is this very biblical reference that, I contend, calls into question the text's status as the proto-typical Romantic *Bildungsroman*.

¹⁴ Many assume that Goethe, an admirer of Spinoza, did have at least sympathy towards atheistic/pantheistic worldviews. Hildesheim, although without much detail, does state that this is an oversimplification. He also specifically notes that Goethe's stance toward atheism or materialism was much more hesitant than Fichte's, for he found such concepts "zu farblos" (76-77).

¹⁵ An interesting and short biographical note concerning Goethe and Felix Mendelssohn provides further proof of Goethe's familiarity with the Saul myth. While being visited by the young composer, Goethe apparently told him, "I am Saul and you are David. When I am in low spirits you must come and comfort me by your accords" (Dole 353). He then additionally promised to never throw a spear at the boy, as Saul eventually had toward David (Todd 292).

III. The Presence of the Biblical Myth of Saul in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*

The Saul myth, an ancient and gory tale, truly is an odd companion piece for Goethe's novel of artistic education. According to the biblical tale, Saul, a young and unknown man from a poor family, is crowned the first king of the Israelites. Commissioned with uniting the land under his rule and defending the laws set down by the god of the Israelites, he initially seeks guidance from the divine prophets. However, he soon falls out of favor with the people and with religious leaders, even going against his own laws and against the laws governing the monarchy. Eventually he drifts into paranoia and insanity before being killed in battle. Within the Christian tradition Saul is usually classified as one of the evil kings of Israel. That is, he defied the religious laws set down by the God of the Israelites. As a result of his disobedience, he loses his mind, his family, and his kingdom. He is seen as a flawed and cursed man who abandoned his divine duty and suffered as a result. Traditionally, his mythos is used as an example of teaching obedience toward the Judeo-Christian God and His religious laws.

Goethe was clearly familiar with the Saul story, and uses it to shape *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. The novel begins and ends with explicit references to the Saul story, and contains a number of other subtle allusions to the myth. The first of these references occurs while Wilhelm is reminiscing with his mother and telling Mariane and Barbara about his childhood. Wilhelm fondly recalls his time playing with a puppet theater and how he often staged productions for his family and friends. He put on performances of familiar children stories, including

the biblical stories of David and Jonathan. Within these early tales “betrat Saul die Szene” (WML 363). The fact that the novel opens up with these references should not be taken lightly. The reader’s first exposure to Wilhelm’s character and storyline is essentially *through* another story, the biblical myth of Saul (Bluhm 7). Furthermore, the fact that Saul is a now character portrayed by Wilhelm demonstrates that the Saul myth has been rewritten as a theatrical piece in which Wilhelm is the leading man. Wilhelm assumes the role of Saul and goes on to say that the happiest moments of his early life was when he was staging and performing this myth.

Wilhelm’s strong connection to these puppets is clear. In fact, his entire fascination with the theater, the premise of the majority of the novel, begins with these figures. He excitedly goes into detail, describing and eventually showing Mariane and Barbara his childhood toys. Each puppet holds its own distinct identity, through costume and construction. Mariane looks through this collection and observes the variety of figures. She finds the David figure “zu klein” and Goliath “zu groß” (366). She refuses to even pay attention to the Samuel puppet. The reason for her rejection of these puppets is not entirely clear. Yet in complete contrast, her negative response to the Saul puppet is unambiguous.

König Saul im schwarzen Samtrocke mit der goldenen Krone wollte Marianen gar nicht gefallen; er sehe ihr aus, sagte sie, zu steif und pedantisch aus. (366)

Saul’s undesirability stands in sharp contrast to Mariane’s petty disregard of the other puppets. She openly points out Saul, noting his negative characteristics

and explaining why she does not like him. This strong description, compared to the other puppets, draws the reader's attention to the figure of Saul.¹⁶

We therefore see our first connection to Saul through Wilhelm's childhood. This connection is developed as we learn more details of Wilhelm's early life. The narrator explains that as a child Wilhelm would imagine his bedroom as a throne room.

Seine Bettvorhänge waren in große Falten aufgezogen und mit Quasten befestigt, wie man Thronen vorzustellen pflegt; er hatte sich einen Teppich in die Mitte des Zimmers und einen feinern auf den Tisch anzuschaffen gewußt; seine Bücher und Gerätschaften legte und stellte er fast mechanisch so, daß ein niederländischer Maler gute Gruppen zu seinen Stilleben hätte herausnehmen können. Eine weiße Mütze hatte er wie einen Turban zurechtgebunden und die Ärmel seines Schlafrocks nach orientalischem Kostüme kurz stutzen lassen. (410)

This setting – an ancient king, wearing a turban, on his throne – is reminiscent of Rembrandt's¹⁷ *Saul and David*. In this painting Saul is shown in a traditionally oriental garb, complete with his "Turban zurechtgebunden." One can easily see Wilhelm imitating such a look in his own room. In doing so, Wilhelm is connecting himself to the stereotypical aesthetic of an eastern king, as depicted in the painting. Even more significant than detachedly controlling the strings of a

¹⁶ The only other puppet described in such detail is the Jonathan figure, which Mariane adores and clings to. There is even the hint that Mariane relates this sweet affable figure to Wilhelm, as she gently transfers her caresses "von der Puppe auf unsern Freund [Wilhelm]," (366). This would imply that Wilhelm is not similar to the gruesome and hard figure of Saul, but rather to Saul's gentle son. I would argue however, that any connection the reader might think Wilhelm has with Jonathan is broken in another scene from Wilhelm's childhood. During one of his many puppet performances, Wilhelm drops the Jonathan puppet, "ein Zufall, der die Illusion sehr unterbrach" (373). In my opinion, this "breaking of the illusion" also disconnects any illusory textual connection between Wilhelm and Jonathan. The narrator is specifically letting us know that despite any apparent similarities to Jonathan, Wilhelm's story is not connected to Jonathan's. This is in addition to the fact that the references to Saul and Wilhelm continue through the novel, while there are no further connections made between Wilhelm and Jonathan.

¹⁷ Coincidentally, Rembrandt was a "niederländischer Maler".

puppet version of King Saul, he begins to dress the part of an ancient ruler and turns his own space into a royal court.



(Rembrandt van Rijn, "Saul and David". Klip, Ronald. The Maritshuis.)

Wilhelm's similarities to Saul do not end merely with the clothing, but also extend to the other figure in the painting – David with the harp. *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* also contains a harpist, who mimics David's actions for Wilhelm-as-Saul. Following Wilhelm's meeting with Philine and his adoption of Mignon, the mysterious Harpist appears. His abilities with his instrument "erheiterten gar bald die Gesellschaft" (482). These enlightening and amusing musical skills are emphasized throughout the novel. Wilhelm recognizes this power and makes use of it.

In der verdrießlichen Unruhe, in der er [Wilhelm] sich befand, fiel ihm ein, den Alten [Harfer] aufzusuchen, durch dessen Harfe er *die bösen Geister* zu verscheuchen hoffte. (490, emphasis added)

Seeking to eliminate these "evil spirits," Wilhelm seeks the Harpist and his music for relief.

To the reader with some knowledge of biblical myths, this short scene's reference to summoning the harper to banish evil spirits is immediately recognizable. After ascending to the throne, Saul is continually bombarded to the breaking point by the surrounding religious leaders, the religious laws, political enemies, and wars. Gradually Saul grows melancholic and virtually unapproachable, as he threatens practically everyone around him. For the anonymous biblical writer, this depression had a metaphysical source.

Am andern Tage kam *der böse Geist* von Gott über Saul und er geriet in Raserei in seinem Hause. (I Samuel 18:10a, emphasis added)

Of course the term *böse Geist* is quite common throughout many religions and secular traditions; there is no sole direct relation here to Wilhelm Meister. Yet just as Wilhelm seeks help and relief from the Harpist, Saul also requires a musical cure for his affliction.

Da sprach Saul zu seinen Leuten: Seht euch um nach einem Mann, der des Saitenspiels Harfe kundig ist, und bringt ihn zu mir. (I Samuel 16:17)

David is then brought to the king's court. Whenever this *böser Geist* overcame Saul, "nahm David die Harfe und spielte darauf mit seiner Hand," relieving Saul from his overbearing affliction (I Samuel 16:23).

Therefore, with just a few short words Goethe strongly connects Wilhelm with Saul. Previously, Wilhelm's own background story had been given to us through references to Saul, such as his childhood fascination with characters from the myth or with scenes of Wilhelm imitating an eastern king. But here we have a link that indirectly but overtly connects the two characters. That is, scenes

from the original myth are being restaged within the novel – with new characters corresponding to the old. Wilhelm, in this reenactment, *becomes* Saul.

The text reinforces this setup by subtly permeating the storyline with other references to the Saul myth, thereby creating a new environment that parallels the source material's own world. One additional example concerns Mariane. After mistakenly receiving Norberg's letter, intended for Mariane, Wilhelm reads a peculiar simile relating to Mariane. Norberg writes to her:

Höre, tu mir nicht wieder die schwarzgrünbraune Jacke an, du siehst drin aus wie die Hexe von Endor. (427)

One might easily glance over this sentence as simply a strong sense of disapproval on Norberg's part. Yet the reference to the Witch of Endor is clear to anyone familiar with the Saul myth, and again underlines its importance to the novel and the restaging of the Saul myth. Mention of the witch here reminds the reader of the disobedience of Saul.

This theme of rebellion, witnessed in Saul's interaction with the Witch of Endor, is central to interpreting the function of Saul in the text. Towards the end of his reign, Saul's political and religious advisor Samuel dies. Despite the consistent criticism and disapproval Samuel had of him, Saul was determined to communicate with his dead advisor. However, earlier in his reign Saul implemented a law prohibiting association with witches or mediums, whose metaphysical practices were outside the jurisdiction or regulated religious procedure. Yet in a desperate attempt to gain contact with Samuel, Saul steps outside established legal and religious boundaries and seeks out a woman who is able to communicate with the dead. His men answer him: "Siehe, in En-Dor ist

eine Frau, die die Toten beschwören kann” (1. Sam 28:7). It is this woman whom Saul approaches in an attempt to speak by-proxy with Samuel.¹⁸ It is also this woman that Norberg compares to Mariane, demonstrating once again the presence of the Saul myth within the storyline of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.

The final and perhaps strongest connection made between Wilhelm and Saul occurs at the end of novel – once again emphasizing the structure of framing the novel within the Saul myth – as Wilhelm is speaking with his friend Friedrich (Bluhm 7). Friedrich, attempting to poetically summarize all of Wilhelm’s adventures, says to him: “[D]u kommst mir vor wie Saul, der Sohn Kis’, der ausging, seines Vaters Eselinnen zu suchen, und ein Königreich fand” (992).¹⁹ Here, in the second-to-last lines of the novel, Wilhelm is directly and unequivocally connected to Saul. In this case, the reference is to the story of Saul’s anointing as king. According to the myth, Saul’s father “hatte...seine Eselinnen verloren” and sends him out to find them (1 Samuel 9:3). Failing to locate them, Saul seeks the advice of the prophet Samuel. But according to the tale:

[D]er HERR hatte Samuels Ohren offenbart einen Tag zuvor, ehe Saul kam, und gesagt: Morgen um diese Zeit will ich einen Mann zu dir senden aus dem Lande Benjamin; den sollst du zum Fürsten salben über mein Volk Israel. (1 Samuel 9:15-16)

Friedrich sees Wilhelm’s seemingly ordinary journey from home in the same way Saul set out on a simple task, only to become a king. To the reader aware of the

¹⁸ The irony of Saul breaking the law to get the advice of his law advisor is certainly tragic. Although Saul’s representative status as one who disobeys is developed later in this chapter, the fact that his ultimate damning act of disobedience was in an attempt to do the right thing should be recognized.

¹⁹ Note that this is the quote Goethe himself references when giving his explanation of the novel.

references to Saul contained in the novel up to this point, this final allusion confirms that the various connections between Saul and Wilhelm are purposeful.

IV. Interpreting the Presence of Saul

Of course, once the presence of the figure of Saul is recognized and his connection to Wilhelm is noted, the obvious follow-up question must be: Why? The references to Saul, while perhaps subtle, are too consistent to be simply a coincidence. Why, then, would Goethe purposely insert such references to this biblical myth and connect his own title character to an ancient dishonored king? In this section I examine the connection between Wilhelm and Saul, examining the similarities and differences between these two figures.

Upon first glance, there appear to be few, if any, actual similarities between Wilhelm, the artistically-inclined son of an eighteenth-century middle-class businessman, and Saul, the brutal first king of an Iron Age nation. After all, the connections between Wilhelm and Saul reviewed in the previous section are simply just that: connections. They merely hint that perhaps there is an unseen biblical, mythical influence on the storyline. However, there is one aspect of Saul's background that does arguably have a direct link to Wilhelm and allows the reader to interpret the function of Saul: namely, Saul's humble beginnings. As noted before, Saul comes from a very poor family within the tribe of Benjamin, itself the smallest of the traditional twelve tribes of Israel. The abnormality that he, an unknown, is divinely chosen to be the first monarch of all of the tribes is

pointed out in his tale. When Samuel tells him that he is to be king, Saul responds:

Bin ich nicht ein Benjamiter und von einem der geringsten Stämme Israels, und mein Geschlecht das kleinste unter allen Geschlechtern der Stämme Benjamin? Warum sagst du denn mir solches? (I. Samuel 9:21)

Therefore, the myth tells of an unknown young man, from a family of no real consequence, being chosen for a prestigious role by the ruling class.

This is similar to one significant feature of the novel's storyline: Wilhelm, a young man from an insignificant family, is chosen by members of the aristocracy for a special position. This connection between the two stories answers at least one part of a question that critics have posed: Why did the *Turmgesellschaft* choose Wilhelm (Ammerlahn 27)? Scholars have presented numerous complex answers and apologies to this question, but I propose that a Saul-centered reading gives the reader a possible new answer: Saul's and Wilhelm's similar origins and destinies. Wilhelm's modest background and eventual selection by the Tower Society, noted by the final words spoken by Friedrich, serve as a decisive connection between his story and the Saul myth. It is with the last reference, the closing part of the Saul framing device, that the actual tie between the stories of Wilhelm and Saul is realized: Wilhelm really *does* set out from his father's house like Saul to receive an education from the aristocracy. Therefore, the starting points of their respective apprenticeships are the same. The numerous links mentioned throughout the novel between the two characters serve as reinforcements of this association. But what ultimately differs between

these two educations is the nature of their respective conclusions: the happy ending for Wilhelm, the tragic for Saul.

These separate endings can inversely function as the starting point for an interpretation based on a reading of the novel through the Saul myth. If we as readers recognize that Wilhelm is a rewritten form of Saul, yet his fate varies in such a drastic way, then we must ask ourselves what sorts of interpretations arise from changing the original tragic ending of the myth. To do so, I propose to move backwards from the different endings of these tales and find the point where they indeed diverge. In other words, we must find where Saul's life becomes tragic and Wilhelm's life is fulfilled.

Working in reverse from Saul's death, through the numerous tragedies and adversities that plagued his reign, the beginning of his demise is generally seen following a battle against the Philistines at Gilgal. Samuel the prophet, who had previously anointed Saul as king and who functioned as Saul's spiritual guide, was to be Saul's advisor for the battle. However, Saul did not wait for Samuel to arrive, pursued the enemy on his own, and disobeyed religious laws concerning post-battle behavior and sacrifice. Finally arriving at the scene of the battle after it had taken place, Samuel cursed Saul for his disobedience. From this point on, Saul's status as king was doomed (1 Samuel 13:1-15).

What can we take away from this event in the Saul myth, particularly in its relation to Wilhelm Meister? I suggest the key is Saul's *Geistlicher*, his spiritual teacher: Samuel. Up until this point, Saul had been an obedient student, following the instruction of the divinely ordained and sanctioned, and therefore

orthodox, prophet. As long as he followed the rules and laws given by his instructor, Saul prospered. Yet the moment he turned away from the teacher's instructions and advanced of his own volition, when he made decisions on his own without the express consent of his *Geistlicher*, he was punished. This is the moment of Saul's demise: going against the instruction of the (orthodox) spiritual teacher. And it is with this moment of disobedience that we can establish a connection between Saul's myth and the story of Wilhelm Meister.

From its very title, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* signifies a learning process. Its status as a *Bildungsroman* is noted from the very beginning. The theme of *Bildung* and aesthetics is also a strong connection between this novel and the Romantic Imperative: humans require a guided education in order to fully appreciate, perfect, and experience first-hand the innate *Poesie* or aesthetic production common to all. Yet there is a deeper level of irony in the title of the novel, more than simply a *Meister* being subjected to an education. Wilhelm the *Meister* is not given an apprenticeship or *Bildung* to reach his aesthetic goals. Rather, he is subjected to a specifically *unending* apprenticeship. He does not challenge his teachers, as Saul did, but rather follows through indefinitely with his *Bildung* under the auspices of the Tower Society. By the end of the novel, the reader knows that Wilhelm has been controlled and manipulated by the society, particularly its leader, the Abbé: every supposed choice Wilhelm makes has, in actuality, been previously determined by his teacher. Wilhelm does not, or perhaps could not, step beyond the boundaries set for him by his masters.²⁰ Like

²⁰ And it is this textual trait of guided education, led by a "higher hand", which Goethe, as previously noted, described as the very theme of the novel.

Wilhelm, who is “Master” only in name, so is Saul “king” only by the authority of Samuel the divine prophet: It is a specifically spiritual advisor that ultimately creates or determines enforcement of the laws governing the monarchy and the state as whole. Saul, as “king,” merely answers and is required to obey this divine authority, in order to be successful. I suggest that in a similar way, Wilhelm’s teacher, the Abbé, represents not simply an educational authority, but a spiritual authority. However, Wilhelm’s education differs in that he submits to this dominating spiritual power.²¹ Saul may have been punished for his unorthodoxy and spiritual defiance, but Wilhelm is rewarded for his obedience. And this submission serves Wilhelm well: at the end of the story, he has in fact truly gained the kingdom that Saul eventually lost.

The status of both Saul’s and Wilhelm’s respective teachers as spiritual teachers introduces an entirely new dimension to this reading based on obedience. These teachers hold prominent positions not only within the ruling, aristocratic circles, but the ruling religious circles. Samuel derives his power over Saul by the fact that he is an anointed representative of the Jewish God. And the Abbé, whose character could easily have any occupation and does apparently change his appearance, remains connected to the dominating orthodox religious institutions. Samuel’s and the Abbé’s statuses as prophet and priest respectively denote their established religious power as earthly representatives of a divinity, sanctioned by the dominating religious culture. Saul and Wilhelm, therefore, as

²¹ At the beginning of the novel, Wilhelm rebels against and runs away from the (economic) world of his father. But at the end of the novel, Wilhelm returns to the (spiritual) rule of the “father” by submitting to the Abbé (meaning *father*). Counter to Krings argument (see Section II), the novel actually portrays the exchange of the economic for the religious.

students, must obey specifically religious authorities or face the consequences of rebellion against orthodoxy.

It also should be noted that both Samuel and the Abbé appear to be more than mere humans. Even within a somewhat realistic novel like *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, the Abbé exhibits very un-humanlike qualities. The status of Samuel and the Abbé as super-human spiritual instructors (or perhaps truly *unbeschränkte Götter*) over their human apprentices, who can never truly move beyond human abilities and understanding, is solidified: Saul and Wilhelm themselves will never be able to become true “masters” but are eternally relegated to the station of mere human and eternal student.

Wilhelm’s own status as a mortal human is made clear when he is contrasted with his mentor, the Abbé. This priest appears to be the head of the *Turmgesellschaft*, the secret society controlling Wilhelm’s life, and has apparently also directed the lives of many others. He is never, however, truly understood by either the reader or even the characters interacting with him. A very basic example: he is seemingly one half in a pair of identical twins. This often confuses other characters, who are never entirely sure with which of the siblings they might be in contact (*WML* 932). Additionally, throughout the novel many characters *seem* to recognize the Abbé, yet cannot be sure if they actually have seen him or merely someone like him. These examples show that the Abbé, although definitely an authoritative figure, has a very fluid identity. One might even say a normal human body cannot contain him, as he continually appears slightly altered or different, seemingly able to change his form and materialize

wherever he wants. This ability adds new meaning to his title of *Geistlicher*. The root *Geist* characterizes as not simply a spiritual leader, but perhaps even a spirit himself. This is a theme the Romantics also noticed in the text. Concerning his ghost-like nature Schlegel writes:

[Der Geistlicher] schwebt über den Ganzen wie der Geist Gottes. Dafür daß er gern das Schicksal spielt, muß er auch im Buch die Rolle des Schicksals übernehmen. (*Über Goethes Meister* 163)

This description supports the assessment that the priest is not only above humanity, but also dictates fate as a representative of the divine. And as the decider of fate, one who “schwebt über den Ganzen,” he closely matches Goethe’s own description of the “higher hand” that thematizes the novel.

Therefore, as a representative, or perhaps even part of the “Geist Gottes,” the Abbé is not only Wilhelm’s teacher, but also a *spiritual* teacher. That is, Wilhelm, by submitting to his *Geistlicher*, is simultaneously surrendering to a *religious* education. This reading of a specifically spiritual education is made clear when Wilhelm finally becomes aware of the Tower Society’s manipulation. As he finally enters the headquarters, so to speak, of the society, he notices the construction of the room which “schien ehemals eine Kapelle zu sein” (*WML* 872). Wilhelm’s entire monitored education has been monitored and executed from a religious space, or at least one with a religious history. Furthermore, he becomes aware of his education in this spiritual space and it is there that he recognizes the power of the society. Ultimately, the divinely-appointed Abbé and his society within the *Kapelle* demonstrate the religious nature of Wilhelm’s education and his final surrender to religious guidance.

Similar to the divine-natured Abbé and his religious control over Wilhelm, so is Saul's own *Geistlicher*, Samuel, a non-human spiritual authority. The most prominent example is perhaps his miraculous birth, which was a divine intervention of sorts in response to his mother's plea for children. According to the original story, in exchange for God granting her a child, Samuel's mother vows to have her son raised by a priest. For that reason she brings her son to the temple, where he eventually begins directly conversing with God. From his childhood Samuel is set aside as a prophet who speaks for the divine (1 Samuel, 1-3).

As an adult Samuel becomes the sole communicator for the Israelites with their divinity. As such he holds tremendous influence and power over a society that does not differentiate between religion and politics: he anoints the monarchs; he advises the monarchs; and he condemns the monarchs. Saul, by ignoring Samuel's instruction, snubs the religious order and orthodoxy of his society, with negative consequences for him and his family.

Wilhelm, on the other hand, does the opposite: He *submits* to the religious authority and may not pursue or question reality on his own. This is shown in another scene in the *Kapelle*, where Wilhelm attempts to ask a question, but is reprimanded by the Abbé, who exclaims: "Fragen Sie nicht!" (WML 876). Wilhelm remains silent and sequestered, surrendering his fate to his *Geistlicher*. This is the ultimate determining difference between the two tales: Saul serves as an example of what happens to those who disobey the religious ruling class, whereas Wilhelm shows the benefits of submitting towards a spiritual authority.

For the reader, Saul illustrates what Wilhelm *might* have become, had he not surrendered to his own religious *Meister*.

V. The Consequences of the Wilhelm's Religious Submission

We could very easily leave a reading of the text at this point: Wilhelm as the Saul figure who ultimately obeys, rather than following his own will. If, however, we read *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in such a way, we are left with unintended consequences specifically related to the novel's reception by the Romantics. The Romantic Imperative demands that the general public be educated concerning their innate divinity and connection with the (unorthodox) pantheistic universe. All literary texts, according to Romantic theory, can function as teaching tools for this goal. Friedrich Schlegel explicitly notes within the *Gespräch über die Poesie* the potential of poetry to unite nature and the world under a "Gedicht der Gottheit, dessen Teil und Blüte auch wir sind" (166). All and everything are part of pantheistic godhead, of sorts. Romantic poetry, therefore, demonstrates a type of universal deism in some form or another.

