

**Heinrich Heine in Paris**  
**The Poetics and Politics of Self-fashioning**

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*Submitted for the degree of D.Phil., Trinity Term 2011*



## Short Abstract

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Drawing on the concept developed in Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, this thesis presents Heinrich Heine as an extreme case of the 'self-fashioning' writer. I argue that his preoccupation with self-construction determines what and how he writes, how he treats his reading public and, crucially, how he perceives and evaluates his own career.

Though self-fashioning occurs in his earliest works, Heine's decision to move to Paris (1831) was the single biggest self-determining act of his life; he constructs it as a moment of rebirth. Inspired by the July Revolution, he sought a new authorial identity in harmony with the supposed new world order and his own social, political and artistic ideals. However, the reality of *juste-milieu* society—a continual seesawing between modernisation and restoration—cast doubt on the possibility, even the desirability, of novelty and progress, the goals of revolution.

In this context, Heine cultivates the identity of a perpetually embattled writer through confrontational dialogue with contemporary ideologies and his readership alike; ever ambivalent in his attitude to the role of art in a modernising world, he is also engaged in an internal battle with the self. First I show how he establishes himself in the role of cultural correspondent in the early journalism by developing a mode of self-conscious spectatorship which enables him to negotiate between contemporary French conditions and German readership expectations. Second I investigate the strategies he uses to free himself from his *Buch der Lieder* legacy and redefine his identity as a poet in Paris; I show how the *Neue Gedichte* (1844) are assembled to record and reflect on this transitional process, making the collection a monument to his self-fashioning tendencies. Finally I explore how Heine manipulates the relationship between public and private within a concept of self to construct his authorial identity; I consider a number of self-editing and self-reconstructive practices in prefaces, letters and autobiographical writing.



## Long Abstract

### *Heinrich Heine in Paris: The Poetics and Politics of Self-fashioning*

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Heinrich Heine's response to the 1830 July Revolution lies at the heart of his most major period of self-revision, in Paris during the 1830s and 1840s, and he constructs it as the critical turning point in his biography and career.

Drawing on a concept first developed in Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980) this thesis presents Heine as an extreme case of the 'self-fashioning' writer – one whose preoccupation with self-construction determines what and how he writes, how he treats his reading public and, crucially, how he perceives and evaluates his own career. Although Heine began constructing an identity and public persona in his earliest works, his decision to move to Paris in 1831 was the single biggest self-determining act of his life with lasting consequences for his person and career; besides two visits to Hamburg in 1843 and 1844, he lived the rest of his days in a kind of self-imposed exile from his native country. In this thesis I explore how he constructs post-revolutionary Paris as the locus of a new beginning for himself as writer. When he left Germany he conscientiously turned his back on the old order upheld by Metternich's Restoration and sought to reinvent his literary identity in harmony with the supposed new world order and his own social, political and artistic ideals. That being said, he remained inherently wary and sceptical

of revolution and its potential political outcomes; he presents the reality of life under Louis-Philippe's politically unstable July Monarchy, characterized by its continual oscillation between modernisation and restoration, in such a way as to cast doubt on the possibility, even the desirability of progress and revolutionary transformations. Despite claiming to be an emancipator and freedom fighter, he consistently refused solidarity with his liberal and radical contemporaries, including those who were fellow expatriates in Paris. A fundamental discrepancy in aesthetic priorities led him to remain pointedly aloof and, in some cases, subject these potential allies to virulent polemic. As self-fashioner, Heine cultivates the identity of a perpetually embattled writer through confrontational dialogue with contemporary ideologies and his readership. Meanwhile, ever ambivalent in his attitude to the role of art in a modernising world, he also struggles internally with his own artistic and political priorities, private and public agendas.

In 1834 Wolfgang Menzel complained 'noch niemand hat von Heine mehr gesprochen als er selbst. Sollte er dieses Geschäft nicht lieber der Nachwelt überlassen?'. He had inadvertently stumbled upon the defining characteristic of Heine's writing, indeed of his entire literary project. This has to do with a fundamental question concerning literary identity, its representation and reception. Who was Heine and, critically, who is in a position to judge who he was? Heine presents a problematic case: he appears unusually conscious that his identity, that is to say the self to be accessed by the contemporary world and posterity alike, is entirely the product of a literary performance, a textual

persona, or succession of personae, he constructs. This thesis aims to show that the frequent interventions by a strongly autobiographical authorial voice that so irritated Menzel are in fact the textual residue of an ongoing process of identity construction, which Heine conducts through various forms of confrontational dialogue and for which he deploys a number of strategies that are politically or poetically motivated, and often both. With one eye permanently on his literary audience, he also develops publicistic strategies to the same end. Considered in this light, his career as a writer in Paris, which is to be understood as a reflection of his evolving sense of self, emerges as the driving force behind the production of texts rather than the aggregate of its works. This poses a significant problem for literary historians and biographers of Heine alike.

Scholarship continues to suffer from two tendencies which Jeffrey Sammons has highlighted as symptomatic of an 'exhaustion of current Heine studies' (*Alternative Perspectives*, 2006). Commentators have long treated Heine's works selectively and acknowledged only those elements which corroborate their own particular political, in recent times often ideologically redemptive, agenda; quite apart from distorting his judgments, the result of this approach has been to whitewash the many contradictions and ambiguities that characterize him as a writer and his literary project as a whole. Those who have sought to redeem him from the kind of ideological attack of which Karl Kraus's polemical essay *Heine und die Folgen* (1910) has become an iconic example tend, meanwhile, towards adulation and uncritical readings; typically their commentary merely reproduces and rehashes Heine's own pronouncements,

remaining firmly within the limits of what he would have us believe – especially about himself. In considering the case of an extreme self-fashioner, we not only avoid the common pitfalls that give rise to such unprofitable perspectives, but are also able to assess the role Heine has played in bringing these about.

To read Heine in this way calls for careful consideration of his style while upholding a degree of critical detachment from the literary performance this produces. With such an approach it is possible to gain a more nuanced understanding of who Heine thought he was – and who we might suppose him to be. Moving away from the kind of ideologically driven assessments that continue to inform critical perspectives, I seek to address the identity question more abstractly, in terms of a literary and psychological conundrum Heine presents. In my focus on his career in Paris (from 1831 until his physical collapse in 1848) and on the earlier projects in particular, I also redress an imbalance in the critical attention paid to various parts of his oeuvre. Prime instances of self-fashioning by virtue of their position relative to the Paris caesura, the early journalism and first poetry collection of the Paris years have been comparatively neglected – perhaps precisely for this reason, but to the detriment of our understanding of Heine overall. *Französische Maler* and *Französische Zustände* are often passed over for the more mature work in the same genre, *Lutezia* (1840-1848); meanwhile, in contrast to the *Buch der Lieder* (1827) and *Romanzero* (1851), the *Neue Gedichte* collection has largely been dismissed as disjointed and confused. I present the works published in Paris as

part of an integrated whole rather than treating these, as commentators seem prone to do, as disconnected literary projects. This brings to light a number of aesthetic preoccupations which recur in all areas of Heine's writing, not least the many paradoxes, the poetic and political dilemmas, which I show to be essential to his sense of self.

This thesis investigates Heine's self-fashioning in three parts. In Part One I consider him in his new role as a foreign correspondent for Cotta's *Morgenblatt* and *Allgemeine Zeitung* and show how he uses the process of orientating himself with respect to contemporary political and cultural conditions in Paris to lay down the parameters of a literary and political programme: an aesthetic response to the recent July Revolution in light of his emigration. Chapter One discusses *Französische Maler*, Heine's review of the 1831 Salon at the Louvre. At first sight an unlikely beginning to his subsequent career in political journalism, I show how Heine develops an 'art of spectatorship' through literary readings of contemporary paintings as a framework in which to explore the relationship between politics and art. Through conscious exploration of the parameters of the spectator's role, he raises (without necessarily answering) questions pertaining to his understanding of his identity as a modern, post-revolutionary writer. He stages a moment of crisis facing the artist: a confrontation between the exigencies of political reality in revolution-prone Paris and a Goethean ideal of art. Its radical implication, that the end of art is nigh, is nonetheless called into question by his own mastery of a language of aesthetic expression in this text, which ends on an essentially positive note with a prophecy and creed

designed to launch his artistic programme in a new age. Chapter Two considers how he uses this same art of spectatorship in his commentary on French social and political life in *Französische Zustände* (1832-1833). As a spectator of French conditions and journalist for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, he embodies the role of mediator between France and Germany in a programme of political enlightenment. In one dimension, he manipulates this perspective to develop an effective style of political commentary by which he can purvey the spirit of the revolution to his German audience even under the watchful eye of the Augsburg censor. In another, this serves as a frame within which to explore different dimensions of his authorial profile: the self-proclaimed objective reporter is also always on the verge of becoming a consciously literary author. I show how Heine develops his journalistic style through self-conscious dialogue, on the one hand with Cotta's enterprise and German readership expectations, and on the other with the cultural and political context in Paris – especially the visual dimension of political discourse under the July Monarchy.

Part Two looks at how Heine sought to renew his lyric identity in the eyes of the German public and in accordance with the literary and political programme laid down in the journalism. The *Neue Gedichte* collection lends itself as a case study of his self-fashioning practice. Heine assembled it precisely to trace a narrative of transition according to which he turns his back on his reputation as the archetypal poet of German Romantic song and emerges as a new poet of the times – the author of the controversial political epic *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen*, which he presents as the climax of a process of self-renewal.

I focus on three sections of the 1844 collection in which he enacts this process through a series of confrontations with his own poetic legacy, public opinion and contemporary poets. In light of the unusually long and complex composition history of the *Neue Gedichte* and the essentially retrospective perspective he adopts to assemble the collection in its final form, I argue in Chapter Three that its very title reveals a fundamentally ambivalent attitude to the poetics of self-renewal it appears to affirm. Heine explores this paradox through the metaphor of a new spring for poetry in its opening section, *Neuer Frühling*, which at once reprises and relinquishes the themes and manner of the *Buch der Lieder*. I show how he systematically undermines the diction and tropes of his Romantic legacy and so launches a programme of experimentation with the limits of acceptability in poetic language and reference. Chapter Four discusses its most self-consciously provocative phase in Heine's bid to transform the love lyric – a pivotal moment in his narrative of self-renewal. The scandalous section *Verschiedene* pays homage to the doctrine of political and sexual liberation, Saint-Simonianism, which attracted him in the Paris of the 1830s. However, I establish that subtle changes incorporated when Heine assembled the poems for the *Neue Gedichte*—a substantial number had already appeared as an independent cycle in 1834—effectively dismiss the love lyric as a vehicle for renewal once and for all, and pave the way for this status to be claimed by a new kind of poetry in an overtly political mode. Chapter Five considers the *Zeitgedichte*, Heine's response to the rising tide of political poetry in Germany of the 1840s, in which he seeks variously to discredit and surpass

the aesthetic approaches of his rivals on the literary market. I investigate the strategies he deploys in a poetological critique of the so-called *Tendenzdichter* while himself striving for a higher form of political engagement. The *Zeitgedichte* enact a kind of publicity campaign designed to introduce *Deutschland* as the work to restore him to pre-eminence in the eyes of the German public in light of the new fashion. However, I show how he introduces a familiar current of unease and maintains a fundamentally ambivalent stance towards this kind of political commitment.

The series of confrontations played out in the *Neue Gedichte* is typical of the provocative, combative and often apparently self-denigrating approach Heine adopts in the search to establish a sense of self. The final section of this thesis discusses the case of the self-fashioning author. How did he use the texts which frame his literary oeuvre to manage the literary identity he presents to contemporary readers, anticipated future readers and, not least, himself? Chapter Six examines how, as a writer of prefaces, he seeks to establish authorial legitimacy with respect to both contemporary politics and literary history. Some mental readjustment is required on the part of modern readers used to skipping over prefaces to appreciate their hermeneutic importance for one who perceives in them a function beyond that of mere practical necessity. Heine uses them as a space for self-construction in much the same way as the literary works themselves. I investigate the polemical and fictional strategies he implements to negotiate the terms of his authorship in two prominent examples: the prefaces to *Französische Zustände* (1832) and *Salon I* (1833). The

second of these presents a dramatic staging of his alleged situation as a writer after the revolution, torn between revolutionary responsibility and artistic freedom. Both emerge as literary performances designed to convince the reader that he is intellectually independent and, above all, aesthetically free. Having referred to Heine's letters throughout this thesis as a complement to discussion of the published texts, Chapter Seven establishes that these under-researched documents are further evidence of his self-fashioning tendencies. Despite their understated, offhand tone I show Heine to be a strategic correspondent with as much propensity to fashion his identity for the benefit of one addressee as he shows in the works he destined to broadcast his public image. I outline a system of self-reference which Heine exploits for the purposes of identity construction, using many familiar strategies and in some cases even formulae which recur and are developed in the published works.

The potential for slippage between a biographical and literary self is something Heine exploits in the textual identity he inhabits throughout his literary works. In a final chapter I discuss the unexpected difficulties this poses in the context of autobiography, which casts a paradoxical new light on my portrait of an intensely strategic self-fashioning writer. Why did Heine make such a song and dance of compiling his memoirs? And what is one to make of the *Geständnisse* (1854), a text he presents as the (biographical) key to interpreting his works but which turns out to be merely a repository for recycled versions of his literary identity? I reveal an 'elusive autobiographer' who undermines the possibility of authenticity in his own narratives and

conspicuously evades the task in hand. Access to a private self, a separate biographical identity behind his textual presence, is at once constantly evoked and routinely denied. This conundrum, which I show to be the driving force behind the autobiographical project, is one he appears consciously to uphold in all that he writes. Having established Heine to be a self-fashioning author, in conclusion I am in a position to reflect on what he thought he was doing, or indeed hoped to achieve, by treating his identity in this way, and to assess the implications for the reader.

# Heinrich Heine in Paris: The Poetics and Politics of Self-fashioning

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L. F. E.







## Abbreviations

- DHA *Heinrich Heine: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke, Düsseldorfer Ausgabe*, ed. by Manfred Windfuhr and others, 16 vols (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1973-1997)
- HSA *Heinrich Heine: Werke, Briefwechsel, Lebenszeugnisse, Säkular-Ausgabe*, ed. by the Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, 27 vols (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag; Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1970 ff.)
- B *Heinrich Heine: Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Klaus Briegleb, 6 vols (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1971 ff.)
- HJb *Heine-Jahrbuch*, Landes- und Stadtbibliothek Düsseldorf, Heine-Archiv; Heinrich-Heine-Institut; Heinrich-Heine-Gesellschaft (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1962 ff.)
- Werner *Begegnungen mit Heine: Berichte der Zeitgenossen*, ed. by Michael Werner, 2 vols (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1973)







## Introduction

On 28 July 2010 a bust of Heinrich Heine was unveiled in the Walhalla temple at Regensburg, the hall of fame founded by King Ludwig I of Bavaria in 1842 to honour distinguished personalities of German history. The long campaign to secure his admission and its eventual successful outcome raised many dissident voices and prompted extensive commentary, confirming that ‘es gibt wohl kaum einen deutschen Dichter [...], der von seinem ersten Auftreten an als so sensationell, kontrovers oder zumindest irritierend empfunden wurde. Welch ein Blätterwelt hier zu rauschen beginnt, ist geradezu frappierend’.<sup>1</sup> Jost Hermand’s remark from 1969 is no less pertinent regarding this latest chapter in the long-running quest to enshrine a Heine for posterity, which has only served to reaffirm the peculiarly contentious nature of his reception in general.

As ever Heine’s identity and its representation were at stake. Those in favour of his inclusion, especially the so-called *Freundeskreis Heinrich Heine*, argued for ‘eine Verbeugung vor einem Mann, der durch sein dichterisches Wirken in Deutschland letztlich viel Positives erreicht hat’.<sup>2</sup> A rather vague assessment, this was little more than a thinly veiled justification for their own redemptive political programme which, using Heine as a kind of poster child, sought ‘ein

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<sup>1</sup> Jost Hermand, ‘Heines frühe Kritiker’, in *Der Dichter und seine Zeit: Politik im Spiegel der Literatur. Drittes Amherster Kolloquium zur modernen deutschen Literatur 1969*, ed. by Wolfgang Paulsen (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1970), pp. 113-133 (p. 115). For discussion of the controversial history of various Heine monuments see Dietrich Schubert, “*Jetzt wohin?*”: *Heinrich Heine in seinen verhinderten und errichteten Denkmälern* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> A letter from the *Freundeskreis* chairman Karl-Heinz Theisen to Bavarian minister Dr Hans Zehetmair on 7 December 2001. I am grateful to Dr Peter Wanschler and the *Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst* for sending me documentation from the campaign.

Akt der Wiedergutmachung [...] als sichtbares und deutliches Signal gegen die antisemitischen Ausschreitungen, die nicht aufhören wollen'.<sup>3</sup> On the other side of the debate, opposing voices have condemned the new monument with equally self-righteous fervour as an insult to his memory. Bernd Kortländer complained of 'ungeheure Respektlosigkeit' towards the author of *Verkehrte Welt*, a poem in which Heine ridicules the Walhalla's founder ('Ein Affe läßt ein Pantheon | Erbauen für deutsche Helden'; DHA 2, 127), and one who consistently railed against the 'marmorne Schädelstätte' (cf. *Lobgesänge auf König Ludwig I*; DHA 2, 143).<sup>4</sup> Dieter Borchmeyer left no doubt in his commemorative speech that Heine remains ever susceptible to utilisation as an ideological pawn: 'wir haben Heine nötiger denn je! Heine braucht nicht die Walhalla, aber die Walhalla braucht ihn!'.<sup>5</sup> It is more revealing still that these opposing views were reported, in the press and elsewhere, as being the latest manifestation of a familiar *Streit um Heine*.<sup>6</sup> Bert Gerresheim's sculpture itself embodies the very essence of contention in that it depicts a Lazarus figure, a Heine of the 'Matratzengruft', with a crack running all down one side. Initially much wider, Gerresheim was asked by the Walhalla selection committee to make this less

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<sup>3</sup> See 'Heine in die Walhalla', *Der Freundeskreis Heinrich Heine* <<http://www.heine-kreis.de/index.php?id=55>> [accessed 25 March 2011].

<sup>4</sup> See Michael-Georg Müller, 'Weiter Ärger um Heine-Büste in der Wallhalla, 21.07.2010', in *Der Westen* <<http://www.derwesten.de/kultur/ausstellungen/Weiter-Aerger-um-Heine-Bueste-in-der-Walhalla-id3396167.html>> [accessed 25 March 2011].

<sup>5</sup> 'Heinrich Heine in der Walhalla. Festakt am 28.07.2010'. I owe thanks to Dieter Borchmeyer for sending me a copy of the transcript of his speech.

<sup>6</sup> See Dietmar Goltschnigg, Charlotte Grollegg-Edler and Peter Revers (eds), *Harry...Heinrich...Henri...Heine: Deutscher, Jude, Europäer* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2008), p. 5: 'während Heine im Ausland von Beginn an uneingeschränkt als Autor der Weltliteratur gerühmt wurde, blieb er im deutschen Sprachraum über ein Jahrhundert lang höchst umstritten. Der Streit um Heine, um seine Denkmalswürdigkeit und seine Zugehörigkeit zum Kanon deutscher Literatur reicht bis in die 1880er Jahre zurück.' Engagement with Heine as a *problem* has been especially intense in the critical tradition since Karl Kraus's virulent polemic 'Heine und die Folgen' (1910).

obtrusive; the end result divided opinion, such that 'die einen sahen ihn getilgt, die anderen nur gemildert'.<sup>7</sup> Quite apart from being used to recreate the well-worn portrait of Heine as a 'Zerrissener' and to frame his status as provocateur as part of a self-conscious critique of the entire Walhalla commemorative convention, the fissure effectively became a self-reflexive representation of the dispute itself. With 'Zerrissenheit' so enshrined, it would seem that the very 'Streit um Heine' has become an inescapable cliché.

As outlined, responses in Germany to the new monument have only reconfirmed what Jeffrey Sammons claimed towards the end of the last century in his review of recent reception history, namely that Heine scholarship in its trajectory since the 1960s has become exhausted and 'is not likely to get out of its present static condition unless it is prepared to leave to one side some of the ideologically redemptive purpose that has motivated it for the last twenty-five years'.<sup>8</sup> Sammons suggested a possible reason for this particular critical failing in another essay in which he addresses the question of Heine's self-perception:

[Heine] does, of course, from start to finish talk about himself all the time, publicly and privately, and it is the custom of Heine scholars to reproduce and remix these utterances within a replicative discourse that remains fairly rigorously within the limits of what he would have us believe.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Eckhard Fuhr, 'Ein Riss geht durch die Schädelstätte. 29.07.2010', *Die Welt* <<http://www.welt.de/die-welt/kultur/article8703460/Ein-Riss-geht-durch-die-Schaedelstaette.html>> [accessed 25 March 2011].

<sup>8</sup> 'The Exhaustion of Current Heine Studies: Some Observations, Partly Speculative', in Sammons, *Heinrich Heine: Alternative Perspectives 1985-2005* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), pp. 51-64 (p. 62). NB Originally published in *The Jewish Reception of Heinrich Heine*, ed. by Mark Gelber (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992), pp. 5-19. Anthony Phelan has sought to reverse this trend in his study of Heine's contribution to the articulation of modernity, *Reading Heinrich Heine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> 'Who Did Heine Think He Was?', in *Alternative Perspectives*, pp. 189-206 (p. 190). NB Originally published in *Heinrich Heine's Contested Identities: Politics, Religion and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, ed. by Jost Hermand and Robert Holub (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 1-24.

The effects of Heine's 'relentlessly invasive pseudo-autobiographical voice' (Sammons, *Alternative Perspectives*, p. 193) had been felt as early as 1834 by Wolfgang Menzel, who complained 'noch niemand hat von Heine mehr gesprochen, als er selbst. Sollte er dieses Geschäft nicht lieber der Nachwelt überlassen?'.<sup>10</sup> With this, Menzel had inadvertently stumbled upon the defining characteristic of Heine's writing, indeed of his entire literary project, which has to do with a fundamental question concerning literary identity, its representation and reception. Who was Heine and, critically, who is in a position to judge who he was? For Menzel, a writer and especially a poet should leave all such judgments to posterity or risk compromising his literary enterprise; 'Heine wird seinen großen Beruf deßfalls verkennen,' he suggests, 'denn er ist und bleibt zu subjektiv, jeden Augenblick vergißt er, daß er uns die Welt malen will, indem er uns sich wieder selbst präsentirt' (DHA 5, 805). Heine presents a problematic case in this respect, for he appears unusually conscious that his identity, that is to say the self to be accessed by the contemporary world and posterity alike, is entirely the product of a literary performance, a textual persona, or succession of personae, he constructs. The recent discourse precipitated by the Walhalla monument clearly illustrates the peculiar impact on his reception, which applies during his lifetime and posthumously in equal measure, of what is Heine's tendency to pre-empt the interpretative, even quite often the evaluative function of criticism in an attempt

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<sup>10</sup> In the *Literaturblatt* of Cotta's *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, No. 71 (11 July 1834), p. 283. See DHA 5, 805.

to manage the way his public perceived him. Klaus Briegleb's entertaining piece in *Die Welt* on 14 August 2010, an imaginary interview with Heine 'im Gespräch über seinen Einzug in Walhalla', presents a particularly good example of the problem he has created for those who seek to judge or, in this instance, represent him.<sup>11</sup> The technique Briegleb employs to send up the specious originality of this latest attempt to re-evaluate Heine in a new context ('die skulpturelle Rhetorik, die ihn uns wieder einmal als "den gespaltenen", den "zerrissenen" feilbietet') is ultimately self-defeating, for it relies on performing its literary equivalent: he concocts Heine's responses to questions put by today's 'literarische Welt' as a pastiche assembled out of comments drawn from all over his literary oeuvre which touch on the question of identity, especially his public identity and reputation. One is reminded of Sammons' criticism of *Opfer Heine?*, regarding which he accused Briegleb of writing 'as though he were composing a modernistic literary work with Heine's texts as his resources [...] thus implying that Heine is a topic that no longer requires any inquiry but merely the rhetorical embellishment of what has been established' (*Alternative Perspectives*, p. 52).

The frequent interventions by a strongly autobiographical authorial voice that so irritated Menzel are in fact the textual residue of an ongoing process of identity construction, which Heine conducts through various forms of confrontational dialogue and for which he deploys a number of strategies that

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<sup>11</sup> 'Diese Jesuiten des Nordens: Heinrich Heine im Gespräch über seinen Einzug in Walhalla', *Welt Online* <<http://www.welt.de/die-welt/kultur/literatur/article8997753/Diese-Jesuiten-des-Nordens.html>> [accessed 25 March 2011].

are politically or poetically motivated, and often both. With one eye permanently on his literary audience, he also develops publicistic strategies to the same end; as Friedrich Sengle has observed, 'er ist zugleich ein Dichter und Publizist, [...] dessen wichtigste Funktion vielleicht das Ärgernisgeben ist'.<sup>12</sup> These warrant investigation however unsuccessful they ultimately proved to be in managing his reputation, be this literary or personal, and securing it against (mis)appropriation by his public and posterity alike – indeed perhaps precisely for this reason.<sup>13</sup> By considering Heine as an extreme example of a self-fashioning writer, that is one who constructs his identity self-consciously for strategic purposes, we not only avoid the common pitfalls that continue to impede the development of 'alternative perspectives' in scholarship but are furthermore in a position to assess the part he himself has played in bringing these about. To uncover the *modus operandi* of the self-fashioner requires us to return to a close reading of Heine's style while at the same time upholding a degree of critical detachment from the literary performance this produces. Only then is it possible to proceed to a more nuanced understanding of who Heine thought he was, or indeed who we might suppose him to be. Such an investigation steers us away from the kind of ideologically motivated assessments that have prevailed hitherto, with their tendency to treat Heine's works selectively and so to distort his purpose. We will find ourselves

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<sup>12</sup> *Biedermeierzeit: Deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815-1848*, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971-1980), III, 590.

<sup>13</sup> In 'The Exhaustion of Current Heine Studies', Sammons lamented that 'we are not yet at the point where Heine's own publicistic strategies are subject to critical analysis' (*Alternative Perspectives*, p. 61).

encouraged to address the identity question more abstractly, in terms of a literary and psychological conundrum Heine presents.

‘His life seems nothing less than this: the invention of a [...] form of consciousness, tense, ironic, witty, poised between engagement and detachment, and above all, fully aware of its own status as an invention.’<sup>14</sup> It is not idly that I invoke Stephen Greenblatt’s notion of the self-fashioning writer, as set out in *Renaissance Self-fashioning* (1980), with reference to Heine. That his description (above) of Thomas More’s literary presence and its relationship to the writer’s biographical reality (insofar as this is manifest in his works) should capture so exactly the nature of Heine’s own, is surely no coincidence. In his study, Greenblatt considers six English Renaissance writers who, through force of historical circumstance, ‘are all displaced in significant ways from a stable, inherited social world’ (p. 7 f.); this is the necessary precondition for self-fashioning according to his particular understanding, which ‘always involves some experience of threat, some effacement or undermining, some loss of self’ (p. 9). While he concedes that self-fashioning is to some extent a universal preoccupation, especially among writers,—‘there are always selves [...] and always some elements of a deliberate shaping in the formation and expression of identity’ (p. 1)—he notes the particularity of the early modern period which bore witness to ‘a change in the intellectual, social, psychological and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities’ (p. 1). Literature enacted this

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 31.

change with respect to society, which for Greenblatt betokened 'a shift from absorption by community, religious faith, or diplomacy toward the establishment of literary creation as a profession in its own right' (p. 8). There are clear parallels to be drawn with Heine's own era: besides the dramatic political and social upheavals set in motion by the French and subsequent revolutions, the early Nineteenth Century witnessed in particular the rapid rise of a culture of journalism thanks to technological advances in printing techniques, faster communication links by rail and telegraph and the growth of urban culture. By the middle of the century, literary periodicals had become the focus of reading culture and such literary institutions as the commercial lending library (in Germany the *Leihbibliothek*) aided its revolutionary democratization. With this came a new generation of career writers: on the one hand professional journalists and on the other authors who were now in a position to supplement lengthy book projects with a more regular income, by serializing and publishing their works in the press as well as making journalistic contributions of their own. That said, even within this context Heine presents a special case. What singles him out as an extreme example of Greenblatt's self-fashioning writer is the way he self-consciously orchestrates a 'renaissance' of his own. In the foreword to *Opfer Heine?*, Briegleb hinted in passing at a connection between the considerable problems we face in interpreting Heine due to what he calls the author's 'Selbstbild-spielen', and an 'Autorpoetik der Renaissance' which could be used, so he suggests, to analyse these.<sup>15</sup> Briegleb claims to

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<sup>15</sup> *Opfer Heine?: Versuche über Schriftzüge der Revolution* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 18.

pursue a different purpose, yet arguably his central concern 'Heines Exilwege neu zu sehen' (*Opfer Heine?*, p. 19) might have been well-served had he considered how and to what effect Heine self-consciously invoked just such a poetics when he made the decision to move to Paris in 1831.

Although self-fashioning occurs in Heine's earliest works, his decision to go to Paris was the biggest self-determining act in his life. Even if he could not have foreseen how permanent the move would turn out to be, he exhibited the mindset of an exile from the outset; 'trübselige Umstände machen es nöthig, daß ich noch eine Reihe Jahre in fremden Ländern herumwandern muß', he told Friedrich von Cotta on 31 October 1831 (HSA 21, 25). Following a number of quixotic and abortive attempts to secure employment in Germany, notably a professorship in Munich in 1828 and then the post of council syndic in Hamburg in January 1831, he had eventually cut his losses. He lived the rest of his life by his pen in the French capital with the support of an annual allowance from his uncle Salomon and, from the mid-1830s, an undisclosed stipend from the French government. It has nevertheless been noted that the decision to emigrate had as much to do with redefining his literary identity as with finding a solution to a practical problem: 'die Entscheidung, nach der Revolution von 1830 seinen Wohnsitz nach Paris zu verlegen, enthielt zugleich den Entschluß, sein Profil als Autor zu verändern.'<sup>16</sup> Post-revolutionary Paris was to be the

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<sup>16</sup> Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Heinrich Heine: Europäischer Schriftsteller und Intellektueller* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2008), p. 163. Sammons has highlighted Heine's unsuitability, in terms of qualifications, politics and temperament ('savage-tempered' and 'revolutionary-spirited'), for either of the posts in Germany (*Alternative Perspectives*, p. 195). His apparently practical motive for applying is equally well explained with reference to his literary programme: as a phantasmal measure undertaken by one obsessed

locus of a self-fashioned new beginning – something he claimed long since to have sighted, especially after news reached him of the 1830 July Revolution while he was on vacation on Heligoland. In other words the decision to embrace exile already constituted in and of itself an advanced instance of ‘renaissance self-fashioning’. According to Greenblatt’s definition, this is ‘achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange or hostile’, something which ‘must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed’ (*Renaissance Self-fashioning*, p. 9). When Heine left Germany he conscientiously turned his back on the old order upheld under Metternich’s Restoration, yet he always remained wary and sceptical of revolution and its potential political outcomes. This is reflected in the way he refused solidarity with his liberal and radical contemporaries, not least those who were also fellow expatriates in Paris, despite himself claiming to be an emancipator and freedom-fighter. He remained pointedly aloof, and in some cases subjected these potential allies to virulent polemic; Ludwig Börne, the republican writer and author of *Briefe aus Paris* (1830-1834) whom Heine attacked in his notorious memoir *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* (1840), is the most salient example. Furthermore, even when it became evident that Paris would be his permanent home, he never applied for naturalization despite being convinced of the detrimental effect on his general and pecuniary wellbeing (‘eben so widerwärtig wie kostspielig wird auf die Länge in Paris der Zustand des

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with the need to find a remunerative position that would leave him free to realize his creative and emancipatory purposes’. See Sammons, *Heinrich Heine: A Modern Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 138.

Fremden, der nicht naturalisirt ist. Man wird geprellt und geärgert'; DHA 14/1, 82). This would never have squared with his enduring self-perception as 'einen deutschen Dichter, welcher die schönsten deutschen Lieder gedichtet hat' (ibid., 84). In all, given the way he consciously embodies the position of outsider with respect to France and Germany alike, Heine may be said to have fostered conditions in which his identity would remain a contentious issue – it demanded constant definition while permanently resisting any kind of resolution.

Heine's response to news of the July Revolution is recorded in the *Briefe aus Helgoland*. Purportedly written between 1 July and 19 August 1830, these appear, as Book Two of the *Ludwig Börne* memoir, to bridge the gap between his meetings with Börne in Germany and their first encounter in Paris after Heine's own emigration; as he puts it, 'der Uebergang wäre sonst zu schroff' (DHA 11, 56). Careful analysis reveals that his concern is not really with temporal continuity or a smooth narrative transition in this text; if anything, the letters represent a disruption, stylistically speaking, to the work as a whole.<sup>17</sup> He is interested rather in narrating the manner of his own transition as a biographical subject: from his state before emigrating and before the July Revolution to the self who arrived in Paris to witness post-revolutionary reality with his own eyes – all told, of course, with a decade's hindsight. From this standpoint he notes that what he eventually saw did not meet with what he had enthusiastically

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<sup>17</sup> Gerhard Höhn notes 'der durchgängige "Enthusiasmusstil" mit seinen abgebrochenen Sätzen, der das Zweite Buch als Fremdkörper im Werkganzen erscheinen läßt', in *Heine Handbuch: Zeit-Person-Werk*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004), p. 417.

imagined in his self-proclaimed 'Freyheitsrausch': 'schon die ersten Tage meiner Ankunft in der Hauptstadt der Revoluzion merkte ich, daß die Dinge in der Wirklichkeit ganz andre Farben trugen, als ihnen die Lichteffekte meiner Begeisterung in der Ferne geliehen hatten' (56). Of interest here is not the revelation that his early responses were inaccurate, but rather that Heine's whole account, that is the sequence of letters and subsequent commentary added 'neun Jahre später' (i.e. in 1840), constructs this particular historical moment as a critical turning point within a narrative of identity formation.

The composition history of the *Briefe aus Helgoland* remains a subject of some uncertainty (see Höhn, p. 417 f.; cf. DHA 11, 251 ff.), but it has been convincingly established that they were not written, as Heine continued to insist in an additional passage inserted in the French version of 1855, 'quelques jours avant et quelques jours après la révolution de Juillet' (DHA 11, 195). One telltale sign is his stubborn insistence here on a detail that recurs in all three stages of the text—in the letters themselves, 'nine years later' and in this late additional commentary—as the sole indicator of the modulation of his relationship to Paris. By now the motif in question has acquired a self-consciously symbolic function which preserves it from 'correction' by subsequent editorial intervention; 'j'y ai laissé au général Lafayette son ondoyante chevelure d'argent,' he remarks with reference to the letter dated 6 August, 'bien que peu de temps après, quand j'eus l'honneur de rencontrer M. de Lafayette à Paris, j'aie vu ces boucles argentées changées tout prosaïquement en une perruque brune' (DHA 11, 195; cf. 'neun Jahre später', DHA 11, 56). In

the 'original' letter, the description of Lafayette had been part of an extended wish-dream to witness the revolution firsthand: 'es ist mir alles noch wie ein Traum; besonders der Name Lafayette klingt mir wie eine Sage aus der frühesten Kindheit. [...] Ich will selbst nach Paris gehen, um mich mit leiblichen Augen davon zu überzeugen' (49). In his self-confessed intoxicated state of anticipation Heine can only envisage a mythologized, literary archetype of the triumphant revolutionary hero: 'es muß prächtig aussehen, wenn er dort durch die Straßen reitet, der Bürger beider Welten, der göttergleiche Greis, die silbernen Locken herabwallend über die heilige Schulter...' (49). A spirit of ecstasy conveyed via an exclamatory style and ellipses carries us into the next letter (dated 10 August) almost instantaneously, despite an alleged four-day intermission, where it precipitates a revision of its author's sense of identity and purpose. As readers, we are led to suspect that no time has in fact passed in the writing process, or alternatively to infer that Heine is able to induce the same state in himself simply by recapitulating his own revolutionary formula, 'Lafayette, die dreyfarbige Fahne, die Marseillaise...' (50). Either way, the text does little to disguise its own literary artifice. Heine enacts a carefully staged reversal of the longing expressed at the opening of the very first letter in the series, 'nach Ruhe, [...] nach einem Zustand, wo ich mich meinen natürlichen Neigungen, meiner träumerischen Art und Weise [...] ganz fessellos hingeben kann' (35), which we are inclined to conclude was invoked purely to set up this moment of transition; he realises a fresh revolutionary imperative and assumes the identity of a poet who will channel its message in the form of a wake-up call

to sleeping Germany: 'fort ist meine Sehnsucht nach Ruhe. [...] Ich bin der Sohn der Revoluzion und greife wieder zu den gefeyten Waffen [...]. Ich bin ganz Freude und Gesang, ganz Schwert und Flamme!' (50). We may recall a similarly rhetorical claim made by the author of *Die Reise von München nach Genua* (1830) who had stated, in a bizarre retrospective self-designation as though from beyond the grave, 'ich war ein braver Soldat im Befreyungskriege der Menschheit' (DHA 7/1, 74); the major difference in the *Briefe aus Helgoland* seems to be that Heine reinstates the poetic dimension of his identity, which he had rendered subordinate to the political imperative in the earlier text. As readers of his oeuvre, we are encouraged to see the earlier statement as a kind of foreshadowing of his post-July-revolutionary self, even though on reflection of course we realise that this is entirely a trick of the later text.

Heine's earliest reaction to the recent events in Paris that can be accurately and reliably dated is recorded in a letter to Karl Varnhagen von Ense on 19 November, in which he proposes to make up for a period of neglectful silence with a friend's account of how life has been treating him in the meantime: 'mit kurzen Worten nachzuberichten wie es mir seitdem ergangen, äußerlich und innerlich, und wie es mir noch geht' (HSA 20, 421). He writes:

Wie es Vögel giebt die irgend eine physische Revoluzion, etwa Gewitter, Erdbeben, Ueberschwemmungen &c vorausahnen, so giebts Menschen denen die sozialen Revoluzionen sich im Gemüthe voraus ankündigen, und denen es dabey lähmend betäubend und seltsam stockend zu Muthe wird. So erkläre ich mir meinen diesjährigen Zustand bis zum Ende July. [...] Zwey Monath badete ich in Helgoland, und als die Nachricht der großen Woche dort anlangte, wars mir als verstände sich das von selbst, als sey es nur eine Fortsetzung meiner Studien.

(421 f.)

This is hardly the casual update he advertised. Notwithstanding the non-literary context and presence of an ostensibly biographical self, here too he styles himself as a prophet of the revolution; or one might even say *the* prophet, since he appears to be claiming it to be the natural consequence of his own developing thought. Such is the overwhelming assertiveness of Heine the self-fashioning writer, that he conceives real historical events and his biographical relationship to these in terms of his own predetermined literary project. Moreover, the form the latter takes appears in turn to be not the result of its own outcome but governed rather by his initial ambition—to be a ‘revolutionary’ writer—and *a priori* assumptions about what should follow from that ambition.

In the present study I focus on the earlier works Heine published after 1831, since these testify to a particularly intense period of self-construction founded on the impulse to restructure his literary identity in accordance with his new location in the seat of the revolution. He used what happened historically in July 1830 to project a programme of self-revision in which the revolution acts as a critical turning point and his own subsequent emigration to the French capital the equivalent autobiographical ‘event’. All that he writes in Paris is implicitly ancillary to the desire to define and manage his public image in accordance with this notion. The first part of the discussion considers Heine in his new role as a foreign correspondent for Cotta’s *Morgenblatt* and *Allgemeine Zeitung* and the way in which he orientates himself with respect to contemporary political and cultural conditions in Paris. In the journalism, he lays down the parameters

of a literary and political programme by which he subsequently seeks to renew his lyric identity in the eyes of the German public. In a second section I examine how Heine assembles the *Neue Gedichte* to trace a narrative of transition according to which he turns his back on his reputation as the archetypal poet of German Romantic song, the legacy of his early success with *Buch der Lieder*, and emerges as a new poet of the times. The series of confrontations played out here, with respect to public opinion, contemporary poets and his own poetic legacy alike, is typical of the particular provocative, combative and often apparently self-denigrating approach Heine adopts in the search to establish a sense of self. In my final section I discuss the case of the self-fashioning author and investigate the various self-publicising strategies he deploys in the texts which frame his literary oeuvre—in prefaces, private correspondence and autobiographical writing—to manage the literary identity he presents to contemporary readers, anticipated future readers and, not least, himself. As Hohendahl has observed, ‘Heines Versuch, seine Rolle als literarischen Autor zu klären, war [...] eine Frage, in der private und öffentliche Aspekte untrennbar zusammentraten’ (*Europäischer Schriftsteller*, p. 171). While Heine exploits the potential for slippage between a biographical and literary self in the textual persona he presents throughout his literary works, this poses unexpected difficulties in the context of autobiography which will cast our portrait of this intensely strategic self-fashioning writer in a paradoxical new light.

PART I

*Becoming a Journalist in Paris*



## CHAPTER 1

**The Art of Spectatorship**

The picture Heine paints of his first encounter with Paris in a letter to his friend Karl Varnhagen von Ense, sent shortly after his arrival, constitutes a dramatic instance of self-staging:

Hier [...] ertrinke ich im Strudel der Begebenheiten, der Tageswellen, der brausenden Revolution; – obendrein bestehe ich jetzt ganz aus Phosphor und während ich in einem wilden Menschenmeere ertrinke – verbrenne ich auch durch meine eigne Natur. (27 June 1831; HSA 21, 21)

However excessive, this response to his new situation is wholly commensurate with the fervour of anticipation whipped up in the *Briefe aus Helgoland*, and, more reliably authentic given the publication dates, with Heine's veneration of the French capital ('das geweihte Land der Freyheit') and enthusiastic reception of the July Revolution ('die große Woche von Paris') at the end of the *Englische Fragmente* (see DHA 7/1, 269; 271).<sup>1</sup> It is somewhat surprising therefore, that the first series of articles he writes from Paris, the first product of an encounter he had long envisaged in politicized terms, should restrict itself to presenting a review of painters whose works were on display in the 1831 Salon at the Louvre. For readers of the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* where they were initially published these were the articles which bore witness for the first time to Parisian reality as seen through Heine's eyes. For Heine, meanwhile, they

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<sup>1</sup> The *Englische Fragmente* were first published as part of *Nachträge zu den Reisebildern* in January 1831 and underwent only minimal revision for their publication in *Reisebilder IV* (1833); unlike the *Helgoland Letters*, in other words, there is no cause to doubt that these reactions were formulated around the time of the text's 'Schlußwort', dated 29 November 1830.

represented the prime opportunity to stake out his territory as a foreign correspondent and, beyond that, to establish the parameters of his literary programme in Paris more generally, with respect to the reality of the situation after the July Revolution and his own emigration. Notwithstanding the exuberance he may have felt, and certainly intended to convey to Varnhagen, on first arriving in the French capital, the first texts he published there betoken a controlled operation in fashioning his new profile as writer.

At first sight, *Französische Maler* seems too inconsequential a project to begin to answer such expectations (NB I will refer to the *Morgenblatt* articles throughout by the name under which they were subsequently published in 1833 as part of the first volume of *Der Salon*). The *DHA* editors have gone to some lengths to ascertain that Heine was most likely a late visitor to the exhibition, and they infer that the new arrival cannot himself have anticipated the significance and prominence he would end up attaching to this experience:

Der späte Besuchstermin läßt also zunächst auf ein mäßiges eigenes Interesse schließen, auf ein formales Interesse an einem Ereignis, das man als kunstinteressierter Paris-Neuling wenigstens noch kurz vor Toresschluß gesehen haben sollte. Doch dann muß ein erster Besuch die Umwandlung bewirkt haben, der revolutionäre Funke sprang von Delacroixs und Roberts Bildern auf den Betrachter über. (*DHA* 12/2, 520)

Irrespective of its accuracy, what is noticeable about this account of Heine's motivation is its proximity to the author's own, which he relates in a published addendum to *Französische Maler* (in its book form) in 1833:

Als ich im Sommer 1831 nach Paris kam, war ich doch über nichts mehr verwundert als über die damals eröffnete Gemäldeausstellung, und obgleich die wichtigsten politischen und religiösen Revolutionen meine Aufmerksamkeit in Anspruch nahmen, so konnte ich doch nicht unterlassen, zuerst über die große

Revoluzion zu schreiben, die hier im Reiche der Kunst stattgefunden und als deren bedeutsamste Erscheinung der erwähnte Salon zu betrachten war.

(DHA 12/1, 51)

Of course both of these synopses constitute attempts after the event to explain, or in Heine's case justify, the priority given to a comparatively esoteric journalistic enterprise over more 'momentous' subject matters – those deemed more relevant to the contemporary political situation, which he would go on to treat in a series of articles on French life for the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (subsequently published as *Französische Zustände* in 1833). Heine's apologia, while reflected in more measured scholarly responses, has been exceeded by others who have gone so far as to obliterate *Französische Maler* from their account of his Paris journalism; 'die Frucht der ersten Begegnung mit der Stadt, in der der Geist der Moderne seinen Ursprung hat, sind die *Französischen Zustände*,' declares Karlheinz Stierle, discounting the earlier text presumably on the grounds of its having an insufficiently avant-garde premise.<sup>2</sup> Stierle is missing a trick, however, for the future author of *Französische Zustände* and later *Lutezia* (1840-1848) uses *Französische Maler* to establish the tenor not only of his journalistic project but also of his literary programme as a whole, a text which begins quite consciously 'mit scheinbar Nebensächlichem'.<sup>3</sup>

If the French painters of the 1831 Salon surprised Heine by kindling the necessary revolutionary spark to precipitate a serious journalistic endeavour, this had less to do with a property of the works *per se* and more to do with the

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<sup>2</sup> *Der Mythos von Paris: Zeichen und Bewußtsein der Stadt* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998), p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard Höhn, *Handbuch*, p. 269.

eye of the beholder. However unplanned the context, the manner in which he recounts his particular experience as a visitor or, more specifically, as a spectator of the exhibition betokens a self-conscious literary strategy. Some years later Heine offers a retrospective commentary on *Französische Maler* as part of his aesthetic polemic against Ludwig Börne, who had indeed been an unsympathetic reader of the articles in the *Morgenblatt*: ‘Börne hatte sich geärgert, daß ich gleich bey meiner Ankunft in Paris nichts Besseres zu thun wußte, als für deutsche Blätter einen langen Bericht über die damalige Gemäldeausstellung zu schreiben,’ he writes in *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* (1840); ‘ich lasse dahin gestellt seyn, ob das Kunstinteresse, das mich zu solcher Arbeit trieb, so ganz unvereinbar war mit den revolutionären Interessen des Tages’ (DHA 11, 92).<sup>4</sup> Having issued this defensive challenge, Heine proceeds to recount how on his first day in Paris he did not seek refuge on Place Louis XVI, at the Pantheon or by the tombstones of Rousseau or Voltaire as Börne, so he suggests, might have expected, but rather in the *Bibliothèque Royale*, where he claims to have perused the manuscripts of the *Manesse Codex*, the love poetry of Middle-High German Minnesingers. There is doubtlessly poetic licence in this apparent idiosyncrasy, intended humorously to accentuate the contrast with Börne’s grey, earnest republicanism; according to the letter to Varnhagen, it was precisely the Pantheon he had made his first port of call as the symbolic

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<sup>4</sup> In a letter to Jeanette Wohl, Börne declared Heine temperamentally unsuited to Paris. In this context, even salon criticism called for the rigour of a philosopher, i.e. Börne himself: ‘auch hier liegt der Stoff zu hoch und dick auf allen Wegen, und der Dichter kann selbst mit den Flügeln seiner Phantasie nicht darüber hinaus. Auf die andere Seite zu kommen, muß man ein philosophisches Ungeziefer sein [...] Heine sah nur die vordere Seite von Talleyrand [...]. Aber als philosophischer Wurm bohrte ich mich endlich durch die Scheidewand und erkannte auch Talleyrands Rückseite.’ *Ludwig Börne: Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Inge Rippmann and Peter Rippmann, 5 vols (Düsseldorf: Melzer, 1964 ff.), v, 77f.

epitome of revolutionary Paris, 'die Spitze dieser Spitze [der Welt]' (see HSA 21, 20). Nevertheless, it draws attention to the defining subtext which emerges from Heine's outwardly dilettantish first account of his experience of Parisian reality in *Französische Maler*, namely the exposition of an aesthetic response to the recent revolution and its contemporary cultural, political and ideological manifestations.

The image of a revolutionary spark emitted by a Robert or Delacroix painting and transferred to the viewer echoes Heine's own response to the latter's *La Liberté guidant le peuple*, a work to which he gives prominence in his report as a focal point of the exhibition and of which he remarks: '[es] athmet in dem Bilde ein großer Gedanke, der uns wunderbar entgegenweht' (DHA 12/1, 20). When the *DHA* editors conclude that 'die Gemälde spiegelten eine gewandelte Kunstauffassung in Frankreich wider, die Heine auf dem Gebiet der Literatur selbst durchsetzen wollte', they may have identified the underlying motivation behind *Französische Maler* but they fail to consider exactly how he configures his role as spectator in relation to its surface narrative (i.e. the interpretations of the paintings in question). As such, their account of the transfer of inspiration *from* the work of art *to* the (re-)viewer merely reproduces the dynamics of Heine's own carefully constructed paradigm and thereby precludes any possibility of exploring its strategic dimension. It is precisely how Heine writes about his visual experiences that defines and allows him to define the particular nature of his literary project, of which one critic has observed that 'more than any other of Heine's works, *French Painters* is both the

theory and the practice'.<sup>5</sup> With this in mind, Susanne Zantop draws attention to how Heine uses the paintings as 'metaphors or referents, as illustrations, as subject matter, as pre-text and as raw material' in order to 'create a new art form that would infuse life into dead *objets d'art*' and 'solve aesthetic-political problems' in the wake of revolutionary change (p. vi). Her analysis does well to foreground Heine's literary strategies over and above the supposed innate evocative power of the paintings, yet there remains something too tidy and conclusive about this assessment of his achievement. More important still than his aesthetic appropriation of the paintings is the way Heine relates this literary performance, in his capacity as a reviewer, to his (physical) experience as a spectator, for it is through his conscious exploration of the parameters of this role that we see him raise (and not necessarily answer) questions pertaining to his understanding of his own identity as a modern, post-revolutionary writer in Paris. It is this critical function of *Französische Maler I* I propose to investigate under the heading of Heine's *art of spectatorship*.

If my title indulges in a certain playful self-reflexivity, it is intended to draw attention to precisely this dimension of Heine's text, in which a particular 'art' of viewing *objets d'art* becomes synonymous with the development of his own journalistic style, something to which even the circumstances of its publication testify. Assuming he had not planned to launch his career as a journalist in Paris with a review of an art exhibition, the series of articles that appeared in

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<sup>5</sup> Susanne Zantop (ed.), *Paintings on the Move: Heinrich Heine and the Visual Arts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 'Introduction', p. vi.

the *Morgenblatt* was nevertheless undeniably the product of a conscious literary strategy. Pragmatically speaking the publication fulfilled the terms of an agreement Heine had made with the paper's owner, Baron von Cotta, in Berlin some two years previously (see his letter to Cotta on 31 October 1831; HSA 21, 24 f.), yet this was more than a marriage of convenience. According to its founding principles, the *Morgenblatt* sought to represent 'die Literatur und die ganze Bildung der Gegenwart, mit Ausschluß der politischen Tagesgeschichte, auf würdige Art und Weise' (my emphasis).<sup>6</sup> As a literary periodical, it published a variety of works ranging from new literature and travel writing to articles on cultural history, literary and art criticism with a view to providing a comprehensive overview of the cultural scene which most of its contemporary German-language publications, typically regional in outlook, could not match. It also included reports from a network of regular correspondents, which lent a topical edge to the publication. Despite the paper's avowedly non-political stance it remained subject to Bavarian State censorship, which regarded such regular journalistic contributions as a likely source of controversial political views – those held in opposition to the Metternichian regime whose interests it was designed to protect. By its very nature, therefore, the *Morgenblatt* raised questions as to the relationship between politics and art in the period. In 1849 the paper's editor Hermann Hauff felt compelled to clarify its position in the wake of the recent European Revolutions: 'das Morgenblatt ist und wird keine

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<sup>6</sup> 'Programmatische Absichten des Morgenblatts', *Projekt Literaturkritik: Theorie, Geschichte, Praxis*, ed. by Rainer Baasner (2005) <https://www.phf.uni-rostock.de/institut/igerman/forschung/litkritik/litkritik/start.htm> [accessed 10 February 2011].

politische Zeitschrift, so lange es ihm nicht beifällt—und es wird ihm nicht beifallen—die Leser von Staatshändeln zu unterrichten und ihnen zu Beurtheilung derselben Gesichtspunkte aufzustellen.”<sup>7</sup> He nevertheless concedes that ‘ein Blatt, das es zu seinen Aufgaben rechnet, ein Bild der Zeitentwicklung zu geben, indem es Zustände und Sitten des Tages schildert, kann es natürlich nicht vermeiden, häufig auf das politische Gebiet überzustreifen’ (ibid.). Hauff’s notion of a ‘Bild der Zeitentwicklung’ is strikingly reminiscent of Heine’s own vision at the end of his salon review, when he prophesies that a new form of art will emerge in harmony with the ‘Zeitbewegung’ (DHA 12/1, 47), the social and political imperatives of the contemporary world. Though the boundaries between art and politics are distinctly drawn within Cotta’s publishing enterprise to distinguish the relative functions of, say, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Morgenblatt* and the latter’s eventual supplement specialising in literary criticism, the *Literaturblatt*, his prevailing concept of a broad cultural journalism tended to blur rather than uphold such distinctions in any given publication.<sup>8</sup> In this respect, we may say that Heine did more than fulfil the expectations of *Morgenblatt* readers with his approach to art criticism, for *Französische Maler* dramatizes this very tendency in a literary performance which plays with the letter of the journal’s rubric.

In setting his first series of articles inside the Louvre, Heine is aware that he has shut the door on the hubbub of real life and, by implication, on the

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<sup>7</sup> See Alfred Estermann (ed.), *Die deutschen Literatur-Zeitschriften, 1815-1850: Bibliographien, Programme, Autoren*, 10 vols (Nendeln: KTO Press; Munich: Saur, 1977-1991), I, 371.

<sup>8</sup> Cotta’s enterprise typified an age of journalism which Sengle has defined in terms of its ‘enge Verbindung mit anderen Kulturbereichen’ (*Biedermeierzeit* II, pp. 60 ff.).

contemporary political situation on the streets of Paris, the very thing he had come to the French capital to witness. The strategic nature of his self-imposed restriction soon becomes apparent as the reader is permitted provocative glimpses of this political backdrop. For one who has elected himself to the role of art critic, Heine is disarmingly ready to admit a propensity to stray from the task in hand. Having embarked on a discussion of Delacroix's *La Liberté*, for instance, he is thrown off course by the intervention of a number of direct-speech reactions to the painting which he attributes to fellow spectators and which lead him to pursue a discursive meditation on the July Revolution. The result is a kind of literary painting in its own right in which he imagines a symbolic marriage between Paris and the sun in rhapsodic, highly poeticized language. 'Doch ich vergesse, daß ich nur Berichterstatter einer Ausstellung bin' (22), he confesses, in seeming penitent acknowledgment of this digression from his allotted role; he has indeed exceeded the kind of spectatorship required of the salon reviewer in order to produce an imaginative, politicized response on his own terms. When it comes to reviewing another key painting—Delaroche's *Cromwell ouvrant le cercueil de Charles 1<sup>er</sup>*—he confines himself to relaying one Englishman's remark which, he claims, interrupted him in the midst of own reflections: 'do you not think, Sir, that the guillotine is a great improvement?' das waren die gequäkten Worte, womit ein Britte, der hinter mir stand, die Empfindungen unterbrach, die ich eben niedergeschrieben' (43). The reader is nevertheless given cause to reevaluate Heine's professed irritation when he subsequently suggests 'an einem andern Orte werde ich vielleicht die

Gespräche berichten, die ich so oft vor seinem Cromwell vernahm. Kein Ort gewährte eine bessere Gelegenheit zur Belauschung der Volksgefühle und Tagesmeinungen' (43). On reflection, we realise that what we have just read was in fact a tantalizing advertisement for the kind of political commentary that lies beyond Heine's official remit, but by no means outside his interest, as a reviewer of this salon. Readers are thus encouraged to look beyond the surface narrative and consider what may be driving Heine's digressional impulse. We discover that it is paradoxically by electing to contain himself within the framework of an aesthetic experience that he can create the opportunity to stage the intrusion of politics, the 'revolutionary interests of the day', and so breach the boundaries of conventional art criticism.

For a review of a salon Heine subsequently declared 'der außerordentlichste den Frankreich je geliefert' ('Nachtrag: 1833'; DHA 12/1, 53), *Französische Maler* begins in a disconcertingly subdued, even a dismissive manner:

Der Salon ist jetzt geschlossen, nachdem die Gemälde desselben seit Anfang May ausgestellt worden. Man hat sie im Allgemeinen nur mit flüchtigen Augen betrachtet; die Gemüther waren anderwärts beschäftigt und mit ängstlicher Politik erfüllt. Was mich betrifft, der in dieser Zeit zum ersten Mahle die Hauptstadt besuchte und von unzählig neuen Eindrücken befangen war, ich habe noch viel weniger als Andere mit der erforderlichen Geistesruhe die Säle des Louvres durchwandeln können. (Ibid., 11)

He goes on to suggest that the paintings on display resemble a motley assortment of orphans for whom visitors to the exhibition barely spare a second glance. Thus Heine plays down the significance not only of his chosen subject-matter but also, most crucially, of his own projected role as reviewer. On careful

reading we nevertheless realise that it is the perception of viewers that has transformed 'die hübschen Bilder' into 'armen Kinder der Kunst' rather than this being a reflection of the paintings' inherent aesthetic status; they are orphans only in as much as they are orphaned by salon goers whose attention is drawn by other more pressing (political) matters outside the gallery walls. As a recent arrival to Paris, for whom everything is by definition arrestingly novel, Heine occupies a special position relative to other visitors which he highlights here by presenting himself as an extreme example of the inattentive spectator. That he opens his account with observations pertaining to his fellow spectators rather than the paintings themselves is in itself demonstrative of the fact. By way of a literary strategy, Heine uses this short introduction to his text—a narrative frame in which he asserts his physical presence as a spectator in the gallery—to cast himself as the outstanding representative of an entire community in a state of distraction. Thus he is able, by simple juxtaposition, to attribute his own lack of mental composure to the same cause affecting the Parisian public without needing to state openly or even to qualify the nature of his sympathy for the unsettled contemporary political situation, which is merely alluded to.

Heine invokes the same relationship even more forcefully to outline how he will proceed in his capacity as a reviewer:

Die Maler, deren Werke man am meisten besprach und als das Vorzüglichste pries, waren A. Scheffer, H. Vernet, Delacroix, Decamps, Lessore, Schnetz, Delaroche und Robert. Ich darf mich also darauf beschränken, die öffentliche Meinung zu referieren. Sie ist von der meinigen nicht sehr abweichend. (11 f.)

By proposing merely to relay public opinion he encourages the reader to believe that the very substance and structure of the account to come is driven by popular consensus rather than by his individual aesthetic judgment. A subsequent announcement reveals that the conventions of art criticism are to be eroded still further: 'Beurtheilung technischer Vorzüge oder Mängel will ich, so viel als möglich, vermeiden' (12). The justification Heine gives for upholding this particular principle may be fair; there is little point in labouring technicalities when his German readers will not have the opportunity to view the works discussed. However, it is scarcely relevant in a passage in which his primary purpose seems to be to set himself up as the mouthpiece, the self-proclaimed 'gewissenhafter Referent' (ibid.), of popular contemporary feeling in Paris, and crucially not as an art expert. His approach may appear at odds with all that we would expect of the author of a salon review, but it gains Heine a double rhetorical advantage to which he alludes in a general remark concerning contemporary French painters. Many of these have, he suggests, pursued a misconceived Romantic notion of 'Eigenthümlichkeit', of idiosyncrasy for its own sake, in their struggle to make a name (and living) for themselves in a newly competitive art market. The outcome, we are led to infer, is works of art of dubious aesthetic value. By contrast, the quality of his own artistic endeavour as author of *Französische Maler* is assured by the move to suspend his individual critical judgment in deference to that of a savvy French public: 'da die Franzosen jedenfalls viel gesunde Vernunft besitzen, so haben sie das Verfehlte immer richtig beurtheilt, das wahrhaft Eigenthümliche leicht

erkannt' (11). In reality Heine's accounts of individual paintings are subjective and far more sophisticated than this implies; so much so that by the end of his report he is able to advocate a form of art that is imbued with 'die selbsttrunkenste Subjektivität, die weltentzügelte Individualität' (47) without inviting accusations of hypocrisy. What we witness here is a strategic manoeuvre designed to claim legitimacy for himself and his outwardly aesthetic enterprise by linking it to a contemporary revolutionary consciousness (the *Zeitbewegung*).

