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‘Jewish Dionysus’: Heinrich Heine and the Politics of Literature

By

Alexander G. Soros

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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Committee in charge:

Professor Martin Jay, Chair

Professor Thomas Laqueur

Professor Anton Kaes

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## Abstract

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Heinrich Heine’s body of work presents seeming disparities between poetry and prose, Romantic lyricism and bitter polemics, love and hate, manifesting the complexity of the author and his vision. Another fundamental yet elusive dimension of Heine’s work involves his Jewish background. Hannah Arendt provocatively described Heine as “the only German Jew who could truthfully describe himself as both a German and a Jew,” in part because he recognized their implicit conflict. His ambivalent attitude toward Jews and Judaism and German-Jewish identity is difficult to separate from his contentiousness and humor. Heine has not been taken seriously enough in part because of a disinclination to approach him as a thinker, including what the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk called Heine’s “satirical, polemical... holy nonseriousness.” At stake is a ‘politics of literature’ in the sense of how literature is evaluated or categorized. Our task is to locate Heine’s original voice and his historical and contemporary significance.

This study addresses Heine’s work largely in relation to his predecessors, contemporaries, and followers. Heine’s belated dialogue with the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe involved their shared opposition to Christianity, nationalism, and Romanticism as a literary movement, as well as their love poetry reflecting the connection between their lives and their work. Heine’s engagement with German philosophy and his “Jewish” pantheism, associated with the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, anticipated Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept “God is dead.” Heine’s *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial* defined the late liberal, converted Jew Ludwig Börne as a Christian or Jewish, ascetic, moralistic “Nazarene,” in contrast to Heine and Goethe as pagan, sensual, art-loving “Hellenes.” At stake in part was Heine’s modern resistance as a Jew to others’ interpretations of what is a Jew.

Friedrich Nietzsche’s relation to Heine constitutes a particularly important consideration. The philosopher’s early infatuation with and later rejection of the composer Richard Wagner, announced in Nietzsche’s publication and revision of his *Birth of Tragedy*, can be understood as a turn back to Heine as an unacknowledged and humorous source for several of Wagner’s ideas. Nietzsche’s Dionysian outlook was anticipated by Heine’s iconoclastic response to German Hellenist interpretations of classical antiquity, although Heine combined his embrace of Dionysus with an ostensible late “conversion” to Judaism. Through his entertainingly thought-provoking art, Heine offers perhaps the definitive non-systematic thinker of profound ambivalence, internal conflicts, and radical juxtapositions of ideas, a unique ‘Jewish Dionysus.’

Dedicated to  
“Jewish Dionysus no. 1”

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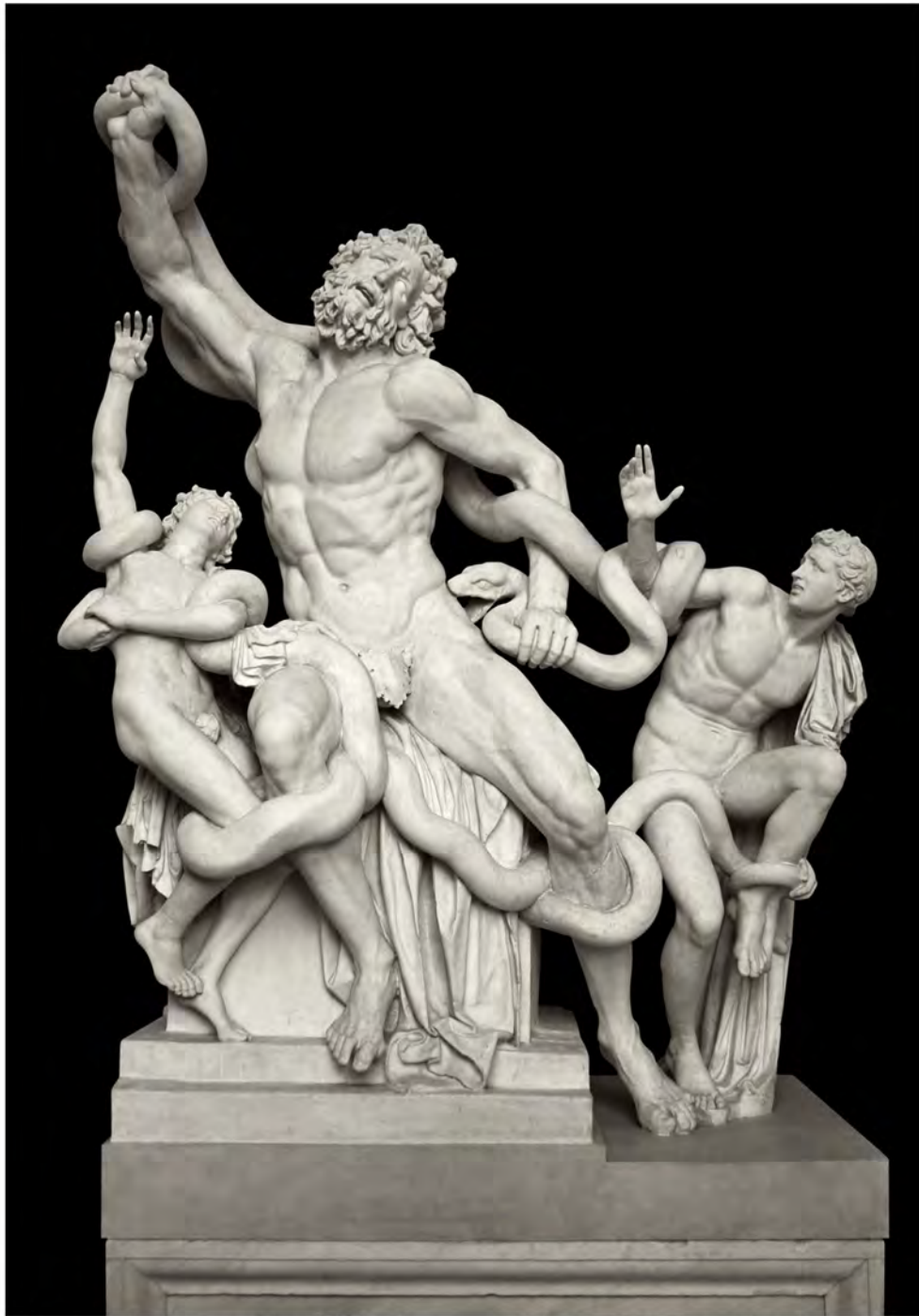


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## ‘Jewish Dionysus’: Heinrich Heine and the Politics of Literature

At the time of his death in Parisian exile in 1856, Heinrich Heine was the most widely read German poet in Europe.<sup>1</sup> His lyric poems or “songs” about love and grief had been set to music by the greatest German-speaking composers, including Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert, Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, and Richard Strauss.<sup>2</sup> Heine’s prose addressed the most diverse and partly obscure topics in original ways, outside conventional literary genres, including outrageous polemics that caused scandals and provoked duels in his lifetime and animosity during his life and after. These writings are little read today in German-speaking countries and largely unknown outside them. Heine’s career and body of work thus present seeming disparities between poetry and prose, the sweetness of Romantic lyricism and bitter polemics, and evoke both love and hate in his own attitudes and his reception by others.

Yet an attentive reading of Heine’s own texts—including his extensive commentary on poetry and about himself as an artist—reminds us that these extremes are inextricable. Heine’s love poems and other poetry combine sweetness with bitterness, the rose with the thorn, or in his own original formulation, “ambrosia and sauerkraut.”<sup>3</sup> More specifically, his poems temper Romantic sensibilities with opposition to Romanticism in the form of humor, sarcasm, parody and satire. This tension is plainly evident in his single most popular poem on the Rhine river-nymph *Lorelei*, so well-known to every German that the Nazis, who sought to eradicate his memory, had to settle for assigning the poem to “anonymous.”<sup>4</sup> Heine’s work encompassed undeniably seductive and entertaining elements along with dissonance and disenchantment, testifying to the complexity and resistance of his vision regardless of the vagaries of his changing and complex reception. Heine lives precisely insofar as we are still striving to understand his art.

A fundamental yet elusive dimension of Heine’s work involves his Jewish background. Against the broader background of the persecution of Jews stretching from antiquity through the medieval and modern periods, concrete instances of German hostilities against Jews in Heine’s lifetime began in the early 1820’s and continued throughout his life. Heine was educated in a during Napoleon’s occupation of the Rhineland, which resulted in the emancipation of the Jews. Yet with the return of German autonomy under Prussian rule Heine soon faced hostility both from pervasive anti-Jewish elements in German society and concrete government laws that limited the professional choices of Jews. After his move to Berlin, Heine also developed his own interest in Jewish culture and letters as a member of the newly founded “Society for the Culture and Scholarship of the Jews” [*Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden*]. Throughout his life Heine had diverse, complex, ambivalent attitudes toward Jews, Judaism, and Germany, particularly when it came to his own identity in the context of assimilation. These issues are difficult to separate from his polemics and humor.

Peter Sloterdijk, whose *Critique of Cynical Reason* became the largest-selling work of philosophy in Germany since the second World War, praised Heine, along with Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, precisely because their critiques lay outside the domains of traditional philosophy and scholarly decorum:

It is no accident that the great representatives of critique—the French moralists, the Encyclopedists, the socialists, and especially Heine, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud—remain outsiders to the scholarly domain. In all of them there is a satirical, polemical component that can scarcely be hidden under the mask of scholarly respectability. These signals of a

holy nonseriousness, which remains one of the sure indexes of truth, can be employed as signposts to the critique of cynical reason.<sup>5</sup>

Sloterdijk singled out Heine above all these giants of modern Western thought for displaying a “knack, unsurpassed to the present day, for combining theory and satire, cognition and entertainment.”<sup>6</sup> It would be difficult to improve on Sloterdijk’s formulation as a foundation for the present study. Taking Sloterdijk’s insight into the holy nonseriousness of non-scholarly critique to heart, this study addresses the profound relevance of Heine’s satirical and entertaining thought in an extended field far beyond literature that encompasses Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche among others within a complex German and German-Jewish cultural realm.

A particularly important consideration involves Nietzsche’s response to Heine. Writing in 1964, the literary scholar J. P. Stern emphatically declared: “The debt that Nietzsche owes [Heine... ] though acknowledged by himself, has never been explored, for the simple reason that Heine’s influence on Nietzsche has never been taken seriously.”<sup>7</sup> This study takes Nietzsche’s debt to Heine very seriously in the sense that many of Nietzsche’s central ideas and underlying aspects of his philosophical vision derive from transforming Heine’s thought. If the connection or elective affinities between Heine and Nietzsche have not been taken seriously enough, as Stern proposed, this is due at least in part from our disinclination to approach Heine as a thinker.

At stake is a ‘politics of literature’ in the concrete sense of how literature is evaluated or categorized, or in the case of Heine, separated off from philosophy. What is found in Heine’s texts in diverse and peculiar contexts, in fragmented, partly incoherent forms, forged in the context of his fraught personal circumstances and evolving outlook, was taken up and reformulated by the philosopher Nietzsche, who also acknowledged his debt to Heine. We have to take Nietzsche’s acknowledgement seriously in pursuing relations between his and Heine’s texts, across disciplines, genres, and historical contexts. Another part of the difficulty involves the highly contested reception and interpretations of both Heine and Nietzsche’s thought. Through his adaptation of Heine’s strategies and concepts, as perhaps the most important reception of Heine, Nietzsche can help us to understand Heine’s texts. Conversely, Heine offers an opportunity to reconsider Nietzsche’s contributions.

This study begins in Chapter One with Heine’s Romantic period and his reception of his own literary tradition, particularly his extended belated dialogue with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In responding to Goethe, a hero among German men of letters and progressively over time for Germany as a whole, Heine was like any other German poet or writer. Yet Heine uniquely shared with Goethe an opposition to Christianity and nationalism and in these respects also antagonism toward the German literary movement of Romanticism, initiated by the brothers August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schegel. Goethe rejected Romanticism as “sick” as opposed to the classical as healthy, and Heine gave a more differentiated account in his essay on *The Romantic School*. Goethe and Heine’s love of classical antiquity in particular, from divergent perspectives, is a primary concern in Chapter Five.

A further central consideration in Chapter One is the German concept of *Bildung* or self-formation involving the relation of the artist’s life and self to his work. The subject of hackneyed Romantic clichés, *Bildung* was originally conceived and theorized in subtle and compelling ways by Goethe and reconfigured by Heine in turn, in both their poetry and prose. Heine’s own *Bildung* centrally involved Goethe, an evolving relation of opposition and identification that deserves extended attention and explanation. What might be called an autobiographical turn in the nineteenth century was partly inaugurated by Goethe—with a host of auspicious forerunners—

and transformed in more humorous and self-deprecating forms by Heine, and then by Nietzsche in turn, as with his section in his *Ecce Homo* on “Why I write such good books.” The Heine-Nietzsche relation was thereby triangulated through Goethe. At issue again is a ‘politics of literature’: the character of and attitudes toward literature and its significance not only for political events and debates of the period, but also defining topics of intellectual history, the relation between poet, writer, philosopher, theologian, artist, and musician, necessary categories that also limit our understanding of underlying intellectual connections.

More than a poet or a writer of unusual prose texts, Heine considered himself a thinker, a quality perhaps most evident in his direct engagement with German philosophy in his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, addressed in Chapter Two. Heine had studied philosophy under A. W. Schlegel and G. W. F. Hegel, and advocated his own alternative of “pantheism,” enlisting not only Goethe but also the Dutch-Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza in his cause. As a corollary of Spinoza, Heine embraced his subjective subversion of the universal and made the problem of his Jewish background an explicit subject of reflection, and thereby provides an alternative means of understanding Spinoza’s significance.

Hannah Arendt provocatively described Heine as “the only German Jew who could truthfully describe himself as both a German and a Jew,” in part because he recognized the implicit conflict of these categories, a principle that extended to his ambivalence about German-Jewish identity that pervades his oeuvre.<sup>8</sup> Heine’s period witnessed the first formulations of ‘The Jewish Question,’ including the essay devoted to that topic by his distant cousin, friend, and fellow-exile in Paris, Karl Marx, an important contrast for, and possibly partly a response to Heine’s outlook. Marx insisted on a transition from religion to purely economic and socio-political concerns, whereas Heine ambivalently tarried with questions of religion as cultural and philosophical rather than as merely dubiously theological phenomena. For Heine, literature was accordingly inseparable from fundamental issues of religion and his own personal background, not from a philosophical perspective so much as a challenge to philosophy, akin to what Nietzsche called “the Gay Science.” Heine specifically advocated a pantheism that appears to come remarkably close to atheism, perhaps best formulated in Nietzsche’s saying, developing Heine’s prior idea, that “God is dead.”

Relatively late in his career in his *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial* of 1840, the subject of Chapter Three, Heine took his radical polemics and redefinition of accepted genres to new heights, or alternatively new depths, depending on the viewpoint of the commentators. Heine defined his antagonist, his late former colleague and fellow liberal assimilated, converted Jew Ludwig Börne in his “memorial” as an ascetic, moralistic, un-artistic “Nazarene,” as contrasted with Heine and Goethe as sensualist or pagan, aesthetically sensitive, art-loving “Hellenes.” Heine’s opposition reflected a broader development of conflicts and ideas throughout his career, yet specifically involved debates related to the group of writers called “Young Germany” and a nascent German identity in relation to German-Jewish assimilation and the forging of a German literary canon. Heine’s polemics also involved complex strategies of Jewish humor in response to the fraught political and social battles of this period, which he channeled in new directions, many of which were later elaborated by Nietzsche. Another dimension of Heine’s unique perspective involves the roles of iconoclastic assimilated German-Jewish geniuses in Western culture and their interpretations of what is a Jew. In inventing his own account, and by implication himself, Heine contributed in a real, concrete sense to Jewish identity and, for some of us at least, provides the example *par excellence*.