However, based on my reading, I believe that the presence of Saul undermines the Romantic qualities praised in the novel, particularly by Schlegel. In his essay on *Wilhelm Meister*, Schlegel does single out the family of characters Mignon, Sperata and Augustino as prime textual examples of Romantic poetics. These three – the "heilige Familie der Naturpoesie" – overcome their own tribulations, albeit in death, to become artistic representations of divinity, mimicking the pantheistic spirituality of Romantic aesthetic theory (*Über Goethes*

Meister 163; *Gespräch* 166). This stands in contrast to Wilhelm, who surrenders to the tutelage of an orthodox Christian educator. And this surrender, I suggest, is illustrated by his contrast with the figure of Saul. Wilhelm, unlike Saul, will not risk upsetting the religious order. But this very inaction can lead to complications when trying to read the novel according to Romantic theory. Whether purposeful or not, the text's positive portrayal of submission toward a dominant religious authority, specifically Christian, clashes with the Romantic conception of unorthodoxy. Concerning Wilhelm's education, Schlegel writes:

Er [Wilhelm] resigniert förmlich darauf, einen eignen Willen zu haben; und nun sind seine Lehrjahre wirklich vollendet. (*Über Goethes Meister* 161)

Schlegel notes specifically that it is Wilhelm's submission that marks the end of his apprenticeship. But what Schlegel seems to miss is that Wilhelm's will is being sacrificed to an explicitly Christian authority. That is, in order for his apprenticeship to end, Wilhelm must willfully submit to an ordained representative of the contemporary Christian faith. Simultaneously, by submitting to a spiritual authority Wilhelm is unable to move beyond whatever religiously-orthodox limitations that authority imposes. Wilhelm's education is not an "echter Kritik," as stipulated in the *Gespräch über die Poesie*, for it does not end in his fusion with an inner "Gedicht der Gottheit," but rather with his surrender to a single, dominating spirituality.

Therefore, far from demonstrating a learning experience that culminates in the student reaching a sort of enlightenment or a divine connection to a universal deity innate within himself, the novel promotes a limited education. Wilhelm's success and happiness depend on his surrender and continual compliance to an

orthodox religious figure. In doing so, his apprenticeship is never truly at an end. Continually dependent on another, specifically a religious proxy, Wilhelm does not have the opportunity to fully engage with the Romantic theories of pantheistic aesthetics. And once more, we can refer to the counterexample of Saul, who demonstrates the consequences of disobeying said religious proxy.

V. Conclusion

The presence of Saul within *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, if noticed at all, certainly does not at first appear to be anything more than an interesting, maybe meaningless, trait of an already dense text. Yet as demonstrated in this chapter, the myth of Saul both frames and permeates Wilhelm's own tale of apprenticeship.

Once this is recognized the reader is compelled to interpret its presence. The reading and analysis presented in this chapter present the view that far from being a true *Bildungsroman*, the novel actually promotes educational submission. The main character is not truly educated, because unlike a true apprentice he does not go out on his own upon completion of his instruction. Rather he is eternally bound to a teacher and is consequently never able to move beyond the orthodoxy that that teacher represents. Yet this submission pays off for Wilhelm, "der ausging...und ein Königreich fand" (992), under the auspices of the guiding "higher hand."

This stands in sharp contrast to Saul, who lost his kingdom when he challenged his own teacher. As addressed earlier, it is not out of the question

that Goethe would retreat to a conservative and obedient religious stance if faced with a significant controversy. So to suggest that the tale of Wilhelm and the Saul myth interweave in this novel to create a new type of religious parable, one which upholds the authority of standard religious belief, is plausible. In doing so, the novel utilizes the traditional function of myth: to educate, specifically concerning religious belief. Yet this very myth of religious conservatism clashes with the Romantic readings concerning *Bildung*, confusion, and fragmentation within the novel.

Therefore, one could indeed label *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as a *Bildungsroman*. Yet it is a *Bildungsroman* that promotes a different type of education: obedience and restriction, without the possibility of questioning boundaries set by the educators.

Chapter 2

“They’re coming for you...”: A Failed Protestant Education and the Invasion of Sinister Myth in Schiller’s *Der Geisterseher*²²

Despite the initial popularity of *Der Geisterseher* upon its publication, Schiller’s reported personal boredom with the text left it incomplete. He began publishing installments in the journal *Thalia* in 1787, with a book compilation released in 1789. Yet despite the text’s unfinished state its audience continued to grow, both within the German-speaking world and abroad through translation. Even today, more than two hundred years after its first installment, the text has maintained a readership. And although critical attention has been focused on the undeniably powerful presence of Schiller the Dramatist within German literature, recent scholarship focused on his attempts at fictional prose has led some reviewers to label him as Germany’s lost modern novelist (Martin 198).

Whatever the actual explanation for Schiller’s abandonment of the project may be, the fact that the text is a fragment is significant. And as an unfinished text, it serendipitously fits with the later-defined Romantic notion of the fragment.²³ Here we have an incomplete novel that somehow is able to put

²² Quote from Night of the Living Dead. (Romero, George. 1968, Market Square Productions.)

²³ Despite the fact that Schiller’s text was published more than a decade before the Jena Romantic movement got underway, and although the Schlegel brothers apparently resented him for dismissing August Wilhelm from Schiller’s journal *Die Horen* (High 1), I do believe Schiller deserves a place within a project that traces the function of rewritten myth and its philosophical implications within the Romantic movement. First of all, regardless of any anger individual members of the Romantics may have had towards Schiller, his limited prose *oeuvre* did influence “the characteristic form and content...of subsequent German authors of short prose work,” (High 3). And even though the Romantics openly praised Goethe, “[t]here can be no doubt that the canonized novellas of Kleist, the later novellas of Ludwig Tieck, Achim von Arnim, and Clemens

forward a fulfilling tale of mystery and deceit, full of fantastic and disturbing elements. As a fragment, it demonstrates the Romantic idea of completion, without denying the possibility of further development.

Yet this unfinished status also reveals a crisis, an interruption. Something has interfered or intruded on either the process of writing or the author's philosophy behind the text: the invasion of the unknown or the threatening breaks down any semblance of balance or stability and endangers the possibility of resolution. I suggest that the fragmentary nature of *Der Geisterseher* mimics the very crisis portrayed in the story itself: the collapse of a failed Protestant education and the subsequent intrusion of non-Protestant ideology. The story is the portrayal of the horrific²⁴ invasion of sinister anti-Protestant myth from the realm of fantasy into reality. On the surface, the plot portrays the consequences of a Protestant education that neither successfully prepares the student for the real world nor successfully instills the values of Protestant orthodoxy. As a result of this faulty upbringing, the student is left susceptible to both an amoral secular society and the machinations of non-Protestant spirituality. Yet what turns this

Brentano...are closer to the roots of Schiller's short prose...than to Goethe's" (3). As I argued in the first chapter and continue to show in this chapter, both Goethe's and Schiller's texts display Romantic traits, despite their respective works not having been written according to Romantic ideals or for a Romantic audience. But even though these texts have Romantic qualities, my readings based on the Romantic concept of pantheistic spirituality show that they do not completely match Romantic aesthetic theory, particularly within the realms of religion. These texts may hint at the atheistic/pantheistic implications of the late-Enlightenment/early-Romantic philosophies, but are hesitant to explore any possible unorthodox developments. By setting these earlier texts alongside the later Romantic texts, as I do in this project, we as readers are able to view the literary "transitional period" (Sage 55) or "borderline between the Enlightenment" (Mahoney) and Romantic religious philosophy, including its evolution from complete taboo to cleverly disguised myth.

²⁴ I use the word horrific purposely, since this crisis of mythical infiltration into the real world attaches the text to the horror genre. Later in the chapter I will develop this text's association with the horror genre, but as a general rule, horror can depict both the intrusion of evil supernatural forces, which disrupts the distinction between reality and fantasy, and the terror associated with these unknown forces.

basic storyline into a distinctive tale of horror is that these anti-Protestant spiritual influences are not simply the standard fictional myths used to reinforce belief. They are, rather, animated in the real world. The dangers of all non-Protestant ideologies become a *real-world* threat that cannot be ignored or overcome. These mythical figures – the Wandering Jew and the vampire – coalesce into the figure of the Armenian and transcend the realms of fiction and superstition, confronting the Prince in the natural realm. As traditionally supernatural beings of mythical tales that are now invading everyday life, these mythical characters truly are *Geister* – creatures removed from their normal plane of existence. The Prince becomes the *Geisterseher*, an unfortunate medium between the real and the mythical, whose final tragedy is succumbing to the power of the other-worldly – and anti-Protestant – figures.

Critics have addressed this topic of the supernatural becoming natural, albeit not sufficiently (Andriopoulos 75). Arguments related to the supernatural, including the presence of a mythical Wandering Jew figure, are also mentioned within the secondary literature (Railo 196-197). Due to the text's obvious themes of political plots and conspiracies, many historical/cultural studies also mention *Der Geisterseher* as a fictionalized representation of the many real-world concerns circulating in central Europe in the late eighteenth century (Niemeyer 345-346). Primarily these concerns deal with the secret societies of Jesuits, the Illuminati, or the Rosicrucians and their (perceived) influence on world governments.²⁵ This theme of secret society conspiracies played a major role in

²⁵ The most likely real-world event to have been suggested as influence for Schiller deals with the ascendance of Frederick William II to the Prussian throne, following the death of his uncle

the developing forms of Gothic and conspiracy narratives, although Schiller's text seems to be one that both conforms to and redefines these genres (Clery 156-157). Other studies have taken up the task of explicitly identifying the genre of *Der Geisterseher*, debating whether it can be considered a short novel, a Gothic novel, a fragment, a *Briefroman*, a *Schlüsselroman*, a *Schauerroman*, or a *Detektivroman* (Weissberg 93-95; Conger 9-14; Sage 52-72; Maier 243-255; Clery 140-142; Niemeyer 345).

In contrast, I intend to fuse many of these various approaches to the text into a new reading. In other words, I analyze the supernatural's connection to myth, conspiratorial influence, *and* genre: the mythical story of a supernatural being's manipulations becomes real within the storyline and in doing so defines the genre of the text itself. But before examining this invasion of myth, a short review of the novel's plot and its depiction of the Prince's faulty education is necessary, for it is specifically his scholastic and religious shortcomings that leave him susceptible to the myth.

I. An Incomplete Education

Der Geisterseher is told through first-hand accounts of the Count von O**, who is visiting Venice with a German Prince, and later continued through a collection of letters written by a member of the Prince's staff. The plot is divided

Frederick the Great. Frederick's reign was known as "enlightened despotism" and an era of religious tolerance existed under him. His successor, however, was hated for his comparatively strict religious policies. Even before Frederick William II's ascension to the Prussian throne in 1786 (shortly before the publication of Schiller's text) rumors circulated that a group, annoyed at his uncle's tolerance, "began to look forward to the day when the Crown Prince would ascend the throne, a faction which appears to have been closely associated with illuminism, theosophical Masonry, Templarism and (later on) Rosicrucianism" (McIntosh 114).

into two books. The first part, which is narrated by the Count, deals with the Prince's development into a skeptic of his parents' Protestant religion and of the supernatural in general – effectively demonstrated in his debunking of a fraudulent séance. The second section recounts the Prince's fall into questionable behavior and debt, as mysterious events and figures seem to be manipulating his fate.

The story begins with the Prince's visit to Venice. In the city he seems to be followed by a mysterious man, called the Armenian. Although this stranger seems to understand the Prince's familial and personal background, he is unfamiliar to everyone. Through many mysterious and seemingly supernatural events, including a seemingly real spiritual occurrence at the phony séance, people in the Prince's confidence begin to suspect that this Armenian is perhaps more than human. It is suggested that the Armenian is an agent of the Inquisition, tasked with forcing the Prince to join the Roman Catholic Church. In the end, a debt-ridden, desperate, and seemingly confused Prince is found in the presence of the Armenian, waiting to hear his first mass.

From the first descriptive introduction of the Prince, the reader is aware that he is an extraordinarily naïve individual, the victim of a sequestered life. His social circle, obviously significantly limited by his aristocratic status, is already very small. Yet he also often retreats to private areas, where he can be alone.

Zwei Kavaliers, auf deren Verschwiegenheit er sich vollkommen verlassen konnte, waren nebst einigen treuen Bedienten sein ganzes Gefolge[...]. Mitten in einem geräuschvollen Gewühle von Menschen ging er einsam; in seine Phantasienwelt verschlossen, war er sehr oft ein Fremdling in der wirklichen. (GS 8)

As far as introductions go, this is very far from any sort of royal or aristocratic presentation. Apparently spineless and uncomfortable around other people, the Prince resorts to a “fantasy world”²⁶ to calm himself. This appears to be a portrayal of a small and shy child, rather than the adult member of a royal household.

This characteristic is vital to understanding his education and development, or lack thereof, to be more specific: The Prince truly remains a child. He has neither been properly taught how to behave nor has he been effectively led into adulthood. A further example of this failure to grow up is his inhibited sexual development and experiences. The narrator notes that “[d]as schöne Geschlecht war ihm bis jetzt gleichgültig gewesen“ (8).²⁷ If ever there was a prime example of the “man-child,” the Prince would be it: socially awkward, sexually inexperienced, and essentially resorting to imaginary friends for comfort. The level of his immaturity is truly startling.

What is more, all of these characteristics and descriptions are given to the reader within the first six paragraphs of the text. That is, the Prince’s character faults and simple nature are not developed over the course of the story. Rather, the narrator immediately and transparently shows us the embarrassing details. As such, the reader really has no option but either to feel sorry for the character

²⁶ This wording should be noted, in light of the later intrusion of myth. Through the progression of the plot the elements are reversed: Rather than the Prince entering into a world of imagination and myth, those myths and imagined beings enter into his world.

²⁷ While this could be interpreted as a possible description of latent homosexuality or at least asexuality, the “bis jetzt” in the sentence seems to counter this. However, it is worth noting that the “bis jetzt” does betray that the Prince is finally becoming aware of his naiveté and entering into a non-Protestant world. Of course, as I later argue, this movement away from his religious roots opens the doors for the invasion of sinister myth.

or to instantly dislike him. Like the Prince, the reader is also being manipulated and not permitted to make free choices.

There are a few hints scattered in these opening paragraphs that suggest how the Prince has turned into such an unsuccessful adult member of society. The Count von O**, the narrator of the first section of the novel and friend to the Prince, notes that as the third in line for the throne “hatte er [der Prinz] keine wahrscheinliche Aussicht zur Regierung” (8). This status leaves the Prince essentially unmotivated and perhaps ignored by those around him. His low ranking in the line of succession could easily explain how any sort of real-world training or political instruction would be limited, if he received any at all.

In fact, the text does point out that any sort of education the Prince did receive was faulty or very limited. The narrator states:

Er [der Prinz] las viel, doch ohne Wahl; eine vernachlässigte Erziehung und frühe Kriegsdienste hatten seinen Geist nicht zur Reife kommen lassen. Alle Kenntnisse, die er nachher schöpfte, vermehrten nur die Verwirrung seiner Begriffe, weil sie auf keinen festen Grund gebaut waren. (9)

There are three important points concerning the Prince’s education worth noting in this statement: (1) the lack of a strong educational base; (2) the (failed) attempts to compensate for a weak education by creating his own knowledge; and (3) the confusing and unsatisfying nature of that knowledge he has created.

Concerning the first point, the unlikelihood that he would inherit the throne is a reasonable explanation for his family ignoring his education. Since the prince is the third in line to the throne, the family had no real vested interest in priming him for public service. Therefore, a complete or at least sufficient education was

not a priority.²⁸ The fact that he also had “frühe Kriegsdienste” supports the theory that he was not a needed member of the royal court and could therefore be easily sent to fulfill his military duties without completing his schooling. Ultimately, it is the Prince’s lowly status within the royal household and the seemingly arbitrary schooling accorded to him that leave him naive and extraordinarily susceptible to outside influences.

This susceptibility is noted in the second point the reader can take from the quote above, which shows that the Prince is unable, on his own, to complete his partial education. He may read many books, but these have not allowed him to mature or gain any real knowledge (die “Erziehung...[hat] seinen Geist nicht zur Reife kommen lassen.”). Any attempts he makes to remedy this lack of *Bildung* – as seen in point three – leave him with only more questions and a useless, self-made knowledge that leaves him just as confused (a “Verwirrung seiner Begriffe”) as when he began. His inability to distinguish between valid and unsound knowledge is itself a reinforcement of the first point: he lacks a solid educational base on which to expand future knowledge.

The lack of a completed education and the Prince’s failure to make up for this deficiency is key to understanding the development of the character throughout the text. We know that his judgment concerning many, many things is very likely faulty and that any sort of educational or personal development the reader sees in him must be viewed skeptically. This is especially true later in the

²⁸ This is another possible connection between *Der Geisterseher* and the ascension of Friedrich Wilhelm. McIntosh notes that “he was not equipped to take charge of the Prussia shaped by Frederick the Great. Weakness and indecisiveness of character were compounded by lack of experience, for Frederick had neglected his nephew’s education and disdainfully refused to give him any steady responsibilities that might have prepared him for kingship” (McIntosh 114).

narrative when it appears that the Prince himself has embraced a positive sort of skepticism and critical thinking skills. Yet, remembering his lack of an educational “festen Grund,” the reader must ask: Has he actually matured and rationally expanded his knowledge? Or is he simply adding more ideas to the “Verwirrung” in his mind?

The fact that the Prince is mired in personal confusion and lacks a serious education has been addressed by many critics. Edward K. Maier, for instance, connects the Prince’s own “haphazard” education and subsequent manipulation to Schiller’s perception of the “German Enlightenment in crisis” (Maier 244). For Maier, both the textual content and the fragmentary form of the novel demonstrate “Schiller’s loss of faith in the moral culture of the Enlightenment” (244). In other words, according to Maier, the tragedy of the Prince is due not only to his faulty education and his inability to effectively reason, but also to society’s inability to correctly instill a “moral core” or a solid sense of self identity in the Prince (245, 248). Essentially, the novel’s failure to resolve itself demonstrates Schiller’s disillusion with contemporary society, both morally and artistically (245).

Maier and others have noted the distinct “anti-*Bildung*” qualities of the novel (Maier 246, Weissberg 99). In contrast to other texts of the period, including Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, the novel presents a character’s complete regression. Even Goethe’s Meister, as discussed in the previous chapter, demonstrates some maturation, although he is still dependent on his

educators. The Prince, in contrast, thoroughly reverts to complete reliance on his master, with very little sign that he has developed.

All in all, the Prince's education and its many faults have not gone unnoticed by critics. I intend to develop this theme by examining the religious aspect of the Prince's education and the subsequent role that religious education plays in the invasion of myth.²⁹ In my reading, it is the faulty Protestant aspect to the Prince's education that leaves him susceptible to (dark) spiritual conversion at the hands of the Armenian.

II. The Prince's Religious Background and Its Repercussions

The narrator himself believes the Prince's religious background played a role in his gullibility. To emphasize this point the narrator notes early in the story how the Prince was raised in relation to spirituality:

Er [der Prinz] war Protestant, wie seine ganze Familie – durch Geburt, nicht nach Untersuchung, die er nie angestellt hatte, ob er gleich in einer Epoche seines Lebens religiöser Schwärmer gewesen war. (GS 9)

The first words to follow the Prince's lack of an educational "festen Grund" specifically also note the religious environment in which he was brought up. In other words, the critique of the Prince's education, given to him by his family, flows right into a description of his family's religion. The fact that this statement of faith is part of the entire initial presentation of the main character ties the Prince's

²⁹ Maier himself has noted the religious aspect of the Prince's education, even noting the psychological damage it probably caused him (245). However, Maier merely integrates this religious aspect into the overarching representation of the Prince's faulty education, without truly addressing the religious aspect on its own.

religious upbringing to the entire critical assessment of his personality and abilities.

This short paragraph describing the Prince's religious background reads almost like an explanation of the many behavioral and cognitive oddities previously reviewed by the narrator. As the closing paragraph of this character evaluation, it presents the reader with the final information needed to understand the Prince's upcoming behavior and decisions. And by noting the Prince's and his family's religious beliefs here, the text presents his religion as his final, and perhaps decisive, idiosyncrasy. His inability to effectively reason and further his education is connected to his religious upbringing and belief in this short paragraph. The narrator notes that the Prince's faith is that of his family – he was brought into this specific set of religious beliefs through birth. This, in and of itself, is not odd: that a child would continue to practice the faith held by his family and his immediate social and cultural surroundings is completely normal. Yet the narrator qualifies this characteristic, noting that the Prince is Protestant only by familial association, not through his own reason or conscience. Furthermore, even though we are told that the Prince was a “religious enthusiast” at one point in his life, the narrator feels it necessary to elaborate and mention that the Prince did not bother to investigate the orthodoxy and motivations behind his Protestant beliefs.

Such qualifications presented by the narrator let the reader note the Prince's lack of a specifically religious “festen Grund.” That is, although brought into a religiously Protestant family and environment, the Prince has no

substantial understanding of his own religious (specifically Protestant) convictions. Nor does he apparently have any sort of motivation or intention to ever investigate or attempt to understand the tenets behind these religious beliefs.

It is easy to imagine such a lackadaisical approach to his religion, and his family's apparent indifference to correcting this behavior, spilling over into his overall education. This is why the final descriptive paragraph noting his family's religion arguably is the explanation for his many educational gaps. It is no wonder that the Prince, who is given neither instruction nor assistance to complete an education fails to truly understand even a topic he, as a "religious enthusiast", holds dear.

This conjecture is verified in the beginning of Book Two. In a rather revealing and damning report, the narrator explains how the Prince's poor religious education affected his entire state of mind, causing him to fear all types of religious matters.

Eine bigotte, knechtische Erziehung war die Quelle dieser Furcht; diese hatte seinem zarten Gehirne Schreckbilder eingedrückt, von denen er sich während seines ganzen Lebens nie ganz losmachen konnte. Religiöse Melancholie war eine Erbkrankheit in seiner Familie; die Erziehung, welche man ihm und seinen Brüdern geben ließ, war dieser Disposition angemessen, die Menschen, denen man ihn anvertraute, aus diesem Gesichtspunkte gewählt, also entweder Schwärmer oder Heuchler. Alle Lebhaftigkeit des Knaben in einem dumpfen Geisteszwange zu ersticken, war das zuverlässigste Mittel, sich der höchsten Zufriedenheit der fürstlichen Eltern zu versichern. (85-86)

This passage presents an extraordinarily disturbing portrayal of the young Prince and the environment in which he grew up. It is his family's religious melancholy and their "dumpfer Geisteszwang" that apparently result in the Prince's own

religious and even intellectual passivity. Furthermore, it appears that any sort of religious education he did receive was biased only to create a sense of oppression and terror towards both God and those more powerful than him (86). The word “knechtisch” is particularly revealing here, as it further supports the concept that the Prince has never truly outgrown his childhood, but remains a “man-child” incapable of truly maturing in any sense: he remains subservient to his (abusive) parents³⁰ and is incapable of shaking off the child-like fear of any type of spirituality. Basically, he lives in terror of the spiritual, like a child afraid of the dark. Yet unlike a child, he does not outgrow this fear.

Ultimately, both passages allow us to classify the Prince as a Protestant in name only: he identifies himself with Protestant culture and practice, yet is unaware of the orthodoxy guiding that culture and practice. Furthermore, it appears that what he was taught of Protestantism has created a warped sense of spirituality. That is, his religion is based on fear – a fear of all things all-powerful (i.e. God; his parents) and a fear of the spiritual in general. Rather than educating their son in Protestant orthodoxy and its reasoning, the family has manipulated the Prince’s religious education to create a childish coward, unable to truly grow up.

III. Maturity and Enlightenment?

The failure of the Prince’s family to provide him with firm Protestant teachings leaves him, I suggest, vulnerable to both (1) the temptations of an

³⁰ Maier correctly casts this abuse as psychological, stemming primarily from the “lack of a structured education,” (244-245).

immoral secular society and (2) the manipulations of non-Protestant spiritual forces. But of these vulnerabilities, it is arguably the invasion of non-Protestant myth that has the greatest effect on the text as a whole. It is almost clichéd that the Prince, without a moral “festen Grund,” is eventually drawn to excessive drinking, gambling, and various other worldly activities generally viewed as vices by religious adherents. If the text were solely a morality story about the dangerous sins to which religiously undereducated individuals were susceptible, then the storyline would be very dull. And while the text does address these moral issues, it is the unseen dangers (i.e. the mythic or spiritual) that truly drive the plot. Rather than focusing on the stereotypical failings of a religiously-unaware individual, the text draws attention to the fact that “something else” is out there – a mysterious other that threatens both spiritual salvation and real-world Protestant society.

This does not mean, however, that the Prince’s decadent behavior is not important; for it is his fall into vice that demonstrates his inability to truly mature. And in this arrested development the creeping invasion of unorthodox myth begins to show itself. Unorthodox myth means a myth or mythical figure that represents the ideals or beliefs of an unorthodox spirituality, or in the case of *Der Geisterseher*, a myth that conflicts with Protestant beliefs.

Within the first book, there is the hope that the Prince has actually matured and successfully moved beyond the faulty spirituality of his family. Following the séance the Prince seeks out practical explanations for all of the apparently mysterious occurrences. His questioning of the Sicilian shows the

Prince to be a level-headed and clear-thinking investigator. Completely unlike the passivity he had previously shown towards anything either intellectual or religious, here he actively seeks out answers to his questions. He allows the Sicilian to explain how each of the apparitions in the phony séance was generated, critically asking him to explain in detail the physical mechanisms behind each apparently spiritual force. With each question the Prince asks, the scene becomes less and less mysterious, until both the Prince and the reader are fully aware of how the Sicilian's stage show worked.