In effect, this short lead-in to *Französische Maler* serves to initiate the (German) reader, by enacting the moment of Heine's own initiation, into a particular culture of art criticism which flourished in France in the wake of the July Revolution. Art salons had acquired a new popular appeal under the July Monarchy, transforming them 'from meeting grounds of the cultivated elite into places of popular entertainment'.<sup>9</sup> It is to this reality that Heine alludes when he identifies Delaroche's *Cromwell* as an ideal site for overhearing public discourse on matters of contemporary interest; the artworks on display are as much public meeting places as they are cultural artefacts. The sheer number of reviews written on the 1831 Salon testifies to a widespread awareness among writers of the significance of this phenomenon and represents a localized example of the 'dramatic inflation in journalistic activity which followed the

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<sup>9</sup> Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Gabriel Weisberg (eds), *The popularization of images: visual culture under the July Monarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. iv.

July Revolution'.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, these reviews fit the profile of an emergent visual culture which has been associated with a general trend in France in this period towards 'a new fluidity of the boundaries between cultural forms (painting, graphic arts, literature, drama, music)' (Chu/Weisberg, p. viii). Besides the colourful diversity of the publications in which they appeared, 'a range of journalistic sites which frequently have only the most tenuous relationship with cultural commentary' (McWilliam, *Bibliography 1831-1851*, p. x), their authors were often literary writers with no more than a dilettantish interest in art criticism, for whom this was an infrequent or even a one-off activity. Nicholas Green has suggested that criticism in this context should be understood 'less as a discrete sub-domain of art than as another mode of urban consumption which, in its own terms, generated and transmitted visual spectacle' to which end the critic functioned 'as a pair of eyes'.<sup>11</sup> Of course a prominent instance of visual spectacle had been the revolution itself, which became manifest in a burgeoning culture of political caricature. In many ways, the July Revolution exemplified the power of visual culture not only to embody but even to effect political change; Roger Magraw notes that it was the journalists, angered by Charles X's suspension of press liberty in the 1830 July Ordinances, who 'organised the final assault by orchestrating the anticlerical crusade and

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<sup>10</sup> Neil McWilliam (ed.), *A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Paris from the July Monarchy to the Second Republic, 1831-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 'Preface', p. x. In total, 1655 reviews were written during the sixteen years between the first and last July Monarchy salons (1831-1847). This represented nearly three hundred more than the total from all previous salons (1699-1827) and gave an average of over one hundred reviews per salon. Cf. McWilliam, *A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Paris from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 1699-1827* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 107.

exposing the regime to damaging caricature'.<sup>12</sup> In the early days of the July Monarchy entire street crowds were exposed to images of the new regime in the form of caricatures pasted up on the walls of Paris, a phenomenon most clearly affirmed when, on 10 December 1830, Louis-Philippe's government introduced a law banning the posting of lithographs, engravings and posters in public places fearing these acted as rallying points for seditious gatherings. While Heine's own aesthetic biases led him to reject caricature—he makes a point of defending Decamps 'gegen den Vorwurf der Karikatur' (26)—it is no surprise that he should treat several of the paintings on display in the 1831 Salon as symbolic representations of revolution. As we will observe, *Französische Maler* recognisably aligns itself with this contemporary Parisian trend. The novelty of Heine's approach lies in the self-conscious way in which he brings this cultural context into play within the structure of his narrative in order to fashion his own aesthetic-political stance.

As promised Heine shuns the kind of technical discourse one might expect of art criticism, save for some moderate references to colour, light and shade, in favour of historical, socio-political and literary interpretations of the paintings he reviews. To a certain extent we may attribute this to a general strategy in *Französische Maler* which seeks to subvert the special status of art by undermining conventional boundaries between art and life; this is most obviously manifest in the loose feuilletonistic style Heine develops, which makes a point of incorporating the real-time environment of the gallery and its

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<sup>12</sup> *France 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 48.

visitors. As such, it chimes with the definition he subsequently gives in his history of German literature, *Die Romantische Schule* (1835; a revised version of *Zur Geschichte der neueren schönen Literatur in Deutschland*, 1833), of the modern artist in the context of a new generation of writers who have overturned previous aesthetic norms: '[die] Schriftsteller des heutigen jungen Deutschlands, die [...] keinen Unterschied machen wollen zwischen Leben und Schreiben, die nimmermehr die Politik trennen von Wissenschaft, Kunst und Religion' (DHA 8/1, 218). Although Heine conspicuously avoids naming himself among this group just two years after writing his salon review, *Französische Maler* undoubtedly comes closest of all his works to expounding such an approach; in an uncharacteristically theoretic reflection, Heine proclaims that the technical trappings of art, 'Töne und Worte, Farben und Formen, das Erscheinende überhaupt,' play a secondary role to the underlying ideas the artist (or writer) seeks to communicate, as 'Symbole der Idee, Symbole, die in dem Gemüthe des Künstlers aufsteigen, wenn es der heilige Weltgeist bewegt [...], Symbole, wodurch er andern Gemüthern seine eigenen Ideen mittheilt' (24 f.). As though to substantiate this theory, artistry and depth of meaning are often inversely proportionate in his judgments of individual paintings. 'Dieses Stück ist besser gezeichnet als gemalt', he says of a work by Robert. 'Es hat etwas Schroffes, Trübes [...]. Doch bewegt es die Seele, als hörte man die naiv fromme Musik, die eben von jenen albanischen Gebirgshirten gepfiffen wird' (31). Similarly, of Delacroix's *La Liberté* he remarks 'trotz etwaniger Kunstmängel, athmet in dem Bilde ein großer Gedanke, der uns

wunderbar entgegenweht' (20). However, we may also trace something more complex and detect a kind of rhetorical stratagem in the frequent references Heine makes to colouration which rather tends to undercut such pronouncements vis-à-vis his own literary style.

In a move to defend Decamps' paintings of Turkish subjects against the charges of contemporary French critics who, we are told, have tended to decry these as unrealistic caricatures, Heine notes that the artist had himself visited Turkey, from which he deduces 'daß es nicht bloß sein originelles Colorit war, was mich so sehr frappirt, sondern auch die Wahrheit, die sich mit getreuen und bescheidenen Farben in seinen Bildern des Orients ausspricht' (23). Even after likening the overall effect of Decamps' *Patrouille turque* to a Chinese shadow play, he nevertheless insists that it possesses visionary truthfulness (it is 'mährchentreu gemalt') in the guise of 'Farbenmusik, die zwar komisch, aber doch harmonisch klingt, der Zauber seines Colorits' (26). The association conjured here between colour and truth constitutes neither an idle nor an isolated remark on Heine's part, but rather contributes to an ongoing aesthetic discourse in *Französische Maler* concerning the relationship between representation and reality, art and life. Indeed his analysis here presents the positive correlative to an earlier reflection regarding a Scheffer painting (*Le Prince de Talleyrand*, whom Heine ominously omits to name) whose murky colouration, 'diesen unbestimmten, gelogenen, gestorbenen, charakterlosen Farben' (14), he sees as perfectly suited to its (politically) shady subject – an observation perfectly summarized in the irony of 'diesem Bilde des falschen

Mannes [...], den Scheffer so *treu gemalt'* (ibid.; my emphasis). Distinctions between these categories are notably blurred in the works for which Heine reserves his most ecstatic praise. In the case of *Patrouille turque* his positive reaction is far from the natural consequence it first appears, for it is conveyed to the reader via self-evidently stylized features, namely synaesthesia or 'Farbenmusik', in his own prose. In other words, what he appears to celebrate as a vivifying force in the original painting, the confused medley of colours, sights, and even sounds, is self-fulfilling for it has been contrived in the first instance by his own artistry.

Heine's review of Robert's *Arrivée des moissonneurs dans les marais Pontins* ('Die Schnitter') represents a striking example of this tactic, by which he treats paintings merely as pretexts (literally, *pre-texts*) for his own literary enterprise.<sup>13</sup> He introduces his interpretation with a reference to the colours which according to his account are self-evident signs of a self-evident underlying message:

'Die Erde ist der Himmel und die Menschen sind heilig, durchgöttert,' das ist die große Offenbarung, die mit seligen Farben aus diesem Bilde leuchtet. Das Pariser Publikum hat dieses gemalte Evangelium besser aufgenommen, als wenn der heilige Lukas es geliefert hätte. (32)

Robert is made the prophet of a quasi-divine revelation which Heine appears merely to witness and record. The authority of this message, and by extension of its messenger, is substantiated here at the expense of Heine's own by his use of quotation and invocation of the work's popular reception. It has been noted

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. David Scott, *Pictorialist Poetics: Poetry and the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 22. Heine's approach is in line with a French tradition of art criticism inaugurated by Diderot. Scott cites Saint-Beuve's confirmation of this phenomenon: 'depuis que Diderot et Grimm ont inauguré en France la critique des Salons, ce sont presque toujours des littérateurs qui ont rendu compte des expositions de statues ou de tableaux, et presque toujours ils l'ont fait plus ou moins au point de vue de la littérature' (p. 20).

that his description of the reapers is reminiscent in its detail of several examples of contemporary French criticism, but that Heine was unique in turning a blow-by-blow account of the painting's subject matter into a vital celebration of life on earth (see DHA 12/2, 573). The 'Apotheose des Lebens' with which he credits the artist and painting is in fact carried in the irrepressible prose of his own narrative reconstruction of the scene depicted. He may break off part of the way through to inform us that Germany will shortly see this popular painting for itself in an etched reproduction, but since its magic, so he claims, 'besteht im Colorit', he justifies resuming his colourful narration unabated.

Reading in between the lines, we discover that the special aura of Heine's description owes less to the particular painting viewed and more to an ideological subtext he, as an individual spectator, brings to bear on the viewing experience. We are even prompted to do so by his allusion to 'einer noch *verhüllten Doktrin*, die von einem Kampfe des Geistes mit der Materie nichts wissen will [...]; "denn Gott ist alles, was da ist"' (34; my emphasis). The hidden doctrine Heine invokes here and the external authority he quotes anonymously is that of Saint-Simonianism, a revolutionary French political and social movement of the mid-Nineteenth Century inspired by the philosophy of Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint Simon (1760-1825). Under the leadership of Prosper Enfantin, it advocated, among other things, the 'rehabilitation de la matière' and an emancipatory socialism founded on a pantheistic vision of heaven-on-earth; Heine uses Enfantin's formula 'Dieu est

tout ce qui est' as a kind of mantra for his own interest in the movement.<sup>14</sup> It is understandable that *Französische Maler* was enthusiastically received in *Le Globe*, the official press organ of Saint-Simonianism which published three long excerpts, including the section on Robert, and celebrated its author as follows:

M. Heine comprend la mission de l'artiste d'une manière grande et large. Il est lui-même une application vivante de ses préceptes. Ce n'est pas un critique de profession faisant de l'esprit à l'occasion d'un ouvrage d'art; c'est un homme du dix-neuvième siècle, dont le coeur bat vivement pour tout ce qui est beau et progressif, qui ne sait pas séparer ses affections politiques de ses sympathies d'artiste et de littérateur; un homme *tout d'une pièce*, qui écrit comme il sent, sans apprêt, avec la poésie du coeur. (2 January 1831; see DHA 12/2, 529)

This glowing portrait is indicative of a movement which was determined to claim Heine as its poster child.<sup>15</sup> It presents him as an ideal of the Saint-Simonian artist, who was an important figure within the programme seen as having an apostolic function and charged with communicating the doctrine to a wider (popular) audience. Close inspection of Heine's text nevertheless reveals that it is crucially Robert, and not Heine himself, who is depicted as an (unwitting) Saint-Simonian: 'Robert ist ein Franzose, und er, wie die meisten seiner Landsleute, huldigt unbewußt einer noch verhüllten Doktrin [...]' etc.

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<sup>14</sup> 'Seraphine VII' of the *Neue Gedichte* (DHA 2, 34) includes the line 'Gott ist alles was da ist'. See Chapter Four of the current study.

The Saint-Simonian slogans I quote are from the second of two 'Expositions' of the *Doctrine de Saint Simon*, which were published in 1829 and 1830 respectively. See Saint-Amand Bazard in *Oeuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin*, ed. by François Barthélemy and others (Paris: Leroux, 1877), vol. XLII, 282; 293. Heine studied the first of these in 1831 before leaving for Paris. This is often cited as a motivation for his emigration, particularly in reference to a letter to Varnhagen on 1 April 1831 in which he claims to dream about going to Paris in order 'ganz den heiligen Gefühlen meiner neuen Religion mich hinzugeben und vielleicht als Priester derselben die letzten Weihen zu empfangen' (HSA 20, 435). Cf. Dolf Sterberger, *Heinrich Heine und die Abschaffung der Sünde* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1972), p. 54; E. M. Butler, *The Saint-Simonian Religion in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), p. 95. The ecclesiastic idiom certainly resonates with Saint-Simonianism. After the July Revolution the movement took on the organisational and operational characteristics of a religious sect, establishing itself as a church, with Enfantin as its self-proclaimed 'père suprême', in polemical opposition to spiritualist Christianity. Sternberger sees no reason to doubt Heine's allusion.

<sup>15</sup> Heine was met by the editor in chief of *Le Globe*, Michel Chevalier, shortly after he arrived in Paris. According to one eye-witness 'die St Simonisten bemühten sich ihn für ihre Interessen zu gewinnen' (see Butler, p. 93).

(34). So he keeps the doctrine at arm's length by casting himself as the omniscient, intellectual witness of an essentially French phenomenon. There has been substantial critical debate as to the degree of Heine's affinity with Saint-Simonianism, which is far from clear.<sup>16</sup> Sternberger guardedly suggests that Robert's painting fulfilled a certain 'saint-simonistisch vorgeprägte Erwartung' (*Abschaffung der Sünde*, p. 235); 'hier trat ihm sein utopisches Programm anschaulich entgegen, es war, als blicke er [...] in den Zauberspiegel seiner eigenen Menschheitswünsche', he suggests (p. 236). The only problem with this careful assessment is that it does no more than reflect Heine's own reflexive use of the work of art in his narrative – Sternberger even reproduces his evasive rhetoric and magical idiom. For readers, escape from this hall of mirrors is possible only once we recognise that both sides, Heine in *Französische Maler* and his Saint-Simonian supporter in *Le Globe*, are involved in a pattern of reciprocal appropriation in which each seeks to use the other as a means to further his own particular aesthetic-political agenda. Butler unwittingly touches on the key issue for Heine: 'an attempt to summarize Heine's interpretation of the Saint-Simonian doctrine ends in some sort in *a characterisation of Heine himself*,' she observes, 'for he interpreted their views according to the dictates of his nature' (*The Saint-Simonian Religion in Germany*, p. 155; my emphasis). His tacit reference to Saint-Simonianism in this passage is not an end in itself, but rather

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<sup>16</sup> In addition to the studies by Butler and Sternberger, see Margaret Clarke, *Heine et la Monarchie de Juillet: Étude critique sur les Français Zustände, suivie d'une étude sur le Saint-simonisme chez Heine* (Paris: Rieder, 1927); Georg Iggers, 'Heine and the Saint-Simonians: A Re-Examination', *Comparative Literature*, vol. 10, no. 4 (1958), 289-308; Wolfgang Preisendanz, 'Heine, Saint-Simonismus und Kunstautonomie', in *Art Social und art industriel: Funktionen der Kunst im Zeitalter des Industrialismus*, ed. by Helmut Pfeiffer, Hans Jauß and Françoise Gaillard (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1987), pp. 153-169.

a staged encounter and step on the way to an ulterior, greater goal: to fashion his own aesthetic-political stance in relation to contemporary positions, of which Saint-Simonianism is but one example. This is reflected in the very structure of Heine's report, for the section on Robert is not the endpoint of *Französische Maler* but an acknowledged stepping stone, which Heine even introduces as a kind of tangential indulgence, on the way to its main interest in Delaroche ('doch ehe ich letzteren besonders bespreche, erlaube ich mir noch einige flüchtige Worte über die Robertschen Gemälde', 31).

The painting which makes the greatest claim on Heine's attention is Delaroche's *Cromwell*, a work he sets up as the shadowy complement to Robert's light-filled *Les moissonneurs* in what emerges as a commentary on two models of historical, social and political progress. Neighbours by chance in the gallery, Heine makes full strategic use of their juxtaposition in his text: Cromwell standing over the coffin of the decapitated Charles I becomes 'der entsetzliche Schnitter' in direct contrast to Robert's 'andern Schnitter [...] mit ihren schönern Aehren heimkehrend zum Erndtefest der Liebe' (43). In the case of the first, Heine extrapolates an archetype of brutal revolutionary progress, 'jene Geschichte [...], die sich so närrisch herumrollt in Blut und Koth, oft Jahrhunderte lang blödsinnig stillsteht, und dann wieder unbeholfen hastig aufspringt', while he interprets the second as 'jene noch größere Geschichte [...] ohne Anfang und ohne Ende, die sich ewig wiederholt [...]; die Geschichte der Menschheit' (44). By deploying a theatrical metaphor to introduce Delaroche's painting as 'eine Scene aus jener entsetzlichen Tragödie, die [...] so viele

Thränen gekostet hat, diesseits und jenseits des Kanals, und die auch den deutschen Zuschauer so tief erschüttert' (37), he prepares us for his interpretation of the painting as a symbol of more recent revolutionary spectacles (beginning with the French Revolution of 1789, alluded to here). Similarly, Cromwell and the King are loosed from their historical particularity in the timeless guise of 'Schauspieler, denen vom Direktor der Welt ihre Rolle vorgeschrieben war, und die vielleicht, ohne es zu wissen, zwey kämpfende Prinzipien tragirten' (38). Heine's coy refusal to divulge what these warring principles might signify merely paves the way for the ensuing excursus he makes into political and historical analysis and the comparison to be drawn with the representatives of more recent French political history, namely Louis XVI and Napoleon. This rhetorical strategy is rendered rather unnecessary with hindsight, however, by his own subsequent claim 'daß Delaroche absichtlich durch sein ausgestellttes Bild zu geschichtlichen Vergleichen aufforderte' (41); 'wie zwischen Ludwig XVI und Karl I wurden auch zwischen Cromwell und Napoleon beständig Parallelen gezogen', he elucidates (*ibid.*). Once again, he feigns to devolve authority for his interpretation onto both other spectators' reactions and the artist concerned; unlike Robert, even a degree of knowing intention is attributed to Delaroche in his approach. And once again, this belies the essentially literary strategy of his narrative. Zantop has described Heine's technique in terms of 'the translation of paintings into historical discourse'.<sup>17</sup> It

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<sup>17</sup> 'Liberty Unbound: Heine's Historiography in Colour', in *Paintings on the Move*, ed. by Zantop, p. 44.

is more revealing still if we consider his own self-conscious use of a dramatic idiom in the culmination of *Französische Maler*.

First of all we may note that it is Heine himself, not Delaroche, who introduces this painting as the scene from a tragedy which has caused the English and French to shed tears, and tellingly even moved its German spectators looking from afar. Second, in his capacity as a German spectator *sur place* we see Heine relinquish the role of detached historiographer to become a player within his own theatrical framework. In other words the text reverts to the framework narrative in which it began, although in more dramatic circumstances which see his artistic musings suddenly interrupted by politics in real time, and from the street outside:

Ich höre in diesem Augenblick da draußen, dröhnender, betäubender als jemals, diesen mißtönenden Lärm, dieses sinnverwirrende Getöse; es zürnen die Trommeln, es klirren die Waffen, ein empörtes Menschenmeer, mit wahnsinnigen Schmerzen und Flüchen, wälzt sich durch die Gassen das Volk von Paris und heult: 'Warschau ist gefallen! Unsere Avantgarde ist gefallen! Nieder mit den Ministern! Krieg den Russen! Tod den Preußen!' (44)

The popular revolt in question constituted a sympathetic outcry on the streets of Paris in response to the news that Warsaw had fallen on 8 September 1831 at the hands of the Russian Tsarist regime, a brutal conservative backlash which put an end to the dreams of independence harboured by Polish revolutionaries who had instigated the November uprisings of 1830. Events in Poland were given scant attention in the Parisian press, which incited popular outrage and awakened sore memories of 1815 (i.e. of the Restoration of Louis XVIII). In Heine's text, the effect of this intrusion is heightened by virtue of the fact that it

occurs at a moment when he personally seems to be succumbing completely to the lure of the art world:

wenn ich den Cromwell lange betrachtet und mich ganz in ihn versenkt hatte, daß ich fast seine Gedanken hörte, einsylbig harsche Worte, verdrießlich hervorgebrummt und gezischt, im Charakter jener englischen Mundart, die dem fernen Grollen des Meeres und dem Schrillen der Sturmvögel gleicht: dann rief mich heimlich wieder zu sich der stille Zauber des Nebengemäldes, und mir war, als hörte ich lächelnden Wohllaut, als hörte ich Toskanas süße Sprache von römischen Lippen erklingen. (44)

Onomatopoeia, evocative sibilant alliteration, simile and poetic imagery are all deployed to dramatize a final battle for Heine's attention, yet it transpires that this art-historical narrative with its political overtones has merely been used to set the stage for another drama with a clear contemporary political imperative. It is striking that the metaphor he arrives at to describe his supposed auditory experience of the imaginatively transformed, animated *Cromwell* is carried over into the new context to characterize the tumultuous mob on the streets. On a close linguistic level, what Heine imagines as a kind of storm warning while observing the painting—the distant, pounding sea and telltale shrieks of the gulls—turns out to be actual drumming and direct-speech yelling from 'ein empörtes Menschenmeer', that is to say a human storm in full fury. In other words, he self-consciously constructs his experience as a spectator of art to foreshadow this contemporary revolutionary reality by means of a literary merging of the two experiences. As a piece of writing, *Französische Maler* consciously straddles these two 'realities'.

For Heine, the Parisian reaction to news from Poland is pregnant with implication for the German political situation; he hints at the false pride of

Prussia in accepting homage from the Russian Tsar, who will surely soon turn the tables: 'ich fürchte, wenn uns jetzt der Zaar von Rußland wieder besucht, dann ist an uns die Reihe ihm die Hand zu küssen' (45). To return for a moment to Decamps, we may note with hindsight that a passing speculative remark he made regarding the colouration of *Patrouille turque*—'ein anderer als ein Franzose hätte stärker und bitterer die Farben aufgetragen, er hätte etwas Berliner Blau hineingemischt' (26 f.)—was in fact a contrived, if subtle, reference (an *overtone* quite literally – in the guise of Prussian blue) to Heine's own political subtext with its anti-Prussian tendency. Even such a small detail, planted by Heine himself, was sufficient at this moment to arrest his attention and stall his art report. So much is implied by the self-conscious intervention subsequently required to get the text back on track: 'damit dieses Bild nicht noch länger festhält wende ich mich rasch zu [...] Lessore' (27); for *Bild*, we might easily substitute *political colouration*. The attentive reader is prompted by such asides to recognise that, in presenting a review of the 1831 salon, Heine has been writing to an ulterior aesthetic-political agenda all along – one that is closely linked to his personal response as an individual, and notably as a German spectator to the news from Warsaw.

For the self-appointed art critic, this incursion by an external, political reality translates to a moment of existential crisis which stops him in his tracks: 'es wird mir schwer, ruhig am Schreibtische sitzen zu bleiben und meinen armen Kunstbericht, meine friedliche Gemäldebeurtheilung, zu Ende zu schreiben' (44). However, he fears that the alternative, to abandon this task and

join the protestors outside, will merely result in his being taken for a Prussian and beaten over the head ‘so daß alle meine Kunstideen zerquetscht werden’ (45). In other words he faces a dilemma: his ability to write or even think about art is lost on either count. Paris is charged with being the particular locus of this crisis facing the artist, since its external realities preclude the kind of secluded privacy that is put forward as the prerequisite for artistic activity: ‘es ist doch in Paris sogar an sogenannten ruhigen Tagen sehr schwer, das eigene Gemüth von den Erscheinungen der Straße abzuwenden und Privatträumen nachzuhängen’ (46). These anxious conclusions are no more spontaneous than our spectator’s preoccupation with ‘ängstlicher Politik’ at the beginning of *Französische Maler*; indeed they present the opposite perspective on the same problem within the structural symmetry of Heine’s report. Moreover, the latent political narrative we have been tracing provides reason enough to question his self-deprecating evaluation of an ‘armen Kunstbericht’ and ‘friedliche Gemäldeaustellung’. Hence when he now laments that he is unable, ‘trotz des besten Willens’, to finish or even continue his artistic enterprise on account of such inauspicious conditions, we are wise to reflect on just how these conditions have been specially contrived by Heine in his capacity as author, and in more ways than one. First, this moment of ‘crisis’—a confrontation he stages between the exigencies of political reality in revolution-prone Paris and the proffered Goethean ideal of art—represents the apex of a conundrum which we have shown the whole of *Französische Maler* and Heine’s self-proclaimed distracted spectatorship to be constructed to dramatize. Second, its most radical implications, namely that art

is no longer possible and Heine's supposed 'alte Prophezei von dem Ende der Kunstperiode' is nigh, are called into question by the very way the impact of the event in question is recorded: it is absorbed and translated back into the language of aesthetic experience in the text we are reading. In spite of his protestations, Heine embraces the distorting effect of outside disruption on his mind as a creative force with which to reshape his discourse on art: 'bey solchem Lärm verwirren und verschieben sich alle Gedanken und Bilder' (45). The paintings to which the reader has already been introduced suddenly undergo an imaginative transformation, as their historical figures and scenes are brought to life and updated to tally with the social and political present, by way of Heine's modified and modifying spectator's gaze: '*wenn ich genauer hinschaue, so liegt kein König, sondern das ermordete Polen in dem schwarzen Sarge, und davor steht nicht mehr Cromwell, sondern der Zaar von Rußland*' (ibid.; my emphasis). Finally, there is a further irony relating to the way Heine presents the relationship between art and political 'reality', as represented in his text by the paintings in the gallery and the crowds protesting in the external space of the street respectively. The latter, which supposedly occurs in real time and embodies 'das rohe Geräusch des Lebens' (46), is in itself the product of artistic intervention. In reality Heine was still on the Channel coast when news of the fall of Warsaw reached Paris, so that what he presents here as historically authentic reportage is in fact an artistically reconstructed street scene – most likely an adaptation of accounts in the French press. To this effect, it has been noted that one of the slogans attributed to the angry mob on the streets outside

the Louvre, the cry of 'Tod den Preußen!' which is conspicuously absent in French reports of the same event, was in fact a fictitious addition on Heine's part (see DHA 12/2, 589) – 'colour' added for the benefit of his German reader. Such a carefully staged interruption lends a definite irony to Heine's claim that the Parisian experience of art is constantly subject to disruption from the concerns of an immediate present, as it does to the notion that there is anything haphazard about the way he operates as a spectator in this text. As Höhn has observed, 'das Rollenverhalten des Berichterstatters hat in Wirklichkeit die Struktur der 23 Bildbeschreibungen [...] wesentlich mitgeprägt' (*Handbuch*, p. 272). So much is evident from the rhetorical strategies we have been tracing, but to what end have these been deployed?

*Französische Maler* concludes on an essentially positive note with a prophecy and creed destined to launch Heine's own artistic programme in a new age: 'ich glaube, daß Frankreich aus der Herzentiefe seines neuen Lebens auch eine neue Kunst hervorathmen wird' (48), a new art 'die mit ihr [der Zeit] im begeisterten Einklang seyn wird [...], und die sogar eine neue Technik [...] hervorbringen muß' (47). Once again, although Heine devolves this task to another author—in this case the rather vague entity of the French nation as a whole—his own text has surely set out to make the first step in this direction. Its guiding impulse seems to be to dissolve conventional boundaries between art and politics, representation and reality, and above all to amalgamate different art forms in the act of engaging with this 'reality' – hence the slippage between visual and dramatic modes which both become metaphors for Heine's own

literary style. Thus we may conclude that *Französische Maler* enacts its own prediction, even though too self-consciously, perhaps, to be considered 'im begeisterten Einklang' with its cultural and political context. It is of course symptomatic of the self-fashioning writer that we are unable to take any such claim to spontaneity in the creative process at face value. By embodying the role of spectator, Heine dramatizes an approach to journalism and his own authorship which he will go on to develop in response to contemporary French conditions more generally.

## CHAPTER 2

**Writing Between French Conditions and the *Allgemeine Zeitung***

‘DORT MÜSSEN SIE SCHREIBEN FÜR HIER’\*

Rahel Varnhagen’s words to Heine sum up the imperative he felt, or at least that on which he claimed to act, in his role as a foreign correspondent in Paris. They imply a programme of political enlightenment which corresponds with his self-presentation as the author of *Französische Zustände*, a series of articles written between December 1831 and the summer of 1832 in which he reported on contemporary political and social conditions in the French capital for Cotta’s flagship political journal, the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*. In the preface to their subsequent publication in book form, Heine presents himself as a cosmopolitan author of reports intended to promote ‘das Verständniß der Gegenwart’ and a pan-European state of ‘Friede und Wohlstand und Freyheit’ (DHA 12/1, 65). Specifically, he embodies the role of cultural mediator between contemporary French political conditions on the one hand and German intellectual and literary history on the other; in his final article on French conditions he notes the productive nature of an exchange which by his reckoning will eventually lead to revolutionary change in Germany, ‘denn wir haben beide, Franzosen und Deutsche, in der jüngsten Zeit viel voneinander gelernt; jene haben viel deutsche Philosophie und Poesie angenommen, wir dagegen die politischen Erfahrungen und den praktischen Sinn der Franzosen’

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\* Rahel Varnhagen in a letter to Heine, 15 June 1832 (HSA 24, 125).

(*Article IX*; DHA 12/1, 178).<sup>1</sup> The spectator's perspective he developed in *Französische Maler* is central to his intended role as a facilitator of this dialogue. In *Französische Zustände* he manipulates it to develop an effective style of political commentary which enables him to purvey the spirit of the revolution and its aftermath in Paris to his German audience even under the watchful gaze of the Augsburg censor. More than this, however, it serves as a framework within which to explore different dimensions of his authorial profile. Heine pursues his political agenda always with one eye on his own situation and identity—as spectator, witness, journalist and author—so that in the end the former seems subservient to this greater self-fashioning purpose. A close reading of his political journalism reveals a self-proclaimed objective reporter who is also always on the verge of becoming a consciously literary author

Heine was quick to make the link between political ferment precipitated by recent events and creative ferment in the form of a particular cultural revolution in Paris. When he wrote to Cotta at the time of his editor Gustav Kolb's visit to the French capital, he emphasised the formative nature of this environment for the German writer:

Kolbs Anwesenheit ist mir höchst erfreulich, ohne es zu wissen lernt er hier täglich, er lernt seine Gedanken klarer zu redigiren, eine Kunst die die französischen Journalisten so außerordentlich verstehen, er wird in Mysterien des Journalismus eingeweiht, wovon er früher keine Ahnung hatte.

(20 January 1832; HSA 21, 28)

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<sup>1</sup> In *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (1835), Heine gives an account of a French and German revolution in parallel; political events in France are matched by a Kantian revolution in Germany: 'auf beiden Seiten des Rheines sehen wir denselben Bruch mit der Vergangenheit, der Tradition wird alle Ehrfurcht aufgekündigt; wie hier in Frankreich jedes Recht, so muß dort in Deutschland jeder Gedanke sich justificieren, und wie hier das Königthum, der Schlußstein der alten socialen Ordnung, so stürzt dort der Deismus, der Schlußstein des geistigen alten Regimes' (DHA 8/1, 77).

In Paris it was possible, so he suggests, to absorb as if by osmosis the lessons and techniques of French journalists whom he credits with near hierophantic status as supreme masters of the art. The enthusiasm he expresses here is a logical progression from the prophecy issued at the end of *Französische Maler* ‘daß Frankreich aus der Herzenstiefe seines neuen Lebens auch eine neue Kunst hervorathmen wird’ (DHA 12/1, 48).<sup>2</sup> Heine’s veneration of French journalism did not attach to any particular writer, mode or practice but rather to the context in which it flourished, above all to its perceived link with the revolution. In fact the rapid rise of journalism in the nineteenth century was a pan-European phenomenon attributable to practical advances in technology—improved printing and lithographic techniques and faster communication links by rail and telegraph—as well as to the increasing dominance of urban culture, which demanded a new immediacy of response to cope with its own rapidly changing nature; Martina Lauster has called this a ‘Phänomen des beschleunigten Wandels’.<sup>3</sup> Even in Germany, which lacked the hub of a centralized capital, journals increasingly promoted rapidity and brevity as the Holy Grail of written communication. ‘Schreibe mir Skizzen, Skizzen! In drei Zügen muß der Leser ein feurig Getränk schlürfen können’, wrote Heinrich Laube to rally a potential contributor in his capacity as editor of the Leipzig

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<sup>2</sup> Heine reiterates the idea in *Article III* of *Französische Zustände*, where he states ‘eine neue Kunst, eine neue Religion, ein neues Leben wird hier [in Paris] geschaffen, und lustig tummeln sich hier die Schöpfer einer neuen Welt’ (DHA 12/1, 103).

<sup>3</sup> ‘Physiologien aus der unsichtbaren Hauptstadt: Gutzkows soziologische Skizzen im europäisch-deutschen Kontext’ in *Karl Gutzkow: Liberalismus, Europäertum, Modernität*, ed. by Roger Jones and Martina Lauster (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2000), pp. 217-254 (p. 222).

based *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Paris has generally been acknowledged as the birthplace of this journalistic revolution:

[Es vollzieht sich] um und nach 1830 offenbar europaweit eine Umschichtung der Wahrnehmungs-, Schreib- und Publikationsweisen, die durch Entwicklungen im französischen Journalismus besonders pointiert vor Augen tritt. Was in der Pariser Publizistik geschieht, wirkt als Fanal und Katalysator für das, was sich anderswo schon ähnlich herausgebildet hat oder langsam, unter anderen Bedingungen und mit anderen Prioritäten im Begriff ist sich zu entwickeln.

(Lauster, p. 236)

Having lived through a succession of political upheavals and regime changes played out on the streets of their capital, the French had particularly urgent cause to record and thereby to reflect on the nature of their own transformations. Hence it is unsurprising that a revolution in those modes of cultural exchange that were best able to respond to a modern world in flux centred on Paris; as one commentator has put it, ‘revolution on the street, revolution on the page – the two were inevitably found together’.<sup>5</sup> For Heine, the revolution in journalism was more than simply a consequence of its political equivalent: it was a direct successor, a necessary second phase in the revolutionary process. Before his arrival in Paris he had enthused ‘welche Literatur bietet uns jetzt die französische Presse, jene ächte Repräsentantinn des Geistes und Willens der Franzosen!’ and noted that the French had already begun to write the history of their revolutionary deeds: ‘jene Hände, die so lange das Schwerdt geführt, werden wieder ein Schrecken ihrer Feinde, indem

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<sup>4</sup> In a letter to Ernst Adolph von Mühlbach on 6 February 1833, cited by Günther Oesterle in “‘Unter dem Strich’: Skizze einer Kulturpoetik des Feuilletons im neunzehnten Jahrhundert’, in *Das schwierige neunzehnte Jahrhundert*, ed. by Jürgen Barkhoff, Gilbert Carr and Roger Paulin (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000), pp. 229-250 (p. 240).

<sup>5</sup> Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the 19th-Century City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 2.

sie zur Feder greifen' (*Englische Fragmente*, DHA 7/1, 219). Against this cultural backdrop, the articles of *Französische Zustände* testify to Heine's understanding of the subversive power of journalism as the aesthetic embodiment of political revolution. Written for an audience (of *Allgemeine Zeitung* readers) with a developing political awareness, they also served to substantiate his notion that the revolutions in France would eventually be succeeded by a more profound revolution—one with an intellectual foundation—to come out of Germany.<sup>6</sup> As a German correspondent in Paris, he appoints himself an active facilitator, a catalyst of that transition.

It is no surprise that *Französische Zustände* has been identified as the origin of the great controversy surrounding Heine's literary identity, which has shaped so much of the reception history, given the extent to which he himself uses the experience of reporting on conditions under the politically unstable July Monarchy consciously to test its limits.<sup>7</sup> Questions relating to his identity as a writer were certainly at the forefront of his mind in 1833 since Prussian censorship regulations, which had been tightened in accordance with an edict issued on 28 June 1832 in response to a show of liberal opposition at the Hambacher Fest in May, had effectively caused him to curtail his project of twelve full-length articles after the ninth. Although he continued to supply a

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Zur Geschichte*: 'der Gedanke geht der That voraus, wie der Blitz dem Donner. [...]Es wird ein Stück aufgeführt werden in Deutschland, wogegen die französische Revolution nur wie eine harmlose Idylle erscheinen möchte' (DHA 8/1, 118 f.).

<sup>7</sup> The controversy to which I refer is the polarisation of his (negative) reception into two camps: those who saw him as a traitor to art and the political left which accused him of apostasy from the cause of freedom. Cf. Höhn, *Handbuch*, p. 287: 'als der Lieder-Dichter und *Reisebilder*-Autor zum politischen Journalisten wurde, fing der "Streit um Heine" erst richtig an.' It is most famously articulated in Karl Kraus's hostile polemic 'Heine und die Folgen' (1910) and Theodor Adorno's subsequent attempt at rehabilitation with 'Die Wunde Heine' (1956).

number of short 'Tagesberichte', he soon lost interest on account of their relatively limited scope and the reduced potential for political commentary. The defining quality of the new journalistic voice he had been developing, a combination of narrative and commentary 'im halben Reflexionsstyle' (see letter to Cotta, 1 January 1833; HSA 21, 47), had effectively been silenced. When he assembled the manuscript for publication in book form, Heine highlighted his approach as that of an objective reporter and faithful historian; in an authorial intervention in *Article VI* he announces his decision to preserve the idiosyncratic nature of momentary reportage ('daß ich nichts an diesen Artikeln ändere, daß ich sie ganz so abdrucken lasse, wie ich sie ursprünglich geschrieben') even at the cost of a coherent narrative and stance: 'eigentliche Irrthümer, falsche Prophezeyungen und schiefe Ansichten [dürfen] hier nicht fehlen [...], da sie zur Geschichte der Zeit gehören. Die Ereignisse selbst bilden immer die beste Berichtigung' (DHA 12/1, 133). That being said, given the self-conscious way in which he manages the presentation of his authorial profile, as here, one might go so far as to suggest that the articles of *Französische Zustände* were primarily intended to be a document not of political conditions, but of the history of his own formation as a journalist in this period. As we will see, Heine begins to negotiate the terms of his authorial identity from the outset in his very approach to writing the original articles for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. This is manifest in the first instance in the way he conducts his relationship with Cotta's paper.

The kind of journalist Heine was to become came out of a conscious dialogue with the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. In an editorial aside in the book version of *Lutezia*, his major collection of journalism of the 1840s, he reflects on two decades of contributions to the journal and describes an instrumental if uneasy partnership:

Es gibt obscure Winkelblätter genug, worin wir unser ganzes Herz mit allen seinen Zornbränden ausschütten könnten – aber sie haben nur ein sehr dürftiges und einflußloses Publikum [...]. Wir handeln weit klüger, wenn wir unsre Glutmäßigen, und mit nüchternen Worten, wo nicht gar unter einer Maske, in einer Zeitung uns aussprechen, die mit Recht eine allgemeine Weltzeitung genannt wird [...]. Beseelte mich nicht dieser Gedanke, so hätte ich mir wahrlich nie die Selbsttortur angetan, für die 'Allgemeine Zeitung' zu schreiben.

(‘Spätere Notiz. May 1854’; DHA 13/1, 64)

He admits to a rather masochistic kind of self-fashioning: the decision to sacrifice his personal freedom as a writer, the possibility of easy, open expression of controversial (i.e. radical liberal) political views, in order to secure wider circulation of his writing in the most influential journal of the age. The designation ‘Weltzeitung’ and Heine’s tribute to its late founder, Friedrich von Cotta, in words borrowed from Goethe’s *Egmont* as ‘ein Mann, der hatte die Hand über die ganze Welt’ (see HSA 23, 193) are no exaggeration of the status enjoyed by the *Allgemeine Zeitung* in this period.<sup>8</sup> Much of its readership was illustrious and influential; statesmen, diplomats, magistrates, bankers, businessmen, intellectuals of all kinds and even royalty numbered among its subscribers. As for its content, in addition to presenting regular news gathered from the German-speaking areas Cotta employed a team of editors and

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Marx called it ‘das einzige Organ mit mehr als lokaler Bedeutung’. See *Ein Weltblatt aus Bayern: Die Augsburger “Allgemeine Zeitung”*; eine Dokumentation [video] directed by Franz Herre (Munich: Bayerische Rundfunk, 2000).

journalists whose job it was to read and review the foreign press, including such important publications as *Le Moniteur*, *Le Journal des Débats*, *The Times* and *The Morning Chronicle*. However, not content to have the wider world brought to Augsburg, Cotta also cultivated a large network of freelance foreign correspondents stationed in most major cities across Europe and even in America who would supply first-hand reports on local cultural and political situations, thereby making the *Allgemeine Zeitung* Germany's eyes onto the world. Paris was a particular focus – by 1832 Cotta had no fewer than nine correspondents writing from the French capital, including Heine. Just as the latter was doubtlessly drawn by the journal's widespread influence and cosmopolitan outlook, so Cotta recognised the benefit to his enterprise of securing contributions from the author of the hugely popular *Reisebilder* as well as the support of one who, on account of his celebrity, was soon well-connected with the literati of Paris and therefore a useful mediator. When Kolb announced that Heine would begin writing *Französische Zustände* for the paper, he informed Cotta in the same breath 'er hat viel Bekanntschaft mit Journalisten'.<sup>9</sup> Heine was not averse to exploiting what he knew to be his privileged status in this respect. His warning of would-be rival German publications springing up in Paris, for instance, which he claimed lacked nothing but 'politischen Federn, deren Deutschland noch lange entbehren wird', adding 'ich kann dieses besser als jeder andere wissen, da dergleichen Leute, indem sie mich irrigerweise für

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<sup>9</sup> 'Gustav Kolb an Friedrich Cotta, 11 Oktober 1831', in 'Auszüge aus Briefen Kolbs an Cotta, Heine betreffend' (typed transcript of letters), Marbach-am-Neckar, Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Cotta-Archiv.

betriebsam halten, mich mit ihren Anträgen beständig belästigen' (31 October 1831; HSA 21, 25 f.), is unmistakably double-edged: Cotta should humour or risk losing him to rival publishers.

It has been remarked upon that the political tenor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* corresponded with that of Heine's writerly profile at the time: 'ein gemäßigter Liberalismus bei prinzipiellem Pluralismus der verschiedenen in der Zeitung vertretenen Positionen [ließ sich] mit Heines damaliger Selbsteinstufung als eines Gemäßigten [...] ganz gut vereinbaren' (cf. 'wenn wir unsre Glut *mäßigen*' in *Lutezia* 'Spätere Notiz. May 1854'; DHA 13/1, 64).<sup>10</sup> Cotta's journal was broadly liberal and founded on principles of truth, integrity and impartiality, to which end it sought to cover events as objectively as possible by presenting a broad range of perspectives.<sup>11</sup> This does not take into account their differing interpretations of measured liberalism, however, and Heine's pursuit of truth and integrity made for an abrasive relationship with the paper's management, which found itself caught between its star contributor's brilliantly refreshing but often provocative accounts of conditions in Paris and the watchful eye of Prussian press law. As editor Kolb had the unenviable task of moderating Heine's political commentary, when this was more explicit than the *Allgemeine Zeitung* could afford to risk, and acting as diplomatic mediator between writer and publisher – a difficult role which often called for wily tactics. Regarding

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<sup>10</sup> Jan-Christoph Hauschild and Michael Werner, 'Der Zweck des Lebens ist das Leben selbst': Heinrich Heine. Eine Biographie, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cologne: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1997), p. 260.

<sup>11</sup> Georg von Cotta restated his father's ideals in a letter to Heinrich Laube on 15 April 1840 as 'Unparteilichkeit, Gründlichkeit und Vollständigkeit'. See Volkmar Hansen (ed.), *Heinrich Heines politische Journalistik in der Augsburger 'Allgemeinen Zeitung'* [Katalog zur Ausstellung] (Augsburg: Presse-Druck, 1994), p. 64.

Heine's critique of the *juste-milieu* regime in *Article V*, he endeavoured to reassure Cotta: 'Sie werden sehen, ich habe ihn, ohne ihm im Wesen zu schaden, so gemildert, daß er gewiß keinen Anstoß geben kann' (12 April 1832; 'aus Briefen Kolbs an Cotta'). In an additional note in the margin he even suggested how Heine might be pacified by invoking an ungainsayable authority: 'könnte man nicht Heine mit ein paar Worten zur Entschuldigung schreiben, daß Ludwig Philipp selbst sich beklagt habe?' (ibid.). Heine was well aware of the existence of an 'allgemeine Zeitungssprache' into which his articles would be 'translated' by an unseen hand if he did not practise sufficient self-censorship (see his letter to Cotta, 1 February 1831; HSA 21, 26 f.), and he would reward Kolb's attempts to keep the peace with a personal attack at the end of the narrator's speech to the wolves in Canto XII of *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen*:

Das war die Rede, die ich hielt,  
 Ganz ohne Vorbereitung,  
 Verstümmelt hat Kolb sie abgedruckt,  
 In der Allgemeinen Zeitung. (DHA 4, 118)

Heine nevertheless acknowledged the constitutive role of censorship in the formation of his literary style, so that after restrictions were lifted in 1848 he was moved to state with ironic pessimism 'ach! ich kann nicht mehr schreiben, ich kann nicht, denn wir haben keine Censur! [...] Aller Styl wird aufhören, die ganze Grammatik, die guten Sitten' (*Werner* II, 108). From Cotta's perspective, meanwhile, there was an equivalent 'Heine-Sprache' (my term) which, though potentially dangerous, was essential to the continuing success of the *Allgemeine*

*Zeitung*. Though he warned Heine not to follow Börne's example and pen incendiary remarks for the sake of it, he nevertheless appreciated his unique flair: 'Ihr Geist findet ganz andre Stoffe zur Schilderung, Ihre Feder weiß selbst aus Steinen Funken zu schlagen, die zur Flamme werden' (7 December 1831; HSA 24, 101). Similarly, Kolb recognised *Französische Zustände* as 'ein unentbehrliches Element der Allgemeinen Zeitung, um dem zunehmenden Rufe, als ältere sie und werde zu servile, zu begegnen' (2 January 1832; 'aus Briefen Kolbs an Cotta'). It seems the liability was worth their while – 'mit einiger Besonnenheit gebraucht sind uns diese Artikel gewiß höchst gewinnreich', Kolb enthused to Cotta (2 February 1832; *ibid.*).

As a foreign correspondent, Heine's articles did not appear in the main body of the paper, which was reserved for more factual reporting, but rather in a separate *Beilage*. While those working in Augsburg produced daily formulaic and rather dry summaries of the French press and the latest news from the Chamber of Deputies, contributions to the paper's supplement were sporadic, due to the still unpredictable nature of long-distance communication not to mention the habits of freelance writers, and more varied, for they offered individual perspectives and reflections on events from the front line. As a result, the *Beilage* held near cult status in the minds of its readers and was instrumental in informing opinion; Rumigny, a French foreign diplomat based in Munich, remarked how 'les correspondances particulières ont toute l'influence d'articles officiels: et, [*sic*] bien des gens ici règlent leur opinion sur celle qu'on leur donne toute faite' (see DHA 12/2, 626 f.). In this respect its

relationship to the special correspondents themselves was a fundamentally paradoxical one, for their autonomy, the very source of their difference, appeal and hence value to Cotta's enterprise, was undermined by the fact that their reports appeared anonymously, with only a symbol allocated by the editorial team to identify them. A practical measure designed to protect the reputations of all concerned (the *Allgemeine Zeitung* assumed legal responsibility for all the material it published), this nevertheless raises fundamental questions concerning the nature of authorship and identity, which may be observed in Heine's case in his playful manipulation of the boundaries where such things are determined, especially his flirtation with the restrictions of censorship. The policy of anonymity served ironically to sharpen rather than erode the celebrity of his name in the minds of enthusiastic readers. 'Also Sie sind noch in Paris! Dies mein theurer Freund, bezeugen für mich auf unwidersprechliche Weise mehrere Zeitungsartikel, [...] [die] nur Einen Menschen in der Welt zum Verfasser haben können', Varnhagen asserted (16 February 1832; HSA 24, 107 f.), while his wife Rahel remarked upon the inimitability of Heine's style – 'jeder Silbe liest man das an' (HSA 24, 128).<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile the relative degree of separation from open political reportage in the main section of the paper served as a partial smokescreen for his own political agenda; ironically the latter depended on him having leeway to experiment artistically – beyond what his readers might have expected of this kind of journalistic writing.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hansen, p. 11: 'liest man eine der alten Nummern, in denen Heines Artikel erschienen sind, dann fallen seine Paris-Berichte gelegentlich nicht durch ihren Neuigkeitswert auf, immer jedoch ihre stilistisch-autoreigentümlichen Qualitäten, die gelegentlich die anonymisierende Chiffre für den Leser durchschaubar machen, durch ihre Evokationspotenz.'

## THE SPECTATOR-COMMENTATOR OF 'JUSTE-MILIEU' POLITICS

The need for a spectatorial perspective is inscribed into Heine's very role as foreign correspondent for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, not least since the journal put such great store by enlightening its reader with a true and complete picture of the unknown. As we saw in *Französische Maler* where verbal sketches of paintings constituted the German reader's only access to the cultural artefacts in question, so too his reports on French life convey a picture of Paris—its culture, politics, personalities and events—for the benefit of a distant audience. Of course whereas his critical engagement with contemporary Paris in the earlier text had been limited by the very nature of its project to sideways glances through gallery windows, *Französische Zustände* invokes a more direct relationship between Heine the spectator and everyday reality as manifest in the public space of the street. As a witness and commentator of world-changing events, he professes to act on native impulse in accordance with 'mein Trieb alles Weltwichtige an Ort und Stelle zu betrachten und behorchen' (29 January 1837; HSA 21, 179). To readers of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, his perspective combined the dual advantage of first-hand authenticity with the special insight of one who could claim 'ich erlebe viele großen Dinge in Paris, sehe die Weltgeschichte mit eignen Augen an, verkehre amicalement mit ihren größten Helden' (HSA 21, 39). That being said, there is a degree of self-aggrandisement in this remark to Friedrich Merckel which reflects his anticipated view of life in the seat of the recent revolution more than it does the reality of conditions under the July Monarchy as he eventually observes and records them. In fact, it

is first and foremost a climate of instability engendered by a regime permanently caught between the poles of revolution and restoration—‘die Folge jener Halbheit, jenes Schwankens zwischen Himmel und Hölle, jenes [...] Justemilieuwesens’ (DHA 12/1, 121)—which shapes his mode of response as a political commentator.

In his articles, Heine draws special attention to the visual dimension of political discourse in *juste-milieu* Paris and so reinforces the essential nature of his own role as spectator. It has been noted that the perceived modernity of the events of 1789, we may add of 1830, and the society these created derives ‘from the translation of politics into everyday life, where every move, every speech, every article of clothing, made a public statement’ (Parkhurst Ferguson, p. 2). As the *deus ex machina* resolution to a kind of theatrical set-piece revolution, Louis-Philippe in particular became a master of political symbolism and was well aware that he had a part to perform to his public: that of *Roi-citoyen*.<sup>13</sup> Heine outlines the nature of his performance in *Article 1* where he recalls the trademark bourgeois hat, umbrella and handshake, the latter being delivered wearing gloves carefully selected to mirror the social status of the one receiving it. However, he also notes that lately the king had been letting this slip: ‘es ist schon lange her, seit er das letztmal, mit rundem Hut und Regenschirm, durch die Straßen von Paris wanderte, und mit raffinirter Treuherzigkeit die Rolle eines biedern, schlichten Hausvaters spielte’ (DHA 12/1, 80 f.). In his own more

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<sup>13</sup> Roger Magraw highlights the self-conscious theatricality of the July Revolution. See *France 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century*, p. 42.

recent anecdote he recounts how ‘als ich ihn das letztmal sah, wandelte er auf und nieder zwischen den goldenen Thürmchen, Marmorvasen und Blumen auf dem Dache der Gallerie Orleans’ (81). As readers who have just been alerted to the workings of political symbolism we are silently invited to supply a latent political commentary, hinted at by Louis-Philippe’s sudden elevation from the streets of Paris to the roof terrace of the Galerie d’Orléans and by the fact that the bourgeois trappings he consciously donned have been replaced by ornaments of opulence which surround him as he is spotted pacing up and down. Although Heine appears to adopt the perspective of an objective eye witness, in practice he has recorded only those details which further his own agenda as a political commentator. Thus he sets up the conclusion at which we, that is to say he with us his readers in tow, arrive: the king’s appearance of ‘Sorglosigkeit’ is rendered sham ‘wenn wir die schwindelnde Stellung des Mannes bedenken’ (81), and we are reminded by the ironic reference to his lofty position that, in setting himself up too high above his people, he has placed himself in an unstable position, exposing himself to a kind of political vertigo.

As a spectator who bears witness to *juste-milieu* visual performances, Heine develops a mode of political commentary based on a refined version of the same kind of strategic manipulation of visual symbols that he observes. As readers we are called to recognise his supreme mastery of the art, which enables him to smuggle his own political commentary under the cover of an apparently objective kind of verbal portraiture. In *Article V* he gives a more detailed portrait of Louis-Philippe as the third in a trio of ‘sonderbaren Legitimitäten’ behind

Napoleon and Henri Count of Chambord, the disputed Henri V and legitimist pretender (DHA 12/1, 127). Of course he might simply have recounted the ongoing discussion of 'unsere Pamphletisten' on the subject, so he suggests, but then rapidly dismisses this as 'zu weitläufig und unfruchtbar, als daß ich es auch hier erörtern möchte' (ibid.). Instead he proposes to divine the course of politics by examining the nature of the person of the monarch: 'jede Auskunft über die persönlichen Eigenschaften des Herzogs von Orleans scheint mir wichtiger zu seyn, da sich an die Persönlichkeit des jungen Fürsten so viele Interessen der nächsten Wirklichkeit knüpfen' (ibid.). That said, he then proceeds to relay two opposing views of Louis-Philippe's character of which he makes the self-refuting observation 'ich brauche wohl nicht zu sagen, daß solch wohlwollendes Urtheil von den Anhängern der Dynastie, das böswillige aber von deren Gegnern herrührt. Diesen ist eben so wenig wie jenen zu trauen' (ibid.). Reading between the lines we may conclude that he deems pamphlet writers too crass aesthetically speaking to be worth mimicking; moreover, their brand of political commentary is too obvious to be considered as a model for *Französische Zustände*, which must needs comply with censorship restraints. Meanwhile the representatives of two opposing political camps in Paris—supporters of the July Monarchy on the one hand and its republican and legitimist opponents on the other—are shown to be unreliable witnesses of character whose accounts are too obviously the product of their own political agendas. By contrast, Heine renders the king's 'persönlichen Eigenschaften' in a more literal sense, to which end he sets himself up as a fastidious and, so we are

led to believe, truthful observer and portraitist: 'ich kann also über den jungen Fürsten nichts Bestimmtes mittheilen, als was ich selbst gesehen habe, nemlich wie sein Aeußeres beschaffen ist. Hier muß ich, der Wahrheit gemäß, eingestehen, er sieht gut aus' (127 f.). The ensuing detailed catalogue of physical attributes he sketches is self-consciously superficial to the point of flippancy, yet he claims to be able to forecast a troubled future, a 'nicht allzu heitere Zukunft' (128), from these observations. By apportioning such effort and space to an apparently inconsequential sketch of a 'good-looking' king, Heine throws his melancholic prophecy into greater ironic relief. If its particulars remain undisclosed, this serves only to enhance the sense of political portent, without the risk of incurring censorship, and to reinforce his integrity as an interpreter in the mind of the reader.

The way Heine records the appearances of things, especially personalities, to convey a hidden layer of (political) meaning reflects a contemporary trend, prevalent in urban culture in general and in Paris in particular, that had been sparked by Johann Caspar Lavater's work on physiognomy in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century: *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* (1775-1778). This had revived interest in the link between surface phenomena and their underlying meaning and provided a cognitive model by which an individual's character could be ascertained by observing his or her physical, especially facial, characteristics. It is this notion Heine exploits when, for instance, he depicts Casimir Perier, the President of the Council, as the physical manifestation of *juste-milieu* political indeterminacy:

‘die Farbe des Gesichts ist graugelblich, das gewöhnliche Colorit der Sorge und Verdrossenheit, und es irren allerley wunderliche Falten darüber hin, die zwar nicht gemein sind, aber auch nicht edel, vielleicht Justemilieu-, anständig grämliche Justemilieu-Falten’ (DHA 12/1, 110).

In Paris, Lavater’s work inspired a related literary genre of so-called *physiologies*, which were popular pamphlet portraits, comprising both a text and lithograph, of Parisian sociological types and institutions classified according to their habits, customs, manners and appearance.<sup>14</sup> While production of *physiologies* did not peak until the early 1840s, other forms with the same underlying preoccupation and strategies were also mapping Paris more broadly in the early 1830s, at the same time as Heine was writing *Französische Zustände*. Pierre-François Ladvoat responded to the challenge of depicting *juste-milieu* society with *Paris: ou le Livre des Cent-et-un* (1831-1834), a multivolume sketch compendium of, in this instance, purely text-based ‘tableaux’ of Parisian people, places and institutions. Penned by multiple authors from multiple perspectives, it aimed to give a portrait of the whole city in all its post-revolutionary confusion. Once again a physiognomic approach was embraced as a means to order and interpret the visual manifestations of its social and political undercurrents; Balzac began his famous portrait of Paris in the *Comédie Humaine* with ‘quelques observations sur l’âme de Paris’ to explain ‘les causes de sa

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<sup>14</sup> Martina Lauster has described these in terms of ‘a meta-physiognomic paradigm’, in *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century: European Journalism and its Physiologies, 1830-50* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 88.

physiognomie'.<sup>15</sup> In *Französische Maler*, Heine credited Delacroix with representing 'die wirkliche Physiognomie der Julitage' in his review of the latter's work (DHA 12/1, 21). In *Französische Zustände* he practises a kind of physiognomy in his own right using the observations he claims to make firsthand.<sup>16</sup>

Writing in 1834, Karl Gutzkow lamented the absence of a German answer to the trend-setting *Livre des Cent-et-un*: 'wir Deutsche bedurften [...] einiger einheimischen Beispiele, ehe wir Charakteristiken dieser Art zu entwerfen wagten. Die Beispiele kamen aber nicht, weil wir kein Paris, keine großen Städte, keine Nüancen in unsern Sitten [...] und bei den Schriftstellern wenig Beobachtungsgabe besitzen.'<sup>17</sup> While Heine cannot be said to have supplied a domestic example in any literal sense, he appears to do something even more constructive through the manner of his engagement in *Französische Zustände* with this contemporary Parisian fashion. Without ever identifying himself with it explicitly, he presents himself as a kind of prototype *physiologist* (my italics are to distinguish the word from its modern usage) with quasi-magical, divinatory powers. As a young man wandering through a slumbering Germany he was able, so he claims in *Article IX*, to read the early stirrings of republican interest in its people before they themselves were conscious of what this might signify, that is before they were awakened by events in France in 1830: 'ich sah

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<sup>15</sup> 'La Fille aux Yeux d'Or', in *La Comédie Humaine*, ed. by Pierre-Georges Castex, 12 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1976-1981), v, 1039.

<sup>16</sup> Zantop has noted 'the link between Heine's *Bildergeschichten* (picture stories), *French Painters*, and his *Geschichte in Bildern* (history in pictures), *French Conditions*'; see 'Liberty Unbound: Heine's "Historiography in Colour"', in *Paintings on the Move*, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> 'Vorrede', *Novellen*, 2 vols (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1834), I, xix f.

den Schmerz auf ihren Gesichtern, ich studirte ihre Physiognomien, ich legte ihnen die Hand aufs Herz und sie fingen an nachtwandlerhaft im Schlafe zu sprechen, seltsam abgebrochene Reden, ihre geheimsten Gedanken enthüllend' (DHA 12/1, 177). In other words he renders himself a kind of cognate in spirit with modern, post-revolutionary French social and political commentators. As such, he enacts the kind of transmission between French and German contexts which he considers prerequisite for political enlightenment and which defines him in his own particular role as mediator.