Chapter Four revisits the familiar scene of Nietzsche's early infatuation with and later rejection of the opera composer Richard Wagner, announced in his publication and later revisions of his *Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche's was directly responding to what could be called Wagner's anti-Semitism, before the actual term was coined in 1879, a dozen years after Heine's death. Wagner's 1850 treatise *Jewry in Music*, a founding text of the political movement of anti-Semitism, concluded with a condemnation of Heine. Yet Heine was an unacknowledged, negatively transformed, and ultimately vilified source for several of Wagner's primary ideas, including Heine's story of the Flying Dutchman from his "North Sea Tales" in his early *Travel Pictures*, related elements of his *Memoirs of Herr Schnabelowopski*, and his poem *Tannhäuser*.

Wagner transformed Heine's sarcastic and iconoclastic humor into a reactionary idealism, infused with and disguised by antithetical modernist elements and Wagner's admittedly unsurpassable musical ingenuity. The parallels are so striking, and the opposition so overdetermined, that Wagner could be characterized as Heine's un-humorous double, the two encompassing alternative artistic means of coming to terms with modernity. These relations allow us to enrich the conventional and largely correct view of Nietzsche as anti-anti-Semite, following his own account, insofar as he allied himself with Heine, specifically as an alternative to Wagner, in a form of self-overcoming and positive definition of German, European, and artistic identity.

The fifth and concluding chapter examines Heine as a 'Jewish Dionysus' by way of his iconoclastic response to German Hellenist interpretations of classical antiquity as well as Heine's ostensible late "conversion" or turn back to Judaism in a multi-cultural vein. In a brilliant and eccentric study from 1932, E. M. Butler characterized German Hellenist adherence to Johann Joachim Winckelmann's ideal as a "Tyranny of Greece over Germany."<sup>9</sup> Heine alone was able to over-throw the tyranny by replacing Apollo-Zeus with Dionysus, a god of ugliness and destruction, of chaos and contingency, inspiring Nietzsche in turn. We thereby return to the notion of myth as solution for a crisis in German identity; nationalism and anti-Semitism as opposed to cosmopolitanism and iconoclasm as strategic responses; and Dionysian art as the highest form, as well as the place of truth in art. Heine's original approaches provide an alternative picture of Nietzsche's achievement, including the Goethe-Heine-Nietzsche connection as an alternative axis of Germany culture and thought.

Heine remains elusive as a major thinker, among other reasons, because of the unusual, often bewildering forms of his critiques. One means of approaching Heine's original thought is through others: doubling Goethe as fellow opponent of Romanticism and its religious-national idealism; as radical successor of Spinoza and precursor of Nietzsche in religious critique; as "pagan" Hellene antagonist of the Nazarene Börne; as a missing third man in the familiar contest between Wagner and Nietzsche; and as contestant of Winckelmann and his disciples and forerunner of Nietzsche in iconoclastic interpretations of classical antiquity and Dionysus in particular. Through his entertainingly thought-provoking art, Heine presents perhaps the definitive non-systematic thinker of profound ambivalence, internal conflicts, and radical juxtapositions of ideas, a unique 'Jewish Dionysus.'

## Prologue Heine as Contested Monument

On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1887, Paul Heyse, a Jewish-born future Nobel laureate poet published a proclamation [*Aufruf*] in the *Düsseldorfer Anzeiger* and other local newspapers announcing “the committee for the erection of a Heine monument” in his birthplace of Düsseldorf.<sup>1</sup> From the outset Heyse adopted an apologetic tone, acknowledging Heine’s controversial political past and anti-Prussian rhetoric, and that he “may have been accused of some errors.” Sixteen years after the unification of Germany, Heyse further explicitly emphasized that the “redemption of the fatherland” was achieved through the house of the Prussian Hohenzollerns, which was only able “to spread its wings over the German Rhine after difficult battles.” Yet Heyse nevertheless made the plea that Heine’s accomplishments in German poetry “hover high above these earthly mistakes which go to the grave with his mortal remains.” Evoking German culture heroes Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Walther von de Vogelweide, Heyse claimed that they would greet their peer Heine with “the outstretched hand of a fellow singer... in the world above.” Ten days after the proclamation’s publication, bitter protests erupted against Heine as a Jew and an enemy of Prussia by fraternity students at the nearby University of Bonn, Heine’s *alma mater*. One student-spokesman of the “Christian-German movement” [*Christlich-deutsche Bewegung*] declared: “[We] would never sacrifice a penny to honor Heinrich Heine.”<sup>2</sup> By the end of the year, a major debate ensued that came to be known as the “Heine monument controversy” [*Heine Denkmalstreit*], which lasted from 1887 to 1894, with an extended afterlife.<sup>3</sup>

Among supporters of a monument to Heine were the Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismark and the Empress Elisabeth of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Elisabeth, affectionately known as “Sissy,” considered herself Heine’s disciple and was convinced that he was dictating the verses of her own poetry. She even described how in her bed one night she had seen “Heine’s profile, as it was known to her from one of his portraits” and believed “this soul wished to separate hers from her body.”<sup>4</sup> Conversely, Heine’s detractors included both Germany’s leading anti-Semite, Adolf Stöcker, and Austria’s leading anti-Semite and pan-Germanist, Georg Ritter von Schonerer. In the context of his ongoing polemics concerning ‘the Jewish Question,’ Stöcker condemned supporters of the monument as “enemies of the Church, Christ-haters, atheists, [and] people for the emancipation of flesh.”<sup>5</sup> According to Stöcker, Heine had a ruinous influence on the German people and German literature and a monument to him “would be a shame for Christian Germany, an annoyance for a moral Germany, an offense to a national Germany, and an impossibility for a monarchical Germany.”<sup>6</sup> Von Schonerer exhorted his readers to “get rid of this stain of shame, this stable has to be completely and thoroughly cleaned, and the name Heine should disappear from our schoolbooks.” He claimed such a “kosher monument” would be a continuing embarrassment for the German people and called Heine “the shit-finch in the German poet’s forest” [*Mistfink im deutschen Dichterwalde*].<sup>7</sup>

As a result of such anti-Semitic agitation, efforts to erect a Heine monument failed, first in Düsseldorf from 1887 until 1893, and then for two years in Mainz in 1893-4. A monument designed for this purpose by the well-known Berlin sculptor Ernst Herter, depicting Lorelei combing her hair with other allegorical figures, was ultimately exiled to the Bronx, where it remains, recently restored, on the grand concourse.<sup>8</sup> The Empress Elisabeth had in the meantime commissioned the Danish sculptor Louis Hasselriis to create her own Heine monument for her residence on the Greek island of Corfu in 1891, the earliest Heine monument, aside from his grave at Montmartre cemetery in Paris.<sup>9</sup> In Germany, monuments to Heine were eventually erected in Frankfurt in 1913 and Hamburg in 1926, although these were later destroyed by the Nazis. Beyond simply opposition to or ultimate success in building monuments to Heine, the



*Heine Denkmalstreit* represented a fundamental cultural and political debate in Germany from the 1880's through the Nazi seizure of power and after.

The debate included extended polemics by the most vocal opponent of the Heine monuments, the *völkisch* journalist and poet Adolf Bartels, who gradually became more and more obsessed with the subject until it took over his life and in a sense became his vocation. Bartels wrote a lengthy pamphlet in 1897, *Heine: Auch ein Denkmal* [Heine: also a monument, i.e. Bartels' book], and proposed that the actual monument should be dedicated to "the German Jews" rather than the German people.<sup>10</sup> Bartels wrote of "exploding the monument" in metaphorical terms along with its supporters, and the necessity of continuing "our good battle to restore health and cleanliness to the German race."<sup>11</sup> He called Heine a disease within the purity of German literature and an "internal enemy" of the German people, and himself became known as the "Heine-killer."<sup>12</sup> According to Steven Fuller, Bartels was "The Nazi's literary grandfather," and "helped formulate the constellation of anti-urban and anti-Semitic ideas that resulted in the *Blut und Boden* ideology, even using the term two decades before the Nazi's."<sup>13</sup> Bartels was later awarded the *Adlerschild* [eagle shield] in 1937, the highest civilian honor of Nazi Germany, by Adolf Hitler himself in 1937.<sup>14</sup>

Bartels had first participated in the vitriolic debates about a possible Heine monument in a new literary periodical called *Der Kunstwart*, founded in 1887. He railed against modern and foreign-influenced aspects of literature as a sickness he christened "Modernitis," and of which Heine was the primary origin. Others writing in *Der Kunstwart* included the critic Franz Sandvoss, writing under the alias Xanthippus, who felt Heine's association of Heine with Goethe was an affront to Goethe, and like Bartels believed German literature was sick and needed to be stripped of foreign and urban influences. "National concerns must be our primary focus in current views," he wrote, "Heine has become a thorn in our flesh." Heine was guilty of being "a Jew in every respect, not a real German," and of converting to Christianity, a form of character deficiency.<sup>15</sup> The renowned Goethe scholar Victor Hehn also wrote in *Der Kunstwart* that he was incensed by Heine's comparison of Heine to Goethe.

The same year Hehn published his book *Gedanken über Goethe* [thoughts about Goethe], in which he accused Heine of a "perversion of good taste and destruction of innocence" in his poems that contributed to the "alienation of the nation from its greatest treasure, Goethe's poetic work."<sup>16</sup> Heine supporters acknowledged Goethe's superiority, or made apologies.<sup>17</sup> The then little-known retired philology professor, Friedrich Nietzsche, followed the *Kunstwart* debate with great interest. Nietzsche was troubled by dismissive rejections of Heine in comparison with Goethe and sketched a letter to the editor Ferdinand Avenarius, which he never sent. Outraged at the racist attacks, Nietzsche cancelled his subscription in protest.<sup>18</sup> Much more than an historical curiosity, the *Heine Denkmalstreit* powerfully brought together pivotal conflicts of this era in German cultural and intellectual history, and also encompasses central threads of this study, including the controversial issues around how Heine's identity was perceived and presented by him, his ambiguous relation to Goethe, and Nietzsche's still controversial outlooks on Jews and anti-Semitism.

The roots of the controversy can also be said to reach much further back, to Heine himself and his checkered career. As George Peters explained, "Heine's popularity among the German bourgeoisie rested, in part at least, on a narrow reading of *Buch der Lieder* [Book of Songs] as a collection of bittersweet, romantic poetry."<sup>19</sup> Those who read Heine at the time were mostly young men at university and female readers interested in sentimental love poetry, who mostly overlooked his irony for the sake of the Romantic clichés that he brilliantly reframed in his

inimitable poems. Editors went so far as to omit offending stanzas, which one modern critic called a “de-thorned” or trivialized Heine.<sup>20</sup> However, Heine was at pains to describe himself as both ambrosia *and* sauerkraut, both flowers *and* the abyss, both Romantic *and* Romantic *manqué* or “renegade monk from the monastery of the Romantists,” to which we might add: German *and* Jew.<sup>21</sup> These “two Heines” were later echoed in the bifurcated reception of Heine the poet and Heine the political writer, and the liberals and assimilationist Jews who were uncomfortable with Heine’s radicalism, as opposed to some of those on the left who preferred to see Heine as a devoted Socialist.

Already in his early play *Almansor* from 1820-22, Heine alluded to the ambivalent predicament of assimilating Jews through the analogy of Muslims in Golden Age Spain, and introduced the uncanny prediction “where they burn books, they will, in the end, burn human beings too.”<sup>22</sup> The line is now seen as prophetic of the Nazis who burned their opponents’ books, including Heine’s texts and possibly *Almansor* itself, and then burned people in the ovens of concentration camps. One of the places where the Nazis burned books, the *Bebelplatz* in Berlin, is now provided with a monument inscribed with Heine’s phrase.<sup>23</sup> In his time Heine also joked that he had built a splendid stone monument in Hamburg in the house of his publisher Julius Campe, which came to stand “thanks in many parts to my *Book of Songs*.”<sup>24</sup> In his *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial*, Heine invented the idea of framing his polemical attacks on his enemy Börne in the form of a “memorial,” a strategy later turned against Heine by Bartels, who composed his own Heine “monument” in the form of anti-Semitic calumny. Even more directly foreshadowing the controversy to come, in his book on Börne Heine invoked, with only half-hearted irony, “those monuments that I planted in the literature of Europe to the eternal fame of the German mind.”<sup>25</sup> He acknowledged that his literary monuments were not “completely flawless,” yet insisted that they were nevertheless out of reach of the gazes of his detractors, who could “only bump their noses on the pedestal[s].” Through his playful confidence in his genius and achievements, and his merciless provocation of his enemies, Heine already made himself into a ‘contested monument,’ long before the controversy was fought over physical monuments to his memory.

The *Heine Denkmalstreit* also extended far beyond discussions about commemorating Heine through particular monuments. One of the participants in the controversy, the Viennese-Jewish journalist Karl Kraus, who mocked both sides of the debate, is perhaps Heine’s best-known opponent.<sup>26</sup> In his book-length essay from 1906, *Heine and the Consequences*, Kraus claimed that Heine had “so loosened the corset of the German language that today every salesclerk can finger her breasts,” an extraordinarily palpable formulation.<sup>27</sup> Kraus’ fundamental thesis, repeated in elaborate variations throughout his essay, was that Heine had forsaken a Germanic mode of writing for a freer, more direct, French-influenced journalistic or “feuilletonistic” style, from the *feuilleton* [short pages] that contained “reviews, essays on culture, short fiction, and travel reports among other things alongside the day’s news.”<sup>28</sup> In Kraus’ view, everyone—including his primary targets, other Viennese-Jewish journalists—could imitate Heine’s superficial, easy approach, which amounted to a betrayal of German language, or fingering its “breasts.”