Furthermore, following the Sicilian's story of his previous encounters with the mysterious Armenian, the Prince actually doubts that he is indeed non-human. Despite the Sicilian's insistence that the Armenian is in fact some sort of spiritual being, the Prince uncharacteristically states that he disagrees, for such a superstitious belief goes against "Wahrheit und gesunde Vernunft" (69). Additionally, the Prince vows to uncover how the Armenian was seemingly able to fool such an experienced showman as the Sicilian, stating that he intends to find the key to the puzzle (70). He even offers an initial possible explanation that does not include any sort of supernatural manipulation. Finally, the Prince makes what can be seen as his most mature and educated statement. Speaking to the narrator, who still holds to the possibility that the Armenian may indeed possess some sort of supernatural power, the Prince says:

Wollen Sie lieber ein Wunder glauben, als eine Unwahrscheinlichkeit zugeben? lieber die Kräfte der Natur umstürzen, als eine künstliche und weniger gewöhnliche Kombination dieser Kräfte sich gefallen lassen. (74)

Keeping in mind the submissive and oppressive spiritual life the Prince had thus far led, his sudden turn to a critical and questioning stance towards the supernatural is absolutely extraordinary. This statement is a sign that the Prince is potentially no longer at the mercy of his “knechtische Erziehung,” but rather has finally learned to reason and question reality on his own.

However, rather than this newfound maturity leading to a life of enlightenment and freedom from an oppressive spirituality, Book Two opens up with a very harsh critique of the Prince’s reasoning abilities. Instead of using his revealing of the Sicilian’s charade as a beginner’s lesson in reasoning, of sorts, the Prince seems to erroneously believe that he has matured more than he actually has.

Die Geständnisse des Sizilianers ließen in seinem Gemüt wichtigere Folgen zurück, als dieser ganze Gegenstand wert war, und der kleine Sieg, den seine Vernunft über diese schwache Täuschung davon getragen, hatte die Zuversicht zu seiner Vernunft überhaupt merklich erhöht. (87)

And although the narrator states that the Prince sought to expand the “Beschränktheit seiner Begriffe,” he remains a victim of his incomplete education. The narrator continues on, noting the Prince’s apparent inability to truly reason or further educate himself. Although continually reading, he really gets nothing out of the books, which hearkens back to the earlier description of the Prince’s problem with reading creating only more confusion. In the end, the narrator laments of the Prince:

[S]eine Vernunft und sein Herz blieben leer, während sich diese Fächer seines Gehirns mit verworrenen Begriffen anfüllten. Der blendende Stil des eignen riß seine Imagination dahin, indem die Spitzfindigkeiten des andern seine Vernunft verstrickten. Beiden wurde es leicht, sich einen

Geist zu unterjochen, der ein Raub eines jeden war, der sich ihm mit einer gewissen Dreistigkeit aufdrang. (89)

Yet when we read through the entire lament over the next few pages of the text, the narrator betrays an interesting bias: While he is certainly saddened that the Prince is unable to take full advantage of his newfound skepticism, the narrator actually appears, above all, upset that the Prince's embrace of reason has caused a loss of faith. The Prince fully engages himself in "die modernste Lektüre" as a means to improve his reasoning and understanding of the world (89). But these lessons only leave him "mit Zweifeln angefüllt," especially concerning the religious topics he previously had been so passionate about (90).

[E]r [der Prinz] hatte sich in dieses Labyrinth begeben als ein *glaubensreicher* Schwärmer, und er verließ es als *Zweifler* und zuletzt als ein Freigeist.³¹ (90, emphasis added)

The narrator has already come to terms with the fact that the Prince's poor educational background has led to his inability to truly mature. He knows that the Prince is essentially doomed to a life of perpetual naïveté. The entire description of the Prince's upbringing reviewed above is proof of this. But here the narrator seems distraught that this poor education has led the Prince to an irreligious worldview. The narrator seems to have a very real concern for the spiritual well-being of the Prince. The narrator has already bemoaned the Prince's poor schooling and its consequences, but appears to have come to terms with this

³¹ While the word itself can be translated as "free thinker," which has a secular/nonreligious connotation, "Freigeist" interestingly retains an aspect of the spiritual by using the base "Geist." This fits with the reading I present in this chapter: that one is never truly free or separated from the spiritual. Whether or not one believes in the spiritual or adheres to a religious orthodoxy, the text promotes the idea that the spiritual, in both good and evil forms, is always present. Furthermore, it supports the interpretation of the narrator's concern for his friend: The Prince is indeed connected to the spiritual, according to Christian orthodoxy. Yet as a "Freigeist" he is without a spiritual base, almost a "schwebender Geist" as it were – floating between thoughts and beliefs, vulnerable to manipulation by sinister spirituality.

past and has a sincere sense of pity towards the Prince. He seeks to assist the Prince in the many worldly affairs he is too naïve to deal with on his own, simply picking up the slack resulting from his inadequate education. Similarly, the narrator³² quite obviously seeks to protect his friend from any sort of malicious manipulation that may come along, whether it be in the physical realm (e.g., freeloaders and social climbers) or in the spiritual realm (e.g., the Catholic societies and the Armenian).

However, the quote above shows that the Prince has, in the narrator's view, strayed into an area where even he can no longer aid or rescue the Prince: faithlessness in the religion of his family. While the narrator previously worried about the Prince's daily foibles and missteps, either he or any of the Prince's other close confidants always advised the Prince on the issue. Yet now it appears that the narrator fears for his friend's spiritual status. Specifically, he worries about the Prince's possible eternal spiritual damnation, following his loss of Protestant Christian faith. In losing his faith the Prince has, at least in the narrator's eyes, removed himself from the protective Protestant spirituality in which he had thus far lived, albeit ignorantly.

It seems, therefore, that the narrator would rather his friend continued to have lived as a poorly educated Protestant, rather than as an unorthodox unbeliever. And certainly the narrator, retrospectively writing this analysis with

³² Of course, the reliability of the text's narrator(s) is a legitimate concern – whether or not we as readers can trust their assessment of the situations in the plot. Statements made by the Count von O** and the later letter writer appear to show their devotion to the Prince and a hesitation in his movement towards un-Protestant activities. So perhaps the text itself is really a demonstration of their prejudices towards any sort of spirituality or behavior that is not Protestant. – the anti-Catholic/anti-Jewish readings (which I develop later in this chapter) are actually the views of the narrator(s) and it is through these prejudiced lenses that they view the entire conversion of the Prince.

the full knowledge of the Prince's upcoming submission to non-Protestant influences, connects this faithlessness with the future tragedy.

Ultimately it is the Prince's inability to truly understand the religion of his family that leads him to reject spirituality overall.³³ In other words, the narrator associates the Prince's rejection of religion and his skepticism with a faulty understanding of that religion. It is only because the Prince lacks a proper religious background and education that he uses flawed reasoning to criticize the spiritual. While skepticism and reasoning are not necessarily disregarded by the text (the revealing of the Sicilian is proof of this), the narrator certainly does disapprove of any sort of questioning that ultimately leads to religious doubt. The narrator connects the Prince's "knechtische, bigotte Erziehung" in religion to both his inability to reason effectively and his inability to guard himself against a skepticism that leads to secularism

Therefore, the text promotes the notion that a skepticism that is unfounded in a strong religious education leads not only to real-world immorality, but also has the potential to lead one to an unbelieving secularism. And such secularism leads to susceptibility to the influences of sinister myth come to life.

³³ This situation recalls Novalis' assessment of Christianity in Europe, which I reviewed in the introduction. Faulty understanding of religion and its function leads to a rejection of all spirituality – a condition that should be avoided. But whereas both Novalis and Schiller see problems within Protestantism itself leading to this state of affairs, Novalis views Protestantism as merely one aspect of spirituality. In other words, it is not the only spiritual paradigm that could possibly be used for religious universalism. Schiller's text, on the other hand, sees Protestantism as the only choice – due to the text's demonization of other spiritualities – and sees Protestantism's failure as the failure of any sort of spiritual unification.

IV. The Myths

The presence of myth within *Der Geisterseher* differs from that in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. While the Saul myth and its respective figures are very obviously referenced in Goethe's novel and by Goethe himself, the status of myths or mythical characters in Schiller's text is much more subtle. Rather than picking up on a specific mythical tale and essentially layering a new story on top of it, as Goethe does in *Wilhelm Meister*, Schiller's text seeks out disconnected mythical figures from various, tales, cultures, and histories, then integrates these figures into his text. Furthermore, these previously separate figures are combined into a single character within *Der Geisterseher*. Specifically, they are combined to create the figure of the Armenian.

Within this blend of mythological figures, critics have noted the characteristics of one myth in particular: the Wandering Jew. Since the Wandering Jew is a non-textual apocryphal Christian myth, there is no authoritative or orthodox Christian text or dogma to which we can refer for an official version, so to speak. By the time of Schiller, the myth itself was an amalgam of the stories of many different mythical and religious figures, converging into a single tale. All of these source myths, however, revolve around the theme of an unending life on earth. Simply, the figure will not die until some specified time, ordained by God or Christ, in the future.³⁴

³⁴ Both the German and English terms – the Wandering Jew and der Ewige Jude – identify important characteristics of the figure: he is both eternal and unable to die, while simultaneously denied a single place to call home.

One of the origins for this myth was St. John, who, based on a comment by Christ, was rumored to live until Christ's return.³⁵ Yet another source was the tale of Cartaphilus, who struck Christ on the way to the Crucifixion and was cursed to live and wander until the end of the world. A further source for the myth is the story of Malchus, who, according to tradition, attempted to arrest Christ and was struck down by St. Peter. One of the first textual examples of the myth is the seventeenth-century pamphlet *Kurze Beschreibung und Erzählung von einem Juden mit Namen Ahasverus*, in which the figure is a shoemaker from Jerusalem and witness to Christ's crucifixion.

Similar texts began circulating through Europe shortly thereafter and were quite popular. These texts seemed to have further described and solidified the definition of the Wandering Jew into the man whose eternal life and wandering is punishment for insulting Christ. He is a mysterious figure who takes on many forms, slightly changing over time; he is forced to proselytize followers to Christianity; and he perhaps also symbolizes the Jewish people themselves throughout Europe: homeless and religiously different within a Christianized Europe.

Scholars have noticed similarities between these traits and descriptions of the Armenian in *Der Geisterseher*. Like the Wandering Jew, the Armenian also seems to be an eternal figure, never aging to those who have seen him at

³⁵ What is interesting about this possible St. John source for the Wandering Jew myth is that it appears to be the only origin story in which the figure is not necessarily cursed to live until the end of time. Most of the other source stories are based on individuals who somehow have affronted God or the church and are subjected to eternal wandering. Although the early beliefs in St. John's immortality may have had a hand in the development of myth of the Wandering Jew, by Schiller's time the figure was certainly associated with negativity (Railo 195).

various times and places (Railo 196). Describing the Armenian and his various disguises and traits to the Prince, the Sicilian terrifyingly recounts the “myth” of this strange figure. Although an extensive quote, it accurately demonstrates how the text presents the Armenian as a Wandering Jew figure:

Es wird wenige Stände, Charaktere und Nationen geben, davon er nicht schon die Maske getragen. Wer er sei? Woher er gekommen? Wohin er gehe? weiß niemand. Daß er lang' in Aegypten gewesen, wie viele behaupten, und dort aus seiner Pyramide seine verborgene Weisheit geholt habe, will ich weder bejahen noch verneinen. Bei uns kennt man ihn nur unter dem Namen des Unergründlichen[...].Es gibt glaubwürdige Leute, die sich erinnern, ihn in verschiedenen Weltgegenden zu gleicher Zeit gesehen zu haben. Keines Degens Spitze kann ihn durchbohren, kein Gift kann ihm etwas anhaben, kein Feuer sengt ihn, kein Schiff geht unter, worauf er sich befindet. Die Zeit selbst scheint an ihm ihre Macht zu verlieren, die Jahre trocknen seine Säfte nicht aus, und das Alter kann seine Haare nicht bleichen. Niemand ist, der ihn Speise nehmen sah, nie ist ein Weib von ihm berührt worden, kein Schlaf besucht seine Augen [.] (GS 46-47)

This description is certainly and hauntingly reminiscent of the Wandering Jew. The Armenian's continual movement from place to place, alongside an apparently omniscient quality and an ability to morph his appearance, arguably does situate him in the Wandering Jew mythology (Railo 197)³⁶. In fact, the text itself indicates that the Armenian could possibly be St. John, who, as previously noted, is one of the original sources for the Wandering Jew myth (GS 49).

Yet I believe this is a simplification of the figure. While he certainly does fit the Wandering Jew myth, there is more to the character of the Armenian. His ability to change and alter his form distinguishes him from the abilities traditionally associated with the Wandering Jew. Although he can be recognized,

³⁶ In fact, a few critics seem to take it for granted that Schiller's Armenian is actually the Wandering Jew, rather than simply a characteristically similar figure. Barton Levi St. Armand, for example, sees *Der Geisterseher's* description of the Armenian actually as a basis for finding other literary Wandering Jew figures (St. Armand 352-354).

albeit with difficulty, he can never be truly grasped or understood by those around him. Critics and traditional readings that focus solely on the Wandering Jew aspect, however, tend to ignore these other traits. I agree that the Wandering Jew is present in the Armenian. However, it is only one mythical aspect of the character. The ambiguous mythological troping of the Armenian is evident, for example, in the description of the Armenian in the passage cited above. Here we see the Armenian's apparently supernatural traits: his ability to change his form, to appear anywhere and at the same moment, his continual existence without having succumbed to death. These traits, while certainly associated with the Wandering Jew myth, can also be found in other mythological figures – most prominently, the vampire.

The myth of the vampire is a long and very detailed one, with variants found in cultures on different continents and spanning back thousands of years (Kordas, section 2). However, beginning in the Middle Ages vampire stories, and subsequently a more formalized and specifically Christian definition of *vampire*, began to emerge (Kordas, section 2; Van Elferen, section 2). Beginning in the eighteenth century with the rise in popularity of Gothic literature – also the period of the publication of *Der Geisterseher* – the vampire became a literary figure (Beresford 115).

The presence of the vampire in such texts is unsurprising, considering the Gothic genre's fascination with Catholicism, albeit in a distorted and fantastic version (Varnado 26). Within the Christian tradition, the vampire has functioned as a cursed figure, who lives on the outskirts of ordained Christian practice

(Beresford 41). And while the connection between vampires and the Christian concept of the Devil has apparently been made since the early centuries of the Common Era, there has been a distinct Catholic connection to the vampire myth since the Protestant Reformation (Beresford 50). Specifically, with the split between Catholic and non-Catholic forms of Christianity, any sort of Christian aspects to the vampire myth began to be viewed as primarily Catholic superstition (Kordas, section 2). The powers of the vampire – its ability to change form, to raise the dead, to feed off blood, and maintain an eternal existence – come from a distorted and perverted form of Catholic practices – especially those dealing with blood. For example, the Catholic belief in the transubstantiation of Eucharist wine into the literal blood of Christ, participation in which grants to the drinker eternal life with God, is perverted in the vampire myth. The vampire also maintains its eternal life through the consumption of blood. But this drinking of blood is seen as a feeding off victims, rather than an offering from the Church (Van Elferend, section 2).

While Catholic practitioners would note that vampirism is a distorted form of Catholic practice and also draw attention to the fact that the vampire exists outside orthodox Catholicism, the common fascination with blood-as-redemption between the two has led Protestants and non-Catholics to draw connections between Catholic rituals and vampiristic behaviors (Van Elferend, section 2; Kordas, section 2).

Hence, the Western tradition of the vampire is very closely tied to Catholic practices and culture. Then, during the eighteenth century, the concept and

mythology of the vampire went through a resurgence of sorts, as travelers arriving in Germany and other Western European states told stories of vampire outbreaks in Eastern Europe (Beresford 99). This is coupled with the eighteenth-century fascination with secret societies and mysticism, which “thrived in Western Europe, and...perhaps aided [their] love affair with the mystery of vampirism” (Beresford 100). It is not out of the question, therefore, that a text such as *Der Geisterseher*, which is filled with such eighteenth-centuries fads like secret societies and the Gothic, would draw upon the vampire mythology and its Catholic traits.

The Armenian’s connection to the vampire myth fits perfectly with the disclosure that he is a Catholic agent, who preys upon the Prince and seeks to take him away from his Protestant roots. The Armenian’s preying upon the Prince could easily be interpreted as “vampire-like”. But the text also suggests that the Armenian really is actually a member of the undead. The Sicilian’s extended attempt to describe and characterize the Armenian implies this. Noting his mysterious nocturnal journeys, the Sicilian states that the Armenian often returns pale with “Blutstropfen auf seinem Hemde [sic]” (GS 48). This certainly does hint at the vampire mythos, when the undead must venture out at night to feed on the blood of the living to sustain their unnatural being. In fact, the Sicilian himself says that many eyewitnesses to the Armenian suspect that he is actually a “Verstorbener,” who extraordinarily continues to exist in the natural world.

In the end, the Armenian is not simply a Wandering Jew figure, but also a vampire figure connected to the Catholic tradition. Each of these ominous

mythological characters has fused into a single entity. Therefore, a reading is required that doesn't simply examine the Armenian based on his connection to one myth or another, but rather his relationship to both simultaneously.

V. The Horrific Invasion of Myth

After establishing these separate mythological traits within the Armenian, we must ask ourselves what sort of purpose and effect does this merging of multiple myths have? That is, why does the text combine such stereotypically maleficent mythological figures into a single new character?

To begin answering this question, it should be noted that the complexity of the Armenian, with both traits of the Wandering Jew and the undead vampire, partly identifies the difficulty that critics have had in characterizing him. In particular, it explains the numerous analyses which note the presence of the Wandering Jew within *Der Geisterseher*, yet cannot effectively pinpoint the Armenian as such a figure. Yes, he does demonstrate traits of the Wandering Jew, but he is more than that: he is the personification of non-Protestant spirituality. The Wandering Jew, the vampire and its association with Catholic superstition, combined with the continual portrayal of Catholicism as a dark, threatening force against the Protestant characters, establish the text as not simply anti-Jewish, but specifically against all forms of non-Protestant spirituality.³⁷

³⁷ I wish to quickly address here the potential latent anti-Semitism that the Armenian-as-Wandering-Jew could pose. I certainly agree that as a whole, *Der Geisterseher* does use the Wandering Jew as a negative stereotype for Judaism and the Jewish people. However, the fact that the Armenian also contains the characteristics of vampirism and Catholic tradition sets up the

Therefore, the Armenian functions not only as a fantastic sort of manipulator of the Prince and his destiny – he becomes representative of sinister spirituality. Furthermore, this threat becomes permissible through the failure of the Prince's Protestant-based education. As previously discussed, the inability of the Prince to effectively reason due to his faulty religious education has left him open to manipulation in the past. And it is specifically following the complete collapse of his ungrounded religious belief at the end of Book One that his vulnerability becomes apparent in Book Two: without the boundaries of Protestantism, the Prince falls under the influence of social immorality and "Catholic"³⁸ coercion. By both disregarding his teachers and advisors, whom he relied upon due to his immaturity, and by putting a displaced belief in his own mental capacities, the Prince is left completely vulnerable to the sinister influences that have been surrounding him since the beginning of the text.

By attributing this fall into spiritual darkness to the Prince's poor education, the text provides some very stern warnings towards a Protestant audience: without proper religious development and continual guidance, outside spiritual forces are given the opportunity to invade. Whether purposeful or not, such a message additionally paints any sort of non-Protestant belief as not only inherently undesirable, but actually evil. Any other sort of spirituality contains an essence of wickedness and malevolence that should be fought against by Protestants.

text as not only potentially anti-Semitic, but also anti-Catholic. In other words, the Jewish people are not singled out as the only victims of hyperbolic criticism – any spirituality regarded as "other" or unorthodox by stereotypical Protestantism also becomes a target.

³⁸ That is, not simply Catholic, but the combination of non-Protestant myth found in the Armenian.

This certainly appears to be the opinion and message of the narrator, who sees the Prince's rejection of his Protestant background and eventual drift into spiritual apathy as a sign of his eventual demise. In the opening lines of the novel he notes that he is writing this story as a warning of how easily one can be led astray.

Den wenigen, welche von einem gewissen politischen Vorfalle unterrichtet sind, wird [diese Geschichte]...einen willkommenen Aufschluß darüber geben; und auch ohne diesen Schlüssel wird sie den übrigen, als ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Betrugs und *der Verirrungen des menschlichen Geistes*, vielleicht wichtig sein. Man wird über *die Kühnheit des Zwecks erstaunen, den die Bosheit zu entwerfen und zu verfolgen imstande ist*; man wird über die Seltsamkeit der Mittel erstaunen, die sie aufzubieten vermag, um sich dieses Zwecks zu versichern. (GS 7, emphasis added)

Here the narrator notes that it is wickedness and its manipulations that have overtaken a human being and caused him to err. And, as I have argued, since this "Bosheit" is textually linked to non-Protestant spirituality, the novel ultimately contains a disturbing anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, and overall negative stance towards any sort of spirituality or belief that does not fall under a strict and true Protestant orthodoxy.

On a certain level, this is somewhat unsurprising, considering the narrative traits that link *Der Geisterseher* to the genre of the Gothic. After all, popular Gothic novels of the eighteenth century generally present their own anti-Catholic or anti-clerical messages (Purves 1). Yet what makes Schiller's text stand out in this respect is the mixing together of various "other" mythologies and spiritual beliefs, including Catholicism, into a single ominous, wicked, and threatening figure. The final victory of the anti-Protestant figure over the Prince demonstrates

a message of the importance of a good Protestant education. For the narrators of the story, the Prince's conversion is negative. It is the culmination of a series of decisions and actions, which the Prince's associates have spent the entire text advising him against. If the Prince had had access to such a devoted education and had been able to maintain orthodox guidance, he would not have ultimately found himself in the arms of the Armenian at the "close" of the novel (GS 161).

I put the word "close" in scare quotes here purposefully, for as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the novel was never truly completed. However, this ending-that-is-not-an-ending, whether deliberate or not, certainly does contribute to and fit with this reading of a failed education. As an incomplete text, *Der Geisterseher* itself signifies a failure – specifically the failure of the writing process and the philosophical lessons guiding the text. With a message that promotes a guided Protestant spirituality, the failure of the text to give the reader a proper ending demonstrates the failure of said Protestant spirituality. This mirrors the Prince's own failure to complete and maintain his education. The novel, therefore, further extends its warning against non-Protestant spirituality by noting that perhaps it is already too late; that perhaps current orthodoxy has failed,³⁹ and we are defenseless against the oncoming invasion of sinister superstition and myth.

And it is this textual trait that, I believe, makes *Der Geisterseher* a true horror novel: the real-world existence of this sinister mythological figure. That is, the Armenian, the personification of anti-Protestantism, is not simply a parable

³⁹ If so, the novel could even be seen as a critique of Protestant orthodoxy and its inability to stave off ideologies, which it views as negative or evil.

told to the Prince or any of the characters in the text: the Armenian is a real figure to these individuals and a very real threat to not only their spiritual salvation, but their lives in their physical world as well (Andriopoulos 71, 78). The Armenian manipulates and controls the Prince in reality – he transgresses from the realm of edifying myth to the actual everyday life of the Prince and his society. The boogeyman, so to speak, comes to life.

This is the definition of a tale of horror. John Carpenter, the famed director of horror films, notes that a certain form of horror deals with the figure of the other, the freak, and subsequent invasion of this other in the everyday world. For example, the stereotypical scene of a group of young people around a campfire, telling the scary ghost story, only to find out that the ghost is real and threatens them (Monument). Carroll further develops this definition and describes these “abnormal” others as “disturbances of the natural order...an extraordinary character in our ordinary world,” (Carroll 52). *Der Geisterseher* fits this classification: the Armenian, as a combination of the Wandering Jew, vampire, and various other Catholic superstitions and myths, comes to life and effectively takes over the Prince’s own life. The Armenian is the horrific other and as such, the horror of this novel is the triumph of non-Protestant spiritualities.

Therefore, as a horror novel, a story that describes the “disturbance of the natural order,” the text does not simply function as a mythical parable, a tale with some sort of moral message or purpose. Rather, it has an almost apocalyptic message: these outside threats to a (Protestant) social status quo are real and not simply superstitions. A proper education, ideally based on a cohesive

understanding of Protestant belief is necessary to prepare and to defend against the other.