In his account of the surface phenomena of *juste-milieu* Paris, Heine essentially problematizes the physiognomic approach, which postulated 'a direct correspondence between people's inner being and their outer physical appearance', in that he bears witness to a breakdown of this correlation in a society ruled over by those with a mastery of dissimulation.<sup>18</sup> He depicts the July Monarchy as a political system which, despite having been brought about by revolutionary action on the street, by the direct visual manifestation of social and political change, has become dependent for its survival on an ability to manipulate and manage an image of itself within this selfsame public space. Thus the annual Paris *Mardi-gras* carnival poses an unusual difficulty for the first-time foreign spectator:

Da dieser Winter der erste war, den ich in Paris zubrachte, so kann ich nicht entscheiden, ob der Karneval dieses Jahr so brilliant gewesen, wie die Regierung prahlt, oder ob er so trist aussah, wie die Opposition klagt. Sogar bey solchen Außendingen kann man der Wahrheit hier nicht auf die Spur kommen. Alle

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<sup>18</sup> Richard Sennett, 'Foreword', in Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), p. 7.

Partheyen suchen zu täuschen, und selbst den eignen Augen darf man nicht trauen. (DHA 12/1, 118)

Heine recognises carnival, in the Bakhtinian sense, to be in and of itself a form of dissimulation with a subversive tendency.<sup>19</sup> As a social leveller and controlled manifestation of revolutionary ideas, 'Maskenfreyheit' is feared by the government precisely because it is only one step away from its uncontrolled equivalent, the riot; he notes that 'man erwartete besonders am Mardi-gras eine Emeute' (118). However, he explains that this is outdone by the regime's own version of masquerade. Even as an eye-witness it is impossible for him to give a true account of what is going on, not with respect to the masked crowds *per se* but because his experience of the event is subject to the destabilizing effects of the wider political situation: 'es ist sehr leicht, die Bedeutung der öffentlichen Mummereyen einzusehen. Schwerer ist es, die geheime Maskerade zu durchschauen, die hier in allen Verhältnissen zu finden ist. Dieser größere Karneval beginnt mit dem ersten Januar, und endigt mit dem einunddreißigsten December' (119). This was hardly the scene of post-revolutionary political freedom he had envisaged, for instance in the *Briefe aus Helgoland* where his ambition to see the effects of the revolution firsthand was linked to a desire for truth (see DHA 11, 49). However, he manages to turn his political disappointment at the reality of conditions in Paris to aesthetic advantage. At the same time as demonstrating his own ability to see through such techniques of dissimulation—he pursues what Lauster has associated with

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<sup>19</sup> See Mikhail Bakhtin on the 'carnavalesque' in *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1984).

the writers of *physiologies* as ‘eine analytische “Durchdringung” der sichtbaren Welt’ (‘Physiologien aus der unsichtbaren Hauptstadt’, p. 225)—he exploits the very same practices in his own writing to develop a mode of political critique that can simultaneously circumvent the censor and initiate the reader in its subversive agenda.

In *Über die französische Bühne* (1837), a collection of letters addressed to the German theatre critic August Lewald which was destined to become the third part of *De la France* after *Französische Maler* and *Französische Zustände*, Heine uses the familiar metaphor of a *theatrum mundi* to explain why French drama may appear excessive to the German spectator: ‘das Leben ist hier in Frankreich viel dramatischer, und der Spiegel des Lebens, das Theater, zeigt hier im höchsten Grade Handlung und Passion’ (DHA 12/1, 243). He explains how, in the context of Parisian society, melodramatic theatre and everyday life are barely distinguishable: ‘was [...] im theatralischen Gewande so greuelhaft unnatürlich vorkommt, ereignet sich täglich und stündlich zu Paris in der bürgerlichsten Wirklichkeit’ (244). Ina Brendel-Perpina has argued for the inclusion of *Französische Zustände* in any discussion of Heine’s writing on theatre, since his writing on French society frequently has recourse to theatrical metaphors which make it a complementary case of the ‘theatersoziologische Perspektive’ she attributes to *Über die französische Bühne*.<sup>20</sup> I have been arguing something similar in connection with a metaphor of picture painting, especially portraiture, as developed in *Französische Maler*. In *Französische Zustände*, Heine

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<sup>20</sup> *Heinrich Heine und das Pariser Theater zur Zeit der Julimonarchie* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2000), p. 56.

invokes the theatre metaphor to highlight his own difficulties as a reporter in a city he characterizes as the 'Heimath der Schaulust' (89); he plays on the semantic etymology of the word to highlight a society defined by its all-pervasive 'desire for display'. He refers to Paris and areas within it as a 'Schauplatz'; the Place Vendôme is the stage for a military review (204), the Rue St Martin and streets in general the stage of popular unrest (197; 201) and even the Louvre nearly becomes 'der Schauplatz nächtlicher Frevel' (101). As reinforced by the metaphor, these are all emphatically public spaces—'dieser Schauplatz ist [...] eine der größten und volkreichsten Straßen von Paris' (197), he says of the Rue St Martin—and backdrops against which dramatic events, or rather spectacles, unfold. In this context revolutionary activity on the streets has become a kind of spectator sport for the curious; Heine had noted in *Französische Maler* 'daß es für einen Ausländer noch ein besonderes Amusement sey eine Revoluzion in Paris zu erleben' ('Nachtrag'; DHA 12/1, 59). The extended metaphor surely does more than present 'außertheatralische Zusammenhänge bildhaft und eindrücklich', as Brendel-Perpina suggests (p. 59). When Heine describes the recent July Revolution as a 'Schauspiel für Götter', for instance, he pursues the implications of his own suggestion to remark just how costly this performance for an illustrious audience has been to produce: 'dieses [...] hat [...] einige Millionen gekostet, obgleich die eigentlichen Akteure, das Volk von Paris, in Heroismus und Uneigennützigkeit gewetteifert' (96). Thus he is able to introduce an implicit socio-critical dimension by invoking the conditions of theatrical production: a costly spectacle for outside

observers, the revolution may have involved significant financial outlay on the part of its producers and immediate beneficiaries (the ruling elite of the *Juste Milieu*), but the real, hidden cost is born by its lowly actors, namely the ordinary Parisian people.

With Paris as a stage, the physical features of its urban landscape become props which, filtered through the analytical gaze of Heine's socio-political critic, can transcend their objectivity and acquire the status of symbols. He lays bare the workings of this process in an observation concerning cobblestones which, only recently torn up and hurled as weapons by the July Revolutionaries, are being calmly reset by the new regime 'damit keine äußere Spur der Revolution übrig bleibe' (DHA 12/1, 82). First of all, as spectator, Heine registers the stones as symbols of revolution; they have acquired meaning through their use as props in political action on the street, being made the literal agent in a metaphorical battle between opposing forces of subversion and restoration.<sup>21</sup> Close inspection of his written account reveals the introduction of a telling subjunctive which sounds a note of defiance against the regime's attempt to obliterate all memory of the revolution's occurrence. Via metonymic replacement, Heine's stones become equated with the people that threw them, who are 'wie Pflastersteine, in die Erde zurückgestampft, und, nach wie vor, mit Füßen getreten' (82). So he implicitly accuses Louis-Philippe not only of ingratitude towards those who secured him power but of politically regressive,

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<sup>21</sup> Heine's account implicitly recalls *Le Replâtreage* by Charles Philippon, printed in *La Caricature* on 30 June 1831. The cartoon prompted the journal's first seizure by the authorities and led to the famous trial in which Philippon sketched Louis-Philippe as a pear. Heine refers to it in *Article 1* (DHA 12/1, 81).

indeed oppressive behaviour, as conveyed by the violent image of stamping. In other words, he carries out an act of subversion by rhetoric; he undermines the attempts of the ruling powers to quash the memory of 1830, and reminds his reader through a strikingly simple metaphor for injustice that true revolution, the emancipation of the people, is yet to come.

The success of Heine's particular political critique rests on his ability to manipulate different layers of his role as spectator. In a study of the early *Briefe aus Berlin* (1822) Hinrich Seeba developed the concept of an 'urban gaze' to describe how Heine not only 'reads' city streets in the manner first proposed by Ludwig Börne—'ein aufgeschlagenes Buch ist Paris zu nennen, durch seine Straßen wandern, heißt *lesen*'—but, being determined 'to turn the urban spectacle into a political lesson', also reconstructs this reading in a 'dramaturgy of political action'.<sup>22</sup> Anthony Phelan has traced the same phenomenon through Heine's sophisticated metonymic reconstruction of *juste-milieu* Paris in *Lutezia*, where details of daily life on the streets that appear to be registered objectively, in self-proclaimed imitation of the daguerreotype principle ('meine Berichte sind ein daguerreotypisches Geschichtsbuch'; DHA 13/1, 19), are in fact woven into a tapestry of signs, symbols and emblems. The result, Phelan argues, is a discourse intended to mimic the practices of the politically unstable July Monarchy whilst simultaneously exposing these for what they are by means of

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<sup>22</sup> Seeba, 'Keine Systematik: Heine in Berlin and the Origin of the Urban Gaze', in *Heinrich Heine's Contested Identities*, ed. by Hermand and Holub, pp. 89-108 (p. 92; 96). Cf. Briegleb, *Opfer Heine?*, p. 154: 'Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Berlin, London, München, Lucca, Paris – in ihren Straßen lesen wir ihre Zeichenwelt, beobachten mit, und geraten [...] in den Zug einer Zeichen-Dramaturgie.' I quote Börne from the 'Schilderungen aus Paris, 1822-1824', *Sämtliche Schriften* II, 34.

a 'strategy of open secrecy in which the everyday factitious world is swept up into the practice of a political hermeneutics' (*Reading Heinrich Heine*, p. 191). The spectator-Heine to emerge from these analyses is first and foremost a political rhetorical strategist, 'an aspiring political writer who [...] encodes his emerging agenda in the crafty construction of a poetic argument' (Seeba, p. 89). To underline this aspect, both Seeba and Phelan have sought to move away from a figure that, owing to critical currency supplied by Walter Benjamin's discussion of Baudelaire's modernity, has often been taken as the representative figure of Heine's journalistic style: the flâneur.<sup>23</sup> While Phelan pursues another model (Scheherazade) to which Heine himself alludes in *Lutezia*, Seeba argues that the flâneur merely perceives visual dynamics without Heine's special interest in changing their underlying social structure (p. 90). However, inasmuch as this archetype of a Parisian spectator is part of his dialogue with French society—in *Lutezia* a flâneur appears as the quintessence of the general culture of 'Schaulust' under the July Monarchy (DHA 13/1, 139)—the comparison still merits consideration. Not least since Heine's political stance is difficult to determine and his agenda remains far from clear.

In *Article II* he makes an open declaration of his political tendency, the implication being that French conditions have merely served to validate his biographical predisposition: 'Royalist, aus angeborner Neigung, werde ich es in Frankreich auch aus Ueberzeugung' (DHA 12/1, 88). By extension, the record of

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<sup>23</sup> 'Baudelaire oder die Straßen von Paris', in *Walter Benjamin: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and others, 7 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), v/i, 54-59. Cf. Wolfgang Preisendanz, *Heinrich Heine: Werkstrukturen und Epochenbezüge* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1973), p. 86; Briegleb, *Opfer Heine?*, pp. 18-20.

his engagement with these, i.e. *Französische Zustände* itself, may be presumed to substantiate the claim. Höhn has formulated an obvious objection based on the conflicting evidence of Heine's own text. He asks: 'kann man als "Royalist aus angeborener Neigung" die Julimonarchie von links kritisieren und gleichzeitig gegen deren rechte *und* linke, d.h. republikanische Opposition opponieren, ohne sich zu widersprechen – ohne sich zwischen alle Stühle zu setzen?' (*Handbuch*, p. 291). The answer is surely no, yet Höhn's implied criticism has already been undercut by Heine's own admission, in a preamble to the *Tagesberichte*, that his articles contain 'vielen widersprechenden Aeußerungen' (DHA 12/1, 193) due to their status as authentic reportage of the moment; a moment that is shaped, moreover, by the permanently vacillating political climate of the *Juste Milieu*. Indeed the very inconsistency of the observations he makes is held up as proof of his own authenticity as a biographical witness. It is useful to consider Heine's spectator as flâneur-like insofar as he avoids systematic critique from any fixed (political) position (cf. Phelan, p. 187 f.), an incarnation in French clothing of the principle of objective reportage which he claims to uphold. A commentator in the French press depicts him in precisely this guise, with the same objectivity of vision he implies is the goal of his subject ('l'observateur que j'observais'): 'le personnage remit tranquillement ses mains dans ses poches, et continua son travail; ce travail consistait à regarder.'<sup>24</sup> It is an objective stance of this kind which allows Heine to make an appearance at a critical meeting of the republican society of the *Amis du peuple* only to move on,

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<sup>24</sup> Philarète Chasles, sketch in the *Revue de Paris* on 1 March 1835. See *Werner* II, 228 f.

as tension grows on the eve of its forced closure by the regime and his neighbour advises he carry a pistol for protection, to spend a soirée in the Faubourg St Germain, where he witnesses 'nichts als Lichter, Spiegel, Blumen, nackte Schultern, Zuckerwasser, gelbe Glacéhandschuh und Fadaisen' (*Article III*; DHA 12/1, 99). On the one hand we read of an earnest republican speech, 'eine Rede voll Geist, Redlichkeit und Grimm', whose aesthetic inadequacy Heine parodies by restricting his own lexis, albeit in a perfectly formed chiasmus: 'doch der vorgetragenen Freyheit fehlte der freye Vortrag' (97). On the other, we are presented with an enumeration of colourful minutiae devoid of relevance to any tangible, real context – metonyms for the Carlist-legitimists who remain oblivious to the shouts of 'Vive la République' that Heine has just been hearing on the streets outside. The juxtaposition without comment of two extremes facilitates implicit criticism of both, while demanding identification with neither; Heine's spectator is able to appear ubiquitously present as an insider and yet permanently on the outside of each scene he presents. While this strategy is clearly advantageous from the point of view of polemic, especially considering censorship requirements, crucially it also allows Heine to uphold a certain ambiguity of identity which has to do with more than an impulse to avoid fixed political labels. In another dimension, he manipulates his function as a spectator of French conditions to fashion his profile more broadly as an author.

## THE AUTHOR OF A 'MORGENRÖTLICHER KLASSIKER'

While daily events in Paris may thrust political issues to the fore, these same politics and French society, with its predilection for the theatrical, also lend themselves to a form of literary re-enactment. As a witness of this society, Heine often appears on the brink of becoming playwright in place of commentator. In a manner rather reminiscent of the claim he makes for himself as an objective spectator ('mein Trieb [...] zu betrachten und behorchen'; HSA 21, 179), the *DHA* editors have attributed this to the native impulse of a literary author: 'das Bedürfnis, seine Beobachtungen literarisch umzusetzen' (*DHA* 12/2, 632). However, the most literary passages of *Französische Zustände* are involved in something rather more self-conscious than this suggests. With an eye always on his literary impact, Heine's political commentary is never far from becoming a self-staging literary performance.

*Article IX* includes an account of the republican uprising on the occasion of Lamarque's funeral procession in which Heine exploits the uncertainty surrounding what actually occurred to explore notions of authenticity in reporting, as well as the possibilities of narrative reconstruction. His investigation turns on the question of his own status as a witness. A detailed narration of scenes in the streets as events unfold gives the impression that this is a report by a firsthand spectator, yet he freely admits that it is based on 'Nachforschungen, die ich, wie mein Amt es erheischt, gewissenhaft angestellt' (*DHA* 12/1, 184). The care he claims to take as a reporter with hindsight is nonetheless undercut by our memory of his own admission in the *Tagesberichte*

which covered the same event—to which he alludes here as the sketchy precursors of the present ‘ausführliche Besprechung’ (182)—that it was virtually impossible to determine what really happened. At the time, he had highlighted the problematic relationship between reality, perception and verbal reporting; he stressed not only how the crowded nature of the street made actual observation a practical impossibility, but also, in humorous subversion of the normal relationship between visual and verbal testimony, that many of the spectators present ultimately allowed subsequent reports and rumours to convince them that they had witnessed all the details of the riot with their own eyes (see DHA 12/1, 195). Readers of the later article are left to conclude that the office of diligent, objective reporter he claims to uphold is in fact no more than a part he plays in a narrative reconstruction after the event; in the end he can do nothing to redeem the fact that his sources are most likely flawed. This is compounded by his subsequent admission that he had reacted less than impassively on first receiving news of the doomed uprising: ‘in der Kirche Saint-Merry hat man mir diese Geschichte erzählt, und ich mußte mich dort an die Bildsäule des heiligen Sebastian anlehnen, um nicht vor innerer Bewegung umzusinken, und ich weinte wie ein Knabe’ (184). In contrast to his contrived reporter’s role, the emotional reaction to which this self-portrait testifies appears that of a genuine biographical self—quite a different Heine to the subtle strategist we have been investigating—who gives an untrammelled, highly subjective response to the political tragedy. To complicate matters, however, this moment of pathos turns out to be as staged as the report which

frames it. Heine's collapse against the statue of Saint Sebastian in the church of Saint-Merry betokens a self-conscious, bitterly ironic evaluation of this most recent failure of the republican ideal and its consequences. He depicts himself falling back for support on the religion he most vehemently rejects, in mock penance, perhaps, for his adamant refusal to identify himself with these radical liberals; 'ich bin, bey Gott! kein Republikaner,' he had declared in his report on 7 June, 'ich weiß, wenn die Republikaner siegen, so schneiden sie mir die Kehle ab' (197). More generally, the architecture of both setting and text here creates a moment of self-staging that calls to mind the device of the chorus in a Greek tragedy, a literary comparison Heine goes on to draw as his depicted self succumbs to the memory of 'alle Heldengeschichten, worüber ich als Knabe schon so viel geweint' (184). As narrator, he is at once sympathetically involved and set apart from the events he recounts. Meanwhile the reader is made retrospectively aware of a narrative dense with literary references – one that has been carefully constructed to exploit all the dramatic potential of the situation. The rioters appear as Bacchanalian revellers, each brandishing a thyrsus and intoxicated in pursuit of freedom, and Heine structures the whole episode to form a breathless linguistic and syntactic crescendo; portentous scene-setting leads to a moment of dramatic irony – 'es war [...] ein trübes Vorbedeutniß, daß der Siegeswagen, dem jene bacchantische Jugend nachjubelte, keinen lebenden, sondern einen todten Triumphator trug' (184) – and finally to a climax in which he bemoans the 'ill-fated' Lamarque. Thus Heine stages his spectator-self in a different kind of relationship to his journalistic enterprise, though no less

strategically than for the purposes of political polemic: a subjective, emotional response is incorporated as part of the historical moment and used to launch a self-consciously literary narrative.

Heine's account of the outbreak of cholera in 1832 presents perhaps the most significant departure from the 'normal' reportage of *Französische Zustände*. The epidemic had in its own right suspended the normal progress of life and politics in Paris, and hence the source of material on which his journalism, even his very *raison d'être*, usually depended:

Mehrere Abende lang sah man sogar auf den Boulevards wenig Menschen [...]. Die Theater sind wie ausgestorben. Wenn ich in einen Salon trete, sind die Leute verwundert, mich noch in Paris zu sehen, da ich doch hier keine nothwendigen Geschäfte habe. (*Article VI*; DHA 12/1, 138)

Unlike the majority of his contemporaries with sufficient means, Heine had chosen not to flee the city. In an authorial aside added to this article in 1833 he explains that this was not out of bravado, but to look after an invalid friend (his cousin, Carl Heine) (see DHA 12/1, 132). Similarly, in a letter to Varnhagen, he anticipates that others will perceive this as a display of courage, which he then refutes with an ironic, self-consciously bathetic avowal: 'es war nicht eigentlich Muth daß ich nicht ebenfalls von Paris entfloh, als der panische Schrecken einriß; ehrlich gesagt, ich war zu faul' (HSA 21, 37). It is virtually impossible to determine his true motivation. What is certain, his decision to stay where other German writers, most notably his rival Börne, had left allowed him to claim special authenticity for his report as an eye-witness account – 'ein Bülletin [...], welches auf dem Schlachtfelde selbst, und zwar während der Schlacht,

geschrieben worden, und daher unverfälscht die Farbe des Augenblicks trägt' (DHA 12/1, 132 f.). By including the date and exact conditions—meteorological and sociological—of the outbreak, and by recounting numerous anecdotes and details of individual and crowd behaviour on the boulevards, he seems to want to reinforce this status. However, the insistence on contemporariness serves primarily to distinguish the narrative layer of his text, which deals with events, with respect to a broader historical perspective, which he establishes in a kind of discursive theoretical framework to the article. Against this backdrop, the cholera report appears as a self-conscious literary interlude.

Heine begins his article, rather unexpectedly, with a general philosophical discussion concerning historiography and the revolution. He asks 'was trieb die Franzosen, eine Revoluzion zu beginnen, und haben sie das erreicht, was sie bedurften?' (131), and highlights the importance of the historical perspective for an informed understanding of the present and vice versa. Thus he pursues 'den Schlüssel der lärmenden Tagesrätsel zunächst in der Vergangenheit' (129), an approach which is in itself a departure from the intention he expressed in the *Vorrede* to write reports 'die nur das Verständniß der Gegenwart beabsichtigen' (65). Furthermore, he announces a plan here to extend his retrospective analysis in a subsequent article (an extract is included as a 'Beilage' to *Article VI* in the book edition of 1833), and ultimately to write a book on the history of revolution in France.<sup>25</sup> The latter never materialised, but Laube did give a

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. letter to Varnhagen, May 1832: 'ich beschäftige mich jetzt viel mit der französischen Revoluzionsgeschichte und dem Saintsimonismus. Ueber beide werde ich Bücher schreiben' (HSA 21, 37).

review of *Französische Zustände* in which he described Heine's journalism as 'die neue Art, Geschichte zu schreiben' and the book consequently as 'ein morgenrötlicher Klassiker'; according to Laube, the defining characteristic of this new kind of historiography was 'die Poesie, mit welcher [...] die Ingredienzien der Geschichte, empfangen sind'.<sup>26</sup> Heine's approach to recording the events of the cholera outbreak testifies to just such an historian's ambition; as he remarks to Merckel on 24 August, 'ich erlebe viele großen Dinge in Paris, sehe die Weltgeschichte mit eignen Augen an [...], und werde einst, wenn ich am Leben bleibe, ein großer Historiker' (HSA 21, 39). Moreover, the text he writes is conscious of its own status as a kind of poetic history of the moment, a hybrid of two literary models he invokes and whose supremacy in the genre of cholera reportage he challenges, albeit ironically:

Thuzydides der Historienschreiber, und Boccaccio, der Novellist, haben uns freylich bessere Darstellungen dieser Art hinterlassen; aber ich zweifle, ob sie genug Gemüthsruhe besessen hätten, während die Cholera ihrer Zeit am entsetzlichsten um sie her wüthete, sie gleich, als schleunigen Artikel für die Allgemeine Zeitung von Korinth oder Pisa, so schön und meisterhaft zu beschreiben. (DHA 12/1, 132 f.)

For Heine, 'a great historian' is one who is able to narrate the present as though it were already the past, who writes history, in other words, from the perspective of first-hand experience of the present. Exploiting the black humour of his precarious biographical situation in disease-ridden Paris, he presents himself as the embodiment of a fundamentally interdependent past, present and future; his ability to explore historical perspectives in the future will ultimately depend entirely on the outcome of the present – that is whether or

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<sup>26</sup> In the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 14/21 February 1833. See B 3, 764.

not he survives the cholera. He observes: 'so viel zur Bevorwortung eines Artikels, der sich mit vergangenheitlichen Beleuchtungen beschäftigen mag. Die Gegenwart ist in diesem Augenblicke das Wichtigere, und das Thema, das sie mir zur Besprechung darbietet, ist von der Art, daß überhaupt jedes Weiterschreiben davon abhängt' (131). With this statement, he stages the intrusion of the present in his own article – that is to say, the actual cholera report itself. As such, its function is analogous to that of the noisy street protests which erupted outside the Louvre in *Französische Maler*. Where revolutionary activity on the street was used as a symbolic focus for the latent political tendency of his reflections on art, here the 'Todtenstille' imposed by the epidemic heralds a literary interlude in his political journalism.

Heine's article was but one of many in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* reporting on the progress of the cholera in Paris, which was being followed anxiously throughout Europe. Besides facts and figures, the socio-political implications of the epidemic were also well-documented: the sanctions imposed by the regime on the working classes, which it held responsible for spreading the disease, and the revolutionary retaliation of a populace convinced that this was merely an excuse for further oppression, or even that the elite had conspired to poison them. The dramatic nature of the situation was widely acknowledged. One correspondent, Julius Mohl, described 'ein Mitleid erregendes Schauspiel, [...] mißleiteten, unglücklichen und übelwollenden Kreaturen sich gegen die militärische Macht auflehnen zu sehen' (my emphasis) in his account of a riot by the chiffoniers, rag-pickers who had been banned from practising their

livelihood by a health directive from the *Commission Sanitaire*.<sup>27</sup> What differentiates Heine's chronicle of such events from those of his contemporaries is that while they may recognise a drama, he writes one. Its plot traces the transformation of Paris from a stage of cheerful street celebrations at carnival time to the setting for tragedy and death through a series of short, dovetailing episodes (or scenes), each one built around an incident that is epically elaborated and exploited for its emblematic potential as political commentary (see Höhn, *Handbuch*, p. 293 f.).<sup>28</sup> More striking still is the way in which this drama revisits material from elsewhere in *Französische Zustände* and even from *Französische Maler*, thereby drawing further attention to itself as a literary performance.

The French press first announced the outbreak of cholera (in *Le Moniteur*) on 29 March, a day which coincided with 'Mi-Carême'—the high-point of carnival celebrations on the third Thursday of Lent—and so afforded a dramatic contrast (see DHA 12/1, 849). Heine seizes the opportunity to develop an extended metaphor of the cholera as a grotesque *danse macabre*, in which the masquerade of carnival is ironically subverted. Thus we read how the cholera breaks out: 'als plötzlich der lustigste der Arlequine [...] die Maske abnahm, [...] [kam] ein veilchenblaues Gesicht zum Vorschein [...]. Man merkte bald, daß solches kein Spaß sey' (DHA 12/1, 134). Revellers struck suddenly by the disease are hurried to the grave still clothed in their festive attire, but now

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<sup>27</sup> *Allgemeine Zeitung* No. 100 (9 April 1832), *Mikrofiche-Edition* ed. by Bernhard Fischer (Munich: Saur), Cotta-Archiv.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Albrecht Betz, *Ästhetik und Politik: Heinrich Heines Prosa* (Munich: Hanser, 1971).

wearing masks of death, a sinister reality having been revealed beneath the belligerent display of cheer. The metaphor of carnival, which in *Französische Zustände* has already been made symbolic of the clash between July Monarchy political hypocrisy and the latent revolutionary impulse of the Parisian populace, is taken up and extended here to explore the darker side of revolution. It becomes a macabre carnival of death whose final outcome, which Heine portrays in a scene at the Père-Lachaise cemetery, is 'die entsetzlichste aller Emeuten [...] eine Todtenemeute' (142). In the build-up to this imaginative finale, Heine offers an account of popular reactions to the alleged poison conspiracy. The streets of Paris become the stage of a new drama of death, this time not of the cholera's making but the result of a small popular revolution, in which the bereaved poor exact brutal revenge on any figure of authority they suspect. He presents an apocalyptic vision, of men beating their brows, women wailing with babies clutched to their breasts and hands being wrung in desperation, which crescendos towards his own vivid encounter in the Rue Vaugirard with a blood-flecked Venus-like figure. The terrible alliterative beauty of this 'wunderschönes wutblasses Weibsbild mit entblößten Brüsten und blutbedeckten Händen' (my emphasis) idealises her as a revolutionary emblem, a self-conscious reference to the bare-breasted 'Freyheitsgöttinn' he described in Delacroix's *La Liberté* (see *Französische Maler*; DHA 12/1, 20). Yet she is also a prosaic figure, part of a violent reality, who kicks the mutilated corpse of a suspected conspirator with a laugh and begs Heine for a few francs in recognition of her handiwork so that she might buy mourning clothes to

grieve her own mother's recent death from the cholera. 'Es gibt keinen gräßlichem Anblick, als solchen Volkszorn' (DHA 12/1, 136), he notes from the perspective of an alarmed spectator. Caught in the thick of the action on the street, Heine narrates a kind of live re-enactment of Delacroix's painting with the only difference being that now, set loose in reality, this celebratory emblematic representation of 'Heilige Julitage von Paris' (DHA 12/1, 20) has been replaced by a darkly irrational manifestation of revolutionary impulses. He describes a swirling mob in self-consciously poetic language, deploying the exact same trope used to describe the unrest on the streets outside the Louvre at the end of *Französische Maler*: '[es] wälzt sich durch die Straßen ein dunkles Menschenmeer [...] und das heult und braust, gnadenlos, heidnisch, dämonisch' (DHA 12/1, 136). Allusions made to his own earlier text in this passage serve to highlight a modulation of his attitude, across two collections of journalism, from a predominantly optimistic reception of the recent July Revolution in art to an account of its destructive ramifications in reality. Heine takes stock of this new outlook in a final scene at Père-Lachaise, where he extricates himself from the mêlée on the street via a flight of imagination to stand on the cemetery's hilltop and reflect upon 'das kranke Paris', a city at once literally sick with the cholera and metaphorically diseased in terms of the political status quo.

In the graveyard, Heine recounts a macabre flight of fancy. The pretext for this final episode in his cholera report is disarmingly anecdotal and quotidian, yet his planned social call ends with him escorting his friend's body to the

cemetery. Similarly, a matter-of-fact observation, 'ich erblickte nichts als Himmel und Särge' (DHA 12/1, 141), becomes the starting point for a narrative related as though from the perspective of a corpse. Heine enquires after the name of his 'Nachbarleiche' in a grim parody of new-neighbourly polite curiosity, only for the situation to be overturned by the revelation that they are not in fact strangers at all, but had encountered one another briefly once before when their carriages crossed paths on the way to a ball. Thus he moves almost imperceptibly between two realities, the imaginary and the real; death becomes merely another way of experiencing the world, a contiguous perspective. Drifting ever further into macabre daydreams, he imagines that he is witnessing a 'Todtenemeute', that the carriages, tumbling over in their haste, are guided not by impatient horses but by the dead themselves, eager to be the first to reach the grave. Just as he is on the verge of witnessing his own burial—the logical outcome of this surreal account—the voice of Heine's narrator intervenes to bring this out-of-body experience to an abrupt halt, allegedly out of respect for his readers' sensibilities. However, it soon transpires that the whole passage has been leading up to an out-of-body experience of another, metaphorical kind. Suddenly ejected from the narrative descent into panicky claustrophobia, we find ourselves looking back with Heine across the whole city from the lofty safety of a hilltop. It has been observed that the mid-Nineteenth Century was 'the period of the bird's-eye view' when 'the panorama was a comprehensive and distancing conceptual mode – and a device of perspective in literature and the visual arts' (Wechsler, p. 20). Père-

Lachaise cemetery certainly offered one of the best panoramas of Paris, a physical property exploited as a literary device by many besides Heine.<sup>29</sup> In a kind of dramatic epilogue laden with Biblical references and the heavy pathetic fallacy of a misty sunset, he adopts the far-sighted gaze of an artist-cum-historian to reflect upon the wider historical and political significance of the cholera and terrible weight of suffering on 'das kranke Paris [...] die Heilandstadt, die für die weltliche Erlösung der Menschheit so viel gelitten' (142). This final scene dramatizes the unexpectedly abstract historicizing reflections with which *Article VI* began, and by extension, I would like to suggest, the journey Heine has made as a writer through the course of his own journalism from *Französische Maler* to *Französische Zustände*. The image of Paris shrouded in mist after sundown recalls a similar moment in *Französische Maler*, though in contrastingly optimistic circumstances, where he imagined a symbolic marriage between the sun and the capital of revolution:

Sonne und Stadt verstehen sich wunderbar, und sie lieben sich. Ehe die Sonne des Abends ins Meer hinabstiegt, verweilt ihr Blick noch lange mit Wohlgefallen auf der schönen Stadt Paris, und mit ihren letzten Strahlen küßt sie die dreyfarbigen Fahnen auf den Thürmen der schönen Stadt Paris. (DHA 12/1, 22)

Thus Heine reflects his own revision of attitude with respect to French conditions and the revolution after a year spent in Paris, a shift which has aesthetic as much as political implications. In a moment of poetically heightened self-awareness, he draws attention to himself as a writer who has arrived at the apex—literally and metaphorically—of the perspective he has

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<sup>29</sup> Most famously, Eugène de Rastignac gazes down from the same hilltop in the final scene of Balzac's *Père Goriot* (serialized in the *Revue de Paris* in the winter of 1834-1835).

been developing throughout his Paris journalism: what I have called his art of spectatorship. It is from here that *Französische Zustände* transcends its primary concern with the exigencies of the everyday and may be considered to have the lasting literary and historical value of a 'dawning classic'.



PART II

*Renewing the Poet*



## CHAPTER 3

**A New Spring for Poetry**

‘NEUE GEDICHTE’: A POETICS OF RENEWAL

In his *Album aus Paris*, August Lewald gives a portrait of Heine, or more specifically of the poet Heine, transformed from the dejected man he had last encountered in Hamburg (see DHA 12/2, 637):

Der Mann steht vor mir in der ganzen Zierlichkeit seiner Gestalt, gekleidet wie es die Mode von einem Dichter fordert, elegant und nachlässig zugleich, erwacht zum feinsten Lebensgenusse, sich fühlend in seinem vollen Werthe, und einen ganzen Frühling von neuen Liedern in der gesunden Brust.<sup>1</sup>

The image is of one who self-consciously embodies the role of poet—self-fashioning in the most literal sense—and of a poet reborn, thanks to his new situation. Lewald’s short sketch has two telling implications: first that Heine’s sense of self, both personally and in terms of his literary identity, is synonymous with his status as a poet, and second that that status is linked, in the mind of a contemporary German reader at least, to a particular kind of poetry and poetic success.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to compare Ludwig Börne’s account of Heine’s presence in Paris which, although it expresses an opposite viewpoint, is founded on the same assumptions:

überhaupt glaube ich, daß Paris kein gesundes Klima für Heines Geist ist. Man kann auf Paris anwenden, was er selbst so wahr von London gesagt: es ist ein Ort

<sup>1</sup> *Album aus Paris* I (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1832), p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Sammons has famously argued for the centrality of Heine’s poetic identity, which he suggests was ‘essential to his self-worth’. See ‘Who Did Heine Think He Was?’, in Sammons, *Alternative Perspectives*, p. 205. Cf. Sammons, *Heinrich Heine: The Elusive Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

für Philosophen, aber nicht für Dichter. Auch hier liegt der Stoff zu hoch und dick auf allen Wegen, und der Dichter kann selbst mit den Flügeln seiner Phantasie nicht darüber hinaus. (*Sämtliche Schriften* v, 77 f.)

Börne's purpose is clearly polemical: he sets himself up as the ideal modern post-revolutionary, the politically engaged philosopher, in contrast to Heine's—by implication—old-world disengaged aestheticism. Here too, Heine in Paris is taken to be synonymous with Heine-the-poet in Paris, and as such, the embodiment of German Romantic poesy. From their divergent perspectives, both Lewald and Börne consider Heine's move to the French capital in terms of the impact on his status as poet, specifically as the already famous poet of the *Buch der Lieder*: a positive moment of self-renewal according to one, according to the other a death knell to a literary reputation measured on the strength of its ability to sustain a German Romantic archetype. As such they articulate two faces of the predominant public perception of Heine, wedded to a particular notion of a successful German poet, which he came up against as he sought to redefine his poetic identity in Paris on his own terms.

Heine's attitude to the purpose of poetry and his own role as poet after the July Revolution is characteristically ambivalent. The continual oscillation between revolution and restoration which characterized his presentation of *juste-milieu* society in the Paris journalism reappears in the guise of an internal struggle with his poetic identity. This hinges on an essential aesthetic dilemma: should poetry be instrumentalized, that is made to engage directly with contemporary post-revolutionary reality in light of new political imperatives, or should it seek to maintain artistic independence in conscious opposition to

these? In light of the 'Ende der Kunstperiode' which Heine prophesied at the end of *Französische Maler*, this became—even more radically—a question of whether poetry was still of value or even possible in a new age more suited to prose. In the preface to *Salon III* (1837) he pronounced poetry and progress incompatible concepts: 'ich hatte längst eingesehen, daß es mit den Versen nicht mehr recht vorwärts ging und deßhalb verlegte ich mich auf gute Prosa' (DHA 11, 154). In 1839 he questioned whether it was worth even attempting to publish new poems he had written, despite encouragement from the editor of the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* to do so; 'ich habe überhaupt nicht viel Vertrauen mehr zu meiner Poesie – nemlich zur versifizirten', he confessed to Gustave Kühne, explaining his attitude with a broad observation: 'mein Lebensalter und vielleicht unsere ganze Zeit ist den Versen nicht mehr günstig und verlangt Prosa' (11 October 1839; HSA 21, 338). Similarly, he professed to feeling strangely compelled to defy convention and write a preface to the second edition of *Buch der Lieder* (1837) in prose. Again he makes reference to a contemporary trend to account for his approach: 'seit einiger Zeit sträubt sich etwas in mir gegen alle gebundene Rede, und wie ich höre, regt sich bey manchen Zeitgenossen eine ähnliche Abneigung. Es will mich bedünken, [...] die Wahrheit scheue sich in metrischen Gewanden zu erscheinen' (DHA 1/1, 564). The implication here is that poetry is unsuited to the quest for truth, the primary purpose of art in the new age. However, when he wrote the preface for a third edition of the same collection in 1839 he claimed to experience an equal

compulsion to revert to poetry, and his supplementary prose commentary presents a kind of involuntary apologia for verse:

Das hätte ich alles sehr gut in guter Prosa sagen können... Wenn man aber die alten Gedichte wieder durchliest, [...] dann überschleicht einen unversehens die klingelnde Gewohnheit des Reims und Silbenfalls, und siehe! es sind Verse womit ich diese dritte Auflage des Buchs der Lieder eröffne. (DHA 1/1, 15)

Heine appears, in other words, to uphold a self-consciously paradoxical stance in relation to his poetic identity, which he presents as being in a permanent state of flux during this unsettled period. In fact the notion of inner conflict is central to his approach to reinventing it after the *Buch der Lieder* – and especially after 1831. This is nowhere more apparent than in his efforts to assemble a first major verse compendium of the Paris years.

The *Neue Gedichte* collection stands as a monument to an intense period of self-fashioning, from the 1830s to the early 1840s, carried out with respect to changes in poetic trends, the attitude and tastes of his public and in view of an evolving sense of his own identity as poet. As a possible resolution to the inner conflict I have outlined, its concluding section of 'Zeitgedichte' offers Heine's contribution to a new wave of politically engaged poetry, so-called 'Tendenzdichtung', which emerged in the early 1840s. In a draft preface to the *Neue Gedichte* he substantiated this with a declaration: 'unsere lyrische Poesie tritt in eine neue Phase. Die somnambule Periode des Liedes, der stillen Gemüthsblume hat ein Ende. [...] Wie Laube sagen würde, bedarf es einer produktiven Lyrik, einer die nicht lange leyert [...] und sehr praktische Wunder verrichtet' (DHA 2, 206 f.). Thus Heine reflects, or at least appears to reflect, on

a transition he himself has undergone in terms of his development since the *Buch der Lieder* – from poet of German Romantic song to ‘Tendenzdichter’. What he actually achieved with his own version of the new political poetry was not so unequivocal, as will be discussed in Chapter Five of this study, but he was certainly not against voicing its ideals insofar as this supported a narrative of self-revision. In short, the *Neue Gedichte* testify to what was the most unsettled, transitional and yet formative phase of Heine’s poetic career. No doubt for this reason, the collection has tended to incur some of the least appreciative and least enlightened moments in Heine scholarship; more often than not it has been dismissed outright as disjointed and confused.<sup>3</sup> In a rare full-length study, one commentator has sought to reverse this trend and prove that it has an overarching unity by tracing a narrative of transition, of its author’s progressive development, through the poems. Jerold Wikoff’s account begins with Heine’s conclusive rejection of the Romantic idiom in *Neuer Frühling* and ends with him becoming the modern author of *Zeitgedichte*.<sup>4</sup> Convincing as it may be, this nevertheless brings to light a major problem facing any comprehensive analysis of the collection as a whole. The fact is Heine has beaten his reader to interpretation by arranging it to form a kind of retrospective self-analysis. By 1844, his identity as poet may be defined as the sum of all the positions he sketches and of all his linguistic investments in the *Neue Gedichte*. From this

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<sup>3</sup> Even Höhn chooses to compare the collection unfavourably to *Romanzero* and the *Buch der Lieder*. He summarizes: ‘zumindest den beiden mittleren Zyklen fehlt es an innerer Einheit; der erste und der vierte Zyklus, die noch am einheitlichsten arrangiert sind, gehören zwei ganz unterschiedlichen Werkphasen an, während der zweite Zyklus sehr unterschiedliche Gedichte gruppiert und der dritte keine einheitlichen Gattungsmerkmale aufweist’ (*Handbuch*, p. 97).

<sup>4</sup> *Heinrich Heine: A Study of ‘Neue Gedichte’* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1975).

historicizing perspective, by which he seems to sit repeatedly in self-judgment upon his past, he is always implicitly proposing some new start for his poetry in the future; the sense of progression from one cycle to the next is reliant on this principle. What results is a kind of psychogram tracing a sequence of his attempts to reinvent himself as a poet as he seeks to free himself from the legacy of his own earlier success and deal with the shift in taste and political climate represented by the *Vormärz*. The tendency for any commentator—and it is difficult to avoid—is to paraphrase Heine’s own narrative without elucidating its purpose or significance. Hence I propose to focus on his strategies of self-renewal, and to show how, through the artistic arrangement of individual cycles within a concept of the whole, he created the collection to reflect on these very self-constructive processes.

Although Heine never ceased writing poetry, he did not publish his *Neue Gedichte* until 1844 which means that the collection represents the culmination of a decade of poetic output in Paris.<sup>5</sup> Its title, which almost invites reading as an oblique reference to the process of self-renewal these poems document, is in some sense inherently ironic, since the vast majority of the works included had already appeared elsewhere and in a variety of groupings in journals or as part of other publications. Campe made a point of this when he complained that Heine’s so-called ‘poems of the time’ were no longer new and so scarcely marketable as such: ‘die Zeitgedichte sind der Zahl nach dürftig und sämtlich

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<sup>5</sup> A number of poems, of the *Neuer Frühling* and *Verschiedene* sections, predate Paris, including one or two from as far back as the early 1820s.

schon bekannt also *nichts Neues bringend*' (10 July 1844, HSA 26, 104; NB emphasis is Campe's own). In other words, Heine's 'new poems' may be said to maintain a certain ambivalence towards the poetics of self-renewal they appear to affirm, an ambivalence he self-consciously upholds, above all through his careful assembly of sections and poems within sections. In the second part of this chapter, I show how this is explored through the metaphor of a new spring for poetry in the collection's paradoxically named opening cycle, *Neuer Frühling*.

The unusually long and complex composition history of the *Neue Gedichte* is in its own right prime evidence of Heine's preoccupation with identity-construction during the first two decades in Paris. It merits an overview since its various phases exhibit the same kind of self-fashioning that one finds in the poems themselves. Indeed the form of the collection as it finally emerged in 1844 is bound up in this compositional narrative, which spanned over ten years and involved a number of setbacks and conceptual revisions. Perhaps more than any other single work it permits us to observe how he operates in relation to the literary market, his publisher and his own texts, and reveals the nature of his artistic intention during this period. The *DHA* editors have noted a contrast in this respect with the earlier *Buch der Lieder* collection:

Die Genese einzelner Gedichte bzw. Zyklen läßt sich im allgemeinen weitaus genauer verfolgen als beim *Buch der Lieder*. Die reichhaltige Überlieferung der *Neuen Gedichte* in Gestalt der Handschriften und der Erst- und Zweitdrucke kann für eine detaillierte Erforschung der literarischen Arbeitsweise Heines also nur als Glücksfall gelten. (*DHA* 2, 245)

Reconstructing the various stages in development of any text necessarily depends on good fortune for the survival of original manuscripts, yet I question whether the wealth of documentation pertaining to the composition of the *Neue Gedichte* can entirely be attributed to lucky chance, as is implied here. The first years in Paris were an experimental period in which Heine allowed different facets of his persona to jostle for supremacy within his artistic programme—the theoretical and journalistic side taking precedence over the poetic in the 1830s, for instance—while at the same time beginning to pursue the idea of a collected works which would assimilate these in a cohesive retrospective overview of his achievements. His second poetry collection is a prime instance of such career-conscious self-fashioning, which was bound to leave more of a paper trail.

The *Neue Gedichte* evolved through four main stages. In 1838, Heine compiled a full manuscript for a second volume of poetry to follow the *Buch der Lieder*. However, the attempt to have this published failed; due to a combination of negative criticism and censorship, he gave it up as a bad job. His subsequent renewal of interest in the project some years later, although conceived in a different form, resulted in its first successful publication in 1844. Finally, he incorporated some changes into a third edition in 1852, which was produced as part of a mini-series of his collected poetic works to date at his publisher's suggestion. The principal alteration in this final phase involved inserting the eclectic cycle, *Zur Ollea*, between the *Romanzen* and *Zeitgedichte*. As hinted by its tongue-in-cheek title, this was a filler section designed to compensate for the substitution of *William Ratcliff* in place of the longer *Deutschland: Ein*

*Wintermärchen* which had been included in the 1844 edition; it comprised ten poems left over from Heine's third major collection, *Romanzero* (1851).<sup>6</sup> Since our interest in the *Neue Gedichte* is as a product and reflection of his experience in Paris under the July Monarchy, my discussion of the poems will centre on the first published version from 1844. The third edition nevertheless provides still further evidence of Heine's progressive and adaptive approach to his creation – the New Poems are a work-in-progress, to be revisited and reinvented in accordance with the demands of each new publishing situation.

The creative beginnings of the *Neue Gedichte* project are closely linked to its predecessor. This is particularly pertinent in relation to *Neuer Frühling* (to be discussed below). Heine's initial idea was for an extended edition of the *Buch der Lieder* to include poems from *Neuer Frühling* and *Verschiedene* – 'alles, was ich metrisch geschrieben habe, hinzuzufügen, und das Ganze *Gedichte* zu nennen' (letter to Campe, 13 April 1837; HSA 21, 198). However, in conjunction with his new ambition to publish a complete works, this soon evolved to become a two-volume concept: the first to contain the *Buch der Lieder* and the second a medley of leftovers from this earlier collection, the two verse tragedies *William Ratcliff* and *Almansor*, *Neuer Frühling*, the poems from *Salon I* (many of which were later published as *Verschiedene*), 'und ähnliche, die zum Theil im Morgenblatt gedruckt, zum Theil noch in Manuskript vorhanden sind u.s.w.' (HSA 21, 198 f.). This vision for a second volume was hardly one of coherence or conceptual independence, which may go some way to explaining his publisher's

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<sup>6</sup>The name derives from a Spanish national dish called 'Olla podrida', a kind of meat and vegetable stew.

continuing preference for a single, expanded *Buch der Lieder*. Heine remained insistent nonetheless, and criticised Campe for what he implies were deliberate delaying tactics:

Wenn ich gewußt hätte, daß Sie den Druck der Gesamtausgabe so lange aufschöben, so würde ich den Neuen Frühling und drgl neuere Gedichte dem Buch der Lieder einverleibt haben. Denn ich weiß, es ist eben jetzt ein Bedürfnis im Publikum, meine gesammelten Gedichte ohne die prosaischen Beygaben zu besitzen. Wollen Sie nun den Druck der Gesamtausgabe bald beginnen, so werde ich alle meine metrischen Arbeiten in die zwey ersten Bände geben; sind Sie aber noch nicht dazu geneigt, so mache ich Ihnen folgenden Vorschlag: Sie geben in einigen Monathen einen "Anhang zum Buch der Lieder" ganz besonders heraus, und in diesem Buche gebe ich alle Gedichte, die nicht im Buch der Lieder enthalten sind und begleite dieselben mit einer Vorrede, so daß das Ganze ein hübsches Bändchen bildet. (23 December 1837; HSA 21, 243)

One thing to emerge strongly from the protracted genesis of the *Neue Gedichte* is the increasingly antagonistic dialogue between Heine and his publisher as each seeks to exert his authority and dictate the form of the project. Whereas Campe had accepted most works of the German years without argument, the Frankfurt Bundestag decree of 10 December 1835, which banned the writings of *Junges Deutschland* members including Heine's, necessitated a more critical stance towards his author. Meanwhile, the confident speeches of a writer who claimed to be able to judge public demand better than his publisher are indicative of Heine's determination to assert his newfound independence in Paris and manage his own literary reputation. On this occasion Campe gave way and in April 1838 finally received the manuscript for a separate volume of poetry with the slightly altered title of 'Nachtrag zum Buch der Lieder'. Although the political poetry was still almost entirely absent, this represented an important stage on the way to creating the *Neue Gedichte*.

What followed in the attempt to have the *Nachtrag* published was even more critical than these early tussles between author and publisher in determining the final form of the collection. A more serious confrontation, with both contemporary criticism and the censor, resulted in the entire project being postponed to a time when a simple addendum to the *Buch der Lieder* would no longer seem an accurate reflection of the direction Heine and his poetry had taken over the course of the first decade in Paris. On 6 August 1838, an influential critic, Karl Gutzkow, warned Heine against the planned publication: ‘durch diesen Nachtrag ruiniren Sie Ihre Stellung so, daß selbst Ihre Freunde die Feder niederlegen und sich bescheiden müssen. Geben Sie das Buch auf!’ (HSA 25, 158). According to his account, Heine’s reputation remained a cause for concern in light of the scandal which had erupted when he published a cycle of love lyrics ‘über Pariser Boulevardsschönheiten’ (Gutzkow, *ibid.*) in the first volume of *Der Salon*; these were to be reprinted as part of the *Nachtrag*.<sup>7</sup> Gutzkow’s résumé of all the negative criticism from 1834 prompted two responses from Heine, addressed to himself and Campe respectively. Heine objected, not unreasonably, that a reprint of the same poems four years later was hardly likely to incur a second public scandal: ‘die neue Zugabe ist, wie ich mich zu erinnern glaube, ganz harmloser Natur. Ich glaube überhaupt, bey späterer Herausgabe, kein einziges dieser Gedichte verwerfen zu müssen, und ich werde sie mit gutem Gewissen drucken’ (HSA 21, 292); he proceeded to

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<sup>7</sup> For the context of Gutzkow’s argument see Chapter Four, where I examine the significance and implications of Heine’s deliberately provocative stance towards his public in the Salon poems (*Verschiedene* of the *Neue Gedichte*).

mount a polemical attack against German bourgeois narrow-mindedness in defence of these poems' artistic merit, using the opportunity to validate his own literary stance. In a letter to his publisher sent just a few days earlier he had seemed meek by comparison and apparently unconcerned by the necessary postponement of the project, although a vindictive dig at Campe perhaps suggests otherwise:

Die Gedichte darf ich jetzt nicht drucken wenn ich nicht von vorn herein mit Gutzkow in die peinlichsten Mißverständnisse gerathen will. Soll ich Ihnen meinen ganzen Gedanken vertrauen, aber Ihnen, so will ich mich so ehrlich und naiv als möglich aussprechen: An dem ganzen Buch liegt mir nichts, es liegt mir nichts dran daß es erst später in der Gesamtausgabe gedruckt wird und durch diesen Aufschub bringt eigentlich mein Verleger Julius Campe ein Opfer – nicht ich. (HSA 21, 289)

His concern to honour esteemed relations with both his publisher and critic is undercut by bitter irony that is barely concealed; one gets the sense that he suspected a conspiracy and was determined to let Campe know as much and make him pay, metaphorically speaking at least. Such power struggles could do nothing to circumvent the censor, however. When the manuscript finally returned from the printing house at Grimma for his approval, he pronounced it 'in einem so wüsten Zustand, daß mir noch eine heillos verdrießliche Arbeit bevorsteht' and complained 'ich muß das Ganze wieder aufs neue ordnen, einige Gedichte fehlen ganz, das ist fatal' (letter to Campe, 12 April 1839; HSA 21, 320). He was not prepared to do the work and so the project was abandoned.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The choice of publishing house had itself been a matter of contention between Heine and Campe (see HSA 25, 195). One might speculate that his decision to abort was as much out of protest against Campe as against the Saxony censor.

In October 1841 Heine expressed a desire to resurrect the idea of a second volume of poetry but in a different form. This was to reflect a recent change in his poetic output, which had taken on a new, predominantly political focus. It was Campe who first reopened discussion of a possible *Buch der Lieder Nachtrag*, urging Heine to capitalize on market conditions which were newly favourable to poetry and so repair the damage done to his literary reputation, most recently by the disastrously received *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift*. Another long period of wrangling ensued, although this time it was Campe who pursued rapid publication, while Heine countered his every attempt to accelerate matters with equal determination to slow them down on the grounds of artistic improvement:

Die Gedichte werde ich nicht sobald herausgeben, da ich im Zug bin die schwachen durch neue und bessere zu ersetzen und überhaupt ein Buch liefern will, wo ich sicher bin daß es in Vergleichung mit dem Buch der Lieder nicht den Kürzern zieht. (28 February 1842; HSA 22, 19)

A *Nachtrag* based on the 1838 manuscript might have been more readily assembled, but Heine was working with an entirely new conception of the project. No longer a simple appendix to *Buch der Lieder*, he now envisaged the second verse collection as its potential rival. It was ironically Heine's return to poetic productivity which delayed its publication until June 1844, his attention being focussed on the composition of two verse epics—*Atta Troll* (1843) and *Deutschland* (1844)—and on new submissions to the Paris-based political journal *Vorwärts!*, a number of which subsequently became the *Zeitgedichte* of the *Neue Gedichte*. The part *Deutschland* had to play in shaping the *Neue Gedichte* has

largely been overlooked, since modern Heine editions use the 1852 version which ends with the *Zeitgedichte* rather than the political epic. While its composition during the winter of 1843 and 1844 may have been a temporary distraction, it soon became the focal point of the entire collection. To ensure enough material to avoid automatic pre-censorship Heine had considered including *Atta Troll*, but he ultimately settled on the newer work; ‘ich sichere dadurch diesem 2<sup>ten</sup> Band die ungeheuerste Vogue’, he told Campe on 3 May 1844 (HSA 22, 104). It was to be the novel selling point of the collection, a means to update his image with something fresh and radical and so win over a new generation of modern readers with new tastes:

Wird das Buch nicht zu streng verboten, so giebt ihm [...] das neue Gedicht einen Zug, wodurch es mit dem Buch der Lieder gewiß rivalisiren kann und tausende werden es kaufen, die gewiß für den zahmeren lyrischen Inhalt des Buchs kein Interesse gefühlt hätten. (5 June 1844; HSA 22, 108)

Campe, who continued to favour a second collection in the mould of the *Buch der Lieder*, was dismayed and no doubt regretted encouraging Heine to write political verse; he had clearly never envisaged the two enterprises mixing.<sup>9</sup> It was nonetheless under these circumstances that Heine transformed what might have been a directionless sequel to the earlier work into a dynamic account of his self-reinvention as a poet, with *Deutschland* representing the climax of the process.

The remainder of this chapter and the two that follow explore how individual cycles of the *Neue Gedichte* record the same kind of battles

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<sup>9</sup> His misgivings were not unfounded for the collection was soon banned by the authorities. However it also became the fastest selling of all Heine’s works – Campe had already released a second edition by October 1844.

encountered in our brief survey of the collection's genesis – between Heine and his readership, public opinion, contemporary conditions in the literary market and above all his own poetic legacy. In a series of combative and often provocative poses, he stages himself in confrontation with poetic tradition, especially his own legacy from the *Buch der Lieder* (*Neuer Frühling*), with public attitudes concerning the limits of acceptability in lyric poetry (*Verschiedene*), and with contemporary trends in politically engaged poetry (*Zeitgedichte*). While each of these could be described as a kind of revolutionary stance, the *Neue Gedichte* collection as a whole does not seek to enact or accomplish a revolution in poetry, should such a thing as 'accomplished revolution' even exist – Heine has far too sceptical a view of its political equivalent. Rather these poems maintain and intensify dialectical tensions that induce revolutionary fervour. As we will see, their role is as a constant provocation, and not necessarily as a solution to the questions they pose.

#### 'NEUER FRÜHLING': ROMANTICISM UNDER REVIEW

The very title *Neuer Frühling* establishes this opening cycle of the *Neue Gedichte* as a reflexive commentary, both on its own function within the collection and as part of Heine's ongoing discussion concerning the role of poetry and his own identity as poet. Hermand reaches the heart of the matter when he describes *Neuer Frühling* as 'noch einmal einen Zyklus von Liebesgedichten, welcher [...] durchaus ins *Buch der Lieder* gepasst hätte' ('Vom *Buch der Lieder* zu den *Verschiedenen*', p. 221), although he seems not to mark the irony implicit in his

own statement. On the one hand this sense of a poetic return fits with the notion of spring as a recurring season. However, the idea of a specifically *new* spring to introduce a collection of 'new poems' carries promise of rejuvenation of an aesthetic kind which is straightaway undermined by the implied connection to the earlier work. In making the link with the *Buch der Lieder* Hermand simply alerts us to the dialogue Heine himself instigates, in *Neuer Frühling*, with his own poetic legacy. The purpose of this cycle seems to lie precisely in an impulse to self-defeat, for in order to establish a new lyric identity Heine must first overthrow or at least undermine the hegemony of the reputation conferred on him by his success with the *Buch der Lieder* as the archetypal poet of German Romantic song.

Thematic and stylistic continuities led many contemporary reviewers to celebrate *Neuer Frühling* as proof that Heine had resumed his lyric voice of old, an impression Heine himself did much to reinforce by integrating these poems in the first instance into his existing literary project. Written in Germany but not tested on the reading public until after he moved to Paris (with twenty-four poems in two editions of Cotta's *Morgenblatt* in February and June 1831), the cycle which heads the 'New Poems' of 1844 was first published in its entirety as a substitute for the *Briefe aus Berlin* and *Nordsee II* in a second edition of *Reisebilder II* in June 1831; in other words, it was presented in such a way as to invoke Heine's literary identity prior to his emigration to the French capital.

The catalyst for the *Neuer Frühling* project had come from Albert Methfessel, a composer Heine knew in Hamburg, who commissioned a set of lyrics for a

new cycle of songs in 1830. Although the music was never written, these circumstances undoubtedly influenced the form and style of the cycle, which automatically encouraged comparison with the *Buch der Lieder*. Quick to recognise the innate musicality of Heine's lyric voice, composers had already plundered the earlier collection to produce countless musical settings. In this sense Methfessel's commission preordained that *Neuer Frühling* should appear the epitome of a *Buch-der-Lieder* cycle; the striking number of two-quatrain poems (nearly half of the total) cannot fail to reinforce this impression. A more concrete connection is established in the way the new cycle sets out apparently to fulfil the hopeful prophecy of a 'neuer Liederfrühling' which Heine had made in *Heimkehr* XLVI of *Buch der Lieder*:

Herz, mein Herz, sey nicht beklommen,  
 Und ertrage dein Geschick,  
 Neuer Frühling gibt zurück,  
 Was der Winter dir genommen. (DHA 1/1, 259)

The theme of a 'new spring' is something of a leitmotif in Heine's writing. Most often it symbolizes his return to artistic or poetic productivity after an implied fallow period. It was in this spirit that he declared to Varnhagen in May 1826 'alles sieht mich an wie verzaubert, viel eingeschlafenes Leben erwacht in meiner Brust; es frühlingt wieder in meinem Herzen, und wenn die alte Kopfkrankheit mich ganz verläßt, so dürfen Sie noch recht viel gute Bücher von mir erwarten' (HSA 20, 241). Similar usage occurs in the *Reisebilder*. In *Ideen: Das Buch le Grand* (1827) he writes: 'es frühlingt wieder in meiner Brust, süße Töne der Wehmut beben in den Saiten der Harfe' (DHA 6, 177); meanwhile the

author of the *Reise von München nach Genua* (1830) proclaims: 'da begann auch in mir ein neuer Frühling, neue Blumen sproßten aus dem Herzen, Freyheitsgefühle, wie Rosen, schossen hervor [...], auch die Melodien der Poesie kamen wieder' (DHA 7/1, 24). The later of these two literary examples hints at a modulation of the theme, a new political imperative, which becomes particularly apparent in the wake of the July Revolution and Heine's subsequent move to Paris, and which is articulated above all by the way he composed and treated *Neuer Frühling*.

