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A Study of the *Athenaeum* as the Early Romantic Work of Art

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in German

by

Xuxu Song

Dissertation Committee:  
Professor John H. Smith, Chair  
Professor Gail K. Hart  
Professor Kai Evers

2022



# **DEDICATION**

To

my family and friends

in recognition of their worth and love

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Early German Romanticism

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Study of the *Athenaeum* as the Early German Romantic Work of Art

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in German

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Professor John H. Smith, Chair

The aim of this dissertation is to consider the *Athenaeum* (1798-1800), the only major production of the early German romantics as a group that contained their most important writing experiments, as a work in its own right. Most approaches to the journal so far have only focused on several well-known individual contributions without considering the context of the journal and the interrelationality among major and minor voices within it. By calling into question approaches that have neglected to see the journal as a whole and treated the individual texts in isolation, I ask what the *Athenaeum* would look like if it is approached aesthetically as a work on its own. I do so to re-consider the essence of the journal and to show how the early romantic notion of a work of art has been put into practice. Examining three central aspects—innermost spiritual community, *Bildung* and *Mitteilung*—that are foregrounded throughout the six issues of journal as its unifying forces, I show how the *Athenaeum* forms as a unified whole with astonishing interrelationships among the diverse and disparate contributions within it. Bringing major and minor voices in the journal in dialogue with each other, this study shows how the *Athenaeum* is held together as a unity that lies in the innermost spiritual community of its authorship, in its ideal of *Bildung*, and in the freest communication as its principle of presentation.



## Chapter 1 Introduction

*[T]he romantic “project,” or in other words that brief, intense, and brilliant moment writing (not quite two years and hundreds of pages) that by itself opens an entire era, but exhausts itself in its inability to grasp own essence and aim—that will ultimately find no other definition than a place (Jena) and a journal (the Athenaeum).*

—*The Literary Absolute*

*Einheit des Geistes würde ein Journal zu einem Phönix seiner Art machen. Sie ist aber gewiß sehr möglich, wo die Herausgeber auch die Verfasser sind, und wo die Herausgeber leiblich und geistlich Brüder sind.*

—*Friedrich Schlegel to A.W. Schlegel, October 31, 1797*

### Preface

The opening ceremony of the new Deutsches Romantik-Museum in Frankfurt am Main, Germany on September 13, 2021<sup>1</sup>, which includes all three stages of the entire romanticism movement from Jena to the Grimm brothers, indicates the actuality of romanticism and captures the essence of the movement by highlighting the intermedial way of presenting the epoch by the museum. It is a result of the contemplation of the question of how literature itself can be exhibited. As Dr. Ina Hartwig, Head of Department for Culture and Science of the City of Frankfurt states in her speech,

[Wir] könnten uns eben schon umschaun, und zwar natürlich viel zu kurz, ist es wirklich so ein *Gesamtkunstwerk* geworden, und wie hier die Manuskripte inszeniert sind als sozusagen die Hauptobjekte um die herum dann Geschichten gebaut sind. Das ist so zugänglich, so sinnlich, so wunderschön geworden. (Emphasis added)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyJhDi3rX50>

The *Athenaeum* is precisely such an intermedial *Gesamtkunstwerk* that characterizes the dynamic yet unified essence of the brief three years of early romanticism. When one thinks about the notion of a work of art, perhaps the form of a journal would not cross the mind. In its broadest sense it will most likely be a painting, a music piece, a sculpture, an architecture, even a film in the modern world; in the sense of the literary world, it's easy to think of a novel, a play, a poem, a novella, a short story etc. One hardly thinks of anything like a letter, a conversation, a diary, a collection of notes, let alone a magazine. A work of art, to the conventional understanding, has a coherent structure with a certain kind of aesthetic attached to it, and is composed by a single hand. The creator of a work of art, namely the artist, the subject, especially if it is considered a masterpiece, is a so-called *Genie*. The Kantian notion of *Genie*, a mega mind, creates the work of art, the object. Therefore, in the traditional sense up until Kant, the artist, the creator of a work of art, is a singular notion, so is the work of art itself.

However, with the emergence of the early romantic ideas, there has been a change in these notions. The artist is not necessarily a singular notion. Rather, it can be an intersubject that consists of multiple minds and hands, serving as a collective notion. Similarly, the work of art does not necessarily have to be of one genre, a single, coherent, closed text. Rather, it can have a mixture of genres, forms, styles, and even incoherent, chaotic, non-closed ideas. In other words, with the appearance of radically new aesthetic ideas and practices by the Jena circle in the last decade of the eighteenth century, the notion of a work of art is undergoing an unprecedented, radical and fundamental change. Perhaps it is no exaggeration to call such change a paradigm shift in the aesthetic realm. Even if the impact might not be huge in their contemporary epoch, the romantics and their *Athenaeum* nevertheless seem to have brought about a paradigm shift in what one could view as a work of art. Just like any other paradigm shifts in history, such as that

activated by Galileo Galilei in science and the one inaugurated by Martin Luther in the religious realm, the one initiated by the early romantics was not going through a smooth phase.

Unacceptance and fierce criticisms from prestigious and dominant thinkers—the Enlightenment thinkers such as Nicolai, for instance—are part of the unfolding of the fundamental change.

As the most important publication of early German romanticism, the *Athenaeum* appeared in three volumes and six issues between 1798 and 1800 with a wide range of topics and forms, including the fragment, dialogue, poetry, translation, commentary, theoretical essay, letter, travelog etc. Precisely given the diversity of the ideas and genres in the journal, hardly anyone would claim that the journal is a work of art. The same reason explains the lack of research on the *Athenaeum* in its entirety as the subject matter. But if we approach this major production of the early romantics from another perspective and think about the mixture of genres and ideas, it could precisely be one criterion, out of several others, for the “work of art” in the eyes of the early romantic authors, and the journal precisely fulfills that criterion for a “work of art.” These principles, forming an early romantic ideal of a “work of art,” what the Jena romantics commonly refer to as *Kunstwerk*, are multifaceted and yet relatively coherent throughout their oeuvre in the *Athenaeum* period. Thus, if we step out of the confinement of the traditional sense of a work of art and start to apply the aesthetic ideas of the early romantics to the journal itself, to examine it against these criteria for the “work of art,” we might find ourselves in astonishment and come to a radically, paradigm-shifting, electrifying conclusion that the very journal of the early romantics, the *Athenaeum*, is precisely the early romantic “work of art.”

The romantics might not be conscious that what they produced is precisely that which can characterize their entire enterprise. As *Athenaeums-Fragment* #401 states, “[u]m jemand zu

verstehn, der sich selbst nur halb versteht, muß man ihn erst ganz und besser als er selbst, dann aber auch nur halb und grade so gut wie er selbst verstehn.” As an interpreter or reviewer of the *Athenaeum*, I approach the journal as the early romantic work of art, which is not even realized by the romantics themselves. Two of the guiding works behind my project are *The Literary Absolute* by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy and *From Work to Text* by Roland Barthes. This dissertation is largely inspired by the formers’ consideration of a radically new mode of writing initiated by the romantics and the latter’s articulation of a fundamentally different notion of a “text.” Barthes differentiates a “text” from the traditional notion of a “work,” while Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy focus on the “auto-poetic” and reflective functions of literature/ literary theory inaugurated by the Athenaeum group. Their study has opened up a new way of reading the entire romantic project in relation to contemporary, especially deconstructive, criticism. But even *The Literary Absolute*, for all its theoretical innovations, does not apply them to the *Athenaeum* as a whole but limits itself to several individual contributions to the journal. And in Barthes’ case, ironically, although he specifically contrasts the open-ended, intertextual “text” to the traditional, closed “work,” I will argue that precisely its nature as “text” makes the *Athenaeum* a romantic “work of art.” Reading the *Athenaeum* in light of these two theoretical approaches would reframe the status of the journal.

## Methodology

Ongoing conversations among the interrelated and interactive pieces within the journal and the variety of topics and genres should suffice for calling into question approaches to the *Athenaeum* as a mere literary journal. In the sense of a conversation, the journal in its own right is a collective work of art that resembles a social meeting place, or a salon of a close circle,

where the most diverse dialogues can take place yet a certain unity of spirit must be present. Miscellaneous thoughts relate the individual contributions to each other and keep conversations in the salon going (*fortführen*) without losing its essence. *Athenaeums-Fragment* #125, which first publicizes the idea of *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie*, states: “[v]ielleicht würde eine ganz neue Epoche der Wissenschaften und Künste beginnen, wenn die Symphilosophie und Sympoesie so allgemein und so innig würde, daß es nichts seltnes mehr wäre, wenn mehrere sich gegenseitig ergänzende Naturen gemeinschaftliche Werke bildeten.” For the Jena romantics, these practices are collectively produced works of art.

For this reason, I attempt to break the internal barriers of the *Athenaeum* in the hope of showing its essence as a unified whole, though one with a great deal of internal diversity. Precisely this dialectic of unity and difference is one of the main aesthetic principles embraced by the journal. More specifically, I look at the *Athenaeum* as a work of art that presents as a collection of *Werkchen* that are interconnected with each other by various clusters of ideas and yet revolve around the same essence. Like the *lyrische Gattung* argued in *Idyllen aus dem Griechischen*<sup>2</sup>, the unity of the work does not lie in any individual contribution in isolation, but rather in itself as an entirety, in its relationality and sociality, and in the spiritual community of the creator(s) of the work. Many scholars have dealt with particular aspects of the journal individually, such as the fragments, Novalis’ *Hymnen an die Nacht*, and Schlegel’s essay on *Poesie*. This is problematic because these are only a small part out of all sixty-six contributions to the six issues as of 1800. The editors of the *Athenaeum* included others to create a complex dialogue or a polyphony of voices that are different yet interconnected around the same essence.

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<sup>2</sup> A fragmentary text with mixed forms co-authored by the Schlegel brothers and published in the sixth issue of the *Athenaeum*.

In order to see the journal as a work in its own right and to show its unity, I attempt to reveal the relationality within it, i.e., by bringing disparate texts and ideas into dialogue with each other in the context of the journal. The juxtaposition of the conversing parts allows them to be restored to the original context of the *Athenaeum* as a unified whole and can unlock facets that otherwise would be overlooked or blended into partial readings of the journal. The following chapters strive to elucidate its essence that is ubiquitous in its various manifestations by unmasking the reciprocity and interconnectivity among the contributions. In the discussion of these “conversations” in each chapter, disparate yet conversing pieces will be engaged together and priorities will be given to lesser-known texts. Overlaps are inevitable, as it is inherent in early romanticism for ideas to not only intertwine with each other but also reflect multiple aspects of the same essence of the *Athenaeum*.

The mixture of genres and forms of the contributions makes them appear different; yet it contains a certain kind of complex unity that can only be recognized upon a closer look. The *Athenaeum* forms itself as a synthesizing work with multiplicity in accordance with the statement in its *Vorerinnerung*.

In der Einkleidung werden Abhandlungen mit Briefen, Gesprächen, rhapsodischen Betrachtungen und aphoristischen Bruchstücken wechseln, wie in dem Inhalt besondere Urteile mit allgemeinen Untersuchungen, Theorie mit geschichtlicher Darstellung, Ansichten der vielseitigen Strebungen unseres Volks und Zeitalters mit Blicken auf das Ausland und die Vergangenheit, vorzüglich auf das klassische Altertum.

My primary sources are not limited merely to the *Athenaeum*, of course, as the entire early romantic spirit and enterprise is interrelated within itself and speaks to many practices outside of the journal, such as, most importantly, the correspondence between the early romantic

thinkers as well as that between the early romantics and other writers with whom they had a close contact, such as Goethe, who had a significant impact on decisions regarding the *Athenaeum*, A.F. Bernhardt, and Schiller among others. These letters and anecdotes potentially provide good sources for elucidating the choice of contributions to the journal and the exclusion of others. Given the importance of the genres of conversation and letter for the early romantics (“Der wahre Brief ist seiner Natur nach poetisch”<sup>3</sup>), incorporating their correspondence in the understanding of the *Athenaeum* period and the journal itself is of great significance. One finds in the correspondence some of the most authentic accounts and insider’s views of the early romantics about their journal and its contributions. In terms of attempting to interpret the underlying form of a collection of various writings in its entirety, I am not alone. Eva Geulen has employed a similar approach in her 2016 book, *Aus dem Leben der Form: Goethes Morphologie und die Nager*, where she approaches Goethe’s *Hefte zur Morphologie* on a basis of the core principle embodied in its form. Disparate texts are nonetheless unified under a common aesthetic, which is precisely how the *Athenaeum* is viewed in this dissertation project.

Yet my project is also caught in a paradox, very much like what Seyhan has recognized with her project, which is an attempt to “impose a certain structure and closure on what apparently resists closure” (21). Naturally, my dissertation is a closed text in terms of its form, there being a last word on the last page. However, it attempts to attain the essence of the *Athenaeum* as the early romantic work, which, according to Friedrich Schlegel under the definition of *progressive Universalpoesie*, never ceases to progress, even with the journal’s discontinuation in 1800. It is essentially infinite and inexhaustible. Academic research and studies, the journal itself, and all the works of art represented by the early romantic spirit, are

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<sup>3</sup> Novalis. *Blüthenstaub* #56.

stimulating and calling for further efforts, comments, criticism, and gap-filling, which is in a certain sense intertextual. Further ideas and thoughts are being sparked at every moment.

### Journalistic landscape around 1800

The last decades of the eighteenth century and the beginning ones of the nineteenth witnessed a particular flourish of literary journals in Germany. Even just around the same time as the three years of the *Athenaeum* (1798-1800), there are a variety of periodicals that provide crucial platforms for voices by active authors and thinkers. Among the most important ones where influential and well-known essays and works get published are Friedrich Nicolai's important review journal, *Die Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (1765-1806), *Berlinisches Archiv der Zeit und ihres Geschmacks* (1795-1800)<sup>4</sup>, *Die Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (1785-1849) founded by Friedrich Bertuch, Christian Schütz and Wieland to which A.W. Schlegel was a regular contributor from 1796 to 1799, Schiller's monthly journal, *Die Horen* (1795-1797), Johann Friedrich Reichardt's *Deutschland* (1796) and *Lyceum der schönen Künste* (1797), and Goethe's *Die Propyläen* (1798-1800). Several journals that were of great significance and influential in the German intellectual world appeared after 1800, including *Die Zeitung für die elegante Welt* (1801-1859) by Georg Voß, Cotta's *Das Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* (1807-1865), and *Der Freimüthige* (1804-1807) by August von Kotzebue etc. It is also noteworthy that a series of journals emerged among the student circle in Jena that "sich als Nachfolger des 'Athenäums' verstehen" (Hocks and Schmidt, 102). These journals founded by the younger generation that aesthetically imitate the *Athenaeum* include August Klingemann's *Memnon*

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<sup>4</sup> Published by Friedrich Ludwig Wilhelm Meyer, Friedrich Eberhard Rambach, and Ignatius Aurelius Fessler.



(1800), Sophie Mereau's *Kalathiskos* (1801), *Apollon* (1803) by Julius Werden, Adolph Werden<sup>5</sup> and Wilhelm Schneider and translation-focused *Polychorda* (1803-1805) by Theodor Heinrich August Bode and Ludwig Hain etc<sup>6</sup>.

After the cessation of publication of the *Athenaeum*, members of the Jena circle also engaged themselves in other journal projects, including *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1802* by Ludwig Tieck and A.W. Schlegel, and, in Friedrich Schlegel's case, art-oriented *Europa* (1803-1805) founded during his trip to Paris and the much later *Deutsches Museum* (1812-1813) that gave prominence to intellectual life in Germany as a nation. Parallel to Madame de Staël's trip to Germany that serves as preparation for her work *De l'Allemagne* (1813) that helps expand romanticism to the entire Europe, *Europa* succeeding the *Athenaeum* marks a new phase of the romanticism movement. "Die Romantik der Athenäumszeit ist zu Ende, neue Bahnen werden eingeschlagen", sagte Oskar Walzel zu dieser bewegten Epoche von 1802 bis 1804" (Behler, *Zeitschriften*, 59). That being said, the *Athenaeum*, although not unique in all aspects in comparison to its contemporaries, is radical in such a way that it can at least define the brief yet intense founding period of *early* romanticism in Jena. Yet the most important question is: in what aspects is the *Athenaeum* a radical project that stands out among others and that becomes the work of art of the early romantics.

## Founding ideas

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<sup>5</sup> The so-called *Gebrüder Werden* are Johann Gottlieb Winzer and Carl Friedrich Theodor Mann who used the pseudonyms, Julius and Adolph Werden, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> See also *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1789-1805* in *Sammlung Metzler*, pp.102.

For the Schlegel brothers and the friend circle that started to emerge after Friedrich joined his brother in Jena in the summer of 1796, the *Athenaeum* was a pressing project to implement, as discord with editors of the Enlightenment- and classicism-oriented journals where they had been publishing were escalating. Establishing their own journal where free expression is left to their discretion without any withholding of opinions or styles is long overdue and becomes the most urgent and anticipated task in the circle, which is recorded in the correspondence between the Schlegel brothers in the fall of 1797. Friedrich Schlegel writes to his brother, “[m]ir hat es lange Zeit geschienen, unser gemeinschaftliches Journal anzufangen [...] Nämlich ein Journal von uns beiden nicht bloß ediert, sondern ganz allein geschrieben, ohne alle regelmäßigen Mitarbeiter.” He continues, “Einheit des Geistes würde ein Journal zu einem Phönix seiner Art machen. Sie ist aber gewiß sehr möglich, wo die Herausgeber auch die Verfasser sind, und wo die Herausgeber leiblich und geistlich Brüder sind.”

It is already in this founding stage that the *Athenaeum* is fundamentally different from others in a way. Above all, the tone is set for the upcoming journal, which was still temporarily named as *Herkules*, that it will be a work created by *brothers*. The common spirit shared by “brothers” does not exist in other journals. Collaborative projects by brothers or close-minded friends are not uncommon. It is natural for any collaborative project to have a collective vision or shared values. But it is not always reflected or in alignment with the aesthetic principles and practices of the project itself. In this case, “being brothers” is not an aesthetic idea nor practice for other journals. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the notion of “brother” and its

associated *Verbrüderung* cannot be confined to brothers in the literal sense, or “leiblich”; rather, it is *geistlich* and is not confined to gender, arguably<sup>7</sup>, nor to time and place.

This is of great significance because most studies on early romanticism and on literary journals around 1800 seem to turn a blind eye to this fundamental difference between collaboration or collectiveness and the romantic understanding of *Verbrüderung* or *Sympoesie*, and thus on the difference between the *Athenaeum* and other journals. The important volume in the Metzler collection on journals, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1789-1805* (1975), points out that *Kommunismus der Geister, das gemeinsame Werk* or *Sympoesie und Symphilosophie* are favorite ideas of the time. Thinking of the journal as *Enzyklopädie* and *Sammelpunkt der Geister* is by no means unique to the early romantics.

Ähnliche Überlegungen finden sich in fast allen Programmen, Vorreden, Einleitungen und Einladungen zur Mitarbeit anderer früherer, gleichzeitiger und späterer Journale aus der Zeit, die dieses Bändchen behandelt. “Eine allgemeine Verbindung” von Künstlern und Kunstfreunden will Kleists und Müllers ‘Phöbus’ sein, der gleichzeitige ‘Prometheus’ strebt eine Vereinigung der Würdigsten an, um der Literatur ein geistiges Vaterland zu geben. Schlegels ‘Deutsches Museum’ soll die Nationalbildung im Allgemeinen betreffen und kann nur “durch eine reichhaltige Vereinigung geister Kräfte” zustande kommen. Die Zeitschrift soll ein Parlament der Nation sein, um die zerstreuten Kräfte des Vaterlandes zu vereinigen. Und noch die 1820 erscheinende ‘Concordia’ spricht mit ähnlichen Worten vom “gesamten Gebiet der höheren Geisteskultur” und der “Versammlung aller geistigen Kräfte auf einen Mittelpunkt”. (3-4)

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<sup>7</sup> Even though the Frühromantikerinnen played a crucial role in the social life of the Jena circle and also published writings in the *Athenaeum*, the notion of *Verbrüderung* was never *Verschwesterung*.

This is not surprising as journals naturally function as platforms for voices to be heard or publishing organs for ideas to be disseminated. However, such collectivity and unity are not part of the aesthetic ideas and practices treated in or embodied by other journals. Instead of only intending to feed the interest of the reading public, the early romantic enterprise shows that the journal itself as a whole can serve as the major work that epitomizes the essence of the group. The number of editors might not be a category that can distinguish the *Athenaeum* from others, as most journals have multiple editors and contributors, if not founders. But the *Athenaeum* is unique in that plurality and collectiveness as part of the romantic aesthetics align with how the journal is planned and practiced. In other words, the diversity and plurality in other journals might not be connected to the unity of the journal by a spiritual community and to its aesthetic ideas and practices. Without *Verbrüderung*, or the spiritual community in the broader sense, the collectiveness in other journals are not *Sympoesie*. In other words, it is the alignment of the aesthetic ideas perceived in the *Athenaeum* and that which gives the journal its form that makes the *Athenaeum* stand out. In the case of the journal itself, the Jena group disintegrated after the *Athenaeum* ceased publication in 1800 and after Novalis' death in 1801.

To take *Propyläen* as a counterexample, Goethe's journal seems to have an overall classicism-oriented art ideal and its impetus is to cultivate the taste of art of the German public by disseminating his specific *Kunstideal* and educating the public on its values. What is lacking there, compared to the *Athenaeum*, are the consciously intended spiritual community that is both inherent in the *Kunstideal* of early romanticism and the journal itself, and mutually conversing contributions.

It is significant to note that *Sympoesie* or *Verbrüderung* does not necessitate absolute unanimity; rather, it places emphasis on the process of communication and approximating the

ideal. It is interesting that what the *Athenaeum* should look like was a debate between the brothers at the beginning and that what it came to be throughout its three years was a developing process instead of a fixed idea. As Behler reminds the reader:

August Wilhelm Schlegel hätte aus dem ‘Athenäum’ ein Organ gemacht, das von der Jenaer ‘Allgemeinen Literaturzeitung’ nicht wesentlich verschieden gewesen wäre: ein kritisches, rezensierendes Institut. . . . hätte er freilich die neue Weltanschauung nur indirekt verkünden können und zudem eine Schule benötigt, die es doch erst noch zu bilden galt. Friedrich Schlegel hatte demgegenüber eine umfassendere Konzeption. Er wollte das ‘Athenäum’ zum unmittelbaren Ausdruck ihrer Ideen machen. (Behler, *Zeitschriften*, 19)

This difference between brothers not only played a determinant role in the variety of the content and form across the individual contributions to the journal but also in how core aesthetics of the romantics were formed and practiced in and by the journal. As will be seen throughout the four following chapters of this dissertation, the *Athenaeum* is held together by a unity in differences and divergent ideas, which is shared in the *Vorerinnerung* on the first two pages of the journal:

Wir theilen viele Meynungen mit einander; aber wir gehen nicht darauf aus, jeder die Meynungen des andern zu den seinigen zu machen. Jeder steht daher für seine eignen Behauptungen. Noch weniger soll das geringste von der Unabhängigkeit des Geistes, wodurch allein das Geschäft des denkenden Schriftstellers gedeihen kann, einer flachen Einstimmigkeit aufgeopfert werden; und es können folglich sehr oft abweichende Urtheile in dem Fortgange dieser Zeitschrift vorkommen. Wir sind nicht bloß Herausgeber, sondern Verfasser derselben, und unternehmen sie ohne alle Mitarbeiter.

These words adequately summarized the exchange of ideas around the journal in the correspondence in 1797 and early 1798. While stressing differences and possible divergences in the ongoing development of the journal, the two co-founders are convinced that this enterprise finally of their own is held together by the unity of spirit, i.e., an inner spiritual community in a certain sense, that guarantees the freedom and independence of that which they collectively strive to communicate (*mitteilen*). As will be seen in Chapters 3 and 4, the unity of differences is at core of the ideal of *Bildung* in the *Athenaeum*, and the way in which the entire journal becomes a polyphony of forms of communication is denoted by the play with the notion of *Mitteilung*. The former characterizes the striving towards the realization of a new mythology or religion where all boundaries are eliminated, whereas the latter shows how the realization is being put into practice by the *Athenaeum*. All three aspects—innermost spiritual community, *Bildung* and *Mitteilung*—both individually and collectively hold the journal together as a whole and offer a perspective from which the journal can be viewed in its entirety.

Along with his letter dated on May 9, 1798, A.W. Schlegel sent Goethe the first copy of the first issue of the *Athenaeum*, hoping to win his support for this young enterprise, which was especially important in light of Friedrich's dispute with Schiller. A.W. Schlegel writes that his brother

[...] will das Journal mit Philosophie u. Kritik, ich werde es mit Literatur, und wir werden es beide jeder nach seiner Art mit Griechen versorgen. So hoffen wir einen Kreis zu haben, der uns nie zu eng werden kann, und worin wir doch durch die Behandlung verschiedenartige Leser festzuhalten suchen. Wir wünschen uns vor allem lebhaft Ihren Beifall, und werden ihn als eine sehr günstige Vorbedeutung des Gelingens unserer jungen und (wenn nur nicht allzusehr!) jugendlichen Unternehmung ansehen.

At this early point, the *Athenaeum* already demonstrates itself as a unity of differences, as promised in the *Vorerinnerung*, as a collective of the divergently flourishing *Geister* of the two brothers. Most importantly, the relations and interaction between differences, contradictions, and opposites are in accordance with the aesthetics conveyed in the journal. The alignment of ideas and forms that are addressed by the journal and those of the journal itself constitutes the fundamental difference between the *Athenaeum* and others, on the one hand, and helps us understand it as *the* work of art of early romanticism, on the other.

Standing at historical crossroads in political, social and cultural aspects, as Beiser points out in his criticism of postmodernist interpretations of early romanticism<sup>8</sup>, the romantics are part of a larger intellectual and cultural movement and are not only impacted by the Enlightenment but also offer a new understanding of the Platonic legacy. Both are manifested in the *Athenaeum* as the romantics strive to synthesize dualisms and to solve the Kantian struggle of representation offering a new way of understanding ancient as well as modern, i.e., *romantische*<sup>9</sup>, *Poesie*. A.W. Schlegel writes to Goethe late 1798<sup>10</sup>, “[e]s ist merkwürdig, daß das Argument, wodurch Diderot die Unmöglichkeit der Korrektheit im strengsten Sinne, zu beweisen sucht, schon bei Plato in seiner Republik vorkommt. Dieser gebraucht es nämlich in der Absicht zu zeigen, daß von der Kunst keine Wahrheit zu hoffen sei.” The paradox of the impossibility of attaining the “Absolute” and the nevertheless inexhaustible striving towards it is at the heart of the romantic solution exemplified by the *Athenaeum*.

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<sup>8</sup> Beiser thinks that scholars such as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy, Azade Seyhan etc. interpret the early romantics as antirationalist, one-sided and anachronistic.

<sup>9</sup> The word *romantisch* is used in the *Athenaeum* to characterize writings of Cervantes, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tieck etc.

<sup>10</sup> December 18, 1798.

Because of its radically different way of approaching art and philosophy—or of unifying all arts and sciences in the romantic sense of universality—the *Athenaeum* faced fierce attacks during its three years and were often criticized for the obscurity of its content and the unconventional way of expression, mostly from the rationalist thinkers, whom Friedrich Schlegel calls the “Philisters in Berlin” in his *Gespräch über die Poesie*. The polemics between the Jena romantics and Friedrich Nicolai is among the most striking examples of the lively intellectual scenes around 1800. Nicolai’s anonymous novel, *Vertraute Briefe von Adelheid B. an ihre Freundin Julie S.* (1799) presents a parody of the enterprise in Jena. By means of satirical mimicries, the novel seems to emphasize the ridicule of the way of thinking and writing of the romantics.<sup>11</sup>

Ludwig Ferdinand Huber offers a relatively more objective perspective, so to speak, of looking at the *Athenaeum* in the anonymously published review in the *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* late 1799<sup>12</sup>. It is particularly interesting that Huber criticizes the Jena group for using the form of the periodical to capture their works that they claim to be ahead of their time— “daß sie ihm [das Zeitalter] zuvorgeeilt sind, und daß sie es nach sich ziehen.”

Nun fällt es zwar niemanden ein, solche Werke in einer periodischen Schrift zu verlangen; allein den Aufsätzen einer periodischen Schrift ziemt der herabwürdigende Ton gegen ihr Zeitalter um so weniger, als dieser Ton in solchen Werken gerade am seltensten zu vernehmen ist. Wenn also das Athenäum, welches gewiß nicht unfreygebig mit Witz und Geist ausgestattet ist, dennoch bey dem Publicum wenig Glück gemacht

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Die Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, No. 372, November 21, 1799, pp. 473-477.



hat, wenn es vielleicht die Undankbarkeit der Lesewelt in einem so hohen Grade erfuhr, daß die Buchhändler-Anzeige auf dem Umschlag des IV. St.

Huber's comments seem to be the exact opposite of how the journal should function for the romantics. The open, indefinite and ever-progressing form of the journal seems to coordinate well with the *progressive Universalpoesie* that is ever-becoming and can never be complete. Both Benjamin's dissertation, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (1973) and *The Literary Absolute* (1978/1988) by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy point out that "the work of literature to be inscribing onto itself the conditions of its own production and producing its own truth" (Seyhan, 8)<sup>13</sup>, indicating that the *Athenaeum* as a work is producing its own theory as it is being written. From Huber's point of view, however, the early romantics precisely made the mistake of attempting to convey their "modernness" or "advancedness" in the form of the periodical that is time-sensitive and conditioned. Huber writes, "[e]ben so wenig ist ein Journal der Platz, wo man sich auf der höchsten von den vielen Stufen, die man voraus zu haben meynt, zur Schau stellen kann." As one of the first readers of Huber's piece<sup>14</sup>, Caroline Schlegel wrote two letters to Huber on Nov 24 and 27, 1799, angrily responding to the critique and blaming his attack on the journal for being *personal*. Her timely communication with Huber that turns from convincing him to distance himself from the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* to potentially cutting their acquaintance offers crucial insiders' insights into the *Athenaeum* in the following four striking aspects that are highly relevant to how the journal is approached by this dissertation project.

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<sup>13</sup> See Seyhan's introductory chapter.

<sup>14</sup> Caroline Schlegel had read and responded to Huber's critique before Friedrich Schlegel came back to the house in Jena and had access to the text.

1) Her accusation that Huber lacks a genuine knowledge of the *Athenaeum* enterprise and the fields that it addresses and is thus unqualified to write a review of it is remarkably similar to A.W. Schlegel's critique of Dietrich Soltau's translation of *Don Quixote*, which will be discussed in Chapter 5 on *Symübersetzung*.

You yourself had to realize that you simply did not have the requisite background knowledge for such an undertaking [...] Hence Schlegel, who was certainly aware of that fact, never thought of you as a reviewer when the A.L.Z. once told him to suggest one himself. That particular journal, which appeared quite accidentally as a journal — and one to which you are nonetheless so particularly inclined to cling — deals with philosophy, art, including the formative arts as well as art in general, and antiquity. . . . even poesy never really appeared to you to be a free art form. You can in no wise boast any acquaintance with antiquity of the sort both Schlegels have to such an extraordinary degree — and I still recall that you had completely neglected Greek, taken purely as a language — and you often write in your *own* language such that one might well doubt whether you would be in any position to properly judge the “harsh struggles” and “hammer-work.”<sup>15</sup>

In a letter to Johann Diederich Gries dated December 27, 1799, Caroline repeats:

I opened it [Huber's review of the *Athenaeum*] and, as his old acquaintance, straightaway also took the liberty of answering it, since it is certainly no secret that Herr Huber is in no way qualified to review *Athenäum* insofar as he has not the slightest understanding of the things with which *Athenäum* is concerned, such as philosophy, art, the study of antiquity,

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.carolineschelling.com/letters/volume-1-index/letter-257>.

etc. (For that reason alone, it was extraordinarily inappropriate for the editors to give it to him in the first place.) And, indeed, the review itself really does not even mention the content of the journal. . . . After Schlegel arrived back home, he had a good laugh and immediately resolved simply to let Huber go just like the others.<sup>16</sup>

2) In the same quote above, Caroline describes the *Athenaeum* as appearing “quite accidentally” as a journal, responding to Huber’s criticism of the form of the journal yet revealing the radicality of the *Athenaeum* and its fundamental difference from others. With the interconnectivity and sociality among the individual pieces within the *Athenaeum*, it is hardly only a literary journal that publishes writings in a certain field, but rather a work of art that is constituted as a whole by some unifying forces—innermost spiritual community, *Bildung* and *Mitteilung*. The notion of a work of art envisioned by the romantics and the unifying forces determine that it perhaps does not necessitate the form of the journal in the conventional sense; it could perhaps be understood as a work of art in other forms, such as a fragment, novel, dialogue, or other “interchangeable” genres. Benjamin’s description of the novel as a *Mischgedicht* that “represents a repertory of various genres and thus embodies ideally the concept of [...] continuum”<sup>17</sup> helps to understand the similarity between the *Athenaeum* and the novel. On the other hand, the *Athenaeum* might precisely be showing how a journal can be conceived alternatively and challenging the traditional notion of a work of art.

3) Opposing Huber’s accusation that the Jena circle is a faction, Caroline indicates that the *Athenaeum* does not exist for the sake of a certain egotistical reason only because the circle is

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.carolineschelling.com/letters/volume-1-index/letter-258/>.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin’s argument in his dissertation work on early romanticism is that the theory of work of art is the theory of its form, which is the medium of reflection. See Seyhan.

minority but rather for a universal cause. She points out that, even if the circle were a faction, revolutions are mostly dependent on factions.

Your error is precisely that you view the Schlegels' efforts merely as a matter of factions — were you standing closer, you would have a better vantage point from which to recognize the size of the masses. I already told you that it is a universal struggle, though the minority is admittedly as limited as the majority is widespread — but even if the Schlegels were to find themselves utterly alone for a time, which is, however, not the case, I would still not be anxious. . . . the truth, however, is that what is great ought never to be a faction, and yet one cannot bring it about *without* such, or at least not without the appearance of such.<sup>18</sup>

4) Most importantly, Caroline criticizes Huber's partial reading and unjust assumptions that do violence to the *Athenaeum*.

Had you gone about all this as a simple reviewer, you would not have adhered merely to your presuppositions here, and would not have done so in so personal a fashion. That on which those presuppositions could indeed be based constitutes only a tiny part of *Athenaeum*. You would have properly presented the rest of the content as well, content over which you only occasionally skate...<sup>19</sup>

The content that Huber “occasionally skates” applies to the lesser-known contributions to the journal that are forgotten by the early romanticism scholarship and is precisely what this dissertation attempts to bring to the fore. The *Athenaeum* as the most important publication by

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

the early romantics as a closely-connected group, with the internal interconnections among its parts, deserves to be examined to a greater extent—or more precisely, as a whole, rather than be treated merely as a publishing organ where only “major” writings are considered by reviewers. Approaching the *Athenaeum* in its entirety by taking into account and foregrounding the wholeness and its internal interconnectivity offers an opportunity to reinvestigate the essence of the early romantic work of art and reconsider how a journal can be understood.

Caroline emphasizes to Huber in an earlier letter, before reading his review, that the dynamic exchange of minds and debates are essential to the circle and that the editors of the *Athenaeum* have plans and work collectively towards a goal.

Do not imagine that these men are engaged in flattering each other or in trying to fool each other: they know each other well, they speak their truths to each other, but they do indeed have a goal — and they are tightly focused on precisely that goal. I could well wish for myself the triumph of seeing you yourself among us. What lively, splendid debates would we have.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, the *Athenaeum* itself justifies this point in an untitled and anonymous piece in *Notizen* of the fourth issue that comments on Johannes Müller’s letter fragments published in *Deutsches Magazin*<sup>21</sup>. It is pointed out that Müller’s communication with his friend resembles love letters and makes the journal where they are published come alive. “Wenn eine leere und planlose Zeitschrift durch einen vortrefflichen Beitrag bedeutend werden könnte, so müßte dies dem Deutschen Magazin widerfahren sein, da es ihm vergönnt wurde [...] die Fragmente aus den

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<sup>20</sup> November 22, 1799. <https://www.carolineschelling.com/letters/volume-1-index/letter-256/>

<sup>21</sup> See the discussion on *Notizen* in Chapter 4.

Briefen eines jungen Gelehrten an seinen Freund, der Welt mitzuteilen" (313). The authors of the *Athenaeum* show that it strives to be the opposite of a "leere und planlose Zeitschrift" by creating a journal that is "geplant," dynamic and internally interconnected. Their journal should be *geistvoll*, i.e., *witzig*, as it tries to communicate to the reader a universality that all arts and sciences are unified and that differences and contradictions can come together and interact with one another, creating a lively whole. Friedrich Schlegel's multiple delineations of the notion of *Witz* in *Lyceum-Fragmente* in 1797 are later reinforced and practiced in various texts in the *Athenaeum* and by the journal itself as a whole. Specifically, *Witz* is defined as, among others, "unbedingt geselliger Geist, oder fragmentarische Genialität" (#9), "logische Geselligkeit" (#56), and "eine Explosion von gebundnem Geist" (#90). Sociability and wholeness are indivisible aspects of the same essence.

As will be discussed in later chapters, *Witz* becomes a fundamental criterion to judge a work of art in the *Athenaeum*. In *Rede über die Mythologie* in Schlegel's *Gespräch über die Poesie*, Ludovico speaks about Shakespeare and Cervantes as *romantische* writers: "Da finde ich nun eine große Ähnlichkeit mit jenem großen Witz der romantischen Poesie, der nicht in einzelnen Einfällen, sondern in der Construction des Ganzen sich zeigt" (102). *Athenaeums-Fragment* #220 clarifies how *Witz* is the principle of universality so that it could in fact apply to *Universalphilosophie*, *Universalpoesie*, or *Universalwissenschaft*.

Ist aller Witz Prinzip und Organ der Universalphilosophie, und alle Philosophie nichts andres als der Geist der Universalität, die Wissenschaft aller sich ewig mischenden und wieder trennenden Wissenschaften, eine logische Chemie: so ist der Wert und die Würde jenes absoluten, enthusiastischen, durch und durch materialen Witzes, worin Bacon und Leibniz, die Häupter der scholastischen Prosa, jener einer der ersten, dieser einer der

größten Virtuosen war, unendlich. Die wichtigsten wissenschaftlichen Entdeckungen sind bonmots der Gattung. Das sind sie durch die überraschende Zufälligkeit ihrer Entstehung, durch *das Kombinatorische des Gedankens*, und durch das Barocke des hingeworfenen Ausdrucks. (Emphasis added)

Multiplicity and plurality within a combinatory whole is not only the aesthetics embraced by the *Athenaeum*, but also the aesthetics that characterizes the journal itself. As Seyhan points out, multiplicity of experiences, interaction with otherness and free play of particular forms constitute the new basis of self-understanding and self-representation (29).

The essence (*Wesen*) of the *Athenaeum*

That *Witz* lies in the wholeness of the romantic work of art where its integral parts socialize with one another—progression in a back-and-forth, reciprocal manner, i.e., *Annäherung*—rather than in isolated individual components corresponds to the essence of a work of art manifested by collections of remnants of ancient Greek poetry portrayed in *Idyllen aus dem Griechischen*, a fragmentary text with mixed forms co-authored by the Schlegel brothers and published in the finale of the *Athenaeum*. It offers one of the most striking examples of the early romantic conception of a work of art that is unified as a lively whole, what Nassar calls “the organic whole” or “a living nexus” where the relationship between its parts and the whole itself as well as that between the parts manifests this unifying principle<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> See Introduction of *The Romantic Absolute*.

Jede Sammlung solcher Werkchen wird mehr oder minder zur lyrischen Gattung gehören, welche die erzählende, dialogische und selbst die lehrende Form in einem gewissen Grade annehmen darf, ohne darum ihr Wesen zu verlieren. Denn die Einheit einer solchen Sammlung liegt nicht in den einzelnen Gedichten, sondern in ihrem geselligen Zusammenhange, im Ganzen, im Dichter selbst und in dem Eigenthümlichen seiner Ansicht... (227-228)

Although here the authors are referring specifically to collections of remnants of ancient Greek poetry, the elements between the lines provide a profound way of understanding the early romantic notion of a work of art during the short three *Athenaeum* years and the unity of the journal itself. Most importantly, the essence (*Wesen*) of a work of art in its entirety stays in place regardless of its internal diversity and relations. Its unity as a collective whole, i.e., a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, though in infinitely transforming and ongoing manifestations, lies in the “gesellige Zusammenhang,” the whole (*das Ganze*), and the collective subjective unity of the authorship. Above all, it repeats the centrality of the whole instead of the “einzelne Einfälle” that defines the unity of the work of art. Same as works by *romantische* writers like Shakespeare and Cervantes shared by Ludovico in *Gespräch über die Poesie*, the collection of ancient poems as a whole draws attention to the collectivity and sociality rather than any isolated individual piece. Friedrich Schlegel writes to his brother in an early letter from 1796, emphasizing the holistic approach to ancient Greek *Poesie*. “Du mußt die ganze Masse der griechischen Bildung kennen im vollsten Sinne des Worts.”<sup>23</sup> As will be articulated in Chapter 3, the conception of *Bildung* in the *Athenaeum* is inseparable from collectivity and sociality, which involves both a cultivative or educative function and a dialogical and relational one. The interrelationality of the community of

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<sup>23</sup> Dated January 15, 1796. In Gundolf. *Romantiker-Briefe*, pp.170.



the authorship of the *Athenaeum* and of the texts within it constitutes its essence that does not get lost in the diversity and variety of topics, genres or forms that are held together in conversations. The inner spiritual community that is established around this essence will be delineated in Chapter 2. Throughout the six issues, such understanding of the essence of a work of art is reiterated at different places and in various ways, and the journal itself as a unified whole together with its interconnected parts precisely manifests this essence.

### The journal as a genre

It might be an astonishing idea to categorize periodicals into a literary genre, as the canonization of the three traditional genres—*Drama*, *Lyrik*, *Epos*—seems to have deprived literary scholarship of the possibility of or interest in considering a journal in its entirety as subject matter. It nevertheless became one around 1800. The important volume in the *Metzler* collection on journals, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1789-1805* (1975) is insightful in that it regards the form of the journal—“die Zeitschrift als literarische Gattung”—as works of high literature and offers a chance to consider journals as part of the literary production of a movement. In the introductory chapter on periodicals of *Weimarer Klassik* and *Frühromantik*, it is stated:

Im Gegensatz zur allgemeinen Rezeption der literarischen Form des Journals in der Literaturwissenschaft wie beim gebildeten Lesepublikum gelten die in diesem Kapitel beschriebenen Zeitschriften als Werke der Hochliteratur und gehören zum verbindlichen Kanon der klassischen und romantischen deutschen Literatur. Das gilt in besonderem Maße für die “Horen”, aber auch für das “Athenäum” und die “Propyläen”. (101)

While all three journals represent their program and literary epoch, respectively — idiosyncratic of the age—and share the commonality that “sie das Verhältnis ihres Rezipientenkreises, und das war das gebildete deutsche Bürgertum, zur französischen Revolution darstellen und zu einem gewissen Teil auch mitbeeinflussen,” the *Athenaeum* stands out as radical since it is not only a response to the historical reality politically, socially and intellectually, but rather, more importantly, comes to form as *the* work of art of the early romantics that embodies the aesthetic principles and practice that shape the brief epoch.

Journal as a particular genre is reflected at multiple places in the *Athenaeum*, which, in various ways, reiterates Caroline Schlegel’s argument that it takes the journalistic form in the conventional sense by accident. In other words, the *Athenaeum* appears to be in the form of the journal yet is in fact something more than the word can convey, for the conception of the journal as a form is something beyond that of the conventional periodical. The author of the introductory piece of the first collection of *Notizen* in the *Athenaeum* elaborates on the idiosyncrasy of the journal that Friedrich Schlegel describes in his letter to August Wilhelm, i.e., the identification of the publishers and the contributors. This provides the reader with direct access to the original character of the subject matter of *Kritik*.

Für jetzt scheint es am zweckmäßigsten, daß Einzelnen für sich zur Befriedigung des allgemeinen Bedürfnisses beytragen was mögen und vermögen. Und wenn dieß einem Journal geschieht, wo die Herausgeber zugleich hauptsächlichsten Mitarbeiter sind, hat der Leser dabey den Vortheil, daß er die Urtheilenden aus ihren eignen Arbeiten schon kennt, und also leicht wissen kann, in wiefern er mit ihnen übereinstimmt. . . . Es ist dabey nicht die Absicht, den Charakter wichtiger Werke zu erschöpfen oder immer förmliche Exempel kritischer Virtuosität aufzustellen; sondern nur ihren Charakter, ehe

die öffentliche Meinung ihnen schon einen vielleicht unrichtigen gegeben hat, im Allgemeinen vorläufig, in der freyesten Form die nur zum Zweck führt, zu bestimmen, damit weder das Vortreffliche, weil es keinen berühmten Namen an der Stirn trägt, unbekannt bleibe, noch was schlecht oder mittelmäßig ist, der Autorität wegen für gut gelte. (287)

As will be delineated in both Chapters 3 and 4, the early romantics conceive the journal as infinitely progressive and universal—exemplifying the *romantische Poesie* as *progressive Universalpoesie*—as it approximates the *Bibel* of the new religion or mythology (the ideal of *Bildung*) and can take no other form than a collective and internally interrelational one (*Mitteilung*). As Novalis formulates, “Journale sind eigentlich schon gemeinschaftliche Bücher. Das Schreiben in Gesellschaft ist ein interessantes Symptom - das noch eine große Ausbildung der Schriftstellerey ahnden läßt.” In Friedrich Schlegel’s case, “[d]as wahre Journal ist universell d.h. moralisch. Der allmähliche Gang, das Schritt vor Schritt und die feine Wendung gehört zur  $\pi\epsilon\iota\theta\omega$ <sup>24</sup>(qtd. in Hocks and Schmidt, 3). The relationship between journal and *Bibel*—neither can be understood in the conventional sense—is intriguing in understanding the early romantic conception of a work of art. It is argued in the Metzler volume that “Journal und Bibel verhalten sich also wie der Weg und das Ziel; sobald nämlich die Bibel verwirklicht ist, muß das Journal aufhören” (2). However, as will be seen in Chapter 3, as the *Athenaeum* together with its internal multiplicity and diversity ceaselessly strives for the infinite and universal ideal of *Bildung* that should denote the forthcoming of the new religion or mythology, the ongoing process of

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<sup>24</sup> To persuade, convince.

approximating it, i.e., as the journal is being created, already indicates the realization of the new Bible.