VI. Conclusion

While *Der Geisterseher* seems to promote the concept of an organized religious education, the fact that the novel remains unfinished leads to complications. Specifically, it is the disintegration of Protestantism and the fragmentation of its cohesive defense against the outside metaphysical forces and superstitions that arguably betray a philosophical crisis towards contemporary religion. Schiller, according to his message in the later essay *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, was concerned with modernity's inability to create a cultural cohesiveness. In his mind, only by returning to an ancient and unified form of society and learning is the collective human race able to truly educate itself.

Therefore, the battle between Protestantism and non-Protestant myths portrayed in the novel may not simply be seen as a clash of cultures. It is clear that the novel demonizes Catholic and Jewish belief and shows the failure of current Protestantism against the encroachment of these spiritually-different paradigms. For the text, Protestantism has failed to live up to the ancient forms of fullness and completeness. In other words, Protestantism cannot truly be a unifying social force – it has failed against the outside onslaught of “other” superstition and myth. *Der Geisterseher* arguably follows the philosophy put forward in Schiller's essay *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* and

has hints of Novalis' *Christenheit oder Europa* essay: current society has failed to create a unified and solidly educated human subject. This is both the crisis behind the incomplete text and the horror of oncoming invasion of the myth of the "other".

Yet, paradoxically, it is the very incompleteness, which categorizes the novel fragment as Romantic, that also undermines that very Romantic nature. As previously noted, a fragment indicates a failure to complete. As a fragmented text with a message of an incomplete education, *Der Geisterseher* is proclaiming Protestantism's failure to spiritually educate and unite humanity. But by surrendering to the impossibility of a Protestant religious universalism and negatively portraying any other spiritual option, the text does not allow for any unorthodox spirituality itself to potentially function as a unifier. In other words, if Protestantism fails, that is the end. Like *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, this text betrays an inner religious conservatism. Unlike the coming Romantics, who saw the potential of spirituality, including Catholicism and its pantheistic roots, as a unifying force for humanity, Schiller's *Geisterseher* desires *only* orthodox Protestantism. Any form of spirituality outside the bounds of strictly monotheistic Protestant belief is not only unwanted, it is actually evil and should be actively avoided. The text condemns the very religious possibilities (i.e. atheism, pantheism, or unorthodoxy in general) that Romantic philosophy requires. Ultimately, despite having the concept of religious universalism in common with the later Romantics, the fact that *Der Geisterseher* promotes Protestant

orthodoxy as the only option for this goal challenges any reading of it as a proto-Romantic fragment.

And yet, one final point concerning this religious universalism should be made. By fusing together these separate spiritualities (i.e. Catholic and Jewish) into a single “other” spirituality through the character of the Armenian, the novel also demonstrates the *possibility* of a single, fused, and universal (catholic) religion that exists outside of Protestantism. But the fact that the text demonizes and refuses to explore this other spiritual realm keeps it from truly becoming part of the Romantic Imperative. It hints at the borders and limits of spiritual orthodoxy, noting an all-encompassing religion exists, but refuses to engage with them and merely resorts to condemning that other spirituality. In contrast, the Early Romantics actively challenged the limits of a controlled education and a restrictive worldview. In the following chapter I explore Tieck’s *Der Runenberg* and argue that it attempts to go beyond these borders of orthodoxy and critically examine the possibility of a new religion, formed through the fusion of various spiritualities.

Chapter 3

“I don’t belong in the world...”: Religious Con-fusion beyond the Limits of *Bildung* in Tieck’s *Der Runenberg*⁴⁰

A cursory glance at the secondary and biographical literature shows that Ludwig Tieck, like many of his own stories, was himself a rather mystifying character: His theories about literature extend out from a seemingly natural state of confusion and unawareness of self. As Maria Tatar says concerning his literary ambitions, he sought “to drive readers to the point of distraction, to mystify and bewilder them until they reached that blissful state that [he] designated by the name ‘poetic madness’” (Tatar 609). If this was his goal, his texts can certainly be considered great successes. Tieck’s stories have the uncanny characteristic of being simultaneously familiar and strange. Everyday materials and events are combined with fantastic situations, peoples, or occurrences. In a tale by Tieck, nothing is what it appears to be – the commonplace exists, but there is always something uncommon nearby.

Such an oscillation between certainty and uncertainty, the familiar and unfamiliar, however, is the exact characteristic that makes Tieck worthy of examination in a study on the development of religious unorthodoxy and pantheism in German Romantic literature. As I have demonstrated in the two previous chapters, Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and Schiller’s *Der Geisterseher* exhibit an innate conservatism with respect to religious educations that challenge traditional Christian (Protestant) orthodoxy. The protagonists of

⁴⁰ Quote from Carnival of Souls. (Herk, Harvey. 1962, Harcourt Productions.)

these texts are limited, by their respective educators, specifically in their exposure to independent or external influences. Tieck, in contrast, is my first example of a Romantic author whose writing, at least hesitatingly, begins to question the limits of a standard religious education. I say “hesitatingly” because while Tieck does question the borders of religious behavior and belief, he also considers the consequences of that very questioning. One may question an orthodox or limited religious education, but what happens afterward? What are the implications or consequences of overstepping the boundaries set in place by spiritual orthodoxy?

Of course, since we are speaking of Tieck, this hesitation between two ideas, between old and new, makes perfect sense. In fact, it would be more surprising if Tieck’s stories straightforwardly promoted or endorsed a particular view of the world. Therefore, keeping this vacillation in mind, I will focus on the theme and message of confusion in *Der Runenberg*. By focusing on this topic, I intend to demonstrate the text’s hesitation with meaning and morality beyond the borders of an orthodox religious paradigm.

Creating a reading centered on the theme of religious confusion in Tieck is perfectly reasonable. Tieck’s own relationship to religion appears to be (characteristically) convoluted. Raised as a Protestant, yet attracted to the pagan *Urreligion* aspects of Catholicism⁴¹, he had a fascination with spirituality and its status in society. His stories demonstrate his dismay with contemporary religious

⁴¹ These qualities include the integration of various non-Christian religions into the Roman Church as formerly pagan lands were converted. See Introduction.

beliefs and practices. In this literary critique, he situates himself alongside the Romantics' outsider view of spirituality and its connection to aesthetics.

Keeping this connection in mind, I argue that Tieck, in textually representing standard mythical and known spiritual figures in different situations and with altered personalities, demonstrates the developing Romantic notion of Christian pantheism. Of course, in typical Tieckian fashion, these newly-formed mythologies neither truly endorse nor condemn this natural extension of Romantic philosophy. Rather, the fantastic nature of *Der Runenberg* keeps the reader from truly grasping any sort of solid religious message. However, by accepting that very religious confusion as the message, Tieck's story demonstrates the very literal nature of pantheism as a fusion of everything. Ultimately, this tale addresses both the positive and negative aspects of a pantheistic universe, separated from a traditional monotheistic Christian orthodoxy.

I. The Problem of Confusion

As one of Tieck's most famous and popular stories, *Der Runenberg* has enjoyed a fair amount of critical attention. While this text is perhaps not as widely read or admired as Tieck's other fantastic fairy tales, *Der blonde Eckbert* for instance, *Der Runenberg* does contain secrets that can be exposed through creative readings and analyses. The story begins when a young man, later identified as Christian, wanders the wilderness and mountaintops. He had previously made attempts to leave his family's home in a valley village, trying to

become a fisherman and a businessman. Both occupations did not suit him, but he soon realizes he wishes to be a hunter, and sets off into nature. He is at first overjoyed with his new lifestyle, but becomes wary as darkness falls. A strange man soon meets up with him, and Christian, apparently forgetting his surroundings, gives this stranger his backstory. Before parting ways the stranger points out the mysterious *Runenberg* to Christian, where strange and unforgettable things happen. Intrigued, Christian approaches the mountain, where he sees many precious stones and crystals. But the most astonishing sight is that of a woman, whom he spies through a window in the rocks. She undresses before noticing Christian and giving him a tablet full of shimmering stones. Soon Christian falls asleep and is then woken by the shining sun. The mysterious woman is nowhere to be found, so he moves along, eventually finding himself in a small valley village. Apparently abandoning his quest to be a hunter, Christian makes his home in the village and marries a village woman. He builds up a modest but successful farm, becoming a respected member of the community. One day a mysterious stranger arrives and stays with Christian and his family. There is the suggestion that this stranger is (or is associated with) the mysterious woman Christian observed on the mountain. Soon this stranger sets out from Christian's home, but before he does, he leaves a small amount of gold with Christian, with the instructions that should he not return, Christian may keep the money. Christian's obsession with the gold increases over time – he is seen counting it over and over again – leading his family to grow worried about him. Eventually Christian does take the gold as his own, invests it in his farm, and

makes it even more successful. Despite his success, Christian is continually haunted by his experiences on the *Runenberg*. In the end, he leaves his family and farm to once again venture into the wilds. He returns home later, only to venture out again, saying that the “Woman of the Woods” was calling to him. Many years later, with his farm failing and his family now in poverty, Christian visits his home one last time, only to tell his wife that he must leave for good and that she should consider him dead.

The story itself is very dark and tragic, although there is much debate as to what is actually happening in this series of events. Due to the many obvious religious references, including the unsubtly named main character Christian, scholarship on *Der Runenberg* does have a strong spiritual slant to it. Yet despite this unifying theme of religion and spirituality, criticism on the text is surprisingly fragmented. Keeping in mind Tieck’s tendency for purposeful confusion and uncertainty, this scholarly division is understandable. The text is extraordinarily difficult to pin down and lacks a consistent, authoritative narrator who would normally inform the reader as to what is real and what is not (Lillyman 233, Corkhill 45). This being the case, critical interpretation of *Der Runenberg* has the unique quality of mimicking Tieck’s own literary and religious tendency toward confusion and hesitation. Some scholars focus on the certainty of reality and the natural, commenting on the slow decay of Christian’s sanity as he begins to see visions of mythological and supernatural beings. Another fairly common interpretation accepts the supernatural, but as a possessing force that

demonically seduces and inhabits Christian (Klussmann 448, Huch 61, Lillyman 232).

Lillyman's 1970 essay "Ludwig Tieck's 'Der Runenberg': The Dimensions of Reality" seems to be an attempt to put an end to all the back and forth between interpretations by noting that the text fundamentally cannot be interpreted: the very construction of the text, with its Tieckian hesitation and confusion, purposely remains uninterpretable. Lillyman strongly states that "there are no events in the tale, nor statements made by one or other of the characters which would provide the validity of one or other of their views of reality. *The text offers no decision*" (231, emphasis added). Scholarly work on *Der Runenberg* after this essay seems to have taken this assessment to heart. Recent analyses have been dedicated primarily to examining the text's Romantic traits, its representation of woman and sexuality, or its function within the larger aesthetic philosophies of the period (Tesch 681-694, Corkhill 39-47, Landes 5-17). In other words, most of these assessments do not deal with a reading or interpretation of the text *per se*, but rather focus on individual historical or social representations.

I attempt, in my own analysis of *Der Runenberg*, to create a hybrid of these readings. I examine the text alongside the contemporary religious-philosophical debates, and then read the story and its innate confusion as a response to that background. While I do agree with Lillyman that the text perhaps purposely misleads the reader, I feel this assessment undermines the quality of Tieck's writing. By declaring the textual confusion un-interpretable, Lillyman's analysis arguably leads to a misconstruing and underestimation of Tieck's

novella. Although the text is confusing and Tieck himself would intentionally have made it so, simply abandoning any attempt at interpretation with the excuse of incomprehensible confusion, I believe, demeans the value and content of *Der Runenberg*. My reading acknowledges this textual confusion, and sees it as an integral part of a literary representation of contemporary religion evolution, Tieck's own religious instability, and the very literal *con-fusing* aspect of Romantic pantheism.

II. A Pantheistic Conversion

On a basic level, the confusing nature of the text stems from the merger of two worlds for Christian. He becomes aware of both a natural realm and a language in nature, beyond that with which he was previously familiar. These two worlds come to be represented in the young man, who constantly hesitates in his attraction to both.

From the very beginning the text presents itself as a story of contemplation and a questioning of the familiar. It opens with the young (as-yet-unnamed) man alone in the wilderness, mentally reviewing his past. Caught in a "Kreise der wiederkehrenden Gewöhnlichkeit," this young hunter has purposely set himself within an unfamiliar and unrestricted natural realm (Tieck 61). He is not content with the "wohlbekannte Heimat," the "enge Wohnung," and "der kleine beschränkte Garten" of his father and friends (61, 64). Rather, he immerses himself in the untamed wilderness and gets caught up in the sounds and sights of nature unrestrained.

Große Wolken zogen durch den Himmel und verloren sich hinter den Bergen, Vögel sangen aus den Gebüsch und ein Widerschall antwortete ihnen. Er [...] setzte sich an den Rand eines Baches nieder, der über vorragendes Gestein schäumend murmelte. Er hörte auf die wechselnde Melodie des Wassers[.] (61)

It is vital to note that this entire setting of nature and the wild is described in great detail, set up for the reader before we even know the main character's name. Essentially, unrestrained nature is established as a key textual figure right from the outset.

Furthermore, we are told that nature itself has a voice and, perhaps additionally, a message.

[E]s schien, als wenn ihm [dem Jäger] die Wogen in unverständlichen Worten tausend Dinge sagten [...] und er musste sich betrüben, dass er ihre Rede nicht verstehen konnte. (61)

Three important points must be taken from this statement. First, Tieck is taking a fairly common fairy tale practice of anthropomorphizing dumb beings and animals. However, he stretches it to include nature as a whole. It is not simply the bubbling brook with a message, but also the rustling birds and the movement of the clouds. This entire natural scene creates an effect for both Christian and the reader. The almost overabundance of nature and an intense sensory experience seem ready to burst forth and overwhelm Christian. However, and this brings us to the second point, the voice/message of nature remains only potential, because it is not yet understandable. Christian, although aware of nature's ability to speak, is incapable of comprehending what these various sounds and experiences actually mean. Any revelatory content that may be contained within nature's sounds is lost due to a disconnect that still exists

between Christian's familiar world and this new place. He continues to be a foreigner, as it were, restricted by the language in which he was raised – the language of his family's household and traditional village. In addition to this new spoken language, the very title of the text – "Rune Mountain" – signifies that language has been inscribed within nature itself – the mountains which surround Christian are marked with strange text. Although it upsets Christian that he is incapable of understanding these new forms of language and speech, he is inspired by this surrounding natural voice and becomes overjoyed. Then spontaneously, "mit lauter Stimme," he sings a song of nature. In essence, he becomes a human voice for the inspiring natural realm. This then brings us to the third point: that as a textual character who speaks and veritably possesses Christian with this voice, Nature in *Der Runenberg* becomes both personified and spiritual. In other words, Nature becomes a deity or godhead capable of infiltrating and speaking through another. But as a divinity that is constructed of various parts, it becomes specifically a *pantheistic* deity. This spiritual voice is part of all aspects of nature, which all work together to create a single message or effect for Christian.⁴²

Yet immediately following this joyous song, celebrating nature, a curious thing happens: night begins to fall and Christian is filled with fear. This is a side of nature, quite literally the dark side, of which he initially knew nothing. This sudden realization of darkness certainly stands in sharp contrast to the previous

⁴² The imposing expanse of nature presented in *Der Runenberg* has been critically connected to the Kantian concept of the sublime (Landes). I strongly agree with this assessment, yet wish to focus in this chapter specifically on the connection between the concept of nature and its connection to Romantic pantheism, which also has its roots in the Kantian sublime (Helfer, Course at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Fall 2004).

song, which focuses on the light and illuminating power of nature. According to the song, in nature “Auroras Augen glühn” in morning and at night “Diana lacht ihn an” (62). This statement further supports both the personification-of-nature and deification-of-nature arguments, as the natural world is connected to the Greco-Roman pantheon. But despite nature being personable, Christian is still uneasy. Up until this point, rather naively or simply just ignorantly, Christian had never associated darkness with nature. But now a different side of the natural universe is revealed to him and he is frightened. To comfort himself he immediately returns, in his mind, to the familiar: his family, his childhood friends, and his father’s old books (62). The specific reference to his father’s books should not be passed over, especially in a reading built around religious orthodoxy and pantheistic spirituality. Notice that when he is confronted by a new language (that of Nature), a startled Christian returns to his father’s texts and their familiar language. As I argue later in this chapter, Christian can be seen as representative of the Christian religion. As an adherent to Christianity, Christian’s mental return to the text/language of the father has a distinctly monotheistic tone to it. Since the three major monotheistic Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) all hold their respective holy texts in high regard, Christian’s father’s/Father’s text symbolizes the old religion and familiar orthodoxy. At this early point the text is already setting up Christian’s inner conflict with his father’s old, orthodox religion and the new natural religion of the wilderness.

It is also here with the description of nightfall that the confusing make-up of the text truly begins in two particular areas. One: the revelation of the dark side further supports the pantheistic interpretation of Nature in the text. By definition, pantheism incorporates everything – the good and the bad, light and dark. Seemingly conflictingly traits and elements are presented as united parts within Nature as a whole. Opposing forces are quite literally fused together (*con-fusio*) in this Natural world. Second, up until this point, Christian was not truly aware that this separate, pantheistic world, different from the familiar one he had known, existed. Initially pleasing and inviting toward Christian, it has revealed a more ominous and threatening side. Although he mentally returns to his old home, he still remains surrounded by this overpowering natural expanse. In other words, Christian is caught between two worlds: he is fearful to fully enter into nature, but also cannot simply return to his old way of life. These two realities have clashed within the person of Christian,⁴³ who therefore is unable to completely commit to one or the other. Furthermore, it appears that once this natural world has revealed itself, it will not disappear easily. For just as Christian appears in his most vulnerable state, nature contacts him again through strange sounds. He hears the rustlings of a mandrake root in the ground, which lets out a horrific sound that “sich unterirdisch in klagenden Tönen fortzog und erst in der Ferne wehmütig scholl. *Der Ton durchdrang sein [Christians] innerstes Herz, er ergriff ihn*” (29, emphasis added). If it was not clear before that the voice of

⁴³ I should mention here the similarities between the fusion of two worlds in the character of Christian and its parallels to the orthodox view of Christ. In standard belief, although many small splinter groups have countered the claim, Christ was both fully God and fully human – a union of the heavenly and earthly realms.

nature had penetrated and possessed Christian, it is certainly made explicit here. The voice of nature has infiltrated him to the point where it becomes a part of him and, most importantly, he is able to understand this new language. This can be seen as the mandrake apparently transforms into the strange man Christian meets during his initial wanderings among the mountains (Tatar 288). Of course this newfound clarity could actually be a sign that Christian has succumbed to the traditional effect of the mandrake root's scream and has gone insane. Perhaps he is hallucinating the mandrake's transformation into the stranger (Tatar 286). Whether the man is a figment of Christian's imagination or not, the two of them have a conversation and, with that, the natural and untamed world, previously incomprehensible and not entirely knowable, has now become familiar – even to the point of being personified into a recognizable form and speaking in a recognizable language.

By making the sounds and language of this other world accessible to Christian, and thereby the reader, the text turns Christian into a conduit between the tamed garden life of his familial childhood home and the outside natural world. The language and the realm of Nature can finally be revealed to the reader once Christian has become this intermediary. Observe how it is only after Christian's exposure to this realm, when he engages with it on a linguistic level (i.e., with the mandrake man, the wild woman), that we as readers are also given a clear insight into this realm.

It is as this mediator between two worlds that, I suggest, Christian is solidified as a Christ-figure. According to traditional dogma, Christ is seen as

both God and man, with both fully divine and fully human characteristics melded into one being. Similarly, *Der Runenberg's* Christian becomes a physical meeting point between the worlds of unbound nature and restrictive valley villages. In fact, Christian's trek through the wilderness mimics the biblical myth of Christ's temptation by Satan in the desert. In this tale, Christ, following his anointing by John the Baptist, spends forty days and nights alone in a wasteland, attempting to prove himself worthy of his divine responsibilities.

There is, however, a significant difference between these two "Christ-in-the-wilderness" tales. Whereas it is Christian's journey into and confrontation with unbridled nature that allows for his transformation into a go-between for the separate worlds, orthodoxy states that Christ had always been both fully human and fully divine.⁴⁴ For mainstream Christianity, Christ did not attain divinity. Rather, he was a divine being from the beginning and took on a mortal human form in order to reveal the spiritual realm to humanity. Furthermore, he does not permit anyone or anything to attain a level of godhood similar to his. This is demonstrated in Christ's confrontation with Satan. According to the biblical account, Christ is offered the "treasures of the world" if he agrees to worship Satan. That is, if Christ acknowledges and raises Satan to a deified status comparable to the (triune) God of monotheistic Christianity.

Wiederum führte ihn [Jesus] der Teufel mit sich auf einen sehr hohen Berg und zeigte ihm alle Reiche der Welt und ihre Herrlichkeit und sprach zu

⁴⁴ Christ as both God and man, which eventually led to the concept of the Trinity, was hotly contested during the early days of the organized Church of Rome. The most significant anti-Trinitarian movement was probably Arianism, which held that Christ, although a divine being, was created by God, and therefore not the same as God. However, even with these challenges to the *eternal* nature of the Christ of Christianity, the religion as a whole maintains Christ's divine nature. The tales of his miraculous birth and his extensive religious knowledge as a boy, all before his anointing by John, demonstrate that he had always been set apart as divine.

ihm: Das alles will ich dir geben, so du niederfällst und mich anbetest.
(Matthäus 4:8-9)

Christ, however, refuses to do so, saying:

Hebe dich weg von mir Satan! denn es steht geschrieben: „Du sollst anbeten Gott, deinen HERRN, und ihm allein dienen.“ (4:10)

By refusing to worship Satan, Christ excludes Satan from attaining godhood and preserves the status of an eternal, single dominating godhead (albeit according to the Christian doctrine of the trinity).

In *Der Runenberg*, Christian also enters into the wilderness and, while there, experiences the seductive temptations of nature. Note how the nature passages previously quoted give a sense of beauty and allurement, almost overpowering to Christian's senses. In fact, Christian is enthralled with these "treasures of the world" and allows himself to be overcome by the temptations of nature. Moreover, he actually receives a very real treasure from the Wild Woman.

Here we can begin truly differentiating Christian and Christ. As previously mentioned, according to orthodoxy, Christ entered the wilderness as God, albeit in human form. He had always been divine and, by refusing Satan, *preserves* his status as the only true divinity. By contrast, Christian enters this natural wilderness as a mortal man. In this realm he is confronted with a divine pantheistic nature that reveals itself to him. And as nature possesses Christian, he becomes part of it - part of the natural pantheistic divine.

This entire wilderness conversion, of sorts, culminates with his actual initiation into this new natural religion. Despite Christian's terror in the all-

encompassing, almost sublime, natural world, the stranger consoles him. He sees that soon “kommt der Mond hinter den Bergen hervor, sein Licht wird dann wohl auch Eure Seele lichter machen” (Tieck 63). Here nature itself becomes (literally) an enlightening force within Christian’s very being. Not only has Christian’s speech been infected with nature, his vision is now seen through this natural light. Christian’s very senses and aesthetics are changed. The natural world has educated Christian about its true being and has brought him into itself. This sequence intertwines religious education and conversion – a transition to a new type of religious experience and awareness. It ultimately culminates in Christian’s initial interaction with the Wild Woman of the Mountains.

This imposing female figure is presented as the final challenge to Christian’s previous cultural and religious attachments. The first clue to this defiance is her appearance. Apparently an immortal being, she possesses a body and features “so groß, so mächtig [...] dass er [Christian] noch niemals solche Schönheit gesehen oder geahnet habe” (67). She is certainly not a human being. And as a magnificent and rather daunting *female* figure, specifically one presented within the contexts of a rewritten Christian myth, she should draw the reader’s attention as much as she does Christian’s. The status of woman within orthodox Christian culture has generally been one of disdain, if not outright scorn in some circles. Women are seen as inherently to blame for the Fall of Man and as ever-present temptresses for mankind. Only a submissive and demure woman is acceptable to such orthodoxy.⁴⁵ The Wild Woman certainly appears to be the

⁴⁵ For examples of standards of female behavior in the Christian New Testament, see 1 Corinthians 11:3-10; 1 Timothy 2:13-15; Titus 2:3-5.

complete opposite of the other significant female character in *Der Runenberg*: Christian's future wife Elisabeth, who is introduced as a stereotypical blond-haired, blue-eyed young maiden and does act the role of the meek and dutiful wife.