Written in Germany at a time when he was already looking to France, Heine conceived *Neuer Frühling* to be an anachronistic collection. He presents the poems as works that have been composed quite deliberately before they are due, in advance of a very particular new spring. 'Ein neuer Frühling wird kommen,' he announced to Varnhagen on 30 November 1830, 'und damit ich ihn dann ganz genießen kann, ungestört, so mache ich jetzt die Frühlingslieder, die dazu gehören. 3 dutzend habe ich in dieser schlimmen Zeit gemacht, auf Veranlassung eines hiesigen Musikers, der etwas Neues komponiren wollte' (HSA 20, 425). The perspective Heine adopts here is strange and at the same time revealing. He claims to do little more than lip service to his duty as a poet, enough to keep Methfessel happy and his (Heine's) public quiet such that he may enjoy the real experience, when it comes, in peace. It is clear that the new spring he invokes in the context of writing *Neuer Frühling* is no longer the same

as that projected by the *Heimkehr* cycle.<sup>10</sup> For the lyric subject of the *Buch der Lieder*, this had promised release for a heart gripped by wintry 'alten Leidensklängen' (*Heimkehr* XLIII; DHA 1/1, 257) in the guise of an imminent new love experience and corresponding vernal impetus for his poetry. By contrast, *Neuer Frühling* has a fundamentally paradoxical relationship with Heine's spring symbolism, which by now has undergone a shift in emphasis. The new spring in question is that which he imagines awaits him in the Paris of the recent July Revolution. As he outlines in the preface to the second edition of *Reisebilder* II, this is a spring in which the flowers, roses and lyric melodies of *Neuer Frühling* have been superseded by a new sense of renewal in the guise of political freedom, which commands a different sort of poetry:

Freylich, diese frommen und ritterlichen Töne, diese Nachklänge des Mittelalters [...] verwehen jetzt im Lärmen der neuesten Freyheitskämpfe, im Getöse einer allgemein europäischen Völkerverbrüderung, und im scharfen Schmerzjubel jener modernen Lieder, die keine katholische Harmonie der Gefühle erlügen wollen und vielmehr, jakobinisch unerbittlich, die Gefühle zerschneiden, der Wahrheit wegen. (DHA 2, 205)

Thus he dismisses the very poems this preface introduces as examples of an outdated genre. Moreover, he pronounces them superfluous contributions to a tradition that has already exhausted itself: 'ich übergebe sie um so anspruchsloser, da ich wohl weiß, daß Deutschland keinen Mangel hat an dergleichen lyrischen Gedichten. Außerdem ist es unmöglich in dieser Gattung etwas besseres zu geben, als schon von den älteren Meistern geliefert worden' (DHA 2, 204). Heine's disparaging attitude seems odd given the statements he

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<sup>10</sup> Most of *Neuer Frühling* was composed fresh during the winter of 1830-1831 in Hamburg, although Briegleb notes a number of additions from a pool of poems that had also supplied *Die Heimkehr*. See B 4, 920.

was making around this time about a hopeful new beginning for his literary programme and identity. We may recall how at the end of *Französische Maler*, which was published later in the same year as the *Reisebilder* II preface, he suggested the imminence of a productive new aesthetic for the modern age – ‘das schaurige Vorgefühl einer Wiedergeburt, das sinnige Wehen eines neuen Frühlings’ (DHA 12/1, 48). Three years later, in a preface to the first volume of *Der Salon*—this included *Französische Maler* alongside some new poems later to become *Verschiedene* of the *Neue Gedichte*—he had reflected on the fact that ‘all mein Wort und Lied aus einer großen, gottfreudigen Frühlingsidee emporblühte’ (DHA 5, 369). The stance Heine adopts in relation to *Neuer Frühling* makes more sense once we recognise its strategic purpose. In short, the attitude he expresses deserves to be taken with a pinch of salt, especially in light of his rather caustic account of the modern poetic alternative.<sup>11</sup> When he appears to consign his spring poems to oblivion, in fact he directs our attention to their function as an index of his aesthetic (re-)positioning in response to the July Revolution. They represent the first part of a lyric response to the aesthetic dilemma he claims to face at this time, namely the conflict between an artistic and political imperative already explored in *Französische Maler*. For a poetic ‘rebirth’ to take place, he must first deal with his poetic legacy.

By deliberately dissociating the source of poetic inspiration from its expression, Heine uses *Neuer Frühling* to make an open mockery of certain

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<sup>11</sup> Heine confronts the kind of politically driven poetry implied here in the final cycle of *Neue Gedichte*. See Chapter Five of the current study.

aesthetic assumptions long associated with German Romanticism, in particular with its nature and love poetry in the mould of Goethean *Erlebnislyrik*. He sets out to challenge an entire tradition of lyric authenticity in this first stage of his search for a new poetic 'truth' in a modernising, post-revolutionary world. There has been significant divergence in opinion as to the aesthetic merit of these poems, which is indicative, if not to say symptomatic, of Heine's struggle to alter public perception of his poetic identity. Contemporary reviews of *Neuer Frühling*, which were predominantly positive, latched onto its superficial resemblance to the *Buch der Lieder* to proclaim his triumphant return to former poetic glory. 'Heine hat darin eine glänzende Widerlegung der Behauptung geliefert, die man wohl hie und da vernommen, daß er in der Dichtung nicht wieder leisten würde, was er sonst geleistet', Christian Wurm remarked on 2 January 1832 in a review of *Reisebilder II*; meanwhile he interpreted Heine's own dismissive attitude towards the new poems as a show of modesty in keeping with the particular apolitical German lyric identity which to his (Wurm's) mind these invoke, despite being published in Paris: 'der anspruchslose Ton, in welchem das Vorwort der Lieder erwähnt, steht ihm so gut an. Nur der Schluß des Vorworts, verbunden mit dem Datum "Paris den 20. Juni 1831" könnte vielleicht an die Manifeste erinnern, die Napoleon aus fremden Hauptstädten zu datieren liebte' (see DHA 2, 323). Heinrich Laube greeted the cycle's second appearance as part of *Salon II* (1835) with a similarly misplaced nostalgia, which appears all the more so given his apparent lack of awareness that this publication was merely a reprint of most of the poems from 1831: 'O, Sie sind

noch glücklich, da Ihnen noch so alte, junge, schöne Lieder kommen' (letter to Heine, 3 May 1835; HSA 24, 312). Both responses typify the desire prevalent among Heine's reading public at the time to preserve him as the embodiment of a German poetic tradition; this they achieve, whether wilfully or not, by ignoring his own ambivalent stance. More recently, Siegbert Praver has given a scathing account of *Neuer Frühling* as a cycle of 'some of the weakest and falsest poems Heine was ever to write'; he condemns Heine for 'forcing himself into a mode that had grown alien to him' and in which he now 'repeats himself, and debases in the process his own best coinage'.<sup>12</sup> Praver suggests commercial gain as the only possible motive and that he is 'cynically writing what he knows to be nonsense but what he also knows his public will eagerly accept' (p. 18). There is doubtlessly some justification for this critique, especially given the original plan for a joint enterprise with Albert Methfessel, yet it also seems to be as misplaced as the early reviewers' praise. Even if Heine was exploiting his contemporary audience's enthusiasm to some degree for purely pragmatic financial reasons, it is Praver's reaction, not their partiality, which sheds most light on what he seems to be doing with *Neuer Frühling*. One might even suggest Heine was aiming to provoke precisely this kind of critical outrage, for the charges of falsity, repetitiveness, cynicism and a general devaluation of the lyric currency founded on the success of the *Buch der Lieder* uncannily reflect his own attitude to the new poems. On close reading, these can be seen to enact a

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<sup>12</sup> Heine: *The Tragic Satirist: A Study of the Later Poetry, 1827-1856* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 15.

confrontation with the Romantic poetic diction of his legacy in which he systematically undermines and discredits its language and tropes.

In *Reisebilder* II, Heine introduced the *Neuer Frühling* section with a motto that explicitly invokes a connection with the *Buch der Lieder* and assumes a particular kind of relationship with the reader:

Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam  
 Im Norden...  
 ...  
 Er träumt von einer Palme  
 Die fern...  
 ...

This self-quotation may serve in part to advertise the new collection as a work in the same popular mode, but it also provides an implicit commentary on the relationship between the two poetic enterprises. Heine presupposes that *Lyrisches Intermezzo* XXXIII is a poem so familiar to his readers that it does not warrant complete citation. Here, the inserted ellipses lend it the feel of a recycled sound bite such that it becomes simultaneously a celebration of catchy lyricism and a revelation of its ultimate vacuity. It is not surprising that Heine selects this particular poem to comment indirectly on his reputation; with over a hundred musical settings and numerous imitations, 'Ein Fichtenbaum' became the most frequently cited of the *Buch der Lieder* lyrics and the epitome of its popular style.<sup>13</sup> In reducing this highly successful poem to the role of marketing slogan for the new cycle, he foreshadows the nature of its aesthetic

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<sup>13</sup> Ernst Chälier lists 121 separate musical settings in his *Großer Lieder-Katalog* (1885). See DHA 1/2, 812.

project, which will deploy self-destructive irony to challenge his accepted identity as the poet of German Romantic song.

*Neuer Frühling*, and by extension the *Neue Gedichte* collection as a whole, is headed by a designated prologue poem which strongly recalls that of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*; hence its image of a knight dressed for battle who, heroic intentions notwithstanding, finds himself hopelessly ensnared in love's embrace, does not invoke the Anacreontic tradition *per se* but rather Heine's own earlier take on one of its topoi. In dialogue with his literary past, the variations Heine incorporates in the new prologue become representative of a general shift in perspective in *Neuer Frühling* and demonstrate the kind of aesthetic self-revision this cycle performs. Once again he uses the essential incompatibility between the roles of campaigning hero and servant of Eros as a metaphor for his own aesthetic dilemma, caught between Romantic tradition and the sense that his poetry should be engaging in something closer to contemporary political reality – as he expressed it in the preface to *Reisebilder II*, the problem faced 'wenn in ein und demselben Dichterherzen sich beyde Arten verschmelzen' (DHA 2, 205). However, whereas in the *Buch der Lieder* some variation on an archetypal *femme fatale*—a nixie (*Lyrisches Intermezzo* 'Prolog'), Loreley (*Heimkehr II*) or sphinx ('Vorrede zur dritten Auflage', 1839)—was invariably responsible for seducing the poet with old Romanticism, in *Neuer Frühling* the lyric subject is complicit, even if uneasily so, in his own detention. Thus he announces 'in holden Hindernissen, | Wind ich mich in Lust und Leid', and knowingly leaves the great 'Kampf der Zeit' to others to fight (DHA 2, 11).

This poem distils in three succinct quatrains the essence of the earlier prologue's narrative, a Romantic ballad of forty-two lines and six stanzas. As a result, its poetological function is brought to the fore. Readers of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* had to wait until the final two lines to discover the poem's underlying conceit: that knight and poet are one and the same and the magic of the nixie who brought him to life and love an elaborate Romantic dream conjured up 'in dem düstern Poetenstübchen' (DHA 1/1, 133). By contrast, the reader of *Neuer Frühling* is addressed at the outset and invited, almost conversationally, to join the poet in visualising the knight in a new context. Here, the protagonist of many a Romantic ballad, including Heine's own, is captured in a single, static image:

In Gemäldegallerieen  
Siehst du oft das Bild des Manns,  
Der zum Kampfe wollte ziehen,  
Wohlbewehrt mit Schild und Lanz. (DHA 2, 11)

A few lines suffice to invoke an entire lyric tradition. The knight and his story of erotic enslavement are encapsulated in a laconic epithet comprised of an iconic shield and lance, which are then symbolically removed in the second stanza by amoretti, Baroque art's equivalent of Romanticism's nixies who noticeably speak the same language of roguish 'necken' (cf. DHA 1/1, 133, l. 26; DHA 2, 11, l. 5).<sup>14</sup> Rather than prolonging the suspension of disbelief, this poem seems to encourage readers to approach it as a spectator might with a degree of critical attachment; the improbable 'Manns / Lanz' rhyme, at once contrived

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Goethe's 'Mit einem gemalten Band', in *Sämtliche Werke, Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, ed. by Dieter Borchmeyer and others, 40 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker, 1985 ff.), I, 289.

and mundane, lends a touch of irony in support of such an attitude. It remains unclear whether Heine based his prologue on an actual painting, as these opening lines seem to imply. According to the *DHA* editors, it is possible he had heard tell or read of an 1828 Parisian wall hanging depicting scenes from Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, including one in which the hero Rinaldo is seduced by Armida whose amorette wield chains of flowers and rob him of sword and shield (see *DHA* 2, 344). The source of his inspiration is of comparatively limited interest, however. Most significant is the lyric perspective he establishes by evoking a visit to an art gallery.

Although the poetological topos which states a metaphorical relationship between knight and poet may not be established here until the statement of comparison which opens the third stanza, Heine's use of a kind of framing technique creates a reflexive scenario that encourages the reader to anticipate this self-conscious dimension from the beginning. The lyric subject, that is to say the poet, effectively frames himself as the subject of the artwork he has just been observing in an aesthetic manoeuvre which mirrors the very scene of entrapment he depicts. So the static, rather artificial feel of this lyric tableau is reflected in the claustrophobic acoustic effects he achieves, with the cheeky 'necken' which half-echoes 'Amoretten' and 'Blumenketten' and in particular with the alliterative pairings 'Binden [...] Blumenketten', 'holden Hindernissen' and 'Lust und Leid'. Equivalent of the knight's half-hearted, ineffectual resistance to the charms of his captors, these oxymora evoke a certain Romantic poetic diction, but they do so self-consciously and to excess. For readers who

are alert to the subtlety of its lyric perspective and level of dialogical engagement, this prologue poem reveals something of Heine's purpose with *Neuer Frühling* as a whole. 'Das Bild des Manns' is evidently intended to be an emblem of his own poetry in a Romantic idiom. However, it is also a portrait in a more literal sense of a poet who, by his own admission, has become a cliché in the eyes of his public: 'In Gemäldegallerieen | Siehst du *oft* das Bild' (my emphasis). By extension, *Neuer Frühling* might be thought of as the literary consequence of a conscious decision on Heine's part to frame himself in the trappings of his own *Buch der Lieder* legacy. This strategic stance enables him as lyric subject, as the knight *in* the painting, to inhabit an identity his public recognises and loves, while at the same time to undermine it with the self-conscious irony of a critically detached spectator *of* his own creation. As readers we are presented with a cycle of love lyrics which, though instantly recognisable as a sequel to *Buch der Lieder*, also works to undermine its authenticity as such and with this the sincerity of its creator's projected self-image.

Despite the promise of rejuvenation contained in the title metaphor, *Neuer Frühling* is structured to tell a tale of decline across its forty-four poems, and does so on three (interrelated) levels: as another love affair runs its course, so spring gives way to a grey, cheerless autumn, and Romantic lyricism is drowned out by the mundane cacophony of noses being blown under a Hamburg sky in a new poetic diction that is 'grau und wochentäglich' (see *NF*

XLIV; DHA 2, 30).<sup>15</sup> The pentameters and enclosing rhymes of *NF* XLII audibly break the hegemonic sway of the simple folksong form, so familiar to our ears, and its prosaic final line lands with a resounding thud on the uncompromising dialectal end rhyme 'regent' (DHA 2, 29); the poem sounds an unfamiliar, jarring note which initiates the shift away from Romantic diction towards something more tangible, more everyday and, we are led to believe, perhaps more authentic. So Heine launches a programme of provocative experimentation with the limits of acceptability in poetic language, a quest for innovation which will continue throughout the *Neue Gedichte*.<sup>16</sup> It is the poet's nostalgic and destructive journey through his own poetic legacy which emerges as the implicit narrative focus of this cycle.

At first sight, *NF* I picks up quite straightforwardly from where *Die Heimkehr* left off. A frozen heart is defrosted from its wintry state and reawakened to life and love by a burgeoning new spring whose seductive blossoms, 'die dich necken und bedecken', assume the role of the Amoretti as symbols of Eros (DHA 2, 12). However, this transition from winter into spring is not the simple, natural progression it first appears, or that readers of the *Buch der Lieder* might expect. In fact it is not a real transition at all, but rather an illusion of seasonal change brought about by the poet's sudden shift in perspective; the 'weiße Flocken' drifting from the tree above were never actual

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<sup>15</sup> In this chapter I refer to individual *Neuer Frühling* poems by the abbreviation *NF* and their number in the cycle.

<sup>16</sup> In a letter to his brother Maximilian, Heine recalls a pertinent observation made by his late niece in response to *Der Tannhäuser*, a poem included in the second section of the *Neue Gedichte*: 'als meine letzte Gedichtesammlung erschien, bemerkte sie ganz richtig: "Das der Onkel das Wort Kackstühlchen gebraucht hat, das ist ganz neu, und das hat noch kein anderer gewagt"' (3 May 1849; HSA 22, 315 f.).

snow, as the reader is led to assume from the focus on wintry weather in the poem's opening three stanzas, but rather spring blossoms initially mistaken for 'Schneegestöber'. The tree's sudden transformation, which induces familiar oxymoronic emotions of 'freud'gem Schrecken' in the lyric subject, is the work of poetic alchemy:

Welch ein schauersüßer Zauber!  
 Winter wandelt sich in Maye,  
 Schnee verwandelt sich in Blüten,  
 Und dein Herz es liebt aufs Neue. (ll. 17-20)

What Heine achieves here is to lay bare the workings of Romantic poetic diction, the tricks of the alchemist's trade. Considered within the overall architecture of *Neuer Frühling*, this first poem seems designed to prefigure its wintry end and relatively prosaic diction by evoking a poetic landscape that is 'kahl geschoren' (l. 6); in *NF XLIII* the trees will appear 'gespenstisch kahl' (DHA 2, 30). However, this proleptic impulse is interrupted by a poetic recollection, for the central image of a snow-white tree also invites comparison with an all-too familiar pine tree enveloped in its snowy blanket. In other words, if *NF I* stages an attempt to give a tentatively alternative reading of the archetypal image of spring, to reinterpret the blossom tree in a different seasonal context, this is doomed to failure for it ultimately leads back to Heine's own symbol of Romantic nature symbolism from the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*. Having revealed the tree's transformation to be a matter of poetic perception, Heine has nevertheless succeeded in infusing an apparently unshakeable Romantic emblem with an element of ambiguity, of questionability, which directs our reading of the last

stanza (cited above). Despite appearances, these concluding lines trouble rather than uphold the reign of another Romantic trope: the pathetic fallacy. They revisit and treat elements explored in the already highly distilled opening poem of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* (see DHA 1/1, 134) with still greater laconic brevity. The chain reaction of events which began 'Im wunderschönen Monat May' and resulted, at the end of two intensely sonorous quatrains, in the poet's 'Sehnen und Verlangen' is replaced here by a mundane co-ordinating conjunction and weary (impure) end rhyme: 'Winter wandelt sich in *Maye* [...] | Und dein Herz es liebt aufs *Neue*' (my emphases). The link between nature and human emotion has become just too obvious, too automatic to sound genuine. Throughout *NF I* the lyric subject attributes what are presumably his own emotions to an unnamed second person; we are reminded of the 'du' which invoked a kind of conspiratorial critical alliance between the reader and a disaffected Romantic poet in the prologue poem. Once again, the poet steps away from his own creation to expose the artificiality of poetic processes which he continues to implement, but with self-conscious cynical detachment.

Although *Neuer Frühling* presents another cycle of love lyrics, these have a subtly different narrative premise to that of the *Buch der Lieder*; the *DHA* editors note that they relate the poet's experience of being separated from the object of his desires as opposed to languishing in unrequited love (see DHA 2, 306). Far more striking, though, is the sheer sketchiness of this narrative. While 'Im wunderschönen Monat May' identified a distinct lyric subject, unequivocally associated with the emotions expressed in the poem by the reference to

'meinem Herz' and to an object of desire ('ihr') to whom these are addressed, the subject of *NF I* is disconcertingly indeterminate. Whose heart and whose experience is this? And where is the object of its love? The familiar synecdoche of Romantic poetic diction, the 'Herz', appears to have been cut free from any surrounding body, either real or fictional. We enter a woodland scene populated by trees, roses, violets, butterflies, nightingale, sunshine and stars in which there is no mention of any other human presence until *NF XI*. Here the poet names 'der Frühling und zwey schöne Augen' as the conspirators responsible for his 'neue Bethörung' (DHA 2, 16); but even these eyes, which are enigmatic and disembodied, have no defining quality beyond a vague Romantic beauty. Given their fellow conspirators are spring, roses and nightingales, it seems most likely that they are just another attribute of anthropomorphic Nature, scarcely distinguishable from the 'schönen Augen der Frühlingsnacht' which personified spring in *NF III* (DHA 2, 13). When a love object is finally directly addressed in the fourteenth poem of the cycle, the brush of her dress—which stands out as a human trapping in this otherwise entirely animal and vegetable world—is a fleeting experience that is barely registered; we are left with the stunned reaction of the poet's immobilized heart as the only sign of her presence. It would seem that separation from the beloved is less a state of being for the lyric subject and more a symptom of his self-referential love. Rather than provide the narrative impetus for the cycle, this separation becomes symbolic of a poetry that has lost either the ability or the will to express authentic emotion. Praver comments on this when he suggests that

there is 'a certain hollowness at the centre of the whole cycle' (*The Tragic Satirist*, p. 17). The poet's metaphors prove to be as empty as the beloved's dress. We may surmise that the poet has fallen victim not to the perfidious charms of some new love, but rather to Romantic poetry itself and all its accessories.

In the *Buch der Lieder*, Nature provided a scenic background and a metaphorical frame for the erotic narrative. In *Neuer Frühling* it becomes an active protagonist, frequently in dialogue with the lyric voice – in many respects it *is* the narrative. Heine interferes with the normal functioning of Romantic nature metaphor by inverting the relationship between signifier and signified:

Ich lieb' eine Blume, doch weiß ich nicht welche;  
 Das macht mir Schmerz.  
 Ich schau' in alle Blumenkelche,  
 Und such' ein Herz. (NF IV; DHA 2, 13)

Rather than being in love with a woman (another heart) and searching for a metaphor to poeticize the feeling, he takes her would-be metaphorical representative (the flower) as his 'authentic' starting point and searches for some meaningful love object behind it. There is none to be found, however, for Nature, presented in the clichéd trappings of Romantic diction, has been permitted to usurp its place entirely. The result is comically vacuous and given the lopsided meter and overtly trite rhyme ('Schmerz / Herz'), self-consciously so. This overreliance on nature to provide the substance of a love lyric is central to *Neuer Frühling's* self-undermining revision of Romanticism.<sup>17</sup> Whereas in the

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<sup>17</sup> Phelan argues something similar with regard to *Lyrisches Intermezzo* III ('Die Rose, die Lilje, die Taube, die Sonne'), in *Reading Heinrich Heine*, p. 72 f.

*Buch der Lieder* the poet's lovelorn sighs were translated into a metaphorical chorus of nightingales (see *Lyrisches Intermezzo* II; DHA 1/1, 134), here the nightingale brazenly sings 'Die Gedanken all, | Die mir im Herzen seufzen' in his stead (*NF* XIII; DHA 2, 17). Thus the later poem accentuates the close tie between human emotion and nature to which the pathetic fallacy and Romantic diction in general aspires, with the result that the poet forfeits control over his own expression to leave the reader with a nonsensical muddle of thoughts sighing in his heart.

*NF* XVIII enacts the dissolution of meaning which arises from the kind of poetic overstatement to which Romantic diction, so Heine demonstrates, is prone. In the first stanza a bewitching blue-eyed gaze transports the lyric subject into a dreamlike state and renders him incapable of speech. So far so conventional, until a second stanza takes up and toys with various elements from the first to generate the imagined thoughts of this dumbstruck Romantic poet:

An deine blauen Augen  
 Gedenk' ich allerwärts; –  
 Ein Meer von blauen Gedanken  
 Ergießt sich über mein Herz. (DHA 2, 19)

A sea of blue flushes all meaning from the words in front of us and pushes abstract Romantic sentiment *ad absurdum*. We are faced with a confused blend of the ubiquitous eyes of *Neuer Frühling*, the 'blauen Frühlingsaugen'-cum-violets (see *NF* XIII), and Heinrich von Ofterdingen's Blue Flower as the

archetypal symbol of German Romanticism.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the unusual end rhyme draws attention to this stanza as a prime demonstration of meandering, directionless poetic rhetoric. In this self-reflexive poem Heine captures the self-induced befuddlement of the Romantic poet who loses his senses in the attempt to over-poeticize them.

Contemporary commentators accused Heine of writing ‘*gedankenlose Poesie*’, full of ‘blauen Gefühlen’ but devoid of genuine sentiment or any kind of emotional investment;<sup>19</sup> ‘es kam das leere Wortgeklingel, das herhalten mußte, wo den Dichter der Gedanke im Stiche ließ’, Georg Neu remarked in his review of *Salon II* in January 1836 (see DHA 2, 330). Their criticism may be legitimate, but it is far from original. With its reduced stock of motifs and tropes woven into a dense and claustrophobic poetic texture characterized by image, word and sound repetition, *Neuer Frühling* draws attention to itself as a kind of pastiche of the *Buch der Lieder* and pursues musicality for its own sake. ‘Klinge, kleines Frühlingslied, | Kling’ hinaus in’s Weite’, the poet intones in *NF VI* (DHA 2, 14) in a self-reflexive commentary on charming but directionless lyricism. Meanwhile in *NF VIII*, a ‘Waldorchester’ epitomizes the notion of musical contrivance; it is comprised of an unlikely array of feathered musicians who keep time to the beat of the lyric subject’s heart. In short, those who accuse Heine of vacuity simply react as provoked to the exaggerated artificiality of poems such as *NF XVIII*. As their tendency to borrow and (mis)quote Heine’s

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<sup>18</sup> Novalis’s novel famously opens with a dream in which the eponymous hero has a vision of a blue flower, a symbol of Romantic longing and of his imminent initiation into poetry.

<sup>19</sup> From a review in *Der Freimüthige*, ‘Von den lyrischen Husaren, oder: Warum es jetzt so viele Dichter giebt’, signed ‘v.---n’ (January 1832). See DHA 2, 320.

language betrays, they are unwitting broadcasters of his own self-critique. Such encounters between an outré poet and his baffled audience have been carefully arranged. They constitute Heine's first attempt in the *Neue Gedichte* to establish a more constructive, that is to say an abrasive, dialogical relationship with his German reading public – to create a critical opposition against which to reinvent himself as a poet.

Despite its avowedly nostalgic mode, there are moments in *Neuer Frühling* which foreshadow the nature of that self-reinvention. In *NF xx*, the poet interrupts himself halfway through the first line to challenge assumptions at the heart of his current poetic project, namely those on which the pathetic fallacy depends.

Die Rose duftet – doch ob sie empfindet  
 Das was sie duftet, ob die Nachtigall  
 Selbst fühlt, was sich durch unsre Seele windet,  
 Bey ihres Liedes süßem Wiederhall;–

Ich weiß es nicht.

[...]

(DHA 2, 20; ll. 1-5)

He might maintain bewildered ignorance in the face of his own probing questions, but these open uncomfortable cracks in the surface of the Romantic idiom, reflected here in this poem's disrupted syntax, that cannot be closed; 'Doch macht uns gar verdrießlich | Die Wahrheit oft!' (l. 5 f.), the poet continues. Truth may grate in a lyric context, it may be 'jakobinisch unerbittlich' (DHA 2, 205), but any attempt to retreat from it into a poetic safe haven is now

recognised, by definition, as lying (see *NF* xx, ll. 7-8).<sup>20</sup> One begins to suspect that what is pronounced ‘verdrießlich’ (l. 5) here may turn out to be more ‘ersprießlich’ (l. 7) for poetry than the Romantic lie to which the poet of *Neuer Frühling* still clings. While *NF* xx peters out into silence, which is one answer to the problem of poetic bankruptcy, *NF* xxxv opts for a more risqué game of hide-and-seek. ‘Sorge nie, daß ich verrathe | Meine Liebe vor der Welt’ (DHA 2, 26), the poet tells his beloved, feigning reassurance in a poem which sets out precisely to reveal secrets. Implicit in the lyric subject’s paradoxical revelation of a love affair he claims to be concealing from the world, ‘jenes glühende Geheimnis’ (l. 7), is a reflexive commentary on the capacity of Heine’s poetry, specifically *Neuer Frühling*, to smuggle other kinds of ‘truths’ through its dissembling use (and abuse) of the Romantic idiom. The final stanza speaks over the head of the poet’s beloved directly to a contemporary reader:

Sprühen einmahl verdächt’ge Funken  
 Aus den Rosen – sorge nie!  
 Diese Welt glaubt nicht an Flammen  
 Und sie nimmt’s für Poesie. (ll. 9-12; my emphasis)

Heine exploits the common notion that poetry has become inconsequential in the modern, post-revolutionary world to mount a clever demonstration of his own poetic artistry, which by implication begins to challenge this very assumption. Although their target remains unspecified here, the ‘suspicious sparks’ seem to represent a threat – of truths about to be disclosed. The very

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Buch der Lieder* ‘Vorrede zur zweiten Auflage’ (1837), according to which ‘die Wahrheit scheue sich in metrischen Gewanden zu erscheinen’ (DHA 1/1, 564). Also, Heine’s treatment of the pathetic fallacy in *NF* xx foreshadows a similar instance in *Seraphine* XIII (*Verschiedene*; DHA 2, 36 f.) and its final radical dismissal in ‘Entartung’ of the *Zeitgedichte* (DHA 2, 115 f.).

poem we are reading is presented as the source of potentially inflammatory revelations that are barely contained behind a façade of abstract aestheticism, in this particular instance behind the metaphor of roses (l. 8). Of course such potential is meaningless in the face of a world—we might read: Heine’s German readership—that wilfully upholds the notion of poetry’s irrelevance where this may assist in disavowing uncomfortable realities. Heine’s irony cuts both ways, however, for the infallible logic implemented by ‘diese Welt’ leads it to do no more than state the obvious – that this is poetry, which of course it is. Ultimately it is powerless to refute this poem’s suggestion of hidden potential. It is left to the next poem in the cycle to hint what the ‘verdächt’ge Funken’ might signify and what the implications will be for poetry.

*NF xxxvi* reaches an apogee of Romantic aestheticism in a heady conflation of spring-time, night-time and dreaming that is comparable only to that found in ‘Gemälden der Historie’ (DHA 2, 27). In a manoeuvre that might have been performed by the author of *Französische Maler*, the poet breaks off his reverie just as he is on the verge of succumbing to the charm of his own work of art. For a moment he imagines transforming into a nightingale to sing a customary ode to the roses in dreamy ‘Wunderklänge’ (stanza 4), but then he is woken by a new distraction outside the window, a new reality which enters from beyond the (Romantic) framework of his own lyric:

Bis mich weckt das Licht der Sonne,  
 Oder auch das holde Lärmen  
 Jener and’ren Nachtigallen,  
 Die vor meinem Fenster schwärmen. (DHA 2, 27)

This is the sun of a new spring and a new day, but also the July Sun risen in Paris in the wake of recent revolution.<sup>21</sup> The poet's fellow songsters sing noisy, but for all that no less dulcet, songs just beyond the bounds—though not out of ear-shot—of the *Neuer Frühling* idiom.

With the political allusion comes a new kind of diction, a new sound in poetry encapsulated in the unconventional 'Lärmen / schwärmen' rhyme; these nightingales have a distinctly different tonal register to their Romantic forebears. This is the final, tentative solution *Neuer Frühling* offers to the problem of its own poetic bankruptcy. Having revealed the fallacy of its proposed new spring for poetry, the first cycle of the *Neue Gedichte* ends with the onset of winter, captured in a more authentic idiom of the everyday. *NF* xxxi stages this shift in a dialogue between the lyric subject and the putative object of his lyric outpourings. Contrary to our expectation, it transpires that the effusive language of the first stanza, the 'Mondscheintrunkne Lindenblüthen' (DHA 2, 24) that are musically pleasing but ultimately vacuous hyperbolic extensions of a worn-out mode, is spoken by the woman; meanwhile the poet is free to suggest an alternative. Her image of him smiling 'wie verloren | In entfernten Sehnsuchträumen' (ll. 13-14) is left like an empty shell he no longer inhabits, while he wills a sudden, transformative blast of winter that brings the poem into a more tangible setting; not the mistaken blossoms of *NF* I this time, but a genuine 'weißes Schneegestöber' (l. 20) to extinguish the lyric mode

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<sup>21</sup> Heine invokes the sun as a symbol of political freedom throughout his works. A 'Juliussonne' recurs through his Paris journalism to symbolize the July Revolution in particular. Cf. *Französische Maler*: '[es] solle alljährlich auf dem Bastillenplatze die Stadt Paris sich vermählen mit der Sonne, dem großen, flammenden Glücksstern ihrer Freyheit' (DHA 12/1, 22).

adopted in this cycle once and for all. The soothing allure of moonshine drunken linden blossom is dispelled by an invigorating shock of dental and sibilant sounds and audibly striking poetic innovation in the ‘Schellenklingelnd, Peitschenknallend’ (l. 23) sounds of a real sleigh-ride.

The dialogue between the poet and his (Romantic) beloved in *Neuer Frühling* XXXI might be between Heine, the poet of *Neuer Frühling*, and his German audience, determined to contain his identity in a certain Romantic image. As I have shown, *Neuer Frühling* sets out to unmask a duplicitous relationship between poet and reader: the aesthetic assumptions on which self-consciously anachronistic Romantic lyrics depend and which sustained the *Buch der Lieder* as well as public perception of Heine’s lyric identity around the time of his emigration. As such, this cycle constitutes the first move in a long game of devil’s advocate Heine plays with his poetic reputation—and records in the *Neue Gedichte*—in an attempt to fashion that identity on his own terms and in accordance with his own progressive artistic agenda. Its subtle yet irrefutable revision of Romanticism paves the way for the unmitigated confrontation with German public expectation we encounter in *Verschiedene* which follows.

## CHAPTER 4

**Transforming the Love Lyric**

## A PARISIAN SCANDAL

In 1834 Heine published the first major collection of new poetry since his emigration – a cycle of fifty-six poems in Volume One of *Der Salon*. Whereas *Neuer Frühling* had first appeared in full as part of a reworked edition of *Reisebilder II*, this prototype of what would become, a decade later, the *Verschiedene* section of the *Neue Gedichte* belonged manifestly to the new Paris phase of his development. In fact *Der Salon* was conceived as a direct successor to the earlier *Reisebilder* project which had brought him fame while still in Germany; another four-part compendium, it assembled the poetry and important prose texts of his first decade after emigration. The poems of *Salon I* were central to this first great statement of Heine's new literary identity in Paris. Consequently they represent a pivotal moment in the narrative of self-renewal told by the *Neue Gedichte*, a status considerably enhanced by the controversial nature of their reception.<sup>1</sup> Under the unremarkable heading of 'Gedichte', they provoked a storm of public reaction which had a lasting impact on his reputation as a poet; not least in the way it shaped the outcome of his

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid confusion, I refer throughout this chapter to the 'Salon poems' of 1834 and to *Verschiedene* to indicate the cycle as it appeared in the *Neue Gedichte*. Forty-five of the Salon poems made it into *Verschiedene*, representing just under two-thirds of this final collection.

quest to produce a second poetry collection after the *Buch der Lieder*, as we have seen.

While the poems of *Neuer Frühling* had elicited a predominantly positive response from the German reading public, being celebrated as a revival of the popular poetic style of the *Buch der Lieder*, Heine's attempt to market a new kind of love lyric in *Salon I* achieved the improbable feat of uniting all of German society and both extremes of the political spectrum in universal condemnation. At issue was the overt eroticism on display in a succession of short cycles dedicated to named women by a self-proclaimed libertine poet. As Dolf Sternberger has noted, this kind of 'Leporello-Album' represented a departure not only from the *Buch der Lieder* and *Neuer Frühling* but from the conventions of love poetry as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Heine had apparently made an insalubrious private life in Paris public and what is more had done so in the same folksong-like lyric mode for which he had, until now, been revered. The German public responded with a general outcry of indignation loaded with aesthetic as well as moral force. He was accused of 'Ausgestorbenheit der Seele' and an 'Öde des Herzens' (in the *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, 1834; see B 4, 902); contemporaries denounced him as the author of 'Poesie der Hurerei', as a 'Dichter der Unpoesie, der Frivolität, des Frevels' (see DHA 2, 386; 426). The term 'Frivolität' recurs in countless reviews independent of their individual political slant or ideological purpose as shorthand for his perceived moral and aesthetic degradation, which

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<sup>2</sup> *Die Abschaffung der Sünde*, p. 107. In Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Leporello kept a record of his master's amatory conquests.

were closely associated in commentators' minds. Heine's apparent descent into debauchery was most frequently linked to the irrevocable fall of a poet formerly at the pinnacle of German lyricism, so that what the *DHA* editors have since celebrated as a prototype 'Großstadt-Dichtung' was generally regarded simply to be bad poetry; 'wo die Liederlichkeit wohnt, da entflieht die keusche Muse. Das ist der Grund, warum die neuere Poesie so dürr und unfruchtbar ist', one reviewer reasoned in 1834 (see B 4, 908). Jost Hermand has traced a striking phenomenon, by which the same disapproval has continued in scholarship into the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> More recently still, in a study of Heine's eroticism, Paul Peters has suggested that *Verschiedene* 'enter realms quite beyond the pale of literary convention and middle-class propriety in their brazen violations of sexual-political correctness' and he concludes rather helplessly that 'one still does not know quite what to make of them'.<sup>4</sup>

Whether they profess outrage or polite academic confusion, nineteenth and twenty-first century readers alike seem to have been confounded by the shock of exposure to an apparently autobiographical Parisian scandal, recounted in the once familiar lyric mode of the *Buch der Lieder* with its unspecified, unrequited loves. Like and yet not, these poems have proven resistant to the critical apparatus established around the earlier collection with which they nevertheless seem to beg comparison. Such reader reactions are far from coincidental, for Heine appears to set out quite deliberately to confuse aspects

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<sup>3</sup> 'Erotik im Juste Milieu: Heines "Verschiedene"', in *Heine: Artistik und Engagement*, ed. by Wolfgang Kutteneuler (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977), p.90 ff.

<sup>4</sup> 'A Walk on the Wild Side: Heine's Eroticism', in *A Companion to the Works of Heinrich Heine*, ed. by Roger Cook (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002), p. 56; p. 79.

of his personal life with aesthetic questions; in the same manoeuvre the libertine poet makes free with Parisian beauties and German lyric tradition, not to mention Heine's own poetic legacy. It was precisely this aspect of the new poems that August Lewald recognised in a titillating sketch of his own, in which he plays up the element of biographical scandal to depict a poet-voyeur in his Paris habitat:

Sein Lieblingsspaziergang war die Passage der Panorama's [...]. Heine schlenderte hier auf und ab, die Hände in den Taschen, den Kopf in den Nacken geworfen, mit aufgesetzter Brille. Hier beobachtete er das Pariser Treiben, und nebenher zogen ihn auch wohl die "Zoen, Aglaën, Desiréen, Clarissen, Amélien, u.s.w." an, die er in seinem ersten Theile des Salon abdrucken ließ. (*Werner* I, 250)

If Heine had played 'a kind of hide-and seek with the expectations of autobiographical reference' in the *Buch der Lieder* 'to make his collection a compendium of forms for supposed self-expression', as Anthony Phelan has suggested (*Reading Heinrich Heine*, p. xiii), then the Salon poems were a radical extension of the same experiment; they placed self-expression, an overt statement of subjectivity, at the heart of his lyric enterprise. Indeed, it was to this that Wolfgang Menzel unwittingly reacted when he lodged an aesthetic complaint in his review of *Salon I*: 'die ganze Welt wird einst den Ekel mit uns teilen, den wir schon jetzt empfinden, indem wir überall statt Gedichte nur Dichter finden' (see B 4, 902). A conscious strategy on Heine's part, this had a political as well as an aesthetic purpose.

Contemporary German readers typically attributed what they considered a catastrophic usurpation of 'old Heine' by the alien voice of the new poet to corrupting French influence. One reviewer of the *Neue Gedichte* in the *Allgemeine*

*Zeitung* suggested that Heine's 'Liebesfrühling', doubtlessly alluding to *Neuer Frühling*, had met a premature end – 'gestorben an der Pariser Luft, in welcher manches Gute gedeihen mag, nur kein deutscher Dichter' (see DHA 2, 269); this is reminiscent, in reverse, of Lewald's portrait of Heine in the *Album aus Paris I*, according to which it was precisely 'die elastische Luft, die man hier athmet' that resulted in his having 'einen ganzen Frühling von neuen Liedern in der gesunden Brust' (p. 68). Such anti-Parisian sentiment is indicative of what was also a distinctly politicised dimension to the discourse surrounding the Salon poems. In his polemical pamphlet 'Heinrich Heine und Ein Blick auf unsre Zeit' (1834), Maximilian Stephani depicts a poet who 'auf den Boulevards spaziert [...] politisirt [...] sich amusirt, Witze sammelt, mit Pariser filles de joie spielt, für die Freiheit lebt und stirbt'; in other words, he pronounces Heine's libertinism to be a display of solidarity with (undesirable) French revolutionary principles, 'die alte, liebe, göttliche, wahnsinnige Frivolität und Gleichheit eingeführt' (see DHA 2, 413). When Heine claimed in a letter to his mother, on 4 March 1834, 'ich zieh mich aus der Politik zurück' (HSA 21, 80), this may have reassured her that he was getting out of trouble and a war of words with German 'demagogues' who had branded him a clandestine aristocrat. However, it did not reflect the reality of his position in light of the recent publication of *Salon I*, in which readers quite rightly detected an undercurrent of revolutionary subversion. In effect, he had merely transferred the dispute over his political identity to an aesthetic arena – and landed himself in new hot water, at odds with everyone.

Karl Gutzkow invoked the same nationalist objection and rhetoric in 1838 when he wrote to advise Heine against publishing the proposed *Nachtrag zum Buch der Lieder*, which included the Salon poems: 'Sie kennen die allgemeine Stimme, die über Ihre Gedichte auf die Pariser Boulevardsschönheiten [...] in Deutschland herrscht; warum in dieser Manier noch eine so fruchtbare Nachgeburt?' (HSA 25, 158). Gutzkow saw the crux of the matter not in the transgressive nature of the poems themselves, but rather in Heine's apparent devil-may-care attitude to his public standing *in toto*: 'Sie scheinen mir in einer Sorglosigkeit über Ihren Namen befangen, die gränzenlos ist' (ibid.). By 1838, and certainly from our perspective today, Gutzkow's position appears self-righteous to the point of caricature; Heine pointed out in reply that there was hardly cause for fresh scandal in a simple re-print. It is nonetheless representative of the peculiar degree of moral and aesthetic posturing which unites so many critical reactions to these poems. Regardless of individual agendas, all have been moved to get on a high horse and 'fix the problem' of a poet who had suddenly transgressed expectations. Heine's response to Gutzkow is noticeable for the way it replicates his self-righteous rhetoric, but from the opposite standpoint. Likening himself to Petronius, author of *Satyricon*, or Goethe, author of the autobiographical *Römische Elegien*, he sees no reason not to publish his own erotic 'masterpiece', which he loftily pronounces 'kein Futter für die rohe Menge' (HSA 21, 292). His reputation, he claims, is simply suffering from the ignorance of the majority of his readers:

Ein eigentliches Urtheil können nur wenige Deutsche über diese Gedichte aussprechen, da ihnen der Stoff selbst, die abnormen Amouren in einem Welttollhaus, wie Paris ist, unbekannt sind. Nicht die Moralbedürfnisse irgend eines verheuratheten Bürgers in einem Winkel Deutschlands, sondern die Autonomie der Kunst kommt hier in Frage. (Ibid.)

It is striking that he should adopt the language of his critics in a passage intended to defend his aesthetic enterprise and literary reputation against them. In referring to the stuff of his poems as 'abnormen Amouren in einem Welttollhaus, wie Paris' he seems to admit himself guilty as charged, yet this facetious résumé of the moral, political and aesthetic opposition he faced is in fact entirely strategic: by legitimizing his subsequent attack on a narrow-minded bourgeois German society, it permits him to assert his own lofty agenda. There is something strangely contradictory about claiming the need for more elevated aesthetic discussion of poems which succeeded in alienating the mass of readers precisely by living up to their prejudices.

Gutzkow's incomprehension at the way Heine pursued a project as though somehow oblivious to the negative reaction of his readership unwittingly points to the paradox at the heart of what the Salon poems were attempting. The uniform outrage they incurred is indicative of a literary project that was designed to provoke just such an attack; what is more, to direct this onto the person of the poet. Heine revealed the nature of his particular strategy in the same letter in which, ironically, he had announced his intention to withdraw from politics: 'den Salon habe ich endlich erhalten [...]. Viel Zoten. *Dieses war politische Absicht.* Ich wollte der öffentlichen Meinung eine gewisse Wendung geben. Besser man sagt ich sey ein Gassenjunge, als daß man mich für einen

allzuernsthaften Vaterlandsretter hält' (HSA 21, 80; my emphasis). The label he assigns his new identity in the wake of the Salon poems makes a quiet allusion to Goethe who, most probably in retaliation against the promethean attack on his literary reputation in parts of *Reisebilder* II, was alleged to have declared: 'Wenn Heine erst aufhörte ein Gassenjunge zu seyn, dann ist er der größte Dichter, der gelebt hat!'.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of Goethe's intention, Heine had evidently determined to receive his comment as a direct provocation. Moreover, he had answered the challenge not with a straightforward rebuttal but rather paradoxically by seeming to embody the epithet in brazen poetic accounts of erotic adventures. What Heine hoped to achieve with the Salon poems, by subjecting his public image to certain attack, and the nature of the identities he trades in this particularly intense and targeted dialogue with his own reception are hinted at in the shift in emphasis he incorporates here with respect to Goethe's assessment of his standing as poet. By setting 'Gassenjunge' against a new epithet he himself supplies, 'Vaterlandsretter', Heine introduces a political dimension into what began as a purely aesthetic question. For Goethe, a guttersnipe is simply the opposite of a great poet. Heine, meanwhile, embraces this identity as a symbol of freedom which allows him to escape a rigid political label he is anxious to avoid; his provocative stance seems to be intended to undermine those who persisted in assigning him a politicised German identity (hence: 'ich zieh mich aus der Politik zurück'), even or perhaps especially after

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<sup>5</sup> Maximilian Heine relayed Goethe's words, which had been spoken to another third party, in a letter to his brother early in 1834 (HSA 24, 240). Cf. Jost Hermand, 'A view from below: Heinrich Heine's Relationship to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe', in *Goethe in German-Jewish Culture*, ed. by Klaus Berghahn and Jost Hermand (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2001), pp. 44-62.

the move to Paris. To the same end the Salon poems make an attempt to wrest his lyric reputation from its *Buch der Lieder* legacy and so clear the way for him to fashion a new aesthetic and political identity on his own terms. In the context of the love lyric, the endless succession of unrequited romances which were conditioned by socio-political conventions beyond the poet's control in the *Buch der Lieder* is replaced by self-directed adventures in Eros that represent a species of political action carried out against convention.<sup>6</sup>

In the preface to *Salon I*, Heine places poetry at the heart of a particular aesthetic-political programme: to counter a perceived pandemic spiritualism, 'jene triste, modrige Aschermittwochs-idee, die unser schönes Europa trübselig entblüht und mit Gespenstern und Tartüffen bevölkert hat', with 'einer großen, gottfreudigen Frühlings-idee [...], die wo nicht besser, doch wenigstens eben so respektabel ist' (DHA 5, 369). So *Neuer Frühling's* false spring gives way to the real thing: poems which openly proclaim a doctrine of sensualism and seek to reclaim the erotic as a 'respectable' subject matter for lyric poetry, a mission which recalls Goethe's celebrated restoration of Priapus in the *Römische Elegien*. In the year before *Salon I*, Heine had published a series of twenty-one of the poems in six issues of the journal *Der Freimüthige*, which included a designated 'Prolog' and 'Epilog'; as in Goethe's cycle, these framing poems served respectively to present the nature of the challenge and celebrate the poet's

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<sup>6</sup> Hermand has argued that Heine's love poetry is an evolving protest against socially imposed restriction, especially against a bourgeois double standard which permitted sexual freedom only to those able to pay for it. Scandal is Heine's weapon for encouraging reform – he exposes himself in order to expose the entire system of contemporary social mores. See 'Vom *Buch der Lieder* zu den *Verschiedenen*: Heines zweimalige Partnerverfehlung', in *Heinrich Heine: Ästhetisch-politische Profile*, ed. by Höhn, pp. 214-235.

triumphant solution. The erotic revival is more conspicuously self-reflexive in Heine's poems, for the focus is on the process of transformation the poet himself undergoes from his own previous lyric identity; in a sense his is to be the symbolic restoration which has implications for lyric tradition rather than the other way around. The prologue (*Angelique* I of the Salon poems and *Verschiedene*) heralds his return to the public stage with a defiant proclamation which breaks the silence of decorum that convention dictates, now that he has been blessed with fulfilled love to write about – 'Nun der Gott mir günstig nicket' (DHA 2, 37). Turning his back on the 'Kummer' of yesteryear much sung about in the *Buch der Lieder* (alluded to here in stanza one), and the exhaustive spate of inferior imitations and imitators which were its only legacy (stanza two), he enlists a familiar chorus of nightingales to announce a new poetry of joy: 'Daß man Eure Wonne höre, | Jubelt auf mit voller Kehle!' (DHA 2, 38). Although it is not yet clear exactly what form this will take, the transition from 'Kummer' to 'Wonne' and the euphemistic nod (literally, in line 1) towards the poet's amorous fulfilment imply a provocative new poetic venture that is barely suppressed, here, within the bounds of convention and a familiar idiom. The epilogue (*Hortense* I of *Verschiedene*) gives a retrospective summary of the transition he has undergone through the sequence of erotic encounters with Seraphine, Clarisse, Hortense, Angelique and Diana. Where once he believed the exchange of kisses to be a serious, contractual obligation predetermined by immovable fate ('Als ob ich erfüllen müßte | Thaten der Nothwendigkeit'; DHA 2, 43), he now proclaims faith in a kind of anti-dogma – a self-determined

sensualist creed ('Und mit leichtern Sinnen küß' ich | Glaubenlos im Ueberfluß'; *ibid.*). The same poem is made the lynchpin of the Salon collection where, under a different heading, it takes stock, at the halfway point between two sequences of three sub-cycles to named women, of the poet's 'Erfahrung' – that is of the experience he has accumulated through these encounters.

Overall, the Salon poems configure Heine's programme of renewal, of self-liberation through erotic adventure, in an even more assuredly self-reflexive manner. Instead of a designated prologue, a poem labelled 'Abschied' followed by two short cycles entitled 'Träumereyen' and 'Tragödie' (including the six poems of *Tragödie* and *In der Fremde* of *Verschiedene*) invoke the poet's recently severed connection to Germany and its folksong tradition, which appear as a quaint reminiscence and insubstantial dream. The *Tragödie* poems were in fact written before Heine moved to Paris and he uses them here to bid a self-conscious final farewell to German lyric tradition; by sweeping out the last vestiges of his former poetic identity, he clears the way for a new project to commence. At the opposite end of the collection four poems under the heading *Der Schöpfer* present a commentary on the artistic process. Where Goethe's poet celebrated the achievement of having helped to restore a neglected Greek deity to his former glory, Heine's makes a thinly veiled direct comparison between himself and God the Creator to vindicate his own poetic enterprise. The repetitive, imitative element of creation, which has been exemplified by his sequence of short cycles on one erotic theme, may have produced an apparently

trivial outcome; this is nonetheless raised to significance by the poet's bold claim, mediated through the borrowed voice of the highest authority:

Das Schaffen selbst ist eitel Bewegung,  
 Das stümpert sich leicht in kurzer Frist.  
 Jedoch der Plan, die Ueberlegung,  
 Das zeigt erst wer ein Künstler ist.

(*Der Schöpfer IV [Schöpfungslied IV]*; DHA 2, 62)

As though anticipating the charge of 'Frivolität' from his reader, he counters it here with an emphatic statement of belief in his poetic concept – and perhaps a nod to his mastery of an aesthetic of arrangement.<sup>7</sup>

Heine's wish to alter public opinion of him was certainly granted. As an approach to a new poetic enterprise, it is hard to conceive how autobiographical scandal could have been anything other than destructive, yet this was a definite ploy to further his revolutionary aesthetic-political programme. What the Salon poems actually achieved by their provocative dialogues in terms of his quest for poetic renewal is something first reflected on not by any critic but by Heine himself, a decade later in the *Neue Gedichte*. Notwithstanding substantial overlaps, *Verschiedene* is no straight-forward recapitulation of the cycle from 1834.<sup>8</sup> The *DHA* editors have remarked that 'die Binnenwanderung der meisten Gedichte, d.h. ihr Weg unter verschiedenen Etiketten, den sie bis zu den *Neuen Gedichten* genommen haben, – das ist eine Geschichte für sich' (DHA 2, 403).

<sup>7</sup> In May 1852 Heine observed that his third poetry collection, *Romanzero*, '[hätte] unendlich verloren [...], wenn ich nicht der äußern Anordnung viel Zeit und Nachdenken schenkte' (HSA 23, 192) and a few months later proclaimed himself 'ein großer Meister in der Anordnung' (HSA 23, 221). Cf. Norbert Altenhofer's study of this aesthetic in practice in the *Buch der Lieder*: "'Ästhetik des Arrangements": zu Heines "Buch der Lieder"', in *Heinrich Heine: Neue Wege der Forschung*, ed. by Christian Liedtke (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), pp. 49-67.

<sup>8</sup> The *DHA* has traced the complex composition history of *Verschiedene* through various stages of assembly in a variety of journal and book publications (DHA 2, 431 ff.). For clarity and to highlight the changes most pertinent to my argument, I outline the composition of the *Freimüthiger*, *Salon* and *Neue Gedichte* cycles in an appendix to the current study.

This is especially true of *Verschiedene*, yet outside the *DHA* apparatus the differences between this cycle and the Salon poems have scarcely been acknowledged, let alone explored. Even this most comprehensive critical edition fails to remark upon the significance of the ‘story’ it so painstakingly reconstructs, whose self-conscious author is Heine himself. The changes he makes to the 1834 collection to create *Verschiedene* turn these poems into a self-reflexive commentary on their achievement in the 1830s, a retrospective reassessment carried out at a time when their erotic take on the German love lyric was no longer such a provocative, revolutionary statement; by 1844, this status had been transferred to an overtly political mode – the subject of my next chapter. In their pursuit of a revolution in poetry the Salon poems ultimately pleased no-one. Via a number of subtle changes, *Verschiedene* dismisses the love lyric as a potential vehicle for poetic renewal once and for all, while at the same time Heine manages to harness its erstwhile provocative spirit to suggest new directions in which this might be sought.

#### AN ABORTIVE PROGRAMME OF RENEWAL

Like *Neuer Frühling* before it, the title *Verschiedene* is self-reflexively ironic. It could refer equally to the various sub-cycles which make up its patchwork structure or the sundry women to which the majority of these are addressed. Either way, its tone is lightly disparaging. Whereas the neutral heading ‘Gedichte’ let the Salon poems speak for themselves, in itself perhaps a ploy to enhance the element of anticipation and surprise attached to these first poems

from Paris, *Verschiedene* betokens the kind of re-evaluation they have undergone since then in terms of Heine's estimation of their relative worth within his poetic project of 1844.

According to Gerhard Höhn, the most innovative aspect of Heine's new love lyrics is their perspective. He observes 'daß sie nicht mehr prä- sondern postamourös sind, daß sie nicht auf unstillbares Verlangen, sondern auf Katzenjammer zurückgehen' (*Handbuch*, p. 104). Despite giving a perfectly accurate summary of the lyric situation in *Verschiedene*, he does not appear to reflect on the irony of his own statement that this is where the novelty of these poems lies. There was something paradoxical about Heine's attempt in the Salon poems to create a poetics of (self-)renewal out of lyrics that are inherently retrospective. With *Verschiedene* he succeeds in creating a collection that is conscious of the self-defeating nature of its own enterprise.

The most significant structural reshuffle Heine made in 1844 was to send the poems of *In der Fremde* and *Tragödie* to the end of *Verschiedene* leaving *Seraphine* as its opening sub-cycle. With this, he changed the tenor of the entire collection. By ending with the poems beyond which the Salon collection had sought to progress, *Verschiedene* is set to follow a contrastingly regressive trajectory. After a cycle to *Friederike*, which makes an explicit cultural and chronological shift from contemporary Paris back to Berlin of 1823, *In der Fremde* and *Tragödie* serve to trap a once provocative experiment in a familiar idiom; the libertine poet renounces his position as lyric subject and recedes behind the borrowed voice of 'ein wirkliches Volkslied, welches ich am Rheine

gehört' (subtitle to *Tragödie II*; DHA 2, 73). In this position, these self-consciously anachronistic poems supply what is literally a foregone conclusion and Heine appears to kowtow to the desire of a scandalized 1830's audience to restore him to his poetic identity of old. Thus he sounds an ironic death-knell to his pursuit of self-reinvention at the end of this second cycle of the *Neue Gedichte*. With this end in sight, *Seraphine* establishes an abortive programme of renewal which will be enacted repeatedly through successive sub-cycles.

Critical interest in *Verschiedene* has tended to focus on *Seraphine* on account of the apparently programmatic statement made by the seventh poem of this sub-cycle, with its unequivocal allusion to a Saint-Simonian doctrine of political and sexual liberation. Briegleb calls it 'Heines am wenigsten verschlüsseltes doktrinäres Gedicht' and 'unverhüllt saint-simonistisch' (B 4, 923) and Sammons reads 'Heine's most compact Saint-Simonian confession' as 'a justification for the vigorous and urbane new poetry of the *Verschiedene*' (*The Elusive Poet*, p. 191). *Seraphine VII* did not appear among the poems published in *Der Freimüthige* and it is entirely plausible that he placed this new addition at the centre of *Seraphine* in the more consciously thought-out Salon collection as a means to substantiate his controversial position.<sup>9</sup> Sternberger has used *Seraphine* as the basis for his discussion of Heine's engagement with Saint-Simonianism (*Abschaffung der Sünde*, pp. 79-112). In connection with the Saint-Simonian doctrine of emancipation which sought 'la réhabilitation des besoins et des jouissances de la chair' (cited by Sternberger, p. 94), he draws particular

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Chapter One of the current study.

attention to *Enfantin's* controversial defence of Don Juan in a lecture on 7 December 1831; he presents this as the latent catalyst for Heine's own justificatory statement of his libertine project (p. 107), rendered in the apostolic Saint-Simonian proclamation of *Seraphine* VII: 'Die dumme Leiberquälerey | Hat endlich aufgehöret' (DHA 2, 34). There is little to add to Sternberger's nuanced reading of this poem, which takes care to distinguish between the outright Saint-Simonian confession many critics have assumed and the rather subtler dialogue in which the text of this poem actually engages. Heine is shown to graft his Saint-Simonian allusions onto a doctrine of progressive emancipation based on his own, sensualist interpretation of Spinoza's pantheism; hence, *Enfantin's* 'Dieu est tout ce qui est' is rendered: 'Und Gott ist alles was da ist; | Er ist in unsern Küssen'.<sup>10</sup> Whether it is unconsciously done or a subtle ploy, the way Sternberger slips seamlessly in and out of French and German is an uncanny reflection of Heine's strategy. Without wanting to detract from this, I wish to propose an interpretation of *Seraphine* which takes into account its position within the grand scheme of the *Neue Gedichte*. There is a need to reassess the nature of its programmatic function (which still stands) in relation to a narrative of decline told by the *Verschiedene* cycle; in other words, to undertake an assessment of Heine's own reassessment, in 1844, of his sensualist doctrine as a positive force for poetic renewal.