Kraus’ dichotomy of German complexity, honesty, and masculinity, as opposed to French simplicity, deceit, and femininity, echoed Heine’s own subtle musings on the relations of Germans and French. Heine had been proudly influenced by French culture, beginning with his education in the French-occupied Rhineland then under the Napoleonic *code civile*, and concluding with his involuntary and ambivalent exile in Paris after 1831, for the rest of his life. He also mocked the heavy-handed machinery of much German poetry and prose, especially the

turgid writing of the German philosophers, who he joked were in this way hiding from the consequences of their own thought.<sup>29</sup> To speak in terms of Kraus' metaphor, Heine felt German writers did not need restrictive, old-fashioned "corsets" of style. Kraus' assertions concerning Heine's ostensible superficiality and pervasive influence are more difficult to accept.<sup>30</sup> Despite their appealingly straightforward and concrete language, Heine's lyric poems have always been recognized as outstanding and inimitable, rivalled in these respects only by Goethe's poems.<sup>31</sup> Like the earlier detractors in the *Heine Denkmalstreit*, Kraus unfavorably contrasted Heine to Goethe on several occasions, and in response to Heine's tongue-in-cheek reference to the "monuments that I planted in the literature of Europe to the eternal fame of the German mind," Kraus responded that the German mind "will rise again only when the intellectual flood of filth in Germany has run its course... Will there be anything left of Heine but his death?"<sup>32</sup>

As Paul Reitter and others have emphasized, Kraus' discourse offers its own fascinating depths, involving the abstruse debates of post-*fin-de-siècle* Jewish Vienna and Kraus' own peculiar form of German-Jewish self-hatred, which, borrowing his own witty characterization of psychoanalysis, could be called, a "mental illness for which it regards itself as therapy."<sup>33</sup> His formula about loosening "the corset of the German language" similarly described his own salacious wordplay. Yet Heine's witty, ironic, humorous, often outrageous style, influenced by French precedents, was undeniably related to his Jewish background, as Kraus implied.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding Nietzsche's admiration for Heine, Kraus detected "that hatred of Germany which embraces every ally it can find" and claimed that Nietzsche "had delusions of smallness when, in *Ecce Homo*, he wrote that his and Heine's names would go down together through the centuries."<sup>35</sup> Kraus further insisted that "in this and only in this way did Heine anticipate Nietzsche with the idea of the Nazarene type," which is manifestly untrue.<sup>36</sup> Nietzsche did not seek to aggrandize himself by association with Heine, but rather to clarify his own vision. In his comparable polemics against German nationalism and xenophobia, Nietzsche, who went into his own exile from Germany, echoed Heine's political resistance in the deeper sense of intellectual engagement rather than party politics. As Nietzsche insisted, he and Heine were the foremost artists of the German language, who could make "her" do anything they wanted.<sup>37</sup>

The *Heine Denkmalstreit*, implicitly initiated through Heine's own polemical self-presentation and provocations, and inaugurated in the battles among his supporters and detractors after his death, continued through the Second World War and after. Writing in 1946, the exiled German philosophy professor and literary critic, Ludwig Marcuse—no relation to the more famous Herbert—proposed that a future Heine monument in Germany should

not only be a monument purely of honor. It should also be a monument of warning—a monument of warning memory. For the history of the Heine monument in Germany is the classic biography of a people that refuses a monument for one of its greatest poets, thinkers, and freedom fighters. For almost a hundred years, Germany has given the name Heinrich Heine to everything that is uncomfortable for its national self-involvement. The anti-humanist, anti-European Germany in its battle against the Heine monument in Germany has erected to itself a memorial stone that is more powerful, more horribly monumental than any sculptor could ever have imagined.<sup>38</sup>

The Frankfurt-school philosopher Theodor Adorno later famously declared Heine a "wound" for German *amour propre* because of both the pain his polemics caused and guilt about the repression of his texts within Germany.<sup>39</sup> Adorno proposed that Heine's "poetic

reproduction... suited to the industrial age” manifests his “inadequacy” and “impotence,” echoing the conventional view of a “de-thorned” Heine and Kraus’ later attacks.<sup>40</sup> Yet Adorno’s evocative term “wound” had less to do with Heine than with Germany’s trauma. Our concern is rather to locate Heine’s *thorns*, his provocative literary mastery that constitutes his original voice and historical and contemporary significance.<sup>41</sup>

In his essay “Heinrich Heine and the Intellectual in Germany,” Jürgen Habermas emphasized Heine’s affinity with the French tradition of what would come to be called “the public intellectual,” writers actively engaged in the struggles of their time, using literary style to make political arguments. This strategy was perceived as alien to German literary and political culture of “the men of spirit” [*Geistigen*] or so-called “mandarins” who did not pronounce on politics and wrote in a neutral fashion, a tendency that has been interpreted as one of the preconditions of the Nazi takeover.<sup>42</sup> According to Habermas, Heine’s public “have not forgiven Heine the *Romantic* for rescuing their Romantic heritage from a deadly nationalistic idealization, from false historicizing, from a transfiguring sentimentality, and restoring it to its own radical origins.” Habermas explained Heine’s efforts, directed against the Prussian border police and censors who sought to enforce a homogeneous Germany, as “a negative version of the arena of public opinion.” Before a parliamentary system could allow for the spirit of public opinion to be incorporated into the power of the state, “as a potential midwife of a political public sphere that would emerge from a literary one, the intellectual cast his shadow ahead of him.” The *feuilleton* as inspiration aided Heine’s cause in bridging the gap “from literary activity to a functioning public sphere” reinforced by the July Revolution:

Heine developed great sensitivity to the mode in which literary products exert their influence, a mode reflected through the medium of the bourgeois public sphere and both refracted and accelerated by the daily and weekly press.<sup>43</sup>

Interestingly, the Austrian born, English philosopher Karl Popper, famous for formulating the concept of the “Open Society,” had previously credited Heine with the recognition of Prussian society as a “closed society,” and French society as an “open society.”<sup>44</sup>

Like Popper, Habermas in accounting for Heine clearly articulated an important political dimension of his literary efforts, yet possibly over-emphasized the political over the aesthetic dimension, in contrast to Heine’s own priorities. Habermas furthermore concluded that “love for his native land was the wound that Heine tried to conceal from his public,” because conventional nationalism was associated with xenophobia and the sacrifice of individual liberties.<sup>45</sup> Habermas’ view is the corollary of Adorno’s claim that Heine himself was a wound in German culture. Both critics, in complimentary ways, could be said to have insufficiently acknowledged how Heine openly expressed his ambivalence about his German identity, his love and his hate for his country. We thus return to the predicament of the “two Heines” which were and are inextricable, and which continue to generate debate. In the end, Heine’s place within the literary canon, and among Western thinkers, remains uncertain, as a once and future contested monument.

The way the *Heine Denkmalstreit* embodies, memorializes, and prefigures the broader controversy around Heine and his work, a politics of literature, may be illuminated through Walter Benjamin’s reflections in his study of *The Origins of German Tragic Drama* on works of art as both metaphorical monuments and metaphorical ruins:

The passage of time serves not only to separate the masterpieces from the mediocre, but also the inessential, historical meaning from essential, lasting interest; the artwork becomes a “ruin,” which exists merely for the aesthetic truth embodied in it.<sup>46</sup>

Benjamin was building on the pioneering work of the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl, particularly his study of monument preservation and its innovative distinction between “historical value” and “age value,” the latter encompassing physical ruins that are potentially better left as ruins.<sup>47</sup> By transposing the distinction to a metaphorical register, Benjamin was able to interrogate conventional notions of the value of art and the purpose of art historical interpretation. The traditional aim of historians of art, to determine an artwork’s function in its historical context, is in Benjamin’s view an “inessential, historical meaning,” as opposed to the “essential, lasting interest” of the masterpiece, which survives as a “ruin” of its historical period.

Benjamin later reformulated this elusively subtle idea in his essay on literary history:

What is at stake is not to portray literary works in the context of their age, but to represent the age that perceives them—our age—in the age during which they arose. It is this that makes literature into an organon of history; and to achieve this, and not to reduce literature to the material of history, is the task of the literary historian.<sup>48</sup>

The traditional task of the literary historian, reducing literature to the material of history, or the context of their age, is equivalent to the “inessential, historical meaning” of the art work. Benjamin sought instead to foreground literary or art works as organon of history, equivalent to the “essential, lasting interest” of the masterpiece, which as ruin mediates between the past and the present that perceives it. Benjamin’s point involves a politics of literature: how different disciplines approach historical material from different perspectives.

Heine’s texts are not solely of interest to historians contextualizing the past, but also continue to be relevant to our present literary culture and tradition. Instead of simply placing Heine in his historical context—which I hasten to add is necessary for any kind of productive understanding of his work—we can also approach his texts as organons of history, or ruins that have survived his historical context and interest today as masterpieces. Benjamin perhaps overstated his point when he claimed that our task is to represent our age through the past, since we inevitably do so. In gauging Heine’s significance for our present outlook, we also sharpen and enrich our understanding of his historical context, and how literature is situated in our thinking about history, the history of philosophy, and intellectual history. Our most important task, and the aim of this study, is to understand Heine’s texts, their historical context, and how they transcend that context, as contested monuments and metaphorical ruins.

[Goethe] cannot prevent that his great name will one day  
often be invoked together with the name H. Heine.

—Heine, *Letter to Georg Wedekind*

Partly because of his critiques and polemical texts, yet also because of his Jewish ancestry—factors that are difficult to disentangle—Heine was already seen in his time and long after as a betrayer of Germany and a negative anti-type to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Germany's greatest poet. Yet that opposition arose at least in part because many considered Heine to be Goethe's rival as lyric poet. Heine himself recognized this dynamic and several scholars have emphasized that he was exceptionally preoccupied with, and deeply ambivalent about, Goethe.<sup>1</sup> Their relation not only corresponded to what Harold Bloom called “the anxiety of influence” between a poet and his towering predecessor; Heine could also be said to have anticipated Bloom's thesis insofar as Heine explicitly described himself near the end of his life as a parodic inversion of his predecessor, in his own words: “the great pagan no. 2.”<sup>2</sup> Heine's phrase alluded to Goethe's popular nickname, “the great pagan,” derived from his love and antiquity and antipathy toward Christianity, not necessarily in that order. Heine shared Goethe's love of antiquity and opposition to Christianity, nationalism, and even Romanticism, at least as a self-conscious literary movement in its Christian, nationalist, and implicitly anti-classical guises.<sup>3</sup> Both Heine's poems and many of his private and public statements about Goethe over the course of Heine's career present a progressively close relationship to Goethe.

Goethe's work and life are fundamental as models for understanding Heine's strategies and aspirations, along with those of every other German-speaking poet or writer of this period, yet, at least according to Heine, theirs was also an exceptional relationship. In approaching Heine through Goethe, we are for the most part going against the historiographic grain, with regard not only to Heine, but also to Goethe, and treatment of the Romantic period in general. Most of the commentary on the literature of this period considers both Goethe and Heine as part of Romanticism, perhaps understandably conflating their historical era of the Romantic period with Romanticism as a literary movement. The two great German lyric poets Goethe and Heine can indeed be seen as providing the metaphorical provide book-ends for Romanticism as its greatest precursor and end, respectively. Yet Heine's ambivalent relation to Goethe and his highly contentious and controversial relation to his Romantic contemporaries opens up an entirely different perspective on these issues. Through Heine's eyes, we learn to see Goethe, the heroic embodiment of his period and culture, as an outsider, and even an iconoclast, whereas conversely their relation provides an illuminating lens on a more heroic Heine than is normally presented to us. Both were involved to some extent in a struggle over the soul of German letters and culture.

Many of Heine's poems were explicit responses to Goethe's poems, and Heine's prose texts were also often responses to Goethe's examples. A crucial component of understanding both Goethe and Heine, particularly in consideration of their love poems, involves the relation between the writer's art and his life in the form of what the Germans call *Bildung* [education, development, culture]. Heine directly addressed Goethe's life and work in private and public texts, which encompassed praise and critique, love and hate, and ultimately constituted a unique form of belated dialogue. This relation and dynamic concerned personal individuals as well as literary tradition, including what I have called a politics of literature, the political stakes of

literature, as opposed to explicit political parties or activity. Understanding Heine as Goethe's ambivalent *Doppelgänger*, an uncanny double, closely familiar yet radically different, also allows us to reconsider Goethe's more fraught relation to his cultural and social context than is usually acknowledged in idealized, implicitly nationalistic presentations, complexities that date back to Goethe's time. As a result, Heine helps us to see Goethe in a different light, just as Goethe allows us to approach Heine from a new perspective, a relation that is in many ways paralleled by that between Heine and Nietzsche.

#### A. Goethe and the Consequences

Goethe is now widely regarded as the greatest German writer and foremost representative of German culture, the counterpart of Shakespeare for English and Miguel de Cervantes for Spanish culture; Heine identified these three as the greatest artists of world literature.<sup>4</sup> Most German writers, including the Romantics and Heine, were at least in part responding to Goethe. We can accordingly adapt Karl Kraus' formula, "Heine and the consequences" and speak of 'Goethe and the consequences,' one of which was Romanticism. In this way, we approach Romanticism through Goethe, rather than the other way around as is usually done, and approach Heine through Goethe, rather than through Romanticism, as is usually done.

A distinction must be made between the German literary movement of Romanticism and the broader Romantic period, which is usually and somewhat artificially placed between 1795-1848, encompassing the last years of the French revolution up to the social revolutions across Europe in May 1848.<sup>5</sup> The initiative of the German Romantics was related to efforts of Romantics in England, France, and throughout Europe, encompassing diverse responses in literature, the visual arts, music, philosophy, and politics, although Romanticism was more urgently political in Germany.<sup>6</sup> Romanticism is understandably often presented in terms of the ideals of its spokesmen, such as the brothers August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, emphasizing its coherence, strengths, positive contributions, and importance. Yet one could just as easily emphasize conflicting impulses, media, and traditions that explode periodization and supposed defining characteristics.<sup>7</sup> The principle applies even to the core phenomenon of the German literary movement of Romanticism. In looking from the perspective of critics of Romanticism such as Goethe and Heine after him, we inevitably focus instead on Romanticism's internal conflicts or incoherence, the ideological presuppositions and motives of its spokesmen.<sup>8</sup>

The terms "Romantic" and "Romanticism" derive from medieval chivalric Romances, fantastic tales of heroic deeds and love, also an association in the modern connotation of "Romantic" love. The term Romantic was first popularized and disseminated through the scholar, translator, and critic August Wilhelm Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Literature* from 1808.<sup>9</sup> August Wilhelm and his brother the philosopher Friedrich Schlegel were among the primary founders of the Romantic movement, first at Jena and later Berlin. They and other Romantic theorists were partly reacting against the predominance of French culture, artistic theory, and language, including at the court of the Prussian King Frederick the Great. As the first province of the Roman Empire, the French were natural inheritors of classical tradition, and the playwrights Jean Racine and Pierre Corneille were considered the definitive representatives of Neo-classical rules such as unity of time, place, and action. The French *philosophes* had also led the enlightenment opposition to religion and the monarchy, and praise of reason and liberty, contributing directly to the French revolution in 1789. The German Romantics partly turned against the French and toward their own Germanic and other medieval traditions, including Dante and Shakespeare, dismissed in the neo-classical period, yet the Romantics were also inevitable

heirs of the Enlightenment, and in some regards its further unfolding.<sup>10</sup> This ambiguity played an important part in the uncomfortable relation to Romanticism of both Goethe and Heine, as adherents of many Enlightenment ideals.

In his Berlin lectures, A. W. Schlegel opposed the “Classic” as the ideal of the prior neoclassical period and the enlightenment, encompassing the harmony, symmetry, totality, and perfection of ancient art, to the “Romantic” ideal as the embodiment of yearning for the invisible, extremes, the incomplete and sublime, as irrational, imperfect, and ugly. Schlegel insisted that Shakespeare far surpassed ancient as well as modern French tragedy in originality and represented the true counterpart of the ancient tragic poets, a revolutionary judgment that is still in force today. His German translations of Shakespeare remain popular. Schlegel’s opposition of the Classic and the Romantic thus corresponded indirectly to that of ancient and modern, southern and northern European culture. The Romantic movement was also informed in part by the aesthetics of the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who had discussed the sublime as opposed to the beautiful, elaborating on prior essays by David Hume and Edmund Burke.