Studies on early romanticism, from Benjamin's doctoral dissertation to Kuzniar's *Delayed Endings: Nonclosure in Novalis and Hölderlin* (1987/2008), have widely examined the forms of this epoch and how fragmentation, sociality and infinite approximation in the form of the fragment and dialogue give rise to the theories of art and knowledge of the Jena romantics. However, by looking at the *Athenaeum* as a whole in itself through the interconnections among the individual ideals and practices, one can easily find that in its *Mitteilung* the idea of approximation (*Annäherung*) is not linearly progressive; the progressivity required for the approximation to the "Absolute" may be more accurately characterized as back-and-forth—or even more radically, chaotic and random (*zufällig*), which is immanent to relationality and reciprocity.

The three aspects articulated in this dissertation that unify the journal as a whole all require the approach of interconnectivity and collectivity so that no one single work or form alone suffices for the innermost spiritual community, the *Bildungsideal*, and the romantic *Mitteilung*. The *Athenaeum* must be a collective striving that gathers together multiple authors, forms and ideas that constantly converse with each other. The dialogical journal is unified by the *Mitteilung* of multiple contributions and shows in practice in its entirety that the new Bible is taking shape and that the new religion or mythology is on the horizon. Seyhan's argument about the romantic interest in the Orient and Hinduism as "an imagistic religious tradition, where the divine presents itself to the world in representational form" aligns with the early romantic conception of a work of art. "The diversity of deities and their representations also

accommodates the Romantic notion of the work of art as one formal manifestation of the infinite” (78).

It is argued in the Metzler volume that miscellaneous forms enabled by the genre of journal, such as *Gespräch*, *Brief*, and *Rede*, establish “einen direkten Zugang zum Publikum” (3). Yet in the case of the *Athenaeum*, they serve the inner spiritual community that should include not only the reader who *denkt mit* but also the authors who write together in the journal. More importantly, the approach of this dissertation project to the *Athenaeum* shows that the journal communicates, shares or informs (*mitteilen*) not merely through one single dialogue, letter, or fragment; rather, it does so through infinitely many interrelationships and mixture of forms within and around itself. Each of the interrelationships contributes to *Mitteilung* as a whole and each of the manifold forms or ideas of communication and expression becomes a “ray of *Bildung*.”

The last chapter that elaborates on translation in the *Athenaeum* as *poetische Symübersetzung* strives to demonstrate that translation is one of the “topics” that keep the journal as a conversation going, i.e., one of the clusters of ideas that are found in the multiplicity of experiences reflected by the journal. *Poetische Symübersetzung* exemplifies the effort of the *Athenaeum* to be collective and universal yet unified and as the meeting place where living and dead authors “write” and “think” together. Schleiermacher’s call for translation *en masse* later when he formulates a systematic translation theory in his lecture, *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens* (1813), conveys the same idea as how Schlegel conceives the journal that translation can only stop when universal *Bildung*, i.e., the new mythology or religion, is achieved.

## Literature Review

Though with continued, if not revived, interest in German romanticism, surfacing in academic and cultural scenes in both Germany and the Anglo-American world, it is strange that a holistic look at the *Athenaeum*, i.e., the most important artistic production of the brief early romantic period, is still absent. New books on early romantic philosophy by Anglo-American scholars still largely focus on parts of what the *Athenaeum* offers. The last three times the journal *itself* was the subject matter were scattered in three countries—Germany, Australia, and France. These three studies are: Ernst Behler's *Die Zeitschriften der Brüder Schlegel* (1983), Stoljar's *Athenaeum: A Critical Commentary* (1973), and Alfred Schlagdenhauffen's *Friedrich Schlegel et son groupe* (1934). The lack of research on this essential work of the Schlegel circle in the U.S. is surprising. With the continued emergence of new ideas inspired by and related to early German romanticism, a revisit of the *Athenaeum* with a fresh, new perspective, i.e., to look at it as a whole in its right, is imperative and may shed new light on the understanding of not only the early romantics, but also the notion of a work of art.

In the voluminous secondary literature I have surveyed, three categories are very clearly displaying themselves. The first set of studies focuses precisely on the *Athenaeum*, including Alfred Schlagdenhauffen's 1933 monograph, Margaret Stoljar's 1978 commentary on the journal, and Ernst Behler's historical accounts, which are the only ones in their kind in the romanticism scholarship over the past century. Their works have been based on important works since the 1870s such as Rudolf Haym's *Die Romantische Schule*, although Haym takes a stance against Friedrich Schlegel, seeing a negative spirit which is an opponent of the classical ideal for which he fights himself. Such studies offer useful analyses and summaries of the history of and external relations around the journal. They recognize its enormous significance on the development of the

early “romantic doctrine” and its crucial place in the following pan-European romantic movement, but they nevertheless still remain *outside* of the journal itself, only look at *parts* of it, and neglect the aesthetics that shape the journal as a *totality from within*. However, it is also necessary to mention the volume from *Sammlung Metzler* that focuses on the journals during this period. The collection provides overviews of each of the journals, namely treating themselves as a subject matter instead of merely looking at the individual contributions. I am following this attempt and plan to investigate deeper into the *Athenaeum*.

The second set consists of influential works on early German romanticism in general, particularly its philosophical ideas and the relation of which to literature, that have been published throughout the decades since the 1970s—the most fruitful years of interest in and research on early German romanticism—such as those of Walter Benjamin, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy, Frederick C. Beiser, Manfred Frank, Alice Kuzniar, Azade Seyhan, Dalia Nassar, and Elizabeth Millán Brusslan etc. Some of these scholars have provided us with a perspective that is situated in the deconstructionist discourse. Early romanticism, even the entire German romanticism, has not fallen out of our discourse yet. Rather, it continues to arouse interest and significance to our day. The new “Deutsches Romantik Museum” inside the Goethe-Haus in Frankfurt launched in the fall of 2021, providing proof that romanticism continues to be of broad cultural interest. Kuzniar’s *Delayed Endings: Nonclosure in Novalis and Hölderlin* appeared in 2008 and *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, an outstanding collection of many different aspects that the romantics are concerned about, edited by Nicholas Saul, was published in 2009. Dalia Nassar’s *The Romantic Absolute*, a book focusing on the romantic philosophies of Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Schelling and offering extremely insightful and crucial analyses of their philosophies, was published in 2013. *The Relevance of*

*Romanticism*, edited by Nassar, was published the next year. *Brill's Companion to German Romantic Philosophy* (2019), edited by Elizabeth Millán Brusslan and Judith Norman, continues to offer valuable and comprehensive understanding of the philosophical essence of early German romanticism.

The discourse inaugurated by the debates and intellectual exchange between Manfred Frank and Frederick Beiser that began in 1989 with Frank's lectures, *Einführung in die frühromantische Ästhetik*, and lasted until his English language work, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, published in 2004. Beiser, an intellectual historian, published in 1993 his masterpiece, *German Romantic Literary Theory*, and then *The Romantic Imperative* in 2004, where he determines to characterize for us German romanticism's early formative years and to "characterize the guiding ideals and issues behind some of the leading thinkers of the early romantic generation." In this book he criticizes the predominant approach to early romanticism as "an essentially literary, critical and aesthetic movement" but argues that the romantic literature is essentially part of the larger intellectual and cultural movement. He criticizes postmodernist interpretations such as those of Lacoue-Labarthe, Nancy, and Seyhan for interpreting early romanticism as antirationalist, one-sided and anachronistic, and instead regards it as part of the Enlightenment's rationalism and carrying the Platonic legacy. He puts early romanticism in the larger whole of state, society and nature, justifying that it cannot be postmodern.

The closest aspect where Beiser and I have in common is that he attempts to "interpret the romantics from within, according to their own goals and historical context (xi)", emphasizing the state and society, the overall environment, namely the community in its broadest sense. The especially crucial argument in this book is that the early romantic ideal of utopia was the creation



of a social or political work of art. What concerns Beiser is also a notion of a “work of art”. The aesthetic whole would be a *Bildungsanstalt*, a society in which people would educate one another through the free exchange of personalities and ideas. Society would, according to the romantics, indeed become a work of art, where life is a grand salon. Beiser’s political reference is very helpful, because what we are concerned here with regard to the *Athenaeum* is precisely to regard the journal as a work of art which is a mini-state, a *Bildungsanstalt*, as the Schlegel brothers already made clear in the *Vorerinnerung*. The romantic imperative is that nature and science become art and vice versa. Beiser’s use of the notion of the “work of art” throughout his work emphasizes aesthetics and its inseparable relation to the larger political context. But Beiser does not specifically concern the *Athenaeum* there. But especially insightful is that he emphasizes the *holistic* nature of the romantic ideal. Especially useful is his definition and characterization of a “work of art” with such notions of nature, freedom, morality, organism, autonomy etc.<sup>25</sup> These discussions are useful and I will attempt to apply them to the journal. The *Athenaeum*, I believe, also goes through a *Bildung* of itself by following its own inner law, whether it is a conscious process or not.

The major difference in the approach as well as common aims and problems of early romantic philosophy by Frank and Beiser are restated and regarded as “still vital today” in the introductory chapter of Dalia Nassar’s edited work, *The Relevance of Romanticism* (2014). Nassar’s volume is especially interesting as she keeps reminding us of the lasting and up-to-date pertinency and significance of German romanticism, and of how romantic philosophical thinking is still of great relevance to the ideas developed after German romanticism, to Western culture in general. As Nassar notes, where Beiser and Frank differ is in fact not so much an opposition,

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<sup>25</sup> See Beiser pp.40-41.

because the definition of the term “idealism” in their discussions, according to Beiser himself, is adopted in different manners. While Frank believes that romanticism is opposed to idealism, his idealism is, as Beiser clarifies, reduced to subjective idealism. That Beiser puts romanticism within idealism is based on his identification of romanticism with objective idealism. There, he argues that early romantic aesthetics derived from Platonic doctrine instead of Kant’s aesthetics, and emphasizes the truth behind poetry, which is in fundamental opposition to Kant’s position on aesthetic judgment. The knowledge of Greek culture and the focus on truth is the cultural barrier between Kant and the early romantics. In general, Nassar’s edited volume is a brilliant collection of essays that deal with various kinds of problems that the romantics have dealt with in their project, mostly on their philosophical thinking and how it is still compelling to us in our time.

In Nassar’s volume there are plenty of different interpretations of romantic philosophy, which are intertwined with all the “-isms” developed during and after the romanticism period. However, unlike this “encyclopedic” introduction to German romanticism and the grasping of the real philosophical “type” of romanticism, my project is only to understand the journal and how it epitomize the early romantic aesthetics, which, of course, cannot be separated from their philosophy even outside of the journal. While I am not taking a stance among these interpretations, it seems that I will go more with Beiser since he views what early romanticism is as aesthetic experience and philosophy together.

In her *The Romantic Absolute* (2013), an eloquent and valuable work a year earlier than the edited volume, Nassar outlines what “the Absolute” means for Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Schelling, and the different ways they approach this philosophical idea. The most interesting argument she makes, similar to her fellow scholars, is that Jena romantics conceive of “the Absolute” as both epistemological (Kant, Fichte, cognitive, knowledge) and ontological

(Spinoza, existential reality), both sides intimately connected with each other. She argues that for the romantics “the Absolute” is a living nexus, an organic whole, an internally differentiated unity, where its parts are interconnected. Although she focuses specifically on, for example in the discussion on Novalis, philosophical writings that are not included in the *Athenaeum* such as Novalis’ three philosophical studies and notes, her extremely valuable insights have offers a fresh perspective of viewing the romantic way of thinking particularly by virtue of her discussions on Nature as an integral nexus and as a unity that emerges only through differences. Behler joins the debate between Frank and Beiser when he published the edited volume *Die Aktualität der Romantik* in 1987, where he mentions that Frank represents the approach to the new research on early German romanticism that connects it with postmodernism, which Beiser criticizes later. Discussions on “Verstehen,” the romantic “book,” the inner plurality in Novalis’s thinking, and mythology are relevant to this project on the *Athenaeum*.

As Ernst Behler’s student, Azade Seyhan continued her studies on German romanticism and published *Representation and its discontents: the critical legacy of German romanticism* in 1992. Seyhan is the scholar that goes the furthest in terms of any view on the *Athenaeum* in the broad range of the secondary literature that I have investigated, but she only makes a brief comment on it in this book, though an extremely insightful one. She discusses how the journal is a criticism, which has a specific and peculiar meaning, as though it were, almost, a “work of art” in my sense. She remarks that the journal is not merely a collection of writings; rather, it serves as “a combination of literary-lab where research centered around an examination of the socio-cultural crises,” and that the journal rewrote the critical history. I agree with her as I believe that there is a central *Zeitgeist* hovering above the journal, coupled with the quintessential spirit of *Verbrüderung*, making the journal try to come to terms with the entire era wherein the early

romantics find themselves while inaugurating their new one. Seyhan's argument about how the journal's editorial policy was a critique in the broader Kantian sense, "an attempt to investigate the conditions of the production of epistemological, moral, and aesthetic values" is extremely useful here, since she recognizes that the journal is a thing in its own right that has its own job to do. However, she limits the journal to "literary criticism." She uses Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy here—"literature and its theory is the privilege locus of expression" and argues that literary criticism has the task of mirroring the age that needs self-reflection. In general, her study focuses on the problem of representation, namely the crisis of representation after Kant that Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy also examine in their work, and how the romantics have "solved" it in their own way by defining and explaining our experience of the world "through narrative configurations." She remarks that "representation is the very nature of the work of art. Human play fulfills the work of art." I have to agree with her here, as the journal never claims self-avowedly to be a "work of art" while actually fulfilling this criterion. The argument that the entire romantic project is a new mythology is a reduced definition. For me, the new mythology, as the ultimate ideal of *Bildung*, is only part of the multifaceted perspective that unifies the *Athenaeum* and the early romanticism epoch. If one agrees that subject and object are inseparable and object becomes the self-representation of the subject, one is obliged to believe, in the early romantic sense, that the subject is an "intersubject," rather than one in the singular sense.

Similarly, Alice Kuzniar is concerned with the problem of representation in German romanticism. Her discussion of Novalis and of how the romantic authors campaign for a form of nonclosure is especially useful and intriguing. Kuzniar argues that the romantics essentially carry with them a kind of indeterminacy and write in a large historical context where temporal progress does not necessarily make sense anymore. Although Kuzniar is not concerned with the

*Athenaeum*, her arguments are crucial as her concentration on the notion of temporality, for example, is of great significance to the understanding of the *Athenaeum* as an early romantic work of art. Kuzniar brings up the notions of displacement and deviation, which can be directly connected to the “chaos” that are deployed in the *Athenaeum*.

One of the works that has inspired me on my dissertation project is the influential masterpiece by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *l'absolu littéraire*, published in French in 1978 and released as *The Literary Absolute* in 1988. This work is worth re-discovering because it has opened up a fundamentally different perspective of looking at Jena romanticism by thinking about the whole program as a new mode of writing, as the founding moment of modern literary criticism. Their consideration of a radically new mode of writing that is inaugurated by the romantics is especially crucial and stimulating. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy focus their discussion on the dual function of literature/ literary theory, namely “auto-poetic” and reflective, which they argue is initiated by the *Athenaeum* group as an “overcoming—which is also to say, a reversal—of Kant,” i.e., a response to Kant’s crisis of *Darstellung*. Moreover, *The Literary Absolute* attributes the essence of early romanticism to the *Athenaeum* that defines the very group of young writers, recognizing the journal as a radical collective project that is founded on the romantic version of friendship, intellectual fraternization as well as community. In this powerful study on the theory of literature and the relation between literature and philosophy in German romanticism, the two scholars identify the romantic project with “a place (Jena) and a journal (the *Athenaeum*). The merits of their work lie not only in its consideration of the romantic origin of modern literary theory, which sheds new light in the field, but also in that it situates most of the textual analyses within the milieu of the journal.

However, the problem with Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy is that they did not follow through the essential place given to the journal. They confine themselves to a small scope, to the several “major” contributions to the journal, what they call the “central theoretical texts of the Athenaeum years,” i.e., the fragments and some of the younger Schlegel’s theoretical essays that explicitly deal with literary theory and criticism. By using these texts the two scholars intend to show the two key determinants of the concept of literature, the fragmentary model of work that is auto-productive, and criticism with a reflective function. In this sense the two essential elements of the romantic project, according to Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, are productive and reflective functions of literature, which leads to a fundamentally different mode of writing. But for me the problem remains, as the perspective of perceiving the journal in its own right is still missing. The fact that *The Literary Absolute* concentrates on the literary theory from a poststructuralist point of view and through philosophical lenses instead of examining the journal itself as a work of art explains why Schladgenhauffen is not to be found in its bibliography.

Studies that directly and explicitly deal with the *Athenaeum* itself are only sprinkles on the vast canvas of the research on early German romanticism. Alfred Schlagdenhauffen was the first to publish a monograph on the *Athenaeum* and considered a central doctrine developed and evolved in the journal. His 1934 work, *Frédéric Schlegel et son groupe : la doctrine de l' Athenaeum (1798-1800)*, is basically the only kind that deals with the principles centering around the *Athenaeum* and why they are important in shaping early German romanticism and even beyond, as what he called “doctrine” derives from the romantic literary and philosophical ideas in the journal, undergoes transformations in the journal, and continues to impact the romantic thinkers in the post-Athenaeum periods. One of the most important observations by

Schlagdenhauffen is that romantic thinking and conception keeps evolving and undergoes successive transformations.

The most crucial merit of his work is that Schlagdenhauffen provides us with a detailed, insightful analysis of some of the most central principles developed throughout the six issues and stages of the journal and especially that he emphasizes this “common spirit” in the journal. He shows us how the central doctrine of early romanticism has evolved over the period of the publication of the journal, a doctrine that does not stagnate, but continues to evolve in different stages of the journal. That being said, he recognizes that the journal continues to transform over time, so do Friedrich Schlegel’s own theories. Schlagdenhauffen’s study is especially crucial by virtue of his emphasis on the “le groupement fraternel, *Verbrüderung*” that defines the group. His study and mine share a similar focus on the essence that characterizes the *Athenaeum* and see the individual contributions interdependently instead of in isolation, although he, as Behler later also does, offers a chronological, volume-by-volume account of the journal and basically argue solely from a philosophical perspective. He justifies his method by indicating that this period was so rich in events and ideas that only the historical account has the means to penetrate it, which stands to reason as he constantly focuses on how the ideas in the journal have influenced and evolved into new ones successively and chronologically.

The emphasis he gives on “immersing the articles of the *Athenaeum* in the atmosphere where they were designed and putting them back in the set for which they were composed” is especially outstanding and is aligned with the inspiration behind my project. Highlighting the interdependence is of great significance to giving the journal a new life. Schlagdenhauffen stresses in this way how much the authors themselves are found linked by a common ideal: their journal appears as the outward sign of a union of men and women grouped around Friedrich

Schlegel. However, Schlagdenhauffen does not explicitly elucidate what this spirit is. Yet this “outward sign of union” offers a great basis for my project, which gives this very “sign” an important place, i.e., a work of art. He argues that Friedrich Schlegel is inclined to give in this new journal an example of this new spirit, “une manifestation révolutionnaire” (11). More specifically, Schlagdenhauffen seems to define the essential characteristic of the *Athenaeum* as freedom (14), and what creates the unity of the journal is the family spirit shared by the brothers, *Verbrüderung* (18). For him, friendship is inadequate to establish a deep unity; rather, two kinds of objects—teleological and mystical—form the bond of all individuals (37). His articulation of *Verbrüderung* is accurate yet does not treat the journal as a work of art in its entirety. In short, Schlagdenhauffen’s study tells the philosophical history of the *Athenaeum* and thus still stands outside of it.

It is inadequate and problematic that Schlagdenhauffen only formulates the development, mostly focusing on Friedrich Schlegel, as implied in the title, of the romantic ideas articulated in the *Athenaeum*. For this reason, while attempting to find the “doctrine” of the journal, he still turns a blind eye on some of the lesser-known texts and the interconnectivity within the journal. The *Athenaeum* is still approached only as an incubator where important ideas originate rather than being regarded as a whole. In contrast, I intend to view the journal in its own right as a work that the early romantics created based on their aesthetic principles in general and on their plans for the journal. But one thing that is clear is that it is not necessary that this “formula for a new doctrine” should appear ready-made from the start. The whole of thought and the continuous research do not end in a clear formula.

Margaret Stoljar, an Australian scholar on German romanticism, comes after Schlagdenhauffen and has in fact made good use of his arguments in her work, *Athenaeum: A*



*Critical Commentary* (1973), published in the “golden age” of early romantic scholarship in the 1970s. Both Stoljar and I have chosen a contextual method. Stoljar’s approach is of great significance as it allows one to see the linkages within the journal and thus to understand more comprehensively what is essentially at stake in the writing of the early romantics. Stoljar claims to offer an overall analysis of the journal but still omits some contributions in the journal, such as the two important essays by Hülsen, the translation efforts by A.W. Schlegel, as well as the poems. Despite the interpretation and commentary on the content of the journal, a coherent idea remains unclear and hard to locate in her work. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that Stoljar identifies in the very last chapter, briefly, six “principal conceptual areas in the romantic aesthetic” as she attempts to link her points together: 1) the life and function of the artist; 2) the concept of art; 3) the vision and faith of the artist; 4) the themes of great works of art; 5) the synthesis of romantic art; 6) the future of art. These areas largely overlap with each other and do not demonstrate themselves clearly.

Besides his major influential works on German romantic literary theory and philosophy, Ernst Behler has made huge contributions to the research on the *Athenaeum* by re-publishing the three volumes in 1960, for which he includes a brief history of the journal at the end of three volumes, and by offering a comprehensive historical overview of the journal as well as other journals published by the Schlegel brothers in *Die Zeitschriften der Brüder Schlegel*. Behler’s work is so important with rich sources and provides us with all the details on every fact we can and should know about the development of and the stories about the *Athenaeum*—its contributors, the founding history, what are included in all six issues, the anecdotes of and the interaction with the two publishers, as well as the end and transformation of the journal. In short, it can be considered as an encyclopedia about the journal in which one can just look things up in

order to get to know about the journal. However, what Behler does not accomplish in his study is viewing the *Athenaeum* as an entirety in its own right. While he walks us through the six issues and their contributions, he does not go further. He nevertheless recognizes that the journal is the program of Jena romanticism and that after it was discontinued in 1800, the Jena romantics went separated and distanced from each other. Although they achieved other deeds after the “Athenaeum period” and practiced new *Symphilosophie* (in its strictest sense), it passed beyond the early romanticism epoch. Precisely this point justifies my project as one that looks at the journal as an early romantic work of art, because after the *Athenaeum*, even though the individual teachings and views represented in the *Athenaeum* found expressions or even further perfected themselves in other forms, there were not another collective effort, the so-called “Gedankenkonfiguration” put together by the Jena circle as their quintessential work. “Die Harmonie des Jenaer Romantikerkreises war erschüttert worden [...] Die Vielfalt der romantischen Bewegung brach auf.” In sum, I am taking a step further than these scholars from the 1970s to the 2010s to investigate the *Athenaeum* as a work of art in its own right by considering its internal interconnectivity.

The scholarship that has incorporated discourses since the 1970s mainly focuses on early romantic philosophy, namely considers the essence of early German romanticism with a philosophical approach. The third group of secondary literature consists of only a small number of works that center on journals around the same time, such as the *Metzler Sammlung* volume, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1789-1805* by Paul Hocks and Peter Schmidt.

## Chapter 2 The Innermost Spiritual Community

*Einheit des Geistes würde ein Journal zu einem Phönix seiner Art machen.*

—Friedrich in a letter to A.W. Schlegel, December 5, 1797

*Daß alle unsre Fähigkeiten fraternisiren müssen, versteht sich von selbst – aus der Natur des Athen.[äums].*

—Friedrich in a letter to A.W. Schlegel, March 25, 1798

*[...] und jede Wirklichkeit hat also keine andere Bedeutung, als die der innigsten Gemeinschaft unsrer aller Wesen*

—Hülsen, *Ueber die natürliche Gleichheit der Menschen*, *Das Athenaeum*, vol. 2, no. 1

In the earliest stage of the *Athenaeum* when ideas were germinating on this promising journal finally of their own, the Schlegel brothers had a clear understanding of what advantages it would bring and an ambitious vision for what it would essentially be like. The tone is first and foremost set for the upcoming journal—a collective and polyphonic work created by *brothers*. The foundational ideas were passionately exchanged in the last few months of 1797, when astounding emphasis was given to the concept of *Gemeinschaftlichkeit*. Friedrich writes to his older brother on October 31, “[m]ir hat es lange Zeit geschienen, unser gemeinschaftliches Journal anzufangen.” It is no surprise as this project corresponds to the reality facing the brothers—it is an urgent task to found their own journal where free expression is left to their discretion without having to withhold anything to please some other editors. However, publishing one’s own does not make a journal fundamentally different from others; neither would simple collaboration do, as cooperative periodicals and projects are not uncommon in the intellectually dynamic eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, it is this other imperative—a

radical spiritual community—that is both the spirit that guides the formation of the *Athenaeum* and reified by it.

The widely studied fragments and their anonymity have already revealed some crucial aspects about the radical effort of the romantics to undermine authorship in its singular sense. The collectivity and deliberate blurring of boundaries between “fraternizing” authors point to the fundamental spirit that frames early romanticism as a whole, i.e., the innermost spiritual community (*innigste geistige Gemeinschaft*) that encompasses a series of almost interchangeable terms used by the romantics. In both his introduction to the reprint of the *Athenaeum* in 1977 and the important study on all three journals by the Schlegel brothers, *Die Zeitschriften der Brüder Schlegel*, Ernst Behler recognizes as the central idea behind the founding of the *Athenaeum* “diese Idee innigster geistiger Gemeinschaft, die mit dem Terminus ‘Verbrüderung auch von August Wilhelm Schlegel zum Leitmotiv des ‘Athenäums’ erhoben wurde” (6). But Behler’s discussion of *Verbrüderung* does not go further than serving the point that it led the brothers to found their own journal. In fact, the idea of the innermost spiritual community has a more profound role to play, as will be seen in the following discussion, in the understanding of the *Athenaeum* as a unified whole and thus early romanticism. It serves as the spirit that essentially holds things together throughout the brief yet intense three years from 1798 to 1800. This community is most significantly embodied by the wholeness and the interconnectivity of the journal. *Verbrüderung*, for example, is not merely the exchange between the Schlegel brothers but an aesthetic principle that brings together disparate authors and forms that revolve around the same essence as a whole.

On the other hand, although Schlagdenhauffen's monograph, *Fredéric Schlegel et son groupe: La doctrine de l'Athenaeum* (1934)<sup>26</sup>, with which Behler is also familiar, and his essay, "Die Grundzüge des Athenäum" (1970), give the concept of *Verbrüderung* a more central place by seeing it as that which creates the unity of the journal, he centers his point on the chronological evolution of philosophical ideas in the journal at each of its stages and largely on Friedrich Schlegel. The problem is that both Behler and Schlagdenhauffen only approach the journal year by year without considering the reciprocal and interactive connections among the texts that precisely constitutes its wholeness and unity. Their readings are essentially still isolating the individual contributions. What is missing is the holistic view of the journal as a whole by taking into account the interrelationships within it that helps unveil overlooked facets of the journal as a unified work of the romantics.

In this chapter, I attempt to bring to light the centrality of the innermost spiritual community that is embodied not only by the collective authorship of the *Athenaeum* but also by the lively "conversations" among individual parts of the journal and to consider it as the spirit that radically hovers above this integral project of early romanticism. What urgently needs to be revealed is that this spirit as an aesthetic principle and practice—a unifying force—of the journal as a work plays the decisive role in differentiating it from other similar periodicals and in considering it in its entirety as the early romantic work of art. This aesthetic notion transcends the idea of a gathering point (*Sammelpunkt*), which the Metzler volume uses to characterize all collaborative literary and political journals around the same time; instead of a mere collection of like-minded writers, it is an interconnected collectiveness, an intimate community that is itself aestheticized by the early romantics. Notably, nowhere else than in the *Athenaeum* is the

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<sup>26</sup> Published in French. "Frederich Schlegel and his group: The doctrine of the Athenaeum."

emphasis on and discussion of the community of minds and relations of such great significance. It is the deliberate stress on and interactive allusions to this idea and the synonymous concepts across time and space in the journal that bring to light its essence as an epitome of the aesthetics of early romanticism. Well studied notions such as *Verbrüderung*, *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie*, *Freundschaft*, *Liebe*, *Familie*, *Geselligkeit*, *Geistesverbindung* etc. have not yet been brought together in association with the more comprehensive and fundamental idea of *innigste geistige Gemeinschaft* to elucidate the spirit incarnated by the journal as a whole.

The generality or vagueness of the idea of a “spiritual community” compels us, in order to understand the *Athenaeum* in its own right, to attend to the specific interrelationships in the context of the journal and in relation to that of epoch in general. In the following discussion, I seek to bring into view the various dynamic aspects that help constitute the innermost spiritual community of the *Athenaeum*, from the ideas that characterize unity of spirit (*Einheit des Geistes*) through the interaction that finds its roots in sociality (*Geselligkeit*) to the relationship between the notions of whole (*das Ganze*) and parts.

## 1. Unity of Spirit und the subjective collective unity

### 1.1 *Verbrüderung*

The innermost spiritual community of the “author(s)” of the *Athenaeum* finds its most direct explanation in what Friedrich Schlegel calls *Einheit des Geistes*, i.e., the unity of spirit, that defines the radicality of the journal. In a letter to his brother dated December 5, 1797, Friedrich writes:

Durch Einheit des Stoffs kann ein Journal wohl eine gewiße Einheit erreichen, aber es wird dadurch auch sicher monoton – und – wenn es nicht ein Brodtfach betrifft – uninteressant,

wie es doch selbst bey dem Philos.[ophischen] Journ.[al] von Fichte verhältnißmäßig der Fall ist. *Einheit des Geistes* würde ein Journal zu einem Phönix s.[einer] Art machen. Sie ist aber gewiß sehr möglich, wo die Herausgeber auch die Verfasser sind, und wo die Herausgeber leiblich und geistlich Brüder sind. [...] Es ist meine schönste Hoffnung bey diesem Unternehmen, unsern Geist dadurch in recht innige Verbindung zu setzen.<sup>27</sup>

Friedrich Schlegel hints at the key that differentiates their journal from others. Rejection of monotony and the stress on unity of spirit instead of unanimity of subject matter already establish the idiosyncrasy of the *Athenaeum* before it is founded. The romantic unity of spirit, where different minds come into close connection and interaction with each other, leads to the formation of a community. It is precisely this kind of unity of spirit, clarified in this letter for the first time, that essentially distinguishes the *Athenaeum* from other periodicals. Schlegel makes it clear here that such a unity can be realized through *Verbrüderung*, though without using the word yet, that is later to become one of the most important concepts about the journal, or as Schlagdenhauffen puts it, its doctrine. Friedrich recapitulates its centrality in a later letter to his brother: “Daß alle unsre Fähigkeiten *fraternisiren* müssen, versteht sich von selbst – aus der Natur des Athen.[äums].”<sup>28</sup>

It is clear that unity of spirit is equated with “fraternization”—in its literal sense of engaging with someone as a brother, which might have started out with the two brothers but later extended to the exclusive, intimate *Athenaeum* group as more friends of the circle were invited to contribute to the journal. The idea of “being brothers spiritually” (“geistlich”) that transcends

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<sup>27</sup> August Wilhelm Schlegel: Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz [Version-07-21]; [https://www.august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2755?left=text&right=manuscript&query\\_id=61f31986136b9](https://www.august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2755?left=text&right=manuscript&query_id=61f31986136b9).

<sup>28</sup> March 25, 1798. [https://www.august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2765?left=text&right=manuscript&query\\_id=61b0dd2a3e704](https://www.august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2765?left=text&right=manuscript&query_id=61b0dd2a3e704)

blood ties between the two brothers makes it possible for other members of the circle to become part of *Verbrüderung*, of the collective authorship of the *Athenaeum*. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that “fraternizing” are not only the authors of the journal, but also those addressed *within* the journal. Particularly, fraternization is also found among the group of authors who are frequently brought up across different contributions and are characterized as *romantisch* by the contributors. Cervantes and Shakespeare, for example, whose works Tieck (in collaboration with his sister Sophie Bernhard) and A.W. Schlegel just started to translate in the *Athenaeum* years, are referred to as “brothers,” if not only “friends,” in *Notizen* of the fourth issue<sup>29</sup>, while the Schlegel brothers often address each other as “lieber Freund” in their correspondence. In fact, as the journal developed further throughout the three years, it would be seen that the essence conveyed in the idea of fraternization is manifested in an extended list of synonyms such as friendship and love.

In other words, the *Athenaeum* is clearly devised and then practiced as a *Gemeinschaftswerk* that is defined by the unity of spirit via *Verbrüderung* in its broadest sense. Even though the editing of each issue is mostly taken over by one of the brothers, and although with the veto, the back-and-forth discussion and planning of the journal as a whole—the joint deliberation (*gemeinschaftliche Berathschlagung*)—are still essentially what keeps it together and progressing. The term *Verbrüderung* is first introduced in the *Vorerinnerung* of the journal, which echoes much of the discussions in private correspondences of the circle and is perhaps the most significant touchstone, the “pre-reminder,” to which any holistic approach to the journal should always return. There, the editors clarify that a *Verbrüderung* of knowledge and skills bring them closer to the ideal of this enterprise, i.e., *Bildung*, on the one hand, and to the freest

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<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 5.



communication (*Mitteilung*) as its mode of presentation, on the other. The common guideline for this work is that the “total truth” will be communicated with the greatest freedom.<sup>30</sup>

Um uns jener näher zu bringen, hielten wir eine Verbrüderung der Kenntnisse und Fertigkeiten, um welche sich ein jeder von uns an seinem Teile bewirbt, nicht für unnütz. Bey dieser leitet uns der gemeinschaftliche Grundsatz, was uns für Wahrheit gilt, niemals aus Rücksichten nur halb zu sagen.

The point is reinforced at different places in the journal as well as in Huber’s anonymous review of the *Athenaeum* (1799), as mentioned in Chapter 1, which is also referenced in the *Athenaeum* itself. He describes the journal as follows.

Eine Verbrüderung nicht gemeiner Talente und Kenntnisse strebt in diesem Journale, ‘in Ansehung der Gegenstände nach freyester Mittheilung.’ Gebildete Menschen theilen also aus ihrem Vorrath hier mit, was gebildete Menschen interessiren kann: eigene Arbeiten, Gedanken und Einfälle, kritische Urtheile im Fache der Kunst und der Philosophie.

Despite Huber’s “personal attack” later, to use Caroline Schlegel’s words, his summary precisely gathers all of the three unifying aspects addressed by this dissertation—the innermost spiritual community, *Bildungsideal* and *Mitteilung*. In the spirit of “romanticizing the world,”<sup>31</sup> Novalis’ *Blüthenstaub* #85 gives the spiritual community more generality: “Innigste Gemeinschaft aller Kenntnisse, scientifische Republik, ist der hohe Zweck der Gelehrten.” It becomes clearer that the notion of fraternization is no different from building the innermost

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<sup>30</sup> Retrospectively speaking, it is ironic that with their veto and for various reasons, not all works by members of this spiritual community get to have a place in the journal, which seems not to be aligned with its vision of the “greatest freedom.”

<sup>31</sup> Novalis. *Fragmente und Studien*. “Die Welt muß romantisiert werden.”

spiritual community or unity of spirit that helps the enterprise approximate its goal. When sending Goethe the second issue of the *Athenaeum* on July 18, 1798, A.W. Schlegel characterizes the journal as “eine Art von Gemeinschaft der Tätigkeit” and portrays a harmonious scene of community in their cozy garden house in Jena:

Meine Frau und mein Bruder, der mich hierher begleitet hat, um hier recht ruhig für unsre Unternehmung zu arbeiten, empfehlen sich Ihnen angelegentlich. Letzthin vermehrte unser Freund Hardenberg, der jetzt in Töpliz die Kur braucht, unsern häuslichen Kreis auf ein paar Tage. . . (48)

In his first contribution to the journal in its third issue, *Ueber die natürliche Gleichheit der Menschen* (1799), August Ludwig Hülsen argues for a similar state of close relationships and community of human beings, i.e., the profound social connection in which men stand with each other, or, to use his own words, “in dem Verhältnisse der innigsten Gemeinschaft.” In Hülsen’s view, the freedom and equality of man are determined by his nature of standing in the innermost community with others.

Diese Gemeinschaft ist wirklich, so wie Menschen überhaupt sind, und wir dürfen sie nur sehen, und müssen sie anerkennen und verehren. Die Natur hat unsre Wesen an einander hingegeben, daß wir uns frey finden sollen in dieser *innigen Berührung*. . . . Tauch unsrer Geister wird allerdings ein schöner Wetteifer in einem gleichen Nachstreben zu einem gleichen Ziele. Das Verhältniß ist ursprünglich, und begreift jede Richtung unsrer freyen Thätigkeit. (172)

... und jede Wirklichkeit hat also keine andere Bedeutung, als die der *innigsten Gemeinschaft* unsrer aller Wesen. (180; emphasis added)

As Schlagdenhauffen points out, Hülsen had already virtually been part of the fraternization, on which he later exerted an important influence, with his essay on equality secured for a place in the journal's third issue. He sees the harmony that Friedrich Schlegel wants to achieve in the new epoch reflected in the natural equality of men (275), because essentially Hülsen stresses the idea that only in community is man "man" and that the circle (*Kreis*)—the concept of "Mensch unter Menschen"—defines the human "being."<sup>32</sup>

### 1.2 *The notion of Bund and the subjective collective unity*

While *Verbrüderung*, and thus *Einheit des Geistes*, has been foregrounded as the defining characteristic of the *Athenaeum* already in its earliest phases, the collective notion of *Bund*, on the other hand, in the same spirit of fraternization and unity, marks the actual practice of the journal until its last pages as an even more conspicuous embracement of the intimate spiritual community, which is no less of a self-censored polemical gesture against thinkers of *Spätaufklärung*<sup>33</sup>. With such closely related notions as *Bund*, *Bündnis*, *Gemeinschaft*, *Genossen*, and even *Hanse*, the authors of the *Athenaeum* strive to convey at least in part how and what the journal has essentially come into being. *Bund* suggests not just any collection of isolated individuals, but rather a united and sociable community. Friedrich Schlegel's justificatory sonnet, titled *Das Athenaeum*, that appeared in the last issue in 1800 underlines the idea of *Bund*. He looks at the journal in retrospect as follows.

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<sup>32</sup> On a different note, the use of such notions as fraternization, equality and man by the romantics might not be unrelated to the aftermath of the French Revolution in which they lived in. After all, *liberté, égalité, fraternité* are the essential aspects of the political call of the French Revolution.

<sup>33</sup> See Elena Agazzi's discussion of the Schlegel brothers' "literarische Selbstzensur" via their literary form on pp.256.

Bestrebt wir uns treu in freyem Bunde,

Und wollten uns auf uns allein verlassen:

...

Ob unsern guten Zweck erreicht wir haben,

Zweifl' ich nicht mehr; es hats die That beeidigt,

Daß unsre Ansicht allgemein und kräftig.

Although in a bittersweet tone, Schlegel's poem makes it clear that to realize the journal's goals *per se*, now in retrospect, is of even less significance than the community that has been formed and the universality of its ideals that stand in eternal relations. These lines repeat *Ideen* #49: "Dem Bunde der Künstler einen bestimmten Zweck geben, das heißt ein dürftiges Institut an die Stelle des ewigen Vereins setzen; das heißt die Gemeinde der Heiligen zum Staat erniedrigen." Faced with criticism and attacks due to its "incomprehensibility," Schlegel reflects on the journal in its own right by emphasizing the exclusivity and collectiveness of its authorship, as seen in the first person plural pronouns used in this poem— "wir", "uns allein," "unsern guten Zweck," "unsre Ansicht" etc. The exclusivity inherent in this spiritual community is noteworthy, as it not only reflects the urgent need to found a fundamentally different journal, but is also closely related to the centrality of *Verbrüderung* in early romanticism—not everyone can become brothers—, justifying the inclusion and exclusion of certain texts in the journal. As stated in *Ideen* and the *Vorerinnerung*:

Eine der wichtigsten Angelegenheiten des Bundes ist, alle Ungehörigen, die sich unter die Genossen eingeschlichen haben, wieder zu entfernen. Die Stümperei soll nichts mehr gelten. (*Ideen* #140)

Fremde Beiträge werden wir nur dann aufnehmen, wenn wir sie, wie unsre eignen, vertreten zu können glauben, und Sorge tragen, sie besonders zu unterscheiden.

(*Vorerinnerung, Das Athenaeum*, vol. 1, no. 1)

But more importantly, the collective authorship that is in a certain sense both singular and plural, as it rejects narrow singularity as well as mechanical plurality, forms a free yet unified whole—a free alliance—and at the same time reveals the way in which the *Athenaeum* forms itself as a unified whole consisting of free yet interrelated parts. The *Bund* of the authors also gives the journal its form as a *Bund*. Already in *Kritische Fragmente* #90 published in *Lyceum der Schönen Künste* in 1797, Friedrich characterizes *Witz* as “eine Explosion von gebundnem Geist,” where *Geist* is again, as in *Einheit des Geistes*, used in its singular form, highlighting the unity and “oneness” of the mind or spirit. As will be seen in Chapter 3, this unique kind of dialectic, i.e., *Witz* as the juxtaposition of opposites in one depression in order to create a spark (*Funke*), points to a new unity out of the collision of differences. The most remarkable representation of this subjective collective authorship is perhaps the *Athenaeum* fragments. As Behler characterizes what the fragment means to Friedrich Schlegel, it is “ebenfalls Ausdruck einer Gesamtvision” with conflicting and manifold ideas (*Zeitschriften*, 35). This should also be applied to the journal itself.

The emphasis on the subjective unity in Friedrich's sonnet is a clear reminder of the clarification made on the second page of the *Athenaeum*: "Wir sind nicht bloß Herausgeber, sondern Verfasser derselben, und unternehmen sie ohne alle Mitarbeiter." The journal is not a collection site of pieces by random authors who do not know each other; rather, it is written and created by an intimate circle unified by the profound spiritual community. To repeat Caroline's point, the authors of the *Athenaeum* know each other well. It also resonates with the view on the unity of the collection of ancient poetic fragments in *Idyllen aus dem Griechischen* mentioned in Chapter 1, that appeared just before the sonnets of the last issue. The co-authors have already made it clear there that the unity of such a collection of *Werkchen*, i.e., that of scattered remnants of ancient poetry, is formed not in the individual poems but rather, among other things, in the "Dichter selbst und in dem Eigenthümlichen seiner Ansicht," except that in the case of the early romantics and the *Athenaeum* as their collective work, the "poet" is a collective whole and the work, which is also a "collection" of *Werkchen*, is unified by the innermost spiritual community. It is interesting to note that for the romantics it is the subjective unity (*subjektive Einheit*) that gives form to a lyric poem, which is fundamentally different from *Epos* and *Drama* that are determined by an "objective unity." The innermost spiritual community of the *Athenaeum* group, which is precisely a *collective* subjective unity, builds the journal into a work of art that is more of a lyric poem than a strictly-formed, closed epic or drama. As Gundolf argues explicitly in the introduction to his volume, *Romantiker-Briefe*, it only makes sense "[d]ie ganze Romantik als eine Person anzusehen" (V). Schlagdenhauffen also draws attention to the important point that the ideas expressed in early romantic writings always come from the voice of a community (85), which was taking a more visible shape than that had been seen in the correspondence since the gathering in Dresden in summer 1798.