In extreme contrast, the Wild Woman of *Der Runenberg* is far from demure. Christian is fascinated and enthralled by her. In fact, we can say that he is indeed tempted by her. Her veritable strip tease, as Christian gazes from the window, sets her up as a seductive figure. But what is particularly interesting about her status as an apparent temptress is that if we do interpret this entire "Wanderung" scene as a reinterpretation of the temptation of Christ, this Wild Woman seems to take the place of Satan in the original tale. She becomes the tempter personified in a German fairy tale, seeking to dismantle or challenge Christian's religious background. This becomes particularly clear when she notices Christian, gives him the jeweled tablet, and utters the words "Nimm dieses zu meinem Angedenken" (36). This is a very distinct allusion to the standard Christian phrase, spoken with the Eucharist and mimicking the words of Christ, "[D]as tut zu meinem Gedächtnis" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

This phrase, however, has a two-fold repercussion in my reading. The first solidifies this entire sequence of events in the wilderness as a specifically religious conversion and educational experience. Christian has been taught a new language and been exposed to a new pantheistic realm of nature, culminating in a religious ceremony. He must never forget his experience in nature. The second repercussion deals specifically with the Wild Woman. As the

one offering Christian the “sacraments”, she has inserted herself into the role played by Christ. Notice that it is Christian, the representational Christ figure, receiving the sacraments, not giving them. Here the tempter, the devil-figure, successfully presents herself as a divine being, worthy of reverence.

If we, therefore, interpret this entire scene in the wilderness as a representation of the biblical myth of Christ in the wilderness, this final Eucharist scene becomes particularly interesting because the ending of the biblical source material is significantly changed in this rewritten form. The Christ figure, Christian in this case, *submits* to the temptations shown to him in the wilderness and accepts the tempter as, at least, a divine being worth of reverence. He allows the Woman, corresponding to the antagonist in the original myth, to have power over him. This scenario, coupled with the previous demonstration that Christian attains a sense of divinity in the wilderness, show that positions in the spiritual realm are not fixed. Unlike the rigid and preserved trinitarian/monotheistic/patriarchal divinities of the biblical tale, this mythological rewriting presents a malleable version of spirituality. Furthermore I have argued that the text shows nature as both a conscious and connected entity: various aspects of nature unite in voice and effect to convert Christian. Nature is no longer a place created by a divinity. Rather, Nature *is* the divinity, specifically a pantheistic divinity.⁴⁶ The ability of nature to communicate and create a very religious experience for Christian, Christian’s possession by the sounds and voice of nature, and the Wild Woman’s explicit insertion into the role of a god all combine to create an alternative to the

⁴⁶ As I reviewed in the Introduction, pantheism is the belief that all of nature and all that exists in the cosmos is God.

restricted religious experiences that Christian experiences in the villages with his family. No longer is religious experience or revelation limited, *beschränkt*, like the nature of gardens in the orthodox valleys. Rather, religion and spirituality become all-encompassing: everywhere Christian turns, another aspect of nature is speaking or affecting him. The dominating divine realm represented in the text is not limited to a single (male) divinity, contained within orthodox principles and beliefs. Instead, both gendered and genderless humans and humanoids are assigned divine characteristics from the original biblical tale. In the end this natural pantheistic realm becomes dominant over any previous religious experience through its sheer mass and effect. The power and influence of the natural realm in relation to the religious village life can be seen immediately as Christian enters the first valley town following his natural religious experience.

These village religious beliefs are presented as an all-powerful and infinite spiritual realm, yet in practice this way of life actually becomes dissatisfying and unproductive. This religious feebleness is exemplified in the text's initial presentation of the village church and priest.

[D]er Priest hatte seine Predigt begonnen von den Wohltaten Gottes [...], wie die Liebe Gottes sich *unaufhörlich* im Brote mitteile und der andächtige Christ so ein *unvergängliches* Abendmahl gerührt feiern könne. (70, emphasis added)

In the immediate aftermath of describing nature's influence and demonstrating its power, the text appears to be attempting to counter this potent natural force with an equally powerful description of orthodoxy. However, it remains just that: an impotent, passive description. This orthodox spirituality – described as *unaufhörlich* and *unvergänglich* – is never actively demonstrated in the text. In

fact, if we see the destitute outcome of Christian's poor wife Elisabeth and her children as the standard for adherents to orthodoxy, then it seems that this type of spirituality fails miserably. If their destitution is due to dealing with the stranger's/Wild Woman's money, then this is a sign that Elisabeth's religion is powerless against the onslaught of outside spiritual forces. Furthermore, the religion of the valley is unable to either satisfy Christian or keep him from being further enticed by the outside natural world. The memories and influences of his pantheistic religious experience overpower any comfort or happiness he found in the village or with his family. His father, who now lives with Christian in his new home, pleads with Christian to abandon his obsession with the gold in his possession – another “treasure” given to him by the Woman of the Woods.⁴⁷

Der Greis nahm schauernd und weinend den Sohn in seine Arme, betete und sprach dann: „Christel, du mußt dich wieder zum Worte Gottes wenden, du mußt fleißiger und andächtiger in die Kirche gehen, sonst wirst du verschmachten und im traurigsten Elende dich verzehren. (75)

The fact that his father sees Christian's transformation as a threat specifically to his status as a good religious man is further proof that the entire nature sequence had actually been a counter-religious experience. His ultimate surrender to nature and his transformation into a “wild man of the woods”, including the abandonment of his family and their respective demise, is testament to nature's true power of possession and integration over that of orthodox religious village life.

⁴⁷ Christian insists that the houseguest, who left the gold in their possession, was actually his Woman of the Woods. “[Er] behauptet, dass er ihn [den Gast] schon gekannt habe, denn dieser fremde Mann sei eigentlich ein wunderschönes Weib” (75).

In fact, as a “wild man of the woods,” the text not only ultimately reaffirms Christian as a Christ-figure, but it also portrays him as an alternative *natural* Christ-figure (Helfer).⁴⁸

Es war ein Mann in einem ganz zerrissenen Rocke, barfüßig, sein Gesicht [...] von einem langen struppigen Bart noch mehr enstellt: er trug keine Bedeckung auf dem Kopf, hatte aber von grünem Laube einen Kranz durch sein Haar geflochten. (80-81)

Christian's appearance here – a long beard, barefoot with tattered clothing – does hint at the stereotypical representations of Christ. But the laurel leaves that are woven through his hair – apart from their traditional implication of victory and power – may also be viewed as an alternative to Christ's original crown of thorns (Helfer).

In the end, with this entire presentation of the bearded man with a crown woven of plants on his head, Christian is no longer a character with Christ-like characteristics. Instead he has become a new Christ. And here the traditional meaning of the laurel leaf crown also comes into play, as Christian is now victorious over the Christ he has replaced. He is the victor, who has overcome the previous religious testaments.

III. Romantic Pantheism

This religious reading of *Der Runenberg* could easily end here, with the revelation that Christian has lost his Christianity and ultimately assimilated into a pantheistic outside realm. As such, the text operates as a challenge to the dominance of Christianity – at least insofar as Christianity is portrayed in the

⁴⁸ Helfer, Martha. “Bordering on the Fantastic”. Course at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Fall 2004.

story itself. However, as I have put forward in the Introduction, I believe Romantic aesthetic theory is, at its base, pantheistic: *Poesie* functions as a unifying force and integrates into itself those who wish to understand and use poetical aesthetics. These characteristics make it comparable to the form of Nature presented in Tieck's short story. Therefore, I suggest that the pantheistic Nature of *Der Runenberg* is not simply a challenge to the orthodox religion of the text. It is in actuality a critique, motivated by Romantic theory, of the dominance of orthodoxy. The dogmas and influence of village Christianity clash with the theories put forward by Romantic pantheism. The tension seen in the character of Christian – his attraction to Nature, while feeling the hold of his father's religion and books – is the fictional portrayal of the real-world religious controversies around the challenges toward orthodox religion at the end of the eighteenth century.

This connection between Romantic theory and pantheistic Nature presented in *Der Runenberg* is entirely plausible. Just as Nature is presented as a specifically religious experience in the text, so too is the Romantic theory of *Poesie* shown to have veritable pantheistic traits. Schlegel writes in *Gespräch über die Poesie*:

Alle Gemüter, die sie lieben, befreundet und bindet Poesie mit unauflöslichen Banden [...]. [I]n dieser Region sind [Fremde] dennoch durch höhere Zauberkraft einig und in Frieden [...]. Unermeßlich und unerschöpflich ist die Welt der Poesie wie der Reichtum der belebenden Natur an Gewächsen, Tieren und Bildungen jeglicher Art, Gestalt und Farbe. (Schlegel 165)

This introduction to the *Gespräch über die Poesie* lays the groundwork for a pantheistic interpretation of Romantic theory. All matter of people, animals, and objects are brought together through *Poesie* and made one.

Furthermore, by defining poesy as a method of binding seemingly disparate objects and beings together, Schlegel is etymologically connecting poetry to the term *religio*. *Religio*, meaning to bind or weave together, is also the root for *religion*. I suggest, therefore, that poetry, as defined by Schlegel, functions as a religion. Specifically, it functions as a pantheistic religion, combining all who love it under its “higher magical power.”

Of course, by binding the various things together, there are sure to be contradictions. Just as the different points of nature in *Der Runenberg* are fused together, so too does *Poesie* create confusion –specifically a religious confusion - within the “Gedicht der Gottheit, dessen Teil und Blüte auch wir sind” (166).

Therefore, with these specific overlaps of pantheistic naturalism, I suggest that Schlegel’s theory of Romantic *Poesie* finds its fictional counterpart in Tieck’s *Der Runenberg*. Each is a self-creating, self-sustaining, and all-inclusive divinity, which integrates new adherents into itself. Christian becomes the fictional example of Schlegel’s student of poetry, who is educated in hopes that “seine Poesie und seine Ansicht der Poesie” may be expanded and developed (167).

If we do read Nature in *Der Runenberg* as a literary example of Romantic theory, there are, of course, ramifications for the story itself, particularly concerning the concept of an incomplete education. In the *Gespräch*, Schlegel notes that, even though one may be integrated into this giant pantheistic *Gedicht*,

each individual's own *Poesie* "beschränkt sein muß, so kann auch seine Ansicht der Poesie nicht anders als beschränkt sein" (166). This ultimately means that truly attaining "absolute Vollendung" or perhaps true integration with the poetic godhead, is possible "nur im Tode" (167). In other words, a Romantic poetic/pantheistic education is naturally limited: One cannot truly experience it to its fullest extent, at least in life. We must, therefore, ask ourselves: What sort of consequences does this have for Christian? Has he truly integrated himself fully into the natural world of the text? Has he truly become the victor, worthy of the crown of laurels he wears? Or does he remain a student, always under the power and influence of his teacher – the Woman of the Woods, who functions as the source of "echter Kritik" described in the *Gespräch*? If Christian is, in fact, an eternal student under the constant supervision and critical attention of the Woman of the Woods, has he merely exchanged one limited spirituality for another that is likewise *beschränkt*?

IV. The Final Verdict?

Analyzing the presence of the Wild Woman does give possible answers to these questions. I have already argued that she inserts herself into the savior role of the Eucharist scene and that Christian does in fact succumb to her "treasures of the world" temptations. In other words, the Woman maintains a power hold on Christian, even until the end of the story. Christian, although possessed by Nature and integrated into it, does not become an equal divine member of this pantheistic godhead. He remains under the influence of the

Woman (in whatever guise she might be in) from his first encounter with her until his retreat into the forest.⁴⁹ Hence, we could read Christian as never truly having the opportunity to perfect his pantheistic education. Although he escapes the limits of his previous religious/educational affiliations, his new teacher restricts his true and final access to “absolute Vollendung” through her retention of power.

This assessment naturally leads the reader to consider the text’s ultimate value judgment on a pantheistic view of reality. After all, the narrator’s own assessment of Christian as “Der Unglückliche”⁵⁰ in the very last sentence does not create a glowing assessment of this newly discovered spiritual realm. Furthermore, the Woman of the Woods, in addition to (or perhaps in spite of) her apparent status as Christian’s eternal overseer, is not represented as a redeemer or savior figure. Rather, she seems to be controlling and to play the part of the seductress: she is the only female figure described in any sort of explicit sexual manner; she replaces the figure of the devil in the mythological retelling; and in the end of the story Christian ultimately leaves his wife and family for her.

Therefore, despite the natural pantheistic realm being all-encompassing and more powerful than orthodoxy, it seems that it is not automatically entirely good or positive. Of course, by being pantheistic and all-inclusive, any sort of

⁴⁹ In fact, it is interesting to note that the woman, appearing in various disguises, maintains a sense of distance from and mystery for Christian. He can never truly understand her and, by extension, the world she represents and into which she seemingly educates him. This separation is particularly clear in Christian’s final description of the woman, when he refers to her as “meine Schöne,[...] die mit dem goldenen Schleier geschmückt ist” (81). She is quite literally veiled from not only the village, but also from Christian. Whatever beauty and mystery she may possess is not visible or capable of being revealed.

⁵⁰ Labeling Christian as “Der Unglückliche” refers back the text’s numerous uses of the term “glücklich” or variations on it. For example, when describing Christian’s “neues Leben” following his marriage to Elisabeth, the words “glücklich” or “Glück” are used at least four times within only a couple of paragraphs. Here the text is making sure that the reader is definitely aware of Christian’s happy way of life. Keeping this emphasis on “Glück” in mind makes labeling him as “Der Unglückliche” at the end all the more striking.

darkness, or negativity would necessarily also be included in such a paradigm. The text itself draws attention to this when it shows its “dark side” during Christian’s conversion scene. These undesirable traits, found throughout the story, demonstrate that the text itself is not sure what to make of this new pantheistic spirituality that exists just beyond the familiar and enclosed borders of orthodox everyday life. Is it a good thing? A bad thing?

I believe this ambiguity, a literal result of the con-fusing traits of pantheism, is actually a result of the text’s own message and assessment concerning this inclusive natural world and aesthetic theory. It reveals to the reader this other realm, yet it is unsure whether or not this realm is, in fact, a spirituality or religious system that should be followed. Furthermore, this hesitation between two worlds, between the familiarity of the village religion and the potential of the pantheistic, matches Tieck’s personal and aesthetic reputation. As previously demonstrated in the review of scholarship, Tieck’s stories historically do resist solid interpretations. However, this lack of sure footing and textual orientation should be viewed as *part* of the stories themselves. This is particularly true with a pantheistic reading of *Der Runenberg*.

Additionally, this ambiguity is arguably also a result of the narrative’s textualization within a historical environment hostile to religiously subversive ideas. By addressing and developing the Romantic concept of a pantheistic reality, the text naturally places itself within controversial and highly divisive debates. Following the late eighteenth-century rediscovery of Spinoza’s philosophy, including its pantheistic implications, radical thinkers and counter-

culturalists embraced his concepts as an opportunity to respond against monotheistic orthodoxy.

[T]he attraction of pantheism for early freethinkers [was that] it ensured the possibility of everyone having [...] direct access to God. The God of pantheism is within me and everyone else [...].(Beiser 52)

Yet one must keep in mind that at the end of the eighteenth century these philosophies of Spinoza were viewed by general society “to be destructive of morality, religion, and the state” (Beiser 2).

The ambiguity of *Der Runenberg*, therefore, seems to have an additional effect. Whether purposeful or not, it allows the text to maintain a distance from any controversy associated with its content. By shrouding itself in both mythological language and an ambiguous storyline, the text can address the theory of Romantic pantheism while avoiding the religiously motivated disputes of the period.

V. Conclusion

Der Runenberg's hesitant probing beyond the borders of religious orthodoxy into the realm of Romantic pantheism undermines the supremacy of a patriarchal monotheistic godhead. While the message of the text cannot be seen as truly positive or negative, the fact that it at least addresses the possibility of a human subject being exposed to non-Christian spirituality sets it apart from works like *Wilhelms Meisters Lehrejahre* or *Der Geisterseher*. Christian is similar to Wilhelm or the Prince, in that he is ultimately limited in his spiritual education by an overseer. However, he is set apart from them thanks to the fact that he is

directly exposed to a separate realm of spirituality. Unlike the educations in Goethe's and Schiller's texts, where the lessons deal more with maintaining the orthodox status quo or decrying religious conversion, Tieck's protagonist is paradoxically restricted beyond the limits of his previous spiritual paradigm. While he may not truly integrate into the pantheistic universe, Christian's education allows him to seriously question the status quo of the village orthodoxy and step into a separate realm of spirituality.

Of course, in typical Tieck fashion, even this exposure to the pantheistic realm is questionable. After all, it is a possibility that Christian, following his uprooting of the mandrake, has become insane. The entire story from that point on could be the portrayal of a mad man masquerading as a Christ figure and only thinking he has heard the language of nature. Yet it is also possible that Christian's hypothetical madness is a sign that nature – through the voice of the mandrake – truly has possessed him and stripped him of human reason. Christian's "insanity" could be seen as a symptom of his confrontation with the *con-fused* aspects of natural pantheism.

Furthermore, it is possible that Christian has not only been exposed to this pantheistic realm, but has also overstepped the boundaries initially set for him by his teacher. At the end of the tale, among Christian's final words to his village family, he tells his wife: "Sei ruhig [...] ich bin dir so gut wie gestorben" (Tieck 81). Not only does this line seem to hint that Christian has come back from the dead, once again confirming his Christ-figure status, for a final goodbye. It additionally could hint that Christian has, in fact, achieved the "absolute Vollendung" that one

can achieve “nur im Tode.” This is just one final characteristic of the religious and poetic confusion that creates the framework and substance of *Der Runenberg*. Ultimately, readers should embrace this confusion and the many parallel readings, simultaneously seeing it as both an aesthetic technique *and* a philosophical reaction to the debates of the time.

Chapter 4

“Join us...”: Pan-Christian Conversion, *Umbildung*, and Anti-Semitic Myth Building in Arnim’s *Isabella von Ägypten*⁵¹

In the previous chapters I focused on a single example or a limited selection of rewritten myths and mythical figures – *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* with the Saul myth; *Der Geisterseher* fusing the figure of the Wandering Jew with the vampire into a single, new character; and *Der Runenberg* inverting the temptation of Christ. I purposefully limited my analysis of these particular source materials – although many more fictional and mythical inspirations exist within the storylines – because they successfully demonstrate each text’s respective relationship to the concept of Romantic pantheism. The primary text of this chapter, however, strays from this formula by embracing a multiplicity of myths and using that variety of backgrounds and traditions to illustrate a distinct, all-encompassing vision of Romantic pantheism.

Ever since its publication in 1812 in a collection dedicated to the Grimm brothers, Achim von Arnim’s *Isabella von Ägypten* has received criticism for its confusing nature, its mixture of history and invention, and its overall denseness. Wilhelm Grimm, in fact, described the text as a painting with the fourth side of the frame missing, allowing the painting to continue on endlessly. Goethe also, in a similar critique, depicted Arnim’s writing style as an overflowing barrel (cited Seyhan 127). Both of these observations deftly illustrate the massive amounts of content and background forcibly concentrated within the bounds of the text.

⁵¹ Quote from *The Evil Dead*. (Raimi, Sam. 1983, Renaissance Pictures/Wonder Works Films.)

Furthermore, these criticisms emphasize that the subject matter and storyline cannot be (or resist being) contained by the very structure of the text and/or the storyteller. *Isabella von Ägypten* feels like a grand historical and grand mythological epic, forcibly (and perhaps unsuccessfully) condensed into a novella.

The main plot itself deals with the unsuccessful love affair between Isabella, a Gypsy princess, and Prince Charles (Karl), who would become Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. Isabella, often called simply Bella, is left to be the symbolic leader of the wandering Gypsy people after her father's unjust execution. However, the Gypsies remain scattered, with only a dream of one day returning to their ancestral home in Egypt. Bella, after falling in love with Charles following a staged sexual encounter, determines to once again see Charles. Using her father's magic books, Bella brings to life a mandrake root, hoping that the object's reported ability to gather wealth will enable her to get close to the prince. The mandrake, however, becomes obsessively jealous of Bella and her pursuit of Charles. Even when Bella and Charles do successfully meet again, the mandrake's constant interference and own desire for Bella create tensions. In an attempt to be rid of the mandrake, Charles enlists a Jewish doctor to create a golem-version of Bella, identical to the original woman but void of a soul, to distract the mandrake. But this plan backfires when Charles himself is fooled into falling in love with the golem Bella, and leaves the original Bella. Despite eventually becoming aware of his mistake, Charles' failure to distinguish between the two Bellas convinces the true Bella that she does not belong with

Charles. Leaving Charles and Europe behind, she leads her people back to Egypt, where she enjoys a long reign. Many years later, both Charles and Isabella die on the same day. On his deathbed Charles has a vision of Bella leading him into Heaven.

This short summary unfairly ignores the abundance of additional characters, events, references, and themes that make *Isabella von Ägypten* a multi-layered text. Its intricacies and details provide a great deal of depth, yet simultaneously make it difficult to grasp and pin down. Furthermore, the narrator himself seems unsure of the very content he is presenting, including forgetting to mention details and background or going off on unrelated tangents. All in all, the text refuses to be read superficially, and actually demands that the reader approach it with a critical eye in order to make any sense out of it.

In this chapter I propose to make some sense out of *Isabella von Ägypten* by examining it through the mythology and traditional tales that appear in rewritten forms within the story. Ultimately, I argue that the interweaving of the various mythological stories and traditions combines to create a new mythology of a new religion – a new truly universal (catholic) Christianity. The text of *Isabella von Ägypten* serves the double purpose, therefore, of introducing both the mythology of this new religion and the historical account of its failure to gain a foothold. It presents a real-world explanation for the present-day division and disunion suffered by orthodox Christendom: the possible pan-Christian unity that could have been forged through the unity of Charles and Bella is undermined and

fragmented by characters who specifically do not wish to create a universal religious totality.

Therefore, the presence of rewritten myth with *Isabella* has two primary effects: (1) to create and solidify the beliefs surrounding the “new” religion of the Gypsies and (2) to present a rewritten form of history. This second effect is particularly intriguing and disturbing in that the text, through narrative techniques, places the blame for this religious disharmony on a real-world group: the Jews. In doing so *Isabella* presents a textual case of not simply *Bildung*, but also of *Umbildung* – a reeducation concerning history and reality. In the texts by Goethe and Schiller that I have examined, mythology and *Bildung* function specifically to solidify the main character’s/textual figure’s education within the already-established bounds of orthodox religious dogma. In my chapter on *Der Runenberg* I demonstrated that the text questions spiritual orthodoxy and educates the protagonist concerning the possibility of a Christian pantheism. However, *Isabella* goes further and reaches out to the reader in the real world, giving a “history” of the failure of a universal or pan-Christianity.

I. Universal Themes

Despite perhaps being Arnim’s most well-known and widely-read literary production, *Isabella von Ägypten* remains densely compact and difficult to comprehend (Hoermann 91). Readers and scholars alike have struggled to grasp the slippery narrative, which presents a myriad of characters, historical events, and informational tidbits at such an alarming rate that the connections between

them cannot always be seen, if such connections exist at all. Critics have analyzed themes of science (Dickson 296-307), anti-Semitism (Helfer 57-77, Garloff 427-443), and the representation of woman (Friedrichsmeyer 51-62). In trying to explain the text's odd combination of myth and history, Lokke, among others, has suggested that, unlike the non-specific times and settings of fairy tales popular of this time, "Napoleon's defeat and occupation of Arnim's beloved Prussia made aloofness from political and historical realities an impossibility for him" (Lokke 21; see also Schürer 205). The text is set in the real world and longs for the days of old when things were or could have been better. This is very relevant for the concept of *Umbildung* that I develop later, and also suggests an important socio-historical critique: the idea of wishing for a past that would have made the present world a superior place.

The interpretations and themes introduced in the secondary literature briefly reviewed above are strongly substantiated and attempt to make sense out of Arnim's convoluted narrative. But perhaps the most intriguing aspect is that the text *itself* appears unsure of how it should proceed. If we count both the literary dedication and introduction as part of the novella,⁵² the story itself starts twice before even getting to the tale of Isabella. Such hesitation amounts to a speaker who is not authoritative or omniscient, but instead unsure of his own relationship to the storyline.

⁵² Both the dedication and the introduction *should* be counted as part of the narrative, as it is here that the stories in the collection find their origin. These tales are not the narrator's own creation, but his recreation. They are mystically given or revealed to him. The details of this revelation are given in the introductory pieces.

Indeed, both the dedication and the introduction *should* be counted as part of the narrative, as it is here that the stories in the collection find their origin. Importantly, these tales are not the narrator's own creation, but his recreation. They are mystically given or revealed to him by a mythological figure, Pegasus. The details of this revelation – which will be considered in more detail below – are given in the introductory pieces, in a tone that differs markedly from the rest of the text.