Goethe’s own Enlightenment roots lay in his thorough education by tutors in Frankfurt, in which his wealthy father played an unusually prominent role, able to devote himself to this task because he had no other professional obligations. He learned ancient and modern languages, studied antique and modern literature along with the other fields of knowledge, skills, and accomplishments of a gentleman. These circumstances and his personal inclinations contributed to an exceptional freedom in his outlook and approach. In his autobiography, *Poetry and Truth*, Goethe recounted a curious incident as a young boy, when he smashed household crockery from an upper story of his house onto the street below, resulting in the violent applause of his enchanted neighbors and other onlookers.<sup>11</sup> The event appeared to prefigure Goethe’s remarkable self-confident disregard of accepted rules, social conventions, and moral norms in his path-breaking career, which always resulted in resounding success. Freud later interpreted the event as Goethe’s affirmation of his favored status as the “chosen one,” his mother’s beloved son.<sup>12</sup>

The young Goethe studied for a time at Leipzig and then Strasbourg, yet was disappointed by traditional academic approaches to art, philosophy, law, and other subjects. He accordingly pursued his own concerns instead: he composed poems based on his experiences and adventures, and engaged in lively discussions with like-minded friends such as the older Johann Gottfried Herder. In his pioneering literary criticism, Herder emphasized concern with the German language, folk poetry and myth, and the idea of the Germanic “folk,” closely connected with the English and Shakespeare, whom he admired.<sup>13</sup> Herder’s concerns are clearly reflected in young Goethe’s preoccupations, although commentators note that Herder merely reinforced Goethe’s own trajectory. Goethe’s essay on the Strasbourg Cathedral was one the earliest affirmations of Germanic Gothic culture, entirely independent of Herder’s field of activity, and an important anticipation of the Romantic movement as articulated by the Schlegel brothers.<sup>14</sup>

Herder’s profound religious skepticism likely also reinforced Goethe’s own inclination to reject Christianity in favor of ancient myth and the pagan Prometheus, himself an artist, as a personal model. Goethe did not receive much religious training in his family home and education, although the Old Testament remained an important literary source throughout his career. Although he initially showed interest in Pietism, this was more as a way of viewing the world than a religious faith. Another early watershed was Goethe’s break in 1780 with his friend and mentor the Swiss poet and theologian Johann Kaspar Lavater, whom he increasingly found superstitious and hypocritical. Goethe ultimately concluded that Christ was an ordinary man who possessed a spark of the divine like all of us.<sup>15</sup> Already in his Law dissertation, Goethe made



sufficiently critical assertions about religion to provoke its rejection by his committee. Back in his hometown he wrote highly provocative reviews for a local newspaper, *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen*, which controversy forced him to stop. Goethe unlikely wanted a traditional law career, and always refused to compromise his own outlook for the sake of others.<sup>16</sup> Like his father, he appeared to seek a position of freedom from professional obligations, yet in contrast to his father, he achieved astounding success early on and soon assumed major responsibilities as well.

A nationalist element was implicit in the turn to German language, history, folk tales, and myth, including the medieval Germanic chivalric romances from which the movement derived its name. Political circumstances also played a primary role, above all the French Revolution in 1789 followed by Napoleon's assumption of power and occupation of other countries. In 1806, Napoleon defeated Prussia at the Battle of Leipzig and occupied the Rhineland, which served as a rallying point for many to embrace the cause of a politically united Germany that would not be realized until the last quarter of the century.

As leading figures of the Romantic movement openly conflicted and were engulfed in scandal, Goethe took increasing distance from their aims. Goethe himself fell ill at the end of 1804 and Schiller died in the new year, contributing to Goethe's alienation and withdrawal.<sup>17</sup> Goethe was also irritated by the success of the Romantics. A journal article in 1808 ranked Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel's poems above Goethe's, partly on the basis of their idealist aims to transfigure the dualism of heaven and earth. At the salon of Johanna Schopenhauer, the mother of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, Goethe lamented that the late "Schiller had still hewed to what was noble; to surpass him [the Romantics] had to reach for what was holy." Goethe also joked that a new literary emperor was now named every season, as with Caesars at the end of the Roman empire, whereas he was happy to wake up in the morning with his head on his shoulders, even if he was no longer emperor. He also quipped: "It shall now be extremely pleasant to live and die as the last pagan."<sup>18</sup> Goethe's image of himself as 'pagan,' reflected in the nickname 'great pagan' thus involved his explicit opposition to Romanticism and to Christianity more broadly. He rejected religion as untrue and in relation to the dubious motives of its adherents; in relation to the precedent of Spinoza and what Goethe called Spinoza's "pantheism"; as an enthusiast for scientific research and would-be scientist; and on aesthetic grounds, in deference to his vocation as poet.<sup>19</sup> In his poetry, Goethe sought to extract some lasting divinity from earthly life, the corollary of the church, which made the divine mundane through its daily rituals. "I don't take the church's advice, since I've already been in paradise," he declared.<sup>20</sup> In *Werther*, Goethe located God in sublime nature as an extension of Werther's subjectivity, as opposed to the conventional, stifling piety of the other characters in the novel. Goethe's treatment of the *Faust* story was predicated on Mephistopheles' contempt for religious morality, and the conclusion to the story that Goethe composed near the end of his life openly mocked the Christian scheme.

Goethe was likewise opposed to German nationalism, which he thought detrimental to German culture. He considered Germany's traditional lack of political unity a strength for its cultural diversity and productivity. His decision to go to Weimar was partly the result of an accidental meeting, yet also reflected his conscious preferences and strategies. After his move to Weimar he largely avoided Frankfurt, and aside from a single visit to Berlin in his capacity as official representative of the Duchy of Weimar, never went back again. The great flowering of German literature and philosophy, including the Romantic movement and Weimar Classicism, had taken place in a fragmented and decentered Germany made up of diverse territories and cities such as Jena and Weimar. Goethe furthermore disagreed with the reductive ideology associated with nationalism. He felt that familiarity with other languages and cultures enhanced one's

relation to one's own language and culture, as evident from his own experience on his Italian journey. He considered patriotism a caricature, much like Romantic religious sentiments, and felt that identification with larger political entities limited the development of the individual, his primary priority.<sup>21</sup>

Goethe greatly admired Napoleon, whom he characterized as Promethean, his own youthful self-ideal, and the "highest phenomenon possible in history," and referred to him as "my emperor." Napoleon sought Goethe out for private audiences, including to discuss *Werther*, and awarded him the Order of Legion of Honor, which the poet wore at every opportunity. In one visit, Napoleon was supposed to have pointed to Goethe and declared "*Voilà un homme*" [there is a man!], about which Goethe offered the commentary: "you can see from that what a real, outright heathen [pagan] I am, since the *Ecce Homo* [behold the man, i.e. Christ] was applied to me in the opposite sense." Christ was presented to the crowd as "the man who claims to be God," whereas Napoleon identified Goethe as someone worthy of the name "man." Goethe claimed that "no superior has ever received me in that way, by allowing me to be... myself."<sup>22</sup> In his embrace of Napoleon and resistance to nationalism, Goethe antagonized both the liberal nationalists or political left, and his employer and friend the Duke of Weimar and others on the political right who sought to preserve the power of the nobility under the guidance of Prince Klemens von Metternich serving the Austrian empire. Even after the allied forces defeated Napoleon in 1815 and Goethe was asked to compose a text to mark the occasion, instead of nationalist subject, he wrote about the freedom of the artist.<sup>23</sup>

Goethe made his opposition to Romanticism, and its religious and nationalist dimensions explicit in his essay "New German Religious-Patriotic Art" [*Neudeutsche Religios-Patriotische Kunst*].<sup>24</sup> The essay is rarely cited in accounts of Romanticism, partly because Goethe is usually invoked as part of Romanticism's foundations, yet the essay was important for Heine, who adopted an analogous position *vis à vis* Romanticism. Goethe's ambivalent relation to Romanticism reflected his peculiar role as leading writer and the most famous individual of his period, often thought of as a personification of German culture, who was however profoundly invested in his individuality and autonomy. Young Goethe was recognized in his time as a rebel, whereas the mature Goethe was often characterized in the opposite way, as an arch-conformist. The seeming disparity was of profound concern to Heine. Goethe has never been thought of as a malcontent, whereas that term, rather than rebel, seems perfectly suited to Heine at every stage of his career, a distinction that conveys much about the relation between the two poets.

In Heine's *Confessions* of 1854, a humorous account of his life and work, he declared:

A witty Frenchman—a few years ago this expression would have been considered a pleonasm—once dubbed me a de-frocked Romantic [*romantique défroqué*]. I have a weakness for wit—and spiteful as was this appellation, it nevertheless delighted me highly. Notwithstanding the war of extermination that I had waged against Romanticism, I always remained Romantic at heart—and that in a higher degree than I myself realized. After I delivered the deadliest blows to the taste for the poetry of the Romantic school, there stole over me an inexpressible yearning for the blue flower in the fairy-land of Romanticism, and I grasped the magic lyre and sang a song wherein I gave full sway to all the sweet extravagances, to all the intoxication of moonlight, to all the blooming, nightingale-like fancies, once so fondly loved. I know it was "the last free forest-song of Romanticism," and I am its last poet. With me the old German lyrical school ends; with

me the modern lyrical school of Germany begins. Writers on German literature will assign to me this double rôle.<sup>25</sup>

“De-frocked Romantic” is itself close to a pleonasm or adjectival doubling, since the Romantics affinity for Catholicism was secular, or “de-frocked,” whereas Heine was doubly so in his ambivalent antagonism toward religion, and toward the Romantics. His gesture was characteristic of his ambivalence, yet also betrayed a development over time, insofar as he first had to distance himself from Romanticism in order ultimately to embrace it, admittedly in modified form. This process or dialectic took place through, and previously within, Goethe.

#### B. The *Bildung* of the Artist: Romantic and Ironic Love

Two key differences between the Romantics and Goethe involved the literary movement as opposed to the creative individual, and a programmatic movement as opposed to the creative individual developing over time, with the possibility of changing his mind, and embracing contrary extremes. Goethe in particular is rightly associated with the concept of *Bildung*, literally, ‘forming,’ ‘shaping,’ ‘building’ in the specific sense of the development of an individual or self, and more particularly an individual’s education, thought, and experience.<sup>26</sup> *Bildung*—the normal German word for ‘education’ with the specific sense of shaping a whole and by extension a person and a society’s “culture”—was associated in Goethe’s time with the educational program of Wilhelm von Humboldt, an important contributor to Jena Idealism and Romanticism whom Goethe knew, and the founder of the University of Berlin, now Humboldt University. Humboldt espoused a comprehensive educational model encompassing both arts and sciences, in which the scholar as both individual and world citizen chooses his and eventually her own way as part of particular development, encompassing a notable academic freedom in contrast to the more rigid French system.<sup>27</sup> The precedent of classical antiquity was a crucial foundation for Humboldt’s model and his own education, and the Germans tended to emphasize ancient Greek culture in particular, as opposed to the French who took Roman antiquity as their primary model, an important factor in the broader dialectic of classicism and Romanticism in Germany.<sup>28</sup> The Humboldt model was later adapted in most universities. Goethe exemplified Humboldt’s ideal in the extraordinary breadth of his education and formation as an individual, although ironically these had little to do with his formal university education and everything to do with his own personal experience.

A related idea is *Die Bildungsroman* [development novel], which Goethe essentially inaugurated. Already the founding gesture of his first masterpiece *Werther—Götz* would have qualified as such for a lesser author—tells the story of the development of a single individual or self over time. One obvious distinction between Goethe’s novel and its indirect model in Rousseau’s *Julie or the new Héloïse*, which likewise reflects the outlook of sentimentalist philosophy and adapted an epistolary form, was the exceptionally succinct and dense quality of Goethe’s novel, which together with the hero’s tragic end, allowed for an extraordinary sense of his rapid development.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, Goethe also took ironic distance from his hero, who could be said to exemplify an arrested development.<sup>30</sup> *Werther*’s premature end also made possible the beginning of Goethe’s own extraordinary *Bildung*, when despite his extraordinary literary success, he returned instead to his practical duties as an official at the Weimar court.

Goethe’s second novel, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* [“William Master’s Apprenticeship”], was recognized as the definitive *Bildungsroman* in his time. Goethe originally called his work in progress *Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung* [“William Master’s theatrical mission”], which

had to do specifically with young Wilhelm [i.e. young Goethe]’s vocation as a dramatist and playwright, which was what Goethe still thought he might become at Weimar. Yet he revised and expanded his novel as his own ambitions grew. Some of the Romantics expressed misgivings about Goethe’s novel; the poet and disgruntled ‘natural’ aristocrat Novalis complained that *Wilhelm Meister* was a betrayal of poetry, “aesthetic atheism,” and not so much an apprenticeship as “a pilgrimage toward a patent of nobility!”—this last accusation directed more at Goethe than his hero.<sup>31</sup> Goethe’s “aesthetic atheism” was an implicit repudiation of the crypto-Catholic program of the Romantics. In Goethe’s scheme, the artist answers to no one but himself, or his own capacity to grow and change.

The possibility of a work’s development can mirror an artist’s own development, and in quasi-autobiographical works like *Wilhelm Meister*, the work can embody the artist. As opposed to a direct correspondence between the facts of the artist’s biography and his works in a rigid “art reflects life” scheme, the model proposed by Goethe is closer to the inverse, that the artist creates himself and by extension his life through his work. The *Bildung* of the artist is the development and formation of himself as a work. Goethe himself was arguably Goethe’s greatest creation. He made all these relations explicit in his multi-volume autobiography, *Poetry and Truth*, a title that already suggests the complex relations between literature and historical truth, the facts of a life and the creative imagination. Goethe’s scheme presents a potential problem for scholarly commentators, who tend to take his construct over as their own “explanation” of his art through his work. That not only reductively simplifies complex matters, but also obscures Goethe’s own capacious construct that he left to us as a means to contextualize his work and life.

Aside from his superlative stature in German letters, his career as model of a life well lived, and his *Faust*, Goethe is probably best known for his love poems. These are difficult to disentangle from his actual love affairs as sources for his love poems, about which he reported in *Poetry and Truth* and elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> The “experiential model” of *Bildung* in Goethe’s love poems extended more generally to all his works in relation to his life. *Götz* and *Werther* implicitly reflected the rebellious angry or melancholy outlooks of the artist as young man; *Iphigenia* and *Tasso* the nascent classicist and poet wrestling with his worldly responsibilities as minister of state; his novel *Elective Affinities* his skeptical attitude toward marriage and society in his maturity; and *Faust* the course and sum of human life, from old age back to youth and forward once more. *Faust* in particular makes explicit the transition in the experiential model from a Christian scheme of judgment at life’s end in terms of salvation and damnation to the development of one’s life here on earth [*Bildung*], “for those who strive,” an aesthetic rather than moral ground of existence, with the artist as model, rather than Christ and the saints. Goethe’s construct of Goethe thus became an exemplar, not just for the Germans, but for all humanity.

These factors were compounded in Heine’s response to Goethe. Like other poets writing in German, Heine was necessarily the heir of Goethe’s poetry and his experiential model of *Bildung*. Yet Heine developed a highly original relation to Goethe, already of interest as such, and perhaps more illuminating for Goethe than that of any other writer. Heine could be said to have heeded Goethe’s own famous advice, which Goethe himself put into practice in his relation to prior tradition: “that which you have inherited from your fathers, you must earn to possess,” that is, you must make your tradition your own.<sup>33</sup> Heine eventually found a shared foundation with Goethe as “pagan” and through his own radical development and self-overcoming.