This raises interesting associations with and yet challenges and transcends Kant's notion of the creative *Genie* articulated in §46 and §47 of *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. While Kant's *Genie* remains within the realm of the singular that only points to individual mega minds and singular mega works—though Kant does see art as based on and contributing to a “Gemeinsinn” (*sensus communis*)—that of this post-Kantian group symbolizes a radical, alternative aesthetics and essentially foregrounds the unity in the innermost spiritual community as a new possibility of considering the creation of genius works of art. It also conceptualizes plurality or collectiveness (*Gemeinschaft*), which, as mentioned earlier, goes beyond the mechanical sum of isolated individuals but embodies the whole (*das Ganze*) that is held together by a mystical unifying force, namely the innermost spiritual community and the different names the *Athenaeum* group gives to it—*Einheit des Geistes*, *Verbrüderung*, *Bund* etc. Novalis makes it clear that “Genie ist vielleicht nichts als Resultat eines [...] innern Plurals” and “Pluralism ist unser innerstes Wesen” (Grosser, 55, 66)<sup>34</sup>. While there can be many different interpretations of his statement, inner plurality that characterizes the *Genie* precisely speaks to the authorship of the *Athenaeum* that is a collective notion with its unity of spirit. But the spiritual community can perhaps be radically yet vaguely equated with the early romantic conception of love in its broadest sense. As Schladgenhauffen puts it, no union is true unless it is based on love, which establishes a bond so that the two persons form into one (271). The point was later proven by the historical fact that the *Athenaeum* and thus early romanticism collapsed after a few breakups of relationships in the circle, including the estranged friendship between Friedrich Schlegel and Schleiermacher, Novalis's death, as well as Caroline Schlegel's gradual detachment from A.W. Schlegel and

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<sup>34</sup> Michel also argues in his essay in *Die Aktualität der Romantik* (1987) about Novalis inner plurality within oneself in terms of interpretation, hermeneutics, and *Bildung*.

leaning towards Schelling. It is nevertheless crucial to recall that early romanticism roughly began with the anonymous, “sympoetic” book, *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1796), by two close friends—Tieck and Wackenroder.

Other than in Friedrich's sonnet, *Bund* is exemplified at various places in *Blüthenstaub* and *Ideen*, the second and third sets of fragments published in the *Athenaeum*. In *Blüthenstaub* #75, Novalis stresses the idea of eternal, universal connections, upon which the power “of invisible alliance of true thinkers” (*des unsichtbaren Bundes ächter Denker*) is based. This, as will be seen in Chapter 3, implicitly defines the *Bildungsideal* of the *Athenaeum* as the eternal and universal converging point (*Brennpunkt*) of all efforts of approximating the new mythology or religion. Novalis's fragment reiterates the profound spiritual community and the interrelationships of the parts within. As Gundolf points out, “[d]ie Beziehungen waren ihnen alles, die Dinge nichts” (III)<sup>35</sup>. A quick glance at *Ideen* strikingly illustrates that *Bund*—both the alliance and the comrades—is of great significance in the understanding of the innermost spiritual community of the *Athenaeum* as its actual embodiment. The following fragments in *Ideen* in the last year of the journal not only continue the conversation about *Bund* that has already been brought up in *Blüthenstaub* in the first year, in Hülsen's essay on equality of men, as well as in Sophie Bernhardt-Tieck's *Lebensansicht*, but also foreshadows the retrospective reflections of the journal itself as the realization of the spiritual community in Friedrich's sonnet on the last pages of the *Athenaeum*.

Ob denn das Heil der Welt von den Gelehrten zu erwarten sei? Ich weiß es nicht. Aber  
Zeit ist es, daß alle Künstler zusammentreten als Eidgenossen zu ewigem Bündnis. (#32)

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<sup>35</sup> See Friedrich Schlegel's sonnet above.



Wie die Kaufleute im Mittelalter so sollten die Künstler jetzt zusammentreten zu einer Hanse, um sich einigermaßen gegenseitig zu schützen. (#142)

The following two *Ideen-fragmente* reinforce the peculiar spiritual aspect in the community of artists, foregrounding the intimate idea of family that also serves as a reminder of *Verbrüderung*.

Wo die Künstler eine Familie bilden, da sind Urversammlungen der Menschheit. (#122)

Willst du die Menschheit vollständig erblicken, so suche eine Familie. In der Familie werden die Gemüter organisch Eins, und eben darum ist sie ganz Poesie. (#152)

In other words, this particular alliance of artists is formed as a spiritual community that is indispensable from the early romantic conception, if not only the real-life practice, of such close connections as family, fraternization, friendship, and romantic love, the defining boundaries between which are often blurred. As seen above, both *Verbrüderung* and *Bund*—if the two are not identical—not only reify the ideal of the unity of spirit that consciously builds the innermost spiritual community as a unifying force of the *Athenaeum* as a work, but also offers a fundamentally self-reflective insight into what the journal essentially turns out to be in its entirety throughout the three years.

## 2. Sociality

I put sociality in a separate section, not because it is to be detached from unity of spirit, as the two are intimately connected and are integral parts of the innermost spiritual community of the *Athenaeum*, but because I believe it is crucial to highlight the peculiar aspect of the *social* and interactive (*wechselwirkend*) in this fundamental collectiveness. It constantly comes to the center of attention throughout the major and minor conversations in the journal and in the

correspondence of the circle. *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism* (2009) mentions its own collective approach as a reflection of the collectiveness of German romanticism and points out that “reciprocal sociability” is its “foundational principle.”

Schleiermacher, who frequented social events in Berlin including the literary salons hosted by Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin<sup>36</sup>, became the spokesperson for *Geselligkeit* with his essay, *Versuch einer Theorie des geselligen Betragens* (1799), which was published anonymously during the time he and Friedrich Schlegel shared a *Wohngemeinschaft* and a reflection of free sociality based on the lively intellectual life around 1800. But the *Theorie*, like Schleiermacher’s translation theory, was hardly a one person’s observation, as *Geselligkeit* is also addressed by a variety of contributions to the *Athenaeum*. Discussions on the romantic *Geselligkeit*, which have been translated into sociality<sup>37</sup> or conviviality<sup>38</sup> etc., are by no means new in the scholarship. Both Gjesdal and Kneller, for example, have contributed insightful essays on sociality in relation to other ideas in *The Relevance of Romanticism: Essays on German Romantic Philosophy* (2014).

But what does sociality say about the innermost spiritual community and the *Athenaeum* as a whole? Can the journal as a work in its own right perhaps be seen as a radical, printed version of a Berlin or Jena salon? Is real life stylized, aestheticized, “romanticized” and transferred into written forms? After all, Schleiermacher has indicated in the essay that the theorist alone “will das gesellige Leben als ein Kunstwerk construieren.” If social life can be

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<sup>36</sup> Rahel Levin was a close friend of Dorothea’s and hosted a famous salon in Berlin, which was frequented by several members of the early romantic circle among other intellectuals.

<sup>37</sup> By *The Relevance of Romanticism: Essays on German Romantic Philosophy* (2014), for example.

<sup>38</sup> By Stoljar (1973) and by Wagner (2021).

seen as a work of art, i.e., aestheticized, can the journal be such a work of art and at the same time social life? This section will attempt to investigate the aspects of sociality and relations both accentuated and represented by the *Athenaeum* on multiple levels, which are embedded in the idea of *Wechselwirkung* and in such interpersonal relations as friendship and love. Emphasis on relations is shared in writings of almost all the contributors to the journal, though with a variety of contexts in which the notion of relation (*Verhältnis*) can be approached<sup>39</sup>. It will also examine diverse efforts of *Sympoesie* considering the etymological sense of the word *poesie*, i.e., making or creating, and the Greek prefix *sym-*, “together”—and thus “co-creating” that never forget to leave out discussions of contradiction and dispute (*Streit*) in the very process. If the notions of *Bund* and the subjective collective unity are more on the macrolevel when looking at the early romantic spiritual community, then perhaps it can be said that sociality reifies it at the microlevel.

### 2.1 Aestheticized sociality (*Geselligkeit*) and relations (*Verhältnis, Verknüpfungen, Verbindung*)

A quick glance at a few examples of sociality and relations in general with regard to the spiritual community would be useful for further discussion. First, the incoherently-structured text on ancient Greek idylls co-authored by the Schlegel brothers<sup>40</sup>, which echoes with the one on elegies in the first issue of the journal, brings to light where the unity of a collection of seemingly unrelated remnants lies. Other than the subjective unity mentioned above, the social nexus and the wholeness that the collection itself forms must also be noted.

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<sup>39</sup> The notion of relation (*Verhältnis*) is central yet ubiquitous in early romantic thinking represented by the *Athenaeum*. It is not only illustrated as personal relationships such as fraternization, friendship, love, family but also as relations in a more abstract sense such as the relation between unity and manifoldness, whole and parts, humanity and nature, the finite and the infinite, the future and the past etc.

<sup>40</sup> *Idyllen aus dem Griechischen* in *Das Athenaeum*, vol. 3, no. 2., 1800, pp. 216-232.

Jede Sammlung solcher Werkchen wird mehr oder minder zur lyrischen Gattung gehören, welche die erzählende, dialogische und selbst die lehrende Form in einem gewissen Grade annehmen darf, ohne darum ihr Wesen zu verlieren. Denn die Einheit einer solchen Sammlung liegt nicht in den einzelnen Gedichten, sondern in ihrem *geselligen Zusammenhange*, im Ganzen, im Dichter selbst und in dem Eigenthümlichen seiner Ansicht... (227-228; emphasis added)

The sociable context in which the unity stands and the interconnectivity within the whole expressed here is in the nature of the intimate community of the early romantics. In the most-cited *Athenaeums-Fragment* #116, the focal point has always been given to the first sentence that characterizes *romantische Poesie* as a *progressive Universalpoesie*; the fundamental sociality inherent in it, stated a few lines later, has been largely neglected: *romantische Poesie* wants to and should make “Poesie lebendig und gesellig,” and, vice versa, make life and society poetic; “[d]ie romantische Poesie ist unter den Künsten was der Witz der Philosophie, und die Gesellschaft, Umgang, Freundschaft und Liebe im Leben ist.” The social nature of *Witz*, which is equated with *romantische Poesie* here, is foregrounded even more radically than in the fragment that defines it as an explosion of *gebundnem Geist* mentioned above. At various places, *Witz* is defined as “unbedingt geselliger Geist, oder fragmentarische Genialität,”<sup>41</sup> “logische Geselligkeit,”<sup>42</sup> and “eine logische Chemie,”<sup>43</sup> as mentioned in Chapter 1. It thus becomes significantly clearer that for the early romantics it is the social essence, as embodied by *Witz*, that determines the ideal work of art. As will be briefly seen below, the incompleteness and the

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<sup>41</sup> *Kritische Fragmente* published in *Lyceum*, #9.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, #56.

<sup>43</sup> *Athenaeums-Fragment* #220

infinite becoming of *romantische Poesie*, which have always been regarded as its defining characteristics, are in fact indivisible representations of its sociality.

If Schleiermacher is the early romantic spokesperson for *Geselligkeit*, then Hülsen and Sophie Bernhardt-Tieck must be called the “relationists” of the *Athenaeum*. Both of Hülsen’s contributions to the journal, one on nature (Issue 3) and the other on equality of men (Issue 5), give profound emphasis to relations, whereas Bernhardt-Tieck laments in her *Lebensansicht* (Issue 6) for one’s inability to understand the notion of man in relation to oneself, i.e., to gain knowledge of what man is and how man exists in the world by grasping the relations between the whole and the parts aesthetically. In other words, the way of knowing the truth is to see the relations and has to be aestheticized. However the three texts differ from one another, both Hülsen and Bernhardt seem to be uncovering a way of knowing the idea of man and his existential being. Hülsen’s entire essay on the equality of men precisely comes down to one crucial point—“gesellschaftliche Verbindung unter Menschen.” He primarily shows that natural equality of men is to be found in the reciprocal and holistic relations of free action (*freies Handeln, freie That*), which is not far from Schleiermacher’s point on free sociality in the essay on social behavior. For Hülsen, as previously noted in 1.1, a human being is only a human being in community, i.e., in relations. It is the free relations, the intersubjective aspect (most likely an influence by Fichte) in an intimate community that can perhaps reveal the truth of men. This is noteworthy because, as Nassar also argues, though by only referring to Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and Schelling, the “Absolute” for the romantics is a “living nexus,” and is both epistemological and ontological<sup>44</sup>. Hülsen writes:

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<sup>44</sup> Hülsen also frequently brings up the question of whether philosophy should be regarded as a science (*Wissenschaft*) in his only book, *Prüfung der von der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin aufgestellten Preisfrage: Was hat die Metaphysik seit Leibniz und Wolf für Progressen gemacht?* (1796), which, although having

So haben die Menschen sich gefunden, und finden wir uns noch immer zu einer innigern Gemeinschaft. Denn das Wort ist Vorstellung unsers schönen Verhältnisses in einer freyen Beziehung, und so rufen wir uns zu in jedem Laute der Sylben: Du bist mein Wesen, wie ich bin das Deine. (176)

...

Aber eben deswegen ist auch keiner ein wirklicher Mensch ohne die Verbindung mit allen übrigen, und sie bleibt also nothwendig die gleiche und selbe, als Verbindung vernünftiger Wesen d.i. als Verbindung aller mit einem jeden und eines jeden mit allen. (180)

The idea of sociality implied in Hülsen's emphasis on relations and on the interdependent possibilities of knowing oneself and understanding relationships with others and the whole has transcended the parameter of the spiritual community that was initially devised by the two co-founders as an independent gesture, a polemical response to the aesthetics of the previous generation. That it is particularly typical of Hülsen to call to mind reflections on the sphere of humanity and its relations to nature and/or divinity as a whole in the *Athenaeum* seems to bring him closer to Novalis's thinking, who greatly enjoyed reading Hülsen via Friedrich Schlegel's suggestion in 1797, especially for the sake of his own study of Fichte. Novalis writes in his personal journals: "[I]ch durchlas Hülsen, der mir außerordentlich gefiel. . . . Heute früh hab ich recht meine Freude an Hülsen gehabt, den ich gelesen und extrahirt. Es war mir unbeschreiblich wohl mit ihm und durch ihn" (qtd. in Naschert, 121). Among all the possible readings of

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contributed to the "emergence of German idealism," remains unknown to many scholars. See Posesorski, Ezequiel L. *Between Reinhold and Fichte August Ludwig Hülsen's Contribution to the Emergence of German Idealism* (2012).

Hülse's philosophical thinking, that of Novalis' "schließlich begreift ihn im Zusammenhang mit der Grundlehre Friedrich Schlegels" (Naschert 122), as he seems Hülse's views the closest to those of Schlegel's. Letters and diary entries as such indicating the reciprocal influence and the joint and interactive process of thinking dominate the communication of the circle. Mutual influence on each other that commonly takes place in the circle is reflected at various places in the *Athenaeum*, which is often formulated in the conspicuously related compound words that start with "Wechsel-."

## 2.2 Wechsel-concepts in the *Athenaeum*: "romanticized" social, intellectual life

*Wechselerweis, Wechselspiel, Wechselwirkung, Wechselgespräch, Wechselberührung...*

It seems that the emergence of these "Wechsel-concepts" peaked during the *Athenaeum* years, partially with the romantics' diligent engagement with and response to Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* and Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, the discourses opened up by Herder, Goethe and the revived Spinozism, as well as the development of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. Two of the most investigated among them might be the notions of *Wechselwirkung* and *Wechselerweis*. The former justifies the early romantics' interests in natural science, especially *Chemie* and *Physik*, while the latter, extensively studied by early romanticism scholars during the 1990s<sup>45</sup>, represents the significance of reciprocity and sociality arising from Friedrich Schlegel's confrontation with *Grundsatzphilosophie*, which is translated by Manfred Frank as "philosophy of first

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<sup>45</sup> For example, see those by scholars at Tübingen: Manfred Frank, "Wechselgrundsatz". Friedrich Schlegels philosophischer Ausgangspunkt" (1996), --. *Unendliche Annäherung*, 1997, Naschert, Guido. "Friedrich Schlegel über Wechselerweis und Ironie" In *Athenäum: Jahrbuch für Romantik*, 1996, pp.47-90 and 1997, pp. 11-36, and Peter, Emanuel. *Geselligkeiten: Literatur, Gruppenbildung und kultureller Wandel im 18. Jahrhundert*, 1999.

principles,”<sup>46</sup> particularly with Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*<sup>47</sup>. Schlegel writes in his notes: “In meinem System ist der letzte Grund wirklich ein Wechselerweis. In Fichte’s ein Postulat und ein unbedingter Satz.”<sup>48</sup>

While influential research on early romanticism, when it comes to these “Wechsel-concepts,” greatly focuses on the relationship between idealist philosophy and the philosophical thinking that Friedrich Schlegel strives to convey, it has to be noted that these concepts are addressed in various contributions throughout the *Athenaeum*, which serves, even only as a seemingly trivial voice, as a principal testimony to the social interaction of the innermost spiritual community and as one of the factors that connect the authors of the journal together. Novalis, Hülsen, Schleiermacher, Friedrich and A.W. Schlegel, and even Schelling, although all having engaged or will engage themselves with these “Wechsel-concepts” and the ideas of relationality and sociality embedded in them in their personal undertaking outside of the *Athenaeum*, have managed as a group to find a way to get across their profound spiritual community through the dynamics of the sociality.

Furthermore, that certain literary forms and ways in which the contributions are titled are favored by the journal provides powerful insights into the aesthetics of interactivity and intertextuality. Four out of the six issues get a contribution in the form of the dialogue

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<sup>46</sup> See Frank, Manfred. *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, 2012, pp227, note 4.

<sup>47</sup> As elucidated in the introduction of *The Relevance of Romanticism* (2014) edited by Dalia Nassar, the initial dispute between Beiser and Frank from the 1980s even to the 2000s regarding the relationship between idealism and early romanticism, according to Beiser himself, is an issue of misunderstanding, because both in fact agree that romanticism finds itself within idealism under the condition that idealism is defined broadly enough, i.e., in both subjective and objective terms; Fichte uses *Wechselbestimmung* when talking about the relations between the *Ich* and *Nicht-Ich*.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Naschert, Guido. “Friedrich Schlegel über Wechselerweis und Ironie” In *Athenäum: Jahrbuch für Romantik*, 1996, pp.47-90 and 1997, pp. 11-36.



(*Gespräch*): *Die Sprachen. Ein Gespräch über Klopstocks grammatische Gespräche* by A.W. Schlegel (Issue 1), *Die Gemählde. Ein Gespräch* co-authored by A.W. and Caroline Schlegel<sup>49</sup> but only signed by the former (Issue 3), and the two parts of Friedrich's *Gespräch über die Poesie* (Issue 5 and 6). Interlocutors agree and dispute with, compete against and inspire each other on various topics. As Kneller points out in *The Relevance of Romanticism*, the dialogue form is central to the aesthetic methods of the early romantics and says something about the social nature of poetry. The "social setting", Ziolkowski argues, is typical of the Platonic dialogue, after which the romantic ones are modeled (qtd. by Kneller in *Relevance*, 111).

Additionally, the dedication in some of the titles is also social, which is often overlooked, in that it deliberately engages another person in the text without his or her presence as a co-contributor, and yet in a way that turns the text into a more social and dynamic space. Perhaps the reader would also want to know why this contribution is dedicated to this person or what that person has to do with the point of the text. A.W. Schlegel's *Die Kunst der Griechen* in the fourth issue is an elegy dedicated to Goethe, followed by his postscript addressed to Tieck the translator in *Eilfter Gesang des rasenden Roland*, and a poem in the sonnet collection in the last issue is directly titled *An Ludwig Tieck*. One of Friedrich Schlegel's only two purely theoretical essays in the journal, in the strictest sense, is *Ueber die Philosophie. An Dorothea* in the third issue. Last but not least, in *Ideen*, is concluded by the only fragment that has a title—*An Novalis*.

One could argue, having read the letter exchange of the circle, that these examples of social, interactive acts infiltrated into various forms of writings seem to be an extension of the sociable intellectual life of the Jena group, including correspondence, conversations, and evening

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<sup>49</sup> Referred to as *Gemähldegespräch* in the following.

readings in family gatherings etc. It seems that the social life of the intimate circle is transcribed onto paper, stylized and aestheticized, if not more radically, to use the romantics' own words, romanticized. The tireless references to each other's ideas and works in the three sets of fragments and *Notizen* collections further illustrate this point.

As one of the most well-known dialogues in the *Athenaeum*, the *Gemäldegespräch* is an adaptation, or re-presentation of the convivial gatherings of the early romantics in Dresden's art galleries in August 1798, a realization of *Verbrüderung* in real life, as both Behler and Schlagdenhauffen have mentioned. Except for Tieck, Schleiermacher and Dorothea Veit<sup>50</sup>, members of the Jena circle and their close friends—the Schlegel brothers, Caroline Schlegel, Novalis, Johann Diederich Gries, Schelling, Fichte and Rahel Levin—who have been scattered in Berlin, Jena and other places, finally had the chance to unite as a group.<sup>51</sup>

Most strikingly, what ought to be social and interactive for the young romantics is not only themselves, but also art. With mixed forms and the transfer of paintings into the poetic form, the lengthy *Gemäldegespräch* already interacts with *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*. The dynamic discussion among Waller, Louise and Reinhold on the understanding and interpretation of *bildende Kunst* points to the significance of social interaction (*Wechselberührung*) and the exchange of minds.

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<sup>50</sup> In 1798, Dorothea was still married to Simon Veit but was already very close to Friedrich Schlegel.

<sup>51</sup> See Behler's summary of the Dresden gathering. "Neben Gesprächen war dieser Dresdner Aufenthalt den allgemein bewunderten Gemäldegalerien gewidmet. Die Brüder Schlegel hielten nach dem Bericht Dora Stocks an Charlotte Schiller die ganze Galerie besetzt und verbrachten hier zusammen mit Schelling und Gries fast jeden Vormittag, wo sie Notizen aufnahmen, ihre Theorien entwickelten und auch Fichte in die Geheimnisse der Kunst einzuweihen suchten, den sie überall hinzogen, um ihn zu ihren Überzeugungen zu bekehren" (38-39).

Louise. Lieber starrsinniger Reinhold, wie Sie sich dagegen setzen, daß man Statuen und Gemähle, die für sich ewig stumm sind, auch einmal reden lehren will! Wie soll man sich denn mit ihnen beschäftigen?

Reinhold. Sie unermüdlich studiren, und dann selbst etwas gutes hervorbringen.

Louise. So arbeitet jetzt der Künstler immer nur für den Künstler. Eine Gemähldeammlung würde auf die andre gepropft, und die Kunst fände, wie es leider oft der Fall ist, in ihrem eigenen Gebiete der Ursprung und das Ziel ihres Daseins. Nein, mein Freund, *Gemeinschaft und gesellige Wechselberührung* ist die Hauptsache.

Waller. Sehr wahr. Es ist mit den geistigen Reichtümer wie mit dem Gelde. Was hilft es, viel zu haben und in den Kräften zu verschließen? Für die wahre Wohlhabenheit kommt alles darauf an, daß es vielfach und rasch *cirkulirt*. (49; emphasis added)

This perspective of looking at art, especially at a “community” of art argued by Louise and Waller is not so much different from how a collection of ancient Greek poetic remnants is approached in the contribution on *Idyllen*, i.e., via a recognition of its *gesellige Zusammenhänge*, nor from Hülsen’s view that our essence is given to each other by nature and we stand in “innigen Berührung.”<sup>52</sup> The spirit of the work of art as a whole and its unity is only possible through the idea of community and the “Wechsel-concept.” It has to make contact with other fields. The way in which the *Athenaeum* finds its own unity and its integral pieces scattered throughout the six issues socially interact within should then not be surprising. With “the journal” as its genre, it not merely stays in its own field as a literary journal, but engages itself with a variety of genres, forms, arts and sciences across time and space with the help of the

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<sup>52</sup> Quoted above. *Gleichheit*, 172.

sociality and interrelationality within it. That which makes it thrive as their own work of art as a spiritual community in the years between 1798 and 1800—“die wahre Wohlhabenheit,” to use Waller’s metaphor in the quote above—and that where its origin and goal of existence lies is not an isolated, self-enclosed notion, but a social and interwoven one that comes from exchange of minds, or spirits in this case. As Kneller indicates when discussing the form of the dialogue, true poetry is social, expansive and incorporates the work of others into one’s own (115).

Exchange of minds, circulation of knowledge and the “expansion” that take place in the profound spiritual community creates infinite possibilities, resembling the way in which the infinite is opened up by *Geist* that is embedded in such romantic notions as *Witz*, *Ironie* and *Funke*. The intertextuality enabled by the fragments, for example, is social and infinite. In his second contribution to *Notizen* in the last issue, titled *Fichte Bestimmung des Menschen*<sup>53</sup>, Schleiermacher writes: “[...] daß das Unendliche das einzige mögliche Medium ist unserer Gemeinschaft und Wechselwirkung mit dem andern Endlichen” (296). His “Gemeinschaft und Wechselwirkung” paraphrases the notion by Caroline and A.W. Schlegel. It is also important to note that Fichte’s lectures on *Bestimmung des Gelehrten* exerts significant influence on the development of Friedrich Schlegel’s perception of sociality, especially that in the role of the poet.<sup>54</sup>

Now, the same social interrelationships that form the unity of a work of art are manifested in the collections of fragments and *Notizen* in the *Athenaeum*. They are no longer only a mathematical sum of aphoristic reflections and random comments on contemporary

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<sup>53</sup> Fichte’s *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800).

<sup>54</sup> See Stoljar’s footnote on pp.33: “Hans Eichner points out the influence of Fichte’s *Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten* on Schlegel’s ideas on the social function of the poet and thinker. See Friedrich Schlegel. *Literary Notebooks 1797-1801*. Athlone Press, London 1957, p.226. Cf. p.16 above.”

works. The interaction among the fragments concerning repeated, derived, or contradictory ideas, such as *Chemie*, *Physik*, *Witz*, and *Poesie*, and the intertextuality between the fragments and other writings have almost always served as points of entry when one first encounters early romanticism. The very process of the formation of these collections of fragments and *Notizen* is also social and interactive. Like Schleiermacher's essays on social behaviors and on translation methods, they are partially fruits from the author's exchange of minds with friends and social interaction within the spiritual community, namely from a reciprocal effect (*Wechselwirkung*). Friedrich writes to his brother on Mar. 25, 1798 about exchanging fragments with Novalis<sup>55</sup>:

Ihr seht, daß ich mit Bescheidenheit von ihm genommen habe. Ich habe auch in meinigen ein Paar gefunden, die Blüthen genug sind, um sie ihm wieder geben zu können, damit die fraternale Wechselwirkung recht vollendet wird. sonst ändre ich nichts in seinen, <außer Kleinigkeiten, die Du gestrichen oder angedeutet hast, oder andre ähnliche>.

Such a notion of "fraternale Wechselwirkung" is almost immediately recognizable as an early romantic concept that underlines not only *Verbrüderung* but also the centrality of sociality in the intimate spiritual community. Such considerable examples are proven endless when the *Athenaeum* is gradually woven into a whole. Friedrich Schlegel's encouragement and impact on Schleiermacher's *Platon-Übersetzung* (1804-1828), which was initially a collective effort in the *Athenaeum* years, is reciprocated by the infusion of the latter's thinking of morality and religion into the former's writings. *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächter* (1799) frequents the contributions to the journal in various ways. For example, an unsigned and untitled text in *Notizen* of the fourth issue as a critique of Schleiermacher's book is a mixture of

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<sup>55</sup> [https://www.august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2765?left=text&right=manuscript&query\\_id=61b0dd2a3e704](https://www.august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2765?left=text&right=manuscript&query_id=61b0dd2a3e704)

forms itself, with the inclusion of two letters between the critic and his friends, allowing *Kritik* to be conversational and sociable. It is later complemented by a few fragments in *Ideen*, where the reader is also encouraged to become familiar with the work, and by the sonnet, entitled *Die Reden über die Religion*, in the last issue in 1800. In the same year, Schleiermacher's *Vertraute Briefe über Friedrich Schlegels 'Lucinde'* (1800) reflects upon Schlegel's novel in a similar fashion to the *Notizen* text, where the unity of the work is emphasized with regard to the reader's understanding of it.

In the section titled *Epochen der Dichtkunst* in the first part of *Gespräch über die Poesie*, Friedrich Schlegel seems to pick up the threads of what Caroline and A.W. Schlegel have elaborated about art in *Gemäldeggespräch*. Not only should different genres and forms of art be sociable and interactive and explore outside of "ihrem eigenen Gebiete"; all arts and sciences, including the most central pair of *Poesie* and *Philosophie* for the early romantics, should connect with each other and form a community (*Gemeinschaft*) where they can be freely transitioned into another.

Die Vollständigkeit nöthigt mich erwähnen, daß auch die ersten Quellen und Urbilder des didaskalischen Gedichts, die wechselseitigen Uebergänge der Poesie und der Philosophie dieser Blüthezeit der alten Bildung suchen sind: den naturbegeisterten Hymnen der Mysterien, den sinnreichen Lehren der gesellig sittlichen Gnome, den allumfassenden Gedichten des Empedokles und anderer Forscher, und etwa den Symposien, wo das philosophische Gespräch und die Darstellung desselben ganz Dichtung übergeht. (72)

Philosophie und Poesie, die höchsten Kräfte des Menschen, die selbst zu Athen jede für sich in der höchsten Blüthe doch nur einzeln wirkten, greifen nun in einander, um sich in ewiger Wechselwirkung gegenseitig zu beleben und zu bilden. (85).

Schlegel argues that the reciprocity and unity of *Poesie* and *Philosophie* can be found in ancient writings, which might precisely be the place where Caroline and A.W. Schlegel imagined the origin and goal of art can be found.

The interaction and the mutual influence on each other set in motion a free sociable and interrelational whole that characterizes both an aesthetic principle and practice of the authors of the *Athenaeum*. These reciprocal and interactive traits form the basis for the spiritual community that is essentially social and interrelational, which gives the journal a form that is in a certain sense a *Wechselgespräch*. As will be seen in Chapter 5 on translation, the *Athenaeum* itself becomes a social meeting place where living and dead artists and the ancient and the modern encounter and form a spiritual community, which, of course, has its qualification standards, while the artist and his or her writing strive to renew and extend (*erweitern*) themselves for the sake of *Mittelung* and *Bildung*.

### 2.3 *Sympoesie, Symphilosophie or Symkritisieren*

The interplay between *Poesie* and *Philosophie* and their unity are not confined to the two as abstract concepts, but are also manifested in their own collaborative and collective practice. Among the most characteristic notions of early romanticism, *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie* would appear in almost every study around the Jena circle. They are not only *not* obsolete, but have been increasingly referenced and mentioned in the scholarship<sup>56</sup>. However, it is curious that the two terms, particularly *Symphilosophie*, have already been turned into a widely-used synonym for any collaboration and joint writing of the Jena circle without being given any specific consideration. However, what is originally meant by *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie*?

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<sup>56</sup> Consider the newly established international scholarly journal, *Symphilosophie*, for example.

Do they merely refer to composing poetry or conducting philosophy together in general terms, which is conveyed literally in the prefix “sym-”, or do they lead to any specificity during the *Athenaeum* years? What might be their significance in the understanding of the *innigste geistige Gemeinschaft* of the journal? In this section, I seek to highlight the “authentic” early romantic discussion of *Sympoesie* or *Symphilosophie* and their specific manifestations in the journal and to examine the question of how they could be social or sociable and thus form a basis for the spiritual community of the journal.

First of all, *Sympoesie* or *Symphilosophie* should be intimate, profound or close (*innig*), and inherently social, leading to the formation of a *Gemeinschaft*. In places wherever either of the two notions appears, the elements of an inner community or complementarity are present. In *Blüthenstaub*, for example, Novalis seems to define that which is philosophical as the alternation between absolute understanding and not-understanding, and uses *innere Symphilosophie* to characterize the process of thinking.

Wenn man in der Mittheilung<sup>57</sup> der Gedanken zwischen absolutem Verstehen und absolutem Nichtverstehen abwechselt, so darf das schon eine philosophische Freundschaft genannt werden. Geht es uns doch mit uns selbst nicht besser. Und ist das Leben eines denkenden Menschen wohl etwas andres als eine stete innere Symphilosophie? (75)

He strengthens the point with #44: “[d]ie Gesellschaft ist nichts, als gemeinschaftliches Leben: eine untheilbare denkende und fühlende Person. Jeder Mensch ist eine kleine Gesellschaft.” Implicitly repeating his view of *Genie* that is internally pluralized, Novalis

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<sup>57</sup> I will return to this concept in Chapter 4.



stresses an inner symphilosophy that is inherent in a thinking subject and that establishes a community within the subject itself. In other words, *Symphilosophie* marks the essence of a thinking subject, whether it is a single or a collective “person,” who embraces and experiences ceaseless renewal of thinking via a philosophical friendship, i.e., an alternation between differences or contradictions. For Novalis, to think, then, becomes to “philosophize” together in a “community.” As Grosser notes in his work on Novalis’ *Genieästhetik*, “[d]ie Möglichkeit der Philosophie beruht auf der Möglichkeit [...] wahrhaft gemeinschaftlich zu denken - Kunst zu symphilosophieren - . Ist gemeinschaftliches Denken möglich, so ist ein gemeinschaftlicher Wille, die Realisierung großer, neuer Ideen möglich” (99).

Intriguingly, in one of the founding letters about the *Athenaeum* quoted at the beginning of this chapter, where Friedrich Schlegel elucidates the idea of *Einheit des Geistes* that will make the journal unique in its kind, he suggests to his brother the possibility of co-writing an essay about Shakespeare in the form of the letter exchange, what he calls “eine ganz neue Gattung,” and alludes to the idea of *Symphilosophie*.

Da wir nun bey diesem Aufsatze beyde Mitarbeiter wären, so könnten wir für diese und ähnliche Fälle unser Direktorium an Karoline übertragen. – Was mich besonders dabey interessiren würde, wäre die Symphilosophie, το συνκριτικόν. Erstlich an sich ist es jetzt eine Lieblingsidee von mir; dann mit Dir; endlich in den *Parcen*, von denen ich wünsche, daß wir bey der Organisierung und Konstitution nicht bloß nach der höchst möglichen Freyheit, sondern auch nach der größten Gemeinschaft strebten. [...] Einheit des Geistes würde ein Journal zu einem Phönix s.[einer] Art machen.

*Symphilosophie* is synonymous with “το συνκριτικόν,”<sup>58</sup> which can literally be translated as “das Synkritizein,” or more grammatically correctly, “das Synkritisieren.”<sup>59</sup> This now stands to reason, since Schlegel characterizes the *Athenaeum* as a journal of *Kritik*, and yet it stands out among other critical journals for the greatest *Gemeinschaft* for which its authors, i.e., contributors, consciously strive—by virtue of its innermost spiritual community. With the idea of *Symphilosophie*, the journal is intended as a social collective where *Kritik*, or *Philosophie*, and *Poesie* (as the two are brought into unity in the early romantic conception) are conducted in community. To “philosophize” is defined as “Allwissenheit gemeinschaftlich zu suchen,”<sup>60</sup> bearing a fundamental essence of sociality and collectivity in itself. Referring to Descartes, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy emphasize the “absolute position” of the subject, upon which the object of philosophy is dependent. Although they are concerned exclusively with the anonymity of the fragment when discussing *Symphilosophie*, they bring up the significance of community in relation to the romantic conception of philosophy, which is implied in *Symphilosophie* and *Sympoesie*, and help us think about how they undermine the conventional notion of the author.

The community is part of the definition of philosophy, as is demonstrated by *Athenaeum* fragment 344, because its object, “universal omniscience” [Allwissenheit], itself possesses the form and nature of the community, in other words, its organic character. . . .

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<sup>58</sup> Stoljar argues that this word is not of Schlegel’s coinage, but exists in a Greek verbal form *symphilosophéo* - to join in philosophical study . . . Schlegel describes in his correspondence with W Humboldt as to “synkritisisein”—Stoljar discusses the fragments exclusively.

<sup>59</sup> Stoljar points out that the term *Symphilosophie* is not Schlegel’s invention, but “exists in a Greek verbal form *symphilosophéo* - ‘to join in philosophic study,’ and had a more immediate precedent in the use of *symphilosophéin* by the Homeric scholar F.A. Wolf to describe his learned correspondence with Wilhelm von Humboldt,” but her translation, “to synkritisein” is not very accurate.

<sup>60</sup> *Athenaeums-Fragment #344*.

it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the *Fragments* are simply the collectivization of the *Discourse*. (45)

Again, this reiterates the argument about the subjective unity that determines the unity of a collection of ancient idyllic remnants. That the subjective unity of the authorship of the *Athenaeum*, as previously emphasized, is a communal one is fortified by the notions of *Symphilosophie*, *Sympoesie*, or *Symkritisieren*, which forms a basis for the innermost spiritual community, in other words, establishes an inner community in the subject.

With his notion of *Gesamtphilosophieren* noted in *Hemsterhuis-Studien*, Novalis joins the idea of the formation of the greatest *Gemeinschaft* through *Symphilosophie*: “[ä]chtes Gesamtphilosophieren ist also ein gemeinschaftlicher Zug nach einer geliebten Welt - bey welchem man sich wechselseitig im vordersten Posten ablöst, auf dem die meiste Anstrengung gegen das antagonistische Element, worin man fliegt, vonnöten ist” (qtd. in Grosser, 99). Like Fichte, the Dutch philosopher Frans Hemsterhuis was a common read among the young early romantics.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, it is important to note that the notion of community embedded in the thinking of *Sympoesie* or *Symphilosophie* has to be differentiated from unanimity and monophony (*Einstimmigkeit*), but rather a unity with manifold parts that interact with each other freely in a variety of ways, reflected in differences, contradictions, arguments etc., in concepts such as *Ergänzung* and *Streit*. The manifoldness (*Mannigfaltigkeit*) works through, as we have

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<sup>61</sup> As Schlagdenhauffen points out, Friedrich Schlegel’s “combinatorial thought” and “synthetic” conception of *Genie* might be influenced by Hemsterhuis’s philosophy of human rapports. See Schlagdenhauffen’s discussion on *Witz* in Chapter IV on the theory of the fragment, pp. 122-126.

seen above, ideas of fraternization, friendship, family, love that carry with them a core of spiritual community. The *Vorerinnerung* of the journal already explicitly tells the reader about its polyphonic nature.

Wir theilen viele Meynungen mit einander; aber wir gehen nicht darauf aus, jeder die Meynungen des andern zu den seinigen zu machen. Jeder steht daher für seine eignen Behauptungen. Noch weniger soll das geringste von der Unabhängigkeit des Geistes, wodurch allein das Geschäft des denkenden Schriftstellers gedeihen kann, einer flachen Einstimmigkeit aufgeopfert werden; und es können folglich sehr oft abweichende Urtheile in dem Fortgange dieser Zeitschrift vorkommen.

When *Symphilosophie* and *Sympoesie*, which should be general and intimate enough, are introduced for the first time in *Athenaeums-Fragment #125*, it is foregrounded that complementarity and blurring or even dissolution of boundaries (*Entgrenzung*) create spiritual unity and collective works.

Vielleicht würde eine ganz neue Epoche der Wissenschaften und Künste beginnen, wenn die Symphilosophie und Sympoesie so allgemein und so innig würde, daß nichts Seltnes mehr wäre, wenn mehre sich gegenseitig ergänzende Naturen gemeinschaftliche Werke bildeten. Oft kann man sich des Gedankens nicht erwehren, zwei Geister möchten eigentlich zusammengehören, wie getrennte Hälften, und nur verbunden alles sein, was sie können. Gäbe es eine Kunst, Individuen zu verschmelzen, oder könnte die wünschende Kritik etwas mehr als wünschen, wozu sie überall so viel Veranlassung findet, so möchte ich Jean Paul und Peter Leberecht kombiniert sehen. Grade alles, was jenem fehlt, hat dieser... (209)

They are delineated only in different words at the very end of *Ideen* in the last year of the journal:

An Novalis.

Nicht auf der Grenze schwebst du, sondern in deinem Geiste haben sich Poesie und Philosophie innig durchdrungen. Dein Geist stand mir am nächsten bei diesen Bildern der unbegriffenen Wahrheit. Was du gedacht hast, denke ich, was ich gedacht, wirst du denken, oder hast es schon gedacht. Es gibt Mißverständnisse, die das höchste Einverständnis nur bestätigen. Allen Künsten gehört jede Lehre vom ewigen Orient. Dich nenne ich statt aller andern.

The stress on the communal act of exchange of minds and *Sympoesie* or *Symphilosophie* found in friendship, for example, create a specific breakdown of boundaries not only between the authors but also forms, and concrete complementarity that also gives the *Athenaeum* specific forms. It is interesting, for example, that in the two letters to his friends recommending Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion* in *Notizen* of the fourth issue, the critic focuses on different aspects of the book accordingly. In the second letter to the religious friend, the "irreligiousness" of the book is emphasized. Essentially, the way in which his argument is presented is a kind of *Ergänzungsmühe*, an attempt to complement the spirit of his friend by supplementing the work with his own thoughts and understanding of it.

### Chapter 3 *Brennpunkt der Bildung*: the New Religion or Mythology of the *Athenaeum*

*Es fehlt, behaupte ich, unser Poesie an einem Mittelpunkt, wie es die Mythologie für die der Alten war [...] Wir haben keine Mythologie. Aber setze ich hinzu, wir sind nahe daran eine zu erhalten, oder vielmehr es wird Zeit, daß wir ernsthaft dazu mitwirken sollen, eine hervorzubringen.*

—“Rede über die Mythologie” in *Gespräch über die Poesie*

*[...] ihr Innres, wo bisher zwey Mächte unfreundlich und einzeln gegen einander standen, in Harmonie bringen, oder wie ich es lieber ansehen und ausdrücken möchte, sie auf eine indirecte Weise von fern der Religion näher führen.*

—Notiz on *Reden über die Religion*

It is made clear in the *Vorerinnerung* that the *Athenaeum* aspires to encompass that which is aimed at *Bildung*. “In Ansehung der Gegenstände streben wir nach möglichster Allgemeinheit in dem, was unmittelbar auf Bildung abzielt....” This is of particular significance since the ideal is that the journal seeks to form a universal whole, a community, a salon, a meeting point, to use concepts from Chapter 2, the parts of which are directed at *Bildung*. It is similar to what Beiser characterizes in *The Romantic Imperative* as a *Bildungsanstalt*, namely the romantic ideal of an “aesthetic whole” that is created as a work of art, which can be manifested as a society, a state, and even life (97). The collectiveness needs to be stressed here in order to be differentiated from views of *Bildung* of the *Athenaeum* as a singular, fixed ideal. This universal whole of manifold efforts that have *Bildung* as their goal not only leads to a unity that determines the journal’s idiosyncrasy, the journal itself in its own right, with mixture of forms and ideas and interrelationships within it, also contributes to the very possibility of the early romantic *Bildung*

agenda. In the historical context, it stands in significant relation to the general ideal of the cultivation of German thought and culture at the turn of the nineteenth century. In a certain sense, *Bildung* gives the journal its very meaning of existence, whereas the journal in its entirety substantiates the purpose of *Bildung*, which should thus be inherent in the journal as an organic whole. The aesthetic principle and practice incarnated by the *Athenaeum* are aligned with the early romantic conception of *Bildung* demonstrated in the journal. However, while Beiser regards the journal as a means to the goal of *Bildung* for the romantics, I attempt to emphasize that the journal is already the work of art, in which those that are aimed at *Bildung* interact with one another and come together to form a unified yet relational whole, that has been realized, although not yet complete or in absolute perfection.

It can perhaps be argued that the *Athenaeum* is held together by *Bildung* as another unifying force that is inseparable from the subjective collective unity that establishes the innermost spiritual community (*innigste geistige Gemeinschaft*). It seems that *Bildung* can only possibly be practiced in such a contextual living whole, the plurality of which is not limited to different subjects, as discussed in Chapter 2, but can also be found in the relationship with oneself. Furthermore, the notions of mythology and religion, although ideas around which are often intertwined in early romanticism, are closely associated with *Bildung* in a particular way in the *Athenaeum*. In short, this chapter attempts to demonstrate how the early romantic conception of *Bildung* in relation to that of mythology and religion, particularly that which is manifested in the interrelated contributions to the journal, leads to what the *Athenaeum* came to be, and, on the other hand, how the journal as a work of art in its entirety, which is unified by and as an innermost spiritual community, reifies how *Bildung* is approached and communicated (*mitgeteilt*) by the romantics. I want to bring to light that *Bildung* as a collective whole infinitely

approximates the new religion or mythology in the early romantic conception that essentially emerges as a focal point (*Brennpunkt, Mittelpunkt*) of all representations of *Bildung*.

This first requires an investigation of how *Bildung* is specifically perceived in a particular way in the journal and then the way in which it stands in relation to mythology or religion. Useful questions might include how religion or mythology essentially has a concrete “poeticized” and “bildende” aspect that seems to be ubiquitous across time and space in the journal, and how this relationship is reflected in the unity of the journal as the early romantic work of art.

#### 1. The conception of *Bildung* in the *Athenaeum*

*Bildung* is by no means exclusive to the early romantic journal. As suggested in the Metzler volume, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1789-1805*, a *Bildungsprogramm* exists in most journals around the same time. Ratajczak also indicates the phenomenon of the “Gemeinschaftsbildung” generally found in avant-garde groups. It is common for these journals or any publishing organ to demonstrate the common goal and the cooperation of a group of writers. Even only in the case of the Schlegel brothers, *Bildung* is not exclusive to the *Athenaeum*. Behler argues that all three journals published by the brothers claim

eine enzyklopädische Tendenz zu haben, ein Beispiel für die romantische Enzyklopädie zu sein, wobei der zugrundeliegende Enzyklopädiebegriff deutlich eine humanistische Ausrichtung hat, auf „Bildung“ konzentriert ist und in den Sphären der Philosophie, Poesie, Moral und Religion aufgeht. (Behler, *Zeitschriften*, 2-3)

However, the early romantic conception of this seemingly ordinary goal of any journal is of such particular interest to the *Athenaeum*, as is the case with *innigste geistige Gemeinschaft*



examined in Chapter 2, that it not only frequents conversations across various contributions to the journal but also seems to reciprocate with the aesthetic principle and practice embodied by the journal. The version of *Bildung* perceived by the early romantics in the *Athenaeum* is thus worth considering, for it might shed a new light on how the journal is created as the work of art of the romantics.