When the narrative proper begins, the storyteller is uncertain, to the point of being amateurish, in his presentation. It is almost laughable when the narrator breaks off at one point and essentially apologizes for his poor storytelling method. During the introductory paragraphs, setting the scene and developing the personality of the title character, he suddenly interrupts himself to describe the history of the Gypsy people. At this end of the historical interlude, the narrator's voice chimes in, saying: "Das mußte voraus berichtet werden, jetzt zu unserer Geschichte zurück" (625). Why should the text draw attention to its technique? If the narrative had simply presented the history lesson as part of the storyline, it would not seem so out of place. But the narrator's intrusion and apparent preemptive address to a criticism that does not necessarily exist is odd.

This entire scenario, separate from the storyline but part of the text itself, demonstrates a true instance of the reader being unable to trust the narrator. This is not necessarily because the narrator is a manipulative storyteller. Rather it is because he is unskilled. From the prologue to the collection, we are already aware the stories contained within this collection are not his own. He is merely

retelling them to the best of his abilities.⁵³ While this is not a final verdict for the reasoning behind the confusing makeup of the novella, it certainly does present an explanation: the narrator is more like a re-teller, a *Nacherzähler* – quite literally the follower or secondary storyteller.

And perhaps his status as a secondary or even second-rate storyteller affects the quality of the narrative. Or perhaps it is a sign of a tension between the storyteller and the story, a signifier that the author has lost control of the myth and its meaning. If this is accurate, then there is a significant change in the function of the myth. That is, whatever lesson the author originally desired to “teach” through the myth has changed and the myth itself has constructed its own meaning independent of the author. It is this tension between author and myth that, I later suggest, frees *Isabella von Ägypten* from the potential biases of Achim von Arnim.

In any case, it is also the text’s status as a *Nacherzählung* that accurately describes the “history” of Isabella and Charles. Its very existence as a retelling implies that (1) it is story worthy of being retold and/or (2) that new information which affects the relevance or interpretation of that story needs to be introduced. And certainly the existence of Isabella and her relationship with Charles, including that relationship’s impact on the text’s perception of European history,

⁵³ In this light the narrator functions as a veritable prophet: a message is revealed to him and he is inspired to, in turn, reveal it to others. The fact the he is unskilled at this connects him to the tradition of Hebrew Bible prophets and Christian New Testament apostles: unskilled and uneducated people, who are given a divine message and commanded to pass that message along to humankind. This prophet status hints at the entire text’s connection to mythology and religious development that will be addressed in later sections of this chapter.

fulfills both counts as simultaneously a moving story of unfulfilled love and a contemporary explanation of a historically unsuccessful monarchy.

The term *Nacherzählung* also implies a sense of explaining after the fact – attempting to attach some sort of historical or past reason for the present state of things. And serendipitously this is just what the critical scholarship itself of *Isabella von Ägypten* has done for nearly two centuries: attempted to defend, explain, and organize the details of this bizarre text, presented by a disorganized narrator, into a cohesive whole (Bonfiglio). What is the meaning, if it exists, behind the madness of the novella's amalgam of fiction, history, mythology, and fairy tale?

As a general rule, the scholarship from the past thirty years or so tends to embrace, rather than disregard, Goethe's and Wilhelm Grimm's assessments of Arnim's writing style and textual construction. That is to say, critics see the confusion, the nebulousness, and the overall elusiveness of the text as purposeful on Arnim's part, rather than merely a sign of an overactive imagination restricted by a poor writing technique (Bonfiglio, Lokke). For example, Kari E. Lokke suggests that Arnim's text "represents an attack upon early nineteenth-century aesthetic expectations, rational thought and social norms through its intermingling of incongruous elements and its juxtaposition and fusion of opposites" (27). This assessment of Arnim as a challenger to "aesthetic expectations" certainly places him within the German Romantic agenda. Following on the heels of a reason-obsessed Enlightenment Europe, Romantic

theory sought to purposely confuse and disorient.⁵⁴ If this is the case, Arnim certainly shows himself to a skilled and nimble writer: one who can create a naïve and unqualified textual narrator, who in fact is being controlled and manipulated to *appear* unskilled for the author's own aesthetic goals of confusion. One aspect of this confusion is not only Arnim's ability to present the tale through the words of an unsure narrator, but also to present numerous narrative voices (e.g., Arnim as the writer of the dedication; the speaker of the introduction; Pegasus as the storyteller of the tale itself). This use of confusion – in both senses of the word as fusing together of numerous objects and a disorientation – strongly situates Arnim's text within the Romantic aesthetic tradition.

However, there are critics, like Ernst Schürer, who develop this idea of textual confusion and see it not simply as an aesthetic or philosophical challenge. Rather, Schürer embraces the confusion and describes it as an effective melding of various times and settings into a new narrative depicting an idealized and mythical location and events (Schürer 190-191; 206-207).

This fusion of myth and history, of certainty and uncertainty, and of various narrators presents a unique challenge to anyone who attempts to work through the text. And "work through" is the appropriate way to describe coming into contact with this text. *Isabella* cannot simply be perused or glanced over. The text's confusion, both form and content-wise, *demands* that the reader engage

⁵⁴ The publication of *Isabella von Ägypten* during the height of the Napoleonic Wars and the implementation of French Enlightenment ideals within the German states certainly does lend a possible interpretation of the confusing nature of the text as a stand against the invading principles of a "foreign" Enlightenment.

with it and attempt to overcome it (Helfer 71). But even a willing reader is confronted with a thought-provoking question: *How* should the text be read? Should the storyline be read simply as fiction? Or should it be read as historical fiction, with the implications that this story is, on some level, based on actual events? Then there is the question concerning the overwhelming presence of myths and fairy tales that litter the pages: Why are they there and what purpose do they serve?

None of these questions is easy to answer. In fact, if we accept the text's confusion as a direct challenge against aesthetic orderliness, then it may be that no one interpretation will ever suffice. The intricate and diverse textual layers, woven together so tightly, create a mosaic that may perhaps be doubly appreciated as both a whole and as individually enclosed parts. As such, the text is ideally suited for a reading according to Romantic aesthetic and religious philosophy – it is a narrative totality, created through the fusion of different fields of human knowledge and creativity. The various readings of *Isabella von Ägypten* attest to the text's ability to connect with so many varied fields: psychoanalysis, scientific writing, nationalism, and gender studies, to name only a few.

In my reading I shall focus in particular on the representations of various religious identities and mythologies. Specifically, I wish to identify various mythological source materials within *Isabella* and examine how they interact with each other. In so doing I hope to demonstrate the novella's attempt to create a new, pan-mythology, fused together from various traditions, including Christianity, Judaism, Germanic folklore, and Classical Greco-Roman spirituality.

Yet a curious feature about this mythological fusion is that it appears unbalanced. That is, it seems to favor some traditions over others. The text may attempt to integrate various traditions, but rather than equally melding them together, it is more of a mass conversion, with one tradition becoming subservient to another. As such it is problematic to read Arnim's text as truly an example of mythological *con-fusio*, in which all parts are combined together with little to no distinction between each other. However, it is an issue I address in this chapter. And in order to begin answering this question of a potentially faulty religious con-fusion, it is necessary to see how the text demonizes one group of people, so that their own respective traditions may be disregarded in favor of another. Specifically, I wish to address the presence of anti-Semitism within the text.

II. Textual Anti-Semitism

On this topic of Romantic anti-Semitism, Katja Garloff writes that "few dispute its existence, [although] scholars have found it difficult to determine the scope and the character" of it (Garloff 427). Concerning the complicated and convoluted Romantic relationship to the Jew in German society, Garloff goes on to say that "[n]othing illustrates [it] better than the life and work of Achim von Arnim" (427). Arnim's anti-Semitism is well documented and his short essay "Über die Kennzeichen des Judentums," which he presented to the *Deutsche Tischgesellschaft*, contains a startlingly over-the-top and proudly hateful depiction of European Jewry. While *Isabella von Ägypten* is certainly not as

overtly anti-Semitic as Arnim's essay, the text does contain a disturbing amount of what Helfer terms latent anti-Semitism.

In *The Word Unheard* Helfer effectively identifies the various signs of Jewishness within *Isabella von Ägypten* that may not be immediately apparent – one example being the correlation between the Gypsies of the text and stereotypes often associated with Jews in European society of the time. The Gypsies-as-Jews, along with other textual antagonists, perpetuate these various negative stereotypes – greedy and unscrupulous, lustful and incestuous – and the text consequently blames these covert “Jews” for the failure of Charles's monarchy and the downfall his empire.

I wish to build on this concept of latent anti-Semitism within *Isabella von Ägypten* and argue for further definition and differentiation of the “Jews” within the narrative. That is, while I agree the text does brand characters with certain “Jewish” traits, I also believe the text distinguishes between certain types of Jews. Specifically, it is my argument that *Isabella von Ägypten* labels (at least) two types of European Jew: (1) those who convert to Christianity, or have been “catholicized” since they have become part of an ever-expanding universal religious paradigm; and (2) those who remain separate from this universal/catholic religion and undermine social unity through that separation. These two groups, due to their respective representation within the text, can be labeled as the “good, converted” Jew and the “negative, unconverted” Jew.

The figure of the “good” Jew is most prominently found in the Egyptian Gypsies of the text. While the very title of “Egyptian” seems to automatically

categorize the Gypsies as hostiles towards Jewish people, certain similarities between the two social groups ultimately equate them (Helfer 72). However these Gypsies represent a specific part of the Jewish populace: the converted. The development of Gypsies-as-converted-Jews within the text begins during that strange narrative intrusion, where the *Erzähler* breaks in to give a historical background to the Gypsy people. Explaining how the Gypsies had come from their homeland of Egypt to wander homeless through Europe, the narrator describes how they had once rejected the Holy Family.

Da fühlten sie erst recht innerlich die Strafe, daß sie die heilige Mutter Gottes mit dem Jesuskinde und dem alten Joseph verstoßen, als sie zu ihnen nach Ägypten flüchteten, weil sie nicht die Augen des Herrn ansahen, sondern mit roher Gleichgültigkeit die Heiligen für Juden hielten⁵⁵, die in Ägypten auf ewige Zeit nicht beherbergt werden, weil sie die geliehenen goldnen und silbernen Gefäße auf ihrer Auswanderung nach dem gelobten Lande mitgenommen hatten. (624)

By characterizing the Gypsies as those who have (initially) rejected Christ, the text shrewdly connects the religious beliefs of Gypsy and Jew. However, while the two are connected, and even though the textual Gypsy becomes a stand-in for the figure of the Jew (Helfer 72), the two groups remain separate. As Helfer notes, “the Gypsies are not Jews, yet they *are* Jews” (72).

This status of the Gypsies as Jewish/not-Jewish is significant. It sets up the possibility of two distinct groups of “Jews” within the storyline. Since the Gypsy “Jews” recognize their rejection of Christ, repent, and attempt to

⁵⁵ Note how the narrator here, with this statement, removes Christianity from its Judaic roots. This furthers my argument, developed later in this chapter, that the text wishes to create a new uniting religion of Christianity, but sees the maintenance of a separate Jewish religious tradition as a threat to that religious unity.

reintegrate within Christian society,⁵⁶ I contend that they specifically represent the converted Jew: the Jew that actively seeks integration within Christian society. For the purposes of my argument, I have chosen to label these converted “Jews” as “good” or “positive” throughout this chapter. While the terms are not perfect, I do believe they accurately characterize the text’s overall anti-Semitic approach to the Jewish population within Christian Europe. That approach namely being the demonization of the religiously-separate (i.e. non-Christian) Jew. The Gypsies are “good” because they have become Christianized and, through Isabella and Charles’ affair, seek to unite all Christian nations into a single, new catholic – that is universal – religion.

III. Myth, *Umbildung*, and Religious Hybridity

The rewritten forms of mythology that appear within *Isabella* give the text an authoritative voice: the narrative emphatically connects itself to the respected mythological, especially religious and philosophical, traditions of Western literature. This method of placing itself within the canonical realm is evident from the very beginning, even before the narrative itself starts. In the “Anrede an meine Zuhörer” that opens the collection of stories in which *Isabella* appears, the narrator describes his ascent to the summit of a mountain, where the stories of this collection are told to him. By introducing the narrative with this prologue the text is connecting itself with a common tradition of both canonical literature and

⁵⁶ Admittedly, this reintegration is severely limited and the Gypsy populace is far from being recognized as full citizens within Christian Europe. However, this is due to the fact that they were being confused with non-Christianized Jews. The converted Gypsy “Jews” are not excluded for anything they themselves have done, but in reality are ostracized due to the religious separation perpetuated by the unconverted Jewish population.

religious accounts: ascending the mountain to receive a new revelation, enlightenment, or *Bildung*. Moses' ascent up Mount Sinai is a prime example of this tradition. He climbs upward, where God and his instructions are revealed to Moses.

Just as Moses surrenders to God's authority and receives a new law and order for the Israelite people, so too does the narrator surrender to a higher authority and subsequently receive a new form of history. The higher authority here is the mythical horse Pegasus, who brings the narrator to the summit of the mountain and begins to speak with a poem. In this poem, Pegasus demands the narrator's trust and surrender. By giving himself over to Pegasus, he will learn a new history.

Ihr Freunde traut mir heute ohne Klügeln,
Ich bin den Wunderweg nun oft gegangen,
Laßt *mir* die Zügel, haltet euch in Bügeln;
Denn wißt, wo euch der Atem schon vergangen,
Da fühlte ich das Herz sich froh beflügeln,
Da hat es recht zu leben angefangen;
Ein Wunder ist der Anfang der Geschichte,
Ein Wunder bleibt sie bis zum Weltgerichte. (Stanzas 6-13)

This passage demonstrates to the narrator that there is an entire world of knowledge – an extensive secret history of which he is unaware – and Pegasus is experienced enough to explain this knowledge. The stories that follow in the collection are meant to reveal new histories to the reader, histories of which he/she previously knew nothing.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Once again note the use of mythology as a teaching tool to bring the student or learner into a better understanding of reality. This strongly connects the text as a whole to the Romantic Imperative.

It is here, even before the story proper of *Isabella* begins, that the text starts revealing its pseudo-historical and pedagogical motivations, which I wish to characterize as a program of *Umbildung*. The word *Umbildung* parses into a term that designates a changing (*um*) education (*Bildung*). The reader becomes aware that this text is not a traditional historical account – the text does not pretend to be conventionally accurate – but rather we are meant to read *Isabella* as a new and enlightened history. What the purpose and effect of this new education, with its rewritten history and mythology, are will be discussed in the following sections. The reader should, however, take this entire prologue, with its merger of rewritten myth and new history, as the pattern of the entire following text.

Yet this very pattern of rewritten myth that saturates the story of *Isabella* is also the quality that makes a reading based on myth a difficult challenge. The composition of the text, with its continuous inter-weavings of distinct source material, forces the reader to unwind a very convoluted narrative, searching for very specific traits. Each reading of the text can reveal a new use of an adapted mythological tale. Furthermore, many mythological references are intertwined with a separate, unrelated piece of source material, which makes identifying the underlying characteristics of this new hybrid myth challenging.

Various critics have reviewed the text in attempt to delineate and catalog this mixture of myths. Schürer's essay "Quellen und Fluss der Geschichte: Zur Interpretation von Arnim's *Isabella von Ägypten*" is an excellent example of this. The essay reviews the many sources and mythical influence Arnim used in his creation of the novella. This includes Arnim's mythical and fantastic knowledge of

Gypsy culture, including their spiritual history (193-194); the magical tales associated with the mandrake root (194-195); and the mythical stories of Jewish sorcery, including the creation of the golem (195-196).

These mythical sources, including the previously mentioned Moses and Pegasus motifs, come from various backgrounds, times, and cultures. Yet Arnim combines them all into a single narrative, which, in the words of Schürer, is “ein Teppich, in dem Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, Zukunft und Transzendenz verwoben sind” (197). Schürer argues that this mixture of many parts is used by Arnim to recreate a vanished time and place. Arnim utilizes “die alten Quellen, weil er sie für Produkte einer unreflektierten Erzählhaltung hält, die das wahrste Bild des Lebens einer vergangenen Zeit, die erschildern möchte, vermitteln” (190-191). In other words, Arnim sought to reconstruct “the good old times” by combining the various myths from simple and idealized societies and periods.

To an extent I agree with Schürer that the text is attempting to symbolize and recreate a lost world. However, I wish to reroute this interpretation in a slightly different direction. I suggest that this very hybridity – a mixture of numerous mythological parts whose separate individual components are made indistinguishable from one another – is specifically a religiously-motivated textual construct. By reworking, merging, and tightly winding disparate myths and legends into one another, the text demonstrates a longing and striving for a new, universal (catholic) mythology. This new myth, the background story of a new universal religion, is used to tell the story of Isabella, the focal point around which the new religion is created. Schürer notes that the “heilige Isabella” is depicted as

a “Vorbild,” an example for others to follow and emulate (203). However, developing my own concept of *Umbildung* – a re-education concerning history and religion – I suggest that Isabella is not simply a “Vorbild,” but actually the new religious icon or image – the *Bild* – around which (*um*) a new religion and religious mythology is created. In order to demonstrate this, I wish to draw attention to one final piece of mythical source material Arnim utilizes in his narrative. Specifically: the religious icon of the Virgin Mary and her connections to Isabella.

IV. The Myth of Mary

Religious hybridity is not only a characteristic or theme of the text. It can also be observed in the title figure of Isabella, through her connection to the figure of the Virgin Mary. There have previously been critical analyses finding similar traits between Isabella and a virgin mother figure. But it is difficult to associate Isabella directly with the Virgin Mary. This is due primarily to Mary’s status as an unsullied, completely pure, and deified figure, in contrast to Bella’s many faults. Various critics have correctly noted her personality defects and character stains. For example, Friedrichsmeyer observes that Isabella does indeed have disturbing, even violent, flaws, drawing attention to the fact that she “knowingly sacrifices her nearly human guard dog in the process of creating the *Alraun*” (Friedrichsmeyer 60). And Bella’s pursuit of the mandrake man is itself propelled by her apparent greed and aspiration to become desirable to Charles.

Scenes like these do complicate the presentation of Bella as a completely virtuous and pure figure. However, with reference to her killing of the dog, I contend that it is merely one example of the complicated nature of Bella. That is, if the dog's death is a sign of her dark side, it is simultaneously a sign of her compassion. Any reading of the dog's death at the hand of Bella should not overlook the many textual points noting her compassion towards the animal, despite his own ambivalent, even sometimes hostile, attitude towards her. Apparently, the two had hated each other "seit früher Zeit" when he had bitten her, and he served her "mit einer widrigen Demut" (Arnim 637). The dog is obviously unhappy with Isabella, who recognizes this and realizes that his death will reunite him with her father, his original master.

[S]ie war gewiß, daß sich der beim Vater Michael besser als bei ihr gefallen müsse. (638)

Furthermore, she makes an effort to make his final days pleasant and is sure to give him "die leckersten Bissen, weil sie wußte, was er für sie tun müsse" (638). Yes, she will be taking his life, but she is aware of his sacrifice and is sure that he will be happier in the end. Far from a cold-blooded killing, her attitude towards the dog's sacrifice is one of understanding and awareness of his unhappiness with her in life.

Additionally, the apparent greed that compels Bella to magically create the *Alraun* is, I suggest, overshadowed by both her ability to acquire the mandrake and her behavior once he is "born." It is true that Bella seeks out the mandrake as part of her quest to magically dupe Charles into loving her, which does establish a deceptive and avaricious quality in her character. Yet at the same

time, she would have been unable to acquire the mandrake if she did not fit the qualities mentioned in her father's magic books. Reading through these books, she comes across the spell for retrieving a mandrake root that stipulates that the performer be a girl, who:

mit ganzer Seele liebt, ohne Begierde zur Lust ihres Geschlechtes, der die Nähe des Geliebten ganz genügt: eine erste, unerläßliche Bedingung, die vielleicht in Bella zum erstenmal wahrgeworden war [...]. (636)

Moreover, once utilizes these positive character traits to get the mandrake, she seems to forget her original purpose and lovingly treats the creature as her own child. Ultimately, although Bella does have underlying character flaws, the text adamantly points out that she is *also* a noble being.

While these seemingly contradictory character traits could be described as complex or Bella herself described as flawed, I argue that both of these sides of her character spectrum come together to play a specific role in the text: By portraying Bella with negative and stereotypical Jewish traits (e.g. greed), the text maintains her connection to her "Jewish" background. But by simultaneously portraying her as a good and virtuous character the text, in a sense, redeems her from this negativity. And I use the word "redeem" here purposefully, since it demonstrates Bella's connection to a specifically "good" and converted "Jewish" background. In other words, the text reminds us of her "Jewish" heritage through her negative Jewish stereotypes, but then shows her movement away from these traits by emphasizing her goodness.

Yet this goodness that Bella gains through "conversion" also plays another role within the text. Once the reader does recognize her as a potentially moral

character, her connection to another similarly righteous mythical figure begins to manifest itself – namely, the Virgin Mary (Mücke 204).⁵⁸

The first hints at this connection show early in the text, as the narrator begins revealing the various aspects of Isabella's character and background. As the daughter of Duke Michael of the Gypsies and an aristocratic Dutch mother, Isabella is herself a princess-like figure within the realm of the Gypsies. As such, she is simultaneously just one member among many within a despised minority group, yet also revered by those within that minority. Mary's own status as a revered personage, but only within the realms of Christianity, has parallels to this situation. Their respective behaviors and beings are even more strongly linked when Isabella's own virtuousness is described. For example, the previously referenced qualities needed to acquire the mandrake root. Bella is portrayed as a pure being and, although perhaps not a physical virgin, her ability to love in a spiritual and restrained manner, sets her apart as a virginal figure. In fact, the text goes on to state that the Gypsy people had always seen her as such a consecrated and separate being – "ein Wesen höherer Art" (Arnim 636) It is only now that Bella herself realizes this status and accepts her own purity. Ultimately, as the revered and venerated leader of an entire group of people, and a sacred

⁵⁸ Von Mücke also draws connections between Isabella and the Greek mythological figure of Astraea, the celestial virgin who will one day "return from heaven and bring about a renewal of the [Augustan Roman] golden age" of politics and society (203). Von Mücke contends that in "Arnim's story, it is the images and symbols associated with Astraea that inform the utopian character of...Isabella." Like Astraea, Isabella "becomes the key figure...of how the traditional imperial model of power is to be transformed into an altogether new model of political power and leadership" (203). While I focus on the connections between Isabella and the Virgin Mary in this section, the presence of Astraea further supports the concept of religious hybridity within not only the text, but within characters themselves.

symbol for that same group to exalt, Bella becomes a Virgin Mother figure in her own right.

This re-representation of the Virgin Mary in the figure Isabella is further developed and alluded to throughout the course of the storyline. At one point Isabella, mourning for her executed father, steps outside and partakes in a memorial meal of bread and wine. As she grieves and customarily breaks the bread and pours the wine, she witnesses the pale moon rising, in which she sees “ihres Vaters bleiches Angesicht, auf seinem Haupt die Krone, welche die Zigeuner aufgesetzt hatten” (627). The presence of the bread and wine in the scene automatically causes the reader to think of the Christian Eucharist and the final meal of Christ, according to the Christian New Testament. As such, Michael seems to be a Christ figure, viciously executed for protecting his people. His young daughter partakes in Communion “in remembrance” of him, echoing Christ’s own instructions.

Yet I believe this connection to the original Christian story can be taken further. Keeping in mind Isabella’s ties to the Virgin Mary, her place in this scene gives her a new religious and iconic dimension. To start, as Isabella looks out a window she sees her father’s corpse being taken down from its high execution point. This mimics the traditional Christian belief of the Virgin Mary witnessing Christ’s execution, elevated on a high cross, and mourning his death. Furthermore, she witnesses the “resurrection” of her father both in a dream and through the rising moon. And seeing his face in the moon, crowned and in the heavens, she becomes the sole connection between the heavenly resurrected

prince and the Gypsy people remaining on earth. In other words, Isabella has, like the Holy Virgin within Christian tradition, become the mediator between her people and the resurrected ruler.

This status is confirmed when, at the end of the tale, Charles witnesses Isabella:

[W]ie sie ihm tröstend und liebend an den Gefilden der ewigen Gedanken begegnete, wo die Irrtümer des Menschen mit der Last seines Leibes in Staub zerfallen. Sie winkte ihm, und er folgte ihr bald und sah ein helles Morgenlicht, worin Isabella ihm den Weg zum Himmel zeigte. (738-739)

Isabella has apparently mimicked Mary's Assumption into Heaven and herself become, if not a deity, then most definitely a holy icon – an image or *Bild* – to be revered. She is the one who leads souls towards God and Heaven, and as such becomes a savior of sorts herself.