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<sup>10</sup> Sternberger suggests that Heine's is less a Saint-Simonian confession than an interpretation of pantheism, and an idiosyncratic one at that: 'ein pantheistisches Glaubensbekenntnis [...], das indessen nicht mehr darauf angelegt ist, aus der Schöpfung auf den Schöpfer zu schließen, sondern vielmehr in der Schöpfung den Schöpfer als ihr einwohnend wahrzunehmen, nämlich zu hören, zu sehen und zu empfinden, ja zu genießen!' (p. 85).

As begins to show in Sternberger's analysis, Heine was never unequivocally committed to an apostolic role, be this in the name of Saint-Simonianism, pantheism or any other quasi-doctrinal position he might imply. The earnest, hymnal tone of *Seraphine VII*, which is already an isolated case in *Verschiedene* as a whole, is undermined by Heine's ironic handling of the evangelical statement by which he asserts his new religion of sensualism—'Auf diesem Felsen bauen wir | Die Kirche von dem dritten, | Dem dritten neuen Testament' (DHA 2, 34)—with respect to the implied erotic union with Seraphine on the cliff tops where he had pursued her in the previous poem: 'die freche Transferierung des Gleichnis-Felsens aus dem Evangelium in einen materiellen Felsen als (etwas unbequemen) Schauplatz eines Liebesspiels [macht] am Ende doch ein wenig zweifeln, wie bar diese Münze oder wie solid die Währung sei' (Sternberger, p. 107). In the same manoeuvre Heine compromises not only the solemnity and hence credibility of his doctrine but also the authenticity of his apparently autobiographical narrative, which begins to look like a playful literary re-enactment of philosophical posturing. *Seraphine VII*'s facetious dalliance with an apostolic mode sets the tone for the reassessment Heine carries out in the *Neue Gedichte*. In this context, the Saint-Simonian connection might even be considered a useful scapegoat, a peg on which to hang the failure of the Salon project.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In *Über die französische Bühne* Heine had articulated a fundamental point of divergence from Saint-Simonianism and rejected the apostolic role this movement assigned to the artist, 'die unsichtbare Kirche der Saint-Simonisten [...] betrachtet die Kunst als ein Priesterthum', in favour of his own doctrine of aesthetic freedom: 'ich nenne sie [die Kirche] irrig, denn [...] ich bin für die Autonomie der Kunst; weder der Religion noch der Politik soll sie als Magd dienen' (DHA 12/1, 259).

Overall, the *Seraphine* cycle is an oddly inconspicuous opening to a collection of poems which had so shocked the literary establishment in 1834. Readers of *Verschiedene* are plunged directly into a narrative situation with little beyond the new title to separate it from that of *Neuer Frühling*. The poet sidles into a setting that is about as un-revolutionary in terms of German lyric convention as may possibly be:

Wandl' ich in dem Wald des Abends,  
 In dem träumerischen Wald,  
 Immer wandelt mir zur Seite  
 Deine zärtliche Gestalt. (Seraphine I; DHA 2, 31)

There is no trace here of Hermand's 'durchgehend moderne Großstadterotik' ('Erotik im Juste Milieu', p. 97). That said, the fifteen poems of *Seraphine* establish a narrative pattern which the rest of *Verschiedene* will follow: hopeful pursuit leads to erotic conquest (*Seraphine* VII) but thereafter to the girl's betrayal and the failure of love, which the poet foreshadows in his recognition of the impermanence of 'Schattenküsse, Schattenliebe' in *Seraphine* IX (DHA 2, 35). Tellingly the cycle ends with him not in the company of Seraphine but of the sea; she disappears for the final three poems in which the poet succumbs to his own bleak musings and dreams. In *Seraphine* XV his pursuit of fulfilment in Eros turns into a self-destructive wish for consummation in Thanatos to take place in the sea, which he greets like an old lover:

Ihr Brüder, wenn ich sterbe,  
 Versenkt mich in das Meer.  
  
 Hab' immer das Meer so lieb gehabt,  
 [...] (DHA 2, 37)

We are reminded of the final poem of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* in which the lyric subject imagined his poems being placed in a coffin and sunk deep into the sea (DHA 1/1, 201 f.), except that here, as in the love encounter itself, the poet's whole person is involved. With this literary allusion to his own previous poetic work, Heine enhances the impression that ultimately the programme of sensualist emancipation leads nowhere new. By placing *Seraphine* at the head of *Verschiedene*, Heine plays up the element of continuity between this cycle, *Neuer Frühling* and by extension the *Buch der Lieder*. Its narrative of rise and decline may be new, built as it is around a moment of erotic fulfilment. However, since it rehearses this process within an all-too-familiar idiom, *Seraphine* lends itself as a self-conscious prototype for the sequence of abortive attempts at self-renewal which the rest of *Verschiedene* narrates.

Small but significant changes to *Angelique* turn the positive statement of its opening poem, which made this an ideal prologue to Heine's bold new enterprise in *Der Freimüthige*, into a commentary on the failure of his programme outlined in the preface to *Salon I*. With the addition of *Angelique V* in which the girl punctuates her kisses, so the poet suggests, with a plague of questions about his native country which force a poetic reminiscence ('Die Eichen sind grün, und blau sind die Augen | Der deutschen Frauen'; DHA 2, 39), Heine prefigures the regressive end to his cycle with its return to an archetypal German love lyric. How can the emancipatory political project with its strong French revolutionary association possibly prevail when even *Angelique*, the epitome of a Parisian distraction, draws attention to his German

heritage? Another new addition to the sequence, *Angelique IX*, turns the poet's casual recognition of a 'Liebe durchgeliebt' in its original concluding poem (*Angelique VIII*) into an irrefutable statement of love's failure:

Dieser Liebe toller Fasching,  
Dieser Taumel unsrer Herzen,  
Geht zu Ende, und ernüchtert  
Gähnen wir einander an! (DHA 2, 41)

Whereas *Angelique VIII* ended with a note of gentle disappointment in a passionless friendship, here the prevailing sentiment is boredom. Invoking the metaphor of carnival, the poet systematically closes down every aspect of love's *Mardi Gras*—the Bacchic cup is emptied (stanza two), the music silenced (stanza three), the lights extinguished (stanza four)—in preparation for the rites of Ash Wednesday, which he himself administers. He marks Angelique's forehead with the ashen cross as a reminder of her mortality, and she crumbles to dust as the poems that bear her name close with his parting admonition, a version of the *memento mori* associated with the imposition of ashes in the church: 'Weib, bedenke, daß du Staub bist'.<sup>12</sup> Thus Heine reinstates the mouldy (specifically, Catholic) 'Aschermittwochs-idee' he had opposed with his own 'Frühlings-idee' in the preface to *Salon I*, to end this second sub-cycle on consciously cynical note.

Diana's 'schönen Gliedermassen | Kolossaler Weiblichkeit' (DHA 2, 42) represent the apex of the libertine poet's scandalous pursuit of sensual pleasure, which Heine conveys in playful, literal fashion: 'Welcher Busen, Hals und

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<sup>12</sup> The Latin phrase used in the Catholic rite is 'Memento homo, quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris', literally: 'remember *man* that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return'.

Kehle! | (Höher seh' ich nicht genau)' (ibid.). As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that *Diana* is the one section to appear unchanged in all three major publications. That being said, whereas her extreme physicality served to revive the spirit of a project that had momentarily faltered with *Angelique VIII's* ending in friendship in *Der Freimüthige* and *Salon I*, in *Verschiedene* the stark contrast with the new preceding poem's spiritual reflections on mortality tend to expose this as not only crude, but hollow. A similar effect applies in the case of *Hortense I*. No-longer isolated in the role of a summative epilogue or affirmative midway commentary, this once triumphant statement of the poet's experiential creed is undercut by a sequence of poems which narrates his betrayal by the insidious Hortense. Her treachery is alluded to in the first stanza of the final poem, with which previous versions of this sub-cycle also ended:

Nicht lange täuschte mich das Glück,  
 Das du mir zugelogen,  
 Dein Bild ist wie ein falscher Traum  
 Mir durch das Herz gelogen.                    (*Hortense VI*; DHA 2, 46)

It is mentioned here almost in passing, by a poet determined to highlight the brevity of the affair ('Geendigt hatten wir schon längst | Eh wir noch kaum begonnen'; ll. 7-8) and indicate the sunny dawn of a new beginning ('Der Morgen kam, die Sonne schien'; l. 5), by implication his own rapid recovery – in the arms of Clarisse. In *Verschiedene* the addition of *Hortense IV* and *V* reinforces the element of betrayal with a biblical metaphor which only highlights this Don Juanesque recovery for the literary sham it is – a means to bring the curtain down on an all-too familiar drama of disappointment. With Hortense presented

less as an individual girl than as an archetypal Eve, the poet writes her betrayal into the affair before it has barely begun. *Hortense V* offers a commentary on this very literary strategy:

Neue Melodien spiel' ich,  
 Auf der neugestimmten Zitter.  
 Alt ist der Text! Es sind die Worte  
 Salomos: das Weib ist bitter. (DHA 2, 45)

The poet's exuberant celebration of a new-found creativity in song-writing is rapidly undercut by his own admission that the libretto of his musical drama is not only old, but also borrowed – as, of course, is his metaphor for Hortense's anticipated betrayal. By extension, readers are encouraged to question the entire premise on which the *Verschiedene* poems appear to be built in their repeated pursuit of novelty.

In a collection constructed with a view to enhancing the basic retrospective tendency of its lyric situation, each new sub-cycle appears to judge its own worth against all that has gone before. As the tally of women grows, so *Verschiedene* becomes increasingly aware of its own repetitiousness. Another new addition to the collection, *Emma* draws attention to the inevitability of these narratives with their monotonous endings in its final poem, which recapitulates the yawning motif from *Angeliqne IX*: 'Unsre Seelen sie ermatten, | Gähnend schauen wir uns an' (DHA 2, 52). Moreover, through banal metaphors which liken this affair to a withered spring nearing the onset of winter (stanza two), *Emma VI* harks back further still to the failure of another spring: poetry's spring, in *Neuer Frühling*. It is worth noting that *Emma* stands out in *Verschiedene*

as the only instance of unrequited love, in which respect it might sit more easily in the *Buch der Lieder*. Situated among the erotic poems, however, this familiar scenario appears to produce boredom rather than the tears which once proved so productive for poetic creativity. The Salon poems promised a new aesthetic destined to revive the love lyric founded on a principle of variety to counter *Neuer Frühling's* 'Pseudototalität' (Hermann, 'Erotik im *Juste-Milieu*', p. 97). Here, this is confirmed to lead to nothing save fruitless repetitions of generic experiences in Eros and poetry alike.

The section entitled *Schöpfungslieder*, which extended *Der Schöpfer* of the Salon collection by two additional poems, provides an interesting commentary on the kind of changes I have been discussing and on Heine's sense of his own identity as poet in relation to the *Verschiedene* project. Though subtle, the change in title indicates a shift in focus from the divine creator as metaphor for the poet—as I have suggested, this was exploited for self-affirmative purposes in the context of the Salon poems—to an account of the creation itself. This is reflected in the now six-song cycle which sets itself up as a conscious parody of the six days God took to create the world in Genesis.<sup>13</sup> In *Schöpfungslied VI* the poet draws an unequivocal link between Creation and his own creativity:

Der Stoff, das Material des Gedichts,  
 Das saugt sich nicht aus dem Finger;  
 Kein Gott erschafft die Welt aus Nichts,  
 So wenig wie irdische Singer.           (DHA 2, 63)

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<sup>13</sup> Heine added a seventh song to the third edition of the *Neue Gedichte* of 1851, thereby reinforcing the parallel (cf. Genesis 2. 2). On his equivalent of the day of rest, the poet gives a retrospective account of 'Warum ich eigentlich erschuf | Die Welt' (DHA 2, 63).

Having made the comparison, Heine proceeds to turn the biblical order upside down to prove a point about his own artistic venture. While the lyric subject of stanza two is clearly equatable to God—he creates woman from man’s ribs—the ‘ich’ of stanza three creates Heaven from the earth and makes angels out of women; so he is able to claim ‘Der Stoff gewinnt erst seinen Werth | Durch künstlerische Gestaltung’ (ibid.). The relationship between this metaphor and the subject matter of *Verschiedene* is clear. When Heine defended the Salon poems against Gutzkow’s attack, he had emphasised the power of style to transform superficially base material into something of artistic value: ‘die künstlerische Behandlung eines frevelhaften oder allzu natürlichen Stoffes [gewährt] ein geistreiches Vergnügen’ (HSA 21, 292). However, the satirical tone of *Schöpfungslied* VI cuts both ways. The notion of repetitive imitation, a kind of self-plagiarism (‘Ich der Herr kopir mich selber’; DHA 2, 61) explored in the first three poems and justified in the fourth on the grounds of an artistic concept, acquires new, self-reflexive irony with respect to Heine’s own achievement in *Verschiedene* – as I have shown, the collection repeatedly draws attention to its own futile, repetitive nature. In this context, the defiant claim in the final two lines of the sixth song, in itself an echo of the defensive statement in *Schöpfungslied* IV (‘Plan’ and ‘Ueberlegung’ has become ‘Werth’ and ‘Gestaltung’), rings rather hollow. There is a sense that this poet protests too much.

It has been remarked upon that there is little to distinguish the women of *Verschiedene* as individuals, 'daß die Damen bis auf Diana physiognomisch oder individuell gar nicht in Erscheinung treten und deshalb letztlich gar nicht so "verschieden" sind' (Höhn, *Handbuch*, p. 98 f.). As Höhn outlines, each one is effectively a literary stylization of a different kind of love, from which the emotional experience of the male poet-protagonist emerges as the only authentic point of reference. Accordingly, Peters has called Heine's treatment of the female object a 'terrible act of effacement and limitation' ('A Walk on the Wild Side', p. 71), a mockery of the kind of political and sexual emancipation his poems seem to preach; the 'wir' of *Seraphine* VII nominally involved the girl in an equal partnership.<sup>14</sup> This is as it may be, but such critical outrage obscures the fact that it seems to be done consciously, and ironically, as part of a literary experiment.<sup>15</sup> The poems addressed to a mother *and* daughter, 'Yolante und Marie', epitomise *Verschiedene's* travesty of female autonomy and emancipation; both are objectified as 'Futter' in his eyes, yet in his bid to choose between two tasty morsels he ends up likening himself to a horse (see *Y/M* II; *DHA* 2, 49). Meanwhile, the *Schöpfungslieder* draw attention to the artifice at the heart of

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<sup>14</sup> As Sternberger notes, in Heine's poem 'die Frau spricht nicht, la femme n'a pas parlé, kann also nicht so sonderlich emanzipiert und "affranchie" sein' (p. 106). He highlights the similarly hypocritical nature of Saint-Simonianism, which defended a doctrine of sexual emancipation based on the 'Affranchissement de la Femme' with an apologia for Don Juan (see p. 100 f.).

<sup>15</sup> This kind of artistic exploitation of the female subject was by no means unusual for the period. Sharon Marcus notes how contributors to the French sketch compendia (*tableaux*) 'developed a sexualised topography that classified Parisian neighbourhoods according to the types of women found in them and defined female types in terms of their urban locations and their relative sexual availability to men'. See *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 39 f.

Heine's literary creation, which is only superficially authentic. It is with mock admiration and surprise that the Creator/creator exclaims of his handiwork in the fifth song: 'Ist nicht Alles wie gemalt?' (DHA 2, 62).

In the same way that Heine presented himself as a distracted spectator and reviewer of the 1831 Salon in *Französische Maler*, the sundry women are merely accessory to the poet's own literary agenda. This is humorously portrayed in *Angelique* VII, which begins:

Ja freylich du bist mein Ideal,  
 Hab's dir ja oft bekräftigt  
 Mit Küssen und Eiden sonder Zahl;  
 Doch heute bin ich beschäftigt. (DHA 2, 40)

A paragon of insincerity, the poet's clichéd opening eulogy to Angelique is intended only to placate her before he tidies her unceremoniously out of his busy schedule. She is just another item on his agenda, and on this occasion other items have priority. The nature of these becomes apparent in the last two stanzas:

Wenn ich Billete bekommen kann,  
 Bin ich sogar kapabel  
 Dich in die Oper zu führen alsdann;  
 Man gibt Robert-le-Diable.

Es ist ein großes Zauberstück  
 Voll Teufelslust und Liebe;  
 Von Meyerbeer ist die Musik,  
 Der schlechte Text von Scribe. (Ibid.)

Though couched as an invitation to his lover to the opera, the poet soon forgets that she is his reason to go and becomes thoroughly absorbed in his own cultural reference. For the first time in *Verschiedene*, a Parisian context is evoked and brought into sharp focus by the startlingly specific reference to the topical

opera *Robert-le-Diable*, which was all the rage in 1831. By name-dropping Meyerbeer and Scribe in the final stanza, incongruous details in a love lyric, Heine tacitly refers the reader to an *idée fixe* of his journalism: their opera is one of a number of contemporary cultural references he employs as a metaphor for Parisian modernity, especially the politics of the *Juste Milieu* (cf. *Französische Zustände*; DHA 12/1, 117). Here, the allusion serves to blur the distinction between journalism and poetry. The final stanza even reads like a versified review, with the unorthodox 'Liebe / Scribe' rhyme parodying the style one imagines he criticises in the libretto. Although short-lived, this curious digression from the narrative of the affair introduces a new element into the love lyric which begins to change its focus, namely an awareness of its own contemporary setting, here specifically quotidian Paris.<sup>16</sup>

In the Salon poems, the function of Heine's stylized Parisian beauties seems to have been primarily to shock his readership. One substantial new addition to *Verschiedene* brought into focus a latent literary agenda of a different kind, which opened up a new avenue for poetic exploration beyond the narrow framework of the love lyric. *Der Tannhäuser* is digressional in its very conception. A ballad of 228 lines divided into three numbered sub-sections, it is structurally disproportionate within *Verschiedene*. Meanwhile its subject matter, advertised by the dedication to a legendary male protagonist, makes it stand out in the context of poems based at least outwardly on real, contemporary

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<sup>16</sup> Phelan has traced how, beginning with *Verschiedene*, 'Heine's lyrics of Parisian life accede to the dominance of the everyday', in *Reading Heinrich Heine*, p. 230.

experiences.<sup>17</sup> It retells the legend of how the poet Tannhäuser manages to escape from the treacherous embrace of Venus and travel to Rome, only to return to her mountain after having failed to obtain absolution for his carnal sins from Pope Urban – an abortive journey that is a kind of narrative of digression in its own right. In his version, Heine takes this a stage further. Though he has Tannhäuser return to his hellish paradise, the poem does not end with a picture of the traveller's despairing resignation and a triumphant seductress as a reader familiar with the myth might expect, nor are we granted the closure of a moralising résumé by the story-teller addressed to the good Christian audience he invoked in stanza one (DHA 2, 53). The poem remains provocatively open-ended. At Venus's request Heine's Tannhäuser embarks on an account of his travels, and the last fifteen stanzas of the poem are dedicated to short sketches of the places he has passed through. The final eleven of these present a satirical portrait of his journey through a symbolically sleepy German polity, which lies 'in sanfter Huth | Von sechs und dreyzig Monarchen' (59, ll. 187-8). Alongside thinly veiled political criticism (of Restoration Germany, ll. 185-8; of repressive government measures against a liberal uprising in Celle, ll. 213-16; of the stock-exchange in Hamburg, ll. 221-4), this also incorporates polemical satire directed at various literary institutions and representatives (the Swabian school of poets, ll. 189-192; Ludwig Tieck, ll. 197-200; Weimar, ll. 201-4; Göttingen University, ll. 209-12). The poem ends with Tannhäuser's promise to

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<sup>17</sup> Its singularity was further enhanced by typographical effects. Briegleb notes: '*Der Tannhäuser* [ist] durch die Stärke der Titelbuchstaben und Absetzung nach freier Seite aus dem Zusammenhang hervorgehoben (wie die Haupttitel "Neuer Frühling", "Verschiedene", "Romanzen" usw.).' See B 4, 933.

continue his account in the future: 'Ein andermal erzähl' ich dir | Was mir all dort begegnet' (ll. 227-8). Such defiance of normal narrative closure has important implications for our reading in the context of *Verschiedene* and the *Neue Gedichte*. Led away from the erotic narrative of the Tannhäuser legend, we are left suspended without explanation in an entirely different kind of poem from the one we began reading; one which has taken up the subject matter of the love lyric and breached its boundaries to explore new poetic territory, in a narrative about Love and its dangers, with a political imperative scarcely hinted at elsewhere in *Verschiedene*.

*Der Tannhäuser* has quite rightly been acknowledged as a precursor to *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen*, which it predates by eight years. With its sequence of satirical episodes, traveller's tales placed in the mouth of a fictional character, it represents Heine's first experiment in harnessing his own popular verse form to serve a polemical aesthetic and political, especially nationalist, agenda. Its placement within the *Neue Gedichte* has even been queried as a result:

Der Zusammenhang mit seinen zentralen erotischen Erfahrungen erklärt auch, warum der Autor den Text in den Zyklus der *Verschiedenen* aufgenommen und nicht etwa den *Zeitgedichten* zugeordnet hat, was angesichts des dritten Teils mit der Reihe halbbiographisch-politischer Anspielungen auch möglich gewesen wäre. (DHA 2, 504)

The *DHA* editors are insightful inasmuch as they recognise the dual focus of this poem, which situates it on the threshold between *Verschiedene* and the *Zeitgedichte* as it moves away from the love lyric towards a new, as yet undefined, poetry of critical engagement with contemporary political and

cultural issues. However, to suggest that Heine might just as well have included it in the later cycle is to ignore the purpose of its account of this progression as part of *Verschiedene*. Heine deliberately endows *Der Tannhäuser* with a proleptic function; in the context of the *Neue Gedichte* its final lines are a tacit advertisement for *Deutschland*.<sup>18</sup>

Unlike the 1844 epic, the travels recounted at the end of *Der Tannhäuser* are not linked to a real journey through Germany; Heine did not undertake his famous return voyage until the winter of 1843. Rather they are symbolic of a journey he makes, or at least anticipates making, as a poet – an assessment of his aesthetic development in light of what he has already written, namely *Verschiedene*, and in view of new directions sought. As a self-conscious bridge poem, *Der Tannhäuser* rehearses the *Neue Gedichte*'s own trajectory from *Verschiedene* towards the *Zeitgedichte*, and indeed *Deutschland*. In other words, it has a programmatic function within *Verschiedene*. As was the case with the knight framed in the prologue to *Neuer Frühling*, it is precisely when the autobiographical Heine appears to withdraw behind a fictional mask that he is most in evidence as a self-fashioning poet. The opening poem of the *Neue Gedichte* had suggested the production of poetry might be linked to a dialectical tension between activity and stasis, which was expressed in terms of a dilemma between 'Kampf' and 'holden Hindernissen'; Heine adapts the *Tannhäuser*

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<sup>18</sup> Heine added the final stanza for the *Neue Gedichte* version of *Der Tannhäuser*, which had previously been published in *Salon* III (1837).

legend to dramatize this same dialectic and reflect his own developmental trajectory.<sup>19</sup>

The eponymous hero's plight epitomizes that of the *Verschiedene* poet, satiated to excess by mindless sensuality and trapped in the Venus Mountain. Unlike the knight in *Neuer Frühling*, taken over apparently against his will by Amoretti, this has been a fate of his own making; as he reflects in a subsequent poem, *Katharina III*, he is the agent of his own bewitchment, like Merlin an 'armer Nekromant | Nun am Ende festgebannt / In die eignen Zauberkreise' (DHA 2, 66). As with each new sub-cycle of *Verschiedene*, Tannhäuser's quest leads nowhere new; he merely finds himself back where he began. The Venus Mountain, a mythical location already loaded with metaphorical and metonymic significance, becomes symbolic also of the kind of stasis reached by *Verschiedene* as a collection, trapped in the circularity of its own exhaustive idiom:

'Frau Venus, meine schöne Frau,  
Von süßem Wein und Küssen  
Ist meine Seele worden krank;  
Ich schmachte nach Bitternissen.

Wir haben zu viel gescherzt und gelacht,  
Ich sehne mich nach Thränen,  
Und statt mit Rosen möcht' ich mein Haupt  
Mit spitzigen Dornen krönen.' (DHA 2, 53 f., ll. 21-8)

Taken out of its narrative context, Tannhäuser's self-diagnosis reads like a self-critical appraisal of the erotic poetry by Heine. Wearying of this lyric mode, he

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<sup>19</sup> Briegleb remarks: 'die Tannhäuser-Symbolik beschäftigt Heine naturgemäß, denn seine Grundmotive, seine strukturellen Redemotive, sein sozialpolitisches Literaturkonzept finden in der Tannhäuser-Geschichte eine plastische – und tragische Konstellation der *Ruhe-Kampf-Dialektik*' (B 4, 932).

seeks to reassert himself in a quest for new laurels, or rather thorns, for erotic gratification is to be replaced by a new desire: self-martyrdom. In terms of Heine's poetic enterprise, this anticipates future battles to be fought in a political context; in Canto XIII of *Deutschland* the poet invokes an image of the crucified Christ, a symbol of political martyrdom, as a means to reflect on the nature of his own political engagement and relationship with the censor (see DHA 4, 118 f.). Of course one might also detect in this an ironic reflection on the suffering he brought upon himself by his provocative stance in the Salon poems. Again, *Der Tannhäuser* asserts itself as a bridge poem which relies on its placement in *Verschiedene* to have full impact as a commentary on Heine's poetic progress; it longs for new poetic scenarios while recognising that these are impossible within the perimeters of the current idiom.

Besides the obvious departure represented by the politically satirical narrative of a journey through Germany, Heine makes one other major alteration to the Tannhäuser story which lends it both a new contemporary edge and a conspicuously autobiographical dimension. According to its subtitle, this poem presents a legend retold for 1836. Hence Heine's Tannhäuser does not return to the goddess, the archetypal *femme fatale* he left behind, but to a rather ordinary Venus, who has been anxiously awaiting his return. She springs out of bed at his late-night homecoming ('Wohl um die Mitternachtstunde'; l. 148) to greet him, relieved, with a nosebleed and a flood of tears before carrying out her housewifely duties, fussing over him with soup and bread and bathing his travel-worn feet. In the manner of a concerned,

fractious wife, she demands to know what has kept him so long. Full of bathos, her reprimand ('Tannhäuser, edler Ritter mein, | Bist lange ausgeblieben'; ll. 165-6) overturns the conventions of a grave epic style evoked in the first stanza and largely adhered to in the first two sections of the poem. If this is a return to the 'ewigen Höllenqualen' referred to by Pope Urban (l. 144), then Hell's torment is a bourgeois marriage, comic, endearing and very familiar. Heine was uncharacteristically candid in identifying himself with Tannhäuser. As Ludwig Bechstein recalled in a letter on 29 February 1836, 'wir [sprachen] ein wenig über das alte schöne und bekannte Lied von dem edlen Tannhäuser, mit dem Sie sich selbst verglichen' (HSA 24, 382). Given the period of composition, it is not unlikely that this poem contains autobiographical traces of Heine's new relationship with the woman he called Mathilde, who would later become his wife. The bitterly ironic portrayal of domestic bliss in this final section certainly resembles the kind of torment Heine prophesied for himself in the early years of a passion he feared would trap and stifle him, notably on account of its object being incommensurate with his sense of his own wit and worth; as he expressed in a letter to Heinrich Laube, 'ich bin verdammt nur das niedrigste und thörichtste zu lieben...begreifen Sie wie das einen Menschen quälen muß, der sehr stolz und sehr geistreich ist?' (27 September 1835; HSA 21, 121). As with all the erotic encounters alluded to in *Verschiedene*, it is tempting as readers to become sidetracked by the lure of such apparently autobiographical parallels and forget that these are purely ancillary to Heine's literary project; they are a means to authenticate a process of self-fashioning with an aesthetic, and

increasingly a political, imperative. If Heine consciously cultivated identification with Tannhäuser then this was not intended to reflect on his biographical situation, but rather on his status as poet. Heine's is the Tannhäuser condemned to stasis as a writer.

A year after their conversation, Bechstein clarified the nature of Heine's engagement with the Tannhäuser legend more fully in a published anecdote which draws attention once again to its political undercurrent:

Wir sprachen von Deutschland; ich fragte ihn, ob er nicht wieder dahin zurückkehren wolle? Er lächelte wehmüthig und antwortete: 'Schwerlich. Ich bin der Tannhäuser, der im Venusberg gefangen sitzt; die Zauberfei giebt mich nicht los'. 'Freilich', erwiederte ich: 'und der deutsche Papst wird Ihnen nie vergeben.'

(Werner I, 292)

Heine's sharp satire targeting political and cultural institutions in Germany is a dimension the original story is entirely without. If Mathilde is his 'Zauberfei', then she is such in her capacity as seductive *Parisienne*, a kind of contemporary Parisian version of *Neuer Frühling's* Amoretti; in other words, in her unacknowledged presence behind the figure of Venus, she is first and foremost representative of his relationship with Paris.<sup>20</sup> By extension, Tannhäuser's imprisonment in the Venus Mountain may be equated with his own position as a German writer in Paris, and Germany, Bechstein implies, will never forgive him his dubious new alliance. In light of the anti-Parisian stance adopted by so many contemporary reviewers as a means to lambast the author of the Salon

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<sup>20</sup> Mathilde recurs as a symbol of everyday Paris in a number of poems, most notably in 'Nachtgedanken' which concludes the *Zeitgedichte*. In its final stanza she is introduced quite blatantly as a literary device (cf. my note 15 on Sharon Marcus), a kind of *dea ex machina* to dispel the poet's 'deutsche Sorgen'—the night thoughts of the title, which evoke Heine's political anxieties with regard to the German polity—and reconnect him with a safer Parisian reality: 'Es kommt mein Weib, schön wie der Morgen, | Und lächelt fort die deutschen Sorgen' (DHA 2, 130). This poem's significance is further discussed in Chapter Five of the current study.

poems, one might even conclude that Heine uses his self-reflexive version of the Tannhäuser myth to stage an admission to his hostile readership that he was guilty as charged: he presents a parable not of the bad Christian but rather of the bad poet. Unlike the legendary Tannhäuser, Heine nevertheless seems hell-bent on remaining in his (Parisian) mountain. Far from showing contrition, he uses *Der Tannhäuser* to reassert himself as a revolutionary writer. The scandal of his modern-day dalliance with Venus propels him in the direction of freshly provocative poetic territory and primes the reader for his subsequent confrontation with the cultural and political climate of Germany in the *Vormärz*.

## CHAPTER 5

**Becoming a New Poet of the Times**

Having begun in *Neuer Frühling's* timelessness and progressed to *Verschiedene* with its references to a contemporary Parisian context, we finally arrive at a cycle of poems that is avowedly 'of the times'. The *Zeitgedichte* represent the culmination of a trend towards increasingly concrete chronological references through the *Neue Gedichte* and by extension the final leg of Heine's journey to reinvent himself as a new poet of the age; his seminal, defining work will proclaim itself 'Ein neues Lied, ein besseres Lied' (*Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen*; DHA 4, 92). In *Verschiedene*, *Der Tannhäuser* marked a transition from the individual pursuit of sexual freedom to a broader concern with political emancipation, and notably its conspicuous absence in contemporary Germany. The *Zeitgedichte* open with the programmatic poem *Doktrin*, which harks back to Heine's engagement with Saint-Simonianism's doctrine of liberation, with a call to 'küsse die Marketenderinn!' (DHA 2, 109), but shifts focus onto the political dimension: here, the lyric subject is recast in the guise of a military drummer. Thus this cycle finally confronts the poet's guilty dalliance with the Amoretti, that is with the love lyrics of *Neuer Frühling* and *Verschiedene*, and answers the implicit summons at the outset of the *Neue Gedichte* (in the prologue to *Neuer Frühling*) to engage 'in dem großen Kampf der Zeit' (DHA 2, 11; my emphasis), the social and political actuality of the day. We have already

traced battles of a literary variety through Heine's confrontation with his literary legacy (*Neuer Frühling*) and public taste (*Verschiedene*). In the *Zeitgedichte* the notion of 'Kampf' acquires both a new literal relevance, in poems that offer a satirical critique of political conditions in contemporary Germany, and an even more patently reflexive aspect. When Heine began writing these poems, he faced a particularly urgent need to defend his reputation.

In 1840 he found himself in a position of isolation both politically and on the literary market. Although reminiscent of the years following the 1835 government edict which had blacklisted his name as a member of *Junges Deutschland* and crippled the publication and distribution of his work, this time the situation was not only more acute but of his own making. As Campe predicted, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* (1840) had proved to be the most untimely and misjudged publication of Heine's career with serious consequences for his reputation: 'den Wunden Fleck haben Sie am deutschen Charakter mit Pfeffer und Salz bestrichen; das brennt und schreit! und wird eine fatale Nachwirkung haben, für Sie und Ihre Zukunft als *deutscher Schriftsteller*' (14 August 1840; HSA 25, 275 f.). Notwithstanding an uncomfortable element of *schadenfreude*, Campe's campaign over the next three years to open his author's eyes to a desperate situation and impart advice based on his own superior knowledge of the contemporary German political and literary climate reveals how, after a decade in Paris, Heine was unquestionably out of touch. This time he had riled not only his usual conservative critics and literary adversaries in the republican camp immediately surrounding Börne

but, far more damagingly, had touched a raw nerve in the public mood and upset prevailing liberal sympathies. As Campe reports, the late Börne had been deified by a nation suddenly become receptive to the idea of political freedom:

Die Gesinnung der Deutschen ist der Freiheit zugewendet, diese wird von den Machthabern entschieden bekämpft; [...] Solange diese Reibungen währen, behält Börne, als der Vater des deutschen Liberalismus seine Bedeutung, bildet: *Bibel, Catechismus und Gesangbuch* dieses Glaubens! (6 March 1842; HSA 26, 23)

The year 1840 saw the accession of Friedrich Wilhelm IV to the Prussian throne and his move to tone down the reactionary policies of his father served to restore liberal hopes; he had eased press censorship and promised to enact a constitution, although the latter never materialised. Apropos of Heine's standing in the eyes of the German public, the aggressive foreign policy of Adolphe Thiers' government, which sought to claim the left bank of the Rhine, had also sparked fears of a French invasion leading to the so-called 'Rheinkrise' of the same year and an upsurge in xenophobic nationalist sentiment. Against this political backdrop, and not long after the scandal of *Verschiedene* which Gutzkow had branded odes to 'Pariser Boulevardsschönheiten' (see HSA 25, 158), Heine's defamation of Börne, who had become the touchstone of German national liberalism, must have appeared doubly seditious; 'und *diesen* Heiligen wollten Sie stürzen?', Campe exclaimed in disbelief (HSA 26, 23).

Besides such self-inflicted damage, Heine also faced a challenge at this time from a new generation of German liberal writers: writers who had found their medium in a political poetry which captured the mood of the nation in the *Vormärz* period (especially during the years between the Rhine Crisis and the

revolutions of 1848) and enjoyed runaway commercial successes. Nikolaus Becker's *Rheinlied* (1840) set the trend for so-called *Tendenzdichtung* (poetry linked to a political cause) in the way it responded to and promoted a collective, public spirit in the wake of the diplomatic crisis. As Robert Prutz noted in his critique of contemporary German political poetry in 1845, 'das loyale Becker'sche Rheinlied [gab] das Signal zu einer politisch-poetischen Literatur, die nicht mehr, wie bisher, in einzelnen verlorenen Vorposten, sondern in geschlossener Reihe, mit dem Bewußtsein und dem Anspruch einer selbständigen Literatur, auftritt'.<sup>1</sup> Other salient publications of the early *Vormärz* were Franz Dingelstedt's *Lieder eines kosmopolitischen Nachtwächters* (1840), Georg Herwegh's *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* (1841) and Hoffmann von Fallersleben's *Unpolitische Lieder* (1841-1842), the latter including 'Das Lied der Deutschen' which quickly assumed the status of a national anthem. All were published by Campe who monopolised the market for political poetry and accordingly felt well-placed to advise the stricken Heine. From a first name-dropping of Hoffmann on 3 April 1840 (HSA 25, 250), his letters read like a registry of his business with the *Vormärz* poets and are increasingly interspersed with commentary intended to goad Heine into emulating their successes as a means to offset the damage done to his reputation (and sales) – 'dadurch werden Sie [...] was uneben ist, *ausgleichen*' (18 October 1841; HSA 25, 346; NB emphasis is Campe's own). Although Campe freely admitted the publishing

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<sup>1</sup> 'Die politische Poesie der Deutschen', in *Zu Theorie und Geschichte der Literatur*, ed. by Ingrid Pepperle (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981), p. 68 f.

phenomenon bore little relation to literary value, he responded to Heine's damning appraisal of, say, Hoffmann's poetry ('schlechte Späßchen um Philister zu amüsiren bey Bier und Taback'; HSA 22, 19) with the cynical logic of a businessman:

Was Sie über Hoffmanns Lieder sagen ist ganz meine Ansicht; ich kann es nicht über mich gewinnen, sie consequent zu lesen, ich kann es nicht aushalten. Aber sie gehen. [...] Was ist der Schluß? – Die höchste Poesie muß sich durchschleppen und abquälen, erkannt zu werden, *diese* Dinge stürmen mit vollen Segeln dahin, wo sie wollen. (6 March 1842; HSA 26, 24)

Heine, meanwhile, is implicitly cast in the role of an advocate of high poesy who is hopelessly out of touch. For all Campe's wily tactics, he was not forthcoming in producing a competitive work and it was with mounting exasperation that his publisher declared him an anachronism in his own time:

Sie wissen, jedes Ding hat seine Zeit; auch die Literatur. Ich habe Sie zeitig gewarnt: Sie hörten nicht; Sie wollten nicht hören, kann ich dafür? Daß Sie zurück gedrängt sind, der Geschichte mehr anheim gefallen, als dem Leben; kann ich das ändern! (2 May 1843; HSA 26, 67)

The insistence on time, timing and timeliness and Heine's apparent disregard for this crucial element of the modern literary climate typifies contemporary responses to his silence after 1840. Alexander Jung spelled out the consequences for a poet who had apparently missed his way and been superseded: 'Heine hat seine Zeit verpaßt, sein Zeitalter getäuscht, [...] und Andere sind eben im Begriffe, das in's Werk zu richten, zu dem er berufen, und in seltenem Grade befähigt war.'<sup>2</sup>

Heine's strange recalcitrance in the matter of his beleaguered standing on the literary market—especially his dithering procrastination from a creative

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<sup>2</sup> *Vorlesungen über die moderne Literatur der Deutschen* (1842). See DHA 2, 652.

retort—appears less so once we recognise how in the *Zeitgedichte* he deploys publicistic strategies of an altogether subtler, if less immediately effective nature. As Campe had made painfully clear, his recovery hinged upon a direct response to his rivals which would in turn determine his identity as a poet of the times. He faced a fundamental dilemma in light of their extraordinary success, for while his own aesthetic biases led him to balk at the prospect of jumping on the bandwagon of *Tendenzdichtung*, he feared in equal measure being left behind by the new fashion. His solution was to neither eschew nor wholly emulate the poetry of his rivals, but instead to tread a delicate line between the two responses. The *Zeitgedichte* are Heine's reflexive commentary on the contemporary debate concerning the nature and purpose of political poetry, and since he was driven by the need to rehabilitate his reputation this commentary is competitive as well as critical. As such we may regard his delayed entry into the fray as essentially strategic, for he could not respond without his competitors having first made their claims. Moreover, the air of aloof detachment this cultivated was commensurate with his stance in the aesthetic debate in question and with his sense of self as poet. This chapter considers how Heine constructs a cycle of *Zeitgedichte* to prelude his reincarnation as the author of a great German political epic. In the context of the *Neue Gedichte* these poems enact a kind of publicity campaign designed to introduce *Deutschland* as the work to clinch the poetological argument and restore him to pre-eminence in the eyes of the German public. Of course their effectiveness in this capacity is reliant on the strategies Heine deploys locally, in

individual poems, to establish his identity as a political poet. It is therefore useful to begin by examining how he develops these strategies, and accordingly his own political lyric style, through poetological critique and a game of literary one-upmanship with his *Vormärz* rivals.

#### TAKING ON THE 'TENDENZDICHTER'

Heine answered Campe's plea for him to move with the times with a satirical portrait of the poets his publisher would have him emulate. *Atta Troll: Ein Sommernachtstraum*, his humorous verse epic serialized in the *Zeitung der elegante Welt* in 1843, presents itself as a manifesto against the new poetry of political commitment:

Andre Zeiten, andre Vögel!  
 Andre Vögel, andre Lieder!  
 Wie sie schnattern! Jene Gänse,  
 Die gemästet mit Tendenzen!

Auf der Zinne der Parthey  
 Flattern sie mit lahmen Schwingen.  
 Platte Füße, heis're Kehlen,  
 Viel Geschrey und wenig Wolle.<sup>3</sup> (DHA 4, 213)

This comic portrayal of modern-day songbirds as flat-footed, gaggling geese with lame wings encapsulates the essence of his critique of the *Tendenzdichter*, namely that they have surrendered the aesthetic to the political imperative with the paradoxical result of rendering themselves impotent as revolutionaries. Excessively zealous commitment to the Liberal cause, the 'party', places their

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<sup>3</sup> The lines I cite are from an earlier unpublished version of the famous poetological dedication to Varnhagen. Their extended satire, which Heine abbreviated and toned down for publication, affords a glimpse of the workings of a strategy he deploys throughout his engagement with *Vormärz* poetry.

poetic enterprise in double jeopardy: their works can have neither aesthetic appeal nor political impact. Heine also alludes more subtly, in a secondary layer of poetological engagement, to a contemporary debate among the very poets he ridicules via a direct quotation of Herwegh's *Die Partei* (1843): 'Selbst Götter stiegen vom Olymp hernieder | Und kämpften auf der Zinne der Partei!'.<sup>4</sup> Herwegh's poem was in itself a targeted response to Freiligrath's *Aus Spanien* (1841), in which the latter had proclaimed 'Der Dichter steht auf einer höhern Warte, | Als auf den Zinnen der Partei' (see Herwegh, *Werke* 1, 119). Freiligrath was a late convert to the kind of politically engaged poetry advocated by Herwegh. Until his sudden dramatic conversion to radical oppositional politics in 1844, with the provocatively named collection *Ein Glaubensbekenntnis* which precipitated his exile to Belgium then Switzerland, his position was rather conservative and he insisted above all on the autonomy of the poet's imagination. Given the position Heine adopts in *Atta Troll*, a self-proclaimed apologia for the self-sufficiency of poetry and poet—'Ach, es ist vielleicht das letzte | Freye Waldlied der Romantik!' (DHA 4, 86)—intended to counter his contemporaries' instrumentalization of poetry, one would expect him to side with Freiligrath in this particular debate. It is striking therefore that his most sustained attack on *Tendenzdichtung*, which he conducts primarily through the comic figure of the politically engaged but aesthetically challenged Atta Troll, 'Tendenzbär', is framed by a direct parody of the one poet adamantly against

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<sup>4</sup> *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* II, in *Georg Herwegh: Werke und Briefe*, ed. by Ingrid Pepperle and others, 6 vols (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2005 ff.), I, 119.

yoking his verse to a political cause at this time; *Der Mohrenfürst*, which Heine highlights in the 1846 foreword—notably after Freiligrath’s conversion—and cites as motto, belongs to the poet’s pre-radical phase. In poking fun at its failed metaphors—especially the image of the Moor emerging from his white tent like a lunar eclipse—he effectively allies himself with the likes of Herwegh for whom Freiligrath’s exoticism was proof of a dubious remoteness from new poetic imperatives; yet by this strange, one might argue perverse, twist he makes Freiligrath the straw man for his polemic against precisely such *Tendenzdichter* as Herwegh.<sup>5</sup>

*Atta Troll* was never incorporated into the *Neue Gedichte*, yet I refer to it here as a clear illustration of how Heine set about constructing his own poetry during the *Vormärz*: via strategic manipulation of the many shifting aesthetic positions of the period.<sup>6</sup> He was not, as is sometimes implied, unique in this approach; ‘in den vierziger Jahren war es durchaus üblich, politisch-literarische Stellungnahmen über andere Dichter in Gedichtform abzugeben’, Richard Hooton observes, and the 1842 ‘Parteienstreit’ is an obvious case in point.<sup>7</sup> Certainly the question of political poetry, its form, role and very legitimacy as an aesthetic category, was up for general debate in Germany at this time.<sup>8</sup> That being said, Heine uses polemic so systematically that it becomes the defining

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Herwegh’s ‘XXX Freiligrath’, Sonette aus einer größern Sammlung ‘Dissonanzen’, in *Werke* 1, 73.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Phelan has remarked that *Atta Troll* is ‘peculiarly representative of the tensions at work’ in the *Neue Gedichte* and a comprehensive overview of the collection’s elements (*Reading Heine*, p. 129). This makes it a useful aid to assessing Heine’s poetic strategies but not the culmination of his search for a new poetic identity in this period; that position, I argue, is occupied by the second verse epic.

<sup>7</sup> *Heinrich Heine und der Vormärz* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1978), p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> See Prutz, ‘Die politische Poesie der deutschen’, p. 60: ‘es ist eine bekannte Thatsache, daß bei uns Deutschen Poesie und Politik als entschiedene und durchaus unversöhnbare Gegensätze betrachtet werden, und daß demgemäß politische Poesie bei uns meist für ein Ding gilt, welches entweder, als unmöglich, nicht existirt, oder, als unberechtigt, doch nicht existieren sollte.’

characteristic of his poetic enterprise after 1840. His motive for doing so becomes clear in light of our reading of the *Neue Gedichte* project as a prime example of his self-fashioning tendency, for these poems are the product and record of a ruthlessly efficient campaign to construct his new identity as a political poet on the backs of his rivals. He undermines their credibility while working in the same medium, entering into the same debates, even borrowing their language; and from here he strives for a higher, more potent form of political engagement.

Scholarship has struggled to determine what defines the 'Zeitgedicht', a term which seems to claim the programmatic status of a genre category (see Praver, *The Tragic Satirist*, p. 92). Höhn remarks that '[Heine] selber hat keine nähere Bestimmung dessen gegeben, was er unter "Zeitgedicht" versteht', and complains 'weiter läßt die thematische Vielfalt des Zyklus von 1844 ebensowenig eine einheitliche Struktur erkennen wie die unterschiedliche Sprechhaltung einen einheitlichen Ton' (*Handbuch*, p. 105 f.). Perhaps this is rather missing the point, however, for Heine's designation is as consciously enigmatic as it is suggestive and the poems seem to be defined first and foremost by what they are not. Hence *Die Tendenz*, which occupies the central position in the cycle of twenty-four *Zeitgedichte* as the linchpin of his polemical project, presents a paradoxical programmatic statement – in the form of an anti-programmatic critique. The essence of its complaint is contained in a final ironic direction given to the would-be poet of 'Deutsche Freyheit', the unspecified 'Deutscher Sänger' to whom a similarly undisclosed lyric subject speaks:

Blase, schmettre, donn're täglich,  
 Bis der letzte Dränger flieht –  
 Singe nur in dieser Richtung,  
 Aber halte deine Dichtung,  
 Nur so allgemein als möglich. (DHA 2, 120; ll. 16-20)

Heine achieves his criticism of *Tendenzdichtung*—in the preface to *Atta Troll* he brands it 'jener vage, unfruchtbare Pathos, jener nutzlose Enthusiasmusdunst, der sich mit Todesverachtung in einen Ocean von Allgemeinheiten stürzte' (DHA 4, 5)—via a brilliant parody of its directionless, empty rhetoric. On the verge of goading the German singer to precipitate real political action through verse—'daß dein Lied | [...] zu Thaten uns begeistre' (DHA 2, 119)—the implied lyric subject breaks off and draws back from the precipice of his own suggestion. The poem's urgency, accumulated through its crescendo of rousing imperatives towards revolutionary subversion, is undone by his instruction to 'singe nur'. Thereafter, linguistic concretion gives way to a wandering syntax. Repetition of the modal particle 'nur' and questionable use of the conjunction 'aber' confuse the sense, and hollow abstraction rings through the dull clang of the rhyming pair ('Richtung / Dichtung') bringing the poem to rest on an impure rhyme that is thoroughly unsatisfactory to the ear. By undermining its own imperative style and rousing rhetoric in this way, *Die Tendenz* reveals its status as a self-conscious parody of the kind of poetic diction which characterizes Herwegh's *An die deutschen Dichter* and many other poems from the first collection of *Gedichte eines Lebendigen*, as well as that of other *Vormärz* poets. Formulae which foreshorten the distance between poetic utterance and revolutionary agency ('Rede Dolche, rede Schwerter!'; l. 10) present a comic

exaggeration of the instrumentalization of poetic language, and are intensified by such humorously improbable contrivances as ‘Marseillerhymnenweise’ and the ‘Werther / Schwerter’ rhyme – manifestations of self-conscious aestheticism from the pen of a poet who is at once sceptical of political poetry as a category and keen to exhibit his own superior artistry in the same medium.

Sammons has remarked upon a widespread fallacy in Heine scholarship which has tended to overstate his distinctiveness and pre-eminence within a corpus of poetry to which quantitatively he only made a small contribution.<sup>9</sup> That such assumptions persist to this day is testimony to his performance in self-promotion in the *Zeitgedichte*. Heine’s harsh judgment of the political poetry of his contemporaries seems to have arisen from his own essential belief that true poetry belongs to an unimpeachable realm far above the world of political sloganeering, and that where true political freedom is sought artistic freedom is paramount.<sup>10</sup> He comes closest to expounding a theory of the distinction in an article written for the *Allgemeine Zeitung* on 20 March 1843, in which he emphasises the importance of form over substance: ‘dieses Selbstbewußtseyn der Freyheit in der Kunst offenbart sich ganz besonders durch die Behandlung, durch die Form, in keinem Falle durch den Stoff’ (DHA 14/1, 48). Furthermore he suggests that ‘die wahrhaft großen Dichter haben immer die großen Interessen ihrer Zeit anders aufgefaßt als in *gereimten Zeitungsartikeln*’ (ibid; my

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<sup>9</sup> In “‘Der prosaisch bombastischen Tendenzpoesie hoffentlich den Todesstoß geben’”: Heine and the Political Poetry of the Vormärz’, *The German Quarterly*, 51 (1978), 150-158.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Canto III of *Atta Troll*, where Heine’s poetic muse is the untamed, mythical Pegasus—‘Nur der eignen Lust gehorchend, | Galoppirend oder Fliegend’—in contrast to those poets who ride ‘Ein Schlachtpferd der Partheywuth, | Das pathetisch stampft und wiehert!’ (DHA 4, 17).

emphasis). As Sammons has observed, this apparently off-hand remark is ‘one of those barbs that sticks more firmly in the memory than its target’ (p. 151), and it has coloured critical reception from Heine’s own time to Twenty-first Century scholarship. In 1844, Adolf Stahr declared it a double advantage ‘daß er die harmlose Trommel mit größerer Virtuosität zu führen weiß, als die andern ihre Schwerter und Dolche, daß er größeren Lärmen hervorbringt und doch nicht so leicht wie sie zu Schaden kommen kann’.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile in our own century, George Peters has contrasted ‘the wooden, mostly uninspired poems of his contemporaries [...] soon forgotten’, with the lasting quality of Heine’s work which ‘quickly became, and remains today, a rallying point for radical democratic causes’.<sup>12</sup> Whether they do so consciously or not, it is striking the extent to which both responses mimic his rhetoric and so substantiate the Heinean perspective. In Stahr’s case the assimilation extends to whole-hearted adoption of motifs from the *Zeitgedichte* repertoire (cf. *Die Tendenz, Doktrin*). For Sammons, Heine’s characterization of the *Tendenzdichter* as a confusion of ‘Marketenderinnen der Freiheit’ and ‘Wäscherinnen der christlich germanischen Nationalität’ (*Atta Troll*; DHA 4, 10) epitomises his wont to foreshorten and misrepresent the spectrum and scope of political poetry in the 1840s. He points out that there is little to suggest Heine was even remotely well-versed in his rivals’ works, immediately rendering his qualitative judgments suspect: ‘the poetry in question bears [...] very little resemblance to newspaper

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<sup>11</sup> From a review of the *Neue Gedichte* in the *Sonntagsblatt zur Weser-Zeitung*, No. 37 (27 October 1844). See DHA 2, 673.

<sup>12</sup> *The Poet as Provocateur: Heinrich Heine and his critics* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), p. 54.

articles; it is homiletic and appellative, and employs all sorts of rhetorical-poetic devices [...]’ (p. 152). In fact such cavalier practices exemplify how he sets about fashioning his own poetic identity and enterprise; whether he was acquainted with the work of Herwegh, Freiligrath and others or not, his polemical attacks rely precisely on whimsical superficiality for their effect.

If substance is of secondary importance and polemic primarily a literary game, how does Heine manage to assert his difference as a political poet? And given it is difficult ‘to make gross distinctions between him and his contemporaries in terms of tone, theme, or strategy, allegiance, proletarian interest, or even the allegedly superior “concretion” often adduced’ (Sammons, p. 150), how was he nonetheless able to engage with the social and political concerns of his own time in such a way that his poems would also stand the test of time, while others in a similar mode were largely forgotten? Ironically, the answer seems to lie in the way he exploited his journalistic enterprise in a concerted effort to promote a new lyric identity. There is playful, self-reflexive irony in his barbed remark about rhymed journalism, given he made it in an article in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* – he was certainly not against integrating these two facets of his own writing in the name of self-promotion.<sup>13</sup> The *Zeitgedichte*

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<sup>13</sup> The efficacy of his strategy has been confirmed, albeit negatively, by Karl Kraus’s notorious polemic, in which Heine falls victim to the very kind of criticism he levelled at the *Tendenzdichter*. Cf. Benno von Wiese, ‘Zum Problem der politischen Dichtung Heinrich Heines’, in Wiese, *Signaturen: zu Heinrich Heine und seinem Werk* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1976), p. 146 f.: ‘Prosa und Poesie waren jetzt keine Gegensätze mehr, sondern das Prosaische, das sich vor dem Richterstuhl der Vernunft und damit auch vor der Gesellschaft zu verantworten hat, wird nunmehr zum notwendigen Bestandteil innerhalb der Poesie selbst. Das hat Heines Dichtung freilich bis heute den Vorwurf des dilettantischen Journalismus, wie ihn vor allem Karl Kraus erhoben hat, eingebracht.’

represent an important milestone in the way they consciously navigate a territory in poetry between his intellectual and aesthetic preoccupations.

At the head of the cycle, *Doktrin* heralds and effects the transition to a new poetic mode. The figure of a military drummer is presented as an incarnation of revolutionary progress whose simple art has the power to awaken the German people from apathetic slumber. Here, the whole of Hegelian philosophy is distilled in the primitive act of beating a drum—which Heine recreates by means of folksong-like repetition and syntactic simplicity—such that the poem appears to carry out the task he had set himself in his history of German ideas of 1835: to illuminate the obfuscation of great German philosophers and make their revolutionary thought fit for popular consumption (see *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*; DHA 8/1, 13). An early reviewer writing in the Paris-based exile journal *Vorwärts!*, the central organ of the radical democratic cause in 1844, seized upon the ‘Tambourmajor’ as a metaphor for Heine as political poet and celebrated his long-awaited return to poetic productivity, which was signalled by a number of contributions to the same publication, as ‘Heines nach langem Winterschlaf neu erwachter Thätigkeit’, a manifestation of ‘seiner vollen Jugendkraft’ (19 October 1844; see DHA 2, 677). ‘Die Kraft neuer Ideen hat Heine aus seinem trüben Schlummer geweckt’, he surmises, before continuing his portrait: ‘geharnischt tritt er auf den Schauplatz, hoch schwingt er die neue Fahne und ein “tüchtiger Tambour” schreitet er wirbelnd und Appell schlagend voran’ (ibid.). Not only does this reviewer invoke *Doktrin* and its summons to ‘Trommle Reveille mit Jugendkraft’, a motif

Heine highlights in the title of his French version of the poem 'Le réveil' (*Poèmes et Légendes*, 1855); he also reproduces the language of an entire tradition in Heine's works of self-projection in the dual role of ideologue and artist. We may recall in particular the early *Reisebild, Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand* (1827), in which he peeps through the persona of Napoleon's drummer, Le Grand, whose art has the power to conjure up revolutionary acts as well as to move. Heine's ability to manage his lyric identity in the political context is closely tied to the subtle ways in which he manipulates the tensions inherent in this dual role. Hence *Doktrin*, which seems at first to speak to and for a collective audience—an expectation set by the poem's title, which its subject-less imperatives do nothing to upset—turns into something slightly different on account of a sudden self-assertive proclamation by its lyric subject in the final two lines:

Das ist die Hegelsche Philosophie,  
 Das ist der Bücher tiefster Sinn!  
 Ich hab' sie begriffen, weil ich gescheidt,  
 Und weil ich ein guter Tambour bin. (DHA 2, 109)

If *Doktrin*—and by extension the cycle of *Zeitgedichte* as a whole—intends to foster a collective political consciousness, then Heine seems to suggest this can only be accessed through the authority of the individual poet; and not any poet, but one with talent in his art. It is this very insistence on his own distinction that distinguishes Heine from the bulk of *Vormärz* poetry, which was characterized in general by a strong collective spirit directly linked to these poets' nationalism and pursuit of a unified Germany; their widespread use of the first-person plural reflects their desire for integration within a revolutionary community

about which Heine remains sceptical. There may be common ideological ground, but Heine is notable for standing outside the collective in his version of a fight for freedom.

Heine's situation in Paris serves as useful shorthand for all that this intellectual attitude implies. When he reflects back on his career in the poem *Enfant Perdü* of the *Romanzero* collection (1851), he describes his standpoint in words that echo Prutz: as opposed to the 'geschlossener Reihe' of his contemporaries ('Die politische Poesie der deutschen', p. 68 f.), he has occupied 'Verlor'ner Posten in dem Freyheitskriege' (DHA 3/1, 121; NB Prutz described poets 'in einzelnen verlorenen Vorposten'). It is at least uncanny—one might surmise deliberate—that he should use the same formula as Prutz in this lyric recollection of his career as a politically engaged poet. Whether by design or not, his poetry always demands to be read as part of an ongoing struggle to assert his literary identity; here, this comes in the guise of a rally between his own and others' perception of what constitutes a political poet. Thus while Campe saw only the negatives of Heine's isolated position (in Paris) with regard to this particular phase of poetic ferment in Germany, Heine managed to turn the state of exile and its intrinsic note of bitterness to his advantage.

Such poems as *Doktrin* and *Adam der Erste* proclaim a positive individualism coupled with political agency, mediated through the triumphant assertiveness of Heine's chosen personae. However, this does not preclude there being an attendant negativity, even scepticism in the lyric voice. In his promethean bid for freedom, the First Adam, whose very title claims him as a

prototype of the political poet, quits Paradise because it cannot live up to his demand for freedom ('Ich will mein volles Freiheitsrecht!'; DHA 2, 110), yet in his spiteful diatribe against God he sounds as much like a resentful exile banished from his birthright as a new, self-made man. Similarly the confident Tambour of *Doktrin* is revealed for the sorry outcast he is in a subsequent *Zeitgedicht* where he is made the eponymous subject (*Der Tambourmajor*; DHA 2, 113 ff.) and treated specifically within his historical context. Cynicism dominates Heine's attitude to German conditions in the *Vormärz*. His lyric voice is characterized by negative irony in stark contrast to his contemporaries' stirring rhetoric in the mould of Nikolaus Becker, or even to his own in *Zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Religion* where a spirit of positive prophecy still held sway. This turned out to be a productive literary stance which brought him political as well as aesthetic advantage over his rivals. The personae he inhabits are a case in point. As I have intimated, these are carefully chosen to enable him to exploit the inherent irony of his biographical situation as a commentator on German conditions without having to surrender aesthetic freedom by limiting his poetic identity to any one form.

Even before *Deutschland* and the *Neue Gedichte* were published, one of the first commentators to evaluate his political poetry gave the following positive review which highlights a unique advantage of Heine's perspective:

Die wenigen politischen Gedichte, die bis jetzt von ihm bekannt geworden, dürften leicht unter allen der beste Ausdruck dieser Zeitstimmung sein, weil sie am prägnantesten unser Mißbehagen an den gegenwärtigen Zuständen, unsere

Sehnsucht nach einer großen Veränderung ausdrücken und zugleich unser skeptisches Mißtrauen ob eine solche Veränderung stattfinden werde.<sup>14</sup>

If Heine seemed out of touch with the popular emotional response to political conditions on which the commercial successes of the *Tendenzdichter* relied (cf. Campe's complaint), his poems sought to establish a more creative partnership with another facet of the public political consciousness: by articulating what was a growing intellectual spirit of disconsolation with the status quo in a reflexive, satirical portrait of the stagnant German collective. With varying degrees of specificity, the *Zeitgedichte* target Germany as a whole, the German people, the question of German freedom, German political poets, the Prussian state, Friedrich Wilhelm IV and his Bavarian counterpart, Ludwig I. The result is a comprehensive critique of the times within which each individual poetic sketch contributes to and elaborates upon a unifying network of recurrent themes and symbols. As we observed in the early Paris journalism, Heine is drawn to exploit the visual possibilities of language and it is his sensitivity to this quality of poetic diction that emerges as the main source of his advantage over his rivals.