### *1.1 Universalized and eternalized Bildung*

It is clear that the notion of *Bildung* is particularly universalized and eternalized by the *Athenaeum*. There seems to be an emphasis on the collective effort to turn the specific and definite into something more profound, infinitely progressive and indefinite. The understanding of such a universal and constantly developing agenda should not only be confined to the ambitious project to educate mankind; it is also found in the authorship of the journal as well as its own progression in the three years as a sociable whole that brings together “mini projects” of *Bildung*. Interestingly, this conception of *Bildung* is aligned with the *progressive Universalpoesie* brought up in *Athenaeums-Fragment #116* in the second issue of the journal. The universality of this *Bildungsideal* is articulated by Novalis when he perceives it as a humanistic project: “Wir sind auf einer Mission: zur Bildung der Erde sind wir berufen.”<sup>62</sup> To confine this mission to any specificity, certainty and law is to do violence to it, as *Ideen #49* in the fifth issue reiterates: “[d]em Bunde der Künstler einen bestimmten Zweck geben, das heißt ein dürftiges Institut an die Stelle des ewigen Vereins setzen; das heißt die Gemeinde der Heiligen zum Staat erniedrigen.”

#### 1.1.1 Erweiterung, innere Poesie, Annäherung

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<sup>62</sup> *Blüthenstaub #32. Das Athenaeum*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp.80

More specifically, it is firstly important to note that this conception of *Bildung* as universal and eternally progressive is mirrored in the idea of *Erweiterung*, a possible influence by Kant's epistemology, particularly the idea of *synthetisches Urteil a priori*, which is also mentioned by A.F. Bernhardi in his critical note in the last issue of the *Athenaeum*. *Erweiterung* in relation to *Bildung* in the journal accounts for the crucial aesthetic idea of *Annäherung*, which will be seen below, and has to be grasped together with the notion of *innere Poesie* or *inneres Dasein* and with the emphasis on *Selbsttätigkeit des Geistes*. *Innere Poesie* or *inneres Dasein* is elaborated in particular by Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck<sup>63</sup> in *Lebensansicht*, Friedrich Schlegel in *Gespräch über die Poesie* as well as in the anonymous *Notizen* text on Schleiermacher's *Reden über die Religion*<sup>64</sup>, while the latter concept is stressed by Hülsen in his two essays and by A.F. Bernhardi in his critical review of Herder's *Metakritik*.

*Bildung* seems to be an infinite expansion, or "upgrading" (to align with "erniedrigen" and Bernhardi-Tieck's discussion of the gradation of *Bildung*) of the innermost being of man and that of a work of art that needs to be communicated (*mitgeteilt*); but on the other hand, only a *gebildete* poet or work of art is capable of communicating (*mitteilen*) the inner self<sup>65</sup>. *Bildung* strives to expand the individual to the universal and infinite, as enunciated in *Ideen* #80:

Hier sind wir einig, weil wir eines Sinnes sind; hier aber nicht, weil es mir oder dir an Sinn fehlt. Wer hat recht, und wie können wir eins werden? Nur durch die Bildung, die jeden besondern Sinn zu dem allgemeinen unendlichen erweitert; und durch den Glauben an diesen Sinn, oder an die Religion sind wir es schon jetzt, noch ehe wir es werden.

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<sup>63</sup> Ludwig Tieck's sister, married to August Ferdinand Bernhardi who was the teacher to Ludwig Tieck and Wackenroder and who contributed a text on Herder in *Notizen* of the last issue of the *Athenaeum*. Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck had an affair with A.W. Schlegel.

<sup>64</sup> The text is composed by Friedrich Schlegel but published anonymously in the journal.

<sup>65</sup> See detailed discussions on *innere Poesie* in Chapter 4 on *Mitteilung*.

In *Lebensansicht* that appears in the last issue of the *Athenaeum*, Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck laments that only if love existed in “jedes Menschen Busen” and implies that the ability to communicate one’s *innere Poesie*, which requires a “loving bosom,” is still a peculiarity of the poet who can undergo the “formative education.” Bernhardi-Tieck gives *Bildung* enormous significance particularly through her delineation of its gradation (*Grad der Bildung*), where she identifies three degrees of *Bildung*. Standing at the lowest level are those who are only concerned with feelings but not with the mind or spirit (*Geist*); they regard each individual feeling at the moment as the highest and yet are incapable of acknowledging the holistic *Geist*, namely a relational whole. Her criticism of those who are ashamed even of their own tears and misuse what they call reason (*Vernunft*) defines the second-lowest degree of *Bildung*.

[...] stehen die, welche es eingesehen haben, daß es mit dem Empfindungen so gar viel nicht ist. Sie sind die, welche sich ihrer Thränen schämen, weil sie sie doch wieder abtrocknen müssen, sie können sich nicht zufrieden geben, daß sie in sich nicht einen Gott verehren können, —und betteln sich einige Sentenzen zusammen, die sie Vernunft nennen, und die so lange glänzen und scheinen bis eine Gelegenheit kömmt, wo sie anwendbar wären; in diesem Fall muß man sich dann mit der menschlichen Schwachheit trösten. (209)

She characterizes the highest degree of *Bildung*, i.e., “die höchste Schönheit, die der Mensch erreichen kann,” as the creation of a work of art out of the union of all passions and as a new kind of religion where the power of one’s soul is the highest of all (210-211). Her understanding of a new religion will be discussed in the second section on mythology and religion, but the point here is that different degrees of *Bildung* suggest the necessity to expand one’s *innere Poesie*. *Grad der Bildung* is also brought up by *Poesie*, one of the interlocutors in

A.W. Schlegel's *Die Sprache. Ein Gespräch*, the opening contribution to the journal. "Poesie", amid the discussion on the development of languages, argues that *Grad der Bildung* has a great influence on the language of a people (24). Furthermore, the role of a work of art in the endlessly expanding *Bildung* is elucidated by Bernhardt-Tieck.

Wohl aber kann ein Kunstwerk es hervorbringen, daß ich in mir selber vollendeter werde. Sobald mir aber der Gedanke bei einem Kunstwerk einfällt, ist es nur mein Wunsch, und der Einfluß, den es auf mich hat, nur scheinbar, ja glaube ich gar den wohlthätigen Einfluß zu bemerken, so habe ich das Kunstwerk nicht verstanden, ja nicht einmal genossen. (208)

The "bildende" function of the work of art is clear, and yet one has to renew the inner self through one work after another. Again, it is an infinitely expansive and universal process that seems to be in accordance with the *romantische Poesie*<sup>66</sup>, i.e., a *progressive Universalpoesie* that "ewig nur werden, nie vollendet sein kann." This leads to the aesthetic idea and practice of *Annäherung* and thus back to the conception of the romantic "Absolute," which can never be reached in perfection, as a "living nexus"<sup>67</sup> and as both epistemological and ontological.<sup>68</sup> Friedrich Schlegel states in the prologue of *Gespräch über die Poesie* that "[d]as Spiel der Mittheilung und der Annäherung ist das Geschäft und die Kraft des Lebens, absolute Vollendung ist nur im Tode." Since in the aftermath of the crisis of representation opened up by Kant and Jacobi the "Absolute" became unknowable and unrepresentable, the notion of *Mittheilung* denotes the way in which the *Athenaeum* as a whole together with its integral parts presents itself and

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<sup>66</sup> The early romantics use the term "romantisch" not necessarily to denote their own writings, but to characterize in the *Athenaeum* the ideal *Poesie* that is best exemplified by such authors as Cervantes, Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe etc.

<sup>67</sup> See Dalia Nassar's *The Romantic Absolute*.

<sup>68</sup> See discussion of Hülsen in 2.1, Chapter 2.

attempts to represent that which is unrepresentable, while *Annäherung* in its various manifestations, marks the infinite approximation towards the “Absolute” and the inexhaustible force in it. This longing for that which will never be perfected embodied by *Annäherung* provides a profound subtext of *Erweiterung*. As A.W. Schlegel wrote to Goethe in a letter dated Dec. 18, 1798, “[e]s ist merkwürdig, daß das Argument, wodurch Diderot die Unmöglichkeit der Korrektheit im strengsten Sinne, zu beweisen sucht, schon bei Plato in seiner Republik vorkommt. Dieser gebraucht es nämlich in der Absicht zu zeigen, daß von der Kunst keine Wahrheit zu hoffen sei.”

Manfred Frank’s lectures<sup>69</sup> have long characterized the notion of knowledge and the nature of philosophy for “philosophischen Frühromantik” as infinite approximation. It “allows us to make advances in our acquisition of knowledge,” and with the “fallibility,” which “can also be interpreted as the non-conclusiveness (*Nichtendgültigkeit*) of our previous state of knowledge,” “a view of the growth of our knowledge is opened” (180). Thus, *Erweiterung* in the early romantic conception of *Bildung* carries with it the essence of *Annäherung* that is not only an infinite effort to approximate the imperfectible absolute knowledge, including that of the *innere Poesie* of man or the work of art, but also, in a more positive sense, justifies the aesthetics of the journal in this endeavor that helps it crystallize into an organic, contextual whole consisting of all that is geared towards *Bildung*. The ceaseless intertextuality and the unbounded space opened up by it not only links together the thinking and works of the authors themselves but also those that they grapple with, which is a specific manifestation of the innermost spiritual community of the *Athenaeum* articulated in Chapter 2.

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<sup>69</sup> *Unendliche Annäherung*, part of which was later translated and published as *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism* (2004).

For the early romantics, to understand oneself and gain knowledge of how man exists in the world is only possible by grasping the relations in which one stands. The way of knowing the “truth” has to be aestheticized, or to be poeticized in the broadest sense, i.e., to be made into *Poesie*, a relational and contextual whole where one’s *Dasein* is found. As Novalis understands *Poesie*: “Er [der Sinn für Poesie] stellt das Undarstellbare dar.” In *Ueber die natürliche Gleichheit der Menschen*, Hülsen alludes to the reciprocity between *Bildung* and the idea of relations by pointing out that every relation “kann nicht anders verstanden werden, als einer notwendigen intensiven und extensiven Erweiterung seiner selbst”(169) and that “[d]ieses Selbst also ist unser Ziel, als eine ewig in sich fortgehende freie Erweiterung” (171). As Novalis writes in the *Athenaeums-Fragment* #284, “Der Geist führt einen ewigen Selbstbeweis.” In other words, *Geist* is indefinitely approximating the absolute knowledge and truth of itself, which will never be reached; the process is an unremitting *Annäherung*. Not only is the *Geist* itself a relationality as infinite expansion; the way in which the *Geist* is connected to the world is also an infinite progression. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, both Bernhardt-Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel in the journal see that *innere Poesie* is innate in one’s *Dasein*. Again in the prologue of *Gespräch über die Poesie*, Friedrich Schlegel stresses the imperative of the eternal expansion of one’s *Poesie* and his view of it. “Er muß streben, seine Poesie und seine Ansicht der Poesie ewig zu erweitern, und sie der höchsten zu nähern, die überhaupt auf der Erde möglich ist” (61). Instead of merely leaving his *Poesie* in works that “stay permanent” (*bleibend*), the poet, who is a social being (*ein geselliges Wesen*), should strive for its endless *Bildung* and infinite approximation to the “Absolute,” which is not so much different from Bernhardt-Tieck’s point in the last quote.

As *Bildung* is perceived in the same vein as the inexhaustibly perfectible “Absolute” or *romantische Poesie*, the eternally incomplete expansion of the *innere Poesie* through *Bildung* resonates with “Erweiterung des innern Daseyns” in the *Notizen* text on *Reden über die Religion* in the fourth issue. There, *Bildung*, particularly the emphasized aesthetics of incompleteness (*Unvollständigkeit*) and infinity, is foregrounded not only in terms of man but also of a work of art. This is illustrated by how Schleiermacher’s *Reden über die Religion* and Goethe are approached by the *Athenaeum*. In an “sympoetic” and supplementary way of responding to Schleiermacher’s work<sup>70</sup>, the critic conveys his thoughts about the book in epistolary form that is mixed with others. The letter to the irreligious (*gottloser*) friend specifically highlights the *Bildung* of the work and brings the aspect of religion to the background. “Doch was mich betrifft, so will ich Deinen Beruf es zu lesen, lieber in Deine Bildung setzen als in Deine Verachtung, wie ich Dir auch das Buch mehr wegen der Bildung empfehle, die es hat, als wegen der Religion” (291). It is significant to note how a “gebildetes Buch” plays a role in one’s *Bildung*.

Gern erlaube ich es, daß Du nach Deiner Art die seltsame Erscheinung mit dem fröhlichen Spott der Zuneigung [...] begrüßest, aber ich fordere dagegen, daß Du die angebotene Erweiterung des innern Daseyns mit ganzem Ernst ergreifst: denn mit ganzem Ernst bietet sie auch der Redner dar. Ich meyne gewiß nicht den Ton, sondern den innern Charakter des Buchs. Nimm es wie Du willst mit den darin enthaltenen Ansprüchen auf Universalität. . . (291)

In a similar fashion to those voices in *Ideen* that ask the reader to get to know the anonymous *Reden über die Religion*, the critic argues that the book offers a chance to expand

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<sup>70</sup> See also discussions in Chapter 2.

one's *inneres Dasein* through its inner character and its claims to universality, which, again, reflects the eternized and universalized *Bildung* understood by the romantics. But certainly, as indicated in the title of the work, the centrality of religion, particularly its relation to *Bildung*, cannot be neglected. *Erweiterung* already alludes to the transformative aspect of *Bildung* that has long been affiliated with pietism and is essentially different from *Erziehung*. Epistemologically, *Bildung* is derived from the Old and Middle High German words "bildunga" and "bildunge", meaning "Bildnis, Gestalt, Schöpfung" and is later picked up by different traditions including mysticism represented by Jacob Böhme, pietism, Leibniz, Herder, Klopstock, Wieland, etc., whom the Jena romantics all studied and discussed. It essentially denotes a process of change from *within* that is distinct from being "raised" or "brought up" from the outside. In the dynamic academic scene in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the concept of *Bildung* seems to have already been canonized, which is particularly contributed to by Wilhelm von Humboldt. The early romantic conception of *Bildung* bears great resemblance to the Humboldtian ideal in that they both understand it as a holistic self-formation (*Selbstbildung*) of man that can only take place in the relationship to others and in context of the world. It is a process of *Annäherung*, of acquiring knowledge of oneself and the world, of developing the fullness and well-roundedness of the human being, which will never end.

Another example is how Goethe, as one of the *romantische* poets designated by the *Athenaeum*, is treated in the same way as ancient poetry by virtue of the incompleteness and progressive expansion of their *Poesie*. In the sequel of Friedrich Schlegel's *Gespräch über die Poesie* in the finale of the *Athenaeum*, a section is dedicated to Goethe—*Versuch über den verschiedenen Styl in Goethe's früheren und späteren Werken*. It is part of the entire dialogue (a reminder of the structure of Schlegel's *Gespräch*) and presented by the figure of Marcus



following *Brief über den Roman*. In the consideration of a living poet, one must strive to see his entirety by accepting the necessary incompleteness, since the whole is not yet complete—so makes Schlegel/Marcus the case for Goethe’s evolving and expanding *Ausbildung*, i.e., *Fortbildung*<sup>71</sup>. The author argues that *Annäherung und Stückwerk* may be the very best way to approach Goethe’s totality.

Das Ganze aber ist noch nicht abgeschlossen; und also bleibt alle Kenntniß dieser Art nur Annäherung und Stückwerk. Aber ganz aufgeben dürfen und können wir das Bestreben nach ihr dennoch nicht, wenn diese Annäherung, dieses Stückwerk ein wesentlicher Bestandtheil zur Ausbildung des Künstlers ist. . . . dieß [den Künstler zu verstehen] kann nur auf jene Weise geschehn. . . (171)

The infinite approximation that manifests itself in the romantic aesthetics of incompleteness or fragmentation and in the way of understanding one’s *Poesie* again accounts for the significance of *Erweiterung* in the conception of *Bildung* and for the search for the “Absolute,” i.e., an organic whole that is both epistemological and ontological. While the wholeness is emphasized, the continuation and understanding of which do not remain static. Rather, it undergoes ceaseless transformations and renewals in every forthcoming and approaching representation. As Seyhan argues in *Representation and Its Discontents*, “[a] representation by itself does not constitute knowledge. In order to know something we need to go beyond representation to recognize another representation linked to it. Knowledge is a system, a synthesis of representations” (26). For the early romantics, the “system” or the ideal of *Bildung* is a relational whole that expands eternally. It is in this indivisible relation between progressivity

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<sup>71</sup> *Fortbildung*, which is defined as *pergere excolere* (*weiter entwickeln, weitere Ausbildung*) in the Grimm brothers’ *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, expounds the eternally continuous development and cultivation of the mind.

and transformation in the imperfectible whole that the resemblance between a “romantic” poet and ancient art is revealed. The way in which diverse ancient poetic fragments are grasped as a totality in progression is similar to how Goethe is approached in *Gespräch*. Marcus elucidates the internal variety in the whole:

Diese Verschiedenheit zeigt sich aber nicht bloß in den Ansichten und Gesinnungen, sondern auch in der Art der Darstellung und in den Formen, und hat durch diesen künstlerischen Charakter eine Aehnlichkeit theils mit dem was man in der Malerey unter den verschieden Manieren eines Meisters versteht, theils mit dem Stufengang der durch Umbildungen und Verwandlungen fortschreitenden Entwicklung, welchen wir in der Geschichte der alten Kunst und Poesie wahrnehmen. (171)

The interesting juxtaposition reveals the centrality of the wholeness and eternal expansion of the *Poesie* of man and of the work of art. As Friedrich Schlegel argues in *Ueber Goethes Meister* in the second issue, “[d]er Dichter und Künstler hingegen wird die Darstellung von Neuem darstellen, das schon Gebildete noch einmal bilden wollen; er wird das Werk ergänzen, verjüngern, neue gestalten” (345).

### 1.1.2 *Selbsttätigkeit*, dialectics of the limited and the limitless, *Annäherung* and *Witz*

While *Bildung* is highlighted as an indefinite and universalized idea, these post-Kantian authors of the *Athenaeum* at the same time endeavor to emphasize a possibility of bringing the limited (the finite) and the limitless (the infinite) into a harmonious relational whole that is already reflected in the notion of *innere Poesie/inneres Dasein* and will further be seen in their conception of religion and mythology. It seems that *Bildung* of a work and that of man are interchangeable, and the ideal of *Erweiterung* is specifically represented in the early romantic

aesthetics. *Bildung* makes possible the harmonious unity of knowing the limit of oneself and striving for the greatest possible expansion of the inner being. Both man and the work of art are bounded and yet can still be boundless. It is fulfilled—just to name a few representations—for Hülsen, through the “Blick” at the divine nature, for A.W. and Caroline Schlegel, the *Kunstreligion*, for Novalis, Schleiermacher and A.F. Bernhardt, the realization of the infinite in the finite and the elimination of boundaries (*Entgrenzung*), and for Friedrich Schlegel and Sophie Bernhardt-Tieck, the new mythology or religion. That the idea of *Erweiterung* enables the harmonious play between the awareness of boundaries and the longing for going beyond them is repeated at different places in the *Athenaeum*. After all, Novalis defines “romantisieren” as “dem Endlichen einen unendlichen Schein gebe.” Romanticizing the world is a practice of *Bildung* that creates a community where the limited, finite and the unlimited, infinite exist dialectically. However, in contrast to most views of early romanticism that almost exclusively lean towards the latter, I found that the romantics are fundamentally humanistic whose ultimate emphasis is on *die Erde*. As will be seen here and towards the end of Section 2, what is ultimately underlined, through *Witz* or *Geist*, is the self-determination and agency of the human being.

The play between the limited and the limitless is illustrated, for instance, in the multi-authored fragments of the second issue and in Hülsen’s two contributions to the journal. #297 of the *Athenaeums-Fragmente* defines the *Bildung* of a work and brings to light the significance of the expansion in *Bildung*, or what is called “le grand tour,” against the backdrop of one’s limits.

Gebildet ist ein Werk, wenn überall scharf begränzt, innerhalb der Gränzen aber gränzenlos und unerschöpflich ist [...] Es muß durch alle drey oder vier Welttheile der Menschheit gewandert seyn [...] um seinen Blick zu erweitern und seinem Geist mehr

Freyheit und innre Vielseitigkeit und dadurch mehr Selbständigkeit und Selbstgenügsamkeit zu geben.

Echoing the inner freedom of man, both Hülsen and A.F. Bernhardi foreground the *Selbsttätigkeit des Geistes*, which is also reflected in the Humboldtian stress on the autonomous individual. Hülsen focuses even more on the infinitely progressive self-determination of man in the essay on equality, and on the inexhaustibly expanding *Bildung*.

Aber der Mensch als Individuum ist auch nicht anders zu bestimmen, als nur durch sich selbst [...] Es ist also nur zu denken, in so fern er sich selbst denkt, und folglich nur als praktisch, in der einen und gleichen freien Selbstthätigkeit. Sein ganzes Handeln ist demnach nichts anders, als ein Fortführen der eigenen Selbstbestimmung, und folglich ein Erweitern jeder Bestimmung zum Unendlichen. (*Gleichheit*, 165)

So erweiterte sich dein Blick im freien Triebe des Lebens, und du riefest durch jede fortgehende Betrachtung deine Welt in eine höhere und freiere Anschauung. (*Natur-Betrachtungen*, 53)

From a similar perspective, A.F. Bernhardi criticizes Herder in his *Notizen* text on *Verstand und Erfahrung. Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1799), alluding to the expansion of the inner self, which he relates to the understanding of language, and to *Erweiterung*, particularly *erweiternde Urteile*, in Kant's search for the answer about metaphysics. Bernhardi finds inadequate Herder's statement that "Sprache sei ein Fundbuch der Begriffe". Instead, he writes:

Sprache ist Darstellung; und das erste Objekt der Darstellung, ist die sinnliche Natur, wo die Sphären der einzelnen Zeichen, durch die Konformität des sinnlichen Eindrucks ganz

bestimmt gegeben sind. Ueber diesem ersten Stamme bildet sich eine zweite Sprache, deren Gebiet von der Selbstthätigkeit des Geistes selbst, geschaffen, und durch ihn vermehrt wird. Es gehört dahin die Bezeichnung des Unsinnlichen, von welcherley Art es auch sey. Es ist klar, daß die einzelnen Zeichen des letztern durchaus keine bestimmten Gränzen haben, allein allerdings bestimmbare. In so fern ist diese Sprache Annäherung zur Philosophie, welche so fern sie sich in Worten offenbart, vor den Richterstuhl der Sprachlehre gezogen werden kann.

The unsensuous (*das Unsinnliche*) that the “second language” represents, the boundary of which is determined and expanded by the same kind of *Selbstthätigkeit des Geistes* stressed by Hülsen, is much like the infinite and the unrepresentable that one seeks to approximate despite the awareness of his finitude and limits. This aligns with the notion of *Bildung* that the *Athenaeum* strives to make indefinite. The third type of man characterized in Schleiermacher’s lengthy paragraph in *Athenaeums-Fragment #428* further reinforces the possibility of the expansion of one’s inner being eternally without losing the sense of finitude; or vice versa, the consciousness of boundaries without being incarcerated in them, a situation where one “bei diesem endlichen Genuß dennoch das Höherstreben nicht vergißt.” The idea is similarly declared in #288, which is one of Novalis’ offerings taken from his *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, the predecessor of *Blüthenstaub*: “Wir sind dem Aufwachen nah, wenn wir träumen daß wir träumen.” It denotes the finitude in the infinity of *Annäherung* and the consciousness of the harmonious unity of the limitedness and the approximation to the unlimited. Schleiermacher writes in #428:

Er verbindet das Talent, seine eigenen Gränzen leicht zu finden, und nichts zu wollen, als was man kann, mit dem, seine Endzwecke mit Kräften zugleich zu erweitern:

Er macht nie einen vergeblichen Versuch, den erkannten Schranken des Augenblicks zu entweichen, und glüht dabey doch von Sehnsucht, sich weiter auszudehnen; er widerstrebt nie dem Schicksal, aber er fo[r]dert es in jedem Augenblick auf, ihm eine Erweiterung seines Daseyns anzuweisen. . .

The repeated arguments for *Erweiterung* shed light on how the limited and the limitless and thus the finite and the infinite can be intimately brought together by *Bildung* through the inner character of the work of art, as is in the case of Schleiermacher's book, or through man's *Geist*, both of which are regarded as synonyms for *Witz* by the romantics. This is particularly noteworthy, since their conception of *Bildung* is in this way linked to the specific aesthetics of the *Athenaeum*. Interrelated discussions and views such as those revolving around *Erweiterung* that echo each other back and forth, most importantly, seem to precisely be carrying out the promised ideal of the journal to bring together that which is directed at *Bildung*. The social interrelationships could be countless, infinitely expanding and sparking further new ideas, had the journal not ceased publication after 1800 or the innermost spiritual community of early romanticism not collapsed.

Finally, a brief discussion of *Witz* is of great interest here as it plays a central role, as synonym for *Geist*, not only in the *Bildung* of both man and that of the work of art but also in the early romantic aesthetics reflected in the journal. Despite the understanding that the infinite has been fulfilled in the finite in a certain sense, in the infinite expansion of the *innere Poesie* or *inneres Dasein* or the approximation to the "Absolute," the fulfillment does not stay stagnant, or *bleibend*, to use Friedrich Schlegel's word. Rather, it constantly expands, transforms and appears anew so that the process of expansion is inexhaustible. This is recapitulated in *Athenaeums-Fragment* #290, again by Novalis: "Geistvoll ist das, worin sich der Geist unaufhörlich offenbart,

wenigstens oft von neuem in veränderter Gestalt wiedererscheint; nicht bloß etwa nur einmal, so zu Anfang, wie bei vielen philosophischen Systemen.” The intimate affiliation, if not identification, between *Geist* and *Witz*, reflected in the word play of *geistvoll* and *witzig* is no coincidence. It is clear that both signify that in which the *Geist* incessantly opens up and reveals itself through sparks (*Funke*) or “explosion” of ideas, constantly creating and reappearing in new, changed forms and remaining eternally unfixed in an infinitely perfectible expansion, which is precisely the practice of *Bildung*. The space opened up by *Geist* or *Witz* itself in the interplay between the infinite (the unbounded) and the finite (the bounded) seems to be what propels and perpetuates *Bildung* in the early romantic conception. Therefore, the lack of *Witz* in a writer or a work of art concerns the *Athenaeum* substantially, which is illustrated in, for example, reviews of Kant’s *Anthropologie*, Soltau’s translation of *Don Quixote*, and of Herder’s *Metakritik* of Kant’s first critique.

*Anthropologie v. Immanuel Kant. Königsb. 98.*<sup>72</sup>, Schleiermacher’s anonymous critical note in *Notizen* of the fourth issue, alludes to *Witz* in two distinct senses, one in the early romantic conception, the other in Kant’s own account of it. Kant is considered as a thinker who possesses the former; however, his understanding of *Witz* needs to be infused with *Poesie*. As one of the first readers of Kant’s book, the critic writes:

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<sup>72</sup> Kant’s *Die Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* was written in 1796-1797 and was published in 1798; Schleiermacher’s critical review had originally appeared anonymously in the *Athenaeum* and was later published in *Band 2: Schriften aus der Berliner Zeit 1796-1799* in his *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (1984), entitled “Rezension von Immanuel Kant: Anthropologie (1799).” This is particularly interesting because the undermining of authorship would not affect the reader of the *Athenaeum*, as this critical note is not being presented as an isolated text on its own by a specific author but rather as part of a group of *Notizen* and a component of the inner interconnections of the journal as a whole. The perception formed in the process of reading this critical note within the context of the journal, with the author defocused, and that as one of Schleiermacher’s individual writings would have different effects on the reader.

Die verachtende Bewunderung des Witzes, wovon Kant doch selbst soviel hat, und von einer Art, die ungleich mehr werth ist, als das, was er hier Zentnerschweren Witz nennt - nur, daß er sich dessen hier sehr entäußert hat - der Haß gegen die Wortspiele, da doch sein Etymologisieren und ein großer Theil seiner Kunstsprache besonders in späteren Schriften auf einem manierirten Wortspielen beruht, das gänzliche Nichtwissen um Kunst und besonders um Poesie [...] dies und mehrers Andere sind Beiträge zu einer Kantologie, [...] ein Studium, welches wir den blinden Verehrers des großen Mannes bestens empfohlen haben wollen. (306)

The alternative approach to Kant here evinces the emphasis that the journal gives to *Witz*. Art, especially of *Poesie*, should not be absent in philosophy. In other words, it can perhaps serve as a reminder that Kant's critical philosophy, which is to set boundaries and impose limits on the use of reason, should be infused with the unbounded freedom of *Poesie*. Schleiermacher's criticism of the complete ignorance of *Poesie* and the lack of *Witz* seems to be in a similar vein by A.F. Bernhardt's review of Herder mentioned above. He criticizes Herder for merely catching something by chance, like catching colorful butterflies, from Kant's critical philosophy as it is, i.e., as unfixed, without expanding his views beyond his own limited understanding and without taking Fichte and Schelling into consideration.

Wenn er [Herder] aber hier diejenigen, welche seit Erscheinung der Kritik die Sache weiter gebracht haben, wenn er Fichte und Schelling ignorirt: so ist es eine ungemene Eitelkeit zu glauben, daß nicht nur die eigenen Kräfte hinreichen, ein so tief sinniges Meisterstück als die Kritik ist, zu fassen, sondern noch darneben, daß die erworbene Ansicht nun auch so unverbesserlich und durchaus vollkommen sei, daß kein anderer Geist sie abändern und modificiren kann. (269)



Bernhardi continues to argue that Herder considers Fichtian views as objections against the Kantian conception of time and space because he is unfamiliar (*unbekannt*) with them (271). These complaints about ignorance, unfamiliarity and absence of expansion by Schleiermacher and Bernhardi bear resemblance to A.W. Schlegel's review of Soltau's translation of *Don Quixote*, which appears in the same set of *Notizen* as Bernhardi's piece and will be delineated in detail in Chapter 5. It is in a similar critical tone that A.W. Schlegel accuses Soltau of lacking *Bildung* and misunderstanding Cervantes, especially the *Witz* or *Geist* in his work. For the early romantic critic, Soltau's translation is an inadequate piece because, without the *Bildung* as a poet, which Tieck, on the contrary, possesses, the translator is unconscious of the *innere Poesie* of Cervantes and that of his work and thus is unable to "access" the space opened up by *Witz*, thus ending up distorting the original *Charakter* of the work. Again, it is the aim of translation, *Kritik* and the *Athenaeum* itself to struggle against such misunderstandings and distortions (by popular and authoritative opinions) of such works.

### 1.2 Collectiveness and manifoldness of *Bildung*

In light of these counterexamples of *Witz* and *Erweiterung* absent in the *Bildung* of the poet or the work of art, the *Athenaeum* offers a variety of "role models" such as those designated as "romantic" poets and their works, ancient poetry, Renaissance paintings etc. Among them, Goethe, whose totality must be approached through *Annäherung und Stückwerk*, and his *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* are delineated as an example of *Bildung* that continues to expand. It is the *geistige Zusammenhang* that is particularly fascinating to the romantics, namely, the context of the whole in the *Bildung* of a poet or a work, into which different and even contradictory individuals are built. While Goethe as a poet is analogous to ancient art, Goethe's novel, which is famously categorized in the fragments as one of the "tendencies" of the age, is compared to

Tieck's *Volksmärchen* by A.W. Schlegel in *Beyträge zur Kritik der neuesten Litteratur* in the first issue. In Schlagdenhauffen's view, Friedrich Schlegel is most intrigued by Goethe's synthesis of objectivity borrowed from the ancients and the subjective modern spirit, i.e., a sublime fusion of the ancient and the modern, the classical and the romantic that is continual and self-perfecting (356).

Moreover, Friedrich Schlegel's essay, *Ueber Goethes Meister* in the second issue, highlights the progressive and expansive nature of the work, in which interrelationships and unity in the world continue to be discovered. Schlegel begins his review with an emphasis on *Bildung* and expansion: "Ohne Anmaßung und ohne Geräusch, wie die Bildung eines strebenden Geistes sich still entfaltet, und wie die werdende Welt aus seinem Innern leise emporsteigt, beginnt die klare Geschichte" (323). It is especially important to see the perspective from which the early romantic critic approaches Goethe's work for the sake of the *Bildungsideal* of the *Athenaeum*. Eternal expansion and yet the unity of universality and individuality in the romantic conception of *Bildung* constitute the fundamentals of the novel. Schlegel writes:

Wer aber ächten systematischen Instinkt, Sinn für das Universum, jene Vorempfindung der ganzen Welt hat, die Wilhelmen so interessant macht, fühlt gleichsam überall die Persönlichkeit und lebendige Individualität des Werks, und je tiefer er forscht, je mehr innere Beziehungen und Verwandtschaften, je mehr geistigen Zusammenhang entdeckt er in demselben. Hat irgend ein Buch einen Genius, so ist es dieses. (336)

When commenting on the second book of Goethe's novel, Schlegel elucidates that it continues to open up a new world for the reader and offers infinite possibilities for further *Bildung*, luring new expectations and interests with each of the new representations of the whole.

Durch jene Fortbildung ist der Zusammenhang, durch diese Einfassung ist die Verschiedenheit der einzelnen Massen gesichert und bestätigt, und so wird jeder notwendige Theil des einen und untheilbare Romans ein System für sich. Die Mittel der Verknüpfung und der Fortschreitung sind ungefähr überall dieselben. Auch im zweiten Bande locken Jarno und die Erscheinung der Amazone, wie der Fremder und Mignon im ersten Bande, unsre Erwartung und unser Interesse in die dunkle Ferne, und deuten auf eine noch nicht sichtbare Höher der Bildung; auch hier öffnet sich mit jedem Buch eine neue Scene und eine neue Welt. (337)

Striking similarities are demonstrated in Schleiermacher's second contribution to *Notizen* in the last issue, titled *Fichte Bestimmung des Menschen*<sup>73</sup>, as mentioned in Chapter 2. There, he reminds the reader that the only way to remain *one* with oneself and the whole is to implement the way of thinking that leads to the self-knowledge (*Selbsterkenntnis*) of human beings offered by Fichte's "profound" work. This mindset, in the critic's understanding that is not unrelated to his own theological thinking, is not to be confined to oneself, but is rather to turn to infinity so that one<sup>74</sup> stands in a shared community and sociality with other "finite beings."

[E]s weiß, daß das Unendliche das einzige mögliche Medium ist unserer Gemeinschaft und Wechselwirkung mit den andern Endlichen: es weiß dies, und will nun gern etwas an einem andern und für ein anderes sein; und alle Verwirrung ist gelöst zwischen dem, was es selbst, und dem was es am Unendlichen ist; beides weiß es jetzt zu vereinigen und zu genießen. . . . In dieser Denkart allein können wir mit uns und dem Ganzen einig seyn und bleiben, und unser wahres Seyn und Wesen ergreifen... (296-297)

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<sup>73</sup> Fichte's *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800).

<sup>74</sup> I use the word "one" not only in the sense of a person but also of a work.

Now, the conception of infinite expansion in *Bildung* is fused with the central spirit of community that the early romantics both stress and practice. The eternalized and universalized idea of *Bildung* is also collective and internally plural, which reminds us of Novalis' understanding of *Genie*. The same aesthetic principle and practice can apply to the *Athenaeum* as an organic, relational whole where individual representations and "modifications" of *Bildung*, what A.W. Schlegel calls "vielseitigsten Streben nach Bildung" in *Beyträge*<sup>75</sup>, come together within the context. The journal has undergone its own three stages of development, "Tendenzen" or "Bildungsstufen," to use Behler's phrases, which Friedrich Schlegel also states retrospectively in *Europa*. In Behler's accounts, the three phases are *Kritik*, a universal *Bildungsprogramm*, and the proclamation of the mysteries of art and science. Even the very authorship, which started out as the original *Verbrüderung* (recall the discussion of the journal's *Vorerinnerung* and spiritual community in Chapter 2), has expanded. As Behler notes, "die Zeitschrift zog schon bald weitere Vertreter des sich bildenden Romantikerkreises an" (Behler, *Zeitschriften*, 27).

The journal's "obscure" individual messages, like each book of *Wilhelm Meister* that leads to further possibilities previously invisible, unfold in a continuous process that can only be grasped in a whole and constitutes a collective and lively enterprise of *Bildung*. It is "nicht eben das todte Fachwerk eines Lehrgebäudes, aber die lebendige Stufenleiter jeder Naturgeschichte und Bildungslehre," so argues Friedrich Schlegel in the critique of Goethe's novel (332), "die Bildungslehre der Lebenskunst hinzu, und ward der Genius des Ganzen" in the section on Goethe's style in *Gespräch* (179), and "die lebendige Harmonie der verschiedenen Theile der Bildung" in the critical note on *Reden über die Religion*. As both Behler and Schlagdenhauffen point out in their historical accounts, the journal keeps shifting its focus and the "Doktrin des

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<sup>75</sup> *Das Athenaeum*, vol.1, no.1, pp. 149.

Journals” continues to modify itself profoundly throughout its developmental stages. It is reflected in their correspondence that the contributors respond to and adopt each other’s views with modifications. Requesting and suggesting ideas for future contributions patronizes the exchange of letters and serves the goal of “keeping things interesting” in each of the journal’s issues. A.W. Schlegel characterizes “Meisterwerke” as those “die den Fortschritt der Bildung bezeichnen” (*Beyträge*, 145). The *Athenaeum* seems to precisely demonstrate itself as such a *Meisterwerk*. As Nassar argues about Novalis’s philosophical thinking regarding the relationship between parts and the whole in *The Romantic Absolute*, “[i]n order to grasp the organism, one must not perceive its parts in isolation, but see how they are connected to one another [...] and thus discern how each part is a modification of the one preceding” (62).

This way of implementing the collective yet lively and manifold *Bildung* of themselves and their work is not only strikingly reflected in the innermost spiritual community articulated in Chapter 2, but also in the way the *Athenaeum* presents itself, i.e., in the notion of *Mitteilung*, and will be examined in Chapter 4. The expansive and progressive formation of the journal as a collective work points to a crucial way to see it anew and as a practice of the early romantic aesthetics, as it guarantees the incompleteness, inexhaustible expansion and sociability in a whole, and of the ideal of encompassing a universality of *Bildung*. The question is, however, whether the journal has succeeded or not.

If infinite and universal *Bildung* as a humanistic project were the criterion, the *Athenaeum* was not so much of a success in that the journal ceased publication after three years, and thus was neither eternal nor all-encompassing. In light of both fierce attacks by the “Philisters” in Berlin<sup>76</sup> and disappointing sales of the journal, Friedrich Schlegel published two

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<sup>76</sup> *Gespräch über die Poesie. Das Athenaeum*. vol. 3, no.1, pp. 95.

pieces in the last issue—*Ueber die Unverständlichkeit* and the sonnet entitled “Das Athenaeum”—that attempt to justify the uniqueness of the collective striving for *Bildung*, despite the awareness of the journal’s fate soon.

Der Bildung Strahlen all’ in Eins zu fassen,  
Vom Kranken ganz zu scheiden das Gesunde,  
Bestrebten wir uns treu in freyem Bunde,  
Und wollten uns auf uns allein verlassen:  
...  
Ob unsern guten Zweck erreicht wir haben,  
Zweifl’ ich nicht mehr; es hats die that beeidigt,  
Daß unsre Ansicht allgemein und kräftig.

For Schlegel, the very striving of the journal as an inner spiritual circle for bringing together all that is aimed at *Bildung* seems to have kept the promise made in the *Vorerinnerung*. His justification indicates that the journal has succeeded in this sense and that the striving process has always been intended to be exclusive despite the all-inclusive ideal that attempts to push out beyond the intimate circle—to educate the earth. However, Huber’s criticism of the journal after its fourth issue emphasizes this exclusivity from an exactly opposite point of view:

[D]ie Herausgeber halten vielmehr so sehr auf ihre schriftstellerische Individualität. . .  
...

... in einem solchen Tone und mit solchen Wendungen wiederholt, als wäre es tiefste und ausschließendste Adeptenweisheit, sucht man mit näher verwandten Geistern ein Bündnis zu stiften, dessen geheimes Wort im Grunde kein anderes ist, als das bekannte französische: *nul n'aura de l'esprit, hors nous et nos ami*.

The dispute seems to be impossible to settle, as each side takes an antithetical standpoint. Nevertheless, against the backdrop of the discussions in *The Literary Absolute* and other poststructuralist and deconstructionist interests in the romantics since the 1960s, let alone Walter Benjamin's dissertation published in 1920, the *Bildungsideal* envisioned by the *Athenaeum* did seem to have transcended its age and continues to spark further conversations. As Stoljar reminds us at the end of her second chapter, “[b]ut a foundation had been laid for the great movement of European romanticism which was to be the real fulfilment of the vision of the nineteenth century that found expression in the Athenäum” (51).

## 2. The approximation of Bildung to the new religion or mythology

Scholars have given plenty of interpretations of the “new mythology” and the understanding of religion in early romanticism but only occasionally or loosely connect them with *Bildung*. Bolz and Beiser<sup>77</sup> indicate the realization of romantic aesthetics through *Bildung* and through the new mythology, while Behler mentions “das neuentdeckte Bildungselement der ‘Religion’ oder des Mystizismus.” Stoljar connects religious experience and *Bildung* by virtue of the role that the poet takes up in educating others. It is surprising that only Nassar and Seyhan have explicitly indicated a fundamental relation between mythology/religion and the *Bildung* ideal of early romanticism.

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<sup>77</sup> In Behler, Ernst and Jochen Hörisch. *Die Aktualität der Frühromantik*. Schöningh, 1987.

However, when the understanding of religion and mythology across different texts within the context of the journal is brought into a dialogue, it is not hard to find that they are an indivisible part in the early romantic conception of *Bildung*. The understanding of *Bildung* as the eternalized and universalized ideal of the *Athenaeum* can be more comprehensive only in close association with that of religion and mythology. As the relationship and difference between religion and mythology do not seem to be a major concern in the *Athenaeum* and as ideas around them are often intertwined, they will be mostly considered together in the following discussion. The aspect in their differences that may be of interest to the examination of their relation to *Bildung*, especially with Hülsen's emphasis on human action (*Handeln*) on mind, is that mythology leans more towards the narrative and foundational stories that shape the thinking of a collective—a people or a society, for example—whereas religion, which is more than a set of ideas, is a way of living one's life and is more concerned with rituals and practices.<sup>78</sup>

In the case of the *Athenaeum*, it is both a representation of the fundamental way of thinking of the innermost spiritual community of the romantics as well as the practice of their thinking and aesthetic principles, i.e., their way of living and writing. Thus, the journal not only represents a new *mythology* but also approximates the notion of the *Bibel*. As is argued in the Metzler volume, journals only cease to exist when they become the Bible (2). With the help of the conversation stimulated by different contributions to the journal, I argue in the following that it is that which the *Athenaeum* perceives as a new religion or mythology that fulfills the ideal of the highest *Bildung*, while *Bildung* infinitely approximates the new religion or mythology.

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<sup>78</sup> See Karen Armstrong.



## 2.1 *The new religion or mythology, the priest-artist, and transformation in the Athenaeum*

It is alluded to across the *Athenaeum* that there should be a new found “religion” or “mythology,” which shares the same essence with that of the old one found in ancient *Poesie* and is mediated by a priest-artist figure, who rediscovered the lost unity of art and religion or mythology and establishes it anew as a “transformed” (*verwandelt*) one. Clearly, religion and mythology in the *Athenaeum*, which are by no means merely discussed in their conventional sense, have acquired a new meaning that aligns both with the aesthetics and with the infinite, universal *Bildung* ideal of the *Athenaeum*.

The close connection between *Bildung* and religion or mythology finds its roots in their historical relation, particularly in pietism, and is radically revived in *Kunstreligion* inaugurated by *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1796), which establishes a new faith in art. As readers of *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795), authors of the *Athenaeum* are profoundly aware of the Schillerian ideal of transforming human society through aesthetic education and of the mediating role of art, created by imagination and mind powers (*Gemütskräfte*) in free play. The term *Kunstreligion* might be an understatement, as art (*Kunst*), even in its broadest connotation of “aesthetic ideas,” is more expansively and radically understood by the early romantics as *Poesie*, which is perceived by the romantics as unified and interchangeable with *Philosophie*. The term *Dichter* is thus also artist in general, and *Poesie* seems to have retrieved its original sense of “creating.” And because all arts and sciences should be unified, according to the *Athenaeum*, *Poesie* can also be *Wissenschaft*. The new *Kunstreligion* should thus also be referred to as *Ästhetikreligion*, *Poesiereligion*, *Philosophiereligion*, *Wissenschaftsreligion* etc.

Religion or mythology is fundamentally “bildend,” i.e., shaping, formative and educational, and induces transformations (and expansion) of a man from within. The particular interests of the *Athenaeum* in the *Bildung* of ancient *Poesie*, *Dichterbildung* as well as the idea of transformation lead to a specific way of looking at the new religion. Different from Behler, Schlagdenhauffen and Stoljar who argue that the *Athenaeum* only starts to turn to religion and mythology in the last year, I want to continue to draw attention to the interconnections within the journal that speak to each other back and forth throughout its six issues. For example, *Elegien aus dem Griechischen* co-authored by the brothers in the first issue, Friedrich Schlegel’s hymn, *An Heliadora*, which opens the fifth issue, and A.W. Schlegel’s sonnet, *An Ludwig Tieck*, in the sixth all allude to a new religion or mythology that is inseparable from romantic *Bildung*, particularly the transformation element inherent in it.