One final textual example that ties Bella to her mythical counterpart Mary is not only one of the most explicit, but also an example of the mythical hybridity mentioned above. That is, the original story of Mary is rewritten using other unrelated tales, legends, and genres. It begins immediately after Bella locates and unearths the mandrake, having brought it to life by following the spell in her father's magic books. The text is perfectly clear in demonstrating her love for the creature.

Zärtlicher kann eine Mutter ihr Kind, das sie bei einem Erdbeben verschüttet glaubt, nicht vertrauter, nicht bekannter, als Bella den kleinen Alraun aus dem letzten Erdenstaube an ihre Brust hob und ihn von allem Anflug reinigte. (641)

It is obvious here that Bella's love for the little mandrake is a specific type of love: that of a mother for her child. Through this creature, Bella has become a veritable

mother – more than the female leader of her people, but the actual caregiver for an individual helpless being. What is more, she received this “child” in a miraculous way – without any sort of sexual relationship. She is a true Virgin Mother. The text even draws this connection for the reader, quoting the Gospel of John’s proclamation that:

Also hat Gott die von ihm geschaffene Welt geliebet, daß er ihr seinen eingebornen Sohn gesendet hat. (644)⁵⁹

It is evident here that Bella and her mandrake child are mimicking the Virgin Mary and her own miraculous childbirth, solidifying yet another connection between Mary and Bella.

This entire scenario has the essence of the Nativity story and demonstrates Bella’s pure love towards her miracle “child.” And while the narrator continually emphasizes this strong devotion, he does so, it seems, to ward off the truly bizarre and grotesque nature of the scene. That is, Bella may be the textual representation of the Virgin Mary, but her child is far from representing the Christ child. Here we have the Nativity being rewritten – where the Holy Mother cares for not the savior, but a horrific little creature.

And this mandrake man truly is monstrously horrific. As she pulls it out of the ground, it wriggles and writhes, but lacks any facial features.

Endlich war sie in ihrem Zimmer, hatte ihr Licht angezündet und besah das kleine Ungeheuer. Es tat ihr leid, daß er nicht einen Mund zum Küssen, nicht eine Nase habe [...] daß keine Augen sein Inneres kundmachten und daß keine Haare den zarten Sitz seiner Gedanken umsichteten [...]. (641)

⁵⁹ Original biblical quote is from John 3:16.

Although this description is veiled through Isabella's compassion and deep devotion to the mandrake, conjuring up a mental image of this being – misshapen and lacking any sort of human features, yet eerily breathing the breath of life – is certainly a gruesome experience. The storyline then ventures further into the realm of horror as Bella continues to follow the spell's instructions and gives the root-man makeshift facial features from various objects. She places millet on his head as hair and berries on his face for eyes. Finally she places a rose-hip branch on the face for a mouth – but does not notice that she “ihm diese [Hagebutte] bald aus Liebe schief küßte,” (642). His deformed body is malleable and jumbled.

This entire passage, far from endearing, is truly a body-horror spectacle simply masquerading as a Nativity scene. Bella may be a representation of the Holy Mother, but the mandrake-man is far from being a textual contemporary of the holy Christ child. The original Nativity story is vital to the myth of Mary, as it truly is the centerpiece of her tale: her status as the virgin birth-giver to Christ. Yet in *Isabella*, the mythical story is altered from its original form into a veritable horror story: Mary “giving birth” to a repugnant humanoid who grows to resent her and interfere with her life. This being the case, the reader is compelled to seek out who or what this mandrake truly represents. What is the purpose of creating a parental relationship between the righteous and virginal Isabella and a disgusting and conniving little creature?

To answer this question I would like to return to and expand upon the previously mentioned topic of the textual representations of stereotypical “good”

and “bad” Jewish characters. For in addition to Bella’s connection to the myth of Mary, she also is part of the text’s overarching depiction of Gypsy-as-Jew (Helfer 72). Her status as a “Jew” is not only an additional example of the text’s practice of combining various myths and traditions into a single character or plotline. It is specifically a single thread in the text’s overall depiction of Bella as the amalgamation and focus of various traditions and religious practices. As not only the new representation of the Virgin Mary, but also a connecting point to the text’s “Jews,” Bella begins to emerge as the center point for the creation of a new form of mythology, of a new pan-Christian, “catholic” religion.

V. Conversion and Unity

The presence of stereotypical Jewish figures within *Isabella* has already been firmly established. Martha Helfer’s work on the latent anti-Semitism in this and other contemporaneous texts identify various “Jewish” characters through traits and behaviors stereotypically associated with the minority Jewish population of Europe. As previously discussed, however, the text of *Isabella* arguably splits its representations of “Jewish” characters into “good” (i.e. converted) and “bad” (i.e. unconverted) Jews. This delineation of the two groups and my own subsequent definition of each as either converted or unconverted becomes apparent through (1) the text’s own blatant labeling of negative “Jewish” traits and (2) the behavior of characters who possess those traits.

Concerning these negative “Jewish” traits, the text features two prominent figures openly labeled as Jewish. They are the Jewish magician and the golem

he creates – both of whom are continually portrayed and described negatively according to Jewish stereotypes. Of the golem the text states that she possessed “ein echtes Judenherz in ihrem Körper” (Arnim 701-702). The golem’s “Judenherz” creates a behavior that includes a fear of losing money (702) and simplified motivations that include nothing more than that:

was in des jüdischen Schöpfers Gedanken gelegen, nämlich Hochmut, Wollust und Geiz, drei plumpe Verkörperungen geistiger, herrlicher Richtungen, wie alle Laster [...]. (688-689)⁶⁰

Such statements demonstrate that the text has its own concept of “Jewishness” and the characteristics associated with it. Once we are able to identify these traits and their presence in other characters of the text, these same negative qualities in other characters create a textual population of negative “Jewish” figures.

As previously noted, the text early on connects the Gypsy population with the Jewish population. While the Gypsies may not be Jews specifically within the storyline, they do share traits and histories (Helfer). Applying the above-mentioned negative Jewish stereotypes, such as greed, to certain Gypsy characters, these figures, including Bella, can be labeled as “Jewish.”

⁶⁰ The narrator goes on to say that this horrible behavior possessed by the golem is so extreme that even it “unterschied sie [der Golem] selbst vom Juden” (689). This assessment would seem to suggest a separation between the sinful golem and the larger Jewish population in general – that in fact “Jews” are not as bad as immoral as she is. However, the narrator makes an interesting point by stating that these immoral traits exist in the golem without a complementary “geistige Richtung” (689). This would suggest that it is not the fact that she possesses such unsavory characteristics that distinguishes her from the Jewish population, but rather that she has no sense of spiritual responsibility to theoretically counter those traits. In other words, the text still associates the negative stereotypes with the Jews, but notes that they have a spiritual sense of responsibility to perhaps thwart those traits. This, I believe, speaks to the theme in my reading of the differentiation between the textual portrayals of converted and unconverted “Jews.” According to these narrative statements the Jews seem to possess a spiritual potential – one that would counteract their “Hochmut, Wollust und Geiz.” Accessing this spiritual potential and using it to remove their respective “Jewishness” mimics a conversion process: accepting a new spiritual guide and orthodoxy to remove one’s old sinful ways.

For example, the two most prominent Gypsy characters of the text, Bella and Braka, both display a certain level of lust for wealth. Braka continually obsesses over money and gold. In fact, it is her suggestion that Bella try to come in contact with Charles in order to receive some of his massive fortune.

[D]as Kuppeln war lange ihr Hauptgeschäft, und diesmal konnte sie auf einmal das Glück aus dem niedern Stande emporreißen. (632)

At another point Braka also betrays her view of money as “der wahre Hauptschlüssel, die wahre Springwurzel, bei deren Berührung die Türen aufspringen” (635). For her, wealth is the true source of power – a source she continually desires. She passes on this view and longing to Bella herself, whose entire purpose in procuring the little mandrake man is due to his supposed magical ability to obtain money.

There also appears to be a connection between the Gypsies and Jews of the text in the use of magic and mystical acts. Both groups, throughout the story, employ the supernatural: Bella using books of magic to learn how to bring a mandrake root to life; Braka exchanging goods with a Jewish doctor, in order to acquire some powerful drops, “welche manchen Sterbenden schon belebt hatten” (685); and of course there is the Jewish magician who uses mystical formulas and knowledge to create the golem.

However, one of the strongest connections between the two groups, mentioned above, is their initial rejection of the Holy Family. Both groups refused to recognize Christ and his parents as holy and, according to Christian tradition, have suffered from rejection from their homelands, forced to become nomads within outside territories. As such, both groups are an unwanted population within

Christian Europe. Duke Michael, Bella's father, described his people as being treated like vermin, blamed for any and all problems within standard society.

Uns geht es wie Mäusen, hat eine Maus den Käse angenagt, so sagt man, die Mäuse sind's gewesen, da geht's an ein Vergiften und Fangen aller [...]. (625)

This analogy eerily matches the historical practices of persecution and discrimination against Jewish populations in Europe.

Yet there is a major distinction between such European Jews and these "Jewish" Gypsies: their subsequent acceptance of and conversion to the Christian religion. While their initial rejection of Christ parallels the traditional view that the Jewish people also spurned him, the Gypsies have recognized their fault.

Als sie [die Zigeuner] nun später den Heiland [Christus] aus seinem Tode erkannten, den sie in seinem Leben verschmäht hatten, da wollte die Hälfte des Volks durch eine Wallfahrt, soweit sie Christen finden würden, diese Hartherzigkeit büßen. (624-625)

With this act the Gypsies also display a quality similar to that of the Wandering Jew, who was forced to wander endlessly due to his own rejection of Christ (Helfer 75). Through both this Wandering Jew imagery and their portrayal as "Jews" within the text as a whole, however, we must distinguish the Gypsies as specifically *converted* Jews: those who have removed themselves from their own Judaic religious and cultural roots and accepted Christianity. These converted "Jews" have acknowledged that "geistige Richtung," so to say, and seek to counter their "Jewish" heritage through penance. This is evident throughout the text when various Gypsy/Jewish characters acknowledge their devotion to the Christian religion. The very opening lines of the storyline itself describe Braka,

whose very greedy and deceptive nature betrays her as a stereotypical “Jew,” is faithfully praying and reciting the *pater noster* (Arnim 622).

Ultimately, while the Gypsies can be read as “Jews” within the text, they are specifically Christianized or at least converted from their previous religious convictions. The negative Jewish stereotypes that saturate *Isabella* function, therefore, as a means for us to identify these characters as “Jewish,” all while the text simultaneously attempts to conceal this cultural and religious background through the group’s Christian associations (Helfer 73). Therefore, these Jewish Gypsies, while noticeably still “Jewish,” are actively and willingly seeking religious integration and redemption within the Christian world.

This stands in sharp contrast to the other negatively-portrayed “Jewish” characters within the text who, unlike the Gypsies, are not shown as having Christianized behaviors. These un-Christian “Jewish” characters – the mandrake man and the golem – are explicitly separate from the Gypsies of the text. That is, although they are identifiably “Jewish” through the same stereotypes as the Jewish-Gypsies, they are specifically not Gypsies, and therefore cannot necessarily be read as converted. Furthermore, it is these explicitly unconverted “Jews,” in whose character descriptions negative Jewish stereotypes reach bizarre and disturbing levels, who function as the story’s antagonists, which is why I have labeled them as the “bad” Jewish figures of the text. They are the forces of interference and destruction who ultimately undermine religious universalism.

As previously noted, there is some overlap in characteristics between the converted and unconverted “Jews” of the text. The concept of greed or lust after riches, which is seen in both Braka and Bella, is also seen in the mandrake. He possesses a selfish resourcefulness, using deception and trickery to cleverly gain what he desires. Yet unlike, for instance, Braka, who might be seen as religiously repentant, the mandrake man is continually greedy and does not appear to regret or feel guilty about his behavior. In other words, he does not wish to repent of the very negative behavioral traits that label him as a “Jewish” figure.

The mandrake’s “Jewishness” then seems to escalate from this behavior into his very physical form. Despite his being brought to life by Bella, the two of them are physically separate from one another – they do not share any sort of bodily traits with one another. The “Jewish” Gypsies are recognizably human, but the mandrake is not. He is often described as resembling or imitating a child, despite his protestations that he is a man. The physical deformations and horrific makeup previously described only add to his perception as a humanoid. His mental capacities are also questioned and critiqued when he is described as having the same destructive “Gescheitheit” of “verwachsenen Kindern”⁶¹ (Arnim 649). This statement connects his abnormal, literally deformed, appearance to a specific type of psychological state and ability to reason – one that is specifically

⁶¹ The phrase “verwachsenen Kindern” here is an interesting way to describe the mandrake man. By itself, “verwachsene Kinder” would seem to imply mentally challenged children or perhaps even adults with the mental capacity of children – anyone who does not truly fit into standard social behaviors or thought patterns, due to either physical deformities or psychological issues. But the word “verwachsen” is particularly interesting here when used in relation to the mandrake man. Noting the prefix “ver” here, the mandrake is literally being presented as something that had grown incorrectly – something is not natural or right about the way he developed. The scene where Bella literally maneuvers his facial features is testament to this. But perhaps what should be taken from this description is the fact that the mandrake has not fully developed – he is not a human and must remain an other.

portrayed as negative and undesirable. Therefore, his very unlikable and exaggerated mannerisms have manifested themselves in his own appearance as a character – distinguishing him from the various textual figures as an other. We could extend this observation to say that it is specifically his negative “Jewish” behaviors, of which he does not repent, that has not only separated him socially, but also physically.⁶²

This connection between inner “Jewish” traits and outward behaviors can also be seen in the other antagonist of the text: the golem Bella. As previously noted, the golem is an explicit example of the text’s bigoted approach towards Jewishness – as exemplified by the specifically sinful Jewish heart it possesses. And like the mandrake, it is the golem’s negative nature and behavior that specifically make it a “Jewish” character.

VI. A New Religious Icon vs. Religious Disunity

Of course once we identify this split, the obvious follow-up question is: Why? What is the purpose and function of portraying both converted and unconverted “Jewish” characters? While it has been suggested that the text blames these Jewish figures for a lost European unity (Helfer), I wish to go a step

⁶² The issue of the mandrake-as-Jew’s physical otherness should be addressed here. So far it appears from this argument that the mandrake is destined to remain a negative being. After all, if he was born abnormally and grew up deformedly (“verwachsen”), he had no choice but to remain with the body similar to that of a negatively-portrayed stereotypical Jewish figure: small and childlike, oddly misshapen, etc. His anti-social behaviors, therefore, seem only to be a logical extension of his physical destiny. However, the fact that (1) his physical appearance is to connected to “Jewish” behavior, (2) “Jewish” behavior within the text *can* be altered (such as with the conversion of the Gypsy “Jews”) and (3) the Mandrake’s body is shown to be malleable and changeable (e.g. Isabella’s adding facial features and adjusting them) demonstrate the possibility that the mandrake has physically manifested his bad behavior, but that it could also be changed, if his behavior also changed.

further and say that these characters, working in conjunction with the Isabella-as-Mary motif, serve as a mythological example⁶³ to demonstrate a specifically lost *religious* unity within Europe. As such, the text serves as a literary example of the Novalis text *Christenheit oder Europa*.

As I argued in the introduction, Novalis' text can be read not as an overt endorsement of Christianity itself, but rather as a longing for religious unity – whatever spiritual form that unity may take. Novalis desired the medieval Catholic church in a more linguistic sense, as a “catholic” or universal entity, rather than the institution of the Roman Catholic Church itself. As such, Novalis' text puts forward the concepts of Romantic aesthetic and spiritual con-fusion. This medieval spiritual unity was as close to a Christian kingdom on Earth as there had every previously been, yet was ultimately undermined and fragmented through Protestantism – those who wished to remove themselves from the “catholic” faith.

Arnim's text can be read as a second “historical” attempt at this religious unity. As I previously argued, Isabella can be read as a Virgin Mary figure. As such, she becomes a new religious icon or image – a *Bild* – for her people to admire and venerate. She is the center of Gypsy unity and the leader they will follow. Through their affair and potential marriage, Bella and Charles demonstrate a new hypothetical religious fusion – the unification of the Holy Roman Empire and the converted Gypsies with their Virgin Mary stand-in. Note these are both separate forms of Christian belief, yet they are (potentially) brought together into a single new form of spirituality – a Pan-Christianity of sorts

⁶³ That is a fictional teaching tool used to reinforce religious concepts. See Introduction.

– that encompasses many different spiritual variations, cultures, histories, and geographies within a single religion. It is here, with a new Virgin icon of this pan-Christian faith, that the concept of *Umbildung* moves from being solely a concept of rewritten history and education, to also a religious idea – that of building a new religion around a new icon or image. Isabella becomes the holy *Bild* around which a new pan-Christianity is built.

Furthermore, *Umbildung* here functions as the specifically spiritual reeducation needed as the new form of Christianity is set in place. And a spiritual education, as I reviewed in the Introduction, requires a myth. And as the text of *Isabella von Ägypten* presents to us the story behind and the demonstration of the new pan-Christian icon, the narrative itself becomes a myth of this new religion, presenting the figureheads and deities to the new spirituality's adherents, and ultimately also a reason for its failure.

Wir fühlen uns *durch das erzählte* Mißgeschick [Charles'] ersten Liebe [...] versöhnt. (Arnim 738, emphasis added)

It is through the telling and re-telling of the story, through the myth, that the machinations of spiritual belief become apparent to the observer.

However, the text is also a source of rewritten history – it is an explanation as to why this new unifying spirituality does not exist currently in the real world. Just as Protestantism, according to Novalis, broke up Christendom in the Middle Ages, the “unconverted Jews” in Arnim’s text serve as the scapegoats for the loss of religious unity in Europe. As previously established, both the Gypsies and the mandrake are “Jewish” characters. Even more, Isabella – the Virgin Mother – gives life to the mandrake man – he is, essentially, part of their community. Yet,

he refuses to “convert.” That is to say, he retains his religious separateness, evident by the negative Jewish stereotypes attributed to him. Furthermore, he uses those negative skills and characteristics to undermine the union of Bella and Charles. While Charles is certainly not represented as an ideal religious or pious figurehead, he is not entirely at fault for the failure of religious integration. For the text places ultimately blame not on him, but on the “unconverted Jewish” mandrake, “der [Charles’] irdische Bahn verletzt hatte,” through his political conniving and “schnöder Geldlust” (738). Through his stereotypical jealousy and greed, the mandrake undermines the unity of Charles and Bella, ultimately forcing disharmony among his “mother’s” people and within Charles’ empire. The mandrake retains his own (negative, unconverted) religious traits, and uses them against those who could unify Christianity, causing the spiritual “Trennung” suffered by Charles’ descendants (738).

VII. Conclusion

Whereas the previous texts I have examined in this study retain their fictional status and do not, at least overtly, attempt to be anything more than fictional or mythical representations, *Isabella* is different. Its desire to be both a myth and a history make it stand out from the other examples of *Bildung* in the Romantic tradition. As a hybrid myth/history, the text is similar to Karen Armstrong’s example of the Jewish Passover and Exodus tradition. As I noted in the introduction, Armstrong brings attention to this custom.

We do not know what actually happened when the people of Israel escaped from Egypt and crossed the Sea of Reeds, because the story has

been written as myth. [B]ut the rituals of Passover have for centuries made this tale central to the spiritual lives of Jews, who are told that each one of them must consider himself to be of the generation that escaped from Egypt. (Chapter 6)

Likewise, Arnim's text is a history that perhaps never was, but that is not the point (Friedrichsmeyer 55). The main purpose of the myth is to explain the cultural and spiritual principles of a religion or culture. In this instance, it is an opportunity to exclaim and mourn the loss of a pan-Christian unity in Europe. It is, however, ironic that the text as a history/myth – a spiritual teaching tool – matches so closely in purpose and function the Jewish Passover Seder history/myth; *Isabella von Ägypten* mimics the very religious tradition (i.e. Jewish) that it views as the cause of religious disunity in Europe.⁶⁴

Yet simultaneously – and perhaps inadvertently – by adopting the same usage as Jewish religious myth, the text – independent of Arnim – moves one step closer towards the theme of religious fusion. The story actually begins to integrate the stray religious traditions that it initially tried to overshadow and “convert” in a final (and likely unintentional) attempt at the spiritual unity the myth itself calls for. So while Arnim as author desired religious unity on a pan-Christian scale and mourned its loss at the expense of the separate Jewish religious tradition, the text itself as Romantic myth actively and independently seeks to integrate that separate tradition.

Perhaps it is this tension between history and myth, between the author's intention and the textual effects, that is mimicked in the uncertainty of the narrative and the *Nacherzähler*. Just as *Isabella* the text gets away from Arnim

⁶⁴ Helfer notes that the narrative is a reversal of the Exodus story, in that the Gypsy/Jews are sent back into Egypt (Helfer 71-77).

and takes on a life and meaning of its own, so too does the myth of Isabella refuse to be held down by the *Nacherzähler*. It is then no wonder that the text – hearkening back to Wilhelm Grimm’s assessment – continues beyond the framed borders set down by the author. The narrator has lost control of the story and whatever mythical meaning that was originally intended. Arnim’s text *Isabella von Ägypten* may promote themes of anti-Semitism and religious bigotry, but the myth of *Isabella von Ägypten* moves beyond such biases and becomes an excellent example of the Romantic concept of spiritual oneness.

Conclusion

Early German Romanticism is not merely a designation of a style of writing. It is a new *Weltanschauung* – a revolutionary way of approaching not only aesthetics, but the very fabric of reality as well. The theories put forward by the writer-philosophers – there truly is no distinction between the two disciplines in this movement – demonstrate the members’ radical reinterpretation of humanity, spirituality, and the cosmos. The Romantics sought to draw out and call attention to the potential aesthetic/spiritual unity they saw as the very underlying substance of the universe. It truly is philosophy concerned with grandness, with a multidimensionality that is concerned with more than the realm of literature presented in this dissertation.

And yet literature is a critical part of this philosophy. It is through the creation of myth and in the production of text that we as humans can truly begin to address and attempt to comprehend the various facets of the world we inhabit. As texts – etymologically stemming from *texere*, meaning to weave together – the new Romantic myths mimic in both form and content the spiritually pantheistic concept of unifying the many components and inhabitants of reality. As a collection of mythical texts – a bibliography, Schlegel’s “biblisches Projekt” – the literature creates a new spiritual book, a new Bible. This new book of Romantic myth– as both text (*texere*) and with its message of fusion and unity – is itself etymologically connected to the term *religio* – to bind together. Romantic myth is a means of revealing and representing a new religion and a new religious book, and writing becomes both a literary and spiritual act.

But in the historical context of the Romantic movement, this spiritual act was also unorthodox and revolutionary. Myth – or more precisely, rewritten myth – played yet another role in disguising atheistic/pantheistic themes and philosophy from the accusations of unorthodoxy. Romantic myth had the potential to introduce a silent revolution, altering humanity's perception of religion without openly challenging the religion of the day. While this spiritual philosophy may not have observably integrated itself into society at large, it marked a shift in theology that did not end with the Jena Romantics.

Heinrich Heine's later passionate promotion of pagan ideals extends the concept of pantheism from realms of post-Enlightenment poetic production to a real-world spirituality of the German people.

The philosophical pantheism that arose in Germany under the belated influence of Spinoza was partly, in his [Heine's] eyes, a revival of the old Germanic religious heritage. The innate pantheistic instinct of the German soul reasserted itself first, he believed, in German art, even before it became embodied in a philosophical theory; what the early Romantics wrongly felt as nostalgia for medieval Catholicism had an older deeper source. (Gerrish 445)

For Heine the version of medieval European religion – the *Urkatholizismus* – admired by the early Romantics was not a sufficient enough move away from orthodoxy. It was merely a Judeo-Christianized distortion of the pantheism native to Germany before the mass conversion. Furthermore, as a defining characteristic of “Germanness,” pantheism was for Heine – as for Arnim before him – not merely a silent religious revolution. It was an open rallying point for nationalism and political unity.

While Heine's vision of a German religious counterpart to the French Revolution did not come to fruition, his idealistic continuation (and occasional criticism) of the unorthodox concepts first promoted by the Early Romantics demonstrate that these ideas did not die with the dissolution of the group in Jena. Although my dissertation focuses on specific writers and texts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, further studies on the concept of Romantic pantheism and unorthodoxy in other texts during and beyond this time period would be possible. To cite but two examples, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, which Novalis wrote as a counter to *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, is rich with spirituality and potential explorations of Romantic pantheism. Hoffman's *Der goldne Topf*, which advocates or at least positively supports an unlimited pantheistic education, could be read as a retelling of the Genesis myth.

My mythological approach to proto-Romantic and Romantic literature – and my focus on interpreting religious themes against the backdrop of the spiritual debates that arose in the eighteenth century – has allowed me to open up new and unexpected dimensions of these mainstream texts. Religion was, and continues to be, a hotly debated topic involving many personal opinions. The ability of the Romantics to question the religious standards of their day in a way that venerates, yet simultaneously evolves those beliefs is certainly a skill that should be admired today.