It may be a perilous exercise to seek a tangible distinction in Heine's use of visual imagery and symbolism in his contributions to *Vormärz* poetry – Sammons is justified in questioning the modern critical assumption that these stand out for being more concrete.<sup>15</sup> Of course his poetological polemic is

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<sup>14</sup> Johannes Scherr, 'Poeten der Jetztzeit in Briefen an eine Frau' (1844). See DHA 2, 670.

<sup>15</sup> Sammons attributes the common claim made about Heine's superior concretion to his 'pronounced propensity for *ad hominem malediction*', but notes that 'otherwise he is not more concrete with respect to event or political purpose than his contemporaries generally' (p. 154).

designed precisely to prepare the ground for advantageous comparisons of this kind. However, one should not overlook Heine's avowed sensitivity to the issue of poetic concretion, highlighting as he does the transcendency of poetic form. As he demonstrates, *Tendenzdichtung* suffers from an overreliance on rhetoric and a kind of crowd-pleasing revolutionary pathos that lends itself to imitation and hence all too readily to parody; he implies that its political message is liable to be lost since it lacks the resilience of form to save it from appropriation. Thus his parody of its extreme instrumentalization of poetic diction in *Die Tendenz* is really a critique of poets pursuing the wrong kind of concretion, for their political purpose is ultimately undermined by a fossilizing treatment of language.<sup>16</sup> We might recall the 'Tendenzbär' Atta Troll, who cuts a comic figure precisely due to a misplaced belief in his superior talent as a dancer; for all his revolutionary pontificating, he fulfils his only practical purpose when he ends up as a luxury rug by the bed of the poet's worldly Parisienne mistress (see DHA 4, 81). The source of Heine's difference seems to lie not in the substance of the language and imagery he uses but rather in the status he gives it. Atta Troll is a case in point for we remember him not merely for his allegorical function, but as a literary character in his own right. T. J. Reed has attributed this unique memorability to the strong visual dimension of Heine's poem in which its eponymous hero is 'a cartoon series to himself, perhaps even

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<sup>16</sup> Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer remarks that Heine recognised *Tendenzdichtung*'s 'vermeintliche Direktheit und Konkretheit' as 'das Signum des Wirkungslosen', in 'Politische Ballade: Zu den "Historien" in Heines "Romanzero"', *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 46 (1972), 435-468 (p. 465).

best thought of as a cartoon film'.<sup>17</sup> The kind of political efficacy and resilience of form that Heine misses in the *Tendenzdichter* seem to converge in the medium of the visual imagination, which he himself prioritizes. It is in this sense that we are still justified in referring to his superior poetic concretion.

The *Zeitgedichte* seem to implement in poetry the technique Heine extrapolated from the history paintings of Delaroche in *Französische Maler*, which he interpreted as aesthetic encryptions of contemporary political ideologies. It is no coincidence that he later went on to produce his own gallery of poetic *Historien*, in the first cycle of *Romanzero*, which treat the same subjects of death, murder, regicide and even the same historical figures, including Charles I and Marie Antoinette. As I have suggested, the carefully constructed images which comprise Heine's developing satirical portrait of Germany in the *Zeitgedichte* bring him two distinct advantages: first, in the manner of their engagement with the reader and second, in their lasting aesthetic appeal. In *Verkehrte Welt*, Heine is able to vent his sardonic wit on a wide range of targets while dodging the censor behind a sequence of humorous anthropomorphic epithets and verbal ironies permitted by the self-proclaimed topsy-turvy of his (German) world vision; as its title hints, the central conceit of this poem is encapsulated in the antiphrasis of its final statement: 'es lebe der König!' (DHA 2, 127). *Verkehrte Welt* elicits two responses from its readers. On the one hand we are called to decode each picture and extract a latent political message, on

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<sup>17</sup> 'History in Nutshells: Heine as a Cartoonist', in *Heinrich Heine and the Occident: Multiple Identities, Multiple Reception*, ed. by Peter Uwe Hohendahl and Sander Gilman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), pp. 163-186 (p. 179).

the other simply to relish its textual surface, a virtuoso poetic performance and carnival of wit. In Höhn's words, we are required to appreciate the political dimension 'hinter dem verfremdenen Vexierspiel' (*Handbuch*, p. 109).<sup>18</sup>

*Der Wechselbalg*, Heine's allegory of the Prussian state, is the epitome of political caricature in poetic form and a self-conscious 'picture puzzle'. 'Nicht brauch' ich das Ungethüm zu nennen' (DHA 2, 122), the poet suggests to his reader in a meiotic aside expressly designed to draw our attention to the unspoken name behind the various monster epithets, as well as to his own prowess as a cartoonist. Here, direct utterance is knowingly supplanted by a kind of graphic communication, an allusive art form that is infinitely subtler and richer in implication. With its central figure of a changeling child, *Der Wechselbalg* aligns itself with a broad network of symbols in Heine's political poems which portray the backward German polity as an infant, as yet (and possibly never) to attain the political maturity of its Gallic neighbour. In *Zur Beruhigung* the Fatherland is a 'fromme Kinderstube' watched over by its thirty-six princely fathers and populated with obedient underlings; *Das Kind* tells of the birth of a would-be German sans-culotte who is thwarted in his naked revolutionary ambition, since Heine's child is literally without trousers, by an unassailable trio of German 'Witterung, | Moral und Polizei' (DHA 2, 121); in *Deutschland!*, which Heine wrote in 1840 but did not include in the *Neue Gedichte*, 'Deutschland ist noch kleines Kind', yet for all this child is fostered by

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<sup>18</sup> Wolfgang Preisendanz uses the same term. See *Heinrich Heine: Werkstrukturen und Epochenbezüge*, p. 172.

the July Revolutionary sun all revolutionary promise is undercut as, in the guise of a Siegfried-like mini-hero, he wins a glittering gold crown in recognition of his dragon slaying (see DHA 2, 141 f.). In this context, *Der Wechselbalg* takes satire to a new level. By depicting a grotesque distortion of Heine's own symbol, its very aesthetic procedure conveys the idea that Prussia represents an extreme example of degenerate politics within the German polity. Caricature is, in other words, both its subject matter and technique, and the poem blends instances of clever political symbolism requiring our interpretative nous with purely graphic features included to enhance the overall poetic impact. Hence Heine's central changeling figure is not the progeny of supernatural forces of conventional legend but rather of unnatural relations between 'der alte Sodomiter' and an overly loved whippet, an allusion to popular rumours about the sexuality of Frederick the Great who ruled Prussia in the mid-eighteenth century. Meanwhile the telltale Prussian traits of 'hellblondem Schnurrbart, greisem Zopf', which will be taken up and elaborated in *Deutschland* (see DHA 4, 96; ll. 33-36), are embedded in a list of non-specific but suitably alarming physical deformities, the very enumeration of which entails a misshapen poetic form. *Der Wechselbalg* is unique among the *Zeitgedichte* for abandoning Heine's customary quatrains for a single amorphous stanza of six rhyming couplets, and Daumier's 1839 caricature of a delighted couple bending over the cradle of a deformed child with the caption 'Est-il joli ce chérubin...' has been suggested as a possible inspiration (see DHA

2, 741).<sup>19</sup> While such a link is impossible to substantiate, Heine's experiment in poetic form tells its own story: the thematic focus, the operation of its satire and its monstrous syntax all draw attention to the graphic element, to its status as caricature.

*Der Wechselbalg* is an extreme, reflexive example of the perfect marriage of aesthetic and political purpose for which the *Zeitgedichte* appear to strive. Heine's witty cartooning and anthropomorphic satire undoubtedly elevate him above, say, the laboured nature symbolism of Herwegh – the kind which he has already dismissed in *Neuer Frühling*, albeit in the context of Romanticism, and which he satirises in an unpublished *Zeitgedicht* 'Herwegh du eiserne Lerche' (see DHA 2, 186). Above all, the difference resides in the self-conscious way in which Heine develops and manages his particular network of images such that we are instructed, simply by virtue of reading, in how to appreciate him as a political symbolist. This is particularly pertinent with regard to the assembled *Zeitgedichte* of 1844, where these poems function as a kind of preparatory workshop for *Deutschland*, for poet and reader alike.

#### TOWARDS 'DEUTSCHLAND: EIN WINTERMÄRCHEN'

As I have been arguing, Heine arranges the *Neue Gedichte* collection to introduce *Deutschland* as the work to update his poetic identity and restore his reputation.

In a letter to Campe on 20 February 1844, he anticipates his publisher's reaction

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<sup>19</sup> For discussion of Grandville's possible influence on the political verse, especially *Atta Troll*, see Winfried Woesler, *Heines Tanzbär: Historisch-literarische Untersuchungen zum "Atta Troll"* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1978). See also L. Reynaud, 'La source française d'Atta Troll', *Revue Germanique* 10 (1914), 145-159; Hellmut Thomke, 'Heine und Grandville', *HJb* 17 (1978), 126-151.

to the new work with disarming confidence: 'Sie werden sehr mit mir zufrieden seyn und das Publikum wird mich in meiner wahren Gestalt sehen' (HSA 22, 96). The implication that his true identity has somehow been under wraps until this moment reflects the self-promotional rhetoric deployed by the lyric subject when he announces, in the first Canto of *Deutschland*, 'Ein neues Lied, ein besseres Lied | O Freunde, will ich Euch dichten' (DHA 4, 92). It is beyond the scope and also, more importantly, the purpose of the current study to attempt a substantive critical evaluation of such declaration. Whether or not we regard this to be the summit of his poetic oeuvre to date is immaterial, since our judgments are always secondary to Heine's own. Of interest here is rather to determine what Heine might mean when he speaks of revealing his 'true self' in relation to his own achievement as a political poet. A reflexive commentary on his progression to this moment of revelation, the *Zeitgedichte* cycle provides a more nuanced evaluation than these blatant self-promoting statements. Although in the first instance he assembles the twenty-four poems with a view to heralding 'das große politische Gedicht' (HSA 22, 108) as this cycle's triumphant outcome, and the culmination of the entire *Neue Gedichte* project, he also introduces a note of doubt via the manner of their arrangement which renders this self-revelation a fundamentally equivocal one.

If *Doktrin* self-consciously set the programme for a new kind of poetry, the penultimate and final poems of this cycle, *Wartet nur* and *Nachtgedanken*, work together in different ways to suggest where this will lead. Both stand out for lacking the elements of role-play, self-conscious symbolism or the ironic tone

that has prevailed in the preceding poems. Consequently we are drawn to observe where they gesture rather than what they achieve as individual examples of a genre. The poem *Nachtgedanken* reinterprets what the reader has come to understand by the term 'Zeitgedicht' over the course of the cycle, for it is not concerned with the broad category of a particular period in (political) history but rather with biographical time, more specifically with its author's subjective experience of the passage of time. Heine reveals himself as the lyric subject in no uncertain terms in a heartfelt litany of longing to visit his mother and so return to Germany after twelve long years in exile. A simple nostalgia is complicated only by the undefined, chimerical 'deutschen Sorgen' which keep him awake at night until they are dispelled by a cheery French morning and the reassuring continuity of his domestic life in Paris. This poem was clearly intended to narrate the transition into *Deutschland*, which Heine wrote after his return visit to Germany in 1843; in an early unpublished version, the epic took up the narrative thread seamlessly, opening with the poet yearning to see his mother and bidding farewell to his wife and Paris (see DHA 4, 291 f.). While *Nachtgedanken* marks a thematic, autobiographical shift, *Wartet nur* prepares the reader for a change in tone. It prophesies a new kind of poetry that will be more radical and direct in its political engagement than anything encountered so far. The poet warns that his lightning, a metaphor for the sharp satirical and polemical poetic language he has been honing in the *Zeitgedichte* we have just read, is soon to become 'das Donnerwort', which he boasts will be capable of tumbling the symbolic pillars of Restoration Germany: oak, palace and church

tower (DHA 2, 128). With this triptych *Wartet nur* reduces Heine's satirical portrait of the German polity to three essential elements, thereby presenting a kind of résumé of his activities as an emerging political symbolist. Similar objects and images have recurred throughout the cycle, whose poems seem to assemble and rehearse those symbols of German national identity which will receive their most extended and systematic treatment in the new epic.<sup>20</sup> A clear example is *Bey des Nachtwächters Ankunft zu Paris* (DHA 2, 112 f.), which deals systematically, stanza by stanza, with Cologne cathedral (ll. 13-16; cf. *Deutschland* Cantos IV & VI), the Rhine (ll. 21-4; cf. *Deutschland* Canto v), and the German censor (ll. 31-2; cf. *Deutschland* Cantos II & XIII). Meanwhile *Wartet nur* implies a transition from poems that threaten subversion, in the guise of satirical posturing (the poet's lightning), to poetry that will enact it; we are reminded of Heine's prophetic vision of a German revolution at the end of *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, where he pronounced: 'der Gedanke geht der That voraus, wie der Blitz dem Donner' (DHA 8/1, 118). The general threat it issues will find its ultimate target in the programmatic final canto of *Deutschland*, where similar imagery is used to warn the king of the danger of offending living poets: 'Sie haben Flammen und Waffen, | Die furchtbarer sind als Jovis Blitz' (DHA 4, 156). The threat of *Wartet nur* and the nightmares of *Nachtgedanken* both contribute to what is a consciously portentous conclusion to the cycle, whose function seems to be to prepare the

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<sup>20</sup> For discussion of Heine's 'mythopoeic programme' in *Deutschland* see Michael Perraudin, *Literature, the Volk and Revolution in Mid-Nineteenth Century Germany* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2000), pp. 133-157.

ground for Heine to be unmasked as a consummate revolutionary poet in the political epic which follows.

In our reading so far, the *Zeitgedichte* imply a poet whose political commitment is evolving, even though along different lines to that of the *Tendenzdichter* he lampoons. However, there is nothing in these poems to substantiate what this commitment might be beyond a general critique of the status quo, and readers who look for a consistent political stance in these poems do so in vain. After the false spring of *Neuer Frühling* and failure of the Saint-Simonian project in *Verschiedene*, the *Zeitgedichte* too do not quite follow through their opening gambit and there is a familiar undercurrent of unease which renders the cycle at best a highly equivocal ratification of its own programmatic statement. *Doktrin* may imply an artist with the ability to awaken the people to the possibility of revolution and *Wartet nur* anticipate a kind of political poetry with real subversive power, yet at moments when this seems within the poet's grasp, he shrinks back from his own suggestion. Carried away by its own militant rhetoric, *Die Tendenz* gathers momentum towards a startling revelation of what this might achieve at the opening of the final stanza—'Blase, schmettre, donn're täglich, | Bis der letzte Dränger flieht —' (DHA 2, 120)—only to withdraw abruptly and retract its call to arms in favour of a vague lyricism ('Singe nur in dieser Richtung' etc.). The poet appears alarmed to discover his own strength and that his language might have real revolutionary consequences were he to allow it free rein.

At the height of what has been referred to not unreasonably as ‘the period of Heine’s most radical political pronouncements’ (Peters, *The Poet as Provocateur*, p. 54), the nature and extent of his political commitment is certainly subject to considerable doubt. The unease which manifests itself at moments in this cycle has a strong autobiographical association. *Lebensfahrt* presents a thinly veiled account of Heine’s own journey into exile through the metaphor of a life’s voyage. Its lyric subject recounts how, as the sole survivor of a shipwreck washed up on the banks of the Seine, he left behind old friends who perished at the mercy of inclement Restoration politics (‘Sie gingen unter, im Vaterland’; DHA 2, 117) and went on to find new companions in Paris. The poem soon cuts through the superficial positivity of this fresh start (‘Ich hab’ ein neues Schiff bestiegen, | Mit neuen Genossen’; l. 9), however, by giving voice to a barely contained anxiety which annuls any initial bravura:

Und das ist wieder ein Singen und Lachen –  
 Es pfeift der Wind, die Planken krachen –  
 Am Himmel erlischt der letzte Stern –  
 Wie schwer mein Herz! die Heimath wie fern! (ll. 13-16)

The poet’s camaraderie with his new alliances rings hollow, for their spirit of joy is not only eerily inappropriate in the face of a brewing storm and possible second shipwreck but is also conspicuously at odds with his own lament. Given the troubled nature of their relationship, the ‘neuen Genossen’ may plausibly be read as an allusion to the *Vormärz* writers and radical republicans Heine encountered in Paris. His mistrust of such connections will be dramatized in the narrator’s unnerving encounter with the wolves in Canto XII of *Deutschland*,

where he relies on the verbal dexterity of a well-practised poseur to avoid both attack and self-identification with any party, be it of wolves, dogs or sheep. With *Lebensfahrt* Heine permits a personal nostalgia for his homeland to interrupt the earnest, assertive drumming of his alter ego in *Doktrin*; it cuts through the qualities of allusion and distortion on which the prevailing satirical tone of this cycle relies, thereby checking its march of progress. In this light, *Nachtgedanken* suddenly signifies more than a simple thematic bridge to *Deutschland*, for its nostalgic tone also expresses sympathy for quiescent Germany in a way that contradicts the combative revolutionary stance of the new political poet.

At the close of the *Zeitgedichte*, Heine seems to be offering personal pathos as an alternative to the collective revolutionary pathos that is characteristic of much *Vormärz* poetry. The apparent gain in lyric authenticity goes hand in hand with a critical stance, conducted through the figure of Heine as conscientious émigré, which remains permanently ambivalent in its judgment of French and German political conditions and hence in its attitude to a doctrine of revolutionary progress. In *Nachtgedanken* the metaphor of a dormant Germany awaiting the poet's *Reveille*, which was introduced in *Der Tannhäuser* (DHA 2, 59; ll. 185-8), developed through several *Zeitgedichte* (*An den Nachtwächter*, *Zur Beruhigung*, *Erleuchtung*) and which will culminate in an imagined dialogue with the mythical sleeping King Barbarossa in *Deutschland* (Cantos XV-XVII), is turned on its head in night-time visions that keep Heine from sleep. However, his is not a progressive wakefulness. While the content of his dreams is not

revealed here—the reader must wait for *Deutschland* to share his lived nightmare—the sense of regression in submitting to them is clear and is communicated through the very poetic language he employs. The newly active knight is distracted once again by Amoretti, or rather by Venus reincarnated in the unlikely guise of Heine's mother: 'Mein Sehnen und Verlangen wächst. | Die alte Frau hat mich behext' (DHA 2, 129; ll. 9-10). Although the arrival of Heine's French wife and the dawn at the last hour (in the final stanza) puts an end to the situation (and the cycle), the cheerful ending her appearance brings does not ring true. In the manner of a *dea ex machina* her advent is too tidily stage-managed to imply anything but a cynically contrived, artistic resolution imposed by a poet who, as plagued as he is by 'deutsche Sorgen', remains fundamentally sceptical of the redemptive power of 'Französisch heit'res Tageslicht' (l. 38).

There is further evidence of Heine's ambivalent political stance in the decisions he made about what not to include in the *Zeitgedichte* – poems that might otherwise have belonged. Some of his most obviously personal polemical works are notable exclusions. He was evidently well aware of the provocative nature of *Der neue Alexander* (1844), a thinly veiled, virulent satire on Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and of his brazen attack on the Bavarian king in *Lobgesänge auf König Ludwig* (1843), which he confessed to be 'das sanglanteste, was ich je geschrieben' (29 December 1843; HSA 22, 91). It came as no surprise that Campe vetoed these as possible additions to the *Zeitgedichte*; indeed in the correspondence Heine almost seems to be willing his publisher to do so. He is

uncharacteristically compliant regarding the *Lobgesänge*: 'dieses Gedicht wird den hohen Herren Schrecken einjagen [...]. Aber Sie, liebster Campe, wissen doch daß ich der höchsten Mäßigung fähig bin, wo eingelenkt werden muß im Interesse Ihres Verlags' (20 February 1844; HSA 22, 97). Meanwhile in the case of *Der neue Alexander* he took it upon himself to advise Campe: 'einliegend drey Flöhe, die Sie, wenn sie Ihnen nicht mißbehagen, den politischen Gedichten einverleiben können; doch will ich, wegen des Königs von Preußen, nicht bestimmt dazu rathen' (23 June 1844; HSA 22, 113). One may conclude that he merely wanted to test their radicalism on his publisher before risking them in the public domain as part of the *Zeitgedichte* cycle, yet his comments give the impression that he had never seriously thought to include them. As we have seen, the *Zeitgedichte* tend to shrink away from potential radical pronouncements. Perhaps the most noteworthy omission of all is *Die schlesischen Weber*. First published on 10 July 1844, Heine had composed this poem in response to reports of the weavers' uprisings in early June, which were brutally repressed by the Prussian authorities. It is noteworthy for being the most instantly popular of his political poems. Despite an immediate ban it was reprinted more than a dozen times straight after its initial publication in *Vorwärts!* and was widely read and sung in workers' circles and taverns. This time the editorial decision not to include it in the *Zeitgedichte* must have been Heine's own; there is no mention of it in the correspondence with Campe until 1851, when the latter advised against its inclusion in *Romanzero* (see HSA 26, 323). It is not difficult to see how, in allowing the weavers' voices to tell their

own story from the perspective of a collective 'wir', this poem achieves a pathos and directness of expression that is at odds with the prevailing satirical tone and especially the lyric subjectivity which unites the *Zeitgedichte* as a collection. Ironically, *Die schlesischen Weber* epitomizes what seems to be implied by the term 'Zeitgedicht' in that it responded directly to a real political event and captured popular imagination at the time. Given the degree of success it enjoyed in *Vorwärts!*, its uncommented absence from the collection published just two months later is telling. There is a sense in which it was too successful to be included in a cycle preoccupied with uncovering the problems and dangers associated with yoking poetry to a political cause. It had generated a popular response that was at risk of overwhelming and obscuring the poem and poet that had inspired it; in other words, it was inconsistent with Heine's primary goal in the *Zeitgedichte*, and in the *Neue Gedichte* project as a whole, which was to take charge of managing his own identity and reputation as poet.

What is certain, Heine's claim that, as the author of the *Neue Gedichte* and *Deutschland*, he was somehow revealing his true self cannot be taken at face value with regard to either his poetic or political identity. In the wake of his success with the new political epic he spoke in a letter to Campe of 'meine plötzlich renovirte Tribunatsreputazion' and concluded, with unmistakable wry humour, 'ich bin plötzlich aus einem verschrienen Renegaten wieder ein Vaterlandsretter geworden' (12 April 1844; HSA 22, 98). At first sight, Heine appears to summarize the transformation of his reputation from the standpoint of the radical German Left: once publicly lambasted as the 'frivolous' and

dubiously Francophile poet of odes to ‘Boulevard beauties’ (*Verschiedene*), now celebrated as the author of a political epic for Germany (*Deutschland*). However, his self-deprecating irony belies the fact that these terms are in fact his own, and in the case of ‘Vaterlandsretter’ usually applied in the other direction. In a letter to Heinrich Laube he had expressed his distaste for the growing wave of ‘Scheinhelden und Maulpatrioten und sonstigen Vaterlandsretter’ (7 November 1842; HSA 22, 36). What, one might ask, can he intend by reflecting this barbed criticism back on himself at the self-proclaimed height of his achievement as a political poet? Reflecting on the poem which he claims to be the definitive statement of his new lyric identity, we merely find him engaging in further self-construction that undermines the very possibility of arriving at a stable definition. Heine alternately rejoices in and rejects the two poles of a divided identity. He is both renegade outsider and national hero, and yet defined by neither. The gain is ambiguity – for the reader frustrating and seductive in equal measure.

It has been noted that Heine did more personally to manage the public reception of *Deutschland* than of any other of his works—he sent sample reviews to sympathetic journal editors and badgered friends to do the same (see DHA 2, 974)—making it an extreme case of strategic self-promotion. It seems more than coincidental that he should have boasted ‘ich bin diesmal sicher daß ich ein Werkchen gegeben habe, das mehr furore machen wird als die populärste Broschüre und das dennoch den bleibenden Werth einer klassischen Dichtung haben wird’ (letter to Campe, 17 April 1844; HSA 22, 100). Notwithstanding

copyright restrictions which applied to reviews of controversial texts as much as to the texts themselves, *Deutschland* quickly became the most widely discussed of Heine's works and ensured the *Neue Gedichte* were an immediate *succès de scandale*. As for its lasting worth and status as serious literature, numerous imitations and critical studies have substantiated his own bold assessment to an extent that he could not possibly have envisaged.<sup>21</sup> Or could he? This study has shown how Heine assembles and presents the *Neue Gedichte* in such a way as to stage-manage his own literary reception. As such, the poetry collection is a monument to the kind of publicistic strategies and compulsive self-presentation which characterize him as a writer and are the focus of my next chapters.

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<sup>21</sup> For a list of studies see Höhn, *Handbuch*, p. 132 ff. T.J. Reed has suggested how *Deutschland* has come to be recognised as serious German literature: 'the idea has dawned that to be a classic need not mean formal polish, symmetry and unwavering elevation, but may just as well be a matter of light-footed mobility, mercurial variety, everyday diction, easy-to-read stanzas, the tactics of wit and the strategy of criticism'. See Reed's introduction to his translation *Deutschland: A Winter's Tale / Heinrich Heine* (London: Angel Books, 1986), p. 19.

PART III

*The Self-fashioning Author*



*Writing Prefaces: Strategies of Self-authorization*

Heine's self-editing, self-interpretative impulse is most obviously at play in his many forewords, prefaces, afterwords, open letters and petitions to the press, the extra-textual apparatus of his literary projects. Just as the *Neue Gedichte* collection forms the psychogram of a poetic development contrived to launch *Deutschland* and with it a new incarnation of Heine as poet, so these texts ask to be read as the psychogram of his experience more generally on the literary market and relate to his self-presentation as author.

While Heine was always concerned with the presentation of his literary works, there is a marked proliferation in the number of *Vorreden*, *Erklärungen*, *Erörterungen* and other such auxiliary texts surrounding his publications of the 1830s and 1840s. He certainly faced a number of genuine challenges in this period which made self-defensive and polemical writing a necessary part of his literary practice, and not automatically the preserve of a compulsive self-fashioner. Briegleb identifies censorship as his primary concern, a concept he extends beyond the usual narrow definition of institutional restrictions to incorporate the kind of political, ideological, literary and personal slander and misrepresentation Heine suffered at the hands of adversaries and friends alike, as well as disputes with his publisher and even with his family regarding his inheritance and memoirs (see B 5, 576 f.). Honouring Heine's struggles with an

editorial decision of his own devising, Briegleb presents all those texts that conform to the type of 'politischer, eingreifender Literatur' (ibid., 574) in one volume under the heading *Schriftstellernöte 1832-1855*, a title he borrows from Heine's open letter to Campe on 3 April 1839 (given as No. 18 of this volume). Moreover, he confers on them the status of an independent genre which he suggests emerged from the conditions of the mid-nineteenth-century market, with Heine as one of its most prominent founders. Together they form a collection of dialogical texts which represent the 'Rede und Gegenrede, Kampf und Gegenkampf' (ibid., 575) between Heine and his assailants in the press. In the preface to a second edition of *Salon II* in 1852, Heine reflected on the difficulty he faced in the 1830s, especially after the 1835 Prussian ban on the writings of *Junges Deutschland* members: 'jede Kundgabe meiner wahren Gesinnung [war] mir während einer langen Periode schier unmöglich', he recalls, with the result that he found himself 'in eine excepzionell gebundene Lage [...], die unerhört in den Annalen der Preßknechtschaft (DHA 8/1, 497). Nearly two decades after the event, his sense of personal injury and of exceptional circumstances conspiring against him seems to have remained undiminished. Elsewhere he had noted the potential of the press to erode a poet's authority on account of its obsessive interest in the nitty-gritty of private, biographical detail: 'ohne Autoritätsglauben kann auch kein großer Dichter emporkommen. Sobald sein Privatleben von dem unbarmherzigsten Lichte der Presse beleuchtet wird und die Tageskritik an seinen Worten würemelt und nagt, kann auch das Lied des Dichters nicht mehr den nöthigen Respekt finden'

(*Ludwig Börne*; DHA 11, 130). Of course Heine also took advantage of this very property to conduct polemical battles of his own and famously defends the apparent flaunting of personality and private concerns—‘das beständige Constatiren meiner Persönlichkeit’ (ibid., 119)—as a duty to truth, thus confirming an essentially paradoxical relationship with the medium.<sup>1</sup>

Heine rendered his authorial identity a problematic issue when he exiled himself to Paris. On the one hand, subversive hints in the *Reisebilder* (1826-1830) and the outspoken preface to *Kahldorf über den Adel* (the final text he composed before emigrating) had raised expectations of radicalism that he could not afford to disappoint. On the other, his often highly rhetorical claims for himself in the role of tribune and freedom-fighter were contradicted, as Sammons has observed, by ‘his refusal of solidarity with his liberal and radical contemporaries’ (*Alternative Perspectives*, p. 203), which led his readers in this camp to accuse him of apostasy and even of sympathy with the regime. We have already seen how Heine exploits this tension in the *Zeitgedichte*. He identified the crux of the matter when, in a memorable remark jotted in the margin of a letter to Karl Immermann on 19 December 1832, he remarked ‘Literatur, das sind wir und unsre Feinde’ (HSA 21, 43). In order for an author to create and sustain his or her authorial identity it is clearly crucial to establish and uphold textual authority – ‘Autoritätsglauben’, to use Heine’s term. Heine acknowledged the particular challenge he faced in this respect with a pithy analogy in the preface to *Salon II* of 1852: ‘der Pfeil gehört nicht mehr dem

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<sup>1</sup> For further discussion see Anthony Phelan, *Reading Heinrich Heine*, p. 153.

Schützen, sobald er von der Sehne des Bogens fortfliegt, und das Wort gehört nicht mehr dem Sprecher, sobald es seiner Lippe entsprungen und gar durch die Presse vervielfältigt worden ist' (DHA 8/1, 497). Although the archery metaphor hints at a certain strategic advantage in being forced to surrender responsibility in relation to the target struck, Heine is ultimately pessimistic regarding the question of authority: loss of control over one's own utterance was an inescapable reality at a time when neither freedom of the press nor the rights of the author were safeguarded. While virtually all his literary works seek to counteract this problem in some way, and are implicitly involved in the task of constructing a new authorial identity after the move to Paris, the prefaces stand out precisely for being self-conscious examples of such activity.

Heine's prefaces have received surprisingly little critical attention. While the more prominent, controversial examples have attracted commentary in relation to the texts they introduce, as a mode of writing with a form, function and rhetorical strategies of its own they have largely been ignored.<sup>2</sup> Heine may have objected to extra-textual explanations on principle, adamant that his main works should be sufficient for a future reading public to understand him and his intentions (see B 5, 574); yet he is also undeniably preoccupied with writing prefaces, and to the extent of one who perceives in them a function beyond that of mere practical necessity. As a crude measure of his interest, it is evident that Heine devoted considerable time and attention to their composition.

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<sup>2</sup> In the *Handbuch* Höhn singles out *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen* (p. 282 ff.), *Vorrede zu: Der Salon. Erster Band* (p. 326 ff.) and *Über den Denunzianten* (preface to *Salon III*, p. 375 ff.) for commentary; but he essentially treats these as isolated cases within a chronological catalogue of prose texts.

Paradoxically, it is a task which demands more creative energy than the works to which they are ostensibly peripheral: 'die verfluchte Vorrede hat mir mehr Mühe gekostet als 10 Druckbogen', he wrote with regard to the preface to *Atta Troll* (19 December 1846; HSA 22, 235). Struggle, toil, abortive attempts, excited anticipation, desperate disappointment, anger at censorship, frustration over delays, passionate declarations of every kind – the language in which Heine discusses his prefaces in the correspondence with Campe denotes an astonishing degree of personal investment in these texts. Practical motivations are rarely entirely absent; 'ich weiß sehr gut was dazu gehört, daß ein Buch Zug bekomme' remarked the practised self-publicist, reflecting on the controversial 'große brillante Vorrede' designed to repackage the 'roher Abklatsch' of the early Paris journalism in book form as *Französische Zustände* (24 August 1852; HSA 23, 229). However for Heine, the desire for success is invariably far outweighed by the need to be understood by his public in accordance with his own sense of self. The preface to *Französische Zustände* (1832) exemplifies this ordering of priorities. Heine may have overestimated Campe's ability or motivation to circumvent the censor, suffering a mutilated manuscript and official ban as a result, but he did not overestimate the power of scandal to raise the profile of his text and the stakes of his authorial commitment. He suggested that this preface was sufficiently potent to enforce a lifelong ban on his own person: 'ich weiß, daß ich mir Deutschland auf Lebenszeit versperre wenn die Vorrede erscheint, aber sie soll ganz so erscheinen, wie das Manuskript ist' (28 December 1832; HSA 21, 44). It remains tantalizingly ambiguous whether Heine

accepted exile as the price he had to pay for the sake of upholding personal integrity or whether he actively courted it as a means to authenticate a combative, revolutionary persona in the public eye. What is clear is that the preface is where he negotiates the terms of his authorship – he recognised a mode of writing and task that are inherently suited to one another.

Michel Foucault uses the example of a preface to illustrate what he calls discourse ‘endowed with the author function’, which is unsurprising given it is the ‘self that speaks in the preface’ that is the most quintessentially and self-consciously authored.<sup>3</sup> Located between a text and its author and between the author of a text and his reading public, prefaces invite the kind of self-constructive textual procedures which perform what may be considered an act of self-authorization; that is to say they facilitate the staking of a personal authorial claim.<sup>4</sup> For Foucault, ‘texts, books and discourses really began to have authors [...] to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive’ (p. 148); in other words, the need for self-defence may be understood as a function of the self-authorization process. While this clearly resonates with conditions in the 1830s and 1840s, some modification is required with respect to Heine whose authorial claim often seems to seek legitimacy through the transgressive rather than the self-defensive act; as we saw in the poems of *Verschiedene*, he uses provocation as a means to transform his poetic identity. Assertive, pre-emptive self-

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, ‘What is an author?’ in *Textual strategies: Perspectives in post-structuralist criticism* ed. by Josué Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 141-160 (p. 152).

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted for my use of the term ‘self-authorization’ to Kevin Dunn’s *Pretexes of Authority: The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

authorization of this kind is something Kevin Dunn sees occurring in the English Renaissance, a period when ‘texts, books and discourses begin to need authors’ since ‘subversive discourse finds itself on the brink of empowerment’ (*Pretexts of Authority*, p. 10).<sup>5</sup> In a nuanced adaptation of Foucault that could hardly be more apposite to the polemical dimension of Heine’s prefaces he concludes ‘it is when transgression itself is appropriated as a rhetorical gesture, that authorship is institutionalized’ (*ibid.*).

On another plane, the prefaces enact a less overtly strategic form of self-authorization in that they establish Heine in the role of interpreter of his own works. This is particularly apparent in the 1830s and 1840s when he was becoming increasingly preoccupied with large projects, no doubt encouraged by the recent triumph of the four-volume *Reisebilder* (1826-1830) which had catapulted him to fame. He pursued these with mixed success, and they ranged in scope from close thematic groupings—the complementary pairing of *De la France* (1833), a journalistic portrait of contemporary France, and *De l’Allemagne* (1835), a critical survey of German intellectual history, cemented Heine’s role as cultural mediator—to assembled collections with varying degrees of aesthetic coherence: the aborted ‘Nachtrag zum Buch der Lieder’ (1838) and subsequently successful *Neue Gedichte* (1844), the vast open structure of *Der Salon* (1834-1840), which amalgamated the poetry and prose of the 1830s in four volumes, and finally a projected ‘Gesamtausgabe’ (see DHA 10, 302 ff.). There is

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<sup>5</sup> In this respect Dunn’s argument resonates with Greenblatt’s notion of a self-fashioning writer in *Renaissance Self-fashioning*.

a certain sense of anticipatory retrospection, the like of which we have already glimpsed in the characteristic multilayered perspective of Heine's journalism and the aesthetic arrangement of the *Neue Gedichte*, that is integral to the very form and function of the preface, by its very nature a self-reflexive medium. Hence the *Ich* that speaks in Heine's prefaces is never merely the writerly *Ich*, but rather a conflation of author and critic that renders him both the object and subject of literary history in the making. Derrida, for whom famously there is no outside to the text ('il n'y a pas de hors-texte'), reflects upon the uniquely complex spatial and temporal relationship between a preface and the work it presumes to introduce in similar terms:

Pour l'avant-propos, renformant un vouloir-dire après le coup, le texte est un écrit—un passé—que, dans une fausse apparence de présent, un auteur caché et tout-puissant, en pleine maîtrise de son produit, présente au lecteur comme son avenir. Voici ce que j'ai écrit, puis lu, et que j'écris que vous allez lire.<sup>6</sup>

However, whereas for Derrida prefaces retain a subsidiary status and remain 'antérieur et extérieur au développement du contenu qu'il annonce' (p. 15), for Heine their function far exceeds that of an introduction to the content or significance of what follows; they become significant works in their own right whose authority even supersedes that of the texts they were ostensibly written in the first instance to justify. As modern readers used to skipping over prefaces that have become more often than not a mere formal convention, some mental readjustment is required for us to appreciate their hermeneutic importance for an author such as Heine. As Dunn would have it, 'we need to recover our lost

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<sup>6</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Préfaces', *La Dissémination* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), p. 13.

ear for prefatory rhetoric' if we are to understand the full significance of the preface for the self-fashioning author (*Pretexts of Authority*, p. xi).

Heine himself divulges no theory or personal assessment of preface writing as such. However, a reflexively titled 'Vorrede zur Vorrede', which was written to introduce and explain the need for a separate publication of the *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen* after the latter had appeared in a form mutilated beyond recognition by the censor, reveals the inner workings of his particular prefatory logic by virtue of being doubly meta-textual. In stating his authorial intent, Heine pleads with his public not to attribute to him false intentions:

Indem ich nun hier einen besonderen Abdruck davon liefere, *bitte ich mir keineswegs die Absicht beyzumessen*, als wollte ich die jetzigen Machthaber in Deutschland besonders reitzen oder gar beleidigen. Ich habe vielmehr meine Ausdrücke so viel als es die Wahrheit erlaubte zu mäßigen gesucht.

(DHA 12/1, 451; my emphasis)

If his intention is in danger of being misconstrued, Heine has already done the work of his critics in prefiguring this eventuality. In the move to forestall misappropriation of his authority by hostile interpreters, he anticipates their opposition to the point of creating it. Where the question of authorial intent is involved in such strategic games, truth takes on a relative value as both the greater authority to which Heine must answer ('als es die Wahrheit erlaubte') and that which he suspends through self-censorship; a compromise he makes in the interests of getting published at all. Furthermore, the suggestion that he has been moderate to avoid causing undue offence is at best an ironic truth given the scandal surrounding the first publication of the preface in question. He issues an implicit threat to the authorities in power that, notwithstanding self-

censorship, the truth will out. The act of subversion (or transgression) on which the oppositional dimension of Heine's authority rests is achieved and justified, here, by a rhetorical manoeuvre and adept manipulation of the dynamics of polemic. His tactics of self-authorization are also more personally motivated. Enemies are one thing, but when, as he suggests, even friends are capable of misreading him the need to assert authority becomes all the more urgent since his personal identity is at stake. 'Mißlicher ist es, wenn die Freunde mich verkennen', he admits. 'Das dürfte mich verstimmen, und wirklich, es verstimmt mich. Ich will es aber nicht verhehlen, ich will es selber zur öffentlichen Kunde bringen [...]' (453). Again, he pleads disarming frankness in acknowledging the critical opposition of others—in this case of those naturally disposed to support him, we are led to assume—while manipulating the situation to prefigure their response and justify his own reaction to that response ('that *should* put me out, *and indeed* I am put out'). What we read is less a preface to a particular work than one to Heine himself, an apologia for the man and writer constructed out of a carefully managed closed system of rhetoric masquerading as candour. So he creates that sense of authority which directs our reception of his texts, including this one.

Traditionally, the preface is the place where we as readers might look to find a credible statement of authorial intent (or at least attitude) regarding the text introduced – a foundation on which to base an informed reading. We are predisposed to assume that claims made by an author in his preface hold the status of truths in relation to anything suggested in the text itself, that the

prefatory voice is distinct from and somehow more authentic than the narrating voice even when both appear to represent more or less the same authorial subject. Our assumption encounters a fundamental problem in relation to Heine, for he uses the preface as a space for self-construction in much the same way as we have seen him do elsewhere in his literary works. If anything, his self-fashioning tendencies are amplified in this direct negotiation of the terms of his authorship. Heine's prefaces have been described as 'eine sorgfältig ausgeklügelte Mischung von Selbstinterpretation, Verteidigung und Angriff' (DHA 4, 735), a succinct definition which nevertheless overlooks one critical element, namely fictionalization. Höhn has rightly called for analysis of the fictional strategies employed in the *Schriftstellernöte* genre (*Handbuch*, p. 416), something that is surely owed to texts Heine treated as a distinct category within his literary oeuvre.<sup>7</sup> This can scarcely be avoided in a study of his prefatory rhetoric, as we will see. The remainder of this chapter explores Heine's strategies of self-authorization in two key texts, *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen* (1832) and *Vorrede zu Salon I* (1833), in which he seeks to establish his position in relation to contemporary politics and literary history respectively. In examining his polemic and fictional strategies of self-presentation, I consider how Heine creates an artful language of self-construction.

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<sup>7</sup> Both the *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen* and *Über den Denunzianten* were published as independent texts. Moreover, in his plans for a *Gesamtausgabe*, Heine envisaged a space for prefaces set apart from the works they originally accompanied. In 1846, vol. 13 was to include prefaces to *Französische Zustände*, *Salon I* and *III* and the *Vorrede zum Adel* (DHA 10, 304); in 1848, vol. 8 was to contain the prefaces to *Französische Zustände* and *Salon I*, vol. 13 the prefaces to *Salon III* and *Buch der Lieder* (305); in 1852, vol. 6 included prefaces to *Französische Zustände* and *Salon I* and *III*, with many more itemized in vols 13-15.

Heine's first major preface of the Paris years is one of his most politically controversial texts, on a par with the *Verschiedene* poems for the scandal it raised. It is also a milestone in the ongoing process of establishing his authorial identity. For Briegleb, it pushes at the limits of his credibility as artist. He describes it as 'eine Sackgasse des Dichters [...], weil weiter, als er dort gekommen war, kein vernünftiger Text mehr gehen konnte'.<sup>8</sup> The *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen* was written to serve two purposes: as an explicatory introduction to the book publication of his articles on French life, and as a public protest against the recent Bundestag order of 28 June 1832 which had further restricted freedom of speech in response to a show of liberal opposition at the Hambacher Fest in May, where tens of thousands had gathered to discuss demands for liberty, civil rights and German national unity. Its function was therefore to make explicit the link between his commentaries on conditions in France after the July Revolution and his reception of the current German political situation, in other words to elucidate the didactic intention behind the Paris journalism with respect to his contemporary German readership. 'Nimmermehr hätte ich jenes Buch herausgegeben ohne diese Vorrede, worin ich die Gesinnungen, die in jenen Artikeln nur angedeutet sind, vollkräftig mittheilen und zugleich durch anderweitige Besprechungen einen großen Akt der Bürgerpflicht ausüben konnte', Heine asserted in a petition to the press on 1 January 1833 (DHA 12/1, 456). Representing as it did the first great statement of

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<sup>8</sup> Klaus Briegleb, *Opfer Heine?*, p. 173.

his identity as a political writer after emigration, the preface combines an essentially private motivation with his self-election to a public role: as representative of the *Volk* and spokesperson for the liberal cause against a reactionary Prussian State. As he announced in his prefatory statement of purpose, 'dieser Wirksamkeit bleibt mein Leben gewidmet; es ist mein Amt' (DHA 12/1, 65).

The notion of public duty is central to Heine's authorial claim, and the most recent display of authority by the ruling powers merely supplies a timely provocation for him to assert his own as representative of the opposition in a threefold repudiation of the ordinance, which forms the much-quoted centrepiece of this preface. He invokes three kinds of authority—legal, political and intellectual—which he enumerates in a style commensurate with that of his opponent: 'Kraft meiner akademischen Befugniß als Doktor beider Rechte [...]; Kraft meiner Pflicht als Bürger [...]; Kraft meiner Machtvollkommenheit als öffentlicher Sprecher' (71 f.). While Heine appears authorized to oppose the new legislation on behalf of the German people merely by virtue of who he is, the rhetorical *tour de force* by which he does so belies the impression of authority being something he already owns. For Heine, rhetorical powers of persuasion are the key to success in constructing credibility through his text. In this passage, he establishes 'plenipotentiary power' ('Machtvollkommenheit') as public speaker via a process of self-authorization enacted through the very language in which he makes the claim. With characteristic legerdemain, he presents his opponent in terms that necessitate the strident response he intends

to give: the Prussian ordinance is a 'Meisterwerk', an elaborate instrument of torture admired for its perversely beautiful assembly of 'geheimen Springfedern, [...] verborgenen Ringe[n] woran jede Kette befestigt werden kann, [...] Fußangeln, [...] versteckten Halseisen, Daumschrauben' – in his final evaluation, a 'ganze künstliche, durchtriebene Arbeit' (71). Heine's striking allegory transforms a piece of state legislation into a palpable, monstrous threat – a worthy target to be dismantled systematically by the fearsome machinery of his own rhetoric. The designation 'künstlich, durchtrieben', we may conclude, is merely a displaced verdict on his own linguistic performance, which culminates in a forceful invective structured by anaphora to form a crescendo of accumulating legalese:

Kraft meiner Machtvollkommenheit als öffentlicher Sprecher, erhebe ich gegen die Verfertiger dieser Urkunde meine Anklage, und klage sie an des gemißbrauchten Volksvertrauens, ich klage sie an der beleidigten Volksmajestät, ich klage sie an des Hochverraths am deutschen Volke, ich klage sie an! (72)

It is notable that the passage which enacts Heine's accession to the role of public spokesperson and representative of an oppressed German people relies on such forthright affirmation of personal authority, which he foregrounds by the rhythmic urgency of the four times repeated protest 'ich klage sie an'. Just when it would seem imperative to suspend the private self in order to achieve his aim ('einen großen Akt der Bürgerpflicht'), an *ich* is emphatically invoked to authorize its pursuit, so reminding us of Heine's personal status as a writer of genius. The technique is strikingly similar to that which he would go on to employ in *Doktrin* of the *Zeitgedichte*, in which the poet's drum-major alter ego

disseminates his revolutionary message via the insistent imperatives of his drumbeat but steps outside the role of mouthpiece in the final two lines to assert his personal authority and prowess as artist (see DHA 2, 109). Briegleb observes how Heine's enemies in the regime sought to separate the poet from the political activist: 'die herrschende Ideologie möchte seine poetische von seiner politischen Wirkung trennen, die erste in die nützlichen Ideologiefunktionen der Kunst einfügen, die zweite vernichten' (B 5, 659). As I have described, his rhetorical practice in the preface actively refuses to admit any such division of his authorship. There is a second motivation behind Heine's self-authorization strategies which overrides the concerns of his public office and has to do with defending his integrity and rights as an individual author.

When *Französische Zustände* appeared in book form on 6 December 1832 Heine suffered a double assault on his authority. Not only had the preface been subjected to radical censorship but the resulting text made him look like a stooge of the regime—'vor den Augen von ganz Deutschland [...] ein trübseliger Schmeichler des Königs von Preußen' (letter to Campe, 28 December 1832; HSA 21, 44)—leaving him open to accusations of apostasy from his natural allies among the liberal left. A Prussian ban followed on 1 February 1833, but this outright silencing was of less concern to Heine than the distortion of his authorial intention and resulting damage to his political integrity; as he put it, 'noch fataler ist, daß durch diese Unterdrückungen alles, was ich sagte, nicht bloß entstellt, sondern auch mitunter ins Servile verkehrt worden ist!'

(DHA 12/1, 456). Heine's solution was to push for a separate publication of the full preface in pamphlet form with its own 'Vorrede zur Vorrede'. Divorced from its original function (as preface to the Paris journalism), the *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen* became all the more patently a platform for negotiating the terms of his political identity. In this context even the polemical attack on Prussia, which had appeared self-explanatory and an end in itself, emerges as part of a web of self-constructive rhetoric designed primarily to counter the charge of apostasy. With characteristic adroitness, Heine determines to turn the situation to his advantage; as he announced to Heinrich Laube, 'die Herausgabe der Vorrede [...] wird wohl das Publikum belehren daß es künftig mir vertraut, wenn ich auch etwas allzu gelinde flöte' (10 July 1833; HSA 21, 56). In other words, he uses this preface to barter for future aesthetic freedom without the risk of compromise to his perceived political integrity. A comment addressed to Karl Varnhagen on 16 July 1833 sheds light on his strategy:

Diese [Vorrede], das leidenschaftliche Produkt meines Unmuths über die bundestäglichen Beschlüsse, versperrt mir vielleicht auf immer die Rückkehr nach Deutschland; aber sie rettet mich vielleicht vor dem Laternentod bey der nächsten Insurrektion, indem jetzt meine holden Landsleute mich nicht mehr des Einverständnisses mit Preußen beschuldigen können. Schufte, wie Börne und Consorten, habe ich dadurch unschädlich gemacht, für mich wenigstens.

(HSA 21, 59)

To uphold his integrity and authority as an oppositional writer, Heine engages in a delicate balancing act using the potential negative consequence of his invective against Prussia—he anticipates a ban on his very person—as a bargaining chip with which to negotiate his rehabilitation within the liberal left, while nonetheless disassociating himself from its more radical members. Even

in private correspondence he is careful to present his public display of personal commitment (i.e. exile) as a serious, credible gesture, in contrast to the politically ineffectual variety of set-piece theatrics for which he ridicules certain elements of the German political left.<sup>9</sup> The credibility of his position is as much reliant on being seen to evade fixed political labels as on authorizing a persona congruent with his own sense of self. For the preface overall, this means decrying conservative censorship on the one hand and deflecting republican attempts to discredit him on the other. At another level, however, the rhetorical manoeuvres Heine performs to achieve these particular ends are part of a broader, more sophisticated textual operation which pursues a different kind of authorial legitimacy.

Heine modulates his manipulation of the dynamics of polemic in relation to its intended target. While the Prussian enemy is tackled straightforwardly and openly, he is more ingenious in dealing with representatives of the radical left, whose accusations are dismissed via a witty rhetorical sleight of hand. In the *Vorrede zur Vorrede*, Heine explores the difference between his own polemic and the clumsy attempts of 'unseren jakobinischen Enragés' to emulate it:

Es ging ihnen wie dem Affen, der zugesehen hatte wie sich ein Mensch rasirte. Als dieser nun das Zimmer verließ, kam der Affe und nahm das Barbierzeug wieder aus der Schublade hervor und seifte sich ein und schnitt sich dann die Kehle ab. (DHA 12/1, 454)

If Heine stands accused of a lack of honesty in intent by failing to put the knife to proper use and make himself bleed, here he advertises the preface to

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. the preface to *Atta Troll* in which *Tendenzdichter* are parodied as sailors jumping from ships' masts, as enthusiastic, theatrical suicides who believe they are immortalizing themselves with the cry 'ich sterbe für den General Jackson' (DHA 4, 10).

*Französische Zustände* as an act of martyrdom intended to restore his credibility as a writer committed to the revolutionary cause: 'gebt euch zufrieden; ich habe mich diesmal geschnitten' (454). However, when properly considered in the context of his satirical vignette, we see that this statement issues from an entirely circular system of logic. In Heine's cartoon-like analogy of polemic-in-practice, the Jacobins are the ones who have misunderstood what is essentially a form of art to their own ridicule and pointless self-destruction. By contrast, he successfully wields this rhetorical weapon to deflect the charge of apostasy without admitting any specific political affiliation or even tendency, and without altering his literary strategy; a superior polemicist, he has only to tell us that he has cut himself this time and we believe him.

So primed to trust the veracity of Heine's authorial intention, we are inclined to take him at face value when, in the preface, he asserts 'ich will Euch die Wahrheit gestehen' (DHA 12/1, 75). Consequently it comes as a surprise when this truth-telling impulse is called into question by a competing claim towards the end of the text: 'fürchtet Euch nicht, ich scherze nur' (76). At first glance, the later statement contributes to a network of apostrophes to the Prussian enemy – its addressee is not to be confused with 'you, the readers' (as in the first statement). Having issued a prophetic warning to this enemy that its comeuppance is nigh—he who kowtows in servility to the state will reveal himself to be a secret Brutus, poised to rise up against his oppressor—, Heine retreats unexpectedly behind a mask of self-deprecating flippancy that seems entirely incongruous with what he calls 'mein Amt'. Prussia need not fear his

text since the German people whose cause it takes up will crush its revolutionary message out of sheer oafish obliviousness: ‘der große Narr bleibt Euch unterthänigst gehorsam, und wollen Euch die kleinen Narren ein Leid zufügen, der große schlägt sie todt’ (76). With self-reflexive irony—he casts himself one of ‘the lesser fools’ in his own picaresque allegory—Heine calls into question his integrity as a writer of self-professed ‘ernsteren Blätter’ (65). It is tempting to ascribe this rhetorical feint to his well-documented practice of *Selbstzensur*, yet this is simply not borne out by an avowedly plain-speaking preface which proved its worth by incurring some of the most vitriolic censorship of all his texts. Attentive readers—courted by Heine at the outset as ‘diejenigen, welche lesen können’ (65)—are prompted to seek a less overtly strategic motivation than this. ‘Fürchtet *Euch* nicht, ich scherze nur’ (my emphasis) is arguably in the first instance a conspiratorial nod and wink to ‘such readers as you’ to consider what has been gained by destabilizing his authority in this manner after having devoted so much care to its construction elsewhere.

The process of self-authorization enacted in *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen* seems designed to preclude the attribution of any fixed position (political or otherwise) by thoroughly disconcerting the reader. While Heine apparently sets out to nail his colours to the mast by drawing up the terms of his tribune, his authorial identity remains determinedly elusive. Moments of affirmative self-definition are overturned by acts of self-effacement to create a multiplication of voices and an essentially unstable prefatory rhetoric, where

nothing is a standard by which to measure the mobility of anything else and subjectivity is anything but a guarantee of authenticity. We are left wondering which Heine, if any, is to be taken seriously or considered authoritative: the official representative of an oppressed *Volk*, the urgent, personal voice of a self-defensive polemicist or the detached, incongruously flippant Scarronian alter ego. The latter embodies the carnivalesque parade of identities by providing a subversively ironic frame to the whole text. Heine speaks as the seventeenth-century French picaresque novelist, Paul Scarron, through its opening quotation (DHA 12/1, 65) and implicitly resumes the voice, via the performative statement 'ich scherze', by mimicking his tone and style in the allegorical passage discussed. Such fragmentation of authority appears to contravene the essential function of a preface, yet it is by ironic treatment of his authorial claim that Heine attempts to ward off political (mis)categorization and uphold a more fluid textual identity. Considered in this light, his quest to validate his authorial presence in a search for legitimacy acquires an aesthetic dimension beyond the political imperative which surely counters Briegleb's suggestion that Heine has taken his authorship down an artistic blind alley. Finally, the preface emerges as a literary performance intended to convince us that he is intellectually independent and, above all, aesthetically free.

#### EMBODYING THE EPOCHAL MOMENT: STRATEGIES OF SELF-FICTIONALIZATION

Since Heine's strategies of self-authorization rely so strongly on an element of performance, few of his prefaces are without a fictional dimension of some

kind. The preface to *Salon* I represents the most developed example of a general tendency towards self-fictionalization, a technique Heine frequently employs to present his authorial persona. Whereas in the overtly polemical prefaces (*Französische Zustände; Über den Denunzianten*) the fictionalizing impulse is primarily harnessed for the pursuit of strategic ends beyond the text, to create a voice or voices with particular designs on a particular reader (political self-positioning; a polemical attack on Wolfgang Menzel, who Heine believed to have colluded with the Prussian authorities against the writers of *Junges Deutschland* in 1835), here its purpose seems to have a more purely aesthetic motivation.

*Der Salon* comprised four mixed-genre volumes assembled from the poetry and important prose texts (those which had not appeared in book form) of Heine's first decade in Paris, much of which had already been published in journals. While a whimsical approach to structure and duplication of material already familiar to the reading public may have contributed, alongside government bans, to *Der Salon* becoming a commercial flop, its summative quality and the censorship problems which directly influenced Heine's composition and publication strategies from one volume to the next make it a self-conscious record of his often problematic experiences as an author during this period. The preface to its opening volume has, not unreasonably, been called 'politisch engagiert' (Höhn, *Handbuch*, p. 326) and said to contain 'ein durchgedachtes Programm' (DHA 5, 1045). Nonetheless, Heine's own assessment is considerably more incisive in illuminating its particular

relationship to contemporary politics, which is by no means the same as that of the preface to the Paris journalism. Here, there is no direct engagement in response to political events beyond the framework of the text but rather a reluctant admittance of their persistent and disruptive incursion into precisely that literary space: 'les pages suivantes [...] expliquent pourquoi les travaux littéraires de l'auteur ont subi tant d'interruptions par les exigences politiques du jour' (DHA 5, 315).<sup>10</sup> Commensurate with its position at the head of a vast new literary project, this preface situates the question of authorial legitimacy in a broader dimension and the impulse to establish a legitimate political identity, precipitated by immediate assaults on his authority, is replaced by a less obviously strategic motivation. Heine sets out to review the sum of his literary achievement so far, and he constructs his authorial profile to reflect this self-assessment through an act of literary self-presentation.

In 1833, Heine presents himself as a writer torn between the need to engage with a revolutionary present and the desire to withdraw into a timeless world of art, the embodiment of a struggle to find a tenable position between the apparently irreconcilable poles of *Artistik* and *Engagement*, to quote Kuttenkeuler's memorably titled study (1977). *Der Salon* arguably exists to embody this conundrum since it includes both controversial, politically engaged texts and consciously anachronistic art works (Heine calls *Salon III* 'eine Reihe harmloser Märchen'; DHA 11, 154); according to Höhn, its title is

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<sup>10</sup> Heine used a version of the same text to introduce the French edition of his novel fragment *Schnabelewopski*.

well-chosen 'weil sich die Assoziation eines bestimmten leichten Tons sowie einer bunten von Zufällen bestimmten Ausstellungsanordnung auf die hier locker versammelten Texte unterschiedlichster Art übertragen läßt' (*Handbuch*, p. 329). In other words, the juxtaposition of different styles and genres is its structuring principle. The preface focuses specifically on the moment when Heine felt (and responded to) the call of the age, which according to his reconstruction of the event was when political events wrenched him prematurely from his artistic endeavours. From the opening reference to a 'fellow artist' whose every attempt to paint a golden angel results in a red lion, to the elaborate anecdote of Heine's encounter with German political refugees in Normandy which jolts him from dreams into political consciousness, it presents the reader with a stylized literary enactment of the *Ende der Kunstperiode*. Thus Heine uses it to corroborate his claim at the end of *Französische Maler* (1831), 'meine alte Prophezezung von dem Ende der Kunstperiode, die bey der Wiege Goethes anfang und bey seinem Sarge aufhören wird, scheint ihrer Erfüllung nahe zu seyn' (DHA 12/1, 47).<sup>11</sup> Sammons has argued that the *Kunstperiode* 'both never existed and never came to an end'; as a 'constantly reiterated shibboleth', it has provided an all-too-convenient cover for unsubstantiated scholarship claiming a Heine who is *either* revolutionary *or* poet (but never both) (see *Alternative Perspectives*, p. 204). Heine is himself undoubtedly to blame in propagating the myth (see my note 11) and

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<sup>11</sup> The same theme surfaces in the 'Briefe aus Helgoland' (DHA 11, 35; 50), the 'Prolog' to *Neuer Frühling* (DHA 2, 11) and the ninth letter *Über die französische Bühne* (DHA 12, 274), as well as in prefaces to editions of *Buch der Lieder* published in the 1830s where it appears in the guise of an aesthetic dilemma: whether to write in prose or poetry.

does so for his own strategic ends. Here, he chooses to embody the supposed epochal turning point by referring to his alleged involuntary expulsion from 'das Land der Poesie' (DHA 5, 370) and accession to 'das beste öffentliche Tribunal' (369), propelled by the events of the July Revolution. The *Vorrede zu Salon I* stands out not for its programmatic function *per se* but rather for the strategies employed in implementing it. Here, the 'end of art' is not just programmatized but dramatized, with the help of a number of figurative and fictional strategies, including self-conscious art symbolism and allegorical anecdote, which give the impression of a self-consciously literary piece. Thus, for example, Heine corroborates the self-conscious art symbolism of his opening anecdote with a closing assertion that is an allegory not only of the unavoidable incursion of revolutionary politics into art in this period, but also of his own literary technique employed in the texts of *Salon I* (especially *Französische Maler*, as we have seen): 'die goldenen Engelsfarben sind [...] auf meiner Palette fast eingetrocknet, und flüssig blieb darauf nur ein schreyendes Roth [...] womit man nur rothe Löwen malt' (375). In a similar instance of self-reflexivity, Heine quotes sentiments expressed in a letter by the recently deceased Rahel Varnhagen to reflect those he has just attributed to himself, with reference to 'einem Buche, welches mir eben zur Hand liegt' (373); the impression given is of a literary artist whose creative spontaneity is carefully studied. Even the partial citation of an old song, which Heine supposedly recalls from childhood involuntarily each time he nears the German border, is disingenuous. Hummed 'zur Zerstreung' and 'zufällig [...] von Schubart' (374), it draws attention to its

own feigned artlessness, not to mention feigned innocence in the political sense, for Schubart's song of 1787 was a protest against the despotic Duke of Württemberg who had sold his own regiment to the Dutch. All such strategies must, on reflection, be seen implicitly to contradict the force of the programmatic argument put forward in this preface. Thus Heine constructs his text to embody a fundamental dilemma at the heart of his search for credibility as an author after 1830; a dilemma it enacts through the paradox of its literary performance.