Among the contributions to the journal that explicitly express an educational purpose, *Elegien aus dem Griechischen* gives a historical account of the poetic form of the elegy and to bring to light the eternally self-rejuvenating and modifying *Poesie* of the ancients, or more precisely, the *Geist* of it.

Ihr Geist hat sich nach den Naturgesetzen der Metempsychose, welche auch im Reiche der Kunst gilt, in andre Gestalten verlohren, oder er ist der Erde gen Olymp entflohen. . . [Andere Gestalten der Kunst] durchlebten mehr als einen Sommer der Bildung, und oft entsproßte dem Stamm, der schon verdorrt schien, ein neues Gewächs, dem alten ähnlich, ja gleich, und doch verwandelt. (107)

If the ancient Greek religious and philosophical notion of metempsychosis also applies to the realm of art, according to the text, then it is the same essence, i.e., the “soul” of the ancient *Poesie* that travels among and is always present in various forms and modifications, which

disappear and flourish along its development and existence. To go beyond the early romantics, in retrospect, the elegy and the idyll to be discussed in the last issue are also two of the forms that gradually give way to other variations. Nevertheless, the ideal of the *Athenaeum* is to make aware of the spirit of the harmonious ancient *Poesie* and the way in which that unity can be created again, “doch verwandelt.” Most importantly, it reveals the aesthetics of the romantic journal as a work, though in a more radical way, since its essence does not get lost along its formation journey but rather always manifests itself in the varying interconnected and reciprocal conversations within it.

The subtle notion of “verwandelt” cannot be overlooked, for it captures the fundamental element of transformation in the understanding of *Bildung* and its role in the new religion. A.W. Schlegel’s sonnet, *An Ludwig Tieck*, highlights the creative faculty and freedom of the friend whom the *Athenaeum* treats as an exemplary *gebildete, romantische* poet. The first two stanzas recapitulate the loss of that unity resulting from the repugnant absence of divinity in the art of the “stolze Geister”<sup>79</sup> who resemble those categorized by Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck into the second-lowest degree of *Bildung*. Schlegel writes: “[d]och als die Kunst entwuchs den frommen Händen,/ Da wollt’ im Schauspiel niemand Gott mehr dienen.” The later two stanzas depict a hopeful scene where Tieck, with his highest *Dichterbildung*, brings “us,” transformed (*verwandelt*), back to the times when art and religion and mythology were a unified totality.

Du, in der Dichterbildung reichsten Blüthe,

Bringst uns verwandelt wieder jene Zeiten,

Wo Adam auf der Bühn’ erschien und Eva.

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<sup>79</sup> A.W. Schlegel is perhaps referring to the Enlightenment thinkers and artists.

Ja, Dank sey deinem liebenden Gemüthe,  
Heiligst die Kunst, verschönerst Heiligkeiten,  
Und machst zum Lied das Leid der Genoveva.

“Verwandelt” conveys a clear message that the *Bildung* ideal of the *Athenaeum* is not a simple *return* to the “golden ages,” to copy the beautiful art and make the ancient modern; rather, it is an endless modifying process of creation that grows out of ancient source and is yet transformed and created anew by the poet with the highest *Dichterbildung*. A.W. Schlegel uses chiasmus in the last stanza to indicate the reciprocal and inseparable relation between art and divinity and that between *Poesie* and life. The journal is not merely reminiscing the ancient Greeks or the unified European Middle Ages<sup>80</sup> but is aspiring to educate the public on the *Bildung* of the old times and to indicate the way in which the *gebildete* poet can establish the unity of art and religion or mythology anew. As Friedrich Schlegel calls out: “Du bist mir Lebensquelle, Heliadora! Durch deren Kraft der alte Schmerz nun ruht.”

*An Heliadora* is Schlegel’s first poem, as Dehrmann points out, and represents his “transformation” into a poet in the strictest sense. On the first page of the fifth issue of the *Athenaeum*, “[d]as Inhaltsverzeichnis nannte - anders als üblich - den vollen Namen des Autors: *An Heliadora. Von Friedrich Schlegel*. Schlegel war, für alle sichtbar, zum Dichter geworden... *An Heliadora* reflektiert genau diese Wandlung.” (181). The second stanza addresses the renewal sparked by the love of death, i.e., that of the infinite, and the *große Bildung* growing from “Kunstlieb’ und Heldenstolzen im festen Bunde” and “[d]er Wissenschaften Geist in Einem

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<sup>80</sup> Novalis’ posthumously published essay, *Die Christenheit oder Europa. Ein Fragment* (1802) was originally a speech, entitled shortly as *Europa*, given at a gathering of the Jena circle late 1799.

Bilde.” Moreover, the sixth stanza<sup>81</sup> accentuates the “ich” who forms works, breaks the limits inherent in finitude, eliminates boundaries between sciences, and brings holy thinking to the community, and deifies arts. The “ich” is close to a priest-artist figure who almost resembles a demigod (or a figure that is both god and hero in Greek mythology). It is no surprise that the early romantics are interested in Hercules and Prometheus alike for their closeness to mankind and their help with arts and sciences on earth. The early romantic journal was originally named *Herkules*<sup>82</sup> before switching to *Athenaeum*, after all.

The “ich” strives to communicate divine messages about the unity of all arts by serving as an example of such unified and divinized arts and by creating works of art that dissolve boundaries between “the infinite and limitless” and “the finite and limited.” This priest-artist figure reiterates the *Erweiterung* aspect in the *Bildung* and the communication of one’s *innere Poesie*. Novalis already clarifies such a priest-poet figure as early as in *Blüthenstaub* #71. “Dichter und Priester waren im Anfang Eins, und nur spätere Zeiten haben sie getrennt. Der ächte Dichter ist aber immer Priester, so wie der ächte Priester immer Dichter geblieben. Und sollte nicht die Zukunft den alten Zustand der Dinge wieder herbeyführen?” It is a clear appeal to the new *Kunstreglion*. The elimination of boundaries between the poet and the priest is later reinforced by both A.W. Schlegel and Novalis himself in *Hymnen an die Nacht* and is represented in a modified way in writings of Sophie Bernhardt-Tieck and Hülsen.

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<sup>81</sup> “Die schwangre Zukunft rauscht mit mächtigem Flügel/ Ich öffne meiner Lebensbahn die Schranken;/ Schau’ in des klaren Geistes tiefsten Spiegel! -/Da kämpf ich Werke bildend sonder Wanken,/ Entreiß jeder Wissenschaft das Siegel,/ Verkündge Freunden heilige Gedanken,/ Und stifte allen Künsten einen Tempel,/ Ich selbst von ihrem Bund ein neu Exempel.” *Das Athenaeum*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1800, pp. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Behler argues that Friedrich Schlegel “denkt dabei an Herkules Musagetes, aber auch an die Keule” (*Geschichte*, 19). Musaget is an epithet of Hercules and Apollo. The entry “Musaget” in Langenscheidt states: “(veraltet) Musenfreund, Kunst- und Wissenschaftsförderer.” See <https://de.langenscheidt.com/fremdwoerterbuch/musaget>.

The divinized poet with the highest *Bildung* is highlighted in *Lebensansicht*, as previously noted, when Bernhardt-Tieck characterizes the highest *Grad der Bildung*.

Die höchste Schönheit, die der Mensch erreichen kann, ist, daß er alle Leidenschaften in sich zu einem Kunstwerk verarbeitet, daß er wie ein Gott über allen steht und sie regiert, so daß sie nur immer von der Kraft der Seele zeigen, aber nie in widrige Verzerrung ausarten. . . (210-211)

The resemblance between the most possibly *gebildete* man and a god seems to point to a way in which the finite can approach being infinite, i.e., *Annäherung*, and attaches particular importance to human agency. The most powerful representation of it might be incarnated by the priest-poet in *Blüthenstaub* #76 that echoes #71. “Ein vollkommner Repräsentant des Genius der Menschheit dürfte leicht der ächte Priester und der Dichter *kat' exochên*<sup>83</sup> seyn.” Nevertheless, the *Athenaeum*'s particular emphasis on *Dichterbildung* seems to convey both to its critics an exceptionalism despite its general claims and their profound belief in *Poesie*.

## 2.2 Rays of Bildung, the new religion or mythology, and the journal

The author of the critical note on *Reden über die Religion* underlines the unusualness (*Ungewöhnlichkeit*) of talking about religion in his contemporary age. It is a subject matter that needs to be rediscovered first, which echoes A.W. Schlegel's depiction of Tieck's writing that brings “us” back to religion and sets it in reciprocity with *Poesie*. The absence of religion is again problematized and the urgency to rediscover it is clear. It is stated in the critical note:

Religion in dem Sinne, wie der Verfasser sie nimmt, ist [...] eines von denen Dingen, die unser Zeitalter bis auf den Begriff verloren hat, und die erst von neuem wieder entdeckt

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<sup>83</sup> κατ' ἐξοχήν: “par excellence” in ancient Greek.

werden müssen, ehe man einsehen kann, daß und wie sie auch in alten Zeiten in anderer Gestalt schon da waren. (289)

It is extremely important to understand his argument that religion is neither an original nor an eternal endowment of mankind and is not inherently found in the realm of *Bildung*, because this justifies not only the founding of a new religion but also the *Athenaeum*'s imperative to integrate it into *Bildung*. One of the most important passages in this note states:

Der Verfasser hat es nun eben nicht construiert, daß die Religion ursprünglich und ewig eigenthümliche Anlage der Menschheit und ein selbstständiger Theil der Bildung sey. Vielleicht konnte er das auch nicht wollen. Aber durch die Bildung, mit der er sie behandelt, hat er sie zur Mitbürgerin im Reiche der Bildung constituirt. (291-292)

Religion is addressed with *Bildung* in Schleiermacher's book—reinforcing the role of *Dichterbildung* and the *innere Poesie* of the work—thereby becoming part of *Bildung*. The critic elucidates in the first letter the most essential characteristics of this new religion portrayed in the book, which, again, is inextricably linked to idea of *innere Poesie* emphasized elsewhere in the journal and performs the function of bringing together seemingly uncompromisable dilemmas of dualism. The author believes that *Über die Religion* can and must bring conflicting, unfriendly forces into harmony, where religion becomes a *Mittler* that overcomes dichotomies. The critic indicates clearly the way in which Schleiermacher's work as a "gebildetes Buch" brings the reader close to religion.

Ja es kann und muß, wirst du selbst sagen, ihr Innres, wo bisher zwey Mächte unfreundlich und einzeln gegen einander standen, in Harmonie bringen, oder wie ich es

lieber ansehen und ausdrücken möchte, sie auf eine indirecte Weise von fern der Religion näher führen. (293)

Most importantly, it is stressed that the religion of the author can be considered as “den Brennpunkt in seinem Innersten, wo die Strahlen alles Großen und Schönen [...] zusammenfallen,” which is not a harmony of the whole, but rather “eine der Moral gleichnamige Größe” (294-295). This conception of religion, which is the focal point in the innermost being where all the rays of *Bildung* coincide, not only sheds important light on how *Bildung* is infinitely approximating religion but also seems to indicate how the lost unity of religion and art can be constituted again as the highest *Bildung*.

In the same vein, Ludoviko delivers a *Rede über die Mythologie* in *Gespräch über die Poesie* and argues that *Poesie* in the contemporary epoch is missing a focal point (*Mittelpunkt*) that existed in ancient mythology, but a new mythology, “eine schönere, größere”<sup>84</sup> is on the horizon. To put it into context with the Schleiermacherian religion, it is the same idea of the “focal point” where all rays of *Bildung* converge.

Aus dem Innern herausarbeiten das alles muß der moderne Dichter, und viele haben es herrlich gethan, aber bis jetzt nur jeder allein, jedes Werk wie eine neue Schöpfung von vorn an aus Nichts. [...] Es fehlt, behaupte ich, unser Poesie an einem Mittelpunkt, wie es die Mythologie für die der Alten war [...] Wir haben keine Mythologie. Aber setze ich hinzu, wir sind nahe daran eine zu erhalten, oder vielmehr es wird Zeit, daß wir ernsthaft dazu mitwirken sollen, eine hervorzubringen. (95)

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<sup>84</sup> See *Gespräch über die Poesie*, pp.96. In *Das Athenaeum*, vol. 3, no. 1.



The imminent mythology is fundamentally collective that must be created by a synergistic community where all contribute and co-operate yet with individual differences and modifications. *Poesie* will again obtain a focal point of all rays of the infinitely expanding *Bildung* with its forthcoming. Ludoviko's speech unveils the approaching reestablishment of the lost unity of *Poesie* and mythology into a new one, reiterating the same "soul" that transmigrates and is reincarnated in new forms as well as the ceaseless interconnections between them.

Denn Mythologie und Poesie, beyde sind Eins und unzertrennlich. Alle Gedichte des Alterthums schließen sich eines an das andre, bis sich aus immer größern Massen und Gliedern das Ganze bildet; alles greift in einander, und überall ist ein und derselbe Geist nur anders ausgedruckt. (96)

The aspects of infinite expansion, collectiveness and manifoldness of *Bildung* articulated in Section 1 are essentially represented in this new mythology or new religion and practically reflected on the pages of the *Athenaeum* as a meeting point.

More crucially, this conception of a new mythology or religion leads to a profoundly illuminating understanding of the *Bildungsideal* of the journal. It is argued in the Metzler volume that "[s]obald nämlich die Bibel verwirklicht ist, muß das Journal aufhören." Friedrich Schlegel indicates that "[d]as wahre Journal ist universell, d.h. moralisch. Der allmähliche Gang, das Schritt vor Schritt und die feine Wendung gehört zur  $\pi\epsilon\iota\theta\omega$ " (qtd. in Metzler, 2). As elucidated in the Metzler volume, "[d]ie Zeitschrift [...] geht auf die Bibel hin, d.h., sie bereite sie vor, wie eine Prophetie" (2). Additionally, Stoljar argues for "[t]he idea of a new Bible which is to be the sacred book of the coming new religion" and "the vessel which holds the living spirit of religion" (86). To apply this mutually-illuminating relationship between *Bildung* and religion and that between journals and the Bible to the *Athenaeum*, with its eternalized and generalized ideal of

bringing together all that is aimed at *Bildung*, the journal is supposed to ceaselessly approach as closely to a Bible as possible. In other words, religion is the highest *Bildung*, namely the “Absolute” that *Bildung* infinitely longs for.

In this sense, the ceaseless and universal *Bildung* efforts in the *Athenaeum*, the *Strahlen alles Großen und Schönen*, establishes the journal as a work in its entirety that approaches to be the “absolute” work of religion. In a letter to Novalis in late 1798<sup>85</sup> Friedrich Schlegel argues about the differences and similarities between their views of religion, in particular his unprecedented “neue Religion” that truly embraces unity and universality of arts and sciences<sup>86</sup> and yet retains their individual characteristics and manifoldness in various, even contradictory ways.

Ich denke eine neue Religion zu stiften oder vielmehr sie verkündigen zu helfen: denn kommen und siegen wird sie auch ohne mich. Meine Religion ist nicht von der Art, daß sie die Philosophie und Poesie verschlucken wollte. Vielmehr lasse ich die Selbstständigkeit und Freundschaft, den Egoism und die Harmonie dieser beiden Urkünfte und Wissenschaften bestehn [...] daß Gegenstände übrig bleiben, die weder Philosophie noch Poesie behandeln kann. Ein solcher Gegenstand scheint mir Gott, von dem ich eine durchaus neue Ansicht habe.

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<sup>85</sup> December 2, 1798. See Raich, J. M. Novalis Briefwechsel mit Friedrich und August Wilhelm, Charlotte und Caroline Schlegel. Franz Kirchheim, 1880, pp. 82-88.

<sup>86</sup> Ziolkowski points out that the view that all arts and sciences meet in a *Mittelpunkt* is “anticipated by Plato, Spinoza and Jakob Böhme.” See Ziolkowski, Theodore. *German Romanticism and Its Institutions*, pp. 263.

[...] fühle ich Mut und Kraft genug, nicht bloß Wie Luther zu predigen und zu eifern, sondern auch wie Mohammed mit dem feurigen Schwert des Wortes das Reich der Geister welterobernd zu überziehn oder wie Christus mich und mein Leben hinzugeben.  
(85)

The “god” in which the community of the new religion believes is precisely a ceaselessly modifying unity of *Poesie* and *Philosophie*, of all arts and sciences, with retained individualities, i.e., a true *Sympoesie* or *Symphilosophie* with “Einverständnis und Mißverständnis” (82). Among the manifold rays of *Bildung* in the *Athenaeum* that is infinitely approaching religion, the pair of *Poesie* and drawings is the main concern of A.W. Schlegel in his essay, *Ueber die Zeichnungen zu Gedichten und John Flaxman’s Umriss*, in the fourth issue. Flaxman’s outline illustrations, which were a sensation at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, seem to serve as another exemplary “work of art” for the romantics to substantiate the aesthetics embraced by the *Athenaeum* for its *Bildung* ideal. On the one hand, boundaries between different arts and forms should be eliminated; on the other, as both an art form itself as well as an interpretation and a “recreation” of an original, “genius” work of art, the illustration must share certain essential characteristics with the original. In other words, different art forms, works of art and artists can interact with each other and be brought together in a certain kind of *geistige Gemeinschaft* when they share the same *Bildung* while maintaining their own idiosyncrasies.<sup>87</sup>

The way A.W. Schlegel describes such a *Wechselwirkung* between the arts (and the artists) interacting with each other is no different than the complementary process of *Sympoesie*.

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<sup>87</sup> This “meeting” and “coming together” of different forms, works of art and artists are manifested by the conception and practice of translation by the *Athenaeum*, where living and dead authors across time and space share and community with each other in their spiritual community. See Chapter 5.

Warum sollte es nicht eine pittoreske Begleitung der Poesie, nach Art der musikalischen, geben können? Je stätiger sie wäre, je liebevoller der Zeichner das Ganze des Gedichts umfaßte, desto kühner dürfte er auch werden, desto mehr sich mit ganzer Seele auf die Seite werfen, wo er reich und mächtig ist, und den Dichter für das Übrige sorgen lassen. So erhielt man das seltene aber entzückende Schauspiel des Zusammenwirkens zweyer Künste, in Eintracht und ohne Dienstbarkeit. Der bildende Künstler gäbe uns ein neues Organ den Dichter zu fühlen, uns dieser dollmetschte wiederum in seiner hohen Mundart die reizende Chiffersprache der Linien und Formen. (203)

Flaxman's illustrations to both ancient and modern poetry such as those to Homer's *Ilias* and *Odyssee*, Aeschylus' tragedies and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, in particular his use of the outline technique, precisely implemented such an idea, "mit so viel Verstand, Geist, und klassischem Schönheitssinne" (203). A.W. Schlegel finds analogies between poetry and Flaxman's outline drawings:

So wie die Worte des Dichters eigentlich Beschwörungsformeln für Leben und Schönheit sind, denen man nach ihren Bestandtheilen ihre geheime Gewalt nicht anmerkt, so kommt es einem bey dem gelungenen Umriß wie eine wahre Zauberey vor, daß in so wenigen und zarten Strichen so viel Seele wohnen kann. (205)

Furthermore, A.W. Schlegel's approach to Flaxman bears striking resemblance to the critique of Tieck's translation of *Don Quixote* in the *Athenaeum* and to the affinity between the German language and the ancients examined in *Die Sprachen. Ein Gespräch*.<sup>88</sup> It is the same *poetische Übersetzungskunst* that Schlegel sees emerging, to which he alludes at the end of his

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<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 5.

essay. The commonality between translation and illustration is the “Schwierigkeit, das Eigenthümliche des Gedichts darzustellen” (200). Characterizing Flaxman’s illustrations as a retranslation or back translation (*Rückübersetzung*<sup>89</sup>) of Greek poetry that has been translated into German, Schlegel is emphasizing not only the “legitimate,” Athenaeumian way of approaching the source work but also the transformation and modification aspect that is so central in the conception of *Bildung*<sup>90</sup>.

Like Tieck who can recreate the old art, “doch verwandelt,” with the highest *Dichterbildung*, Flaxman is also a priest-artist who can restore the work to its original place, create it anew, and bring it to expression. Such a new work of art cannot be produced from mere grammatical and literal understanding of the old art; the only remedy against the danger of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of its true spirit is in the creativity of the witty priest-artist with the highest *Bildung*— “unsre Fantasie auf den Flügeln der alten bildenden Kunst zu ihnen emporzuheben, und es ist des besten Dankes werth, wenn ein geistvoller neuerer Künstler uns hiezu hülfreiche Hand bietet” (230). Comparing illustration to poetry and translation at the end of the essay, A.W. Schlegel explicitly appeals to the German public, specifically to illustration artists and poets, to create like Flaxman.

Indem Ich lebhaft wünsche, daß uns bald ein Deutscher Künstler mit ebenso schönen  
Einladungen zum Genuss der alten Poesie beschenken möge, und mich freuen würde,

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<sup>89</sup> See pp. 225.

<sup>90</sup> It is important to note that despite the significance the Jena romantics attach to transformation, it has two different connotations in the journal. On the one hand, it indicates the ancient idea of metempsychosis and later the transformative cultivation that help (re)create the unity of art and religion, and thus infinitely approximates the new romantic religion. On the other hand, it is an aesthetic practice that aligns with the romantic mixture of forms in general and is best reflected in the transfer between genres or forms, a “translation” in a certain sense. It seems that the early romantics favor the switching and play between forms in particular when it comes to *Kritik* regarding the relationship between art and religion or mythology. Because the second type of transformation sheds more significant light on the way the *Athenaeum* presents itself, i.e., the *Mitteilung* of the journal, it will be addressed in Chapter 4.

wenn dieser Aufsatz etwas Beiträge die Aufmerksamkeit dahin zu lenken, kann ich nicht vergessen, daß die Dichter auch das ihrige thun müssen, ihre Vorbilder bei uns Einheimische zu machen, und daß unter andern, bey allen Fortschritten in in diesem Fache, poetische Übersetzungen, woraus der Deutsche Leser die sämtlichen Dramatiker der Griechen und den Pindar nach Würden könnte schätzen lernen, zu den Aufgaben gehören, die immer noch ihren Meister suchen. (246)

With a clear purpose of educating the public on the aesthetic approach, A.W. Schlegel's essay, as promised, hopes to contribute to the most general and universal ideal of the *Athenaeum* to bring individual efforts of *Bildung* together. It is the same question raised in Novalis's *Christenheit oder Europa*: traces of *Geist* appear here and there in Germany, but when can it happen to us as a whole? If mythology and religion are guiding principles of the way of thinking and acting of a community—the ultimate “Absolute” that is tirelessly striven for and approximated—it is no coincidence that the spiritual community of the *Athenaeum* aspires for an eternal, universal convergence of all contributions to *Bildung*.

Last but not least, it cannot be neglected that the idea of *Natur* and the priest-artist with the highest *Dichterbildung* play the most vital part in the emergence of the new mythology or religion and point to the very way of how the new mythology or religion, which is ceaselessly approximated by infinite rays of *Bildung*, is communicated (*mitgeteilt*). The intimate relation between nature and the “power” of the priest-artist precisely leads to the possibility of *Bildung* and determines *Mitteilung*, i.e., the way in which the infinite and the finite are connected. It is a wholeness, the same *Wesen*, dwelling in every *Bildung* and every form of *Mitteilung* that holds all individual transformations and representations together. In *Rede über die Mythologie*,

Ludoviko characterizes the mythology as a work of art of nature in which everything is ceaselessly represented and transformed.

Die Mythologie ist ein solches Kunstwerk der Natur. In ihrem Gewebe ist das Höchste wirklich gebildet; alles ist Beziehung und Verwandlung, angebildet und umgebildet, und dieses Anbilden<sup>91</sup> und Umbilden eben ihr eigentümliches Verfahren, ihr innres Leben, ihre Methode, wenn ich so sagen darf.

Da finde ich nun eine große Ähnlichkeit mit jenem großen Witz der romantischen Poesie, der nicht in einzelnen Einfällen, sondern in der Construction des Ganzen sich zeigt, und den unser Freund uns schon so oft an den Werken des Cervantes und des Shakespeare entwickelt hat. (102)

This resonates with the notion of nature presented both by A.W. Schlegel and Hülsen. In Schlegel's case, Tieck and the "good actor" in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* possess such natural qualities as *Enthaltsamkeit* and *Mäßigung* that contrast the problematic "overdoing" and "superficiality" in artists that directly speak to Bernhardt-Tieck's depiction of those who are unnatural; in Hülsen's essay on Swiss landscape, it is in the interaction between man and the "bildenden Natur" that eternally changes and transforms where the infinite is realized in the finite and thus where mythology or religion may emerge. As will be seen in Chapter 4, it is not the passivity that human beings can only infinitely longing for the divine but rather the positive and powerful agency inherent in the finite, which needs to be communicated and shared in relations that the Athenaeum emphasizes. *Mitteilung* reflects not only the innermost spiritual community of the authors and contributions but also their *Bildung* that ceaselessly approaches

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<sup>91</sup> See "anbilden" in *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, which is indicated by the Latin expression "effingere": to portray, depict, represent.

the new religion or mythology. With the ideal of the eternal and universal *Bildung*, the *Athenaeum* itself infinitely approaches to be a new “religious” or “mythological” work of art, i.e., the Bible.



## Chapter 4 *Mitteilung*: The Presentation of the *Athenaeum*

*Welten bauen genügt dem tiefer dringenden Sinn nicht:*

*Aber ein liebendes Herz sättigt den strebenden Geist.*

—Blüthenstaub #91

If the new religion or mythology is the converging point of eternal and universal rays of *Bildung* envisioned by the authors of the *Athenaeum*, the notion of *Mitteilung* denotes the way in which the ideal is being inexhaustibly put into practice and fulfilled. The journal as a whole approaches to be the new religious or mythological work of art by virtue of its way of bringing together opposites by the innermost spiritual community. The harmonious unity of the limitedness and the approximation to the unlimited, the finite and the infinite, and the divine and the secular articulated in Chapter 3 is seen practically in *Mitteilung* of the *Athenaeum*. *Mitteilung* holds the journal together by presenting a possibility of approaching the problem of the unrepresentable. In accordance with Novalis' idea that "[der Sinn für Poesie] stellt das Undarstellbare dar," *Mitteilung* of the *Athenaeum* shows *how* this presentation might be possible. First and foremost, as will be seen in Section 1, the notion of *Mitteilung* reflected in the *Athenaeum* is not only closely linked to the idea of *innere Poesie*, particularly in consideration of the reflective usage of the word; it is also immanently participatory and sociable. By taking Hülsen's Swiss text as a primary example, Section 2 attempts to bring to light the endlessly transforming and renewing realization(s) of the infinite in the finite through *Mitteilung* wherein the free creative power of the finite being plays a determining role. The chapter will end with a discussion of the form of *Notizen* in the *Athenaeum* as an example of the lively (*lebendig*) and chaotic way of collectively communicating, informing or sharing and of fulfilling the *Bildung* ideal of the journal.

## 1. The notion of *Mitteilung* in the *Athenaeum*

The way the *Athenaeum* communicates itself is reflected in manifold forms, which keeps transforming itself and yet is held together as a whole in a social context by the innermost spiritual community and strives towards the ideal of eternal and universal *Bildung*. In *Vorerinnerung* of the journal, the co-founders indicate that in terms of presentation, they strive for “im Vortrage nach der feyesten Mittheilung.” In *Blüthenstaub* #35, Novalis makes it clear that *Mitteilung* is participatory.

Interesse ist Theilnahme an dem Leiden und der Thätigkeit eines Wesens. Mich interessirt etwas, wenn es mich zur Theilnahme zu erregen weiß. Kein Interesse ist interessanter, als was man an sich selbst nimmt; so wie der Grund einer merkwürdigen Freundschaft und Liebe die Theilnahme ist, zu der mich ein Mensch reizt, der mit sich selbst beschäftigt ist, der mich durch seine Mittheilung gleichsam einladet, an seinem Geschäfte Theil zu nehmen.

### 1.1 *Innere Poesie*

For the early romantics, *mitteilen* is intimately linked to *Geist* and to the inner world that urgently needs to be communicated. It is thus of great significance to understand the essential relation of the communication or sharing of ideas in the early romantic conception to the sociability and regenerativity of sparks (*Funken*) and forms, and that the *Athenaeum* crystalizes the synthesis of both. The word *mitteilen* is already stimulating, not only because it contains “mit” and “teilen” that inherently carry with them a sociable and interactive dynamic, but also because of its different connotations used since at least the German Baroque. In the Grimm brothers’ *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, the fifth usage of *mittheilen* as a reflexive verb is illustrated by

examples in writings of Herder, Goethe and Martin Opitz, with whom the early romantics are familiar. In the case of Herder and Goethe in particular, *mitteilen* conveys a sense of a communicable, exuberant and vivacious action in the writer's communication of spirit and feeling. Herder reflects on the creative *Genie*, the "originality" over mere "imitation," in Edward Young's writings: "[w]eil der Youngische Geist drinn herrscht, der aus seinem Herzen gleichsam ins Herz; aus dem Genie in das Genie spricht; der wie der elektrische Funke sich mittheilt" (256)." Goethe uses *mitteilen* in a similar vein as he offers insights into the style of Laurence Sterne: "wenn auch sein Geist nicht über den Deutschen schwebte, so theilte sich sein Gefühl um desto lebhafter mit" (208-209).

One of the meanings of *mitteilen* indicated in Duden is "sich jemandem im Gespräch anvertrauen, mit anderen von sich selbst sprechen," and in Cambridge Dictionary, "jdm. sagen, was man fühlt und denkt", which can perhaps be translated into English as "to confide in someone". The connotation of *Mitteilung* involves the self, since it is essential in this usage of the word that it is one's feeling and thoughts, namely reflections of one's inner being that is being shared or communicated. The way in which *Geist* or feeling shares or communicates itself seems to resemble that in which the electric spark generates. The Jena romantics grew up under the tradition of Herder's thinking, wherein *Funke* forms an inextricable link to the idea of *Genie* and *geistige Kräfte*. It seems that the romantics are playing with this particular connotation of *mitteilen* in association with their ideas not only of *innere Poesie* but also those around *Funke*, and with forms of communication in the journal such as the fragment and *Notizen*.

If *Mitteilung* is the process of informing, communicating and sharing, it is essentially significant to understand what it is that is being informed, communicated and shared. It is interesting that the fundamental idea of *innere Poesie*, which has been mentioned in Chapter 3 on

*Bildung* and the new religion, not only forms a central idea in the understanding of *Bildung*, which precisely shows the highest *Bildung* of a poet or a work of art, as seen in the case of Ludwig Tieck, Schleiermacher's *Reden über die Religion* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Moreover, it is the very subject matter of the early romantic *Mitteilung*, i.e., that which urgently needs to be informed, communicated or shared. The understanding of *Mitteilung* in the early romantic conception cannot be separated from *innere Poesie*, which emphasizes the "self" mentioned above and the implied social relationship with the "other." This is elucidated in a few interrelated contributions to the *Athenaeum*, such as Friedrich Schlegel's *Gespräch über die Poesie* and *Lebensansicht* by Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck. As will be seen in the following paragraphs, the idea of communicating one's *innere Poesie* should be further understood in relation to love, both of which, in the early romantic view, must be communicated and made known to others. The untitled and anonymous text on Johannes Müller's letters to his friends in *Notizen* will serve as a significant example of this.

For the romantics, human beings are innately poetic; Man, nature, *Poesie* and *Bildung* are inextricably linked to each other. Already in the first volume of the journal, it is clarified in *Athenaeums-Fragment #430*: "Also sollen alle gebildete Menschen im Notfalle Poeten sein können, und daraus läßt sich ebenso gut folgern, daß der Mensch von Natur ein Poet sei, daß es eine Naturpoesie gebe, als umgekehrt." At the opening of *Gespräch über die Poesie*, the author indicates that finite beings are part of the "divine poem" and its blossom (*Blüthe*) and states, "[...] die Schönheit des Gedichts zu verstehen, sind wir fähig, weil auch ein Theil des Dichters, ein Funke seines schaffenden Geistes in uns lebt und tief unter der Asche der selbstgemachten Unvernunft mit heimlicher Gewalt zu glühen niemals aufhört" (60). He views the *Poesie* of each man as unique and peculiar as it is innate (*angeboren* [sic]) and built (*angebildet*) in his

*Dasein*.<sup>92</sup> This is echoed in *Lebensansicht* when Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck elaborates on the importance of love, which is supposed to exist as *Poesie* in general in the core of every human being. She gives an example of the ideal romantic love, where the young man forces a longing into his heart and communicates the message to the girl when they meet. Bernhardi-Tieck implies that this ideal should also apply to *Poesie* in general. Same as the *innere Poesie* of every human being, love has to be communicated and made known. Yet with her critical tone, Bernhardi-Tieck laments that the ideal that love as *Poesie* resides in every human bosom is yet to be achieved and denounces those who are incapable of communicating, sharing or informing their *innere Poesie*. She asks, “Liebe, warum lebst du in Liedern, und wohnst nicht als allgemeine Poesie in jedes Menschen Busen” (206). With an intriguing analogy between flowers and human beings, she further illustrates the point that *Poesie* is immanent to man.

Sehr viele Blumen stehn nun geruchlos and in unscheinbaren Farben da, und dies ist die grössere Anzahl unter den Menschen, möchte ich sie diejenigen nennen, die ihre innere Poesie nicht mittheilen können; allen ist es nicht gegeben, durch einen süssen Duft die vorübergehenden zu erfreuen. (207)

Bernhardi-Tieck argues that just as there is no flower without color, there is no man without *Poesie*. However, a great many flowers still exist, odorless and inconspicuous, and so is the case with the “odorless” human beings who are incapable of communicating their *innere Poesie*. As she calls particular attention to the inner world and to the need to bring it to expression, *Mitteilung* seems to play the most essential role in her conception of the ideal man or

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<sup>92</sup> See *Gespräch über die Poesie*, pp.61.

work of art. While she stresses *Mitteilung* and criticizes the incapability thereof in most men, Friedrich Schlegel elucidates its significance in a more direct way in *Gespräch über die Poesie*.

Darum geht der Mensch, sicher sich selbst immer wieder zu finden, immer von neuem aus sich heraus, um die Ergänzung seines innersten Wesens in der Tiefe eines fremden zu suchen und zu finden. Das Spiel der Mittheilung und der Annäherung ist das Geschäft und die Kraft des Lebens, absolute Vollendung ist nur im Tode. (60-61)

Communicating the inner self and infinitely approaching to the absolute completion is the lifelong pursuit of man, Schlegel argues, thereby also the drive of life. The necessity of *Mitteilung* is indispensable from *Annäherung*, as it is the play of both that is determinant to the *Athenaeum*. When taken into consideration together with *Annäherung*, *Mitteilung* is not static but rather a living and dynamic process that will never be complete. This precisely establishes the way in which the journal communicates itself aesthetically. There cannot be a singular, closed form that dominates the communication, nor can it be confined to a fixed state or a definite goal. In accordance with the universalized and eternalized *Bildung* ideal discussed in Chapter 3, *Mitteilung* is an infinitely ongoing process with manifold, sociable and transforming forms and manifestations that reject absolute stillness and isolation. I shall come back to this point later in Section 3. The play of *Mitteilung* and *Annäherung* is reflected in the work of art that is created out of it, as Schlegel further states:

Darum darf es auch dem Dichter nicht genügen, den Ausdruck seiner eigenthümlichen Poesie, wie sie ihm angebohren und angebildet wurde, in bleibenden Werken zu hinterlassen. Er muß streben, seine Poesie und seine Ansicht der Poesie ewig zu erweitern, und sie der höchsten zu nähern, die überhaupt auf der Erde möglich ist; darum

daß er seinen Theil an das große Ganze auf die bestimmteste Weise anzuschließen strebt.

(61)

Again, in the same vein of how *innere Poesie* is perceived in terms of *Bildung*, its *Mitteilung* continues to approximate the “Absolute” so that it is the very process of the infinitely expanding and transforming *Mitteilung* that is of the greatest significance to the romantics. Since the *Bildung* of *innere Poesie* never ceases, *Mitteilung* cannot reach an endpoint either.

In addition, in *Beyträge zur Kritik der neuesten Litteratur*<sup>93</sup>, A.W. Schlegel’s depiction of “romantic expression,” which concerns the *Poesie* of Tieck and Goethe alike, such as that reflected in *Der blonde Eckbert*, brings to light just how central that which resides in the inner world is to what the early romantics characterize as “romantisch” and to their aesthetics. Schlegel argues that the “romantic” *Poesie* mirrors the striving for the unknown and the past, which can only originate from the innermost being.

In diesen klaren Thautropfen der Poesie spiegelt sich alle die jugendliche Sehnsucht nach dem Unbekannten und Vergangenen, nach dem was der frische Glanz der Morgensonne enthüllt, und der schwülere Mittag wieder mit Dunft umgiebt; die ganze ahnungsvolle Wonne des Lebens und der fröhliche Schmerz der Liebe. Denn eben dieses helldunkel schwebt und wechselt darin: ein Gefühl, das nur aus der innersten Seele kommen kann, und doch leicht und lose in der Außenwelt umhergaukelt; Stimmen, von der vollen Brust weggehen, die dennoch wie aus weiter Ferne leise herüberhallen. Es ist der romantische Ausdruck der wahrsten Innigkeit, schlicht und fantastisch zugleich. (175-176)

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<sup>93</sup> Published *Das Athenaeum*, vol. 1, no. 2.

As clearly seen from these contributions to the *Athenaeum* that speak to each other in an intriguing way, it is the idea of *innere Poesie* that constitutes the subject matter of *Mitteilung* that reflects the aesthetic ideal embraced by the early romantics. However, in terms of *Mitteilung* of the *Athenaeum* itself, the most concerning questions might be how it is reflected in its form and how it helps the journal form as a work of art in its entirety of the early romantics.

### *1.2 Participatory and sociable Mitteilung: friendship and love*

Since the authorship of the *Athenaeum* is formed as an inner spiritual community that manifests itself in such concepts as unity of spirit, *Verbrüderung*, friendship and sociality, the journal's approach to *Mitteilung* also foregrounds these collective and sociable ideas. For the authors as a subjective collective unity, *Mitteilung* cannot be a singular nor static term, but rather one that is essentially participatory, sociable and dynamic. These essential characteristics of *Mitteilung* precisely determine the aesthetic practice of the *Athenaeum*, the form of which is participatory, sharing, sociable, unfixed, and progressing. The romantic conception of *Mitteilung* is particularly premised on the notions of friendship and love, which can be seen illustrated in a few contributions including *Lebensansicht*, a short untitled and anonymous text on Johannes Müller<sup>94</sup> in *Notizen* of the fourth issue<sup>95</sup>, *Blüthenstaub*, *Gespräch über die Poesie*, as well as in Hülsen's essay on Swiss nature.

Bernhardi-Tieck's point on love and *Poesie*, which has been mentioned above, is reiterated in the text in *Notizen* that offers a critique of the letter fragments from Johannes Müller

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<sup>94</sup> Johannes von Müller (1752-1809), Swiss historiographer.

<sup>95</sup> In *Das Athenaeum*, vol.2, no.2, pp. 313-316.



to his friend Bonstetten<sup>96</sup> that appeared in *Deutsches Magazin*<sup>97</sup>. The unidentified critic points out that the journal<sup>98</sup> has only become significant by informing the world of Müller's letters.

Wenn eine leere und planlose Zeitschrift durch einen vortrefflichen Beitrag bedeutend werden könnte, so müßte dies dem Deutschen Magazin widerfahren sein, da es ihm vergönnt wurde (im 15ten, 16ten und 17ten B.) die Fragmente aus den Briefen eines jungen Gelehrte an seinen Freund, der Welt mitzuteilen. (313)

Similar to the author of another *Notizen* piece<sup>99</sup> who urges the reader to get to know *Reden über die Religion* by virtue of its *innere Poesie* and *Bildung*, the author of this brief piece asks the reader to become familiarized with Müller's letters, "in denen er dem angebeteten Freunde seine ganze Seele hingiebt, ihn zum Vertrauten von allem macht, was er will, was er verehrt und liebt." "Welch herrliches Gemüth und ernstes großes Streben offenbaren sich da," the author exclaims (313-314). It is precisely the communication of his innermost essence to the beloved friend that characterizes Müller's friendly letters, which, according to the author, resemble love letters. Same as how A.W. Schlegel argues in his *Nachschrift* to *Der rasende Roland* for Tieck's understanding of both ancient and modern *Poesie* and Soltau's lack thereof, the brief critical note indicates that as historiographer Müller is acquainted with the ancients and treats history with sanctity. This also echoes the last stanza of A.W. Schlegel's sonnet on Tieck, "[j]a, Dank sey deinem liebenden Gemüthe,/ Heiligst die Kunst, verschönerst Heiligkeiten" (233). The *Athenaeum*'s approaches to Müller and Tieck alike are essentially the same—the bringing of *Poesie* together with *Heiligkeit*, i.e., the forthcoming new religion in the early

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<sup>96</sup> Karl Viktor von Bonstetten (1745-1832), Swiss writer.

<sup>97</sup> The journal, *Deutsches Magazin* (1791-1800), was published by Christian Ulrich Detlev von Eggers.

<sup>98</sup> *Deutsches Magazin*.

<sup>99</sup> The untitled text on *Reden über die Religion* in *Notizen* of the fourth issue, pp.288-300.

romantic conception. The critical note similarly underlines the role that Müller's "liebendes Herz"<sup>100</sup> plays in his writing, which is proved by the friendship communicated through his letters. "Die in diesem Briefen athmende Freundschaft ist ein Beweis davon: sie ist im antiken Styl wie seine Werke" (315).

Although aware that the wish "daß der Freund, den wir lieben, uns ganz in unserer eigensten Eigenthümlichkeit verstehen möchte" is in vain and that one cannot enunciate entirely the "innerste Eigenthümlichkeit seines geliebtesten Freundes,"<sup>101</sup> Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck still regards love and friendship as preceding *Mitteilung* and the understanding of her text, which surprisingly turns out to be a letter to a friend:

Lebe wohl, mein theurer Freund, möcht' ich sagen, und kann nicht einmal über diese Thorheit lächeln, in Gedanken habe ich doch alles an ein Wesen gerichtet, das mich versteht und mich liebt, und darum reiche ich diese Blätter öffentlich in die Welt, und wer meine Worte mit Liebe lieset, für den sind sie geschrieben. (215)

This kind of reciprocity—*Liebe und Gegenliebe*—is reinforced by Friedrich Schlegel who underlines the essence of the true poet as a sociable being in *Gespräch über die Poesie*, revealing the sociability of the early romantic conception of *Mitteilung*.

Er kann es, wenn er den Mittelpunkt gefunden hat, durch Mittheilung mit denen, die ihn gleichfalls von einer anderen Seite auf eine andre Weise gefunden haben. Die Liebe bedarf der Gegenliebe. Ja für den wahren Dichter kann selbst das Verkehr mit denen, die

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<sup>100</sup> In *Das Athenaeum*, vol.2, no.2, pp.315.

<sup>101</sup> *Lebensansicht*, pp. 210.

nur auf der bunten Oberfläche spielen, heilsam und lehrreich seyn. Er ist ein geselliges Wesen. (61)

This passage follows the one quoted earlier, which indicates the imperative of the poet to strive to expand his *Poesie* eternally, make it infinitely approaching the highest, and thus to connect himself to the whole. Here, it is suggested that the poet can do so if he has found the focal point—an indication of the universality of *Bildung* and thus of the forthcoming new religion<sup>102</sup>—, by sharing or communicating with those who stand in the inner spiritual community with him. Essentially, the approximation to the “Absolute” seems to be only possible through the sociable *Mitteilung* by the *gebildet* poet. The innermost spiritual community where “friends” or “brothers” stand in connection with each other, the ideal of universal and eternal rays of *Bildung*, and the urgency of the participatory *Mitteilung* are interdependent on each other, holding together a unity that forms the early romantic aesthetics incarnated by the *Athenaeum*.

It can clearly be seen in these conversing contributions to the journal that friendship, which is synonym for “love” for the romantics, is the prerequisite for *Mitteilung*. This is of great importance, because it reinforces the spirit of the innermost spiritual community of the *Athenaeum*. A realm is created through the journal wherein “friends”—living and dead authors such as Ariosto, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tieck and the contributors to the journal themselves—meet and exchange minds with each other. On the other hand, it justifies the exclusion of others and the response to the fierce polemic against the “incomprehensibility” of the early romantic form of expression by the older generation in Berlin. Among the most notable examples, Nicolai’s anonymous novel, *Vertraute Briefe von Adelheid B. an ihre Freundin Julie S.* (1799), ferociously attacks the Jena group by presenting a parody of their enterprise,

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<sup>102</sup> See Chapter 3.

particularly their way of expression, with the character of Doktor Pandolfo representing Friedrich Schlegel and Fichte. The eighth letter delivers some of the most clearly satirical description of Pandolfo and the fragments. Doktor Pandolfo said “mit unbeschreiblicher Würde”:

“Man soll nicht mit allen symphilosophieren wollen, sondern nur mit denen, die hochstehend sind.” Da hatte er wieder recht. Er und sein Wissen standen erstaunlich hoch, wie ein paar Mücken auf einem Kirchturme.

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“Hm!” sagte er, “arrogant ist, wer Sinn und Charakter zugleich hat und sich dann und wann merken läßt, daß diese Verbindung gut und nützlich sei. Wer beides auch von den Weibern fordert, ist ein Weiberfeind.” [Fußnote: Doktor Pandolfo brachte nicht einmal seine eigenen Gedanken hervor. Es findet sich, daß alle mit “” bezeichneten Machtsprüche in der Zeitschrift der Herren Gebrüder Schlegel, “Athenäum”, im zweiten Stücke. . . in den sogenannten “Fragmenten”, wörtlich abgedruckt sind.]