Bibliography

- Ammerlahn, Hellmut. "Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*: An Apprenticeship Toward the Mastery of Exactly what?" Colloquia Germanica 30.2 (1997).
- . Imagination Und Wahrheit: Goethes Künstler-Bildungsroman *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* Struktur, Symbolik, Poetologie. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003.
- . "The Marriage of Artist, Novel, and *Bildungsroman*: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, a Paradigm in Disguise." German Life and Letters 59.1 (2006): 25.
- Anderegg, Johannes, and Edith Anna Kunz, eds. Goethe Und Die Bibel. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005.
- Andriopoulos, Stefan. "Occult Conspiracies: Spirits and Secret Societies in Schiller's *Ghost Seer*." New German Critique 35.1 (2008): 65.
- Arnim, Achim von. "Isabella Von Ägypten." Achim Von Arnim Werke in Sechs Bänden. Ed. Renate Moering. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990. 622.
- Arnold, Heinz Ludwig, and Mirjam Springer. Friedrich Schiller. Munich: Richard Boorberg Verlag GmbH & Co KG, 2005.
- Arntzen, Helmut. "Tiecks Märchenerzählung Oder Die Ambiguität Der Romantischen Poesie: Ein Vortrag." MLN 103.3 (1988): 632.
- Avni, Abraham Albert. The Bible and Romanticism: The Old Testament in German and French Romantic Poetry. The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1969.
- Barthes, Roland. Mythen Des Alltages. Trans. Helmut Scheffel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1964.
- . Mythologies. Trans. Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Bascom, William. "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives." Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth. Ed. Alan Dundes. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984. 5.
- Beaujean, Marion. "Zweimal Prinzenerziehung: *Don Carlos* Und *Geisterseher*. Schillers Reaktion Auf Illuminated Und Rosenkreuzer." Poetica: Zeitschrift für Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft 10 (1978): 217.

- Behler, Ernst. German Romantic Literary Theory. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- . Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe. Vol. 18. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1963.
- Beiser, Frederick C. The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Beiser, Frederick C. The Fate of Reason : German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Beresford, Matthew. From Demons to Dracula : The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth. London: Reaktion, 2008.
- Berger, Claudia. Ortlosigkeit Des Fremden: "Zigeunerinnen" Und "Zigeuner" in Der Deutschsprachigen Literatur Um 1800. Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1998.
- Berthoin, Christine. Gothic Hauntings : Melancholy Crypts and Textual Ghosts. Basingstoke England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Bidney, Martin. "Beneficent Birds and Crossbow Crimes: The Nightmare-Confessions of Coleridge and Ludwig Tieck." Papers on Language and Literature 25.1 (1989): 44.
- Blackall, Eric A. The Novels of the German Romantics. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Blair, John. Tracing Subversive Currents in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1997.
- Bloom, Clive. Gothic Histories : The Taste for Terror, 1764 to the Present. London; New York: Continuum, 2010.
- Bluhm, Lothar. "'Du Kommst Mir Vor Wie Saul, Der Sohn Kis'...": *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* zwischen "Heilung" Und "Zerstörung". (2004): June 20, 2013. Goethezeitportal. June 20, 2013
<http://www.goethezeitportal.de/db/wiss/goethe/meisterslehrjahre_bluhm.pdf>.
- Blumenberg, Hans. Work on Myth. Trans. Robert M. Wallace. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985.
- Bonfiglio, Thomas P. "Electric Affinities: Arnim and Schelling's Naturphilosophie." Euphorion: Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte 81.3 (1987): 217-39.

- Bristow, William. "Enlightenment." The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2011): 2012.
<<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/enlightenment/>>>.
- Broszeit-Rieger, Ingrid. "Paintings in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister Novels: The Dynamics of Erecting and "Eroding" the Paternal Law." Goethe Yearbook 13 (2005): 105.
- Brown, Jane K. "Im Anfang War Das Bild: *Wilhelm Meister* Und Die Bibel." Goethe Und Die Bibel. Ed. Johannes Anderegg and Edith Anna Kunz. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005. 241.
- Butler, Marilyn. Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Carrol, Noel. "The Nature of Horror." The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 46.1 (1987): 51.
- Clery, E. J. The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Conger, Sydney M. "Another Secret of the Rue Morgue: Poe's Transformation of the *Geisterseher* Motif." Studies in Short Fiction. Winter (1987).
- Corkhill, Alan. "The Crisis of Sexual Identity in Ludwig Tieck's *Der Runenberg*." Forum for Modern Language Studies 37.1 (2001): 38.
- Crisman, William. "Poe as Comparatist: Hawthorne and "the German Tieck" (Once More)." The American Transcendental Quarterly 16.1 (2002): 53.
- Crouter, Richard. Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between Enlightenment and Romanticism. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Curran, Jane V. Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship: A Reader's Commentary. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002.
- Davison, Carol Margaret. Gothic Literature 1764-1824. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009.
- Dickson, Sheila. "The Body-some Body-any Body: Achim Von Arnim and the Romantic Chameleon." The German Quarterly 74.3 (2001): 296-307.
- Dixon, Wheeler W. A History of Horror. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2010.

- Duban, James. "'Visible Objects of Reverence': Quotations from Goethe in Melville's Annotated New Testament." Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies 9.2 (2007): 3.
- Dundes, Alan. "Introduction." Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth. Ed. Alan Dundes. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984. 1.
- Edmunds, Kathryn R. "'Ich Bin Gebildet Genug...Um Zu Lieben Un Zu Trauern': Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship in Mourning." The Germanic Review 71.2 (1996).
- Eichner, Hans. "Friedrich Schlegel's Theory of Romantic Poetry." PMLA 71.5 (1956): 1018.
- Eigler, Friederike. "Wer Hat 'Wilhelm Schüler' Zum 'Wilhelm Meister' Gebildet? *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* Und Die Aussparungen Einer Hermeneutischen Verstehens- Und Bildungspraxis." Goethe Yearbook 3 (1986): 93.
- Estes, Yolanda, and Curtis Bowman, eds. J.G. Fichte and the Atheism Dispute (1798-1800). Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010.
- Fernandez, Berta Raposo. "Das Scheitern Der Aufklärung Am Beispiel Von Schiller "Geisterseher"." Revista de Filologia Alemana 2 (1994): 161.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, Daniel Breazeale, and Günter Zöller. The System of Ethics : According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. Die Grundzüge Des Gegenwärtigen Zeitalters. Ed. August Messer. Berlin: Wegweiser, 1924.
- . Die Wissenschaftslehre in Ihrem Allgemeinen Umriss (1810). Ed. Günter Schulte. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1976.
- Frank, Manfred. Einführung in Die Frühromantische Ästhetik: Vorlesungen. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989.
- . Der Kommende Gott: Vorlesungen Über Die Neue Mythologie. Vol. 1. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982.
- . The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism. Trans. Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003.

---. Unendliche Annäherung: Die Anfänge Der Philosophischen Frühromantik. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997.

Friedrichsmeyer, Sara. "Romantic Nationalism: Achim Von Arnim's Gypsy Princess Isabella." Gender and Germanness: Cultural Productions of Nation. Ed. Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller. Providence/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997. 51.

Frost, Brian J. The Monster with a Thousand Faces : Guises of the Vampire in Myth and Literature. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Press, 1989.

Garloff, Katja. "Figures of Love in Romantic Antisemitism: Achim Von Arnim." The German Quarterly 80.4 (2007): 427.

Gelbin, Cathy S. The Golem Returns: From German Romantic Literature to Global Jewish Culture, 1808-2008. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2011.

Gerrish, B. A. "The Secret Religion of Germany: Christian Piety and the Pantheism Controversy." The Journal of Religion 67.4 (1987): 437.

Gille, Klaus F. "Der Berg Und Die Seele: Überlegungen Zu Tiecks "Runenberg". " Neophilologus 77.4 (1993): 611.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre." Johann Wolfgang Goethe Sämtliche Werk, Briefe, Tagebücher Und Gespräche. Ed. Wilhelm Voßkamp and Herbert Jaumann. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992. 355.

Haggerty, George E. Queer Gothic. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

Hart, Gail. "Save the Prinz: Schiller's *Geisterseher* and the Lure of Entertainment." Goethe Yearbook 18 (2011): 245.

Hartwich, Wolf-Daniel. "Messianische Mythen Und Romantischer Antisemitismus: Von Achim Von Arnim Zu Richard Wagner." Romantische Religiosität. Ed. Alexander von Bormann. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005. 243.

Heine, Heinrich. Zur Geschichte Der Religion Und Philosophie in Deutschland/Die Romantische Schule. Ed. Manfred Windfuhr. Vol. 8. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1979.

Helfer, Martha. The Word Unheard: Legacies of Anti-Semitism in German Literature and Culture. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011.

- Hoermann, Roland. Achim Von Arnim. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984.
- Honko, Lauri. "The Problem of Defining Myth." Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth. Ed. Alan Dundes. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984. 41.
- Hösle, Vittorio. "Wilhelm Meister and Mignon as Models for Nicholas Nickleby and Smike?" Neohelicon 2 (2008): 237.
- Huch, Ricarda Octavia. Die Romantik: Ausbreitung, Blütezeit Und Verfall. Tübingen: R. Wunderlich, 1951.
- Hunter, Michael, and David Wootton, eds. Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Hurst, Matthias. Im Spannungsfeld Der Aufklärungs: Von Schillers Geisterseher Zur TV-Serie the X-Files: Rationalismus Und Irrationalismus in Literatur, Film Und Fernsehen 1789-1999. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2001.
- Jones, Lindsay, ed. Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. Vol. 1,4,10. Detroit/New York/San Francisco/San Diego: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005.
- Kant, Immanuel. Dreams of a Spirit-Seer. Trans. E. F. Goerwitz. Ed. Frank Sewell. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1992.
- Kimpel, Dieter, and Jörg Pompetzki, eds. Allerhand Goethe: Seine Wissenschaftliche Sendung Aus Anlaß Des 150. Todestages Und Des 50. Namestages Der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität in Frankfurt Am Main. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, 1985.
- Kimpel, Richard W. "Nature, Quest, and Reality in Tieck's *Der Blonde Eckbert* and *Der Runenberg*." Studies in Romanticism.9 (1970): 176.
- Kirk, G. S. "On Defining Myths." Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth. Ed. Alan Dundes. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984. 53.
- Klees, Michael. "Gesellschaftliche Randgruppen Im Werk Achim Von Arnims: zur Funktion Von Zigeunern Und Juden in 'Isabella Von Ägypten' Und 'Die Majorats-Herren'." Fremde Und Fremdes in Der Literatur. Ed. Joanna Jablonska and Erwin Leibfried. Frankfurt/New York: P. Lang, 1996. 60.
- Kluge, Sofie. "An Allegory of *Bildung*: Friedrich Schlegel's Interpretation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*." Orbis Litterarum 62.3 (2007): 177.

- Klussman, Paul Gerhard. "Die Zweideutigkeit Des Wirklichen in Ludwig Tiecks Märchenovellen." Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie 83 (1964): 426.
- Kordas, Ann. "House of Horrors: *Brideshead Revisited* at the Movies." Roman Catholicism in Fantastic Film: Essays on Belief, Spectacle, Ritual and Imagery. Ed. Regina Hansen. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2011. Location 1611.
- Kreuter, Peter Mario. Der Vampirglaube in Südosteuropa. Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2001.
- Krings, Marcel. "Die Entgötterte Welt: Religion Und Ökonomie in Goethes "Lehrjahren"." Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie 127.2 (2008).
- Kuzniar, Alice. "'the Crystal Revenge': The Hypertrophy of the Visual in Novalis and Tieck." The Germanic Review 74.3 (1999): 214.
- Labriola, Patrick. "Ludwig Tieck and Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Fairy Tale and the Popular Legend." The Journal of Popular Culture 2.38 (2004): 325.
- Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe, and Jean-Luc Nancy. The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism. Trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester. Albany: State of New York University Press, 1988.
- Landes, James. "The Kantian Analytic of the Sublime in Tieck's "Runenberg"." Colloquia Germanica 42.1 (2009): 5.
- Lange, Horst. "Goethe and Spinoza: A Reconsideration." Goethe Yearbook 18 (2011): 11.
- Leistner, Bernd. "Goethes "Werther" Und Seine Zeitgenössischen Kritiker." Goethe-Jahrbuch 112 (1995): 71.
- Lillyman, W. J. "The Enigma of *Der Blonde Eckbert*: The Significance of the End." Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies 7 (1971): 144.
- . "Ludwig Tieck's "Der Runenberg": The Dimensions of Reality." Monatshefte 62.3 (1970): 231.
- Linder, Luz-Maria. Goethes Bibelrezeption: Hermeneutische Reflexion, Fiktionale Darstellung, Historisch-Kritische Bearbeitung. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 1998.
- Loewen, Harry. Goethe's Reponse to Protestantism. Berne and Frankfurt/M.: Herbert Lang & Co. Ltd., 1972.

- Lokke, Kari E. "Achim Von Arnim and the Romantic Grotesque." Germanic Review 58.1 (1983): 21-32.
- Lüer, Edwin. Aurum Und Aurora: Ludwig Tiecks "Runenberg" Und Jakob Böhme. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1997.
- Lukacs, Georg. Goethe Und Seine Zeit. Bern: A. Francke AG. Verlag, 1947.
- Mahoney, Dennis. "'Der Geisterseher'." 30 September 2008 2008. The Literary Encyclopedia.
<<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworcs.php?rec=true&UID=21899>>.
- . "*Der Geisterseher*: A Princely Experiment Or, the Creation of a 'Spiritualist'." Schiller's Literary Prose Works: New Translations and Critical Essays. Ed. Jeffrey L. High. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008. 234.
- Maier, Edward K. "Gothic Horror, the Windowless Monda, and the Self: The Limits of Enlightenment in Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*." Colloquia Germanica 39.3/4 (2006): 243.
- Mauthner, Fritz. Der Atheismus Und Seine Geschichte Im Abendlande. Vol. 3, 4. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1963.
- McCarthy, John A. "Criticism and Experience: Philosophy and Literature in the German Enlightenment." Philosophy and German Literature: 1700-1990. Ed. Nicholas Saul. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 13.
- McIntosh, Christopher. The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason: Eighteenth-Century Rosicrucism in Central Europe and its Relationship to the Enlightenment. New York: E.J. Brill, 1992.
- Minter, Catherine J. "'Die Macht Der Dunklen Ideen': A Leibnizian Theme in German Psychology and Fiction between the Late Enlightenment and Romanticism." German Life and Letters 54.2 (2001): 114.
- Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue: The Evolution of the American Horror Film. Dir. Monument, Andrew. Prod. Maddrey Joseph. Perf. Henriksen, Lance, Larry Cohen, Joe Dante, et al. Lorber Films/Lux Digital Pictures, 2009.
- Mortiz, Karl Philipp. "Fragmente Aus Dem Tagebuche Eines Geistersehers." Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie/Andreas Hartknopfs Predigerjahre/Fragmente Aus Dem Tagebuche Eines Geistersehers. Ed. Hans Joachim Schrimpf. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968. 305.

- Mucignat, Rosa. "Theatrical Revolutions and Domestic Reforms: Space and Ideology in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and Austen's *Mansfield Park*." Comparative Critical Studies 7.1 (2010): 21.
- Mücke, Dorothea E. von. The Seduction of the Occult and the Rise of the Fantastic Tale. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Murray, Patrick. The Development of German Aesthetic Theory from Kant to Schiller. Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1994.
- Müsebeck, Ernst. "Das Verhalten Der preußischen Regierung Im Fichteschen Atheismusstreit." Historische Zeitschrift 3.19 (1916): 278.
- Myers, Perry. "Ludwig Tieck's *Der Gestiefelte Kater*: Striking the Balance between the Idealistic and the Fantastic." Monatshefte 96.1 (2004): 62.
- Neumann, Peter Horst. "Legende, Sage Und Geschichte in Achim Von Arnims 'Isabella Von Ägypten'." Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft 12 (1968): 296.
- Nitschke, Claudia. "Unanständige Wiedergänger: Liebe Und Revolution in Erzählungen Von Arnim Und Eichendorff." Weimarer Beiträge: Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft, Ästhetik und Kulturwissenschaften 55.2 (2009): 221.
- Norman, Judith. "Nietzsche and Early Romanticism." Journal of the History of Ideas 63.3 (2002): 501.
- Novalis. "Die Christenheit Oder Europa." Novalis: Werke in Einem Band. Ed. Hans-Dietrich Dahnke. Berlin/Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1985. 325.
- Paulin, Roger. "The Early Ludwig Tieck and the Idyllic Tradition." Modern Language Review 70.1 (1975): 110.
- Pfau, Thomas. "*Bildungsspiele*: Vicisstudes of Socialization in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*." European Romantic Review 21.5 (2010): 567.
- Plenderleith, H. Jane. "An Approach to Goethe's Treatment of Religion in *Dichtung Und Wahrheit*." German Life and Letters 46.4 (1993): 297.
- Polaschegg, Andrea. "Genealogische Geographie: die Orientalistische Ordnung Der Ersten Und Letzten Dinge in Achim Von Arnims 'Isabella Von Ägypten'." Athenäum 15.95 (2005).
- Preizt, Max, ed. Friedrich Schlegel Und Novalis: Biographie Einer Romantikerfreundschaft in Ihren Briefen. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1957.

- Priestman, Martin. Romantic Atheism: Poetry and Freethought, 1780-1830. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Purver, Judith. "Wild Women: A Comparison of Interpolated Narratives in Tieck's *Das Zauberschloss* and Eichendorff's *Dichter Und Ihre Gesellen*." German Life and Letters 40.2 (1987): 117.
- Purves, Maria. The Gothic and Catholicism : Religion, Cultural Exchange and the Popular Novel, 1785-1829. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009.
- Rahe, Konrad. Cagliostro Und Christus: Zu Den Biblischen Anspielungen in Goethes Komödie "Der Groß-Cophta". Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 1994.
- Railo, Eino. The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism. New York: Humanities Press, 1964.
- Rickert, Heinrich. Fichtes Atheismusstreit Und Die Kantische Philosophie: Eine Säkularbetrachtung. Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1899.
- Rijn, Rembrandt van. Saul and David. Ed. Ronald Klip. The Hague: The Mauritshuis, 1650-1655.
- Röseler, R. O. "Goethe Und Der Jenaer "Atheismusstreit"." Monatshefte 41.1 (1949): 351.
- Sage, Victor. "Black Venice: Conspiracy and Narrative Masquerade in Schiller, Zschokke, Lewis and Hoffmann." Gothic Studies 8.1 (2006): 52.
- Sagmo, Ivar. Bildungsroman Und Geschichtsphilosophie: Eine Studie Zu Goethes Roman "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre". Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1982.
- Sauder, Gerhard. "Aufklärische Bibelkritik Und Bibelrezeption in Goethes Werk." Goethe-Jahrbuch 116 (1999): 108.
- . "Der Junge Goethe Und Das Religiöse Denken Des 18. Jahrhunderts." Goethe-Jahrbuch 112 (1995): 97.
- Schiller, Friedrich. "Der Geisterseher." Schillers Werke. Ed. Magnus Enzensburger. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1966. 346.
- Schimitz-Emans, Monika. "Die Laterna Magica Der Erzählung. Zur Semantik Eines Bilderzeugungsverfahrens Und Seiner Poetologischen Funktion." Monatshefte 102.3 (2010): 300.

- Schings, Hans-Jürgen. Die Brüder Des Marquis Posa: Schiller Und Der Geheimbund Der Illuminaten. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. Kritische Und Theoretische Schriften. Ed. Andreas Huyssen. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1984. 143.
- . Deutsches Museum. Vol. 3. Hildesheim/New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973.
- . "Gespräch Über Die Poesie." Kritische Und Theoretische Schriften. Ed. Andreas Huyssen. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1984. 165.
- . Philosophical Fragments. Trans. Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. Literary Notebooks, 1797-1801 Commentary by Hans Eichner. Ed. Hans Eichner. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957.
- Schneider, Kirk J. Horror and the Holy : Wisdom-Teachings of the Monster Tale. Chicago, Ill: Open Court, 1993.
- Schottroff, Willy. "Goethe Als Bibelwissenschaftler." Allerhand Goethe: Seine Wissenschaftliche Sendung Aus Anlaß Des 150. Todestages Und Des 50. Namestages Der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt Am Main. Ed. Dieter Kimpel and Jörg Pompetzki. Frankfurt am Main/Bern/New York: Verlag Peter lang, 1985. 111.
- Schürer, Ernst. "Quellen Und Fluss Der Geschichte: Zur Interpretationen Von Arnims *Isabella Von Ägypten*." Lebendige Form: Interpretationen Zur Deutschen Literatur. Ed. Jeffrez L. Sammons and Ernst Schürer. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1970. 189.
- Schutjer, Karin. "Beyond the Wandering Jew: Anti-Semitism and Narrative Supersession in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*." The German Quarterly 77.4 (2004).
- Seyhan, Azade. Representation and its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1992.
- Smart, J. J. C. "Atheism and Agnosticism." The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2013 (2013)
<<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/atheism-agnosticism/>>>.
- Smith, John H. "Living Religion as Vanishing Mediator: Schleiermacher, Early Romanticism, and Idealsim." The German Quarterly 84.2 (2011): 137.

- Strack, Friedrich. "Das 'Wunder' Der Geschichte Und Die 'Wahrheit' Der Sagen: Isabella Von Ägypten Als Poetisches Experiment." Zwischen Den Wissenschaften: Beiträge Zur Deutschen Literaturgeschichte. Ed. Gerhard Hahn, Ernst Weber, and et al. Regensburg: Pustet, 1994. 292.
- Summers, Montague. The Vampire in Europe. New Hyde Park, N.Y: University Books, 1968.
- Tatar, Maria M. "Deracination and Alienation in Ludwig Tieck's *Der Runenberg*." The German Quarterly 51.3 (1978): 285.
- . "Unholy Alliances: Narrative Ambiguity in Tieck's "Der Blonde Eckbert"." MLN 102.3 (1987): 608.
- Tesch, Pamela. "Romantic Inscriptions of the Female Body in German Night and Fantasy Pieces." Neophilologus 92 (2008): 681.
- Thrower, James. A Short History of Western Atheism. London: Pemberton Books, 1971.
- Tieck, Ludwig. Werke in Vier Bänden. Ed. Marianne Thalmann. Vol. 2. München: Winkler-Verlag, 1963.
- van Elferen, Isabella. "'the Blood is the Life': Roman Catholic Imagery in Vampire Films of the 1930s." Roman Catholicism in Fantastic Film: Essays on Belief, Spectacle, Ritual and Imagery. Ed. Regina Hansen. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2011. Location 1370.
- Varnado, S. L. Haunted Presence : The Numinous in Gothic Fiction. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987.
- Vazsonyi, Nicholas. Lukacs Reads Goethe: From Aestheticism to Stalinism. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1997.
- Voges, Michael. Aufklärung Und Geheimnis: Untersuchungen Zur Vermittlung Von Literatur- Und Sozialgeschichte Am Beispiel Der Aneignung Des Geheimbundmaterials Im Roman Des Späten 18. Jahrhunderts. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1987.
- von Hanstein, Adalbert. Wie Entstand Schillers Geisterseher?. Reprograph. Dr. d. Ausg. Berlin 1903 ed. Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1977.
- Weeks, Andrew. "Between God and Gibson: German Mystical Romantic Sources of *the Passion of the Christ* ." The German Quarterly 78.4 (2005): 421.

Weissberg, Liliane. Geistersprache: Philosophischer Und Literarischer Diskurs Im Späten Achzehnten Jahrhundert. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1990.

Whiting, Raleigh. "Novalis' Influence on Der Runenberg: On Ludwig Tieck's Contribution to Early Romanticism's Image of the Artist." Carleton Germanic Papers.17 (1989): 53.

Wilke, Sabine. Poetische Strukturen Der Moderne : Zeitgenössische Literatur Zwischen Alter Und Neuer Mythologie. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992.

Curriculum Vitae

- Education: October 2013
Ph.D., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- October 2012
M.A., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- January 2006
B.A., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- Occupations: September 2008-May 2013
Teaching Assistant, Department of Germanic, Russian, and
East European Languages and Literatures, Rutgers, The
State University of New Jersey
- September 2008-May 2012
Graduate Student Director, German Living-Learning
Community, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- September 2011-June 2012
Graduate Student Intern, Office of Student Involvement,
Department of Student Life, Rutgers, The State University of
New Jersey
- September 2006-July 2007
Lehrassistent, Hermann-Lietz Schule, Hohenwehrda,
Germany