The most obvious relation between Goethe and Heine involves their love poems. Heine’s love poems were recognized from the outset of his career as profoundly dependent on Goethe’s, although as his own poetic voice matured, his poems were increasingly recognized as entirely

different. A single well-chosen comparison can reflect their distinct voices as well as their relation. The last stanza of Goethe's *Welcome and Farewell* from 1771, one of his many extraordinarily popular love poems, has a direct counterpart in the second of two stanzas of a poem in Heine's cycle *Homecoming*, published in his *Travel Pictures I* in 1826, including several repetitions of words and rhymes:

... Your kisses' warmth, what rapture in it, [*In deinen Küssen welche Wonne!*]  
What sorrow lingers in your eye! [*In deinem Auge welcher Schmerz!*]  
I want; your head was lowered in sadness,/ You watched me go, in deep distress.  
And yet, to be so loved, what gladness! [*Und doch, welch Glück, geliebt zu werden!*]  
To love, o gods, what happiness! [*Und lieben, Götter, welch ein Glück!*]<sup>34</sup>

What lies there are in kisses! [*In den Küssen welche Lüge!*]  
What bliss (warmth) in their illusion! [*Welche Wonne in dem Schein!*]  
Indeed, how sweet is the deception, [*Ach, wie süß ist das Betrügen,*]  
Sweeter still, to be deceived! [*Süßer das Betrogensein!*].<sup>35</sup>

Heine employs similar language and concepts, particularly evident from his repetition of words in the German originals: *Ach, Küssen, welche Wonne*. Yet whereas Goethe celebrates authentic experience, Heine speaks of illusion and deception.

Heine's love poetry, which was wildly popular, was also recognized early on as self-conscious and ironic, and often said to be superficial and frivolous. Malicious verses circulating soon after his *Book of Songs* was published charged him with calculated manipulation for financial gain:

The gardener tends to his spades,/ The beggar to his lame leg,/  
The money-changer to his ducats,/ Me to my love's torments./  
Therefore I am so bound,/ my child, to your faithless heart;/  
I have found much money/ and fame in the pain of love./  
Now I sing by a night-time lamp/ Of the misery that found me:/  
It will appear at Hoffmann and Campe/ in a small octave format.<sup>36</sup>

These notions derive partly from the self-evident logic of Heine's poetry, which he makes explicit in one case, that the pain his lover causes results in poems that he presents back to her: "Out of my tears of yearning/ The blossoming flowers throng,/ And all my sighs are turning/ To nightingales in song./ And if you love me, dear,/ I'll give you those blossoms pale,/ And outside your window you'll hear/ The song of the nightingale."<sup>37</sup> Another poem offers a more bitter formulation: "My songs are filled with poison—/Why shouldn't that be true?/ Into my budding manhood/ You poured your poison through."<sup>38</sup> Heine was also more explicit than previous poets about the concrete social, political, and economic circumstances of publishing. Both Heine's original perspectives on these issues and attacks against him, justified and not, are difficult to separate from his Jewish background, as suggested by the reference in the malicious verse cited here to "the money-changer," a standard trope in the bible and the history of art of Jews as Christ's enemies, which corresponded closely to their subsequent role as money lenders and bankers. However, Heine actually made little money from his best-selling poetry due to a combination of low royalties, pirating, and censorship.

Heine was working within a model of experiential poetry inherited from Goethe, which he undeniably gave a new twist. Heine scholarship has accordingly concentrated on possible biographical sources for his poems. The most obvious source was his cousin Amalie, the pretty daughter of his millionaire banker uncle Solomon, whose hand in marriage—Amalie’s rather than Solomon’s, although there was perhaps confusion on this point—Heine unsuccessfully sought, and then possibly her sister Therese after her. Known in Paris as something of a dandy, Heine eventually married his mistress, the shop-girl Crescence Eugénie Mirat, whom he called Mathilde, out of concern about his possible death from a duel related to his scandalous book on Ludwig Börne, one of at least ten duels Heine is known to have fought.<sup>39</sup> Goethe had similarly married his long-time and illiterate common-law wife Christiane Vulpius after she valiantly defended their household from occupation by Napoleon’s soldiers. Many commentators observed a parallel between Goethe and Heine’s unconventional choices of a socially “low” partners; Heine’s biographer Jeffrey Sammons even invoked an *imitatio Goethii* [imitation of Goethe].<sup>40</sup> Like Goethe, Heine also had a late-life erotic relation, specifically with the woman who called herself Camille Selden whom he named *la Mouche* [the fly], although his near paralysis made physical consummation impossible.

In contrast to Goethe, it is difficult to “map” correspondences between Heine’s love poems and his possible lovers. Amalie as lover-manquée certainly comes into play, although Heine’s choice of her as object of desire or at least would-be fiancée likely involved practical considerations and was over-determined; he spent the rest of his life trying to get some part of his uncle Solomon’s millions, equally unsuccessfully. Amalie’s understanding of these circumstances may have also contributed to her rejection of Heine. We cannot know if this primal experience informed his poetic outlook on love, his sense of contempt, disappointment, and emptiness. Conversely, his choice may have been partly determined by the demands of his poetic vocation, such that he pretended to be in love, and reaped the sadness as a result in order to produce more verse, a circular logic rehearsed in his poems.

Heine’s friend Karl Marx—who carried on a well-hidden affair with a political kindred spirit who was serving as the family maid—claimed that Heine “never had any luck with women,” whereas Dolf Sternberger called Heine “a lively eroticist.”<sup>41</sup> The topic was also a subject of gossip related to Heine’s public polemics with Ludwig Börne. One scholar counted as many as a hundred different women to whom Heine’s poetic persona addressed his complaints, a tally of Don Giovanniesque proportions, far beyond Goethe’s, yet concrete connections between Heine’s life and his poems are rarely evident.<sup>42</sup> Marxist scholars have rejected biographical connections in favor of Heine’s realism reflecting the changing status of women and sexual roles in his urban, industrialized society.<sup>43</sup> Yet these leftist critics have tended to ignore Heine’s own proclivity for misogyny, open contempt for his love objects, and characterization of the sexual act as degraded and empty, in striking contrast to the female love object as elevated in beauty, intellect, spirit, and social standing in Goethe and the broader Western tradition of love poetry.<sup>44</sup>

Several scholars have seen parallels between Heine’s poems and the tradition of Petrarchan poetry, with its paradoxes such as “icy fire”; one Petrarchan scholar cited Heine’s poetry as the closest analogy.<sup>45</sup> Heine was certainly aware of Petrarchan tradition, and he was one of the earliest students of the medieval German *Minnesänger* with whom the Romantics and later Wagner were obsessed—his first visit in Paris was to a Walther von der Vogelweide manuscript in the *Bibliothèque nationale*. On the other hand, Heine adapted such traditional precedents in ironic ways, as evident from his treatment of the Tannhäuser legend in particular.<sup>46</sup> Petrarch emphasized the transformative power of love, like subsequent Western poets including Goethe,

whereas Heine saw only disappointment..<sup>47</sup> George Peters characterized Heine's poetry as devoted to nothing less than "destroying the myth of passion in the Western tradition."<sup>48</sup> Heine's poetry arguably coincides with the end of Western tradition of love poetry and anticipates the beginning of different modern, postmodern tradition.

On the other hand, Peters' thesis is perhaps over-stated, or too abstract, and at odds with his usefully concrete account of connections between Goethe and Heine. Heine's poetry was bound up with Goethe's biographical, experiential model, a relation of intimate doubling, or a poetic tango, that Heine could not easily step outside. Juxtaposing Goethe and Heine's love poetry potentially casts both in a different light. Critics naturally approach Heine's sarcasm and irony, his seeming conception of love as "false," in terms of authentic experience: hence the appeal to his particular lovers or conversely to degraded gender relations in a capitalist society. This model derived from Goethe. Yet we could just as easily reverse these relations. Goethe's experiential model was a conscious construct, and whatever his actual experience with various women, what he was able to express in his poems was an artistic achievement, not simply a translation into words of what he felt. Goethe's most fundamental dialogue with Schiller bears directly on these issues insofar as the experience of love, like the "primal plant," necessarily involves a dialectic of observation and idea.

Goethe inherited an idea of love and love poetry in the Western tradition from his "fathers" that he "earned" and made his own or transformed, and which Heine inherited and transformed in turn. We should also bear in mind Goethe's deliberate distance from Romanticism, not only its religious and nationalistic dimensions, but also Romantic love itself, as irrational and deluded, idealistic and based on projection, perhaps the core of what Goethe called "sick" in relation to Classicism as "healthy."<sup>49</sup> If *Werther* was partly a conscious parody on the part of the author Goethe, we might think of all his love poetry in terms of a conscious internal distance, a necessarily crafted and thus artificial construct of experience. We can accordingly see Heine's poems as a response to Goethe's artistry, rather than simply a reflection of Heine's different experience or sensibility, or to put in another way, Heine's construct [*Bildung*] of Heine was a response to Goethe's Goethe.<sup>50</sup>

Heine's "false" experience of love was thus over-determined by its coincidence with the precedent of Goethe's poetry, and of Goethe as a towering precursor, an intersection of personal history and literary history that Goethe himself had explored. The relation between Goethe and Heine corresponds in this regard to Schiller's distinction between the naïve and the sentimental poet, ostensibly corresponding to Goethe and Schiller, although Goethe later asserted that there were no naïve poets, since all poets are self-conscious about their place in tradition, a criticism Heine understood all too well in his self-conscious irony.<sup>51</sup> Schiller's distinction also resonates with Bloom's theory of "The Anxiety of Influence," which I have proposed Heine anticipated. Heine sought to over-turn or to surpass Goethe's precedent, yet recognized that he was trapped in the position of a *Doppelgänger*, an uncanny double, in his own words, "the great pagan no. 2."

### C. Heine's *Auseinandersetzung* with Goethe

As a gifted young poet writing in German with a preternatural ability to mimic other poets and writers, Heine was intimately familiar with Goethe's poems. Heine's teacher A. W. Schlegel and his mentors in Berlin, Karl August Varnhagen von Ense and his Jewish wife Rahel, who led a renowned Berlin Salon, also encouraged him to take Goethe's poems as models. Heine told Rahel Varnhagen's brother Robert that he "had now read, into the smallest particulars, all of Goethe! I am no longer a blind pagan, but rather a seeing one."<sup>52</sup> The remark playfully combined the

biblical contrast of the blind pagan and seeing Christian with Goethe's popular nickname. Goethe thus effectively embodied paganism as a new cultural dispensation. Yet Heine was also profoundly ambivalent about Goethe and already engaged in a broader process of what the Germans call *Auseinandersetzung* ["setting apart from one another"], a belated dialogue that also served to distinguish between and relate their outlooks. On some level, Heine used Goethe as a means to become himself.

Already in 1821, Heine sent his first book of poetry to Goethe with a highly deferential dedication, indeed, a declaration of love, also on behalf of "the German people":

I would have had a hundred different reasons to send Your Excellency my poems. I only want to mention one: "I love you"... I was long perplexed about the nature of poetry. People told me: "Ask [A. W.] Schlegel." He said: "Read Goethe." That I have done in all reverence, and if I shall ever do anything worthwhile, I know whom to thank. I kiss the noble hand which has shown me and the whole German people the way to heaven...<sup>53</sup>

Heine's emphatic confession of love could have been sincere, and at the same time suggests more ambivalent feelings, as Goethe surely understood from the extensive adulation and projections of others he had experienced throughout his career.

The following year in 1822 Karl August Varnhagen von Ense edited a collection of essays on Goethe and solicited but did not include an essay by Heine, which from other circumstances we can surmise lacked the objective distance or positive outlook necessary for such a collection.<sup>54</sup> Heine also claimed that he was writing a book on Goethe, which never materialized, although his lengthy essay *The Romantic School* from 1833 had the requisite material for such a volume. Rahel Varnhagen reported that Heine was obsessed with Goethe's fame in relation to his own and wanted to rage against him, but "it didn't work, I had to laugh."<sup>55</sup> Heine's emphatic love was understandably accompanied by darker feelings stemming from an unavoidable rivalry and jealousy. In the summer of 1824 Heine told his friend Eduard Wedekind that he planned to write a Faust that would be "precisely the opposite of Goethe's."<sup>56</sup>

In the Fall of that year Heine set out on a journey to the Harz mountains, and their highest peak, the Brocken. He was following in footsteps of Goethe, who shortly after taking up his post in Weimar climbed the Brocken, reputed to be the location of the *Walpurgisnacht*, a yearly night-time gathering of witches that figured prominently in Goethe's *Faust* part II. At the end of his journey, on October 2, Heine paid a visit to the seventy-five-year-old Goethe in his house on the *Frauenplan*. As was customary, Heine sent a letter of introduction beforehand:

I beg your Excellency to grant me the good fortune to appear before you for a few moments. I shall not trouble you. I shall merely kiss your hand, and go. My name is H. Heine. I am from the Rhineland, and now reside in Göttingen. Before that, I lived for a few years in Berlin, we're associated with a number of your old acquaintances and admirers (the late Wolf, the Varnhagens, etc.) and grew to love you more and more. I am also a poet... On the Brocken I was seized by an urge to make a pilgrimage to Weimar and pay homage to Goethe. I have come here truly as a pilgrim, that is, on foot, in weather-stained garments, and I await your answer to my prayers.

With enthusiasm and devotion,  
H. Heine<sup>57</sup>



There was no reason to expect anything from the meeting. After his unprecedented international fame following the publication of *Werther*, Goethe had become a world celebrity, visited by Napoleon, Beethoven, and Hegel. He mostly avoided the countless petitioners who sought his advice and support, including the poets Heinrich von Kleist and Friedrich Hölderlin. Goethe's audiences in Weimar were notoriously short, sandwiched into an over-full daily agenda, and Heine was still an immature poet and a relative unknown.<sup>58</sup> In letters to friends, he was initially reticent about the visit, referring to the good beer and roast goose he had tasted in Weimar. Much later, his brother Max published a fascinating account, ostensibly based on Heine's report:

The conversation, when not exactly about the weather, proceeded on a very ordinary course, there was even talk about the *Pappelallee* [poplar avenue] between Jena and Weimar. Then suddenly Goethe directed to Heine the question: 'what are you working on now?' The young poet rashly answered: 'on a Faust.' Goethe, whose *Faust* part II had not yet been published, braced himself a bit, and asked in an arch tone: 'do you have other business in Weimar, Herr Heine?'<sup>59</sup>

The audience was over.

Some scholars have dismissed this account as apocryphal; others have given it credence.<sup>60</sup> Heine had repeatedly mentioned working on a Faust poem to others, including to his friend Wedekind in the previous summer, and he eventually produced a highly original take on the *Faust* theme in his "dance-poem" *Doktor Faust* with commentary in 1847. Heine could have been developing this idea, or simply claimed to be doing so. In his account of the same meeting a decade later in his essay *The Romantic School*, Heine wrote only that Goethe asked him about his journey on the *Pappelallee* leading to Weimar, and he replied that he ate plums along the way and they tasted good, a somewhat irreverent reply to a superficial question.<sup>61</sup> Heine plausibly left out important elements in this earlier report. Max improbably invented his story, with an even more irreverent reply to a similarly general point of conversation, whereas Heine could have expected his brother to pass the story on, whether it was factual or greatly embellished, as what is arguably a literary work in itself.