Diese “Fragmente” dienen übrigens noch dazu, ein Zeugnis abzulegen, daß dergleichen Wesen, wie Frau Adelheid beschreibt, in der deutschen Welt wirklich existieren, und zwar mit noch größerer Anmaßung der alles zermalmenden Poesie der Poesie und mit noch frischem Kolorite der sich selbst einbildenden Einbildung, hochtrabend und dunkelhell, als hätten sich Kaspar Lohenstein und Jakob Böhme zusammen auf den Dreifuß der Priesterin zu Delphi gesetzt.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> In the eighth letter. <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/nicolai/briefe/chap002.html>.

Adelheid's letters contain countless such detailed references to the thinking and writing of the Jena circle. As Becker-Cantarino points out,

Nicolai kritisiert den Anspruch auf Neuheit, Originalität, die Überheblichkeit, die gegenseitige Lobhudelei, das elitäre Gebare, die Leere und Unverständlichkeit ("dunkelhell"), die Arroganz, das Hochtrabende, den Egoismus, die Ich-bezogenheit, den Dünkel und die Abgehobenheit von der Realität der jungen Literaten, die wie "Katzen und Störche" auf Dachfirsten herumspazieren. (101)

However, from the perspective of the romantics, the criticism might precisely validate their claims that the journal is intended for those who share the spirit in this *Verbrüderung* and are thus part of the spiritual community where *freiste Mitteilung* takes place. In the unending search for the "Absolute," they inform, communicate, and share by standing in close relations with and understanding each other. Ideen #124 calls attention to the imperfectability of the processes of understanding and *Mitteilung*. It is not the task of the *Athenaeum* to seek or show perfect comprehension but to *mitteilen*.

Warum äußert sich das Höchste jetzt so oft als falsche Tendenz? – Weil niemand sich selbst verstehen kann, der seine Genossen nicht versteht. Ihr müßt also erst glauben, daß ihr nicht allein seid, ihr müßt überall unendlich viel ahnden und nicht müde werden den Sinn zu bilden, bis ihr zuletzt das Ursprüngliche und Wesentliche gefunden habt. Dann wird euch der Genius der Zeit erscheinen und wird euch leise andeuten was schicklich sei und was nicht.

Moreover, it is worth reiterating that the notion of friendship for the *Athenaeum* is not confined to the relationship between two people or works, as it originates as an innermost

spiritual community that can even take place within oneself, as long as the sociality is present. This is especially validated in Novalis's thinking. Already in *Blüthenstaub* #20, Novalis highlights the centrality of inner philosophy in *Mitteilung*, an inner *symphilosophy* in particular.

Wenn man in der Mittheilung der Gedanken zwischen absoluten Verstehen und absoluten Nichtverstehen abwechselt, so darf das schon eine philosophische Freundschaft genannt werden. Geht es uns doch mit uns selbst nicht besser. Und ist das Leben eines denkenden Menschen wohl etwas andres als eine stete innere Symphilosophie? (75)

The peculiar friendship that he characterizes here takes shape in the floating state (*schwebend*) between extremes that come to reconcile in relationality in the process of *Mitteilung*, which demands participation, interactivity, and collectiveness. The Novalisian *innere Symphilosophie* has added the aspect of collectiveness to *innere Poesie* or *innere Philosophie* and that of inwardness to *Sympoesie* or *Symphilosophie*, leading to a more synthesized understanding of the unifying forces of early romanticism. Thus, the participation and sharing of minds that is carried out through friendship indicates the emphasis on sociability and dynamism in the conception of *Mitteilung* of the *Athenaeum*, which will be seen below in the discussion of its own forms.

## 2. Mitteilung as the fulfillment of the infinite in the finite

An initial question of whether *Mitteilung per se* is even possible, which still stands in the aftermath of the Kantian crisis of presentation, might even be more perplexing for the reader of *some parts* of the *Athenaeum*, since the journal makes it clear that the striving of poets and *Poesie* to approach the new religion or mythology is eternally imperfectible. Specifically, it may

stand to reason that the seeming unattainability of the actualization of the *Bildung* ideal discourages communication, participation or information, i.e., *Mitteilung*.

However, the emphasis placed between the lines of the *Athenaeum* on the affinity between the “bildende” nature and the “gebildete” poet with the freest creative *Geist* seems to have suggested a solution and given rise to the possibility and meaningfulness of *Mitteilung*. Essential to the *Athenaeum*, the early romantic *Mitteilung* reflects both the innermost spiritual community and the ceaseless *Bildung* ideal of the poet and *Poesie*. It is not the hopelessness of impossible absolute perfection but rather the active and powerful agency immanent to the free creative *Geist* that induces *Mitteilung* as the way of presenting the process of *Annäherung*. The *Athenaeum* clearly foregrounds and favors the latter. Notably, what plays a vital part in *Mitteilung* is the way in which the infinite and the finite stand in relations (*Verhältnis*)—the foundation of the innermost spiritual community. As briefly mentioned at the end of Chapter 3, the close relation between nature and the priest-artist makes *Bildung* possible and shapes the way in which the emergence of the new mythology or religion is communicated or made known.

Other than its conventional and literal connotation that forms the prerequisite for *Mitteilung*, as mentioned in the last section, the idea of friendship has a peculiar representation in *Naturbetrachtungen auf einer Reise durch die Schweiz*<sup>104</sup> where Hülsen delineates the affinity between man and nature, the finite and the infinite, or the secular and the divine. Interactions in a friendly manner between man and nature repetitively take over the pages of the text, highlighted by the personification of the divine nature whose affable gestures—beckoning (*winken*), smiling

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<sup>104</sup> In *Das Athenaeum*, vol.3, no.1.

(*lächeln*), and embracing (*umarmen*), inviting (*einladen*), and touching (*berühren*)—subtly vindicate the indispensable role of “friendly”<sup>105</sup> relations in what is perceived as *Mitteilung* here.

Es *lächeln* sich die Göttinnen in ewig schwebenden *Umarmungen* Liebe und Freude, und *winken* sie den Menschen in himmlischen Gefühlen durch stille Bildung des Schönen. . . .  
Wo der Augenblick dich *umarmt*, da fühle *Rührung* des Ewigen: denn des Gottes bleibende Freude ist ein unsterblicher Blick, strahlend den Himmel in jeglichem Wechsel des Schönen. . . . (50; emphasis added)

Clearly, the condition for seeking truth and infinity is friendship, or more generally, the spiritual community, in which the finite being stands in relations with the divine, eternal and beautiful. Since the early romantic *Bildung* is the principle of bringing opposites together and signals the forthcoming of the new religion or mythology, the infinite and universal approximation (*Annäherung*) to the “Absolute” demanded by this principle determines the proactivity of the free creative human *Geist*. Hülsen writes further towards the end of the text: “So begreife die unendliche Schöpfung des Geistes und suche die Wahrheit nur da, wo sie freundlich dir winket. [...] Suche den Freundlichen, und er wird dich umarmen” (55). As will be discussed below, the human gaze (*Blick*) that Hülsen underlines in the text is precisely a manifestation of the free creative *Geist* that empowers the finite being to connect with the infinite nature.

It is also important to reiterate that for the romantics *Mitteilung* can only occur with the presence of the highest *Bildung*. More specifically, only the “gebildete” poet with a *liebendes*

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<sup>105</sup> I use this word here in its broadest sense, particularly in consideration of the innermost spiritual community of the early romantics that accentuates such notions as friendship, *Verbrüderung* (fraternization), sociality, unity of spirit etc. See Chapter 2.



*Herz* or *liebendes Gemüt* is capable of genuine communication, sharing or informing. In a letter dated early 1799<sup>106</sup>, A.W. Schlegel told Novalis that Hülsen was in Berlin, “fraternized” (*fraternisirt*) with his brother and promised him more potential contributions to the *Athenaeum*. Besides that, Hülsen also “fraternizes” with Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck, which is particularly revealed in the *Symposie* that takes place between their contributions to the journal. While they convey some similar ideas, their texts present heterogeneous styles and forms of expression as well as ways of participating in the journal. Similar to how Bernhardi-Tieck depicts the highest possible *Schönheit* that can be achieved and the divinized poet at the highest level of *Bildung* who works all of the inner *Leidenschaften* into a work of art, Hülsen embraces the free creative *Geist* that commands and combines all forces (*Kräfte*) and connects them to life in free works. To use Hülsen’s words in the Swiss essay, “[e]he dein Wort noch tönet, durchflogst du die Unendlichkeit, und diese stille Gewalt ist die That des Geistes, die über alle Kräfte gebietet, und sie zum Leben verbindet in freiem sichtbaren Werken” (56). The free creative faculty of the poet is the most central factor in *Dichterbildung* and in the *Mitteilung* through the close relation between the poet and nature.

Drawing particularly on Hülsen’s essay, this following discussion attempts to bring to light that the romantic *Mitteilung* demonstrates the essential social process of the fulfillment of the infinite in the finite in each renewed form and moment opened up by the eternal free *Geist*. Hülsen’s text places more significance on man than how it would be interpreted merely as a hymn to the divine nature as he venerates the different forms demonstrated in the Swiss landscape—the mountains, the Rhein and the waterfalls—and the various angles from which it can be observed. Eternally changing and infinite *Bildungen* of nature are first and foremost

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<sup>106</sup> January 12, 1799.

brought to the fore in the text. The depictions of the sublime mountains and the tirelessly transforming currents in the Rhein river and waterfalls all merge into an implied twofold conception of nature that is both “bildend” and “gebildet,” with its truth, divinity and eternity. While “die bildende Natur” is not uninfluenced by Spinoza’s “schaffende Natur” (natura naturans), nature’s own *Bildungen* provide a profound subtext of the connection between the infinite nature and the finite poet. On the one hand, nature ceaselessly goes through its own *Bildungen* that are manifested in countless and diverse forms; on the other, it is “bildend” as it formatively cultivates the finite beings that stand in intimate connection with it. The finite beings seem to be able to acquire their *Bildungen* from those of nature’s.

The point that the author strives to make is that *Bildung* is not a passive, one-way gift from nature that falls on the human being; rather, he must actively seek the eternal connection (*ewige Verknüpfung*) to nature through his own action (*Handeln*). More specifically, man attains *Bildung* proactively through the free gaze (*Blick*) at nature. As Hülsen summarizes, “[e]s sind deine Bildungen, wohin du blickest” (53). *Blick* is the participatory way that empowers the finite to connect to the infinite and thus that enables the infinite to be realized in the finite. This connection and realization precisely denotes the early romantic *Mitteilung*. With his *Blick* following nature, which also often appears as other related concepts such as *Augenblick*, *Auge*, *Anschauung*, *schauen* in the text, man acquires truth, divinity and eternity from nature. In other words, that which is possessed by nature can be mirrored in man through *Blick*.

While the author delineates a variety of possibilities where the act of *Blick* brings man and nature together in a harmonious nexus, the human gaze at the mysterious fog and at the c in the mountains provides an intriguing example:

In ihm nahen deinem Blicke alle Bildungen der Unendlichkeit: denn wo im ewigen Raume glänzt das Schöne und Erhabene, das dem Auge nicht daherleuchtete in der Harmonie des Ganzen. Du siehst in jeder Erscheinung ihre unendliche Verknüpfung, und ahndest darum in jeder Berührung die unendliche Welt. Sie ist ewig in deiner Anschauung, und das Dunkel der Gestalten und jeder Schimmer aus tiefer Ferne winkt die gleiche Gewißheit deines vollendeten Blickes. In dieser Freiheit deines Blickes fühle den eignen Himmel im Busen, wo alles Große und Schöne in ewiger Nähe dir wohnt, und deute in ihm jede Erscheinung, die der Augenblick dir zuführt. So bist du geweiht durch dein eignes Gefühl für die Wahrheiten der Natur, und innig vertraut mit ihrem heiligen Sinne, wandelst du, nirgends ein Fremdling des schönen Landes. (37)

The forces of both man and nature play an indispensable part in their harmonious reciprocal relationship. Nature ceaselessly transforms and renews itself in “tausenden Formen,” while man takes the initiative to look at and follow the eternal movements of nature, whereby he participates in the endlessly modifying process of *Bildung*. It is the interaction between man and nature through the sociable human gaze that characterizes and renders *Mitteilung* possible. *Mitteilung* approached by the *Athenaeum* can perhaps be defined as the presentation of such connection between the infinite and the finite— nature and man in this case—particularly through the freedom, creativity and sociability of the finite being. The early romantic priest-poet is a finite being; yet with his *Dichterbildung*, he is divinized and eternalized.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, as will be discussed in Section 3, *Mitteilung* determines the way in which the *Athenaeum* as a whole presents itself as the process of *Annäherung* to the ultimate *Bildung* ideal and in which its

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<sup>107</sup> See Chapter 3.

authors seek infinity on earth through the connection with the divine, beautiful and eternal embodied by nature.

This connection, in accordance with the *Bildungen* of nature, also transforms in “tausenden Formen” and refuses to stay fixed. One of the most striking scenes portrayed in the essay is the tireless movements of currents in the Rhein and the human *Blick* drawn to following the changes and aspiring to embrace them in “kindlicher Unwissenheit und Freude.” “Dahin wandelt der Strom. Deute seine Wahrheit, und fühle die ewige Harmonie. Was du siehst in seinem Wandel ist Himmel in dir, denn er ruht in der vereinten Kraft deines Lebens und jede Regung des Schönen ist *Wink* seiner Erfüllung” (50). But a new shift in the movement of the currents follows immediately: “[...] aber es wandelt der Strom. In diesem Zauber der Bewegung fließt dein trunkner Blick, und du eilst mit des Stromes spielendem Wirbel schnell am Ufer vorüber” (40). The process of the human eye following the eternal changes and varieties of nature crystallizes the early romantic conception of *Mitteilung*.

As much as how Hülsen stresses sociality and relations in his first contribution to the journal, *Ueber die natürliche Gleichheit der Menschen*, it is implied in the very act of *Blick*, in which represents the human agency and *Geist*, that it must be understood as participatory and sociable. By *participating* in and socializing with nature, the finite being attains nature’s *Bildungen* and creates with it a close spiritual connection, whereby eternity and divinity are in a certain sense fulfilled in the earthly. Yet the fulfillment changes and renews ceaselessly as the way of the participation and connection transforms unendingly. *Mitteilung* denotes this infinitely regenerative process of connection and participation as well as that of the realization of the infinite in the finite.

By using *Blick* in a more figurative sense in *Ueber die Philosophie. An Dorothea*, Friedrich Schlegel stresses how central a role the inexhaustible power of the inner world plays in communication, participation and relations when it comes to *feeling (fühlen)* the unity of universality and individuality, which speaks to Hülsen's point mentioned above. In order to find the world in or to put it into the beloved one, Schlegel argues, one must already possess it, love it or have the abilities to love it. But such powers can also be cultivated and the cultivation process should be eternally perfectible.

Daß diese Kräfte cultivirt werden können, daß der Blick vom Auge unsers Geistes immer weiter, fester und klarer werden soll, und unser inneres Ohr empfänglicher für die Musik aller Sphären der allgemeinen Bildung; daß die Religion in diesem Sinne sich also lehren und lernen, obgleich nie erschöpfen lasse, leuchtet von selbst ein. (15)

Participation (*Teilnahme*), specifically “die innigste, ganz rastlose, beynah gefräßige Teilnahme an allem Leben,” is key for Schlegel in terms of striving to understand the world. While focusing on *Philosophie*, Schlegel's text is closely connected to the wider context of the *Athenaeum* in that it conceptualizes *Philosophie* in the same way as how *Poesie* is approached by the romantics. Both are infinitely becoming and can never be complete<sup>108</sup>. That the way to make anything *philosophisch* is through eternal and universal *Bildung* and the relation to the infinite reinforces how the finite being attains truth through his relations to the infinite nature in Hülsen's view. Schlegel writes, “[...] durch die Herrschaft des Innern über das Aeußere, durch Ausbildung des Verstandes und der Gedanken und durch stete Beziehung auf das Unendliche können alle Studien und selbst die gewöhnliche Lektüre philosophisch werden” (34). This can perhaps serve

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<sup>108</sup> See especially pp. 33.

as a reminder of the Novalisian *innere Symphilosophie* that characterizes the life of a thinking man and is so central in the unending *Mitteilung* of one's mind.

Already reflected in Bernhardt-Tieck's text, the analogy between man and nature is further insinuated by Hülsen in order to illustrate the power of the finite being, ultimately leading to the understanding of the early romantic view of humanity and that of romanticism essentially as a humanistic project. The powerful force generated and continued in nature itself, just as that of the currents in the Rhein tirelessly flowing from rock to rock and through endless chasms, is analogous to the eternal freedom of the human *Geist* through the beautiful *Dasein* throughout his entire life. Man carries on the freedom in himself unendingly through the flow of time.

Wie des Stromes Gewalt seine eigne Quelle ist, die er in sich fortführt über Felsen und durch Klüfte: so auch ist im Menschen durch sein ganzes schönes Leben seines Daseyns Urquelle bleibende ewige Freiheit, die er in sich fortführt durch den Strom der Zeiten, und zum Ziele fördert wie der Strom seine Quelle. (41-42)

The ceaseless continuation of the spirit brings forth the driving force of the whole *Dasein* of man. Hülsen's depiction of the endless, regenerative source in both nature and man reinforces the play of *Annäherung* and *Mitteilung* as the vigor of life foregrounded by Friedrich Schlegel. Man's acquisition of the innate truth, divinity and eternity of nature through his *Blick* indicates the significant role that *Geist* and freedom play in the harmonious relationship between man and nature.

Aber nur harmonische Bildung giebt deinem Gefühle die Wärme, und die hohe Klarheit, durch welche dein Leben freie That dir erscheint im Umkreise der Schöpfung. So nur

achtest du auf dich, und das Verhältnis deiner Anschauung, und findest in jeder  
Berührung dein Wesen durchdrungen von eigener Fülle des Lebens. . . .

Denn alles Leben ist Freiheit in der bildenden Natur, und welche Formen die Bildende  
auch immer hervorbringe, haben sie nur Beziehung auf den ewigen Geist, so muß  
notwendig jede Bildung auch der Freiheit entsprechen im wirklichen Gefühle deines  
Lebens. Dies ist Gesetz deiner Anschauung durch die freie Beziehung deines Gefühles.  
Dem himmlischen Wesen der Freiheit entspricht aber nichts, als nur die ewige Harmonie.  
(54-55)

The infinite is realized in a way in the finite, as the latter attains infinity through the free  
creative *Geist*, and the attainment and realization change and transform continuously without  
standing still. The expansive aspect of *Bildung* discussed in Chapter 3 determines the ceaseless  
transformation into new forms, but it is important to understand that the *essential* process of the  
infinite being realized in the finite found in every new form represents the romantic *Mitteilung*.  
In other words, *Mitteilung* embodies how the infinite and the finite are intimately connected,  
which is not only mirrored in but also leads to each new realization along the ceaseless striving  
for the infinite and universality; it is the way of presenting the infinite approximation that  
manifests itself in every different form at every distinct moment.

On the last page of his outpourings for the Swiss landscape, Hülsen suggests that the  
human gaze at nature expands in the free dynamism of life, and thus *Mitteilung*, in accordance  
with the *Bildung* ideal, also continuously becomes freer and higher.

In dieser Sphären nur bist du, und führst dein Leben du fort durch durch ewig thätiges  
Bilden. . . So erweiterte sich dein Blick im freien Triebe des Lebens, und du riefest durch

jede fortgehende Betrachtung deine Welt in eine höherer und freiere Anschauung. Du im  
Gefühle dieser Anschauung sagst es, sie ist dein, und was kreiset in ewigen Sphären und  
leuchtet in ihrem Lichte, ist deines Blickes Berührung, ist dein Gefühl und dein Leben. . .  
(53)

...

So ist ewig das Schöne im Blicke des Geistes erhöhtes Gefühl, des Lebens bleibender  
Gewinn. Wecke dies Gefühl, und du weckst dein Leben. (57)

Here, Hülsen reaffirms Friedrich Schlegel's *Spiel der Annäherung und Mitteilung* in a  
specific way. It becomes clear that the early romantics are not concerned about a firm and  
perfected realization of the so-called "Absolute"; rather, they attempt to engage themselves in the  
communication, sharing and information of the infinite and universal striving in a participatory  
way. What Schlagdenhauffen and many other scholars notably neglect is the implied emphasis  
placed on finitude and earthliness in the early romantic endeavor. The ideal of educating the  
earth necessitates the significance of the finite part.

### 3. *Notizen* as an example of the *Mitteilung* of the *Athenaeum*

Aligned with the conception that the new religion or mythology is the focal point of all  
rays of *Bildung*, the *Athenaeum* that is formed around the innermost spiritual community of the  
early romantics is the lively and changing focal point of the emergence of this new religion or  
mythology. If the journal only stops when the new Bible comes out of it, as Friedrich Schlegel  
argues, the journal is in fact approximating the ultimate *Bildung* ideal, i.e., the appearance of the  
new religion or mythology, infinitely and universally. *Mitteilung* of the *Athenaeum* is precisely  
the collective practice through which the journal presents itself as such a "work in progress" that



is determined to be ongoing and universal and is held together by relational and manifold forces within it.<sup>109</sup> Since the romantic *Bildung* strives to bring together opposites and differences, the process of the “bringing together” is enabled by the space opened up by *Geist*, as reflected in the notions of *Witz*, *Funke* and *Sympoesie* alike. The point or moment at which the explosion of different yet connected minds is the site where the infinite is fulfilled in the finite. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the fulfillment does not stay stagnant (*bleibend*) but rather always expands, transforms and appears anew in changed forms. To use Novalis’s words in *Athenaeums-Fragment #290* again, “[g]eistvoll ist das, worin sich der Geist unaufhörlich offenbart, wenigstens oft von neuem in veränderter Gestalt wiedererscheint; nicht bloß etwa nur einmal, so zu Anfang, wie bei vielen philosophischen Systemen.” The inexhaustible and universal collection of such “points,” “moments,” or “fulfillments” as a whole can be understood as the early romantic *Mitteilung*.

Thus, the *Athenaeum* is unified by *Mitteilung* and perhaps shows in practice in its entirety that the new Bible is taking shape and that the new religion or mythology is on the horizon. It is argued in the Metzler volume, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1789-1805*, that miscellaneous forms enabled by the genre of journal, such as *Gespräch*, *Brief*, and *Rede*, establish “einen direkten Zugang zum Publikum” (3). Yet in the case of the *Athenaeum*, they serve the inner spiritual community that should include not only the reader who *denkt mit* but also the living and dead authors who “write” together in the journal. More importantly, as is shown in the approach of this dissertation project to the *Athenaeum*, the journal communicates, shares or informs not merely through one single dialogue, letter, or fragment; rather, it does so through infinitely many interrelationships and mixture of forms within and around itself. Each of

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<sup>109</sup> Ironically, the “work in progress” is precisely the early romantic notion of a work of art.

the interrelationships contributes to *Mitteilung* as a whole and each of the manifold forms or ideas of communication and expression becomes a “ray of *Bildung*.” As of the last issue in 1800, forms and genres that are favored by the *Athenaeum* include, but are not limited to, *Gespräche*, *Fragmente*, *Briefe*, *Kommentare*, *Notizen*, *Literaturkritik*, *Gedichte*, *Übersetzungen*, *theoretische Aufsätze*, and *Prosa*. While some of them are evidently sociable and interactive in themselves, others either get mixed together or often convey an early romantic sense of relationality, *Bildung* and *Mitteilung*.

The *Athenaeum* forms itself as a synthesizing work with various forms in accordance with the statement in its *Vorerinnerung* by the co-founders.

In der Einkleidung werden Abhandlungen mit Briefen, Gesprächen, rhapsodischen Betrachtungen und aphoristischen Bruchstücken wechseln, wie in dem Inhalt besondre Urteile mit allgemeinen Untersuchungen, Theorie mit geschichtlicher Darstellung, Ansichten der vielseitigen Strebungen unseres Volks und Zeitalters mit Blicken auf das Ausland und die Vergangenheit, vorzüglich auf das klassische Altertum.

*Funke* and liveliness of *Mitteilung* are promised there: “[...] für die Unterhaltung aller Leser wünschen wir so viel anziehendes und belebendes in unsre Vorträge zu legen, als ernstere Zweckes erlauben.”

Studies on early romanticism, from Benjamin’s doctoral dissertation to Kuzniar’s *Delayed Endings: Nonclosure in Novalis and Hölderlin* (1987/2008), have widely examined the forms of this epoch and how fragmentation, sociality and infinite approximation in the form of the fragment and dialogue gives rise to the theories of art and knowledge of the Jena romantics. However, by looking at the *Athenaeum* as a whole in itself through the interconnections among

the individual ideals and practices, one can easily find that in its *Mitteilung* the idea of approximation (*Annäherung*) is not linearly progressive; the progressivity required for the approximation to the “Absolute” may be more accurately characterized as back-and-forth, or even more radically, chaotic and random (*zufällig*), which is immanent to relationality and reciprocity. This is reinforced by Novalis in *Blüthenstaub* #99:

Der Gang der Approximazion ist aus zunehmenden Progressen und Regressen zusammengesetzt. Beide retardiren, beyde beschleunigen, beyde führen zum Ziel. So scheint sich im Roman der Dichter bald dem Spiel zu nähern, bald wieder zu entfernen, und nie ist es näher, als wenn es am entferntesten zu seyn scheint.

Novalis’s fragment places under question the notion of *Annäherung* as a linear and sequential movement while at the same time insisting on the playful process of approaching the ultimate goal. The relational and contextual conception of truth, knowledge and reality—what the romantics long for and live within—is inextricably linked to *Mitteilung* of the early romantic notion of a work of art. Chaos that characterizes the space opened up by *Geist*, where the conflict between the impossibility of communication and the urgency to communicate without reserve, gives form to the romantic mode of writing and to the *Athenaeum* in its entirety.

Schlagdenhauffen defines chaos as a notion that sums up in one word the infinite living richness of the psychological and phenomenal world, and that among other kinds of infinities, *Witz* is the infinite production of genius thoughts (168)<sup>110</sup>. Without an understanding of the rationale of chaos, one can easily condemn the *Athenaeum* and the individual writings within it as

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<sup>110</sup> “Ainsi le Chaos » résume en un seul mot l’infinie richesse vivante du monde psychologique et phenomenal. . . le « Witz », l’infinie production de pensées géniales.”

incomprehensible and obscure by virtue of their confusing and chaotic presentation of *Sympoesie*, *Symphilosophie* and *Symkritik*.

Perhaps there is no other form that is more chaotic within the *Athenaeum* than *Notizen*, which began to appear in the fourth issue in 1799. Outshined by the fragments and dialogues, *Notizen* are under-analyzed particularly in terms of the formation of the early romantic notion of a work of art and *Mitteilung* of the *Athenaeum*. Although resembling the fragments in structure and crammed together with each other across dozens of pages, *Notizen* are more specifically oriented around the most up-to-date contemporary works, making the journal come alive, and are used by the early romantic authors as a way of informing each other of these works. In fact, the last contribution to the first issue, *Beyträge zur Kritik der neuesten Litteratur*, has already functioned as a critical note of newly published works. Early 1799, Friedrich Schlegel proposed the idea of *Notizen* in a letter to his brother<sup>111</sup>:

Ich habe die Idee, wir geben unter dem Titel „Notizen“ was der Titel sagt, ganz kurze Nachrichten von dem Neuesten in Kunst und Wissenschaft in Poesie und Literatur; etwa wie wir einer an den andern von einem Buche schreiben würden, was dieser noch nicht kennt. (Behler, 42)

For the romantics, *Notizen*, as a way of *Kritik*, should be an essential part of a literary periodical and function as a living record of their epoch on subjective terms. At the beginning of the first collection of *Notizen* of the *Athenaeum*, it is made clear that “[w]ir [...] gestehen sonach, daß diese Notizen zwar, insofern sie sich bemühen werden, den litterarischen Fortschritten der Zeit auf dem Fuß zu folgen — zum Archiv der Zeit, aber nur zu einem Archiv der Zeit und

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<sup>111</sup> February 25, 1799.

unsers Geschmacks gehören werden” (288). More importantly, *Notizen* provide the reader with the advantage of accessing the *Charakter* of a work before “popular” opinions, whether authoritative ones or incorrect ones, impose their stamp on it.

Für jetzt scheint es am zweckmäßigsten, daß Einzelnen für sich zur Befriedigung des allgemeinen Bedürfnisses beytragen was mögen und vermögen. Und wenn dieß einem Journal geschieht, wo die Herausgeber zugleich hauptsächlichsten Mitarbeiter sind, hat der Leser dabey den Vortheil, daß er die Urtheilenden aus ihren eignen Arbeiten schon kennt, und also leicht wissen kann, in wiefern er mit ihnen übereinstimmt.

Wir haben uns daher entschlossen, unsern Lesern von Zeit zu Zeit Notizen über die merkwürdigsten Produkte der einheimischen Litteratur zu geben. Es ist dabey nicht die Absicht, den Charakter wichtiger Werke zu erschöpfen oder immer förmliche Exempel kritischer Virtuosität aufzustellen; sondern nur ihren Charakter, ehe die öffentliche Meinung ihnen schon einen vielleicht unrichtigen gegeben hat, im Allgemeinen vorläufig, in der freyesten Form die nur zum Zweck führt, zu bestimmen, damit weder das Vortreffliche, weil es keinen berühmten Namen an der Stirn trägt, unbekannt bleibe, noch was schlecht oder mittelmäßig ist, der Autorität wegen für gut gelte. (287)

The goal of the early romantic *Kritik* is not is not to “exhaust” the work being critiqued but to restore its original character. As will be seen in Chapter 5 on translation in the *Athenaeum*, the purpose of the translation is precisely the same as *Kritik*, and this also characterizes the criteria to differentiate romantische translation from the bad ones.

Clearly, *Notizen* should serve as a way of *Mitteilung* in the informative and educative sense. Interestingly, they are contributed by the most diverse hands among all the contributions

to the journal. Out of the three sets of *Notizen*, all pieces in the first two are anonymous, and yet in the last issue all authors are indicated in the table of contents with their initials in the custom of the circle, including Dorothea Veit (“D.”), Schleiermacher (“S—r.”), A.W. Schlegel (“W.”), and August Ferdinand Bernhardt<sup>112</sup> (“B.”). Other contributors to the *Notizen* who are not indicated in the journal are later identified as Caroline Schlegel and Karl Gustaf von Brinkmann. With astonishing up-to-dateness, they treat works and topics that include Schleiermacher’s *Reden über die Religion* (1799), Kant’s book on anthropology (1798), critiques and translations of *Don Quixote*, literary taste around 1800, journals such as Carl Wilhelm Ettinger’s *Belletristische Zeitung auf das Jahr 1800*, letters between friends, the late-Enlightenment philosopher Christian Garve’s last writings, Basilius Ramdohr’s moral tales (1799), the third volume of Johann Jakob Engel’s *Der Philosoph für die Welt* (1800), the French poet Évariste de Parny’s epic poem *La Guerre des Dieux, Gedicht und 10 Gesänge* (1799), Herder’s *Eine Metakritik Zur Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft* (1799), and Fichte’s book *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800).

If the motivation behind the collection of *Notizen* is to share with and inform each other of what others do not yet know with the author’s original and creative mind, it falls under the definition of *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie* articulated in *Athenaeums-Fragment* #125 that foregrounds the complementariness of different minds. In a more specific sense, it should be characterized as *Symkritik* as these *Notizen* are critiques of works by others. They are clearly a participatory and sociable form of communication and expression born out of the spiritual community of the romantics and the *Athenaeum*. As mentioned in Chapter 2, because of the reciprocal effect (*Wechselwirkung*), the collections of *Notizen* are no longer a mere mathematical

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<sup>112</sup> He was married to Sophie Tieck, Ludwig Tieck’s sister, in 1799.

sum of random commentaries on contemporary works searching for fixed outcomes, but rather lively points of entry into inexhaustible activities of the mind. This reiterates the point carried in the way in which the journal presents itself that it strives for imperfectable *freiste Mitteilung* instead of complete comprehension.

It should be noted that *Notizen* denote a way to show that the inexhaustibility of *Mitteilung* must be differentiated from the impossibility of it. The former assures the significance of liveliness (*Lebendigkeit, Lebhaftigkeit*) in early romantic *Mitteilung* that speaks to the Schlegelian “vigor of life” reflected in *Gespräch über die Poesie*, even if the “Absolute” is never to be reached. Working together with other forms in the journal, the three sets of *Notizen* render the journal even more alive by way of the inexhaustibility and up-to-dateness in the nature of the form of *Notizen*. Stoljar summarizes the *Notizen* as those which would “provide a further opportunity for the mutual stimulation and exchange of impressions so prized in the romantic circle” (116). Schlagdenhauffen’s description of the Schlegelian fragment equally applies to *Notizen*, which should serve as an eternal agility of the infinitely imperfectible chaos.<sup>113</sup>

That the unfixed and lively *Notizen* deliberately reject any absolute closure or to function as a singular, isolated work is unambiguous, which ties back to the idea of *Funke* in association with *Mitteilung* of the *Geist* mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. *Notizen* as a whole demonstrate how *geistige Kräfte* work like sparks in a vigorous and regenerative way that further stimulate infinitely more sparks, invite others to join, yet follow no order in the succession of sparks. Schlagdenhauffen’s investigation of Friedrich Schlegel’s critique of *Wilhelm Meister* is of significant help in the understanding of the individual sparks and the whole which the

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<sup>113</sup> See Schlagdenhauffen, Chapter IV on the theory of the fragment, pp.135.

infinitely many constitute. He argues that through the succession of books, which are linked together by the resumption of themes and feelings, the work progresses, flourishes, and diversifies into a thousand digressions. However, the reader feels the work solidly united by a common spirit, by a universal and mystical bond that characterizes the secret of its organization. As each of the books opens up new horizons, they are penetrated by the whole and serve as a starting point for the next but still maintain the wholeness that stays with those which will succeed it (184). Schlagdenhauffen's conclusion about *Wilhelm Meister* is interesting: the purpose of the novel is to present a slice of reality where poetry is mixed with life and offers the most likely way to make contact with universality. The continuous widening and development of the *Notizen* and the journal itself as a whole perhaps functions the same way as the novel. It is in *Mitteilung* of the work of art that universality and eternity are ceaselessly fulfilled.

Many of the *Notizen* resemble the specific conversations that take place in the correspondence among the early romantics that render infinitely more conversations possible while the collective spirit hovers in the background. For example, long before the actualization of the *Athenaeum*, Friedrich Schlegel wrote to his brother, “[w]irst Du nicht den ‘Meister’ rezensieren? - Solche Rezensionen wie die über die Horen sind treffliche Vorübungen zu unsern Gespräch über die deutsche Poesie” (Gundolf, 171). In a letter dated Sept. 30, 1799, A.W. Schlegel encouraged A. F. Bernhardi to write *Notizen* for the *Athenaeum* and offered various suggestions: “Vor allen Dingen vergessen Sie darüber unser Athenäum nicht. Könnten Sie uns nicht allerlei für die Notizen geben? Etwas von neuesten Theaterstücken? Kotzebues anglisierten Pizarro? Usw. – Oder etwas Ernsthafteres: Über die Phantasien, wobei ein allgemeines Wort über Wackenroder gesagt werden könnte ... Über die Schattenspiele in Berlin... Sie hatten uns Hoffnungen zu einen Aufsatz über Herders Metakritik gemacht...”



The early romantic understanding of and approach to structuring and displaying *Notizen* apply to contributions to the journal in general.<sup>114</sup> Later contributions often echo with previous ones, reinforcing communicated ideas or bringing renewed perspectives. In many cases, ideas that appear in previous texts can forecast future ones, forming a dynamic scene where they always invite each other into conversations and self-reflections. The continuous realizations take place through the sociability and interconnection between the sparks of *Mitteilung*. As Stoljar reminds us at the end of her second chapter, “[b]ut a foundation had been laid for the great movement of European romanticism which was to be the real fulfillment of the vision of the nineteenth century that found expression in the Athenäum” (51). The *Bildungsideal* envisioned by the *Athenaeum* did seem to have transcended its age and continues to spark further conversations.

Little wonder that the deconstructionists later developed interest in early romanticism. The intertextuality and non-closure inherent in the “text”, to be differentiated from that of the closed “work”, for example, as Roland Barthes guides us through the movement in his essay “De l’oeuvre au texte” (1971), translated as “From Work to Text” (1977), interestingly speaks to the sociality and regenerativity of *Funken* embodied by the *Notizen*. It becomes an impossible task to secure an ultimate, absolute ending of the ceaselessly progressive approximation, of the forever becoming of the early romantic work of art, which, ironically, is closer to the Barthesian “text,” which is always “the intertext of another text” (Hendricks, 7). In this light we see that infinite approximation and intertextuality are intertwined in the role of *Funke*, as the sparks keep regenerating and at the same time connect to one another in different ways. The “modern”,

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<sup>114</sup> Schleiermacher’s timely response to and critique of *Lucinde* in the epistolary form, *Vertraute Briefe ueber Friedrich Schlegels Lucinde* (1799), can be seen in a similar fashion to *Notizen* in the journal.

opening up of the understanding of an “Absolute” that is unstable, plural and manifold, is enabled by the new progressive, universal mode of writing and type of work of art, and thus echoes with *Witz* that implies plurality and relationality that is unfixed and eternally changing. When elucidating the early romantic preference for the fragmentary form, Seyhan also brings up the notion of the “text”, as she states that “the world is only accessible as a text” (72). Both the journal itself and its individual contributions, not merely the fragments and *Notizen*, can be understood here as a “text” in the deconstructionist sense. The journal itself functions as an explosion of different minds and spark generated in the coming together of differences.

The back-and-forth and chaotic progression is reflected in genre switching in early romanticism as a form of transformation. Transformation is an aesthetic practice that aligns with the mixture of forms in general and is reflected in the transfer between genres or forms, a “translation” in the Novalisian sense where everything can be translated. This notion of transformation sheds significant light on the way the *Athenaeum* presents itself that holds it together as a collective, unified work of art. Chapter 5 will attempt to articulate translation in the *Athenaeum* as a synthesis of all three unifying forces—innermost spiritual community, *Bildung*, and *Mitteilung*.

## Chapter 5 *Poetische Symübersetzung*: A Case Study

*Ich glaube man ist auf dem Wege, die wahre poetische Übersetzungskunst zu erfinden;  
dieser Ruhm war den Deutschen vorbehalten.*

*A.W. Schlegel, Eilfter Gesang des rasenden Roland; nebst einer Nachschrift des  
Uebersetzers an L. Tieck, Das Athenaeum, vol.2, no.2.*

### 1. Introduction

As one of the lesser-known contributions to the *Athenaeum*, A.W. Schlegel's translation of the eleventh canto of Ludovico Ariosto's romance epic, *Orlando Furioso* (1516)<sup>115</sup>, entitled *Eilfter Gesang des rasenden Roland* in the journal, together with the *Nachschrift des Uebersetzers an L. Tieck*, provides crucial insights into the fundamental role of translation for the early romantics. In the *Nachschrift* Schlegel writes to Tieck, who had published his translation of *Don Quixote* just a short time earlier, "[a]rigitig ist es doch, daß Sie mir gerade eine vorläufige Protestation gegen alle etwanigen Übersetzungen des Ariost zuschicken mussten. Sie findet sich in dem Gerichte, welches über Don Quixote's Bibliothek von Ritterbüchern gehalten wird" (279). Schlegel is referring to the scene in *Don Quixote* where the priest talks with the barber about discovering Ariosto's poem in Don Quixote's library of knight books. What fascinates Schlegel is that Ariosto's epic, which is echoed everywhere in Cervantes' novel as an intertext, is precisely the original text of his own translation work. The interrelationship in the translations as well as in the original works, which is largely overlooked in the scholarship, accounts for the

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<sup>115</sup> The Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem, which first appeared in 1516, had a wide influence in the following centuries. It has forty-six cantos and A.W. Schlegel only translated the eleventh in the *Athenaeum*.

spirit of the innermost spiritual community of the *Athenaeum* constellation and offers a profound understanding of the aesthetic principle and practice demonstrated in the journal.

Although often neglected by scholars of romanticism, the influence of Ariosto's epic on Cervantes' novel is not new in the Cervantes scholarship. In her essay, "Cervantes, Ariosto, and the Art of Reading Author(s)," Julia Farmer reminds instructors of Spanish literature that the intertextuality in *Don Quixote* should be given more attention. This is particularly interesting to the present study on the *Athenaeum* as an early romantic work of art where individual contributions constantly speak to each other and form inner connections in a holistic manner. The dialogue and interrelationship take place not only between the two Renaissance authors of Romance languages but also, centuries later, between the early German romantic translators, surpassing time and space. *Sympoesie* crystallizes into *Symübersetzung* in the practice of translation for the romantics. The importance of the translations of romances from the Romance languages, in the case of Ariosto and Cervantes here, is at the heart of what the Jena circle conceive as "Romanticism."

Moreover, A.W. Schlegel and Tieck as translators made significant contributions in exposing Shakespeare and Cervantes, whom the Jena romantics determine to have been *misunderstood* in their home countries, to the German-speaking world. In an early letter to Tieck dated December 11, 1797, when the two friends have not yet met in person but have been exchanging thoughts about each other's work and critiquing those of others', such as Tieck's *Don Quixote* translation and *Volksmärchen*, and A.W. Schlegel's translations of Shakespeare, Schlegel raises the issue of how Shakespeare has been misconceived and how a new critical understanding must be established in Germany.

Die englischen Kritiker verstehen sich gar nicht auf Shakespeare.

...

Es wäre rühmlich für unsere Nation, wenn wir einmal eine kritische Ausgabe des englischen Shakespeares bekämen, welche den in England erschienenen vorzuziehen wäre. (Lohner, 42).

The idea of misunderstanding is essential to the motivation behind the early romantic enterprise. As mentioned in Chapter 4, *Notizen* as a crucial part of a literary periodical provides the reader with the vantage point of accessing the *Charakter* of a work before popular opinions—authoritative or incorrect ones—impose their stamp on it. In a similar vein, preventing situations where works are misunderstood by bad translations forms the key task of translation advocated by the romantics. In other words, the fundamental function of translation, like *Kritik* practiced in the form of *Notizen*, is the same as that of the journal, namely, to expose the essence of a work, i.e., its *innere Poesie, Bildung*, or what A.W. Schlegel calls *Ton, Farbe* and *Hauch* of a work, before its *Charakter* is distorted.

Es ist dabey nicht die Absicht, den Charakter wichtiger Werke zu erschöpfen oder immer förmliche Exempel kritischer Virtuosität aufzustellen; sondern nur ihren Charakter, ehe die öffentliche Meinung ihnen schon einen vielleicht unrichtigen gegeben hat, im Allgemeinen vorläufig, in der freyesten Form die nur zum Zweck führt, zu bestimmen, damit weder das Vortreffliche, weil es keinen berühmten Namen an der Stirn trägt, unbekannt bleibe, noch was schlecht oder mittelmäßig ist, der Autorität wegen für gut gelte.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> See the introduction to the first collection of *Notizen* of the *Athenaeum* in vol.2, no. 2, pp. 287. Also quoted in Chapter 4.

Two sets of examples show the essential functions of translation, *Kritik*, and the journal. The commonality between Tieck's translation and Flaxman's art of outline illustrations discussed in A.W. Schlegel's essay, *Ueber die Zeichnungen zu Gedichten und John Flaxman's Umrisse*, published in the fourth issue<sup>117</sup>, lies in that both are able to represent and re-create the essence and idiosyncrasy of a work. Similar to how the *Athenaeum* advocates that writers should write like Cervantes, the two contributions indicate that translators should translate like Tieck and illustrators draw like Flaxman. The counterexamples are represented by Soltau's translation of *Don Quixote* and Herder's *Metakritik* of Kant's first critique articulated by A.F. Bernhardt<sup>118</sup>. In the view of the authors of the *Athenaeum*, both misunderstood the original works and failed to convey their essence and *Charakter*.

Characterizing Shakespeare and Cervantes among others as *romantische* writers later became one of the primary themes in the *Athenaeum*. Intriguingly, Research on *Don Quixote* mostly traces interests in the Spanish novel back to the early German romantic period, when Tieck's translation was published in 1799, which offers a significantly different perspective from those of other translators, and when the early romantics as a group marked *Don Quixote* as *romantisch*. Studies emphasize the contribution made by the early romantics to the wide interest in *Don Quixote* and, vice versa, its influence on German romanticism. Dietrich Soltau's translation of the novel appeared only after a year of Tieck's version, of which A.W. Schlegel contributed a critical review in the *Athenaeum*, though it was not the first time Cervantes' work had been mentioned in the journal. Before Tieck and Soltau, Friedrich Bertruch was the pioneer

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<sup>117</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>118</sup> In A.F. Bernhardt's *Notiz* on Herder's *Verstand und Erharfung. Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1799) in *Notizen* of the sixth issue of the *Athenaeum*. See Chapter 3.

in the German translation of the novel; his version published in 1775-1777 was quite dissimilar to Tieck's translation. According to a number of references by A.W. Schlegel in the journal, Tieck re-creates *Don Quixote* as a work of art rather than merely an object of the word-for-word rendering, as he grasps the character and *Bildung* of Cervantes's work and undergoes an aesthetic experience in the translational practice.<sup>119</sup>

In this chapter, I attempt to show that translation as practiced and examined in the *Athenaeum*, what A.W. Schlegel defines as *poetische Übersetzungskunst*, plays a fundamental role for the early romantics. I strive to reveal how translation, as a synthesizing principle itself and a (re)creative process of a work, helps to show the essence of the journal as a unified whole with internal multiplicity and exemplifies the synthesis of all three aspects—the innermost spiritual community, *Bildungsideal* and *Mitteilung*—that hold the journal together. In *The Literary Absolute*, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy argue that the work of literature inscribes “onto itself the conditions of its own production and producing its own truth,” reinventing literary form “as the definitive equation between presence and representation” (Seyhan, 8). In other words, the work of art produces its own theory as it is being created. This equally applies to translation for the romantics, which is both a reflective and self-reflective mode of writing and the product of the creation process. It forms an organic whole of hermeneutics—interpretation of the original work of art—and a process of self-reflective poetic (re)creation.