Heine presents his recent, personally experienced *Ende der Kunstperiode* in two ways: first as a critical event viewed from the perspective of literary history, then as a biographical episode whose symbolic significance has been grasped retrospectively and enhanced with a number of fictionalized elements. At first glance only the second of these seems to demand the kind of textual strategies we have labelled self-authorizing, yet both form part of the same strategic manoeuvre to authorize his place within literary history as the embodiment of an epochal moment he marks.

Unlike in the preface to *Französische Zustände*, Heine appears to adopt a distant, even passive stance in dealing with his authorial claim. Any ambivalence he expresses vis-à-vis his role as spokesperson for the revolutionary cause ('Ich hatte manchmal nicht übel Lust das ganze Sprechamt aufzugeben'; DHA 5, 369) is overridden by the terms of its authority which are, he suggests, essentially non-negotiable: 'wir ergreifen keine Idee, sondern die Idee ergreift uns, und knechtet uns, und peitscht uns in die Arena hinein, daß

wir, wie gezwungene Gladiatoren, für sie kämpfen' (369 f.). This recalls Heine's commentary to Varnhagen on his emigration to Paris, where he evoked a similar causality: 'ich habe wahrhaftig nicht die Dinge auf die Spitze gestellt, sondern die Dinge haben mich auf die Spitze gestellt, auf die Spitze der Welt, auf Paris' (HSA 21, 20). Once again, chiasmus is used to foreground the revolutionary imperative. The abdication of individual authority—prerogative of the artist—, first to the collective he claims to represent and thereafter to the ideological force of the revolution, is central to Heine's understanding of his newfound *Tribunat* and ostensibly incompatible with the notion of *Künstlertum*. He presents himself as a mere conduit through which a greater authority, that of historical progress, speaks. Self-authorization seems an irrelevant concept when he claims, moreover, to have been superseded even in this modest capacity: 'wogegen ich einst mit leichten Waffen frondirte, wird jetzt ein offener ernster Krieg geführt – ich stehe sogar nicht mehr in den ersten Reihen' (DHA 5, 369). In fact, this disconcertingly retiring self-portrait is entirely strategic, and in its own way designed to support a new kind of authorial assertion. By objectifying himself as the involuntary mouthpiece of an historical moment, Heine implies that now, as preface-writer, he is in a position to review and evaluate the literary activities of this former authorial self with the critical advantage of hindsight. *Der Salon*, like the *Neue Gedichte* compilation, stands in an historical relationship to its own material – in essence a literary recollection, it repackaged texts that had already been published. Thus it falls to the preface

to explain the circumstances in which this literary 'past' arose for the benefit of the 'present' text and reader:

Damit alles gesagt sey, erwähne ich zugleich, daß dieses Buch [...] im Sommer und Herbst 1831 geschrieben worden, zu einer Zeit, wo ich mich meistens mit den Cartons zu künftigen rothen Löwen beschäftigte. Um mich her war damals viel Gebrülle und Störniß jeder Art. (DHA 5, 369)

The apologetic, confessional tone which makes this an unlikely beginning to an authorial declaration of purpose conceals a clever textual manoeuvre. By evoking a past self preoccupied with beginning work on '*künftigen* rothen Löwen', Heine bridges the historical disjunction without erasing its contours. There is an essential affinity between Heine then and Heine now as author of the preface. Despite appearances, both sense they should be prioritizing red lions over golden angels. The only major difference is that the latter has gained the advantage of hindsight, placing him in a position to interpret the motivations of the former and so set his own texts in an analytical context. In other words, Heine harnesses the essential function of the preface to authorize himself in the role of literary historian of his own career. One might even say that this preface dramatizes, in an historical-biographical paradigm, the Derridean theoretical understanding of the relationship between preface and main text and corresponding layers of authorship. By extension, Heine does not lay claim to a reader so much as to a discipleship: 'ein zweites, "nachwachsendes Geschlecht" hat eingesehen, daß all mein Wort und Lied aus einer großen, gottfreudigen Frühlingsidee emporblühte' (369). Sammons has dismissed this assertion for a pipe dream, calling the successor generation

‘imaginary in his time, if perhaps less so in ours’ (*Alternative Perspectives*, p. 203). It nevertheless seems likely that Heine was fully conscious of its fictive element and his use of quotation is telling in this respect. The original reference is to Goethe, who had commented on the vicissitudinous reception history of his works in the notes to *West-Östlicher Divan*: ‘ein zweytes, drittes nachwachsendes Geschlecht entschädigt mich doppelt und dreyfach für die Unbilden, die ich von meinen früheren Zeitgenossen zu erdulden hatte.’<sup>12</sup> However, Heine had already quoted the same passage at the end of *Nordsee* III (DHA 6, 145), such that the reference here is as much to his own earlier citation as to Goethe. Thus on the one hand it appears to give a stamp of authority to the claim by evoking a previous authority (Goethe’s), while on the other it points ironically at his own excessive partiality to and overreliance on this conveniently vindictory literary formula. Indeed he will restate the same hopeful prophecy in the final caput of *Deutschland* (1844): ‘Es wächst heran ein neues Geschlecht [...] | Dem werde ich alles verkünden’ (DHA 5, 155). Paradoxically, it is by depersonalising himself as an object of literary history that Heine gains licence to invoke successors to his legacy as a means to legitimize his own (current) literary enterprise and person. Once again, a creative rhetorical strategy belies our superficial reading of his self-designation as a kind of ventriloquist’s dummy for the age: ‘wir sind nicht die Herren, sondern die Diener des Wortes’ (370). In presenting himself as a servant he

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<sup>12</sup> Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke* III/I, 138.

simultaneously reveals himself the master, a status he substantiates by his treatment of the anecdotal narrative which forms the core of the preface.

A characteristic instance of self-reflexive rhetoric reasserts his authoritative prefatory voice and signals the approaching shift into a more personal idiom: 'und auch ich will jetzt Geständnisse machen', he announces (DHA 5, 370). What follows is a dramatic staging of his alleged situation as a writer after the revolution, torn between revolutionary responsibility and artistic freedom. With the help of a number of fictional strategies, he transforms a biographical anecdote relating his own personally experienced turning point into an allegory of the epochal moment. In short, he constructs his authorship in such a way as to make it emblematic for the age. We read a narrative in three phases: a retreat to the Normandy coast in search of peace and creative inspiration precedes a chance encounter on the road with some Swabian refugees fleeing political oppression in Germany, after which he is drawn back to the sea by the lone figure of the blonde Swabian girl whose questioning triggers a reflection on the implications of this event for his self-perception as author. Literary stylization is immediately perceptible in its novella-like structure, whose constitutive turning point is perfectly arranged to coalesce with Heine's own, at the moment of the roadside encounter. Furthermore this is self-consciously done, by a preface writer who seems intent on staging the processes involved in the formation of his new authorial identity as a means to ratify this in the eyes of a sceptical German readership. He begins by rewriting himself into the role of Romantic poet, 'in das Land der Poesie, wo ich als Knabe so glücklich gelebt' (370), a

biographical impossibility that can only be realised metaphorically through a conscious effort of will and Hoffmannesque process of self-intoxication ('Und stille Lieder wollte ich dichten, [...] und goldne Bilder dämmerten wieder empor in meinem Gedächtnisse, ich ward wieder so traumselig, so mährchentrunken, so verzaubert wie ehemals'; 371). Precipitated by his version of Goethe's 'sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit', Heine then signals his transition from this state with a second instance of dramatic self-staging.<sup>13</sup> In a display of authorial self-awareness that is the prerequisite to introducing his anecdotal encounter in its allegorical function, he writes:

Als ich [die Auswanderer] näher betrachtete, durchzuckte mich ein jähes Gefühl, wie ich es noch nie in meinem Leben empfunden, alles Blut stieg mir plötzlich in die Herzkammern und klopfte gegen die Rippen [...]. Ja, es war das Vaterland selbst das mir begegnete. (371)

Self-conscious use of allegory gains Heine two advantages in the bid to construct and legitimize his authorial identity. He exploits the inherent quality of this literary device simultaneously to reveal and conceal a metaphorical correspondence between his meeting with the Swabians and his relationship with Germany and his German identity as an émigré writer.

In the first instance, allegory is used to construct and stage a defining moment of reconciliation with a (German) readership suspicious of his motives for exile. He raises a handshake exchanged with one of the refugees to a level of symbolic significance, 'als gäbe ich dem Vaterland selber den Handschlag eines erneuten Bündnisses der Liebe' (371). Readers are then offered a dramatic

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<sup>13</sup> Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke* xxxix, 221.

narrative enactment of the rhetorical performance in the preface to *Französische Zustände*, by which Heine authorized himself as the representative of an oppressed German people. A revelatory statement of identification precedes an emotional outpouring offered in support of its claim:

Das ist es. Deutschland, das sind wir selber. Und darum wurde ich plötzlich so matt und krank beim Anblick jener Auswanderer, jener großen Blutströme, die aus den Wunden des Vaterlands rinnen [...]. Das ist es; es war wie ein leiblicher Verlust und ich fühlte in der Seele einen fast physischen Schmerz. (374)

Here, Heine conversely seeks to endorse his personal situation in exile by identifying himself with this group through an act of empathy which turns him into the physical incarnation of its collective plight. He arrives at a neutral and affirmative definition designed to liberate the concept of German patriotism from contemporary xenophobic (especially Francophobic) tendencies. Having exploited the possibilities of this synecdochical relationship, Heine then invokes the allusive quality of allegory to negotiate the politically sensitive nature of his new authorial identity. A display of political restraint, according to which he coyly suppresses discussion of the reasons the Swabian family has left Germany ('nein, ich gehöre nicht zu den Demagogen, die nur die Leidenschaften aufregen wollen und ich will nicht alles wiedererzählen was ich auf jener Landstraße [...] gehört habe'; 372), is offset by his subsequent admission that the import of what is said lies 'nicht im Wort selbst, sondern im Ton'. We may read this as a hidden commentary on his technique in this preface, which makes full use of the powerful art of suggestion afforded by its various fictional strategies.

In a final scene, Heine reflects on the implications of his encounter and, given the continually self-reflexive nature of the preface, of his self-fictionalization as an object within this encounter for his authorship. By staging himself once again in communion with the sea, he pointedly evokes not only the opening of the present anecdote but also other parts of his literary oeuvre, notably *Schnabelewopski*, which was included in *Salon I* (cf. *Nordsee I-III* [1827]). This time, however, the sea does not precipitate regression into a land of poetry; conversely it conveys the spirit and message of revolutionary progress which will eject Heine from his reverie, and consequently from his narrative account. The allusion to earlier artistic works, which he claims are about to be superseded by a new political imperative (red lions usurping golden angels), maps the same progression in the literary-historical dimension.

The final question posed by this and each of Heine's prefaces is, who has he become as author? Or, more accurately, who is the Heine to emerge from his self-styling prefatory rhetoric? Regardless of motivation—polemical, self-defensive or self-interpretative—Heine's prefaces are, above all, performances in identity construction and authorial self-presentation. As a supremely self-conscious example of the form, the *Vorrede zu Salon I* supplies a commentary on this very act. Whether casting himself as historical or biographical object, Heine employs strategies of self-fictionalization to authorize his place within literary history. In so doing, he creates a language that embodies the polarity not only of his own authorship, but of the epoch as a whole. In his personal struggle to establish a legitimate authorial profile, he develops rhetorical strategies, often

against the grain of what may be expected of a self-authorizing prefatory statement, that are designed to hold all such competing categories—especially those which constitute his sense of self—forever in contention. Heine's impulse to fictionalize *himself*, here specifically in his role as author, may contribute to establishing textual authority alongside polemic and other rhetorical devices, but it also procures some moments of purely aesthetic self-presentation which nudge the prefatory voice closer to that of an autobiographical artist than of a polemical strategist and self-publicist.<sup>14</sup> Hence in the very place we expect to find reliable, stand-alone authorial statements to tell us who Heine was, or perceived himself to be, as author, we are confronted instead by familiar strategies of self-construction which tend to draw us back into the world of his literary oeuvre. It remains to be seen how he deals with more avowedly 'confessional' forms and for us to examine how he negotiates the territory of 'official' autobiography and how he treats those texts with no literary imperative at all, namely his private correspondence.

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<sup>14</sup> Dunn alludes to the possibility of an (auto-)biographical dimension in an apt analogy of the prefatory mode: 'like the biographer, the preface exists nominally only for and because of its subject; like the biographer, it exists ideally in a state of transparency; and like the biographer, it must come both before and after its subject – introducing it from a retrospective vantage point' (*Pretexts of Authority*, p. x).

## CHAPTER 7

*Letters from Paris: The Self-reflexive Correspondent*

Like the prefaces, Heine's correspondence has largely been ignored as a subject for critical study in its own right.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the prefaces however, it has also incurred continual indiscriminate treatment by scholars who have plundered it to substantiate claims about the published works with little critical reflection on its independent form or function. Joseph Kruse has called for a new appraisal of letters 'die allzu lange und bisher allzu sehr im Schatten [Heines] Schriften gestanden haben, die jedoch aus ihrem Dornröschenschlaf einer bloß für Kommentar und Interpretation dienlichen archivischen Nebensache endlich befreit zu werden verdienen' ('Literarische Qualität und historisch-biographische Quelle', p. 167). Furthermore, he suggests that it is the duty of the scholarly community 'sämtliche Briefe ernst zu nehmen, [...] die Brief-Zitate nicht mehr einzig und allein zu überraschenden kleinen Glanzlichtern im Begründungszusammenhang zu mißbrauchen' (ibid., p. 168). The only danger with Kruse's otherwise commendable ambition to promote the letters from their commonly accepted status as mere aids to interpretation ('bloßes Quellenmaterial'; p. 177) lies, conversely, in overstating their worth. There has been an equally problematic tendency among commentators to take them for

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<sup>1</sup> There have been two recent exceptions: Joseph Kruse, 'Heines Briefe: Literarische Qualität und historisch-biographische Quelle', in *Briefkultur im Vormärz [Vormärz-Studien IX]*, ed. by Bernd Füllner (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2001), pp. 165-177, and Christian Liedtke, "'Briefschreibungsordentlichkeit'?: Beobachtungen zu Sprache und Stil in Heinrich Heines Briefen', in *Rhetorik als Skandal: Heinrich Heines Sprache*, ed. by Kálmán Kovács (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2009), pp. 135-154.

self-evident biographical truths with a unique potential to elucidate our understanding of the published works. ‘Hier sind für ein breites Publikum ungeahnte Entdeckungen zu machen, [...] die dem durchaus auch nur streckenweise bekannten Werk gleichberechtigt an die Seite treten können’, Kruse enthuses (p. 174). Meanwhile, Fritz Mende’s judgment is compromised by his unconscious assimilation of a distinctly Heinean metaphor and perspective. He suggests that ‘ihre Lektüre gestattet uns, einen Blick hinter die Kulissen seiner literarischen und politischen Auseinandersetzungen zu werfen’, as though Heine somehow wrote letters primarily for the benefit of future literary historians.<sup>2</sup> I do not profess to be entirely guiltless in my selective use of the correspondence to elucidate aspects of the journalism, poetry and other works discussed in this study. However, I have also tried where possible to highlight its often striking proximity to these in terms of the linguistic strategies and motifs, sometimes even the very formulations Heine deploys. For all that the private letters command a unique status as the one area of his writing not destined for publication, they are not without an element of performance that may cause us to reconsider conventional assumptions about the unassailable trustworthiness of this mode of writing as a biographical resource.

In his review of a two-volume collection of letters from the Biedermeier period, Karl von Holtei’s *Dreihundert Briefe aus zwei Jahrhunderten* (1872), Friedrich Sengle observes that ‘das Ganze ist als Porträtgalerie und psychologisches Kuriositätenkabinett, nicht als “Quellenveröffentlichung”

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<sup>2</sup> Fritz Mende, ‘Vorwort’, *Heines Briefe in einem Band* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1984), p. vi.

gedacht' (*Biedermeierzeit* II, p. 209). The apparent indiscretion von Holtei committed in publishing private correspondence is justified, according to Sengle, by its implied reclassification as part of a semi-literary enterprise in the mould of the French sketch compendia (referred to in earlier chapters of the current study). In many respects, Heine's letters represent the antithesis of the stylized aesthetic constructions which flourished in literary circles throughout the Biedermeier period.<sup>3</sup> That being said, both the goal and method of his letter-writing may be considered similarly in terms of a conscious act of self-portraiture. When he declared to Varnhagen on 1 April 1828 that 'man kann diesen Zeilen mein grämliches Gesicht ansehen', he immediately drew attention to the fact that this record of his mood was inconsistent with favourable external conditions—'meine Verhältnisse sind hier sehr heiter u[nd] lebenswerth' (ibid.)—which might have made him appear quite the reverse to an objective, outside observer (HSA 20, 322). Paul de Man has famously lamented a common tendency in Rilke studies to venerate the letter-writer at the expense of the poet, noting that 'readings that start out from the most self-directed passages in the letters [...], fail to uncover the poetic dimension of the work'.<sup>4</sup> With Heine, the danger arises first and foremost when we fail to recognise the poetic or rhetorical dimension of his letters as we use these to support our discussion of his literary works. Far from helping to elucidate the latter, we risk merely reproducing his own performances as a correspondent.

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<sup>3</sup> See Sengle, *Biedermeierzeit* II, p. 407: 'die Restaurationszeit ist allgemein als eine Zeit mit hoher Briefkunst gekannt, in welcher der literarische Rang dieses sehr beliebten Genres unbestritten war.'

<sup>4</sup> Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 21.

In March 1824, a youthful Heine offered a telling reflection on his own epistolary practice. Writing to Rudolf Christiani, he claimed that 'bey mir immer der Brief, den ich schreibe, ein Thermometer ist, woraus man meine Gemüthsstimmung erkennen kann' (HSA 20, 147). The effusive quality of his letters to friends of school and student years, in which he professes to let 'alles aus dem Herzen rauschen' (to Christian Sethe, 6 July 1815; HSA 20, 17) and 'in vertrauter Stunde meinen Herzensvorhang aufzudecken' (to Moses Moser, 23 August 1823; HSA 20, 106), certainly echoes a Romantic confessional style – the very kind he seems to be invoking by his observation in the letter to Christiani. 'Das ist doch am Ende die Hauptsache, die man aus Briefen der Freunde ersehen will,' he continues, 'und darum ist mir der Brief im Negligee-Gewand tausendmahl lieber als der Galla-Brief' (HSA 20, 147). Heine's preference for an intimate and unaffected style is certainly cultivated in, though by no means confined to the early correspondence with its Wertherian overtones. This prevails even after the move to Paris and in the final years following his collapse in 1848, despite the sea changes occasioned by these biographical upheavals in terms of his interests, preoccupations and indeed pool of correspondents. That being said, this self-conscious assessment of his own approach to writing letters also seems to suggest itself as a metaphor for a 'strategy' he adopts as correspondent, and thereby casts an ironic light on any professions of spontaneity. In other words, even in this characteristically least premeditated section of a writer's output, Heine's correspondence displays a degree of self-conscious design which warrants investigation.

Intimate disclosures concerning his mental and especially his physical state form a narrative thread throughout Heine's letters, more or less regardless of their individual addressees. As correspondent, he renders himself a kind of human thermometer (cf. his remark to Christiani) by giving regular readings of his own physical condition; he refers more often than not to his ailments, in particular the headaches and eye troubles which plagued him for much of his life. The way in which he inhabits and manipulates this 'bodily voice' almost invites comparison to a narrative perspective. It is harnessed to reflect his internal state ('Gemütsstimmung'), which he links in turn to the external conditions of his life, and ultimately to those of the wider historical and political age. An obvious case in point arose out of the biographical coincidence of his physical collapse with the revolutions of 1848, which he was quick to exploit. Heine encapsulated his lamentable fate, that of the age and his intellectual and emotional responses to both in painfully witty epigrammatic formulae, for instance in a letter to Edouard de La Grange in which he wrote: 'mes jambes n'ont pas survécu à la chute de la royauté et je suis à présent cul-de-jatte' (25 June 1848; HSA 22, 284). Here, laconic black humour, which he uses to establish a degree of ironic self-detachment, enables him to exploit the figurative potential of the situation and incorporate a layer of political commentary. A self-proclaimed constitutional monarchist—in *Französische Zustände* he claimed to be a 'Royalist aus angeborner Neigung' (DHA 12/1, 88)—, the revolution had also crippled him in a purely metaphorical sense. Far from being an isolated example, Heine's personal account of 1848 and its aftermath merely

epitomizes—in uncanny fashion, since it was precipitated by a genuine historical coincidence—a technique he implements throughout his correspondence. When he wrote to his medically qualified brother Maximilian in less extreme circumstances some years earlier, for instance, this had ostensibly been to ask for advice, yet he wasted little time in offering a self-diagnosis: ‘rathe mir als Arzt, was thue ich gegen mein Kopfweh, das mich seit zwey Monath stärker als je heimsucht? Es ist vielleicht Folge großer Geistesbewegung’ (21 April 1834; HSA 21, 82 f.). He claimed that his mental agitation had been caused in turn by ‘Widerwärtigkeiten, die ich, in Folge der politischen Begebenheiten, zu erleiden hatte’ (ibid.). Not content merely to propose such a correlation, Heine nudged the idea into subtly new territory to say something about his position as a writer:

Du hast keine Idee davon, welche kolossale Reputazion hier auf mich lastet – aber das ist eine Last wie jede andere und hat genug Noth, Aerger, Verlegenheit, Mühe und Qual zur Folge. Ich begreife jetzt sehr gut, warum alle berühmte Männer ein unglückliches Leben geführt. (Ibid., 83)

Having initially called upon Maximilian’s superior (professional) knowledge, he now appears to deny that his brother could possibly understand the particular illness afflicting him. Irrespective of any medical reality, Heine configures his headache as a symptom of literary greatness. With this in mind, we find ourselves even less surprised by the manner of his alleged reaction to the political events of 1848 than he presupposes will be the case for another doctor by training, Alfred Meißner, to whom he announced ‘daß ich einen Augenblick furchtbar bewegt wurde, daß es mir kalt über den Rücken und die

Arme hinauf wie stechende Nadeln lief, das wird Sie nicht verwundern' (12 April 1848; HSA 22, 271). Having already evoked '*meine Gefühle bei dem Umschwung*' (my emphasis), and having related these alleged physical 'symptoms' in the midst of a passage of political commentary, one senses that the reference to Meißner's intuitive understanding was made in recognition of his literary sympathies rather than his medical understanding.<sup>5</sup> As omniscient readers of Heine's correspondence, we are in a position to identify and trace a strategy that is highly reminiscent of the one we have seen him use repeatedly, especially in the journalism and prefaces, to establish himself in the role of tribune or prophet. It is striking that even in this most private, least 'literary' of written forms he should persist in fashioning himself in this manner, as a bodily representative of the age.

The understated, offhand tone that prevails in Heine's letters from all periods of his life belies a strategic correspondent with as much propensity to manipulate and fashion his identity for the benefit of one private addressee as he shows in the works he destined to broadcast his public image. A telling remark to Eduard von Schenk reveals the interchangeable way in which he regarded these two ostensibly distinct spheres: 'im Grunde ist es auch nicht nöthig, daß Leute unserer Art sich einander viel schreiben. Unsere Bücher sind große Briefe, die doch zumeist an die Leute unserer Art gerichtet sind' (1 September 1828; HSA 20, 339). For Heine, the purpose of correspondence (with

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<sup>5</sup> Meißner trained as a doctor but soon abandoned medical practice to become a writer. He was the author of a biographical memoir of Heine, *Heinrich Heine: Erinnerungen* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1856).

other writers) is something that is already fulfilled by the published works; or to adopt his perspective, the latter have the character of a private exchange between writers, carried out in the public domain. For this reason Mende is quite correct when he observes that, contrary to what we might expect of an author who conversed regularly with the other literary giants of his time, 'Heine [...] sieht im Brief keine notwendige Bestätigungsform seiner schriftstellerischen Existenz' (*Briefe*, p. v). However, Heine's relationship with the letter as a vehicle for self-expression and as a potential extension of his literary project is far more complex than this statement implies. In one dimension, he exploits its potential as a literary form *within* his published works.<sup>6</sup> It suited his journalistic purpose in Berlin and Paris—in the *Briefe aus Berlin* (1822), *Über die französische Bühne* (1838) and the uncompleted *Deutschland-Briefe* (1844)—and he even addressed his memoirs to an (unidentified) 'Madame' (DHA 15, 59) in a manner reminiscent of *Ideen: Das Buch le Grand*, where a similar device served to produce a confessional tone and so create the impression of autobiographical authenticity. In another, he manipulates its private status for strategic effect, for instance in an 'open letter' published in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* where this served to authenticate and maximise the impact of personal grievances aired against his publisher in the hope of garnering public sympathy for his cause ('Schriftstellernöthen', 3

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<sup>6</sup> According to Sengle, the letter was 'eine der beliebtesten Einkleidungsformen der Biedermeierzeit' (*Biedermeierzeit* II, p. 202). He cites Heine's contemporary Heinrich Laube, who explained its popularity as a literary form as follows: 'die Laune, das schnelle Ergreifen aller Dinge, das Reißende, Fugitive ist ein wesentlicher Bestandtheil unserer Tage, darum sind Briefe die bequemste Ausdrucksweise dafür, ein wichtiges Genre unserer [...] Literatur' (ibid.).

April 1839; DHA 11, 172 ff.).<sup>7</sup> For all the self-righteous anger he voices in the preface to his memoirs, where he demands that a writer's private correspondence be respected as such (see DHA 15, 59), Heine was ever ready to abuse this privacy and publish his own letters when it suited his purpose. In the wake of the Börne book crisis he did just that, using an entire succession of targeted indiscretions in order to bring down his opponent and rival Gutzkow.<sup>8</sup> Such self-conscious manipulation of the letter form encourages some reconsideration of those (not infrequent) moments in Heine's correspondence when, for a variety of reasons, he dismisses letter writing as either too difficult, impossible, or even a redundant activity. In his letters from Paris, this very tendency to understate its purpose comes to the fore as part of a network of motifs which together form a portrait of his self-perception as a writer at this time.

It would be quite wrong to suggest that Heine's letters to a large, shifting group of correspondents form a narrative in the same way as, say, the *Neue Gedichte* do, for which this quality was the outcome of a process of intense aesthetic rearrangement. A chronological reading across the entire corpus nevertheless reveals something like a tendency towards narrative structure. This can scarcely be planned, yet Heine's propensity to self-fictionalize—to use literary strategies to organise his self-presentation—at a local level creates a

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<sup>7</sup> Briegleb refers to this category of usage as 'Briefdiplomatie' (B 5, 576).

<sup>8</sup> Heine encouraged Heinrich Laube to publish a letter he himself had sent him, explaining his strategy as follows: 'erstens werde ich dadurch *gezwungen* weitere Erklärungen und Erörterungen zu geben, *Briefe von Campe mitzuteilen*, ich reitze vielleicht gar Gutzkow schon gleich zu Angriffen gegen Campe, und alles was ich vorbringe, erscheint absichtloser in den Augen des Publikums' (9 September 1840; HSA 21, 379 f.).

strangely unifying effect, and the impression of an overarching narrative design which resonates with elements of his literary works. It is first and foremost in his correspondence, for instance, that he identifies the move to Paris as a pivotal, transformative moment in his life and career. In his letters, Heine seems to foreground certain events for their impact on his sense of self to the extent that these take on the quality of emblems, or ‘autobiographems’, to borrow from a study on the subject of narrative and identity.<sup>9</sup> It is these autobiographems—further examples besides the obvious emigration to Paris might be the 1832 cholera epidemic, the controversy surrounding the *Vorrede zu den französischen Zuständen*, Heine’s infatuation with ‘Mathilde’, the Bundestag edict of 1835, the death of Salomon Heine and ensuing inheritance row etc.—that then become the pegs on which he hangs his authorial identity in the literary works. Considered in this way, Heine’s correspondence falls into a familiar narrative in three broad parts, each of which reflects the changes in his life situation, preoccupations and, most importantly, the purpose of the letters he writes. If we disregard obvious differences, those composed in Germany before 1831 and those sent from his ‘mattress grave’ after 1848 may be said to share, in their professed intention if not in practice, an introspective, confessional type of impulse that is almost entirely absent from all but a handful of examples from the active period in Paris. Christian Liedtke has commented on a particular characteristic that perhaps most aptly describes this

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<sup>9</sup> Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh (eds), *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001), p. 271. Presumably the authors have coined ‘autobiographem’ as an adaptation of Roland Barthes’s ‘biographème’ from the preface to *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971).

middle phase. He observes: 'Worte der Innerlichkeit und Innigkeit sind seine Sache nicht, stattdessen bietet er kurze, schlagartige Bemerkungen, die seinen Gemütszustand beleuchten' ('Briefschreibungsordentlichkeit?', p. 147). With a modicum of surprise if not to say disappointment, Liedtke goes on to note that it is 'die Kategorie der Selbst-Darstellung und -explikation, die ja für die Biographen auf den ersten Blick die interessanteste ist, [die] wohl am seltensten vorkommt' (p. 148). Overt moments of self-presentation are notably scarce in Heine's correspondence, above all in the letters from Paris. Contrary to what we might expect in light of our study of the published works, this nevertheless corroborates the portrait of a permanently self-fashioning writer.

For Heine, the move to Paris signified a change in the very form and function of correspondence. In the period leading up to emigration his letters communicate a growing feeling of being cut off from the march of progress in a German backwater. This is manifest in self-conscious flights of introspection which tend towards oblivion, or at least towards the realisation that his sense of his own identity and that of the times are out of kilter. 'Ach, eben indem ich mich in die Zeit und ihre Bedürfnisse versenke, vergesse ich mich selbst', he told Varnhagen on 19 November 1830 (HSA 20, 423). His link to the real world had become tenuous, an impression he conveys fittingly via a literary allusion (to his contemporary Fürst von Pückler-Muskau's recent *Briefe eines Verstorbenen*): 'wer ist denn der Verstorbene? Mir können Sie es sagen, der ich ebenfalls tot bin und nur noch durch das Essen und den täglichen Ärger mit der lebenden Welt zusammenhänge' (ibid.). Once in Paris this disjunction between

self and surroundings is ostensibly removed, and Heine's letters become extrovert in a very literal sense: as missives sent to enlighten their German recipients about his situation in the revolutionary capital of Europe. For logistical reasons alone, the new location changed the parameters of his correspondence. On the one hand, a wealth of new acquaintances in Paris, among them many illustrious literary and political names, engendered a proliferation of short letters which deal primarily with the arrangement of social engagements and rarely exceed this pragmatic function. On the other, Heine's status as an émigré heightened the essential function of those letters he sent to his German correspondents back home. These fall into two categories: practical instructions to his editors and publishers and accounts of life in Paris related to friends and family members, in both cases frequently being accompanied by requests for news from Germany. Of course, it was at this time that Heine became a foreign correspondent in an official capacity – for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. As such, his personal experience of the French capital is primarily channelled through his journalism. The self-presentational tactics he deploys in his private letters are far less apparent than those one encounters in his articles on French life; in fact the focus falls precisely on the difficulties he experienced in expressing himself in this mode, particularly while in Paris. In short, his rather reticent letters from Paris seem to form the complement of his self-fashioning in the public domain.

Heine frequently admits negligence as a correspondent. 'Ich unglücklich saumseeliger Briefschreiber hab in der letzten Zeit meine besten Freunde ohne

Brief gelassen', he confessed to Moser on 14 October 1826 (HSA 20, 267). His changing perception of the role of correspondence in relation to the move to Paris is most readily observed in the context of this lifelong negative trait. Where once he had merely blamed personal laziness—'das Briefschreiben ist zu mühsam, und meine Faulheit ist zu groß', he told Karl Immermann on 14 January 1823 (HSA 20, 65)—his reasoning had become more elaborate by the time he wrote a final letter to Varnhagen before emigrating:

In dieser tollen Zeit ist es schwerer als je Briefe zu schreiben, wenn man nicht just bestimmtes sagen, melden, erbitten oder anzubieten hat. Des Weltallgemeinen ist zu viel um es brieflich zu besprechen, das persönlichst Wichtige ist wieder zu geringfügig in Vergleichung der großen Dinge die täglich *ohne unser Zuthun* passiren. (1 April 1831; HSA 20, 434; NB emphasis is Heine's own)

In the new post-revolutionary world, personal traits, or indeed defects, are no longer relevant factors. As Heine now presents it, his 'difficulty' in writing letters is symptomatic of an age in which personal agency has been usurped by greater historical forces, in which context private correspondence may serve only the most perfunctory of purposes. Rather than a beguiling confession of guilt, our correspondent now reconfigures his behaviour to look like involuntary submission to an external imperative. In a manoeuvre reminiscent of the paradoxical self-effacing strategies he deployed in the preface to *Salon I* to objectify himself as the apparently involuntary mouthpiece of an historical moment ('wir ergreifen keine Idee, sondern die Idee ergreift uns' etc.), he renders his very inadequacy as a correspondent as a positive sign of his personal engagement in matters that lie beyond the letter's power to

apprehend. Once in Paris, Heine excuses his epistolary negligence in yet another way:

Ich stehe mit niemandem im Briefwechsel aus dem Grunde, weil ich nur kurz antworte auf lange Briefe, die mir nie lang genug sind. Ihr aber, was Ihr nie bedenkt, seydt im geruhsamen Deutschland, wo jeder Tag 25 Stunden hat; ich aber bin an einem Ort, wo die Zeit selber sich kaum die Zeit nimmt zu verfließen. Ich habe hier gar keine Zeit.

(To Johann Hermann Detmoldt, 22 March 1835; HSA 21, 98 f.)

Time is at issue once again, although here the lofty notion of an epoch-defining moment has given way to a more pragmatic preoccupation with clock-time. This is no less symbolic, however. Detmoldt may infer who Heine has become in Paris from an account of the correspondent he (Heine) claims he no longer has time to be; like the poet-lover of 'Angelique VII' (*Verschiedene*; see DHA 2, 40), his priorities as a writer turn out to lie elsewhere. In the letters from Paris, self-ironizing play with a topos of accelerated time is distilled in a refrain of 'die Post geht ab', and in the recurrent motif by which Heine situates himself '*im Strudel der Begebenheiten, der Tageswellen, der brausenden Revoluzion*' (27 June 1831; HSA 21, 21; my emphasis). Both recall similar preoccupations and motifs in the Paris journalism.<sup>10</sup> The way Heine presents himself as a correspondent appears as integral to his self-fashioning in Paris as are any other of the writerly profiles he inhabits.

Heine's relationship with individual correspondents appears to undergo a similarly conscious transformation. It seems more than coincidental that his

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<sup>10</sup> In *Lutezia* Heine abruptly breaks off his article of 21 September 1840 with the same formula: 'die Post geht ab, und wie die Sultaninn Scheherezade unterbrechen wir unsere Erzählung, verträöstend auf morgen, wo wir aber ebenfalls, wegen der vielen eingeschobenen Episoden, keinen Schluß liefern' (DHA 13/1, 88). Anthony Phelan uses this as a basis for his discussion of a strategy of infinite postponement in Heine's late journalism. See 'Scheherazade's snapshots: *Lutezia*', in *Reading Heinrich Heine*, pp. 181-208 (p. 188).

contact with Moser should end with a final letter (which is also the first he sends) from Paris, even though there had already been a hiatus of some eighteen months. ‘Mein Stillschweigen ist keine stumme Klage’, he insisted to his erstwhile close friend on 27 June 1831, before going on nonetheless to describe the essence of a grievance: ‘ich klage nur über [...] die Art wie Du mein Leben und Streben begriffest. Du hast letzteres nicht verstanden’ (HSA 21, 19). The manner of Moser’s dismissal betokens a symbolic renunciation of the kind of intimacy that was represented by their intense correspondence in Germany.<sup>11</sup> How is he to understand, indeed how could he ever have understood Heine, who was always destined to strive for a different kind of life in Paris? – such is the eminence given to the Paris caesura in Heine’s sense and presentation of his own identity.<sup>12</sup> This letter to Moser set the precedent for a new preoccupation with the distance, both literal and metaphorical, between himself and his correspondents in Germany. Thus his letter to Detmoldt continues:

Sie können sich keinen Begriff davon machen, wieviel zerstreuende Erscheinungen mich umwogen, wieviel Noth, Unsinn, Lebenskampf, Liebe, Haß und † mir um die Ohren saust. Was Sie in Deutschland etwa von mir hören, ist nur ein gelindes Echo hiesiger Schwertschläge. (HSA 21, 99)

In the very medium in which we might expect him to dwell on precisely these kinds of personal experiences, Heine precludes the possibility that such things might be communicated. Once again, he accuses a correspondent of being unable to comprehend his situation before giving him a chance to prove

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<sup>11</sup> Moses Moser was Heine’s most frequent addressee in the years before 1831 and the recipient of around a third of his total correspondence from 1823-1826.

<sup>12</sup> Reflecting on his emigration in a letter to Varnhagen in 1833, he suggested that ‘Pflicht und Klugheit [riethen] zur Abreise [...] – in meiner Wiege lag schon meine Marschroute für das ganze Leben’ (HSA 21, 58).

otherwise. Variations of 'Sie haben keinen Begriff' recur throughout the letters from Paris, as though Heine were seeking to force a gap of separation from his addressees against the natural grain of these as a channel for sympathetic communication. Such formulae do not reflect a characteristic of the individual addressed, as he tends to make it appear; rather they are used to establish his position, which was vital to his literary projects of this period, as a lone voice speaking from a distant Parisian outpost. Thus he is able to reflect back thirty years later in the poem 'Enfant perdu': 'Verlor'ner Posten in dem Freyheitskriege, | Hielt ich seit dreyzig Jahren treulich aus' (*Romanzero*; DHA 3/1, 121). Even in the case of the few correspondents with whom Heine remained intimate, he frequently observed that maintaining contact with Germany by letter was a problematic, or in some cases even a superfluous activity. He often voices fear that his letters will be intercepted by political adversaries. Whatever the reality, this suited the profile of a controversial, free-thinking intellectual and one who was able, for instance, to sign off a letter to a brother-in-arms with a targeted indiscretion which encapsulated the poet of *Verschiedene* and author of the preface to *Französische Zustände* in one: 'ich schreibe diese Zeilen im Bette meiner schönhüftigen Freundinn, die mich diese Nacht nicht fortließ, aus Furcht daß ich zu Hause arretirt würde' (letter to Laube, 10 July 1833; HSA 21, 56). In contrast to his relationship with Moser, he claims to experience something like telepathy with Varnhagen and so implies that their correspondence is essentially superfluous ('wir sind so einverständlich, daß wir gar nicht eines Briefwechsels bedürfen'; HSA 21, 127). Meanwhile, he

excuses the infrequency of his letters to Laube in paradoxical fashion: 'Sie sind der einzige in Deutschland, der mich in jeder Beziehung interessiert; ich fühle dieses tief, und eben deßhalb kann ich Ihnen selten schreiben' (27 September 1835; HSA 21, 121). Flattery soon turns to accusation, however, as Heine reveals more of his reasoning: 'eigentlich bin ich böse auf Sie; ich denke so ungern an Deutschland, und Sie sind Schuld, daß ich an Deutschland denken muß, denn Sie sind dort, und nun gar soll ich Ihnen dorthin schreiben!' (ibid.). The way he turns neglect of his friend into a subtle reflection on his own political stance towards contemporary Germany mirrors a strategy that is already familiar to us from a lyric context. In *Zeitgedicht* XXIV, the poet Heine evoked the bewitching power of letters—in this instance his mother's—to explain his dark, wakeful dreams about returning to Germany in spite of the political convictions that drove him away, the 'Nachtgedanken' of the poem's title. As physical objects, letters are potentially powerful conveyors of emotion, especially to a recipient who is sensitive to this particular property:

Die alte Frau hat mich so lieb,  
 Und in den Briefen, die sie schrieb,  
 Seh' ich wir ihre Hand gezittert,  
 Wie tief das Mutterherz erschüttert. (DHA 2, 129; ll. 13-16)

The emotional bind to close correspondents in Germany was a continually troubling reality for Heine in the context of his self-imposed political exile in Paris, a fact he exploits in literary motifs, as here, which substantiate his broader writerly profile.

The strategies of identity construction uncovered thus far, in letters which at first sight appear too pragmatic to be involved in anything so self-consciously ‘literary’, trouble our natural assumption that Heine’s private, epistolary voice commands a greater degree of biographical credibility than his public, authorial one. Jan-Christoph Hauschild acknowledged this problem in passing—he does not pursue its implications—in the preface to his assembled *Biographie in Briefen*, where he remarks of Heine’s letters: ‘wenngleich sie für das Verständnis der Entwicklung seiner Persönlichkeit wichtige Aufschlüsse liefern – die Frage, wer Heine war, vermögen auch seine Briefe nicht hinreichend zu beantworten.’<sup>13</sup> There are certainly some more blatantly self-constructive passages in Heine’s letters which prompt us to consider his motivation in this context. In one such example, he comments on his new situation in Paris as follows:

Fragt sich jemand wie ich mich hier befinde, so sagen Sie: wie ein Fisch im Wasser. Oder vielmehr, sagen Sie den Leuten; daß, wenn im Meere ein Fisch den anderen nach seinem Befinden fragt, so antworte dieser: ich befinde mich wie Heine in Paris. (24 October 1832; HSA 21, 40)

Heine’s instruction to Ferdinand Hiller reads like a commentary on his own method of literary self-stylization. It is a lesson in the art of metaphor construction of a peculiarly self-conscious kind, for he inverts the normal order between the idea (Heine in Paris) and the image (a fish in water) to make himself the vehicle of his own metaphor. By drawing attention to the literary process in this way, he reinforces the essence of the idea—that he is in his

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<sup>13</sup> *Heinrich Heine: Leben Sie wohl und hole Sie der Teufel. Biographie in Briefen* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2005), ‘Vorwort’, p. 14.

element in Paris—in his reader's, in this case Hiller's, mind. Later in the same letter, a sketched self-portrait performs a similar function:

Ich bin jetzt ein fleißiger Besucher der Oper, ein Anhänger von Ludwig Phillipp, meine Backen sind roth, zwey Finger an der linken Hand sind gelähmt, ich trage helle Röcke und bunte Westen – Sie werden mich kaum wieder erkennen. (40 f.)

The associative juxtaposition of contrasting elements is a technique instantly familiar to readers of Heine's *Reisebilder* and journalism.<sup>14</sup> He deploys it here, with self-reflexive irony, to produce a caricature of his supposed new identity in Paris. For all its colourful exuberance, the portrait includes jarring allusions to his paralysis and to an implied diminution of the revolutionary fervour which had inspired him to emigrate. It is tempting to read the statement addressed to Hiller, 'you would not recognise me as I am now', as a displaced expression of anxiety on Heine's part that he cannot in fact recognise himself in such self-portraits – that is to say the self he intended to inhabit in Paris. Does he incorporate these primarily for their impact on individual addressees, one might ask, or does he merely use the opportunity for moments of self-reflection, by which he seeks to reassure himself that a positive transformation has indeed taken place? Tellingly, this was not the first occasion he had compared himself to a fish in water. In the same letter to Christiani with which I opened my investigation of the self-reflexive correspondent he had remarked:

Ich weiß nur zu gut, daß mir das Deutsche das ist, was dem Fische das Wasser ist, daß ich aus diesem Lebelement nicht heraus kann und daß ich—um das Fischgleichniß beyzubehalten—zum Stockfisch vertrocknen muß, wenn ich—um

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Gerhard Höhn, 'Kontrastästhetik: Heines Programm einer neuen Schreibart', in *Heinrich Heine: Ein Wegbereiter der Moderne*, ed. by Paolo Chiarini and Walter Hinderer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009), pp. 43-66.

das wäßrige Gleichnis beyzubehalten—aus dem Wasser des Deutschthümlichen herausspringe. (HSA 20, 148)

Even if his subsequent resurrection of the same metaphor were entirely subconscious, which seems unlikely given its inherent quiriness and the laboured way in which he introduces it on both occasions, its reuse looks like an attempt to restructure his self-perception in line with his intention to reinvent himself as a writer in Paris. Heine's strong identification with the French capital has all the appearance of an elective affinity, but the conditions under which this arises are at least partly contrived by his own linguistic manoeuvring.

The first letter Heine sent to Varnhagen from Paris, on 27 June 1831, is the exception to prove Liedtke's rule that 'Selbstkommentare sind bei ihm eher die Ausnahme' ('Briefschreibungsordentlichkeit?', p. 145). In many respects the direct inverse of the one he wrote to Moser on the same day, it exudes all the verve of a new arrival and a fresh beginning. Heine conjures up an image of himself as the embodiment of revolutionary change, the literary stylization of which (chiasmus) we have already had cause to discuss in the previous chapter: 'la force des choses! Die Macht der Dinge! Ich habe wahrhaftig nicht die Dinge auf die Spitze gestellt, sondern die Dinge haben mich auf die Spitze gestellt, auf die Spitze der Welt, auf Paris' (HSA 21, 20). To intensify the sense of excitement, Heine injects an element of (political) danger into the situation—'ich bin umgeben von Preußischen Spionen' (ibid.)—and finally throws all of this into relief with a self-conscious parody of Danton; he is forced to reflect on his abandoned homeland, 'wo ich nichts als Kampf und Noth habe, wo ich nicht

sicher schlafen kann, wo man mir alle Lebensquellen vergiftet' (21), for he cannot quite dislodge the mud of Germany from his shoes. The great irony of this dramatic account of his emigration is that the political reality of Paris at this time was anything but turbulent. Heine's most frequent complaint in the coming months is of a lack of sufficiently newsworthy items to feed his articles for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*.<sup>15</sup> Liedtke has accordingly declared this letter 'ein eindrucksvolles Zeugnis für eine Rhetorik der Identitätsstiftung' (p. 150) – rhetoric that is typical of Heine the author. It is no coincidence that Varnhagen should have been the addressee of this comparatively rare instance of conspicuous self-fictionalization in the context of Heine's correspondence. The heady dream of emigration Heine shared with him back in April had raised expectations of a perfect synergy of man, place and purpose. He had written:

Ich träume jede Nacht ich packe meine Koffer und reise nach Paris, um frische Luft zu schöpfen, ganz den heiligen Gefühlen meiner neuen Religion mich hinzugeben, und vielleicht als Priester derselben die letzten Weihen zu empfangen. (HSA 20, 435)

The actual occasion of his emigration demanded a sequel narrative commensurate with this prophecy. Heine needed to convince Varnhagen, and not least himself, that he had arrived at the heart of something exciting in order to make good his projected biographical trajectory, to justify the self-imposed exile and shake off Danton's earth. The degree of poetic licence reflects what he assumes will be Varnhagen's sympathetic appreciation of a fellow writer's impulse, namely to capitalize on the emblematic potential of such an important

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<sup>15</sup> Heine expressed this frustration in letters to Cotta during his first winter in Paris. In October 1831 he complained 'hier ist jetzt alles still' (HSA 21, 23), then in December 'wir leben hier in der unleidlichsten Apathie' (ibid., 27) and the following January 'es geht [...] nichts Bedeutendes vor' (ibid., 28).

moment. In light of his expedient use of the epistolary dynamic to bolster a sense of self in alignment with his literary programme, Heine's alleged telepathy with Varnhagen emerges as little more than veiled self-reflexivity.

In Heine's correspondence we find ourselves in something like the workshop of the self-fashioner. It is here that he seems first to identify and establish those events as 'autobiographems' on which he then bases the construction of his authorial identity in the literary works. Even in writing that is destined for a limited, private audience and hence without any obvious literary imperative, Heine reaches a level of self-reflection that marks him out as an extreme example of the self-fashioning author.<sup>16</sup> The fact that this led him paradoxically to adopt an inconspicuous, even reticent voice as a correspondent, particularly in the letters from Paris, prepares us in some measure for the most surprising element in our account, namely Heine's ambivalent relationship to the task of writing an official autobiography.

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<sup>16</sup> Brigitte Glaser notes that, for self-fashioning to occur, 'the writing self must have reached the level of self-reflection'. See *The Creation of the Self in Autobiographical Writing in Seventeenth-century England: Subjectivity and Self-fashioning in Memoirs, Diaries and Letters* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2001), p. 13.

## TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER 8

*The Elusive Autobiographer\**

‘In den Werken der Dichter muß man ihre Geschichte suchen, und hier findet man ihre geheimsten Bekenntnisse’ (DHA 10, 253). So Heine observes in his *Einleitung zu Miguel Cervantes* (1837), having dismissed conventional biography—the kind reliant on ‘Notizen, die gewöhnlich bey den Frau Basen der Nachbarschaft aufgegabelt werden’ (252)—as a means to discern anything beyond the outer shell (‘Hülle’) of the author in question. However, as enlightened readers of Cervantes’ poetic works, he implies that we—that is Heine himself and we his literary disciples—may gain access to ‘den Mann selbst, seine wahre, treue, unverläumdete Gestalt’ (ibid.), a statement which acquires its full significance once we recognise how Heine uses this text throughout to smuggle ‘Bekenntnisse’ of his own via a biographical character-sketch of another writer (cf. Briegleb; B 6/i, 298). As such, the *Einleitung* offers a veiled instruction in how to exploit what he seems to imply is his own autobiographical tendency: a close reading of Heine’s literary works could reveal the most secret confessions of his life.

This disclosure to the aspiring reader-biographer recalls the kind of comments he had made nearly fifteen years earlier in a letter to Karl Immermann, where he nevertheless came to quite a different conclusion:

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\* I coin the phrase as an adaptation of Jeffrey Sammons’s famously ‘Elusive Poet’.

Wie leicht auch die Geschichte eines Dichters Aufschluß geben könnte über sein Gedicht, wie leicht sich wirklich nachweisen ließe, daß oft politische Stellung, Religion, Privathaß, Vorurtheil und Rücksichten auf sein Gedicht eingewirkt, so muß man dieses dennoch nie erwähnen, besonders nicht bey Lebzeiten des Dichters. Man entjungfert gleichsam das Gedicht, man zerreißt den geheimnißvollen Schleyer desselben, wenn jener Einfluß der Geschichte den man nachweist wirklich vorhanden ist; man verunstaltet das Gedicht wenn man ihn fälschlich hineingegrübelt hat. Und wie wenig ist oft das äußere Gerüste unserer Geschichte mit unserer wirklichen, inneren Geschichte zusammenpassend! Bey mir wenigstens paßte es nie. (10 June 1823; HSA 20, 93)

Here, he conceives the relationship between a poet's life ('Geschichte') and works in terms of the same language of secrecy and uncovering, but with reference to a further, complicating dimension: the possible discrepancy between a life-story as it appears on the outside and the (hidden) reality within. If we believe his assertion at the end of the passage quoted then the reading method suggested by the *Einleitung* seems destined to fall down when applied to Heine's own texts. Any bid to uncover latent autobiographical confessions in his poetic works, formulated here in terms of a violatory unveiling which exploits biographical detail in the interpretative act, is frustrated by the revelation that such matters as 'politische Stellung, Religion, Privathaß, Vorurtheil und Rücksichten', however pertinent, merely belong to a writer's 'external armoury'. Superficial signs, they remain divorced from the 'wirkliche innere Geschichte', an entirely independent entity which continues to elude detection. Given what has come to light in the course of our study, this claim to a further, cabbalistic layer of biographical meaning must be treated with a healthy dose of scepticism. We have seen that political and ideological positioning, private and public feuds, prejudices and scandals form precisely

(and exclusively) the stuff of Heine's ubiquitous acts of self-presentation in all areas of his writing, from journalism to private correspondence, poetry to polemic. Here, Heine's statement represents a strategic manoeuvre in response to a recent and unwelcome review of his poetry—'es kränkte mich tief und bitter als ich gestern im Briefe eines Bekannten ersah wie er sich mein ganzes poetisches Wesen aus zusammengerafften Histörchen konstruiren wollte' (HSA 20, 92)—and is designed to reassert the special autonomy of the artist. In short, it is an instance of self-fashioning whose success paradoxically relies on there being insubstantial, or at least ineffable, autobiographical evidence.

Together, both texts point to a fundamental ambivalence in Heine's attitude towards autobiography which is surprising for one who writes so incessantly about himself. We may recall Wolfgang Menzel's complaint made in reference to the *Memoiren des Herren von Schnabelewopski*, which implicitly defined him as the quintessential *autobiographer*, that is one who usurps the function of his future biographer: 'noch niemand hat von Heine mehr gesprochen als er selbst. Sollte er dieses Geschäft nicht lieber der Nachwelt überlassen?'.<sup>1</sup> However, when it comes to designing and executing an 'official' autobiography—as discrete from such pseudo-autobiographical texts as *Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand* and *Schnabelewopski*, and indeed the kind of autobiographical reminiscences which colour virtually all his writing—he proves to be conspicuously evasive. Heine's approach to autobiography presents a puzzling conundrum within our portrait of the self-fashioning author.

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<sup>1</sup> In Cotta's *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, no. 71 (11 July 1834).

Early references in the correspondence make it possible to assert that he spent over thirty years engaging with the idea of writing an official autobiography or memoirs. 'Wenn Du einst meine Memoiren liest, so wirst Du mich besser verstehen', he suggested to Immanuel Wohlwill on 7 April 1823 (HSA 20, 73). However, despite several periods of alleged productivity and frequent references to the project, only the *Geständnisse* (1854) were published before his death, a work which one critic optimistically introduced as 'die letzte ausführliche Reflexion über mehr als 50 Lebensjahre, der Endpunkt seiner persönlichen Evolution', only to concede in conclusion: 'damit öffnete er mehr Türen, als er verschloß'.<sup>2</sup> There is even greater uncertainty about the manuscript which eventually resulted in the posthumous *Memoiren* fragment, published in 1884 as part of the complete works by Hoffmann & Campe. Was there in fact a much larger autobiographical text that was then lost or destroyed, and if so by whom? The question of what happened to the manuscript was already a hot potato in negotiations leading up to the first publication of the fragmentary text and has, ever since, so captivated readers that commentary on the memoirs is invariably consumed with a perceived need to unravel or at least ponder the mystery it presents. Ironically, this has tended to divert attention away from the texts themselves. There has been very little in the way of sustained critical analysis of either the *Memoiren* or *Geständnisse* with the result that pertinent and

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<sup>2</sup> Jean Chick, *Eine Untersuchung zu Heines 'Geständnissen'* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1987), p. 3; p. 88.

more probing questions concerning Heine as an autobiographical writer have been overlooked.

In his critical edition of the complete works, Briegleb does not query the one-time existence of a much larger manuscript precursor to the published memoirs (see B 6/ii [1976]). He elaborates a theory to explain its disappearance, in particular its likely disappearance during Heine's lifetime, based on the idea of a notional 'family censor' and hence preventive 'self-censorship' on Heine's part:

Das Gewaltverhältnis, das Heine im Schoße seiner Familie erfahren hat, die 'Familienzensur', hat die Geschichte der Textvernichtung im wesentlichen ausgelöst [...] so daß wir sagen können, nicht nur die Überlieferung, sondern auch die Entstehung der *Memoiren* war den gesellschaftlichen Äußerungsbedingungen ausgesetzt, die es Heine nur schwer möglich gemacht haben, seine 'soziale Stellung', indem er sie reflektierte, zugleich in einem kritischen Erklärungszusammenhang darzustellen. (B 6/ii, 296)

He later alludes to the probable destruction of at least part of the manuscript at the hands of maligned family members following Heine's death, 'gegen deren selbstverständliche Gewaltanwendung keine gesetzliche Regelung (Testament) bestehen konnte' (B 6/ii, 320), although he takes care to foreground Heine's own part in delivering it to this fate:

Die Geschichte dieser Vernichtung ist keine Skandalstory mit Verantwortlichen und interessanten Rätseln. Die Personen sind austauschbar, nur Heine selbst nicht, der den Versuch unternommen hat, seine gesellschaftlichen Erfahrungen unerschrocken und plastisch darzustellen und ihre Synthese in einer kritischen Lebensbeschreibung zu finden. (Ibid., 320)

If only he had entrusted the manuscript to his publishers during his lifetime rather than delaying in the hope of a better deal for his widow, it might have survived, Briegleb argues.

Gerd Heinemann stemmed the tide of much speculation in 1977 with an article in which he dispatches the many suppositions made about direct destructive intervention by elements of Heine's family at various points in the long history of the memoirs.<sup>3</sup> While his findings do not automatically disqualify Briegleb's argument, which does insist on Heine's own agency, they nevertheless expose its rather metaphysical nature, founded as it is on a preoccupation with presenting the author as victim. For Briegleb, the curtailed memoirs represent a reminder of the loss of 'eines der bedeutendsten Werke der literarischen Sozialkritik' (B 6/ii, 320), with which Heine, had he not been thwarted, would have delivered a supposedly frank and graphic account of contemporary society and his experiences within it. It is difficult to conceive of him ever having composed a text to fit this description. He may have had grandiose pretensions to something of the sort, but these were most likely rhetorical gestures calculated to convince his publisher that he was writing to fulfil contemporary expectations not dissimilar to Briegleb's own; he announced to Campe that 'das Buch, das man ganz eigens von mir erwartet' was to be a great work to encompass no less than 'die ganze Zeitgeschichte, die ich in ihren größten Momenten mitgelebt, [...] sammt den markantesten Personen meiner Zeit, ganz Europa, das ganze moderne Leben, deutsche Zustände bis zur socialen Revolution, das Resultat meiner kostspieligsten und schmerzlichsten Studien' (HSA 21, 189). Sammons argues more cogently with

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<sup>3</sup> 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Datierung der "Memoiren" Heinrich Heines', *Études Germaniques* 32 (1977), 441-444.

reference to the earlier autobiographical texts and extant memoirs, which he suggests offer sufficient evidence to presume that 'the lost work would not have been an orderly, chronological, realistic account' but rather 'a poetic fiction, a transformation of experience into its imaginative correlatives' (*A Modern Biography*, p. 338). It is ironic that Briegleb should reject the notion of a 'Skandalstory' to describe the fate of the memoirs when his self-proclaimed '*Geschichte der Vernichtung*' elaborates a mythology of suppression and destruction with its own decidedly emotive rhetoric – a tale of victimhood and violent power struggles in the bosom of the family. Once again Sammons is more measured in his assessment, calling the memoirs 'a particularly concentrated example of the web of cross-talk and misinformation that so often surrounds Heine's affairs' (p. 337). At the same time he refreshes scholarly debate by venturing that the entire premise of an erstwhile complete manuscript might be a fallacy and a myth of its author's own making; that Heine claimed at various points to have written more than he had, for strategic purposes. The argument is compelling and wholly congruent with our profile of the self-fashioning author. However, it rests on a problematic approach – strangely, one which unites Sammons and Briegleb in their otherwise divergent accounts of Heine's autobiographical project. Just as Briegleb omits to reflect critically on the self-conscious and entirely strategic nature of Heine's protestations against his family—his unconscious reproduction of a Heinean rhetoric of victimization is telltale evidence of this—so Sammons invests wholeheartedly in his alleged myth-making by propagating a tale of 'The

Mysterious Memoirs' which 'flit like a phantom through almost his entire career' and present 'one first-class enigma that continues to tantalize us' (p. 335). In short, both fall into the trap of merely echoing aspects of a narrative Heine weaves, about the composition of the memoirs in letters, public statements and the extant text itself, which seems destined to muddy the status of his autobiographical project and distract attention from its limited execution. What they fail to reflect on is the striking ascendancy of this peripheral narrative over the tangible results of the project. There is little purpose in examining the web of extra-textual speculation in its own right, since in doing so we merely elect to surrender our critical judgment to a game of hide-and-seek we cannot win, in which Heine manipulates his reader's natural curiosity and thirst for biographical revelation for his own ends. Rather than wondering what a putative complete manuscript might have contained, our question ought to be: why does Heine, who has been named 'der geborene Autobiographist [von der Struktur der Schreibweise her]' (Höhn, *Handbuch*, p. 494), make such a song and dance of writing an official autobiography and how might this inform our reading of the texts he did produce?