Heine was working at that time on his *Harz Journey*, first published in 1827, based on his pilgrimage in the Fall of 1824, which echoed or parodied in inverted form several ideas from Goethe, including his *Werther*, and followed in Goethe's footsteps, culminating in a visit to Goethe himself, although Heine omitted that event from his account.<sup>62</sup> Whatever actually happened, their encounter could hardly have been included in Heine's narrative, at least not one written by young Heine. Heine's invocation of his own supposed Faust would simply have been a more aggressive version of what he was doing. Whether Heine actually replied to Goethe in this way or merely willed it so by conveying the story to his brother, the comment effectively conveyed Heine's oedipal relation to Goethe: "I intend to rival your still uncompleted greatest work and the definitive masterpiece of German literature." The story also distills something of the essence of Heine's career: his repeated burning of bridges, which might seem irrational, but was perhaps necessary if he were not to compromise or to sacrifice his unique vision. Heine would in any case unlikely have been able to ingratiate himself to the aged poet, let alone make Goethe recognize him as a successor or rival. A better strategy, implicit in Heine's retort, whether said or merely imagined and passed on, would be to make posterity recognize him as Goethe's rival in

the form of a parodic inversion, or Goethe's ambivalent *Doppelgänger*. This was still merely a latent possibility at that time, gradually realized over the course of Heine's career, and arguably still unrecognized today.

The following year in 1829, in a letter to his friend Rudolf Christiani, Heine declared: "I am in a true war with Goethe and his texts, just as my views of life are at war with my innate tendencies and the secret movements of my soul."<sup>63</sup> According to Heine, Goethe's primary concern was the beauty of life and rational, practical progress, whereas Heine tended toward the ideal and dream-like fantasies [*Schwärmerey*]. He also claimed that the philosophy underneath Goethe's writings repelled him, yet he venerated their aesthetic worth. Heine reassured his friend Christiani, a Goetheaner, that "I will never show this war outwardly, I will always belong to the Goethean militia [*Freykorps*]," and quoted Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan* inaccurately from memory to underscore his allegiance.<sup>64</sup> A few weeks later he wrote along similar lines to his friend Moses Moser:

Goethe and I are essentially of two natures which must repel one another in their heterogeneity. He is innately a light-hearted man of life who sees enjoyment as the highest virtue, and occasionally feels and intuits life for and in the idea and formulates this in poems, but has never deeply understood and even less lived it. By contrast I am innately a dreamer, i.e. to the point of the sacrifice of life inspired by the idea.... The big question remains whether this dreamer, who gives his life to the idea, will live a moment more or happier than the Herr v. Goethe has during his entire 76 years of egotistic and comfortable life.<sup>65</sup>

Heine later wrote that Goethe had, "advanced to the age of eighty, become a state minister and well to do—poor German people! This is your greatest man!"<sup>66</sup>

The young Heine was probably more ambivalent about Goethe than his declaration of love in his early letter would lead us—if not necessarily Goethe—to believe, and other reports from the following year confirm his profound ambivalence. These tendencies were surely intensified by their unproductive and abortive meeting. Heine acknowledged Goethe's importance and his allegiance to him and at the same time identified him as his primary rival and declared war on him. A few years later Heine asserted in a letter that "[Goethe] cannot prevent that his great name will one day often be invoked together with the name H. Heine."<sup>67</sup> Heine also confessed that his own "views of life" were at war with his innate tendencies, thus, an internal war, that corresponded to or was projected onto his struggle with Goethe.<sup>68</sup> Heine further sought to formulate their differences, rather inchoately: he identified with the tendency toward irrational dreaming, a central characteristic of the Romantic movement, which Goethe had opposed, although he too had been a Romantic in his youth and then likewise fought an internal war.

In subsequent works Heine progressively upped the ante in his competition with Goethe. Heine's *Journey from Munich to Genoa* from 1829 made the parallel with Goethe's *Italian Journey* explicit at the beginning of his text, yet Heine swerved away from Goethe's itinerary to Genoa, and swerved away in terms of content and approach.<sup>69</sup> Goethe's *Italian Journey* looked to the past, to antiquity and the classical tradition, whereas Heine was concerned with the political present, including the repression of the Northern Italians under the reactionary Hapsburg regime, and the "grand tour" as invasive and exploitive tourism, particularly by what he considered to be the soul-less English. More broadly, Heine addressed a crisis of culture under capitalism, the *Zerrissenheit* [torn-ness or fragmentation] of modernity.<sup>70</sup>

Heine's following *Baths of Lucca* of 1829 included a dig at Goethe's famous characterization of Italy as "the land where lemon trees bloom," words he placed in the mouth of Mignon in his *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, which Heine qualified with "Just don't come in early August, when you will burnt or you'll burn by the sun during the day and be torn asunder by fleas at night."<sup>71</sup> Heine's content and approach in this book had become more personal and stranger, above all because he belatedly concluded his narrative with an incendiary parody of the classicist poet count August von Platen-Hallermünde. At the end of his *North-Sea Tales* from 1827, Heine had included some of the satirist and poet Karl Immermann's *Xenien*, inspired by Schiller and Goethe's *Xenien*, polemical poems in their journal *Propyläen*.<sup>72</sup> Immermann's *Xenien* were loosely based on the form of Martial's epigrams and mocked the poets Friedrich Rückert and Platen for their bad poetry imitating classical forms and Goethe's classically-inspired poetry. Rückert, now best known for poems set to music by many great composers including Gustav Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder*, ignored the slight, whereas Platen mounted a sustained counter-attack in his play *The Romantic Oedipus* of 1829. Here he characterized Immermann as a bad poet and a Romantic, not a classicist, and threw in Heine for good measure as another Romantic, and referred to "baptized Heine, the pride of the synagogue" and that "his kisses smell of garlic."<sup>73</sup> Immermann responded with an essay and Heine with his *Baths of Lucca*, both from 1829, which accused Platen of writing bad poetry and deluded egotism, and cast his dubious nobility and his homoerotic practice and sensibility in a negative light.<sup>74</sup>

Heine's *Baths of Lucca* was the far more original and significant work, a comic masterpiece of an entirely new genre. As Jefferson Chase has explained, during this period of Jewish assimilation within German culture, writers began to critique a distinct type of low and polemical "Jewish humor," and several Jewish writers, Moritz Saphir, Ludwig Börne, and Heine, all "assimilated" or internalized these critiques within their humor, turning anti-Jewish polemics against their opponents.<sup>75</sup> Heine was by far the most creative in this endeavor, and his *Baths of Lucca* was unique in its synthesis of anti-Jewish and anti-homoerotic caricatures.

The main character, Marquis Cristoforo di Gumpelino, previously Christian Gumpel of Hamburg, is an assimilated Jewish *parvenu*, based loosely on a Hamburg banker Lazarus Gumpel, with his servant and foil Hirsch Hyacinth, a former Hamburg lottery dealer. Heine as narrator also plays a role as does an unassimilated Hamburg Jew, Moses Lump. Heine's novel thus already addressed much more complex contemporary "political" circumstances than his *Journey from Munich to Genoa*, including anti-Jewish caricatures and motifs. When the polemic with Platen came to the fore, Heine adapted Gumpelino to represent Platen in disguised form in several respects, and thus transformed Platen into his own anti-Jewish caricature.<sup>76</sup> At the end of the story Gumpelino becomes enamored of Platen's poems, which Heine savagely mocks. Heine later claimed that Goethe and Schiller's *Xenien* were "merely a sham battle [*ein Kartoffelkrieg*, a battle waged by throwing potatoes] compared to him" and that he sought in this way "to divest the title 'count' of its magic."<sup>77</sup> Complex issues of Jewish identity were thus inextricably woven together with attacks on Platen's homosexuality, polemics about social status, and Heine's broader literary ambitions.

The publication of the novel raised Heine's profile in cities throughout Europe, but also unleashed a scandal, particularly in Germany, not the least because Heine as a commoner was attacking a member of the aristocracy in this degrading way. He later acknowledged his regret and promised to remove the attacks on Platen, although he never did so, and merely substituted another name in a French translation of his novel. Shortly before the original publication, he

wrote to Immermann: “for three months I pondered over what to do and then I did only what absolute necessity demanded.”<sup>78</sup> Afterward, he confessed to Varnhagen von Ense:

No one knows better than I that I have done myself an incalculable harm with the Platen chapter, that I should have handled it differently, that I have offended a better class of the public; at the same time I feel that with all my talents I could not have done better and that—cost what it might—I had to make an example... I girded my loins and struck as quickly and as hard as I could... Robert, Gans, Michael Beer, and others always bore these [anti-Jewish] attacks like good Christians and maintained a prudent silence when they were attacked. I am a different kind of man, and that is well. It is good when evil ones find a man who will fight ruthlessly and mercilessly to vindicate himself and others.<sup>79</sup>

There is something undeniably noble about Heine’s stated motive, although this was also his self-justification, and his novel comprised undeniably offensive material, particularly his *ad hominem* attacks on Platen’s sexuality. Nor would this be the last instance of Heine making one of his masterpieces unpalatable, unacceptable, and perhaps unassimilable, effectively undermining his reputation and career, which conveys much about his unique place in literary history. His repeated invocation of necessity regardless of cost vividly evokes his life story and artistic vision as an extricable fate, distantly recalling the unique precedent of Goethe.

To what degree we should interpret Heine’s aims and motives and literary vision as formed in opposition to Goethe remains open to debate. Heine’s polemics against Platen, as a Goethe follower and dogmatic classicist, could be interpreted as an indirect or disguised means of challenging Goethe. Goethe himself went on register his incomprehension: “Platen scandalizes Heine, and Heine Platen, and each seeks to make the other hateful; while the world is wide enough for all to live and let live; and everyone has an enemy in his own talent, which gives him quite enough to do.”<sup>80</sup> Another report that Heine heard claimed that in response to his *Travel Sketches*, Goethe had referred to Heine as a *Gassenjungen* [“guttersnipe” or “ragamuffin,” literally, “a boy of the streets”], a term that has been associated with *Gassenjude* [Jew of the streets] as a possible inversion of *Judengasse* [Jews’ street].<sup>81</sup> This chain of associations might be far-fetched, yet Heine was clearly “sniping” in “street boy” polemics and these circumstances could not be separated from his Jewish background. Jost Hermand claimed that “to show Goethe he was truly worthy of the invective ‘guttersnipe,’ Heine employed as many filthy jokes as the subject at hand allowed.”<sup>82</sup> As suggested by Heine’s letter cited above, he sought to demonstrate his “manly” seriousness through merciless attacks on Platen. Regarding Goethe, Heine protested, not entirely believably, that “it is only natural that Goethe, the aristocrat, dislikes me. I’m honored by his rebuke, for he praises all weakness. He fears the rising Titans. He has become a weak and decrepit god, peevish because he can no longer create... I have stopped loving him.”<sup>83</sup>

On the other hand, the same report also provoked Heine’s declaration that Goethe could not “prevent that his great name will one day often be invoked together with the name H. Heine.” Heine thus sought to yoke his name to Goethe’s as his ostensible enemy, a peculiar love-hate struggle or wrestling of would-be Titan and decrepit God, which however remained largely unaddressed in Heine’s time, as opposed to his much less significant, albeit fascinating, feud with Platen. At the end of his life, Goethe was understandably primarily focused on applying the finishing touches to his *Faust* and other house-cleaning, and unlikely spent much time thinking about Heine. Yet the relation remained primary or primal in Heine’s consciousness as evidenced

by his texts up to the end of his life. As it turned out, Heine's prediction eventually proved correct, as with others he made, insofar as nationalist, anti-Semitic critics later opposed his name as evil anti-type to Goethe's as literary hero of the nation, which was presumably not what Heine had in mind.<sup>84</sup>

#### D. Goethe, Heine, and the Politics of Literature

In the course of the 1830's Heine grew progressively close in his own outlook to that of Goethe, at least as Heine understood him. There are several, "over-determined" reasons for this development. Heine's literary activities and the scandals they unleashed, which as shown by the Platen episode are difficult to separate from his Jewish background, provoked the German authorities and censors, so that leaving Germany to some extent became his unavoidable fate. The bourgeois revolution in Paris in 1830 drastically transformed the political landscape of Europe and precipitated Heine's move to Paris in 1831, which would turn into a life exile. Perhaps most importantly, Goethe died at the age of 82 in 1832, concluding the "Goethe period" and ushering in a new more explicitly and self-consciously political era, about which Heine was so ambivalent that it put into context his lesser ambivalence about Goethe.

Several writers of Heine's generation had inevitably come to define themselves in opposition to Goethe. A pioneering literary critic, Wolfgang Menzel, attacked Goethe in a study of German literature that the young Heine had endorsed in an 1828 review: "the principle of the Goethean time, the art-idea, is slipping away. A new time with a new principle is on the horizon, and... it begins with the insurrection against Goethe." Heine concluded by comparing Goethe to an "aged robber chieftain [... who] has put aside his trade, leads an upstanding middle-class life among the local dignitaries [...and] strives to uphold all philistine virtues down to the pettiest detail."<sup>85</sup> That is, Goethe had implicitly betrayed his position as Romantic rebel by embracing and conforming to the establishment. A younger generation of writers with explicitly radical liberal agendas, including Ludwig Börne, Karl Gutzkow, and others, among whom Heine was usually grouped, which came to be called "Young Germany," dominated German literature in the period after 1832. The Prussian authorities banned their works. Heine hated being lumped together with Young Germany and especially being censored in this way and sought to differentiate himself. The most extreme example was his attack on Börne in 1840, who seemed to occupy an adjacent position on the political spectrum, although Heine made their opposition clear. In his 1837 book *The Informer [Über die Denunzianten]*, Heine also attacked Menzel after his swerve to the political right.<sup>86</sup> Menzel had participated in one of the torch-lit outdoor celebrations by fraternities on the anniversaries of Napoleon's defeat by Prussia in 1816, including on the Wartburg, at which anti-Jewish slogans were embraced and books were burned.<sup>87</sup>

Heine's highly idiosyncratic personal history was inevitably embedded within the broader dynamics of German history. The fraternity-sponsored rallies, including one on the Wartburg, constituted an act of German nationalism, already bound up with anti-Semitism. Another was Romanticism, which looked back to medieval legends and Romances, inextricable from Catholic Christianity as a foundation of German culture and identity, which was necessarily at odd with Jewish identity, including modern secular variations of Jewish identity. Young Heine had been educated by August Wilhelm Schlegel, a spokesman of Romanticism, and initially considered himself an exemplar of Romanticism and something of a Romantic theorist in his early 1820 essay *Die Romantik*.<sup>88</sup> Yet in that same year he was expelled from his fraternity in Göttingen, and later fought a duel related to the issue, possibly involving his Jewish background.<sup>89</sup> He soon after moved to Berlin and began to involve himself with the salon of Varnhagen von Ense's Jewish

wife Rahel and “The Society for the Culture and scholarship of the Jews” or *Verein* and by extension Jewish history, culture, and identity as part of his own personal and literary identity. At this time, he increasingly grew distant from Romanticism. At first Heine sought to differentiate good Romanticism from its bad Christian and “Gothic” elements, including the eclecticism he dismissed as a bright play of colors [*buntes Farbenspiel*], he gradually came to identify Romanticism generally with Christianity and a troubling German nationalism.<sup>90</sup> These issues are difficult to separate from Heine’s dynamic attitude toward his Jewish background and identity, as well as his evolving outlook on Goethe, whom he first identified as Romanticism’s greatest exemplar, and then increasingly acknowledged as a critic of Romanticism, like himself.