Translation and the theory of translation are unified as one, so is the case with the *Athenaeum* itself, as mentioned in Chapter 1, which produces its own theory as it is being

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<sup>119</sup> The hermeneutical approach to translation, pointed out and developed by scholars of translation studies such as George Steiner and Hermann Stolze, seems to be the most similar to A.W. Schlegel's depiction of Tieck's version.

written. The romantic work of art is essentially in the process of emerging out of many voices—and is therefore embodied in truest form through collaborative and collective translation. The exchange between A.W. Schlegel and Tieck serves as a significant example of translation as one of the many clusters of ideas and practices that keep the *Athenaeum* as a conversation going. Similar to others, translation as an aesthetic principle stretches across all the issues of the *Athenaeum* and brings together major and minor voices. It unites many practices by the early romantics, such as intertextuality, being immersed in various traditions, and shared engagements. Specifically, translation for the romantics not only demands the innermost spiritual community on multiple levels as its prerequisite but is also useful in the striving for the universal and eternal *Bildungsideal*. Furthermore, it also reflects the aspect of *Mitteilung* as the way of how the romantics present themselves and how the ideal is being put into practice. Again, situating translation in the context of the journal, it is one of the rays of *Bildung* in the universal and infinite striving for the new mythology or religion by the innermost spiritual community that demands not only collectivity but also sociability and multiplicity. It was one of the founding pieces that formed the basis for any systems that emerged later for individuals such as Schleiermacher, Friedrich and A.W. Schlegel who were no longer *Frühromantiker*.

In terms of the spiritual community, which makes the Schlegelian *poetische Übersetzungskunst* more radical as a *poetische Symübersetzung*, a genuine translation in the view of the romantics is dialogical, that is, premised on notions such as *Verbrüderung* and friendship that constitutes a community between the author and the translator, the original text and the translated one (the “renewed,” transformed piece), as well as between fellow translators. As far as the *Bildungsideal* of the *Athenaeum* is concerned, translation must be *gebildet*, that is, must serve as a ray of *Bildung* that must be universal, *en masse* (to use Schleiermacher’s phrase),



infinitely approximating the “Absolute.” Like the journal, translation should only stop when the eternal and universal *Bildungsideal*, i.e., the realization of the new mythology or religion, is achieved. Since the romantic *Bildung* is less education than conversation and the creation, through art, of a community of living and dead authors, which is essentially built upon the premise of a spiritual community and is social, rhetorical, hermeneutical, and dialogical, translation is a *Symübersetzungskunst*. Furthermore, it reflects *Mitteilung* as the participatory and sociable way of how the romantics present themselves, how representation of the “Absolute” might be possible and how the *Bildungsideal* is put into practice, or more radically, realized, through translation.

For this reason, the interconnectivity and dialogues within the journal become even more radical in the case of translation. A brief survey of works of and about translation in the *Athenaeum* gives an overview. It is noteworthy that these texts do not read significantly differently from other texts in the journal, as they are displayed with equally confusing characteristics such as anonymity, mixed forms and chaotic structures. The prevalence of translations and discussions of translation cuts across the entire journal and shows interwoven layers that can be roughly put into three categories: 1) intertextuality that reveals the aesthetics of translation of the Jena group during the *Athenaeum* period; 2) actual translations; 3) critiques of translations and theoretical discussions on translation and associated concepts such as hermeneutics, language, and *Kritik*. The multilayered representation of the early romantic conception of translation must thus be situated in a larger dialogue in the journal. *Die Sprachen. Ein Gespräch*, for example, illustrates this point as it implicitly demonstrates the significance and the function of translation for the romantics.

In the first issue of the journal from 1798, a lengthy piece addresses remnants of ancient Greek elegies in the forms of both translation and commentaries. A.W. Schlegel's translation of *Orlando Furioso* finds its place in the fourth issue. But the space given to translation in the *Athenaeum* is not limited to these direct translations. A number of contributions to the journal gradually form a picture of the early romantic aesthetics of translation, or vice versa, translation as an early romantic aesthetic principle. The first piece that gives a glance of it is the insightful *Nachschrift des Uebersetzers an L. Tieck*, as mentioned at the beginning of my chapter. There, A.W. Schlegel offers insights into translation and discusses Tieck's newly published translation of *Don Quixote*, about which the two friends have been exchanging thoughts in correspondence prior to the journal's appearance. A.W. Schlegel's remarks about Tieck's translation presage the critique of Soltau's translation in *Notizen* of the last issue in 1800. The back-and-forth referencing among the contributions to the journal is by no means uncommon. In the text on Soltau, A.W. Schlegel reminds the reader that "[i]m vierten Stück dieser Zeitschrift war von Tiecks Uebersetzung des Don Quixote bey ihrer ersten Erscheinung die Rede" (297).

In addition, there are many other places within works where translation is addressed. The sections below will discuss interconnections among contributions as and about translation. Juxtaposing these contributions that play with one another can lead to a more concrete and coherent understanding of the aesthetics of translation in the *Athenaeum*. As will be seen below, it involves a creative process of a work of art while grasping the original wholeness of the emerging text. For the sake of clarity, I list the relevant contributions to be discussed below in Appendix II. It is important to point out that among the contributions to the journal, actual translations only make up a tiny part, and most of them are dedicated to ancient poetry. Nevertheless, the entire first issue of the journal, though with no intention to establish any

systematic translation theory, deals exclusively with the discussions of language, poetry and *Kritik*<sup>120</sup>, in addition to the miscellaneous issues covered in Novalis' *Blüthenstaub* and *Athenaeums-Fragmente* that are highly relevant to translation for the romantics.

## 2. Qualifications for *poetische Symübersetzung*: *Bildung* and the spiritual community

This section attempts to reveal the aspects that the romantics regard as essential to a genuine translation. The restoration of the *Charakter* of the original work in the emerging translation requires the *Bildung* of the translator as a poet who is situated in a spiritual community with the original author, as seen in both the conversations between the authors of the *Athenaeum* and the living and dead authors. This reveals the essence of the journal as the early romantic work of art that serves as the meeting place of “romantic” authors and texts. Through the interconnectedness with regard to translation in the journal, one sees the great extent to which the early romantics are constantly “sympoeticizing and symphilosophizing” within the journal and foregrounding their shared, collective spirit that defines romanticism in these early years and the journal as a work of art that forms out of the early romantic aesthetic practice. In other words, translation for the early romantics involves a creative process of a work of art while grasping the original wholeness of the emerging text. In particular, when it comes to the approach to ancient texts, philological work and purely linguistic renderings can no longer dominate. Translation in

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<sup>120</sup> The early romantic approaches to translation and *Kritik* share the same aesthetic traits and function as a common aesthetic principle and practice of the *Athenaeum* that integrate the aspects that unify the journal as a whole. In the process of both translation and *Kritik* a work of art is (trans)formed in accordance with the early romantic conception of *Poesie*, and both are practiced collectively as *Symübersetzung* and *Symkritik* on multiple levels, which brings together major and minor voices in the journal. The conceptions of translation and *Kritik* cannot be isolated from other concepts; thus, only an interplay and integration of all together within the early romantic context can lead to a more profound understanding of this complex, interrelated problem.

this sense is closely linked to the evolution of the concept of *Kritik* for the romantics that also stemmed from philology regarding ancient writings.

Without grasping of the original work in its entirety and without a creative process, but rather with a mere understanding of such mechanical aspects as grammars and words, translation is not an aesthetic practice or a creation of a work of art but only a transfer of linguistic symbols<sup>121</sup>. For the early romantics, translation must be a combination of both philological work and the grasping of the *Charakter* of a work. As Schlagdenhauffen argues when discussing illustrations of poetry:

Traduction elle aussi, non seulement l'illustration rend l'œuvre accessible à quiconque n'entend pas la langue originale du poète, mais l'artiste nous offre un organe nouveau, si bien que deux arts concordent, charmant spectacle d'harmonie, sans qu'il y ait abdication d'aucune part<sup>122</sup> (285)

It is the same case with translation. Not only does the illustration make the work accessible to anyone who does not understand the original language of the poet, but the artist offers us a new organ, so that two arts are in accordance with each other—a charming spectacle of harmony—without any abdication on any part. (Translation mine)

While intertextuality penetrates the journal everywhere and the early romantics are known for their play with intertexts, as seen in Friedrich Schlegel's critique of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and the numerous mentions of works they characterize as *romantisch* such as those by

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<sup>121</sup> In this sense, translation for the early romantics becomes closer to their hermeneutics and criticism, two concepts to which Schleiermacher later devoted "Hermeneutics and Criticism" (1838). When it comes to interpretation of a work of art, especially for Friedrich Schlegel, it is a combination of philological work and intuition.

<sup>122</sup> Chapter IX "Difficultés et lassitude". Translation below is mine.

Shakespeare, Cervantes, Dante, the interconnectedness among this group of friends in many different ways, whether it is conscious or accidental, is especially intriguing when it comes to translation. A closer look at the anecdote between A.W. Schlegel and Tieck mentioned above, which the former insists on marking as accidental, will provide us with a fresh perspective of considering what can be called *Symübersetzung* in the journal.

Reading the journal from start to finish, one will be amazed by how much Tieck is referenced throughout the journal's six issues and be surprised in addition by the fact that none of his writings find any direct place in the journal during its active years.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, as a close friend, A.W. Schlegel had maintained frequent correspondence with Tieck since 1797 and spared no effort to bring up Tieck's poetic and translational accomplishments throughout the journal.

Even without an explicit *Symphilosophie* between Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel, the connection between the former and A.W. Schlegel in and outside of the journal is hardly deniable. It is interesting to consider the way in which their close relationship exerted a crucial influence on the collective conversation and a deliberately established spiritual connection embodied by the journal. Although the early romantics as a group collapsed after the *Athenaeum* ceased publication, A.W. Schlegel and Tieck found ways to continue their collective practice by publishing together their own *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1802* in Tübingen, inspired by the

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<sup>123</sup> According to Ernst Behler's historical account of the journal, although Tieck would have been willing to participate in the journal, he was not admitted to the "inneren Bezüge der Symphilosophie," and the Schlegel brothers "bleiben zurückhaltend und haben ihre Zweifel über eine mögliche Gemeinsamkeit mit ihm." Although scholars have argued that it was Tieck's lack of philosophical interests, in fact it was his purely poetic practice that did not align with Friedrich Schlegel's agenda of infusing philosophy into *Poesie* and thus kept Friedrich Schlegel distanced from him, it is still unclear why such *Gemeinsamkeit* did not happen in the journal.

one published by Schiller from 1796 to 1800. In a letter dated November 30, 1798, A.W. Schlegel already suggested to Tieck that they could publish a “Spaß-Almanach” together.

Wenn Sie Lust dazu haben wollen wir uns näher verabreden - wir beiden müßten die Hauptsache dabei tun - mein Bruder lieferte uns eine Anzahl witziger Fragmente - Bernhardi einen Aufsatz - übrigens müßten wir uns an keine Form ausschließend binden - Prosa, Verse, Räsonnement, Erzählung, Parodie, kleine Dramen in Hanssachsischer Manier, Epigramme in Distichen usw. (Lohner, 50)

Despite the absence of Tieck’s direct contribution to the *Athenaeum*, A.W. Schlegel constantly reminds the reader of the friend of theirs whose spirit and *Bildung*, shown through his poetic achievements, align so well with that of the contributors of the journal. In their correspondence, as is the case with other friends in the circle, A.W. Schlegel and Tieck showed consistent passion about the projects they were undertaking respectively, requesting criticism from one another, and seeking inspiration for any “Sym-project.”

The dynamic exchange of ideas about each other’s work, especially their translations, genuinely occupies the romantic friendship. “Was macht ihr [sic] Don Quixote? Vergessen Sie ihn ja nicht” (Lohner, 50). A.W. Schlegel asks frequently about Tieck’s projects. He mentions in the postscript that Tieck’s *Don Quixote* has provided them [the family and friends in Jena] with several beautiful nights and he hopes that his own translation of *Orlando* can do the same to amuse Tieck. As commonly seen in the correspondence between other intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they ask for each other’s judgment about their own works, in A.W. Schlegel’s case, the treatment of metrics in his translation of the Italian poem, provide feedback, argue and share thoughts. In the postscript, Schlegel first refers to the conversation

between the priest and the barber from *Don Quixote* to offer his insights into Tieck's translation approach and thus differentiates it from others. Schlegel quotes from Tieck's translation:

“Wenn ich den Lodovico Ariosto antreffe,” sagt der Pfarrer, “und er redet nicht seine Landesprache, so werde ich nicht die mindeste Achtung gegen ihn behalten, redet er aber seine eigenthümliche Mundart, so sey ihm alle Hochachtung;” und hernach: “wir hätten es gern dem Herrn Capitan erlassen, ihn ins Spanische zu übersetzen und zum Castilianer zu machen.” Wenn Ariost nicht einmal in eine so verwandte Mundart übertragen werden konnte, ohne “seine eigentliche Trefflichkeit einzubüßen”: in welcher Sprache dürfte man denn ein besseres Gelingen hoffen? (*Nachschrift*, 279)

Having the Italian poem translated into Spanish and into the Castilian dialect would be painful and, more importantly, sabotage the original poem and poet. A.W. Schlegel then makes the point that if Ariosto could not even be translated into such a language that is so closely related to Italian, there is no hope for other languages. Interestingly, he had attempted his own German translation of Ariosto before reading this episode in *Don Quixote*, and nevertheless draws the same conclusion that the German language is not yet adequately evolved in order to convey the excellence of Italian poetry, even though he, the early romantic translator, already possesses the required “ausgebildeten Geist.” I shall come back to this point later. But in terms of preserving the original *Charakter*, Schlegel praises Tieck's approach of avoiding problematic germanization (*Verdeutschung*) of the Spanish work, i.e., by turning the original text into absurd German (to use Luther's phrase) resulting in the loss of the original spirit. Tieck's practice, according to Schlegel, would be approved by Cervantes himself.

Zu meinem trost [sic] hat der unvergleichliche Cervantes Ihnen gleichfalls verboten, seine Dichtung zu verdeutschen; er versichert, “dass eben das allen begegnen werde, die

Poesien in eine andere Sprache übersetzen wollen, denn bei allem Fleiße und Geschicklichkeit, die sie anwenden und besitzen, wird der Dichter nie so wie in seiner ersten Gestalten erscheinen können.” (279)

Cervantes seems to deny the possibility of translating a poetic work of art into another language, because the writer of the original text would never be able to appear in the translation the way he does in his original work. But Schlegel uses this to make the point that germanization must be avoided, which Tieck was able to achieve while most translations of “alte Poesie” have failed, as can be seen in Soltau’s translation discussed in Schlegel’s critique. Schlegel by no means denies the possibility of literal translation of the Spanish novel into the German language, as it is precisely what most translators so far have done. Rather, he refers to the misunderstanding and thus undermining of the character and spirit of the original work in the translation. In a letter to Goethe dated February 4, 1799, A.W. Schlegel writes:

. . . Voß besitzt der Vertrautheit mit dem Buchstaben der alten Poesie doch gar zu wenig von ihrem Geiste. Ich höre, sein Theokrit wird bald erscheinen, und so übersetzt er die alten Dichter frisch nach die Reihe weg. Ich glaube freilich nicht, daß es mit seinen [sic] Verdeutschung auf immer ein Bewenden haben kann, allein sie machen [sic] doch gewaltig Bahn. (Lohner, 53)

The problem of germanization is particularly true when it comes to translation of the poetic part as opposed to the prosaic part in *Don Quixote*. Schlegel argues that Cervantes would have complained the same that most translations of his work so far have only kept the prosaic part of his satirical romance and have largely destroyed the writer’s poetic achievement. Cervantes’s novel is a “dichterische Ausführung,” which is best described as “die reizende und zuweilen erhabene Zusammenstellung der Parodie auf die veraltete Abenteuerlichkeit der



ritterlichen Romanzi mit eingewebten romantischen Dichtungen in einem ausgebildeteren Geist” (280).

For A.W. Schlegel, as will also be seen in other members of the group, the requirement for keeping the originality is twofold: *Bildung* of the *Geist*, i.e., a truly *poetischer Geist*, and *Bildung* of the German language, which accords with the understanding of Friedrich Schlegel’s conception of translation as a fusion of “intuition” and philological work. Accordingly, the reasons for the failure of most translations so far, or more generally, of literary writings, are precisely because of the absence of such a more *gebildeter Geist* that is able to combine and unify an old theme with romantic poetry. In other words, the *Bildung* of the *Geist* and that of the German language are equally exigent for not only the creation of *Poesie* but also the interpretation and translation of it. But as seen in A.W. Schlegel’s argumentation in the postscript and in his critique of Soltau, the reasons for failing the translation are different depending on the translator/poet. For some translators, certain qualities have already prepared him halfway through the success; for others, both the *Geist* and the linguistic aspect are absent. The former is valid in the case of A.W. Schlegel and Tieck, the latter Soltau.

It is important to note that Tieck’s translation is not perfect in A.W. Schlegel’s eyes, even though the former was able to shun the problem of germanization, as opposed to Soltau, and thus retained the sense and spirit of the original work by virtue of his “friendship” with Cervantes and his possession of a truly romantic *Geist*. On the other hand, reflecting on his own translation of Ariosto, Schlegel makes it clear that what hinders his project is the problem of the German language, the poetic metrics of which are incapable of handling Italian poetry that is a model to be looked up to. The essential way of valuing translation for keeping *Poesie* in its originality, in

its “ersten Gestalten,” revealed in Cervantes’s work, is picked up by both A.W. Schlegel and Schleiermacher, who stresses the preservation of a sense of foreignness in translation.

A.W. Schlegel’s criticism of *Verdeutschung* to a large degree presages Schleiermacher’s 1813 lecture, *Über die verschiedene Methoden der Übersetzung*<sup>124</sup>, that results from the dynamic exchange of minds and *Symphilosophie* in the circle back in the *Athenaeum* years. Most scholars did not attribute the formation of Schleiermacher’s translation theory to other romantics until Patsch brought to light that it was a product from the period when Schleiermacher and Friedrich Schlegel lived together in Berlin and when both exerted significant impact on each other’s thinking in many ways. On the one hand, for example, Schlegel encouraged Schleiermacher to take on the *Platon-Übersetzung* (1804-1828), which was originally initiated by the former as a shared engagement and was later conducted by Schleiermacher on his own. “Schlegels geistiger Anteil an dieser Übersetzung ist noch nicht erhellt” (Patsch, 463). On the other hand, Schleiermacher infused the ideas of morality and *Religion* into Friedrich Schlegel’s thinking. Schleiermacher’s *Über die Religion* finds various representations in the *Athenaeum*.<sup>125</sup>

Already in the contribution entitled *Beiträge zur Kritik der neuesten Litteratur* in the very first issue of the journal from 1798, A.W. Schlegel talks briefly about Tieck’s *Erzählungen* such as *Der blonde Eckbert*, as he attempts to characterize the “romantic” way of expression. He describes Tieck’s writing as “eine nicht sogenannte poetische, vielmehr sehr einfach gebaute, aber wahrhaft poetisirte Poesie” and attributes to Goethe this secret of its “Maß” and “Freyheit,”

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<sup>124</sup> Schleiermacher held this lecture in the Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin on June 24, 1813.

<sup>125</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 2, an unsigned and untitled *Notizen* piece on *Reden über die Religion* was published in the fourth issue of the *Athenaeum*. Moreover, multiple fragments in *Ideen* ask the reader to become acquainted with Schleiermacher’s book. In the very last issue of the journal (1800), one of the four sonnets by Friedrich Schlegel was entitled *Die Reden über die Religion*, and Schleiermacher’s *Vertraute Briefe über Friedrich Schlegels Lucinde* was also published in the same year.

and “ihres rhythmischen Fortschrittes, und ihres schön entfaltenden Überflusses” (174). These qualities seem to be shared by Tieck, Goethe, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Dante, all of whom the *Athenaeum* characterizes as *romantisch*, and their writing “der romantische Ausdruck der wahrsten Innigkeit, schlicht und fantastisch zugleich” (176).

The journal stresses the friendship between Tieck and Shakespeare—across two centuries—since the former also naturally possesses such crucial characteristics—*Enthaltsamkeit* and *Mäßigung*—which are rarely seen in “contemporary young writers.” In the same essay, A.W. Schlegel compares Tieck to Shakespeare, particularly the latter’s opinion on a good actor depicted in *Hamlet*, to make the point that true artists can avoid “overdoing” and superficiality that “exceeds the modesty of nature,” which should be the case for both *Trauerspiele* and *Volksmärchen*, and thus to emphasize the naturalness in Tieck’s *Poesie*.

Enthaltsamkeit und Mäßigung, seltne Eigenschaften bey jungen Dichtern, sind dem Verfasser der Volksmärchen so natürlich, daß sie für ihn keiner besondern Empfehlung bedürfen; desto mehr hat er die zweyte Hälfte von dem Rath seines Freundes Shakespeare zu beherzigen, der, wie er dem Schauspieler ermahnt hat, niemals die Bescheidenheit der Natur zu überschreiten, zu der ersten Warnung vor dem “Overdone” sogleich die zweyte vor dem “Come tardy off”<sup>126</sup> hinzufügt. Er vergesse nicht, daß alle Wirkung der Kunst einem Brennpunkte gleicht, diesseits und jenseits dessen es nicht zündet, er behalte immer ihr Höchstes vor Augen, und achte sein schönes Talent genug, um nichts geringeres leisten zu wollen, als das Beste was er vermag. Er sammle sich, er dränge zusammen, und ziehe auch die äußere Formen vor, welche von selbst dazu nöthigen. (177)

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<sup>126</sup> Referring to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 2, where Hamlet gives advice to the actors.

*Brennpunkt*, as argued in Chapter 3, is precisely the converging point of all rays of *Bildung* that strives towards the new mythology or religion. The translator, as is the case with Hamlet's actor and Tieck, needs to retain the naturalness and modesty in the creation of his work of art, namely the translated text. The requirements for a romantic artist and that for a translator are no different from each other. Any strict word-for-word rendering or excessive freedom that completely changes the original text—thus distorting its *Charakter*—is the opposite of such naturalness and modesty. Throughout the complicated history of Western translation theory, finding the middle point seems to be the most challenging task in one's translational practice. As Lawrence Venuti puts it, "the whole history of the theory of translation is about the changing relationships between the autonomy of the translated text, equivalence, and function" (5). Depending on the translator's view and emphasis in his thinking of culture, language, philosophy, literary theory, as well as his purpose and a possible agenda, consideration of these relationships varies. The balance between sense-for-sense and word-for-word renderings differs in each of the most significant translation theorists.<sup>127</sup> In Tieck's case, as A.W. Schlegel would say, his translation is well balanced thanks to his capability of conveying the spirit of Cervantes' novel while, with his poetic talent and *Bildung*, rendering the Spanish language well.

With regard to the problematic germanization, what concerns Schlegel is not the impossibility of translating into the German language, but rather forcing the source text into absurd German, which Luther fiercely criticized in his *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* (1530).<sup>128</sup> As

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<sup>127</sup> Jerome's sense-for-sense translation, which follows Cicero's translation model for rhetoric purposes, is close to that of Luther and John Dryden. Any radical "faithfulness" in translation would lead to what Jerome calls in his *Letter to Pammachius* "overzealousness" (24) and thus to the destruction of the greater beauty of the original work. And for Dryden, what he defines as "paraphrase" is the preferred well-balanced middle point over the two extremes—"metaphrase" and "imitation"—in the three translation methods.

<sup>128</sup> In Luther's receiver-oriented translation approach, the translated text must be comprehensible in the way German is commonly used while faithfully preserving the "true meaning" of the source-text. In Luther's words, "denn man muss nicht die Buchstaben in der lateinischen Sprache fragen, wie man soll Deutsch reden, wie diese Esel tun,

mentioned above, one of the most important indications of a translator's ability to avoid germanization is grasping the spirit of the work in its wholeness and reproducing "den Ton und die Farbe des Originals." In the *Notizen* section immediately following A.W. Schlegel's translation of *Orlando*, the last piece, unsigned, discusses *Don Quixote* precisely via Tieck's translation.<sup>129</sup> It primarily stresses the spirit, the wholeness—the *Zusammenhang*<sup>130</sup> and the context of the work—and *Poesie* of Cervantes's work, what can be truly regarded as a work of *Romantische Kunst*, and thus the same characteristics of Tieck's translation that significantly differentiate it from other translations. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is no coincidence that the romantics see the essential importance of the translations of novellas or romanzi from the Romance languages in what they conceive as *romantisch*. The problems with the existing translations so far, according to the author of the critical note, is that although they are pretty entertaining to read, *Poesie* is absent in both the verse and prose in the translations. Again, the critic emphasizes the friendship between Tieck and the *alten romantischen Poesie*, echoing the friendship between him and Shakespeare.

Essentially, the *Dichterbildung* is a social notion, so is the *Bildungsideal* of the journal. With a genuine spiritual connection with the *romantische Poesie*, Tieck as translator catches and reproduces in German the essential sense and wholeness of the work, resulting in a *German*

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sondern man muss die Mutter im Hause, die Kinder auf der Gassen, den gemeinen Mann auf dem Markt drum fragen und denselben auf das Maul sehen, wie sie reden, und darnach dolmetschen; da verstehen sie es denn und merken, daß man deutsch mit ihnen redet." Ironically, Luther characterizes his own method precisely as *Verdeutschung*, which strives for ordinary phrasing in the target language. What Luther really means is that the receiving public of the translation work matters and it is most significant for them to be able to actually comprehend the sense of the text, which is in partial agreement with the early romantics.

<sup>129</sup> Many scholars assume that this is composed by Friedrich Schlegel, but it sounds more like out of A.W. Schlegel's hands considering similar insights and points of departure in his other contributions to the journal.

<sup>130</sup> The wholeness of the work in its *gesellige Zusammenhänge* is the same as that in the discussion of the remnants of ancient poetry by the Schlegel brothers.

translation free of the problem of germanization. His outstanding genius even makes many almost untranslatable places pleasantly expressed. This further illustrates the importance of restoring the *Charakter* of the work to avoid misunderstanding that is valued by the romantics in terms of *Kritik* and the journal. It is stated in the *Notiz*:

Ein Dichter und vertrauter Freund der alten romantischen Poesie wie Tieck muß es seyn, der diesen Mangel ersetzen und den Eindruck und Geist des Ganzen im Deutschen wiedergeben und nachbilden will. . . . Er hat den Versuch angefangen und der erste Theil seiner Uebersetzung zeigt zur Genüge, wie sehr es ihm gelingt, den Ton und die Farbe des Originals nachzuahmen, und so weit es möglich ist, zu erreichen. Auch viele Stellen von denen die fast unübersetzlich scheinen können, sind überraschend glücklich ausgedrückt. (324)

In terms of faithfulness to the original, what Tieck achieved and what concerns the critic is the consideration of the *Farbe* of the entire work of art instead of the detail. This aligns well both with Luther's approach, which justifies his adding "allein" (*sola*) in his biblical translation, as well as with Schleiermacher's translation theory where keeping a sense of foreignness is essential. The loyalty to the "Ton und Farbe" of the source-work necessarily sacrifices the accuracy of details and meanings of words, which is most clear with translating poetry, where the reproduction of *Sylbenmaß* is at its core.

Doch ist die Übersetzung keineswegs in Einzelnen ängstlich treu, obgleich sie es in Rücksicht auf das Colorit des Ganzen auf das gewissenhafteste zu seyn strebt. Daher ist in den Gedichten der Nachbildung des Sylbenmaßes, welches beym Cervantes immer so bedeutsam ist, lieber etwas von der Genauigkeit des Sinns aufgeopfert. (325)

*Sylbenmaß* is of clear significance for Cervantes and the many poems in his novel, as well as for A.W. Schlegel who struggled with the recreation of the Italian *Sylbenmaß* in German in *Der rasende Roland*. Schlegel's painful struggles will be discussed in the next section. A specific example is that despite the difficulties, Tieck is able to restore the Spanish feeling, spirit, and the wholeness when translating Chrysostomus's poem<sup>131</sup> in *Don Quixote*. As for the prose part in Tieck's translation, the critic sees it as progressively "ausgebildeter" and "spanischer," which could be easily associated with the idea of approximation to the original and translation as a notion of an emerging work.

Was man hierin von dem Uebersetzer hoffen dürfe, sieht man aus dem meisterhaft übersetzten Gedichte S.417. Auch in dem Gedicht des Chrysostomus ist der Ton des Ganzen sehr gut getroffen. Die Prosa scheint, je weiter das Werk fortrückt, immer ausgebildeter und spanischer zu werden; auch die einzelnen Härten werden seltner. (325)

While placing great value on Tieck's translation, the *Notiz* offers crucial insights into Cervantes' novel itself, characterizes it as *Romantische Kunst*. Furthermore, the critic brings Cervantes close to Shakespeare, which is crucial because the authors of the *Athenaeum* find their own way of linking their intertexts and "interwriters" together, as seen in the anecdote at the beginning of the chapter. Cervantes and Shakespeare are seen as brothers whose minds meet in an invisible community, so is the case with Shakespeare and Tieck. While the notion of *Verbrüderung* that is essential to the romantic spiritual community plays a key role in the entire enterprise in these early romantic years, it applies not only to the early romantics themselves but also to the authors they address and to whom they regard as *romantisch*. The romantics attempt

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<sup>131</sup> Chrysostomus is the shepherd-student in *Don Quixote* who died from his love sickness for a girl and had asked for his poetry to be burned.

to bring Cervantes in a community with Shakespeare because of their shared spirit and mind. Apparently both writers have been misconceived and the “romantic” character in their works of art undiscovered. Shakespeare was perceived as a wild “Sturm- und Drangdichter” before being accepted as “einen der absichtsvollsten Künstler.” It is the early romantics’ hope that Cervantes can be treated this way as well.

. . . so ist Hoffnung, daß man sich entschließen werde, auch den großen Cervantes nicht bloß für einen Spaßmacher zu nehmen, da er, was die verborgne Absichtlichkeit betrifft, wohl eben so schlau und arglistig seyn möchte, wie jener [Shakespeare], der ohne von ihm zu wissen, sein *Freund und Bruder* war, als hätten sich ihre *Geister* in einer unsichtbaren Welt überall begegnet und *freundliche Abrede* genommen. (326; emphasis added)

Perhaps this is precisely the function of Tieck’s translation. It is clear that the “romantic” friendship and fraternization—the innermost spiritual community—take place when different minds encounter and converse with each other by sharing the same romantic *Geist* while maintaining their individuality. A specific sense of the link of minds (*Geistesverbindung*) through *Romantische Kunst* makes these individual writers become affinitive and thus friends and brothers in the way in which they would otherwise not have been. In other words, *Romantische Kunst* is a “place” where the texts and authors from different centuries and traditions meet, indicating the centrality of translation to the early romantic project and to the *Athenaeum* as the quintessential romantic work of art as the radical collective intertext.

The approach to translation and *Kritik* by the early romantics should be seen as radical in the sense that they are inaugurating a fundamentally different understanding of interpreting and (re)creating works of art. This understanding and the ways of theorizing translation precisely



point to how the *Athenaeum* comes to form as a radically different kind of work of art of the romantics. More specific to the *Notiz* on *Don Quixote*, the author intends to make the *Witz* and *Ironie* in Cervantes' work comprehensible and accessible to the reader. Tieck's *poetisierte* translation achieved this goal through its capture of the original Spanish sense and spirit while displaying itself as a work of *Poesie*. Misleading translations have prevented *Don Quixote* from being understood as a work of *Romantische Kunst*. Thus, translation for the early romantics is essential for the restoration and recreation of a work of art. The author of the *Notiz* goes on to argue that Cervantes' other *novelas* are certainly not inferior and thus should also be translated like *Don Quixote* after Tieck's model. "Denn übersetzen und lesen muß man alles oder nichts von diesem unsterblichen Autor" (326).

The conclusion might be that the ideal translation for the early romantics is an aesthetic practice that should recreate the *Ton*, *Farbe*, and *Hauch* of the source-text and make the original spirit accessible and comprehensible to the receiving culture, thus in a certain sense performing the function of the *Bildung* of the public—the ambitious ideal of the early romantics and their *Athenaeum*. The *Poesie* in Cervantes' prose is what makes his prose the only modern kind that can counterpose that of the ancients'. The romantic translator recreates its character favorably, which, as will be articulated in the following discussion, is in striking contrast to other translators, particularly Soltau. Seeing Cervantes's work as romantic, the critic delineates its characteristics as follows.

Nur noch eine Bemerkung über die Prosa des Cervantes, von der ich schon vorhin erwähnte, daß auch Poesie in ihr sey, und daß der Uebersetzer ihren Charakter sehr glücklich nachgebildet habe. Ich glaube, es ist die einzige moderne, welche wir der Prosa

eines Tacitus<sup>132</sup>, Demosthenes<sup>133</sup> oder Plato entgegenstellen können. Eben weil sie so durchaus modern, wie jene antik und doch in ihrer Art eben so kunstreich ausgebildet ist. In keiner andern Prosa ist die Stellung der Worte so ganz Symmetrie und Musik; keine andre braucht die Verschiedenheit des Styls so ganz, wie Massen von Farbe und Licht; keine ist in den allgemeinen Ausdrücken der geselligen Bildung so frisch, so lebendig und darstellend. Immer edel und immer zierlich bildet sie bald den schärfsten Scharfsinn bis zur äußersten Spitze, und verirrt bald in kindlich süße Tändeleien. Darum ist auch die spanische Prosa dem Roman, der die Musik des Lebens fantasiren soll, und verwandten Kunstarten, so eigenthümlich angemessen, wie die Prosa der Alten den Werken der Rhetorik oder der Historie. Laßt uns die populäre Schreiberey der Franzosen und Engländer vergessen, und diesen Vorbildern nachstreben! (327)

Cervantes' writing is unique in its kind while the works of his contemporaries are raw and common. Abolishing the popular French and English models of writing and striving for Cervantes's romanticism as a role model constitutes the ambitious ideal of the mode of writing and is only first possible through translation.

Another contribution that is of great significance is A.W. Schlegel's *Notiz* on Dietrich Wilhelm Soltau's translation of *Don Quixote*—a thirty-two page long critical review full of detailed textual references, published in the last issue of the journal in 1800. It is noteworthy that Soltau's translation appeared only a year after Tieck's version and was an evident opponent. Soltau attacked Tieck and other romantics on multiple occasions and certainly did not show a

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<sup>132</sup> Roman historian, politician, orator. Probably northern Italy or Spain. Important monographs: the *Germania*—on the lands and tribes of barbarian Germania; *Dialogus*—a dialogue on the art of rhetoric.

<sup>133</sup> Ancient Greek orator, statesman, artist, best known for his *Philippics*.

friendly gesture towards the Jena *Verbrüderung*. According to A.W. Schlegel, he sees all the praise given to Tieck's translation as weakening of his own rather than being willing to sympoeticize here. Schlegel, on the other hand, holds out an olive branch to Soltau by suggesting that there should be friendship and *Sympoesie* between two translators who occupy themselves with the same great writer for a common cause, and whose efforts can complement each other, inviting him to the shared engagements. This cannot be neglected because it stands in striking accord with the *Athenaeums-Fragment* #125, where the notions of *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie* are introduced for the first time. If A.W. Schlegel's statement were added to this fragment, *Symübersetzung* would have no problem to fit in. They can be viewed together:

Vielleicht würde eine ganz neue Epoche der Wissenschaften und Künste beginnen, wenn die Symphilosophie und Sympoesie so allgemein und so innig würde, daß es nichts Seltneres mehr wäre, wenn mehre sich gegenseitig ergänzende Naturen gemeinschaftliche Werke bildeten. Oft kann man sich des Gedankens nicht erwehren, zwei Geister möchten eigentlich zusammengehören, wie getrennte Hälften, und nur verbunden alles sein, was sie könnten. (209)

Zwischen zwey Uebersetzern eines großen Dichters sollte das freundliche Verhältnis von Männern obwalten, die nach einem gemeinschaftlichen Ziele streben, und deren Bemühungen einander zuweilen ergänzen können. (297-298)

Unfortunately, Soltau is not qualified as a romantic translator so that no *Verbrüderung* or *Symübersetzung* is taking place between him and Tieck. Schlegel criticizes Soltau's polemic gesture and yet makes it clear that the purpose of his critique is not to respond to all the attacks from Soltau but rather only to stand as a judgment of the latter's translation by providing plenty of examples and focusing on the original and on Cervantes. Yet as seen in a letter to Tieck dated

September 14, 1800, Schlegel is pleased with his own critical note. He writes, “. . . wenigstens denke ich den Soltau so zugerichtet zu haben, daß er noch vor Ende des *Don Quixote* völlig den Hals brechen muß” (Lohner, 74). As pointed out earlier, Tieck’s translation is not perfect in Schlegel’s eyes, but he has made greater achievements in solving problems such as the loss of original sense and germanization that are concerned in the early romantic aesthetics. They would complement each other for the same greater goal if there were *Verbrüderung* and unity of spirit i.e., a spiritual community, between the two translators. Intriguingly, despite the differences in aesthetics and translation methods, both Tieck’s and Soltau’s translations are still read today. While the present study is not concerned with the details about the translations articulated in Schlegel’s *Notiz*, he does offer a wide range of insightful observations and interpretations that undeniably reflect the translational aesthetics of the journal.

In general, the distinctions between Tieck’s and Soltau’s translations—thus between the romantic translator and others—lie in the grasp of the wholeness and character of the original Spanish romance and the modesty and naturalness demonstrated by the translator in his work. The following paragraphs will offer a detailed discussion of Schlegel’s critique of Soltau’s piece, particularly of the most important aspects where he fails, according to Schlegel, so that it can be seen from the flipside of the critique what the positive values of romantic translational aesthetics would be.

- 1) *Translational errors and the interference with the joy of poetry (Genuß der Dichtung) in translation.* A.W. Schlegel points out the literal meaning of the text can be sacrificed for the sake of the enjoyment of poetry in a poetic reproduction (*poetische Nachbildung*). Yet this should not interfere with the pleasure of poetry. However, in Soltau’s version

one encounters serious errors but no enjoyment of poetry. Schlegel criticizes him with phrases such as “ganz falsch und noch obendrein lächerlich” (303).

- 2) *Failure in grasping the characteristics of the original work.* Soltau fails to convey Cervantes’s characteristic of immodesty (*Unbescheidenheit*) and playfulness and irresponsibly diminishes or shortens Cervantes’ playful expression. His translation deprives the work of its original *Charakter*.
- 3) *Omission of the poetic parts.* While Bertuch leaves out the poetic part in Cervantes’s work entirely, which gives his translation wholeness in a certain sense, Soltau offers a poor piece due to its inconsistency and omission of random parts. As a translator of *Don Quixote* who claims to be a rival against Tieck’s version, Soltau is not accomplishing more or better in terms of the poetic part.
- 4) *Incompleteness, neglect and Zwang in the transmission of the style and characteristics of a work of art.* Soltau’s work lacks completeness in that it leaves many things untranslated in Spanish. One can tell from Soltau’s translation that he apparently often missed the points of wit and playfulness (*Schelmerey*) in Cervantes’s expressions. “Die Schelmerey, welche dahinter steckt . . . scheint Herr S. gar nicht gewittert zu haben” (307). Precisely this “Schelmerey” is central to how the early romantics characterize “romantic art,” as found in Cervantes and Shakespeare. Schlegel’s point interestingly speaks to Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck’s point on the degree of *Bildung* (*Grad der Bildung*) of the artist in *Lebensansicht*, where she criticizes the “try-hards” with their contrived works that do not arise through naturalness but are forced by the artists.
- 5) *Inauthenticity, germanization and localization of the source-text.* Soltau inappropriately replaced Spanish phrases and allusions with German and even provincial ones that have a

strong local color<sup>134</sup>, resulting in the complete loss of Spanishness in the translated text and thus inauthenticity and unfaithfulness. The intensification, coarsening and plebeianization of Cervantes' original expressions lead to the deprivation of authenticity. Schlegel points out that poetic use of lowness and rawness (*des Niedrigen und Rohen*) are quite different from straight vulgarity and platitude (*unmittelbare Gemeinheit und Platttheit*) (315). Apparently, Soltau misunderstood Cervantes' work and could not convey its truly high art due to his incapability of the poetic language of such art by romantic standards.

- 6) *Loss of the difference among speech styles in the narratives.* As a poetic reproduction, translation needs to retain the world created in the source-text in its entirety, including the diversity of speech styles, which is essentially another component in maintaining its originality. One can clearly distinguish in *Don Quixote* between languages that are "frisch und neu" from Cervantes' time and those outdated ones that belong to knight books. Soltau fails to distinguish between the two and translates everything in his own language, where the obsolete and the contemporary are mixed, making the entire translated text sound like an eighteenth-century German piece.
- 7) *Inadequate knowledge of knightly and mythological traditions.* A crucial point that A.W. Schlegel raises in this critical note about translation is the essential qualification of a translator of a romantic work of art such as *Don Quixote*: the translator needs to be thoroughly knowledgeable, for instance in knight mythology and books, in order to grasp the original work fully. The spiritual community between the author and the translator is of great significance.

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<sup>134</sup> Soltau in some places uses Lower-Saxony and Plattdeutsch words and phrases.

8) *Inadequate knowledge of Spanish poetry*. In responding to Soltau's argument for the impossibility of translating a long Spanish poem into eleven-syllable verses with feminine endings, A.W. Schlegel confirms that his friend, Tieck, and himself belong to a different "Klasse von Deutschen" from that of Soltau, implying their superiority in poetic art in general over the latter. Soltau's "Unwissenheit" of the essence of Spanish and Italian rhymes make him incapable of reproducing them. The ideal that the translator is also a poet himself aligns well with the greater ideal of unity between *Poesie* and philosophy, and between all arts and sciences, which is crucial to the understanding of the translational aesthetics of the *Athenaeum*. Translation is twofold in the sense that it not only requires philological work but also the grasping of the spirit of the work of art.

These problems give rise to the principles that the early romantic translator values the most:

- 1) *Genuß der Dichtung; poetische Nachbildung*
- 2) Preservation of the characteristics of the original work
- 3) Retention of the original work in its entirety, especially its sense and playfulness with naturalness and without forcedness
- 4) Avoidance of germanization and localization and thus preservation of a sense of foreignness.
- 5) Retention of the temporality of the source-text
- 6) Preservation of the original speech styles and narrative tones
- 7) Familiarity with the cultural settings in which the original work is situated
- 8) The translator is a poet-translator

In short, the essential reason why Soltau's translation is unnecessary and substandard for A.W. Schlegel, compared to that of Tieck's, lies in that he failed in both of the most essential aspects regarding translation—a thorough knowledge of the source- and target-languages and their *Poesie* and the genuine understanding of the wholeness and character of the original. Without an adequate knowledge of Spanish *Poesie*, culture, style and a genius mastery of his very own German, which leads to what matters to the romantics the most—misunderstanding of Cervantes's creative romantic art, and without being a poet who has befriended such an art, Soltau could not offer a “higher” (*höhere*) piece than that of Tieck's and thus ended up distorting the character of the original work. It is Tieck's “poetisierte Poesie”, as mentioned above, that makes the *poetische Übersetzungskunst* possible for Cervantes's “poetisierte Prosa.” The translated text must possess the *Poesie* that the author also does in his original work.

Thus, translation for the early romantics cannot be merely an act of transferring linguistic symbols; rather, it engages a poetic creation, a reproduction where a true interpretation and intuition of the spirit and characteristics of the original work and the *poetisierte* way of writing are key. The critic advocates that all German writers write like Cervantes, where it is also implied that all translators should translate in the way in which Cervantes writes. Even for the romantics as renowned philologists, the practice of translation cannot be confined to philology, but rather is a joint of philology and intuition. Instead of word-for-word renderings from one text to another<sup>135</sup>, it takes place as a process of transformation, where the original text is being treated as a work of art, the translation process an transformative and recreating aesthetic experience,

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<sup>135</sup> Schleiermacher's 1813 lecture tells a more complicated and developed story and will be discussed later.



and the translator undergoing *Bildung* that is inseparable from the spiritual community. A picture of a dynamic, lively and reciprocal relation is formed that opposes a dead and dull one. Thus, translation for the romantics is *Symübersetzung*, an effort of *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie* that unites many different principles and practices of early romanticism. The actual translation process—the philological work—and the interpretation and grasping of the genuine spirit of the source-text are unified as an organic process of poetic creation in the work of art enabled by the poet-translator. As will be articulated in the following sections, this genuine interpretation and understanding of the character of the original work of art is only possible for a *gebildeten Geist*. *Bildung* later becomes the ultimate ideal in Schleiermacher's translation theory.