Jürgen Brummack comes closest to identifying a credible explanation when he considers 'ob Heines Schwierigkeiten mit den Memoiren wirklich da lagen, wo er selber sie sah, nämlich in den Machenschaften der Feinde [...] oder nicht vielmehr in dem immanenten Anspruch der Gattung Autobiographie, der nicht

mehr einzulösen war'.<sup>4</sup> While this still gives too much credit to an assumption that Heine is being honest with his reader (and himself) when he attributes certain difficulties experienced in writing the memoirs to hostile external circumstances, Brummack nevertheless highlights an internal problem with autobiography as a genre that is far richer in implication. The unusual level of intrigue and obfuscation with which Heine surrounds his memoirs sets these at odds with our genre expectations, he suggests – 'ein eigentümliches Mißverhältnis, das der Erklärung bedarf' (p. 287).

Much energy has been devoted to distinguishing between the *Geständnisse* and *Memoiren* as examples of two different modes of autobiographical writing: a self-reflexive autobiography 'in der sich der Erzähler auf die eigene Entwicklung konzentriert', and memoirs 'in denen er über persönlich erlebte geschichtsträchtige Ereignisse und Personen berichtet' (DHA 15, 223). While general consensus recognises the *Geständnisse* as Heine's official autobiography, the jury is still out on how to define the posthumously named *Memoiren* fragment – Friedrich Sengle pronounces the title 'irreführend' (*Biedermeierzeit* II, 224). There is also speculation that, had the work continued, its form would have grown closer to that of the *Geständnisse* as Heine progressed from youthful memoirs onto adult reflections, which would necessarily have had a more intellectual focus (see DHA 15, 1047). All such debates of nuance automatically become irrelevant, however, when we recognise that both works—not just the

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<sup>4</sup> 'Heines Memoirenpläne und ihr Verhältnis zu seinem dichterischen Werk', in *Heinrich Heine: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung*, ed. by Brummack (Munich: Beck, 1980), pp. 287-289 (p. 289).

memoirs, as has been implied (see DHA 15, 1017)—are conditioned by Heine's own essential ambivalence towards the form and function of autobiography as an overarching category. As two inconclusive derivatives of the same lifelong project, they are in fact the very manifestation of his indecision. Focus has tended to be on the *Memoiren* in this respect due to their posthumous and fragmentary publication status as well as Heine's evasive comments pertaining to their composition, yet in terms of the texts we have before us, the *Geständnisse* are no less mysterious. On the contrary, one might argue they are the more so by virtue of being an ostensibly complete work within a project characterized by incompleteness. Before we examine the particular ways in which Heine's only official published autobiography eludes the task it purports to carry out, it is necessary to consider how this text fits with his problematic relationship to the genre in general. As a tangent to the long thirty-year history of his attempt to produce memoirs, the *Geständnisse* are the formal embodiment of Heine's permanently evasive attitude.

There are four main phases to this repeatedly abortive compositional narrative. Material from as early as the 1820s, which the twenty-five-year-old Heine had destined for a self-contained autobiography—he communicated plans for this to Wohlwill (7 April 1823; HSA 20, 73) and Ludwig Robert (27 November 1823), and Eduard Wedekind alluded to it in his diary (16 June 1824; *Werner* 1, 99)—, was most likely diverted into the pseudo-autobiographical *Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand* (1826). His comment to Robert prepared the ground for a poetic transliteration of superficially substantive 'Bekanntnisse' that were

nevertheless intended to show 'wie ich meine Zeit und Zeitgenossen betrachtet, und wie mein ganzes trübes, drangvolles Leben *in das Uneigennützigste, in die Idee übergeht*' (HSA 20, 124; my emphasis). By this account, memoirs are transformed within an imaginative paradigm and autobiography becomes a kind of act of self-redemption through art. Such texts are the preserve of an essentially elusive poet whose views Heine had voiced to Immermann (HSA 20, 93) and reasserts here: 'es liegt mir viel, sehr viel an der Anerkennung der Masse, und doch giebt's niemand, der wie ich den Volksbeyfall verachtet und seine Persönlichkeit vor den Aeußerungen desselben verbirgt' (HSA 20, 124). A second, more prominent phase centres round Heine's plans for a *Gesamtausgabe* in 1837. To this he proposed to append a work he variously refers to as 'meine Lebensbeschreibung' (to Johannes Scheible on 24 February; HSA 21, 186), 'meine Biographie' (to Campe on 1 March; *ibid.*, 189), '[der] Roman meines Lebens' (to Campe on 17 March; *ibid.*, 193) and 'meine Memoiren' (to Maximilian Heine on 5 August; *ibid.*, 223). The last of these is perhaps the most apt description of a project which now belonged firmly in the category of *Zeitgeschichte* (see the letter to Campe; 189). That being said, the more overtly autobiographical terms Heine uses show how he regarded this as having in essence a dual function: as an account of contemporary history from a personal standpoint which would also serve as a form of autobiographical confession. It is unsurprising that Heine should have sought to move away from autobiography with a private, inward focus and towards a more public form conceived in a spectatorial mode which envisaged a creative relationship

between self and world, author and reader. This reflected the poet and especially the journalist he was fashioning himself to be in the 1830s. However, as demonstrated by the complex aesthetic negotiations of the *Neue Gedichte* project, his attitude was far less clear cut in practice. In his correspondence, Heine alludes to a period of urgent and prolific activity that is nevertheless offset by the impulse to take his time. Once again, he professes himself unwilling to compromise on artistic merit; as he told Campe, 'ich wollte ihr [der Publikation] auch den höchsten Glanz verleihen und lange daran schreiben' (HSA 21, 191). However, there were also more complicated motivations involved here than was the case with the *Neue Gedichte*. In the letter to his brother, Maximilian, Heine appears fraught with uneasy indecision over the timing of the work: 'ich schreibe viel. Mein wichtiges Werk sind meine Memoiren; die aber doch nicht so bald erscheinen werden; am liebsten wär es mir wenn sie erst nach meinem Tode gedruckt würden – aber ich brauche das Geld' (HSA 21, 223); immediate practical considerations were forcing his hand, he suggests, while in the same breath he announces that the memoirs will not be published quite as soon as all that. His mercurial stance with regard to an optimum publication date seems to have corresponded with an inability to determine quite what was motivating him to produce this allegedly 'scandalous' account of his life and times: was it intended primarily to provoke his readership for immediate effect, or was it to be postponed and released as a posthumous revelation, with a view to writing history? By 1840, Heine seems to have resolved on the latter and informs Campe of four volumes of memoirs 'die

mein Sinnen und Wollen vertreten und schon ihres historischen Stoffes wegen, der treuen Darstellung der mysteriösesten Uebergangskrise, auf die Nachwelt kommen' (HSA 21, 381). With this he determined to cement his perceived role as the prophet of a new era – he concludes with wry candour, 'das neue Geschlecht wird auch die beschissenen Windeln sehen wollen, die seine erste Hülle waren' (ibid.).<sup>5</sup> With the failure of the planned *Gesamtausgabe*, material he had assembled for an official autobiographical work was once again diverted, this time into the biographical memoir *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* (1840) which had the character of a 'Zeitgeschichte' and certainly fulfilled the promise of creating a scandal with immediate impact.

The noisiest period in the history of the memoirs was paradoxically the least productive of all in terms of actual publications, even of a tangential nature. Heine's involvement in the inheritance feud which followed the death of his uncle Salomon on 23 December 1844 was certainly a distraction. This nevertheless crucially shaped his conception of the function of autobiography. The feud centred round increasingly bitter negotiations with his cousin Karl, Salomon's heir, who had determined to withhold the sum of eight thousand marks left to Heine and pay instead an annual sum of two thousand francs at his own discretion. He declared Heine financially irresponsible, doubtless with some justification, and warned him not to write anything disrespectful concerning Salomon Heine or risk losing even this annuity. Heine was furious to be held to ransom in this way and fought back with a virulent campaign in

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Deutschland*, Cantos I and XXVII (DHA 4, 94; 155).

which the threat of public exposure, the very thing that had motivated the family's policy, became his principal weapon. Revenge had already been a motivating factor in the 1820s, when Heine vowed to use his memoirs to reveal unpalatable truths about a loathed 'Hamburger Menschentroß' (HSA 20, 73). In light of his treatment at the hands of the family this combative element, which was unusual in the context of memoirs as a genre, now became the entire *raison d'être* of the project.<sup>6</sup> Even during Salomon's lifetime Heine had asserted his own 'geistigen Obermacht', and in a barely concealed attempt at blackmail reminded his uncle 'daß kein Mensch in der Welt, mit wenigen Federstrichen, sich gewaltiger rächen könnte als ich' (1 September 1837; HSA 21, 229). After his death, Heine held the memoirs over his family like a Damoclean sword. Once again, he construed autobiographical revelation as an essentially public and, above all, strategic act; as he informed Campe on 4 February 1845, 'da kann ich unaufhörlich in den Zeitungen reklamiren, Memoiren schreiben, Gott und die Welt als Zeugen einmischen' (HSA 21, 160). In conjunction with a press campaign aimed at mobilising a show of public abhorrence towards his family's actions, he uses the memoirs to stage a battle for supremacy in which the writer's pen and genius are pitted against the forces of philistine wealth. It is immaterial whether the texts to which Heine alludes at this time existed or not, since the promise of their existence was sufficient for his purpose. Above all, he relied on cultivating an aura of mystery and uncertainty to heighten the

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<sup>6</sup> The *DHA* editors note: 'mit dem Motiv der Abrechnung deutet Heine eine Richtung an, mit der die Gattung Memoiren üblicherweise nicht verbunden war, jedenfalls nicht in Deutschland' (DHA 15, 1019).

impression of his power to inflict real damage.<sup>7</sup> For all this manoeuvring, one nevertheless cannot help but question the effectiveness of his public campaign and strategy to involve the memoirs in what was to all intents and purposes a private dispute. Even before he was finally forced to back down in the summer of 1846, and comply with Karl's censorship demands in order to secure the restoration of his allowance, Heine's tactics had led him to produce a perverse parody of a piece of autobiographical writing. In February of the same year he composed an insulting letter against himself which he ascribed to a 'Dr. H.' (Halle?), one of Karl's allies, with a view to having Varnhagen reply in his defence. The text is an uncanny pastiche of all the familiar attacks on his person, and highlights the memoirs as the crowning example of an egotistic author's folly:

Der Doktor Heinrich Heine [...] hat ein sehnlichst erwartetes Mittel gefunden, seine sich überall vordrängende Persönlichkeit auf recht eklatante Weise in den Mund der Leute zu bringen. Er beabsichtigt, wie es scheint, der ununterbrochenen Reihe von Scandalen, die sein Leben und seine schriftstellerische Thätigkeit bilden, die Krone aufzusetzen; denn er geht [...] mit der Abfassung einer gegen seine eigene Familie gerichteten Denkschrift um.

(DHA 15, 108)

Sammons quite rightly observes 'something psychologically weird in the exactness of the mimicry' (*A Modern Biography*, p. 283). Despite frequent assertions to the contrary, Heine must have studied his enemies' criticisms closely to enable him to create such a credible and comprehensive character assassination in the third person. There is also something weirdly disconcerting in his treatment of autobiography. In the passage quoted he reproduces the

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<sup>7</sup> A number of eye-witness accounts attest to Heine's strategy, including memoirs by Alfred Meißner and Wolfgang Müller von Königswinter. See *Werner* II, 79; 96.

most common objection to his prevalent autobiographical impulse in a formula ('[eine] sich überall vordrängende Persönlichkeit') which echoes one he deployed openly in *Ludwig Börne* in defence of the need for assertive self-presentation, '[das] beständige Constatiren meiner Persönlichkeit' (DHA 11, 119). If this text can be said to represent Heine's (only) autobiographical output from this third phase in the history of the memoirs, we might legitimately question his soundness of purpose in using the genre strategically. The self-proclaimed outward-looking, forthright personality appears to be retreating inward in a self-denigrating version of autobiography that borders on the pathological and masochistic.

One direct consequence of the agreement with his cousin was that Heine burned most of his mother's and sister's letters and thereby, so speculation goes, a deal of the material that would otherwise have been incorporated into his memoirs. Remarks in the correspondence suggest that he carried out three separate 'Autodafés': in April 1847 (two months after the final agreement with Karl Heine), between December 1849 and January 1850, and finally between May and June 1851 (see DHA 15, 1032 f.). Heine encourages speculation in an extant prefatory section of the *Memoiren*, where he states: 'diese Aufzeichnungen [...] habe ich jedoch schier zur Hälfte wieder vernichten müssen, theils aus leidigen Familienrücksichten, theils auch wegen religiöser Skrupeln' (DHA 15, 59). In a sense the posthumously published fragment may be regarded as 'complete', since Heine evidently now conceived the memoirs as an inherently fragmentary project on account of censorship constraints placed

upon him, notably by his family – a circumstance of which he is keen to remind us. If there is cause to doubt that such ‘Autodafés’ took place in reality, they were unquestionably a useful and colourful ploy to highlight this issue. By January 1850, he nevertheless attributes his destructive actions to a different motivation. As Ludwig Kalisch recounts, Heine had claimed most recently to have burned manuscripts ‘weil ich gefunden, daß dieselben gar Manches enthielten, was mit meiner jetzigen Ueberzeugung nicht mehr übereinstimmt’ (*Werner* II, 156). Such ‘geistige Selbstmordgedanken’ (*ibid.*)—NB Heine uses the same term in *Article* XXXVII of *Lutezia* (see DHA 13/1, 142)—can no longer be identified with a Brieglebian notion of self-censorship, the kind practised out of necessity by a victim of external circumstances; rather they are symptomatic of a shift in Heine’s perspective which turns on the concept of autobiography as ‘vanity’. In the words of Eduard von Fichte’s report of 31 August 1851:

Die größte Eitelkeit, sagte [Heine], sei es, dem Nachruhm nachzujagen. Aus diesem Grunde [...] schreibe er auch an keiner Selbstbiographie. Er habe außerordentlich viel Geschriebenes darliegen, dessen Schicksal er nicht vorausbestimmen könne, schon Vieles habe er mit großer Mühe ausgesucht und dem Feuertode übergeben, damit es nicht in die Hände Unberufener falle und auch, um sich selbst der Versuchung zu überheben, in die er doch noch einmal gerathen könnte, dasselbe zu veröffentlichen. Das wolle er jedoch nicht aus dem Grunde so ängstlich verhindern, weil seine Ansichten sich geändert [...] wohl aber hätte sein Urtheil über Personen und Verhältnisse *mannigfache Berichtigung* erfahren. (*Werner* II, 280; my emphasis)

Reading between the lines of this typically muddled account of the status of Heine’s autobiographical project at this time, it is possible to identify a change in direction which von Fichte has sensed, but without comprehending the implications. When Heine claimed to be stalling his ‘Selbstbiographie’, he was

really referring to the memoirs project. However, the term is inadvertently appropriate to the text he would soon publish as *Geständnisse*, an autobiographical ‘confession’ in which he presents not a complete transformation but rather an ‘adjustment’ of his intellectual position after 1848.

The failed revolutions of 1848 and his own physical collapse were doubtlessly in the forefront of Heine’s mind when he announced ‘die Zeit der Eitelkeit ist vorüber’ (*Geständnisse*; DHA 15, 51), yet he had already professed the same thing three years earlier in a letter to Campe: ‘ich habe gar keine Eitelkeit [...] mir liegt am Ende gar nichts an der Meinung des Publikums; mir ist nur eins wichtig, die Befriedigung meines innern Willens – die Selbstachtung meiner Seele’ (4 February 1845; HSA 21, 164). External historical and biographical events effectively served to confirm a transformation Heine was already undergoing in terms of his attitude to the memoirs project. Albeit still in reference to hypothetical ‘Memoiren’, Alphons Trittau seemed to be willing Heine to produce a more inward-looking, self-reflexive kind of text when, on 1 February 1854, he wrote to Campe with the following suggestion:

Seine Memoiren würden seine innere Bildungsgeschichte die Entwicklung und den Fortschritt seiner Ideen, sein Verhältniß zur Literatur und Philosophie Deutschlands etc. darstellen [...], sie würden die innere Tiefe seines Geistes zeigen und offenbaren, was hinter den Coulissen vorgegangen während seine Dichtungen und Werke ja nur den Schauspielern glichen, die auf offener Bühne erscheinen. (*Werner II*, 335)

If we overlook the element of wishful thinking in Trittau’s expectations regarding the revelatory power of such a work, we are left with a description that closely reflects Heine’s new measure of autobiographical worth, based on

private self-recognition, and uncannily anticipates the *Geständnisse*, which were published towards the end of the same year. It is at this moment that the composition histories of Heine's two autobiographical texts diverge. While the memoirs had always been an outward-looking, attention-seeking project most resonant of Heine the 'Schauspieler' and polemical strategist—their overriding use as 'a piece in the great chess game' (Sammons, *A Modern Biography*, p. 336) attests to the fact—the *Geständnisse* were launched in the first instance as an *interpretative* aid, in the guise of a preface to a new edition of *De l'Allemagne* destined for the *Œuvres Complètes* planned with Michel Lévy. In an *Aveux de l'auteur*, Heine sought to bridge the gap between a contemporary French audience and his now twenty-year-old project. Although the German version may be said to have assumed the more conventional position of an autobiography—it headed the first volume of the *Vermischte Schriften*—, both publications represented an opportunity for Heine to reflect on how he had changed as an author, since his earlier works, in light of the philosophical and religious revision he had already broadcast in the 'Berichtigung' of 15 April 1849 (DHA 15, 112 f.) and elaborated upon in the 'Nachwort zum Romanzero' (30 September 1851; DHA 3/1, 177 ff.). As was the case with the *Neue Gedichte*, Heine's *Geständnisse* project an author who is also the editor, commentator and interpreter of his own literary career – an intellectual focus that rebounds on the autobiographical act with surprising consequences.

The *Geständnisse* offer a commentary on the very activity of writing the self. This is something Heinemann appears to recognise instinctively when he defends the brevity of the work, which is indeed conspicuously at odds with the weight of expectation generated by Heine and others in the run-up to its publication, and reads it as a kind of cipher for the entire literary oeuvre:

Heines Gesamtwerk ist eine facettenreiche Mischung von autobiographischen Elementen, historischen Gegebenheiten und poetischer Imagination. Es entspricht daher der Struktur dieses Werkes, wenn der Dichter am Ende seines Lebens nur eine knappe Autobiographie, die *Geständnisse*, verfaßt [...]: Sein Gesamtwerk sollte als autobiographische 'Einheit' verstanden werden; den Schlüssel dazu lieferten die *Geständnisse*.

(DHA 15, 1347; NB Heinemann is this volume's editor)

At first sight, the argument that this text offers the key to understanding Heine's works as an autobiographical unity is as compelling as it is comforting for Heine too gives the impression that the *Geständnisse* are to be and demonstrate just that; 'nicht Jedem zugänglich, doch sind sie wichtig, indem die Einheit aller meiner Werke und meines Lebens besser begriffen wird' he assured his publisher (3 August 1854; HSA 23, 358). In June 1852, he was already discussing his then current literary projects—most likely *Lutezia* and the *Vermischte Schriften*—in terms of 'den Abschluß meines litterarischen Treibens' (to Campe, HSA 23, 210). Two months later he reiterated his awareness of the need for closure, 'da dieses Buch das letzte ist, das bei meinen Lebzeiten von mir erscheinen wird' and revealed his determination to have the final say in presenting his life's works to posterity: 'ich [muß] mein Hauptaugenmerk darauf haben, daß es gut sei, daß es vollendet sei, und daß ich nicht am Rande

des Grabes Fiasko mache. Ich habe keinen zweiten Pfeil nachzuschießen' (HSA 23, 220). Such comments were quite likely precipitated by a challenge issued by his French translator in the *Revue des deux mondes* on 1 April 1852. 'Une seule chose a manqué à cette carrière brillante,' Taillandier had proclaimed, and cited 'l'ordre, la règle, l'harmonie, condition suprême du beau et qui doit tenter le grand artiste à l'heure où il va se séparer de son oeuvre' (see B 6/ii, 197-8). Invoking Heine's acute awareness of his own status as author, he called for an impartial, grandly summative and harmonious account of the man behind the works:

Vous avez représenté mieux que personne toute une période de la pensée allemande, période de trouble, de maladie, de déchirement: qu'il serait beau d'exprimer aussi le retour de la sérénité vraie, à l'heure où ce pays semble prêt à retrouver ses voies, où il repousse de plus en plus le sensualisme, l'athéisme et toutes les grimaçantes visions du délire! (Ibid.)

Heine's own metaphor for the autobiographical act is markedly different in tone to Taillandier's rather triumphal vision. Forced to turn away from the outside world on account of his debilitating illness, he tells Cotta how 'mein Leben ist nur ein Zurückgrübeln in die Vergangenheit', implying that (autobiographical) memories have become a substitute for living (26 March 1852; HSA 23, 193). This recalls and deepens the sense of resignation and regression—'meines Fortschreitens nach hinten'—already expressed, albeit with ironic humour, in the preface to *Salon III, Über den Denunzianten* (DHA 11, 157). Taillandier's conception of autobiography may propose the same basic premise as that on which Heine professes to build in the *Geständnisse*—'die Aufgabe [...], hier nachträglich die Entstehung dieses Buches [*De l'Allemagne*] und die

philosophischen und religiösen Variationen, die seit seiner Abfassung im Geiste des Autors vorgefallen, zu beschreiben' (DHA 15, 15)—but it presupposes the possibility of a serene and uncomplicated convergence of history, writing and the author's life which this text, for all its pretensions, avoids.

In one passage, Heine recounts how he spent two years composing an accessible account of Hegel's philosophy to be appended to a second (German) edition of *De l'Allemagne* only to abandon it. He confesses:

Als das Werk endlich fertig war, erfaßte mich bei seinem Anblick ein unheimliches Grauen, und es kam mir vor, als ob das Manuskript mich mit fremden, ironischen, ja bößhaften Augen ansähe. Ich war in eine sonderbare Verlegenheit gerathen: Autor und Schrift paßten nicht mehr zusammen.

(DHA 15, 35)

The moment at which Heine comes to reflect on one of his own works (Taillandier's 'hour of separation') is characterized not by order and harmony but rather by the recognition of a fundamental disjunction between author and work. In his anthropomorphic description, the latter takes on a life of its own, while he finds himself the object of its antagonistic gaze. The consequence is a staged Autodafé, which represents the only way for Heine to reclaim jurisdiction over his own literary project: 'ich warf mein Manuskript über die Hegelsche Philosophie in die lodernde Glut; die brennenden Blätter flogen hinauf in den Schlot mit einem sonderbaren kichernden Geknister' (DHA 15, 38). Given what we have traced of the composition history of the autobiographical project as a whole and given that the *Geständnisse* proceed from a self-reflexive premise, it does not require a great leap of imagination to

bring Heine's own conclusion to bear on this text. Indeed, on close reading we encounter an author who is consistently at odds with the task he has set himself.<sup>8</sup>

Superficially, the text adheres to a basic logical chronological progression: from Madame de Staël's arrival in Paris (1814) to Heine's own in 1831, then on to the February Revolution of 1848 and his current situation in 1854 (see DHA 15, 916). It is nevertheless striking that the work in which Heine comes closest to expounding a theory of autobiography and the autobiographical method so fundamental to all his writing remains a strangely indeterminate example of the genre. In the most basic sense, the *Geständnisse* elude definition simply by trying to be and do too many different things: autobiographical 'confession' (Heine's philosophical and religious revision), literary review (of his own works, focussing on *De l'Allemagne*), polemic (against Mme de Staël, among others), narrative in the style of memoirs (Heine's arrival in Paris in 1831) and even political history (in particular, Heine's account of Napoleon III as a continuation of Napoleon).<sup>9</sup> This state of confusion regarding the purpose and structure of the work was intensified by its origin, intended for a French audience although it was also published in German. One telling indication of its maladjustment in this latter respect is the insertion of a lengthy quotation from

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<sup>8</sup> Michel Espagne seeks to rescue the *Geständnisse* from the implications of Heine's disjunctive self-designation by highlighting the intellectual continuity they achieve through 'einem Akt der geschichtsbezogenen Selbstausslegung'. As a result, he rather loses sight of Heine's own persistent focus on the problematic aspects of autobiography. See "'Autor und Schrift paßten nicht mehr zusammen": Heines Selbstausslegung in den deutschen Manuskripten der "Geständnisse"', *HJb* 20 (1981), 147-157 (p. 150).

<sup>9</sup> This latter component was reduced with the removal of the so-called 'Waterloo Fragment' in early 1854. Campe warned Heine against including this section on account of its stridently Francophile political tendency: 'Sie scheinen außer Acht zu lassen, daß Sie deutscher Schriftsteller sind' (17 April 1854; HSA 27, 170).

the preface to a second edition of *Salon II* of 1852 (DHA 15, 38 ff.), which would already have been familiar to German readers. It draws attention to its digressive status by requiring a rather clumsy authorial intervention ('nach der Stelle, welche ich hier citirt, folgen Geständnisse über [...]'; *ibid.*, 40) to link it to the remainder of the text. A patchwork structure and excursive style alone may be insufficient grounds to question the validity of Heine's text as autobiography. However, these are far from being the only manifestation of an ambivalent relationship with a genre which for Heine, to quote Brummack, 'nicht (mehr) einzulösen war' ('Heines Memoirenpläne', p. 289).

In calling his autobiography by a variety of synonyms for 'confessions' (originally 'Bekenntnisse', in French 'Confessions', and ultimately 'Geständnisse' or 'Aveux'), Heine engenders certain expectations in his reader regarding its function, not least through the allusion to some famous literary precedents – Rousseau's *Confessions* and Augustine's *Confessiones*. We are encouraged to anticipate an act of disclosure, by which our author will recount hitherto hidden episodes of his life to reveal his true self, the influences and the motivations behind his literary works – a confession of accountability (in religious terms, guilt) for the life lived and recognition of the development in thought (conversion) that such a confession elicits. Some early readers were apparently convinced by his performance in this respect. 'Mit seltener Offenheit deckt er [...] das Geheimniß aller der Gegensätze und Widersprüche auf, denen wir in seinen Schriften begegnen', remarked one reviewer in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (21 September 1854; see DHA 15, 289), while a French counterpart

writing in *Le Mousquetaire* enthused ‘ces pages disent quelque chose. Ces confidences intimes racontent des réalités’ (17 September 1854; see B 6/ii, 166). It is nevertheless telling that the latter, who accepted this work as a foretaste of Heine’s memoirs, looks forward to the occasion when ‘il fera ses Confessions, comme Jean-Jacques Rousseau’ (ibid., 167) – by implication, a feat that has not been accomplished here. Briegleb is more rigorous in his assessment of Heine’s purpose, which he relates to the failed revolutions of 1848, yet he still argues according to the same conventional understanding of what autobiography ought to achieve:

Die Begegnung mit dem Autor selbst könnte unter dem Vorzeichen gesucht werden: Studium der Art und Weise, wie einer sich aus der persönlichen Verantwortung für das Scheitern eines geschichtlich-revolutionären Schrittes nicht davonstiehlt, in dessen Vorgeschichte er eine Rolle übernommen hatte und deren Ziele er nach wie vor teilt. (B 6/ii, 208)

This rather worthy account proceeds from an attempt to reconcile an essentially classical form, which assumes a positive, progressive relationship between self and world, with the topsy-turvy events of Heine’s own times and biography. As Ingrid Aichinger notes, authors such as Immermann and Gutzkow had perceived a fundamental problem with autobiography in this period, namely ‘die Unmöglichkeit, den Stoff ihres Lebens dem inaugurierten Modell einer – im wesentlichen erfolgreich – fortschreitenden Persönlichkeitsentwicklung anzupassen’.<sup>10</sup> Their response was to moderate the perceived hegemony of the authorial subject via a ‘Zurückdrängung des dargestellten Ich bis zur

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<sup>10</sup> Ingrid Aichinger, *Künstlerische Selbstdarstellung: Goethes “Dichtung und Wahrheit” und die Autobiographie der Folgezeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1977), p. 11. NB Goethe’s is the ‘inaugurierten Modell’ alluded to.

Maskierung' (Immermann) or 'Kapitulation des Individuums vor der Macht der Umstände' (Gutzkow) (see Aichinger, p. 11). Both techniques are familiar from our study of Heine's strategies of self-presentation, yet whereas these authors and Briegleb, in his analysis, seek to assimilate the perceived problem in an adaptation of the conventional autobiographical mould, Heine in his autobiography refuses to do so. Instead he makes a point of highlighting the difficulty.

No sooner has Heine invoked a Rousseauian model for his project (by its very title), then he questions the worth, even rejects the possibility of pursuing it. 'Die Abfassung einer Selbstcharakteristik wäre nicht bloß eine sehr verfängliche, sondern sogar eine unmögliche Arbeit', he suggests, and goes on to reason 'mit dem besten Willen der Treuherzigkeit kann kein Mensch über sich selbst die Wahrheit sagen' – least of all an author conscious of his watching public (DHA 15, 13). Of Rousseau, he asks pointedly 'verläumdete er sich etwa selbst, um mit desto größerem Schein von Wahrhaftigkeit auch Andre [...] verläunden zu können?' (14). To give an *appearance* of truth (rather than to tell 'des réalités') is ironically precisely what defines autobiography. According to Jens Brockmeier, 'to create the impression of first-hand authenticity and to make the story convincing is what all autobiographical narratives are about'.<sup>11</sup> Heine does not contest the validity of such a definition, which he ascribes conversely to a genuine human trait: '[Rousseau] blieb [der menschlichen Natur] doch treu in Bezug auf unsere Erbschwäche, die darinn besteht, daß wir

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<sup>11</sup> Brockmeier (ed.), *Narrative and Identity*, p. 266 f.

in den Augen der Welt immer anders erscheinen wollen, als wir wirklich sind' (14). Indeed, just five short paragraphs later he celebrates an apposite anecdote told about Madame de Staël which, he muses, 'sollte sie auch unwahr seyn, so bleibt sie doch gut erfunden' (16). More radically, however, he shows confessional autobiography to be a self-refuting activity and unmasks its version of authenticity as a narrative effect that is entirely subject to the individual author's intent. Where does this leave our reading of his own self-proclaimed 'confessions'? Heine brings his exposition to a close with an answer, of sorts, to the implicit question:

Jeder von uns möchte dem Publikum in einer anderen Farbe erscheinen, als die ist, womit uns die Fatalität angestrichen hat. Gottlob, daß ich dieses begreife, und ich werde mich daher hüten, hier in diesem Buche mich selbst abzukonterfeyen. Doch der Lakune, welche dieses mangelnde Portrait verursacht, werde ich in den folgenden Blättern einigermaßen abzuhelfen suchen, indem ich hier genugsam Gelegenheit finde, meine Persönlichkeit so bedenklich als möglich hervortreten zu lassen. [...] Seyd ohne Sorge, ich werde mich nicht zu weiß malen, und meine Nebenmenschen nicht zu sehr anschwärzen. Ich werde immer meine Farbe ganz getreu angeben, damit man wisse, wie weit man meinem Urtheil trauen darf, wenn ich Leute von anderer Farbe bespreche. (15)

If Rousseau began his *Confessions*, which bear the motto 'Intus et in Cute' (inside and under the skin), with the aim and confident assurance of making himself known to the reader, Heine obviates the very possibility of genuine disclosure with this wildly disorientating conclusion to his opening gambit. The passage cited may have all the appearance of a substantial claim regarding the integrity of his own method; he ends with the reassurance that, since he willingly acknowledges the pitfalls of self-portraiture, it logically follows that he is a reliable autobiographer. However, closer inspection reveals a rhetorical

performance, in which Heine undermines his own argumentation concerning the matter of autobiographical truth. 'Seyd ohne Sorge' is not meant to soothe us. On the contrary, it is a signal to alert the attentive reader to the coming contradiction: if truthfulness escapes even those who pursue it 'mit dem besten Willen der Treuherzigkeit', we can be sure that when Heine proceeds from the claim 'ich werde immer meine Farbe ganz getreu angeben', we may trust anything but his judgment. Thus he destabilizes the basic premise of autobiography and self-consciously undermines the possibility of authenticity in his own narrative from the very outset. Of course the manoeuvre by which he does so need not be seen in itself to negate his own enterprise in writing 'confessions'. As a strategy already familiar to us from his engagement with the Romantic legacy, where he routinely suspends authenticity, this act of aesthetic subversion need not require any justification beyond the artistic licence it affords, to make use of the assumptions of conventional autobiography without being seen to ratify them, and hence the enjoyment it produces for complicit readers who witness a dazzling rhetorical performance. Far more unsettling for our reading of the text, however, is the way in which Heine nevertheless appears to address the authenticity problem he has identified – by practising suspension of another, more radical kind.

In the passage quoted, Heine admits that in rejecting the autobiographical mode he had initially been exploring—self-portraiture à la Rousseau—he has created a lacuna in his own project. For a moment, the *Geständnisse* are suspended in a vacuum, defined only by what they are not ('dieses mangelnde

Portrait'), until an alternative method is ventured – his 'Persönlichkeit' will come forth and enter the breach, he suggests. That said, this allusion to a technique he has already employed elsewhere, notably in *Ludwig Börne*, does not seem to preclude his returning in the next breath to the painting metaphor. As readers, we get the sense that a more genuine kind of autobiography is being suggested, offered to us, but then denied us again, all in the blink of an eye. The fact that the proffered alternative recalls a method and text with its own problematic relationship to autobiography neither aids nor impedes the impression. A strikingly similar manoeuvre occurs in the very opening paragraph, where Heine reflects on an opportunity already missed: 'ich [hätte] in meinem Buche *de l'Allemagne* [...] eine Besprechung meiner eignen Person liefern müssen. Indem ich dieses unterließ, entstand eine Lakune, welcher ich nicht leicht abzuhelfen weiß' (13). Having already invoked the modesty topos ('es ziemt mir nicht, mich hierüber weitläufig auszulassen [...]') as one form of explanation for his reticence in including an autobiographical section in the earlier text, his statement of lament segues into another, namely the outright rejection of 'Selbstcharakteristik' discussed above. What he omits to mention (until the end of the next paragraph) is that the current text, in its review of *De l'Allemagne* refracted through his present, altered perspective, sets out precisely to fill that lacuna. Why, then, his insistence on the element of failure or impossibility, on the gap-always-waiting-to-be-filled? We have identified the central paradox of Heine's autobiographical method: the infinite postponement of the task in hand intensified by the intimation that a 'real' (i.e. genuine)

account of his life and identity may be attainable elsewhere, even though this is categorically denied us here in his official autobiography.

It is possible to relate Heine's entire compositional strategy in this text to an act of procrastination, which is chiefly manifest in its digressive structure and rhetoric of evasion. After a long excursus into biblical and religious matters, which he prefaces with the announcement '[es] folgen Geständnisse über den Einfluß, den die Lektüre der Bibel auf meine spätere Geistesrevolution ausübte' (40), he sees fit to reassure his reader that the digression is over: 'ich verlasse den Ocean allgemeiner religiös-moralisch-historischer Betrachtungen, und lenke mein Gedankenschiff wieder bescheiden in das stille Binnenlandgewässer, wo der Autor so treu sein eigenes Bild abspiegelt' (47). Such signposts as this give the impression of a helpful, even contrite author who is keen to guide the reader through his avowedly non-linear narrative, yet as is the case here, these tend to prove misleading. By going off at a tangent and owning up to having done so, Heine is able to stage a return to the relatively easy task—so his metaphor aims to highlight—of what his readers expect from autobiography: a true depiction of the author. The problem remains that the digression itself supplies the only text we have before us, and even were this not the case self-portraiture has already been thoroughly discredited as a route to truth. Heine's metaphor for a reflective kind of autobiography—self-reflection in 'inland waters'—also strongly hints at the potential for narcissism. Structurally speaking, the *Geständnisse* leave the reader permanently at sea while the promised safe haven of genuine autobiography remains a tantalizing

*fata morgana*. Each individual episode—on religion, on the relationship with Hegelian philosophy or Madame de Staël's account of Germany, on the move to Paris etc.—is a self-conscious tangent to the main thrust of the project, which always lies in an indeterminate 'elsewhere'.

The *Geständnisse* appear to defer closure using the very same technique that Phelan has identified as Heine's journalistic strategy in his second major collection of articles on Parisian life, *Lutezia*. He invokes one of Heine's own analogies to describe 'a style of continuous procrastination' in which, writing as Scheherazade, he 'avoids settled positions and conclusions in favour of a narrative of continuous interruption' (*Reading Heinrich Heine*, p. 188).<sup>12</sup> While there was an obvious practical reason in the political journalism for Heine to prolong his narrative, namely to avoid 'execution' by the Bavarian state censor, it is far from apparent why he should continuously procrastinate from the comparatively innocent task of writing an autobiography, especially considering the idea had preoccupied him for so many years. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is the section of *Geständnisse* devoted to an account of his emigration to Paris which allows us to come closest if not to explaining why, then at least to understanding how Heine creates this puzzle. As I have been arguing, he places this particular biographical event at the heart of his authorial self-(re)construction, and he returns to the moment time and again in his writing. The most notable previous instances are in the second part of

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<sup>12</sup> Heine had cut into the end of one article to announce 'die Post geht ab, und wie die Sultaninn Scheherezade unterbrechen wir unsre Erzählung, vertröstend auf morgen, wo wir aber ebenfalls, wegen der vielen eingeschobenen Episoden, keinen Schluß liefern' (DHA 13/1, 88).

*Florentinische Nächte* (1833) and in the 'Briefe aus Helgoland' (Ludwig Börne, 1840). In the *Geständnisse*, the account is preceded by a disclaimer with which Heine abruptly dispels any expectation that we might be about to become privy to new information concerning the circumstances of his emigration and early experiences in Paris: 'an einem andern Orte, in meinen Memoiren, erzähle ich weitläufiger als es hier geschehen dürfte, wie ich nach der Juliusrevolution nach Paris übersiedelte' (22). Once again, the real autobiography is postponed, this time specifically to the memoirs. It is difficult to imagine how, as Heine appears to be suggesting, things which might have to be suppressed in one autobiographical work could subsequently be aired untrammelled in another. One may infer that he deemed this episode of his biography unsuited to the prevailing intellectual tenor of the *Geständnisse*, or that he already had it in mind to leave it to posthumous publication to avoid any uncomfortable repercussions. Heine claims similarly to postpone an account of his experiences during the Restoration to a time when, if we believe him, 'die uneigennützigste Absicht solcher Mittheilungen keinem Zweifel und keiner Verdächtigung begegnen kann' (23). However, neither hypothesis sits particularly well with our profile of a proactive and provocative writer. Michael Werner identifies a more credible motivation, which takes into account Heine's own designation of *Geständnisse* as the 'Vorläufer zu meinen Memoiren' (7 March 1854; HSA 21, 306):

Auch hier [...]spart Heine die eigentliche Autobiographie, die echte Bilanz und Summe, für später auf, läßt das, was er sich jetzt zu sagen anschickt, nur als bescheidene Vorform gelten, während er dem Mythos der dem Publikum schon

seit fast zwanzig Jahren angekündigten Memoiren fleißig neue Nahrung zuführt.<sup>13</sup>

There is only one problem with this otherwise convincing assumption that Heine is usurping the function of his first official autobiography purely to build suspense and excite anticipation for the next: the anecdotal narrative that follows his statement would seem more at home, stylistically speaking, in the *Memoiren*—‘die freilich in einem populärerem und noch viel pittoreskeren Style geschrieben werden’ (HSA 21, 306)—than in the *Geständnisse*. We must conclude that Heine’s admission of procrastination is in itself a rhetorical feint, designed to divert attention from the fact that the autobiographical account we are already reading is as much as we are ever likely to be offered.

The episode comprises a sequence of anecdotes, impressions and encounters which relate the moment of Heine’s emigration and his arrival in Paris. Following elemental visions and nightmare dreams, encounters with a ‘Justizrath’ from Spandau who talks of German chains and hardship and a travelling French wine merchant who tells of a promised land of freedom and plenty, he crosses the domain of ‘Vater Rhein’ and, with a parting glance at a tut-tutting Strasbourg Minster, arrives to embrace the sounds, smells and sights of Paris, where he revives his rusty French in one easy conversation with a flower girl in the *Passage des Panoramas*. It is above all sights that drive this narrative, and the perspective of a first-person spectator-narrator that structures it. Having tossed his visiting card to Father Rhine, Heine steps into the role of

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Werner, ‘Rollenspiel oder Ichbezogenheit? Zum Problem der Selbstdarstellung in Heines Werk’, *HJb* 18 (1979), 99-117 (p. 112).

tourist with self-conscious zeal and reels off a giddy array of Parisian monuments, artefacts and personalities viewed. Phelan has suggested that the reader of *Lutezia* encounters a text in which 'the real world presents itself with photographic immediacy, but its sheer facticity postpones the completion of decipherment, like Scheherazade's tales' (*Reading Heinrich Heine*, p. 194). He highlights Heine's interest in the daguerreotype as an inspiration for his journalistic method, which constructs a metonymic discourse and relies on an esoteric reader to respond to its 'strategy of open secrecy in which the everyday factitious world is swept up into the practice of a political hermeneutics' (p. 191). Once again we see Heine adopt a similar approach in his autobiography, although one might suggest portraiture as the more apposite visual arts metaphor in this context since the equivalent of the journalism's 'factitious world' is an elaborate pastiche of autobiographical tableaux drawn from elsewhere in his literary oeuvre.<sup>14</sup> Thus he prefaces his departure from Germany by invoking symbols of an oppressive German nationalism, such as the 'preußische Cocarde' and minster, in much the same way as he did in the *Zeitgedichte* and *Deutschland* (e.g. the Prussian 'Zopf' and 'Pickelhaube' and Cologne Cathedral); thereafter, he travels to Paris as Tannhäuser to the 'Venusberg', where even his encounter with the flower girl, an archetypal autochthonous Parisienne, strongly recalls the portrayal and function of, say,

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<sup>14</sup> According to Brockmeier, portraiture as it originated in the Renaissance was a kind of life writing in visual form 'meant to situate an individual [...] within a web of well-defined symbolic meanings, outlining an often hidden system of reference to the social, religious, and intellectual culture the person belonged to or wanted to be seen as belonging to'. He cites Greenblatt's concept of "textualizing" one's life: to transform a life story into a visual text that was readable by others' (*Narrative and Identity*, p. 261).

the blonde Swabian girl in the *Vorrede zu Salon I*, or the ‘Harfenmädchen’ who retunes his ears to the sounds of German, Germany and its folk heritage in Canto I of *Deutschland*. As Heinemann has noted, some passages are even more explicitly derived from earlier texts: ‘die Haupteindrücke seiner Ankunft in Paris schildert Heine schon in den *Florentinischen Nächten*, teilweise mit parallelen Worten’ (DHA 15, 488). The way Heine redeploys techniques used in *Lutezia* is no coincidence but neither is it straightforward. Regardless of what we may think about the reality of his level of artistic intervention in articles he claims present ‘ein daguerreotypisches Geschichtsbuch, worin jeder Tag *sich selber abkonterfeite* [...], worin das Dargestellte seine Treue authentisch durch sich selbst dokumentirt’ (‘Zueignungsbrief’, DHA 13/1, 19; my emphasis), he has already rejected the practice of (self-)portraiture as unfaithful to the task of autobiography – ‘ich werde mich daher hüten, hier in diesem Buche *mich selbst abzukonterfeyen*’, he announces. Yet just like his tourist alter ego in the text, Heine captures the experience of moving to Paris by amassing and (re)viewing a veritable gallery of vignettes which, on account of their frequent repetition and variation elsewhere in his works, have come to symbolize this biographical moment. In short, he has created a kind of self-authenticating picture-book history à la *Lutezia*. The problem is, while the immanence of the Augsburg censor coupled with the independent status of certain political realities guaranteed to Heine’s system of ‘political hermeneutics’ a certain degree of legitimacy, what we might call his system of *autobiographical hermeneutics*—the suggestion that his identity is similarly a piece of contraband to be kept under

wraps—has no such extra-textual anchor, and is identical without residue with what has already been written elsewhere.

The lacuna we have highlighted in Heine's aesthetic of digression and continuous postponement is matched, in this passage, by a paradoxical void of substance. The memoir-style narrative seems to be laying claim to a hidden layer of significance by its very overload of detail, yet all the reader in fact encounters are recycled versions of autobiographical experiences. These have been generated by an essentially tautological aesthetic by which Heine short-circuits the function of an ostensibly independent autobiographical work and sends us back into his own literary oeuvre via an endless textual loop. He appears, moreover, to employ this strategy entirely consciously. His sighting of Lafayette strongly evokes the moment portrayed in Article II of *Französische Zustände*, where he had observed:

Er lebt in Bildern und Liedern, [...] und ehrlich gestanden, es hat sogar einen komischen Effekt auf mich gemacht, als ich voriges Jahr den 28 Julius im Gesange der Parisienne die Worte hörte: 'Lafayette aux cheveux blancs', während ich ihn selbst mit seiner braunen Perücke neben mir stehen sah.

(DHA 12/1, 91)

In the *Geständnisse*, he supplies the same basic ingredients in order to draw attention, as before, to the discrepancy between appearance and reality, but with a telling variation. Here, we are told that he glimpsed the characteristic white hair of Lafayette, which in the earlier article was already emblematic of his mythologized status, not in reality but rather 'aparte, da solche in einem Medaillon befindlich waren, welches einer schönen Dame am Halse hing, während er selbst, der Held beider Welten, eine braune Perücke trug, wie alle

alte Franzosen' (DHA 15, 26). In one sense, this is indicative of an historical shift Heine seeks to reflect, namely that revolutionary heroes celebrated in rousing songs in the immediate aftermath of 1830—and reported on in the articles of *Französische Zustände*—have become little more than a fashion accessory in an increasingly bourgeois and commoditized society (as he reports in *Lutezia*). However, in another dimension the reference to Lafayette's (stylized) portrait in a cameo locket, which is already complicated by the fact that its real-life model is the product of the kind of self-stylizing procedure (he sports a wig out of vanity 'like all old Frenchmen') Heine has exposed as an autobiographical trap ('der schwarze Negerkönig will weiß gemalt seyn'; 15), also draws attention to Heine's own compositional method. Given such a self-consciously self-reflexive text as the *Geständnisse*, the locket—an art copy that is many layers removed from its original, let alone any underlying reality—may be taken to represent the kind of tautological aesthetic we have identified. As a strategy in autobiography, this raises some fundamental questions in connection with our understanding of Heine as a self-fashioning writer.

#### AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CONUNDRUM: THE PROBLEM WITH HEINE'S SELF-FASHIONING

One would expect the kind of incessant self-fashioner we have shown Heine to be to revel and excel in the task of autobiography. After all, to borrow Brockmeier's pithy formula: 'autobiography is about a self-fashioned biography' (*Narrative and Identity*, p. 254). Yet despite the fact that Heine apparently cannot stop writing about himself, and we may find ourselves not

infrequently wishing, along with Menzel, that for pity's sake he leave us his 'future' readers to judge him for ourselves, he remains puzzlingly reticent as a writer of official autobiography. Why is he so self-consciously evasive in his treatment of this ultimate opportunity for self-presentation, even to the point of sabotaging his own texts? Why contest the kind of autobiography suggested by Taillandier when this would seem a natural culmination of the self-interpretative project that drove his preface writing, say, or to create the *Neue Gedichte* collection as we know it?

Heine had already reflected on Goethe's autobiographical method in *Nordsee* III, where he gave the following definition:

[Er will] durch seine Selbstbiographie uns selbst eine kritische Beyhülfe zum Beurtheilen seiner Werke geben [...], [er liefert] doch keinen Maaßstab der Beurtheilung an und für sich, sondern nur neue Fakta, woraus man ihn beurtheilen kann, wie es ja natürlich ist, daß kein Vogel über sich selbst hinauszufiegen vermag. (DHA 6, 148)

In his own autobiography, meanwhile, an endemic self-consciousness gives precisely the impression that he is looking down at himself even in the act of writing *about* himself, and in place of new facts he feeds us old fictions. In other words, his text enacts a challenge to the Goethean model. Whereas strategies of self-fictionalization and the perspective of a spectator had been so useful to him elsewhere—to construct a public persona and an entire aesthetic methodology, as I have shown—, here they become disruptive. For the compulsive self-fashioner, writing an official autobiography is at once redundant and impossible. His sense of identity is by definition synonymous with that which has already been put forward by the works so that, for all his tantalizing

suggestions to the contrary, there is no other version of Heine that the reader can access.

The textual strategies, rhetorical feints and manoeuvres Heine deploys in the *Geständnisse* and in talking about his autobiographical project are no different to those we have unearthed in other areas of his self-fashioning, irrespective of the genre or writing situation. In this particular context these must nevertheless be said to undermine rather than substantiate the notion that the so-called 'confessions' provide a cipher for the rest of his literary oeuvre. Heinemann's proves to be a false reassurance which glosses over the fact that this text relentlessly postpones closure of any kind. It is less a key to access the Heine behind the self-presentation than a repository for recycled versions of his identity; selves that he has already constructed elsewhere in his works. Similarly, we must question the value of Espagne's valiant attempt to give a positive spin to Heine's autobiographical method in the *Geständnisse*, which he describes as 'weniger die Suche nach einer verborgenen Wahrheit als die permanente Rettung schon ausformulierten Gedankenguts' ('Heines Selbstausslegung', p. 147). Even if this were Heine's primary aspiration for his self-proclaimed ideological 'confessions', his procrastination tactics indicate that he did not really believe in permanence – at least not for his authorial identity in the public sphere. On the whole, readings of his autobiography have too often focussed on its perceived relationship to genre definitions and conventions. More often than not, attempts have been made, explicit or otherwise, to assimilate it to a Goethean model. As ever, critical analysis of this

kind is ultimately redundant since it merely apes the very struggles already enacted in the texts themselves.

We are now in a position to face the fundamental question as to what Heine thought he was doing and indeed what he hoped to achieve by treating his identity in this way. Is his self-fashioning merely the consequence of an anxious psychological trait which compels him to seek confirmation for his sense of self through writing, or is it self-consciously done as part of a giant literary experiment, and if so to what end? To return to *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, Greenblatt might have asked the same question with reference to Thomas More, of whom he writes 'to make a part of one's own, to live one's life as a character thrust into a play, constantly renewing oneself extemporaneously and forever aware of one's own unreality – such was More's *condition*, such, one might say, *his project*' (p. 31; my emphasis). Both are plausible explanations for this practice and it is impossible to prove either one as the more probable, although the second is more appealing since it both reinforces the argument and allows our self-fashioning author to have the final word.

If Heine was primarily motivated by the need to defend his public standing on his own terms we must conclude that such self-fashioning tactics did little to alter the public opinion he feared, whether during his lifetime or after. Too provocative and combative, too manipulative and strategic, too elusive and lacking the serenity needed to commit to the kind of complete summary of his writerly self expected of an autobiographer, he ultimately laid himself open to the kind of selective (mis)appropriation that has characterized his reception

history. Heine is wont to place a rather self-righteous trust in the unassailability of the artist's reputation, as seen in the following remark made to Campe when he was in the thick of the inheritance row. An embittered man, he warns

daß ich schonungslos behandelt auch ohne Schonung handeln kann, daß ich, zum Aeüßersten gebracht, mich ganz ruhig an den Pranger stellen werde, aber umgeben von meiner ganzen lieben Familie, die auch am Pranger stehen wird und weit verdrießlichere Gesichter schneiden wird als ich, der ich an dergleichen schon etwas gewöhnt bin und *mich* übrigens alsdann *in dem Purpurmantel meines Ruhmes verhüllen kann*. (4 February 1845, HSA 21, 162; my emphasis)

Here, the cloak of fame that is his trump card to deflect the hostile gaze of the world and protect him, so he implies, from complete exposure, is a defence of his own making. Elsewhere, however, he presents his reputation as an entirely separate entity that is beyond his power to control. In the *Geständnisse* it is created and managed by others and painfully divorced from his own reality; 'was nützt es mir,' remarks a bed-ridden man, 'daß begeisterte Jünglinge und Jungfrauen meine marmorne Büste mit Lorbeeren umkränzen, wenn derweilen meinem wirklichen Kopfe von den welken Händen einer alten Wärterinn eine spanische Fliege hinter die Ohren gedrückt wird!' (56). However, even at such pressing times of his life, when we are made to feel the presence of an intensely personal, apparently empirical subject, Heine remains engaged in what Werner has called 'das komplizierteste, subtilste Spiel mit sich selbst und seinem öffentlichen Bild' ('Rollenspiel oder Ichbezogenheit?', p. 111). The theatre metaphor is upheld and attendant subversive games with identity continued even when, as here in the final section of the *Geständnisse*, Heine must appear as the victim of a bitterly ironic Aristophanic comedy; a 'kleinen irdischen,

sogenannten deutschen Aristophanes' admits that he has been outdone, in satire, by 'der große Autor des Weltalls, der Aristophanes des Himmels' who has decided his fate (56).

It is difficult for readers of Heine's texts to shake off the sense that, with whatever motivation, he is playing quite consciously with notions of self and authorship. Ever the elusive autobiographer, he makes an unavoidable conundrum of the act of self-revelation so that the closer we imagine we are to accessing who Heine really (thinks he) is, the more abrupt our encounter with a strategic self-fashioner who either evades definition altogether or else refers us back to his own previous literary self-constructions. As Sammons has suggested, Heine is forever 'systematically blocking and misdirecting our access to the inner sanctum of the self'.<sup>15</sup> However, the question of Heine's identity may be more troublesome than even Sammons allows when he describes it as an encrypted text in an apparently open book (*Alternative Perspectives*, p. 189). When Trittau hoped that the autobiographical confessions would reveal 'was hinter den Coulissen vorgegangen während seine Dichtungen und Werke ja nur den Schauspielern glichen, die auf offener Bühne erscheinen', he did not reckon with the fact that Heine's self and the self we access through his writing are inextricably one. A passage from the sixth letter *Über die französische Bühne* illuminates the 'problem' in an extended

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<sup>15</sup> 'Who Did Heine Think He Was?', *Alternative Perspectives*, p. 190.

dramatization of this very metaphor, already familiar from 'Nun ist es Zeit' in the *Buch der Lieder* (see DHA 1, 257-8):

Sie wundern sich, daß ich so oft ins Theater gegangen [...]. Aus Kaprice enthielt ich mich diesen Winter des Salonlebens, und damit die Freunde, bei denen ich selten erschien, mich nicht im Theater sähen, wählte ich gewöhnlich eine Avant-scène, in deren Ecke man sich am besten den Augen des Publikums verbergen kann. [...] Man sieht hier nicht bloß, was auf dem Theater gespielt wird, sondern auch, was hinter den Kulissen vorgeht, hinter jenen Kulissen, wo die Kunst aufhört und die liebe Natur wieder anfängt. Wenn auf der Bühne irgendeine pathetische Tragödie zu schauen ist und zu gleicher Zeit von dem liederlichen Komödiantentreiben hinter den Kulissen hie und da ein Stück zum Vorschein kömmt, so mahnt dergleichen an antike Wandbilder [...], wo in den Ausschnittecken der großen historischen Gemälde lauter possierliche Arabesken, lachende Götterspäße, Bacchanalien und Satyridyllen angebracht sind.

(DHA 12/1, 256)

As a spectator at the theatre, Heine likes to occupy a borderland between auditorium and stage (an *avant-scène* or stage box) since this allows him precisely to look behind the scenes while watching the play itself; in other words to access the reality behind the art. A complication immediately arises, however, via the metaphor he chooses to elucidate this relationship. Although he suggests a fundamental disjuncture between the tragedy being performed and the bawdy comedy of the actors milling about backstage, the ensemble reminds him of antique murals where both elements are displayed as part of the same work of art and where the comic dimension, with its arabesques and mythical figures, is at least as if not more artful than the serious historic subject itself. The distinction between art and real life (nature) is no longer so clear. More intriguing still is the narrative within which Heine frames this observation. He confesses he also favours this particular corner of the theatre because it conceals him, the consciously invasive spectator, from the watching

eyes of the audience; or more specifically from friends who would otherwise drag him back into the limelight in their salons. We are encouraged to infer that here in the theatre Heine is more able to be his private self, with no need to perform. The only trouble is that he has placed himself in this scenario avowedly 'aus Kaprice' and, in his 'performance' as spectator, has undermined the distinction between private and public, nature and art, reality and performance. The 'real' Heine and his textual presence are rendered one and the same, the product of a self-reflexive arabesque.



## Appendix

The following table outlines the arrangement of the sub-cycles of poems in two significant publications of *Verschiedene* prior to their assembly as the second section of the *Neue Gedichte* in 1844: first in six issues of the journal *Der Freimüthige* (7 January – 26 March 1833; abbr. *F*) and thereafter as ‘Gedichte’ in *Salon I* (1834; abbr. *S I*). In each case I give the original titles from these publications followed by a label and number in parentheses which corresponds to the poems as they appear in the *Neue Gedichte* (abbr. *NG*), where applicable.

NG: ‘Verschiedene’ (1844)	F (1833)	S I: ‘Gedichte’ (1834)
Seraphine (abbr. <i>Ser</i> )	I – XV ‘Prolog’ (Ang I)	‘Abschied’ (Frem I)
Angelique (abbr. <i>Ang</i> )	‘Seraphine’ I – II (Ser I-II) III (Ser IV) IV (Ser VI) V (Ser XII)	‘Träumereyen’ I (Anhang) II (Frem II) III (Frem III)
Diana (abbr. <i>D</i> )	I – III ‘Clarisse’ I – III (Clar I-III) IV (Anhang)	‘Tragödie’ I – III (Trag I-III) ‘Seraphine’ I – XV (Ser I-XV)
Hortense (abbr. <i>Hort</i> )	I – VI ‘Hortense’ I (Hort II) II (Ser X) III (Ser XIII) IV (Hort VI)	‘Angelique’ I – III (Ang I-III) IV (Anhang) V (Anhang) VI (Anhang) VII – VIII (Ang VII-VIII)
Clarisse (abbr. <i>Clar</i> )	I – V	
Yolante und Marie (abbr. <i>Y/M</i> )	I – IV ‘Angelique’ I (Anhang) II (Anhang) III (Ang VIII)	‘Diana’ I – III (D I-III)
Emma I – VI	‘Diana’ I – III (D I-III)	‘Erfahrung’ (Hort I)
Der Tannhäuser	‘Epilog’ (Hort I)	‘Hortense’ I (Hort II) II (Hort VI)
Schöpfungslieder (abbr. <i>Schö</i> )	I – VI* [21 poems; 17 taken into NG]	‘Clarisse’ I – IV (Clar I-IV) V (Anhang) VI (Anhang) VII (Anhang) VIII (Anhang) IX (Anhang) X (Anhang)
Friedrike I – III		
Katharina I – IX		
In der Fremde (abbr. <i>Frem</i> )	I – III	
Tragödie (abbr. <i>Trag</i> )	I – III	‘Yolante/Marie’ I – II (Y/M I-II) III (Anhang) IV (Ang IV) V (Y/M III) VI (Y/M IV)
[73 poems]		
* <i>Schö</i> VII was added in the third edition of 1851		‘Der Schöpfer’ I – IV (Schö I-IV) [56 poems; 45 taken into NG]



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