Heine first explained his radical change in perspective on Goethe in his essay on *The Romantic School*, which initially appeared in 1832, in the year that Goethe died, in a French translation as part of his text “On Germany.” The text was in part a response to Madame de Staël’s popular book of the same name.<sup>91</sup> Heine sought to generate funds of his own, and to counter the distortions of what he considered De Staël’s superficial outlook, although he was in certain regards unfair to her. His account also served to explain his own understanding of developments in German literature, culture, and thought—“the German mind”—to his new community of the French, and eventually, revised and expanded in German language editions, to the Germans. He was at the same time explaining his own vision as an artist, to others and to himself. In his *Romantic School* essay, Heine almost immediately addressed Goethe as the literary “elephant in the room,” a figure so monumental as to leave little space for anyone else, who represented an unavoidable burden to writers of Heine’s generation:

Most people think that with Goethe’s death a new literary era began in Germany, that the old Germany went to its grave with him, that the aristocratic period of literature came to an end and the democratic period began, or, as a French journalist expressed it recently, “the spirit of man as an individual has ceased to exist, the spirit of collective man has begun.”

For my part, I cannot pass judgment in such a categorical fashion on the future evolutions of the German mind. Many years ago, however, I predicted the end of the “Goethean Period of Art,” the term I first used to designate this period. It was easy enough to prophesy. I was very familiar with the ways and means of those malcontents who wanted to put an end to the Goethean realm of art, and some even claim to have seen me myself taking part in the mutinies against Goethe. Now that Goethe is dead, a strange sadness overwhelms me.<sup>92</sup>

Goethe’s death marked a watershed moment in German literature and even intellectual history, a division of eras or transition from the reign of art and the aristocratic individual to the democratic many, including among the latter some seditious malcontents aligned against Goethe. Heine playfully asserted that “some even claim” he took part in the mutinies, which is part of the published record, although his aims and motives were subject to interpretation, and in the wake of Goethe’s death he confessed his sadness. He further observed that it is “difficult to divine the particular motives which moved each individual to voice publicly his anti-Goethean convictions. I know the motives of only one person exactly, and since I refer here to myself, I shall honestly confess: it was envy.”<sup>93</sup> Heine of course means the opposite: it is easy to divine their motives. In confronting his conflicted loyalties toward Goethe, Heine not only made up for his earlier error, but also impugned the motives of his peers who rejected Goethe, on behalf of his entire

generation and nation. The recognition of envy also anticipates his later distinction of the resentful, ascetic, moralistic Nazarenes as opposed to the life-affirming, sensual, aesthetic Hellenes, including Goethe and himself. This dichotomy was a natural outgrowth of Heine's turn toward Goethe, which as evident from the passage above also meant on some level a turn toward the individual over the group, the aristocratic over the democratic, and art over politics.

Heine himself was nothing if not political, although a distinction can be made between his concrete political sympathies and what he concretely sought to achieve through literature. In fact, his writings had if anything become more political at this time, including his *Introduction to Kahldorf on the Nobility* of 1831 and *Conditions in France* of 1832, both manifestoes of liberal ideas. He remained liberal in his outlook and sympathies, yet in the course of differentiating himself from his contemporaries, and specifically placing himself in relation to Goethe, he began to make finer distinctions that elaborated his unique vision. At stake was a transition from left-right party politics to what can be called a politics of literature, in which literary or artistic values and concepts have priority. Heine sought to establish a position against both the conservatism and repressive censorship of the Prussian state and the political left's moralizing, nationalism, and hostility towards the aesthetic. The aristocratic individual is a function of style and wit, of artistic achievement, rather than social class, and the moral becomes questionable in the context of individual motives and an abstraction for the community. Heine allied himself instead with Goethe in a literary sense. Both were great poets whose concerns transcended matters of practical politics, and whose development or *Bildung*, specifically their development as artists, offered more meaning and insight than political positions, formulas, and slogans.

Heine pointed to Goethe's similar position against Romanticism in his essay on "the Christian-Patriotic-New-German School" and emphasized Goethe's stridently anti-Christian position:

The orthodox were indignant at the great pagan, as Goethe is commonly called in Germany; they feared his influence on the people, who he imbued with his philosophy of life by pleasant writings, even by the most unpretentious little lyric; they saw in him the most dangerous enemy of the Cross, which, as he said, was as repulsive to him as bedbugs, garlic, and tobacco. For this is the approximate wording of the epigram that Goethe dared to utter right in Germany, in the country where these vermin, garlic, tobacco and the Cross rule everywhere in Holy Alliance.<sup>94</sup>

In his *Venetian Epigram* no. 66, Goethe had mentioned four things that irritated him in the manner of "pet peeves," a way of trivializing the Cross. Heine characteristically raised the ante by invoking a parodic "Holy Alliance" of these four things in Germany, and thereby implicitly an alliance between Christianity and nationalism.

Heine further observed that like the Bible, Goethe's *Faust* "embraces heaven and earth" and "became the secular Bible of the Germans." He acknowledged that "I would be no true German if I wrote of *Faust* without giving expression to some explanatory thoughts concerning it." His interpretation is one of the most profound that has been offered:

With *Faust* the medieval age of faith ends and the modern critical age of science begins... The Reformation began... when... Faust lived, and... invented the art which procured for science a victory over faith, namely, printing, an art which, however, also deprived us of the Catholic peace of mind and plunged us into doubts and revolutions... The German

people has already suspected... for a long time... [that] the German people is itself that learned Doctor Faust. It is itself that spiritualist who through the spirit finally understood the insufficiency of the spirit and demanded material pleasures, restoring the rights of the flesh... as a fall from God, and a compact with the devil. But it will still require some time until fulfillment of what was prophesied in that poem... That will be the revolution, the great daughter of the Reformation.<sup>95</sup>

Heine alludes to his prophecy of a coming German political revolution, following the intellectual revolution of the Reformation and German idealism, which will surpass the French political revolution in vehemence and violence. Some have seen in Heine's prophecy a premonition of Nazi Germany, formulated in this passage as a pact with the devil.<sup>96</sup> Heine also placed Goethe's *Faust* squarely on the side of skeptical scientific modernity and in opposition to an earlier Catholic peace of mind, the latter naturally associated with the mystical impulses of the Romantics. Thomas Mann adopted a related strategy in his novel *Dr. Faustus* from 1947, which presents a kind of allegory of elements of German culture that would soon come to the fore accompanying the Nazi takeover.

Heine's account of Goethe's opposition to Christianity and by extension Romanticism, repositions Goethe as rebel, despite the practical circumstances of his career in his maturity. At the same time, Heine acknowledges Goethe's role as spokesman of his culture, and prophet, only from a broader historical perspective, beyond the petty fights of his time, and Heine's time. By extension, Heine was likewise a rebel in relation to his own time, including both the right and left. Both Goethe and Heine's circumstances were more complex than the reductive black and white schemes of their accusers, including the young Heine as critic of Goethe. Goethe may have conformed in an external way to the practical basis to the conservative forces of his time, yet did so in order to vouchsafe an internal freedom for his radical literary ideas, at odds with both the right and left. The inverse principle applies to Heine, who impractically refused to conform to any regime, and antagonized both the right and left, "realizing" his internal freedom of thought as major sacrifices in his external circumstances, a unique *Bildung* or perhaps *mis-Bildung* of the artist as a kind of humorous and sarcastic Jewish Werther who survived. In defending Goethe, Heine was defending himself, as an author who does not appear in his account of *The Romantic School*, yet is everywhere in its text. The essay might even be called a self-portrait.

As regards his great predecessor, Heine insists that "to my credit I must say that I assailed in Goethe only the man, never the poet," which is not entirely true.<sup>97</sup> Heine's earlier critiques tended to be *ad hominem* in their focus, yet clearly involved Goethe's texts. The more relevant procedure was to judge the man, or rather the artist, by his work. A common criticism involved those who claimed Goethe's "poems had no moral aim; that he could create no lofty characters, but only low, vulgar creatures; that Schiller, on the contrary, had produced the most ideal and exalted conceptions." This comparison was already prevalent, including among Romantics, when both poets were alive and collaborators, and was repeated long after Schiller's death by both Menzel and Börne. Heine specifically claimed that Menzel's critiques of Goethe derived from that of Friedrich Schlegel:

Wolfgang Menzel, who led the battle against Goethe with a display of wit worthy of a better cause... based his attacks in part on the latest dicta of Friedrich Schlegel, who after his fall, from the depths of his Catholic cathedral, cried out his lament over Goethe... "whose poetry had no central focus." Mr. Menzel went even further and proved that



Goethe was not a man of genius but merely a man of talent, he eulogized Schiller as contrast, and so on. This happened some time before the July Revolution. Mr. Menzel was then the greatest admirer of the Middle Ages, both of the art works and of the institutions of the period.<sup>98</sup>

Heine thus equated critiques of Goethe in favor of Schiller with Romanticism, and his own defense of Goethe with his and Goethe's critique of Romanticism. Heine also claimed that "those much praised, much idealized characters, those altar-pieces of virtue and morality, which Schiller undertook, were far easier to create than the sinful, provincial, imperfect beings which Goethe let us see in his works?" Goethe "treats every character in his novels and plays, wherever he appears, as if he were the protagonist. So it is also in Homer and in Shakespeare. There are in fact no secondary characters in the works of any great poet; every character in the leading figure is the province."<sup>99</sup> Heine compared Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe to absolute monarchs, insofar as the person of most importance is the one with whom they are concerned. The absolutism of art brings about a radical democracy of quality in literature, rather than politics. The supposed flaws in Goethe's texts detected by critics are actually a result of their own myopia and failure to recognize the great distance between themselves and Goethe: "I have never found fault with his works... as have those critics with even detected moon spots with their finely cut lenses... what they took for spots are blossoming forests, sublime peaks and laughing valleys."<sup>100</sup> Heine also takes a more fundamental stand on the priority of aesthetics over morality: "the promotion of morality, which was being demanded of Goethe's works, was by no means the purpose of art; in art there were no purposes, just as in the universe itself, where only man had read into it the concepts of ends and means; art, like the world, existed for its own sake."<sup>101</sup>

Goethe never had to defend himself. His critiques of Romanticism and German nationalism were largely ignored, by the Romantics, and the public at large, which preferred to think of him as a personification of German culture. Goethe's polemics against Christianity were similarly passed over silently or excused under the rubric "great pagan," an effective figleaf for Germany's greatest man, more of an abstract myth than a concrete individual. The younger generation critiques of Goethe as conservative or apolitical similarly served to negate or obscure his radical personal views. Heine sought to reconnect with Goethe the dynamic artist, Goethe's own *Bildung* of Goethe, as part of Heine's *Bildung* of himself, as "great pagan no. 2."

Yet there were nevertheless many important differences between Goethe and Heine's positions. Heine was not an Olympian success whose polemics were ignored for the sake of his stature; rather, his polemics reflected his profound ambivalence and were a central component and perhaps even the defining characteristic of his artistic vision, inextricable from his fraught stature, and in some cases vilification as Goethe's anti-type and his nation's disgrace. We might also call Heine "discontent no. 1." He was far more vocal and subversive in his critiques of Christianity, indeed all religion, and of German nationalism, reflecting a later historical context, the vicissitudes of his Jewish background, and his unique development as an artist including his *Auseinandersetzung* with Goethe. As Goethe's ambivalent *doppelgänger*, Heine potentially reveals hidden aspects of Goethe, and still unrecognized aspects of Heine's outlook and thought. Their relation is also important for understanding Heine's own doubles, both Wagner who inverted Heine's ideas about love and myth, and Nietzsche, who in distancing himself from his adopted position as Wagner's philosophical double, and overcoming himself, turned back to Heine as kindred spirit and inspiration.

## Chapter Two Heine's Jewish Pantheism

No one says it, but everyone knows that Pantheism is an open secret in Germany...  
Deism is a religion for servants, for children, for the Genevese, for watchmakers.  
Pantheism is the clandestine religion of Germany, and those German writers  
who fifty years ago railed against Spinoza foresaw that this would happen.

—Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*

Heine wrote about literature, religion, and philosophy, as well as history, nations, and culture. He was not a conventional scholar, although his reading and knowledge were extensive. Despite, or precisely because of these circumstances, he wrote and thought with exceptional originality, including about the very genres he employed. After his move to Paris in 1831, partly because of his intermediary position between two countries, Heine began to compose prose texts in which he sought to articulate a broader cultural vision. His *Romantic School* and *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in their original form together made up his response to Madame de Stael's *On Germany*. With the possible exception of his astounding, outrageous, and at times bewildering *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial*, addressed in the following chapter, Heine's *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* may well be his most important prose text. If we were able to identify Heine's philosophy it would most likely be found here, under the name "pantheism."

Heine invoked pantheism in diverse contexts and seemingly different senses, yet this elastic concept also brings together the disparate threads of Heine's vision: his fondness for and identification with antiquity; his fascination with German history and thought; his irreverence toward institutional Christianity and Judaism; and his radically modern literary sensibility. The concept takes fascinating twists and turns in Heine's text, including major figures and movements such as Luther and the Reformation, Kant and the Enlightenment, as well as lesser stars of intellectual history. Through his idiosyncratic formulation of pantheism, Heine was able to voice fundamental critiques of institutional religion and philosophy, anticipating Nietzsche's idea that "God is dead" and his corresponding philosophy of a "gay science" or joyous wisdom affirming the primacy of art and aesthetics as "justification" of the world.

A central dimension of Heine's account concerns what he calls "Spinoza's pantheism." Baruch Spinoza never used that term and certainly did not share Heine's outlook. Heine was instead responding to the reception of Spinoza in Heine's time including by Goethe and the infamous "pantheism controversy" involving Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn. Spinoza was the first philosopher to eliminate transcendence or metaphysics, which opened new social and political questions about religion through the relation of the particular to the universal. Heine made Spinoza's anti-metaphysical turn, inherited by Goethe and others, into an explicit principle of pantheism, the clandestine religion of Germany. Spinoza continues to play a prominent role in recent intellectual historiography such as Willi Goetschel's *Spinoza's Modernity*, which argued that Spinoza, partly because he was a Jew without Jewish faith, was a pioneer of a modern liberal political outlook in relation to Lessing, Mendelssohn and Heine. Conversely, one could also emphasize Heine's Jewish modernity in relation to Spinoza.

'The Jewish Question' was an important issue in Heine's time, which could also be approached as a series of 'German-Jewish questions' facing Heine and his contemporaries,

including his distant cousin on his mother's side, and friend and fellow exile in Paris, Karl Marx. Both were trained in and antagonistic toward philosophy, and Hegelian philosophy in particular; both were of Jewish secular backgrounds and had converted but were antagonistic toward religion; both were politically engaged through polemics and fearless attacks on authorities. Marx was profoundly influenced by Heine and initially aspired to a literary vocation but swerved toward philosophy in college and then political journalism and political science and economics helping to establish and transform these fields. Marx's early "On the Jewish Question" was an anomaly in his oeuvre, yet highly significant for understanding his broader career. Marx the political-economist repressed his ambivalence toward Judaism or sublimated his ambivalence into what seems like an anti-Semitic attack.