The ideal of translation for the early romantics aligns with their enterprise regarding *Poesie*. A.W. Schlegel sees that Germany is on the way to inventing the true poetic art of translation that is only possible via versatile receptivity to foreign national *Poesie*. In other words, they must stand in an innermost spiritual community. This is in notable accordance with Schleiermacher's formation of a systematic translation theory in the 1813 lecture that places the most value in the preservation of a sense of foreignness and the *Bildung* of the translator, both of which implicitly stress the spiritual community.

Nur die vielseitige Empfänglichkeit für fremde Nationa poesie [sic]<sup>136</sup>, die wo möglich bis zur Universalität gedeihen soll, macht die Fortschritte im treuen Nachbilden von Gedichten möglich. Ich glaube man ist auf dem Wege, die wahre poetische Übersetzungskunst zu erfinden; dieser Ruhm war den Deutschen vorbehalten.  
(*Nachschrift des Uebersetzers an L. Tieck*, 280)

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<sup>136</sup> Nationalpoesie

That the *poetische Übersetzungskunst* is reserved for the Germans is interestingly echoed, though in more general terms, in Novalis's posthumously published essay, *Die Christenheit oder Europa. Ein Fragment* (1802), that was originally entitled simply as *Europa* and presented by the author at a meeting in the Jena friend circle late 1799, around the same time as A.W. Schlegel's postscript.

In Deutschland hingegen kann man schon mit voller Gewißheit die Spuren einer neuen Welt aufzeigen. Deutschland geht einen langsamen aber sichern Gang vor den übrigen europäischen Ländern voraus. Während diese durch Krieg, Spekulation und Parthey-Geist beschäftigt sind, bildet sich der Deutsche mit allem Fleiß zum Genossen einer höhern Epoche der Cultur, und dieser Vorschrift muß ihm ein großes Uebergewicht über die Andere[n] im Lauf der Zeit geben. In Wissenschaften und Künsten wird man eine gewaltige Gährung gewahr. Unendlich viel Geist wird entwickelt. Aus neuen, frischen Fundgruben wird gefördert.<sup>137</sup>

In sum, the *Athenaeum* group sees two criteria for a qualified translation—a truly *gebildeter Geist*<sup>138</sup> and German language—and tends to foster an art of translation that is a transformed recreation, which engages both hermeneutics concerning the original work and the formation of a new work of art. Not only do the original author and the translator, i.e., the transformer and recreator of the work, “sympoeticize” with each other in a sense, but the translator himself is likewise found in a harmonious process where the production of the translation is precisely also the production of a work of art.

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<sup>137</sup> <http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Novalis/Essay/Die+Christenheit+oder+Europa>

<sup>138</sup> Interestingly, Aristotle sees that criticism is exercised by the universally educated mind (Smith, John H. *The Spirit and Its Letters*, 147). It is required in the early romantic conception of both translation and *Kritik*.

### 3. *Bildung* of the German language and *Poesie*: a project of *Aufhebung*

In *Nachschrift des Uebersetzers an L. Tieck*, besides a discussion of Tieck's translational practice, A.W. Schlegel reflects on his own translation of the Italian epic and particularly on the toughest struggles in the translation and thus reproduction of it—the transformation of the Italian poetic meter into the German one. He stresses the importance, in his own case, of mastering Sanskrit and other oriental languages in order to acquire the art of translating poetically in the form and peculiarities of the original work, to use his own words, “um den Hauch und Ton ihrer Gesänge wo möglich zu erhaschen” (281). Mastery of the language and the *poetische Übersetzungskunst* is precisely where translators like Soltau fail, as mentioned before. However, for Schlegel, it is not only the source language, but also the target language that especially demands the poet-translator's talent and effort in circumventing the difficulties. The translator of Italian poetry is faced with peculiar vexation regarding the German language. Interestingly, Schlegel argues that the German language is incapable of handling Italian *Sylbenmaß*, which should be a model for the Germans to look up to. This is precisely the reason for his abandonment of the entire project of Ariosto translation. Confronted by the struggles in translating the romance epic from Italian to German, he humorously declares at the end of the text that he cannot continue and will perhaps return to it at an old age.

Um nicht in diese tragische Lage zu gerathen, erkläre ich ausdrücklich, daß mich der Einfall mit diesem Gesange zu nichts weiter verpflichten soll. . . . Vielleicht kehre ich bey grauen Haaren einmal zum Ariost zurück, er ist recht dazu gemacht die frostigen Jahre zu erwärmen: und wenn ich dann jährlich einen Gesang fertige, so kann ich es zu einem ehrwürdigen Alter bringen. (284)

The tragic situation that Schlegel references is the particular hurdles with which any translator of Ariosto's romance is bedeviled. The "rhythmic poverty" that the translator feels during translation is so painfully crucial that it could force out of him verses as if they were uttered curses and imprecations. For Schlegel, as the difficulties in the language cannot be overcome yet, the Italian epic is in a certain sense not fully translatable. And yet when it comes to creating modern poetry art in general, he does argue that certain approaches are more preferable than others. Since Martin Opitz<sup>139</sup>, the German verse had been exclusively imitating French and Dutch practices with strict alexandrine and rhyme schemes. The English and Italian tunes were only gradually included after much resistance. A.W. Schlegel was rebuked sharply by some *Kunstrichter* because he, following Petrarch's<sup>140</sup> example, used nothing but feminine rhymes<sup>141</sup> in a few of his sonnets. Intriguingly, Shakespeare is as well-known for the use of iambic pentameter in his plays as Petrarch.

For Schlegel, the peculiar issues with, or disadvantages of so to speak, the German language compel the poet-translator to circumvent them in particular ways. He notes that the language of the Romans was only able to be made "arable for poetry" through unspeakable effort and force, and it also forced the ungratefulness of the German soil (*die Undankbarkeit des Bodens*) into a more laborious culture<sup>142</sup>—the laborious efforts and tasks required of the poet-translator to outwit the peculiar problems of the German poetic language, which is brilliantly summarized by

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<sup>139</sup> Martin Opitz was the one who established the sonnet form in German poetry in the Baroque era. The strict iambic Alexandrine dominated the German Baroque.

<sup>140</sup> The Petrarchan sonnet uses iambic pentameter and a slightly more flexible rhyme scheme.

<sup>141</sup> A.W. Schlegel dedicated many pages in different pieces to technical discussion of the rhyme gender (*Reimgeschlecht*), which originated from the French *alternance des rimes* and is particularly important in the metric of Romance languages. The feminine is an unstressed two-syllable rhyme while the masculine is a monosyllabic rhyme.

<sup>142</sup> A.W. Schlegel might mean that the German language did not pick up the poetic qualities from Roman poets.

Schlegel:

Unsere Sprache ist halsstarrig; wir sind desto biegsamer; sie ist hart und rau: wir thun alles für die Wahl milder gefälliger Töne; wir vertreten uns sogar im Nothfalle zu Wortspielen, einer Sache, wozu die Deutsche Sprache am allerungeschicktesten ist, weil sie immer nur arbeiten, niemals spielen will. (283)

Not only is the image of “Boden” linked to “cultivation” and hence *Bildung* in a way, the notion of *Spiel* subtly comes in here as an aesthetic category for the romantics as readers of Schiller’s *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1794). Poetic qualities inherent in the Romance languages—flexibility, gentleness, pleasingness and playfulness—which are to overcome the unpoetic peculiarities of the German language, i.e., rigidity, harshness, roughness, and maladroit, must be possessed and mastered by the German poet in order to allow his work of art to be more playful, less rigid and clumsy, and flow more freely. The question for the early romantic translator becomes: “Wo sind denn nun die gepriesenen Wundervorzüge, die unsere Sprache an sich, zur einzig berufenen Dollmetscherin aller übrigen machen sollen?”<sup>143</sup> For Schlegel, it is in fact natural for German to become *the* exceptional interpreting, i.e. translating language, on account of its richness in words, its ability to compound and to always create anew, the somewhat freer word order than some other modern languages, and its plasticity or moldability (*Bildsamkeit*) of poetic metrical forms. He points out that German *Poesie* had been following foreign models since the time of the Provençals<sup>144</sup> and that the adoption of the old *Sylbenmaß* must be ascribed to the zeal and sense for it and the efforts of individual poets, rather than to the structure of language itself

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<sup>143</sup> *Nachschrift des Uebersetzers an L. Tieck*, pp. 283.

<sup>144</sup> He is referring to the *Minnesang* that was likely to be influenced by Provençal literature, i.e., the medieval Occitan lyric poetry about courtly love sung by troubadours.

(283). On A.W. Schlegel's agenda, the task of circumventing the unpoeticness of the German language rests on the shoulders of individual poets and translators of his time, which, as we know, will later resonate with Schleiermacher's blueprint for the advancement of the German language, the call for a translational practice *en masse*—*Symübersetzung*—as well as the *Bildung* of individual translators elaborated in his 1813 lecture on translation methods. The emphasis on German as a “competitor” with other European languages stands in the historical contexts of the French Revolution and the wakening of the national consciousness formation of Germany.

In short, while A.W. Schlegel praises Tieck's outstanding translation of *Don Quixote* on the strength of his retention of the character and wholeness in the way in which the original work flows and unfolds, he admits that Ariosto's *Orland Furioso* demonstrates challenges that he, or any other German poet-translator, has not yet been able to overcome. Situating this postscript against the backdrop of the overall context of the journal, and even that of the entire trajectory of early German romanticism, we may conclude that A.W. Schlegel's reflections serve as a building block not merely for the early romantic aesthetic theory and practice of translation, but also for its ambitious ideal of the *Bildung* of the German language, culture, mind, and humanity in general, to use the romantics' own words, *Bildung der Erde*, and thus for an actual humanist project.

A.W. Schlegel's criticism of the German language and call for its opening up to play freely in *Poesie* are stimulating as they refer back to the very first contribution to the *Athenaeum*—*Die Sprachen. Ein Gespräch über Klopstocks grammatische Gespräche*, which is also contributed to by the elder Schlegel brother. It is nevertheless not unexpected since the early romantics grew up in the tradition of Klopstock and the progressive tendency to free German poetry from strict molds. Klopstock's translations of other forms into ones that suit the German language and his devotion to setting the German poetic language free and making German a poetic language—he uses

unrhymed hexameters in his epic and poems instead of the conventional alternating verse forms without free rhyme in strict alexandrines—and advocacy of opening it up and parting with the French model are likewise found in A.W. Schlegel. The latter justifies, as seen above, abandoning the French and Dutch models and picking up the Spanish and Italian ones in both A.W. Schlegel's postscript and critical notes on translations of *Don Quixote*. However, in *Die Sprachen*, Schlegel intends to outstrip Klopstock's narrow patriotism on the issue of poetic creation in German—what Schlagdenhauffen calls “Klopstock's capital execution” (*l'«exécution capitale» de Klopstock*) (x), and it is already in this very first contribution to the journal that the ambitious *Bildungsideal* of a radically new mode of writing and culture takes shape.

Most importantly, the lively dialogue among the ancient and modern languages in *Die Sprachen* poses crucial questions about the early romantic conception of translation, which would be an inconspicuous connection to make without placing it within the context of the journal and that of the discourse on translation of the Jena circle. When situated within the context, the dialogue seems to lay a critical foundation for any discussion about translation later in the journal, which also provides the program for the Athenaeum itself as a dialogue with mixture of forms, insights into and practices of translation, as well as authors.

It repeatedly echoes A.W. Schlegel's points on the individual characteristics of the languages in the critical pieces discussed above and closely relates to the insights into translation both by him and Schleiermacher. As indicated in the title, Klopstock is the focal point of the dialogue, and the interlocutors include not only the ancient—*Griechen, Römer*—and the modern—*Franzose, Italiäner, Engländer, Deutscher*—but also such peculiar figures as *Grammatik, Poesie*,

*Deutschheit*, and *Grille*<sup>145</sup>. The title was later altered in A.W. Schlegel's *Kritische Schriften*, published by De Gruyter in 1828, to the more conspicuous *Der Wettstreit der Sprachen. Ein Gespräch über Klopstocks grammatische Gespräche*, with a brief paragraph as *Vorerinnerung*, drawing an even closer connection to Klopstock's 1794 text. Among the interconnections between this text and the contributions to the journal relevant to translation, the following four points are of greatest significance.

First of all, the qualities and flaws of the individual languages directly relate to the discussions on the theory and practice of translation. For example, in the dialogue between *Römer* and *Deutscher*, the former points out such limitations of the German language as ambiguity and confusion that will be generated by any omission of words and the limited use of participles and the ablative case<sup>146</sup>. *Deutscher* responds with the argument about the ability of the German language to create compound words, echoing the qualification of German as the exclusive language of translation in the postscript to *Der rasende Roland*. Both texts interestingly speak to each other with respective emphasis on *Poesie* and translation. The dialogue among the ancient and modern languages paved the way for the communication of early romantic aesthetics of translation in the journal and for the way of looking at it as a unified work.

Another example is in the exchange between *Franzose* and *Deutscher* that shows clearly

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<sup>145</sup> *Deutsches Wörterbuch*: laune. seltsame, wunderliche einfälle . . . 1. das phantastische, unwirkliche wird stärker betont: hirngespinnst, einbildung, erfindung, täuschung . . . 2. das unbegründete, willkürliche, launische wird stärker betont: marotte, schrulle, bizarrer einfall; 3, (this might be the case with AWS) seit dem 17. jh. mit zunehmender häufigkeit von den wunderlichen einfällen grübelnder gelehrter, philosophen, theosophen: die wunderlichen sachen, welche der discursus sol vorgebracht haben, sind philosophische grillen 4, im 17. jh. und anscheinend auf md. boden entwickelt sich die bedeutung: trübselige, sorghafte gedanken, von sorgge meist dadurch geschieden, dasz es sich um grundlose, einer wunderlichen einbildung oder melancholischen gemüthsverfassung entspringende kümmernisse handelt.

<sup>146</sup> Although New High German does not have an ablative case, some loanwords from Latin are considered exceptionally as ablative.



the significant difference in both the theory and practice of translation between the two. While (according to A.W. Schlegel) the French method is to domesticate the foreign text to make it conform to the French conventions, the German criticizes the French indulgence in localization, implying that the essence should lie in the preservation of a sense of foreignness, and stresses again the plasticity (*Bildsamkeit*) in translation.

Franzose. In den grammatischen Gesprächen<sup>147</sup> wird ein Wettstreit zwischen den Sprachen angekündigt, worin ihnen [sic] der Vorrang nach der Geschicklichkeit im Übersetzen zuerkannt werden soll. Ich protestire hiegegen im Namen der meinigen. Es ist ein bloß nationaler Kanon, denn die Deutschen sind ja *Allerweltsübersetzer*. Wir übersetzen entweder gar nicht, oder nach unserem eignen Geschmack.

Deutscher. Das heißt, ihr paraphrasirt und travestirt.

Franzose. Wir betrachten einen ausländischen Schriftsteller, wie einen Fremden in der Gesellschaft, der sich nach unsrer Sitte kleiden und betragen muß, wenn er gefallen soll.

Deutscher. Welche Beschränktheit ist es, sich nur *einheimisches* gefallen zu lassen! (59; emphasis added)

The French theory and practice of translation is that the source text must be adapted according to the French rules and conventions completely, through which the original color becomes defocused and insignificant. *Deutscher's* disapproval of such domestication or localization concurs not only with the judgment of the inauthenticity in Soltau's translation of *Don Quixote*, as discussed above in detail, where he completely *germanizes* Spanish phrases at some

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<sup>147</sup> Klopstock's *Grammatische Gespräche* (1794)

places without staying faithful to the original, but also with Schleiermacher's central position in *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*, i.e., the preservation and creation of an effect of a sense of foreignness in translation. Paraphrasing and travesty seem to be unacceptable methods in the Jena romantics' understanding of the art of translation as they result in the loss of originality and foreignness, as found in most Cervantes translations and Shakespeare critiques. In *Blüthenstaub* #68, Novalis also echoes the criticism of travesty in the French approach to translation, when he characterizes *verändernde Übersetzungen*, which is the second of the three types of translation he identifies: "Sie fallen leicht ins Travestiren, wie Bürgers Homer in Jamben, Popens Homer, die Französischen Übersetzungen insgesamt." Even as late as 1813, Schleiermacher, having picked up on ideas co-developed during his close friendship with Friedrich Schlegel and the years in the *Athenaeum* circle in general, continues to envision the formation of a German language and culture that is idiosyncratic and universal, just as what A.W. Schlegel is advocating in these early formative years. The characterization of the Germans as *Allerweltsübersetzer* is reiterated in his proclamation that the German language should become in itself the "einzig berufenen Dollmetscherin aller übrigen," as seen above. Schlagdenhauffen recognizes the justification that A.W. Schlegel gives to the German:

Guillaume Schlegel applaudit à cette idée: on pourra ainsi démontrer la supériorité de l'esprit allemand capable de pénétrer par la traduction l'esprit des langues et des civilisations étrangères. [...] L'allemand, lui, sait s'assimiler purement et simplement l'œuvre traduite. Sa langue et son esprit ont une souplesse, une faculté d'adaptation qui permettent de transposer dans l'idiome national les auteurs étrangers les plus divers, et de leur conserver, dans cette nouvelle ambiance, leur caractère spécifique et les beautés dont leur tempérament et leur ciel les ont dotés. (74)

Wilhelm Schlegel applauds this idea: This will demonstrate the superiority of the German spirit, which is able to penetrate the spirit of foreign languages and civilizations through translation. [...] The German knows how to assimilate the translated work purely and simply. Its language and its spirit have a flexibility, a faculty of adaptation which make it possible to transpose into the national idiom the most diverse foreign authors, and to preserve them, in this new environment, their specific character and the beauties with which their temperament and their sky endowed them. (Translation mine)

Translation becomes an *Aufhebung* for the romantics in a certain sense. The seemingly paradoxical project puts some of the most central aesthetic traits of the *Athenaeum* group on display and should be understood essentially as a *Bildungsprojekt*. On the one hand, the romantics are in search of a way to demonstrate their cultural uniqueness in the solution of the crisis of representation. On the other hand, to build a radically new nationalist (German) culture, including language, art, philosophy etc. is also to allow the German *Poesie* to form itself (*sich bilden*) into a universal one that is representative of the entire humanity, where it takes from and absorbs other cultures with which they believe they are closely affiliated. The entire project is paradoxical, or dialectical so to speak, in that a German culture that tries to form itself starts taking shape but this forming process is out of question without the “others.” In other words, it is a unifying self-*Bildung* process where the German culture itself and its “other” become one. The *Athenaeum* itself is precisely an example of such a project of *Aufhebung*, as it tries to bring various and diverse voices together—ancient and modern—and form a community while searching for its own way of approximating the infinite and universal “Absolute” as it is being created.

Yet the idea of *Allerweltsübersetzer* still seems to be problematic for the figure of *Poesie* in the dialogue. While *Franzose*’s argument for domestication is that it is for the sake of the effect

of their own peculiarities, namely the Frenchness, and culture (*Bildung*), and that the Greek always hellenize everything, *Deutscher* opposes the point by calling the French peculiarities one-sided and their *Bildung* too conventional. The individuality of the German language, on the contrary, is plasticity or moldability (*Bildsamkeit*), which is an important interlocutor in Klopstock's original dialogues. This is problematic for the *Poesie* figure because, ironically, if one has too much plasticity, one would become characterless without peculiarities: "Hüte dich, Deutscher, diese schöne Eigenschaft zu übertreiben. Gränzenlose Bildsamkeit wäre karakterlos" (59). It is again the question of modesty and arriving at the sweet spot as opposed to the "overdoneness," which A.W. Schlegel articulates in his examples of Hamlet's actors and Tieck's short stories. Inner connections can thus be clearly seen between the competition of the distinctive traits of the languages that are appropriate for translation in *Die Sprachen* and the case Schlegel makes for the suitability of German as the universal language of translation in later contributions to the journal.

Thirdly, *Griechen* gives the languages a translation test and holds that ancient Greek is so inherently inimitable that only that which is reproduced with the same or nearly the same idiosyncrasy, i.e., the same dignity, power and grace, can be called "translated." Clearly, translation here can by no means be purely philological work. It has to be a reproduction that retains the spirit of both the source text and its culture. Thus, not all translations are qualified.

Griechen. [...] Indessen wollte ich euch doch in wenigen Zeilen allerley zu rathen geben, und sehr lebhaft daran erinnern, daß unsre Sprache ihre ganz unnachahmlichen Reize hat. Es versteht sich, daß nur das mit gleicher oder beynah gleicher Würde, Kraft und Anmuth nachgebildete übersetzt heißen kann. (59)

The test quickly turns into a fierce debate on grammatical differences and the freedom of word order, especially its advantages and disadvantages in translation, among the languages. The

freedom of moving words around in Greek verses, what *Griechen* proudly characterizes as “die schönste Frucht von dem vollkommenen Bau unsrer Sprachen,” is an error for *Deutscher* and is thus impossible for the German language. Likewise, *Franzose* and *Engländer* declare their superiority to the German language in the merit of “einer natürlichen, dem Verstande gemäßen, ordentlichen Wortfolge” (63). *Poesie*’s position reinforces the general recognition of the contributions that Klopstock has made to emancipating German poetry from the rigid conventions: “Erinner dich, Deutscher, wie gar wenig von poetischer Wortstellung ihr hattet, ehe Klopstock dichtete” (64). But *Römer*’s criticism of Klopstock’s translation of Horace reveals the importance of the modesty that A.W. Schlegel heavily emphasizes in other places, especially that of the coexistence of word and sense in this case. According to *Römer*, Klopstock’s German translation altered the original sense as a result of the different word order, and thus was unable to convey the authentic and original meaning in the same way as the Roman verse does most clearly in itself with its grammatical structure.

Curiously, when it comes to *Poesie* and the role of the poet in general, all the interlocutors seem to have reached a consensus. The poet, rich in creativity, free and unbounded, is the most sociable person of all and can offer inexhaustible richness in only a little. The infinite possibilities and openness enabled by a poem ensures the special space of *Poesie* in the early romantic aesthetics. *Poesie* as a whole has more power than language and individual words in the eyes of *Griechen*. The sense and spirit of what a poem tries to convey becomes a poetic whole. Again, when viewed against such criteria, the *Athenaeum* can precisely be seen as a “poem” in its broadest sense, namely a product of *Poesie* by a subjective, unified community. The position of the *Poesie* figure in the dialogue reinforces that and at the same time the essence of *Poesie*. Most importantly, the difference in *Sylbenmaß* and in poetic language in general between languages and cultures

unveils the fundamentally distinct characters, or natures so to speak, of their *Bildung*. Essentially, the affinity drawn between *Poesie* and *Bildung* provides a core justification for the early romantic ideal of formative intellectual cultivation and education of the German public through the aesthetic project where *Poesie* and *Philosophie* are unified as one, which is part of the grand enterprise of *Bildung* in Germany throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Historically seen, these three intense years of the *Athenaeum* (1798-1800) were situated between the Schillerian letters on aesthetic education (1795) and Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808). Thus, translation, especially that between the ancient and the modern, demands a genuine understanding of the original—not only the language, but also the culture, the “verschiednen Karakter der Bildung”<sup>148</sup>, which is the same as the romantic *Kritik*—as well as that of the translator's own language and culture, i.e., “fusion of horizons,” as Gadamer argues later in *Truth and Method* (1960). Similarly, Stolze, in his “Hermeneutics and Translation”, drawing upon theories of Schleiermacher, Gadamer and George Steiner, characterizes translators as part of both sides.

Translators are individual human beings having gathered their own culture and an awareness of the other culture . . . Different cultures as systems of knowledge get into contact within the translator's mind, in a “fusion of horizons”. In other words: the translator has a share in those cultures or domains and may even be part of them, rather than standing in between the cultures doing a transfer or working on them. (143)

Thus, philhellenism of the romantics, the affection towards ancient cultures in general, and appreciation of other modern writings that meet the early romantic criteria of being *romantisch*,

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<sup>148</sup> The figure of *Poesie* in the dialogue: “Über die anfängliche Abneigung gegen die antiken Sylbenmaße darf man sich indessen nicht wundern: ihre Verschiedenheit von den modernen liegt nicht auf der Oberfläche, sondern ist in dem wesentlich verschiednen Karakter der Bildung gegründet” (49).

especially those within the realm of translation, are established on the basis of a twofold connection, i.e., that between the spirit of German and other cultures and that between *Poesie* and *Bildung*. Such connections form an essential part of the foundation of early romantic aesthetics of translation that is embodied in the *Athenaeum*. While Klopstock opened up German poetry for more freedom, his approach, which the early romantics perceive as narrow and patriotic, is criticized in the journal as they endeavor to transcend his limitation and to cultivate (*bilden*) German *Poesie*, in the broadest early romantic sense, through their radically new aesthetic principles and practices. Stoljar points out that the romantics intend to go beyond Klopstock's native patriotism and show sensitivity for other languages. The ultimate purpose, as one recalls from the *Vorerinnerung* of the journal, is the *Bildung* of the public and man in general, which should be presented with the freest communication (*Mitteilung*<sup>149</sup>). It is a nationalist *Bildungsprojekt* in a broader sense that is to be achieved by a unification of the self and the other, which outstrips a narrow patriotism that is only possible by rejecting the "other."

*Bildung* of the German language and *Poesie* is echoed not only at other places in the journal but also in the translation theory later established by Schleiermacher. In *Notizen* of vol. 2, no.2 of the *Athenaeum*, immediately following *Der rasende Roland*, the third piece is a brief commentary on the language and songs that emerged in the ancient German tribes. The anonymous critic draws the conclusion that the history of the German language and *Poesie* still needs to be elucidated from many different angles. As mentioned above, A.W. Schlegel's ideal of circumventing the absence of *Poesie* of the German language is to be realized through the effort of individual poets and translators. Schleiermacher, in his 1813 lecture on translation methods, concurs with and makes more explicit the enterprise of the cultivation of their language, the *Bildung* of the individual

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<sup>149</sup> See Chapter 4.

translator, and most interestingly, a translational practice *en masse*. The grand enterprise of intellectually educating the so-called German nation demands a collective effort, a *Sympoesie*, if not merely *Symübersetzung*.

The role that translation plays in the *Bildungsideal*, as far as Schleiermacher is concerned, and particularly the specific translation method he advocates, is that it is an essential necessity, a steppingstone to the (re)discovery of the beautiful in their language and thus to the cultivation of the nation, both not yet adequately “gebildet.” Specifically, Schleiermacher rejects the models of paraphrasing and imitation in translation, with which most modern translators content themselves, and instead insists that the development of a German culture has to be fueled by the sense of foreignness and authenticity—to speak with the notion of misunderstanding—by absorbing the beauty that different ages and cultures have to provide. The rejection of paraphrasing and imitation reiterates the criticism of the French translation approach of *paraphrasieren und travestieren* not only by *Deutscher* in *Die Sprachen*, but also by Novalis in #68 of *Blüthenstaub*.

The grand *Bildungsprojekt* by means of translation can only be possible under a twofold precondition, i.e., the *Bildung* of the German language and that of the public. Schleiermacher elucidates this point in his 1813 lecture:

Es beruht auf zwei Bedingungen, daß das Verstehen ausländischer Werke ein bekannter und gewünschter Zustand sei, und daß der heimischen Sprache selbst eine gewisse Biagsamkeit zugestanden werde. Wo diese gegeben sind, da wird ein solches Uebersetzen eine natürliche Erscheinung, greift ein in die gesammte Geistesentwicklung, und wie es einen bestimmten Werth erhält, giebt es auch einen sichern Genuß. (Störig, 58)

The demand for flexibility (*Biagsamkeit*) and freedom of their own language is already emphasized



in A.W. Schlegel's portrayal of the way in which the romantic poet circumvents the obstinacy (*Halsstarrigkeit*) of German, as seen above. It is important to note that the romantic ideal of the formative and intellectual education of the nation that is to be preceded by the cultivation of the language is likely to be founded on Herder's idea, in *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772), that thought is dependent on language. A people's language, despite the manifold expressions within it, is a single whole for the nation. Translation plays an essential role in educating and cultivating the creativity of the domestic language and thus the national thought. The understanding of the link between language/expression and the people/thought is thus the underpinning of such a gradual *Bildungsprozess*. In terms of Schleiermacher's translation theory specifically, the close inner connection between language and a nation's thought, to use his words, "the formative power of language, which is one with the particular nature of a people," determines the impossibility and unattainability of the "goal of translating just as the author himself would have written originally in the language of the translation." The original author does not think in the German way. Concerned about the same issue, Luther and Schleiermacher have two different perspectives in their approaches to translation. The former focuses on the linguistic elements, especially on how German is used by ordinary people, whereas the latter highlights the thought and culture of a people. As mentioned before, Luther argues in *Sendbrief* that the translator must always strive to convey the translated text in ordinary phrasing so that it can make sense to the receiving public.

However, the sense of foreignness that A.W. Schlegel and Schleiermacher emphasize in their theories will have to be sacrificed in Luther's approach. While all three foregrounds the significance of language use and the way of thinking that are native to a specific people, the early romantics underline that to germanize the original virtues of a work is inimical, for they are

inherent in it, and thus that it is vital to retain the foreignness in translation. In Schleiermacher's view, through the contact and interaction with the foreign, i.e., translation, the beautiful in the German language can be (re)discovered. He concludes in his lecture that only when the proper time comes, i.e., when the ideal of the *Bildung* of the language and the public is achieved, can the practice of translation be less needed.

Wenn einst eine Zeit kommt, wo wir ein öffentliches Leben haben, aus welchem sich auf der einen Seite eine gehaltvollere und sprachgerechtere Geselligkeit entwickeln muß, auf der anderen freier Raum gewonnen wird für das Talent des Redners, dann werden wir vielleicht für die Fortbildung der Sprache weniger des Uebersetzens bedürfen. (69)

The grand nationalist *Bildungsprojekt* to formatively educate and cultivate the German language and *Poesie* through translation that A.W. Schlegel and later Schleiermacher envision already finds its precession in *Blüthenstaub* #2 and #70, all of which are likely to be founded on Herder's idea that language determines thought. Novalis writes: "Die Sprachlehre ist die Dynamik des Geisterreichs. Ein Kommandowort bewegt Armeen; das Wort Freyheit Nazionen." While there is clearly a political aspect to it, the freedom that Novalis focalizes here can point to the emancipation of German *Poesie*, a revolution in intellectual development that stimulates a fundamental change in the nation. The latter fragment makes a more specific point that the true poetic language should be organic and alive with the unifying force, which is not yet the case with the German language: "Unsere Sprache ist entweder mechanisch, atomistisch oder dynamisch. Die ächt poetische Sprache soll aber organisch, lebendig seyn. Wie oft fühlt man die Armuth an Worten, um mehre Ideen mit Einem Schlage zu treffen" (90). Novalis implies that language, and the early romantic notion of *Poesie* in general—the creation of a work of art—in which literature and philosophy are one, can only be truly poetic, i.e., creative, when it owns the

unifying force with its organism and vitality. Similar to his conception of freedom, the unifying power is to be understood both literally and figuratively. Both the work of art that the poet creates and the nation that is to be further cultivated must be unified, respectively, through the medium of an organic and lively language. In this sense, *Sympoesie* and *Symphilosophie* should be defined not only as a mode of writing, creating and thinking that is collaborative and collective, but also as one that is unifying and organicalizing.

Last but not least, another two contributions on poetry and translation resonate with each other in a stimulating way—*Elegien aus dem Griechischen* in the first issue of the *Athenaeum* and *Idyllen aus dem Griechischen* in the last, both co-contributed by Friedrich and A.W. Schlegel. In both contributions, although they do not grapple explicitly with issues about translation, the Schlegel brothers underscore the wholeness, the spirit and peculiarities rooted in it, in particular, in ancient Greek poetry. Particularly intriguing is that these elegies and idylls are only accessible as *Bruchstücke*, i.e., fragments. It is the unity and totality of such a collection of ancient poetic remnants, which lie in their interrelations and in the idiosyncrasy of the mind of the poet rather than the individual poems, that are at the heart of the early romantic ideas. It is interesting to note that the curious mixed forms of both texts—half commentary and half translation—provide significant insight into translation as an aesthetic principle of the journal. It is characterized by the blended processes of criticism and translation, which are not only found in other contributions discussed above, but also reflect the unison of a set of core concepts including *Poesie*, philosophy, philology, hermeneutics, criticism, art, and science, with which the early romantics are engaged.

In *Elegien*, the notion of transformation already appears to be fundamental to the early romantics, which is later echoed in A.W. Schlegel's sonnet addressed to Tieck who possesses the highest *Dichterbildung* so that he can bring *Poesie* back unified with religion. It is made very clear

that the new notion of a work of art, which grows out of the old source, i.e., ancient poetry, is similar and even the same as the old, and yet *transformed*. It is important to note that the new work of art is not a kind of “either...or...” but a unification of both. It is the same yet transformed. The way in which ancient Greek elegies are characterized in this text is of great significance as it speaks to the fundamental approach to translation and *Poesie* of the early romantics. The Schlegel brothers stresses the elegy by virtue of its vitality (*Lebenskraft*), plasticity (*Bildsamkeit*), universality, and the ability to preserve for the afterworld the life and art of its time, namely eternity, and to connect both the present and the past.

Besides in the individual translations and discussions on translation, which incorporate intellectual exchanges among the journal contributors, their contemporaries, and different cultures from various ages, representations of the romantic conception of translation in the *Athenaeum* can also be seen in the three collections of fragments in the journal, namely *Blüthenstaub* (vol.1, no.1), *Fragmente*<sup>150</sup> (vol 1, no.2), and *Ideen* (vol.3, no.1), in a somewhat more abstract and concise manner. The fragments that address translation, although mostly implicitly, are almost impossible to fully comprehend without a holistic look at the contributors’ conception of other notions such as philology, grammar, hermeneutics and *Kritik*. In other words, approaching them in isolation will most likely leave the reader with obscurity and incomprehensibility. Furthermore, dynamic interactions among the contributors must also be noted as the ideas that these exchanges have woven together crystalize some fundamental ideas about translation as an early romantic aesthetic principle and practice. The highly abstract and succinct style of the three fragments in *Blüthenstaub* that address translation helps recapitulate the beliefs of translation and language of the Jena circle scattered throughout the journal and

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<sup>150</sup> Commonly known as the *Athenaeums-Fragmente*.

other writings. When read in isolation without the context of the journal, Novalis's fragments seem to be sporadic. However, if viewed in the context, they are engaged as *Sympoesie* or *Symphilosophie*, such as that between Novalis and A.W. Schlegel regarding translation, helps these formulations emerge in their full significance and shed light on the core ideas about translation of the romantics in association with their spiritual community, *Bildungsideal* and *Mitteilung*.

The Schlegelian notion of *poetische Übersetzungskunst* that conveys an essential idea of translation in the journal and concurrently makes it a central principle of the romantic aesthetics can be applied to *Poesie* in general. Novalis's extending understanding of translation in *Blüthenstaub* #68 is helpful as he characterizes three different types of translation—grammatical (*grammatisch*), mythical (*mythisch*), and transforming (*verändernd*). “Grammatische Übersetzungen sind die Übersetzungen im gewöhnlichen Sinn. Sie erfordern sehr viel Gelehrsamkeit, aber nur diskursive Fähigkeiten.” Novalis implies that the translator who only translates discursively without grasping the whole is practicing grammatical translation. In other words, it consists of pure transfer between linguistic symbols without concerning the wholeness of the work of art. One can recall that one of Soltau's failures in translating *Don Quixote* is using unsuitable words and phrases precisely because he focuses on word-for-word rendering instead of on the spirit of the original work.

Mythical translations, Novalis emphasizes, are those in the “highest” style, as they represent the character and the idea of the original work of art in their entirety. This stands in striking accordance with the function of translation, *Notizen*, as well as of the journal to restore the *Charakter* of a work. The translator of mythical translations must possess a mind wherein both *poetischer Geist* and *philosophischer Geist* permeate each other in their fullness. In other

words, *Poesie* and philosophy are unified as one in mythical translations. Novalis illustrates his point with the example of Greek mythology as a mythical translation of a national religion, as it represents the nature and character of the Greeks. Peculiar to Novalis' conception, translation is not confined to written texts; rather, everything is translatable. This justifies the switch between different forms in the journal and the way the journal presents itself that holds it together as a unified work of art with internal multiplicity and miscellaneousness. Translation in its broadest sense reflects the *Mitteilung* of the journal that puts the *Bildungsideal* into practice by the innermost spiritual community.

In Novalis's view, the highest *poetische Geist* belongs to the transforming type of translation, i.e., *verändernde Übersetzungen*. This kind of translation can only avoid falling into travesty and be genuine when the translator is also the artist, namely a poet-translator, to refer back to A.W. Schlegel, and to use Novalis' words, "der Dichter des Dichters" who is able to render the idea of the whole of the work of art. Essentially, the poet-translator recreates (*nachbilden*) and thus transforms a work of art; in the translation (process), both the original character of the work and the translator's own culture are fused together without clear boundaries. With his ambitious ideal of "romanticizing the world," Novalis denotes a similar relationship between the genius of humanity and the individual man:

Eine Übersetzung ist entweder grammatisch, oder verändernd, oder mythisch. Mythische Übersetzungen sind Übersetzungen im höchsten Styl. Sie stellen den reinen, vollendeten Charakter des individuellen Kunstwerks dar. Sie geben uns nicht das wirkliche Kunstwerk, sondern das Ideal desselben. . . .

Zu den verändernden Übersetzungen gehört, wenn sie ächt seyn sollen, der höchste poetische Geist. . . . Der wahre Übersetzer dieser Art muß in der That der Künstler selbst

seyn, und die Idee des Ganzen beliebig so oder so geben können. Er muß der Dichter des Dichters seyn und ihn also nach seiner und des Dichters eigener Idee zugleich reden lassen können. In einem ähnlichen Verhältnisse steht der Genius der Menschheit mit jedem einzelnen Menschen.

Nicht bloß Bücher, alles kann auf diese drey Arten übersetzt werden. (89)

In a similar vein, A.W. Schlegel portrays Ludwig Tieck the poet, not merely the translator, in the sonnet, *An Ludwig Tieck*, in the last issue of the *Athenaeum*.

Du, in der Dichterbildung reichsten Blüthe,

Bringst uns verwandelt wieder jene Zeiten,

Wo Adam auf der Bühn' erschien und Eva. (233)

Not only are *Poesie* and philosophy unified, the character of the original work of art represented in its entirety, and the work of art recreated and thus transformed in the case of the true translator of *mythische* and *verändernde* translations, the same also applies to the poet in his highest *Bildung*. In the manner that the subtlety of “verwandelt” in A.W. Schlegel’s poem and the notion of “Nachbilden von Gedichten” captures the transformation and recreation in the early romantic ideal of *Poesie* and that of *Bildung* through *Poesie*, Novalis’ notion of *verändernd* conveys the same idea in the realm of translation. More generally, it is significant to note that A.W. Schlegel’s vision of *poetische Übersetzungskunst* seems to be synthesizing aspects from both the *mythische* und *verändernde* kinds of translation in Novalis’ theory and is essentially in the same spirit with the early romantic aesthetics of *Poesie*. *Poesie* and translation share the same traits aesthetically, which substantiates the notion of the poet-translator, the poet of the poet in the early romantic sense. The idea of transformation and recreation in the realm of *Poesie* has

already been mentioned in the discussion of Greek elegies and idylls above. The new kind of work of art is supposed to grow out of the ancient source and is yet transformed and recreated, establishing a community with the ancient in which the essence remains, and new individualities emerge.

The same idea inherent in translation is evidently elucidated in *Athenäums-Fragmente*. #393 makes it clear that to make the ancient modern is not to merely imitate, but to recreate (*wiederschaffen*):

Um aus den Alten ins Moderne vollkommen übersetzen zu können, müßte der Übersetzer desselben so mächtig sein, daß er allenfalls alles Moderne machen könnte; zugleich aber das Antike so verstehn, daß ers nicht bloß nachmachen, sondern allenfalls wiederschaffen könnte. (297)

Likewise, in #402, the author argues that the possibility of translating ancient poets depends on whether the translation, which is faithful to the original work of art and yet is translated into the purest German, is not still Greek. “Bei der Frage von der Möglichkeit, die alten Dichter zu übersetzen, kömmts eigentlich darauf an, ob das treu aber in das reinste Deutsch Übersetzte nicht etwa immer noch griechisch sei.” A similar point is made in *Gespräch über die Poesie* that “to mold the modern languages classically” is essentially “language-creation”. This goes back to the view held by Schleiermacher and A.W. Schlegel about the preservation of a sense of foreignness and the *Hauch* of the work of art while recreating and transforming it. Since transformation is fundamental in the early romantic *Bildung*, it is no surprise, then, that translation as an aesthetic practice is an internally necessary steppingstone to the *Bildung* of the German nation, as already seen in A.W. Schlegel and Schleiermacher, and thus to the realization of the new mythology or religion that requires shared efforts *en masse* by a spiritual community.



Writing in a period of a pandemic, a new war breaking out in Europe, and the intensifying political divide both internationally and domestically, I find it hard not to consider the relevance of the *Athenaeum* and the romantics who lived in a very tumultuous time themselves. Where does the understanding of the *Athenaeum* as a unified whole with different yet interrelated parts fit in the world in which we live? How may these ideas of unity, differences in unity and unity in differences help us think about how to cope with issues in our contemporary world where differences and conflicts of values cannot seem to be reconciled? Dichotomies and the search for a reconciliation of opposing aspects within an organic whole faced by thinkers over two hundred years ago are still baffling us today. If Kant, Schiller, Hegel and Goethe continue to be revisited and exert their influence when it comes to thinking about dichotomy, polarity and reconciliation through the beautiful, the *Athenaeum* is worth re-reading as the early romantic work of art, as a practice of a unity with miscellaneousness and interrelationality.

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## Appendix A: Contributions to the *Athenaeum*

### Volume 1, Issue 1 (1798)

1. *Die Sprachen. Ein Gespräch über Klopstocks grammatische Gespräche.* (3-69) A.W. Schlegel
2. *Blütenstaub.* (70-106) Novalis
3. *Elegien aus dem Griechischen.* (107) A.W. and Friedrich Schlegel
4. *Beyträge zur Kritik der neuesten Litteratur.* (141) A.W. Schlegel

### Volume 1, Issue 2 (1798)

1. *Fragmente* (179-322)
2. *Über Goethe's Meister* (323-354)

### Volume 2, Issue 1 (1799)

1. *Ueber die Philosophie. An Dorothea.* (1-38) Friedrich Schlegel
2. *Die Gemählde. Ein Gespräch.* (39-151) A.W. Schlegel
3. *Ueber die natürliche Gleichheit der Menschen.* (152-180) Hülsen

### Volume 2, Issue 2 (1799)

1. *Die Kunst der Griechen. Elegie an Goethe.* (181-192) A.W. Schlegel
2. *Ueber Zeichnungen zu Gedichten und John Flaxman's Umrisse.* (193-246) A.W. Schlegel
3. *Eilfter Gesang des rasenden Roland; nebst einer Nachschrift des Uebersetzers an L.*



*Tieck.* (247-284) A.W. Schlegel

4. *Notizen* (285-340)

Volume 3, Issue 1 (1800)

1. *An Heliodora.* (1-3) Friedrich Schlegel

2. *Ideen.* (4-33) Friedrich Schlegel

3. *Naturbetrachtungen auf einer Reise durch die Schweiz.* (34-57) Hülsen

4. *Gespräch über die Poesie.* (58-128) Friedrich Schlegel

5. *Notizen.* (129-164)

Volume 3, Issue 2 (1800)

1. *An die Deutschen.* (165-168) Friedrich Schlegel

2. *Gespräch über die Poesie* (Fortsetzung). (169-187) Friedrich Schlegel

3. *Hymnen an die Nacht.* (188-204) Novalis

4. *Lebensansicht.* (205-215) Sophie Bernhardi-Tieck

5. *Idyllen aus dem Griechischen.* (216-232) A.W. and Friedrich Schlegel

6. *Sonette* (233-237) A.W. and Friedrich Schlegel

“*An Ludwig Tieck.*” (233) A.W. Schlegel

“*Die Reden über die Religion.*” (234) Friedrich Schlegel

“*Schellings Weltseele.*” (235) Friedrich Schlegel

“*Das Athenaeum.*” (236) Friedrich Schlegel

“*Zerbine.*” (237) Friedrich Schlegel

7. *Notizen.* (238-336)

*Ramdohrs moralische Erzählungen.* (238-243) Dorothea Schlegel

*Engels Philosoph für die Welt. III Th.* (243-252) Schleiermacher

*Parny guerre des Dieux.* (252-268) A.W. Schlegel

*Herders Metakritik.* (268-283) A.F. Bernhardi

*Fichte Bestimmung des Menschen.* (283-297) Schleiermacher

*Soltau Uebersetzung des Don Quixote.* (297-329) A.W. Schlegel

*Belletristische Zeitung.* (329-336) A.W. Schlegel

8. *Ueber die Unverständlichkeit.* (337-354) Friedrich Schlegel

## Appendix B: List of contributions related to translation

The contributions are listed in their original titles as shown in the table of contents at the beginning of each issue of the *Athenaeum*,<sup>151</sup> as some of them do not have a title on the page where the actual text is located.

1. Die Sprachen. Ein Gespräch über Klopstocks grammatische Gespräche. W. (vol. 1, no.1, pp. 3-69)
2. Blütenstaub. Von Novalis (vol. 1, no.1, pp. 70-106)
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<sup>151</sup> Except for the second issue of the first volume that does not provide a table of contents. The only two contributions in this issue are *Fragmente*, commonly known as the *Athenaeums-Fragmente*, and *Ueber Goethe's Meister*.