By contrast, Heine the poet freely expressed his ambivalence in relation to both his German and his Jewish identities, ambivalences that were mutually reinforcing, yet also an important driving force of his vision as a poet and writer. Heine's ambivalent German-Jewishness involved the facts of his upbringing and education, including his formal conversion to Protestantism, his dynamic historical milieu, and his evolving vision as a literary artist. Hannah Arendt identified Heine as "the only German Jew who could truthfully describe himself as both a German and a Jew," in part because he acknowledged the conflict between these identities.<sup>1</sup> Heine's unique perspective on these matters is crucial for understanding his pantheism, and *vice versa*, so that in place of the richly thought-provoking yet ultimately chimerical concept of "Spinoza's pantheism" we can substitute what is rightly called 'Heine's Jewish Pantheism.'

#### A. A "literary" history of religion and philosophy in Germany

In the wake of the July Revolution of 1830, Heine moved to Paris in 1831. Here he began working as a correspondent for the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Augsburg and compiling his response to Madame de Staël's enormously popular 1813 book *On Germany*. In his introduction to what became the second part of his book, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, Heine announced that the French will never understand German literature without an understanding of German religion and philosophy. More specifically, his book will examine "the mutual relations, discords, and dissensions between this philosophy and religion. We shall, however, constantly keep in view those philosophical questions to which we attribute a social significance and towards whose solution philosophy competes with religion."<sup>2</sup> Heine's dual interrogation of religion and philosophy, further triangulated through literary history, was an obvious challenge to Madame de Staël's one-dimensional overview, that was more deeply steeped in questions of religion and philosophy and at the same time more "literary" both in his intimate familiarity with his fellow German writers and his own use of language.

The Germanist J. P. Stern lavished extraordinary praise on Heine's *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*:

Heine had neither the scholarly equipment nor the detachment to write anything that a respectable historian would want to put his name to... [Yet] so much of it is true, so much of the book consists of brilliant, apparently casual and quite unexpected insights—that more truth and good sense is said here about certain important aspects of German history and culture, about the German mind, than in any other single book I know.<sup>3</sup>

That "respectable historians" would not want to put their name to Heine's ideas would help explain why his book has been largely overlooked. Heine himself openly admitted at the outset: "I

am not a scholar. I am not among the seven hundred wise men of Germany.” Yet his admission, which inevitably recalls his failed attempt to obtain a university position at Munich in the previous years, was more likely a point of pride than a confession of inadequacy. He went on to contrast “the little I say... expressed clearly and comprehensibly” with the philosophers’ “infinitely thorough, very profound, stupendously profound, but equally incomprehensible” texts, which he suggested may reflect their “fear of the results of their own thinking, results they do not dare to impart to the people.”<sup>4</sup> Heine felt no deference toward philosophers or their technical terminology and jargon or “scholarly equipment.” Conversely, his was self-consciously a *literary* history of religion and philosophy, written with his unique sensibility for language and itself a work of literature, and self-consciously balanced with his account of German literature in his companion *Romantic School*.

According to Stern, although Heine’s text did not correspond to a scholarly mode, he had managed to do what Bertrand Russell merely claimed to do in his own *History of Philosophy*, but did not, which “was to show philosophers as the product of their institutional and social milieu.”<sup>5</sup> Heine made clear that he was emphasizing the “social significance” of religion and philosophy, but also focused on individual philosopher’s biographies, a point he emphasized in relation to Spinoza in particular: “I could not refrain from calling particular attention to these personal misfortunes of the man. It was not merely schooling that shaped him, but life as well. In this he is different from most philosophers.” Heine further declared as his aim “to point out how the philosophers are related to each other, and whether more or less closely, and I shall show only the degrees of relationship and the genealogy.”<sup>6</sup> This last term specifically recalls Nietzsche, and indicates an effort to look at underlying relations not only between philosophers but also *behind* or *beneath* their explicit accounts. Heine provides a *critical* account, addressing the motives and errors of philosophers.

Heine’s teacher and immediate predecessor Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel had inaugurated the idea of the history of philosophy among other things as a cumulative development, culminating in his own time. Hegel sought to co-opt or to neutralize religion insofar as the unfolding of an underlying world spirit [*Geist*, also “mind”] comprising the potential of both humanity and the Christian God. Another student of Hegel and friend of Heine, Karl Marx, famously inverted Hegel’s scheme insofar as the development of history does not reveal God, but rather man’s own material conditions, which could be deliberately harnessed toward the liberation of oppressed classes in Marx’s own totalizing scheme. Heine’s scheme was not so much teleological or goal-directed and far more pessimistic, with an implicit goal of spiritual liberation that was not yoked to his concrete historical analysis, which addressed the relation between religion and philosophy. This relation was directly relevant to Heine himself, as a poet and literary writer who was educated as a philosopher, yet not a professional philosopher, but rather a philosopher manqué. Heine’s account is unique in its humor, metaphorical strategies, and bold arguments, all of which contributed to what Stern recognized as Heine’s unique insight into “the German mind.” Heine’s book is divided into three sections focused on the monumental figures Martin Luther, Spinoza, and Immanuel Kant. His broader narrative history is organized around an over-arching dialectic between what he calls spiritualism and sensualism, corresponding roughly to the categories of materialism and idealism in philosophy, with the concrete associations of spirituality and sensuality, spirit and flesh.

Heine begins with Luther, whom he characterizes as “not merely the greatest, but also the most German, man in our history,” the origin and font of the German mind. According to Heine, Luther essentially created the modern German language through his translation of the Bible, and

when he attacked the papacy and declared that his doctrine “could be refuted only by the word of the Bible itself or on grounds of reason,” he enthroned reason.<sup>7</sup> When the authority of the pope fell, all other arbitrary authority fell with it. Theological truth thereby became philosophical truth, such that the Reformation led directly to freedom of thought in German idealist philosophy. On the other hand, Heine offered a profound critique of Luther, whom he claimed misunderstood the pope and the Catholic Church and specifically the necessary role of a hypocritical sensualism within the Church. By contrast, the French understood this compromise, as reflected in their own irony and hypocrisy. Although not addressed specifically by J. P. Stern, this kind of discussion was likely precisely what he meant by the unique insights into the German mind provided by Heine. Heine’s unprecedented critiques of the Renaissance and Reformation were important precedents for Nietzsche’s similarly iconoclastic perspectives on the same topics.

The imbalance that Heine addressed in his critique also had historical consequences:

The idea of Christianity, the annihilation of sensuality, was far too great a contradiction of human nature for it ever to have been completely realized in actual life. [Luther] had not understood that Catholicism was, so to speak, a concordat between God and the devil, that is, between spirit and matter... Hence a clever system of concessions which the Church made for the benefit of the senses... As soon as spiritualism had made a breach in the ancient structure of the church, sensualism rushed forth with all its long-restrained passion, and Germany became the most tumultuous arena for intoxication with liberty and sensual pleasure.<sup>8</sup>

Christianity had only superficially supplanted the sensuality of the ancient Germanic pagan gods, which Heine refers to as pantheism, akin to paganism in antiquity. The Reformation opened the doors to extreme forms of sensuality that came to the fore in the anarchy and unbridled sexuality among apocalyptic groups such as the Anabaptists.

In his second section, Heine gives an overview of pre-enlightenment philosophy. He identifies René Descartes as the founder of modern philosophy coming in the wake of theology, and his three most important disciples as John Locke, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and Spinoza. The sensualist, materialist Locke’s English empiricist successors included Utilitarians such as Jeremy Bentham. The spiritualist Leibniz was the first German idealist. In Heine’s account, Spinoza alone managed to reconcile spiritualism and sensualism, idealism and materialism, or in Spinoza’s own terminology, thought and dimension, which are extensions of God as “everything that exists.” Spinoza remained unsurpassed in this regard and for that reason embodied the primary hero of Heine’s narrative.

Heine introduces a further transition when he declares that “since Luther, Germany has produced no greater nor better man than Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. These two are our pride and our delight.”<sup>9</sup> As Luther’s successor, Lessing, a pioneer of German letters and the Enlightenment in Germany, sought to return to a Christianity such as Christ himself would teach, and offered profound criticism of religion, science, and art.<sup>10</sup> Yet within the grand scheme of Heine’s narrative, Lessing “was merely the prophet who pointed out the way from the second to the third Testament. I have called him Luther’s continuator.” Luther’s baton, taken up by Lessing, was passed to Kant, whose *Critique of Pure Reason* provided the “third testament.” As Heine observed, Lessing died in the same year that Kant’s treatise first appeared, in 1781, appropriately underscoring the transition between them. In the last paragraph of his second section, Heine refers

to the publication of Kant's *Critique* as "deism's 21st of January," the equivalent of the beheading of the French King Louis XVI in 1789.

Heine then poetically evokes a history of God culminating his death:

Our heart is filled with shuddering compassion—it is ancient Jehovah himself who is preparing for death. We knew him so well, from his cradle in Egypt, where he was reared among divine calves and crocodiles, sacred onions, ibis, and cats. [...He later] became a little god-king in Palestine among a poor shepherd people and lived in his own temple-palace... We saw him emigrate to Rome, the capital, where he renounced all national prejudices and proclaimed the divine equality of all nations... We saw how he became even more spiritual, how he whimpered in bland bliss, becoming a loving father, a universal friend of man, a world benefactor, a philanthropist—but all this could avail him nothing—

Do you hear the little bell ringing? Kneel down. They are bringing the sacraments to a dying god.<sup>11</sup>

In his third section of his book, Heine reviews the history of modern German philosophy from Kant through Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling to Hegel, with whom Heine had studied. He has amusing anecdotes about all these personalities. He claims, perhaps somewhat flippantly, that Kant wrote his *Critique of Practical Reason*, which serves to vouchsafe an un-interrogated place for God as "thing in itself," as a concession to Kant's servant Lampe.<sup>12</sup> In terms of Heine's broader agenda, his idea about Lampe underscores Heine's point about Kant's "intellectual deicide" and serves to explain how Kant sought to mediate his radical claims for the general public, circumventing the accusation of atheism. The story further suggests Kant's idiosyncratic character as aged bachelor, with his servant as perhaps a substitute partner, and also conveys something of Kant's essential kindness.

Heine was much harder on Fichte, hilariously so. He compared the subjectively created world of the Fichtean ego to a goose with a grossly engorged liver to produce *foie gras*, such that one no longer knows whether it is a goose tied to a grossly over-sized liver, or rather a liver tied to a tiny goose.<sup>13</sup> The image in any case does certainly not indicate a healthy worldview. Heine further wondered out loud whether there was any place for Mrs. Fichte in Fichte's subjectively created world, an implicit riff along the same lines as Kant in relation to his servant Lampe. In Heine's recounting, the universal abstract becomes concrete and particular. Such personalization of philosophy very much involves its content. The same principle applies in the case of Fichte's firing from the university at Jena on the grounds of his atheism. Heine's account reveals Fichte's hypocrisy as well as that of his employers and mediators including Goethe. Heine also quoted at length from Fichte's journals published in his son's biography of Fichte, which uncannily transforms the nature and genre of Heine's text. The quotes are so lengthy and personal in character that we gradually become uncertain who is speaking or writing, and Fichte appears to testify against himself.<sup>14</sup>

Fichte was succeeded in turn by Schelling, whose nature philosophy was closer to poetry than abstract philosophy, according to Heine.<sup>15</sup> German nature philosophy also comes close to Spinoza's "everything that exists." Heine harshly condemned Schelling for his subsequent return to religion. He became a reactionary who went "cringing about" and "in the dens of Jesuitism he lends a hand in forging intellectual manacles," such that he "disavows his disavowal, and to the disgrace of apostasy adds the cowardice of lying!"<sup>16</sup> Apostasy normally referred to renouncing a

religion, yet Heine used it in the opposite sense, as re-affirming religion after its disavowal, as a cowardly lie.

Heine contrasted the rogue Schlegel with Hegel as “a man of character” who “may have given support by certain suspicious vindications to the existing order of affairs in church and state,” but at least did so in the name of progress, a low bar, and a rather back-handed compliment. Hegel comes off best of all the philosophers in Heine’s history, but does not escape unscathed, to say the least. Heine relayed reports that on his deathbed Hegel confessed “‘Only one person has understood me,’ but immediately afterward he added crossly, ‘and even he didn’t understand me.’”<sup>17</sup> Perhaps this one person was Heine! Heine also cavalierly reduced Hegelianism to the outlook of the serpent in Eden, “that little private tutoress who lectured on Hegelian philosophy six thousand years before Hegel’s birth.” Specifically, Hegel’s idea that “the absolute consists in the identity of being and knowing, how man becomes God through cognition, or, what is the same thing, how the God in man thereby attains self-consciousness” amounts to the same idea as the biblical serpent’s admonition: “When ye eat of the tree of knowledge ye shall be as God!”<sup>18</sup> In this scenario, Hegel is equated with the devil.

Commentators often observe that despite Heine’s relatively positive assessment of Hegel and his privileged place as the culmination of religion and philosophy in Germany in Heine’s narrative, Heine has remarkably little concrete to say about Hegel’s actual philosophy, and what he does say is surprisingly glib.<sup>19</sup> Heine might well have derailed his narrative had he delved into Hegel’s elaborate terminology and structures of argument, whereas Heine’s concerns lay elsewhere. On the other hand, Heine was profoundly influenced by his teacher Hegel’s ideas, yet took these in a different direction, particularly in his bold account of the antagonistic relation between religion and philosophy, which Hegel had sought to reconcile. More specifically, Hegel sought to disguise philosophy as compatible with religion. Heine’s history of God culminating in his death is Hegelian in spirit, but ends precisely with the inverse, in the death of Hegelian “Spirit,” which was no accident. This development was a central idea of Heine’s account, prefigured in Luther’s implicit enthroning of reason as the transition from theology to philosophical freedom; in fact, Luther called reason a “whore,” yet his Reformation did make possible the eventual flowering of German philosophy. Heine merely tracked this development as part of an unfolding narrative, by way of Spinoza’s God as “everything that exists” and then Kant’s killing of God on the part of all Germans, acknowledged all-too-openly by Fichte, embraced and then denied by Schelling in a cowardly lie, and obfuscated by Hegel, whose equivalence to the biblical serpent is in implicit opposition to and usurpation of God’s role.

Heine later recounted a particularly revealing anecdote about a Berlin party he attended as a twenty-two-year-old student where Hegel was present. Heine was gazing out the window at the stars “abodes of the blessed.” Hegel grumbled to himself: “The stars! Hm! hm! the stars are only a shining excrescence [or gleaming leprosy] on the firmament.” The young poet protested that virtue would surely be rewarded after death. “But he, glaring at me with his dim eyes, remarked, sneeringly, ‘So you want a recompense because you have supported your sick mother and have not poisoned your brother?’ At these words he looked anxiously around, but was reassured when he saw no one near.”<sup>20</sup> We cannot know if Heine made up this anecdote entirely out of whole cloth; nevertheless, it contains many details that ‘ring true’ as a reflection of Hegel’s personality, like a quilt made up of existing bits of fabric. The story also brilliantly conveys the fundamental points that Heine made in his earlier treatise.

In keeping with the paradigm invoked by Stern in relation to Heine’s *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, Heine shows how Hegel, the private man at a

social gathering, reveals the truth behind the public pronouncements of the renowned philosopher. The topic of conversation sounds like a deliberate inversion of Kant's famous pronouncement that he was filled with admiration and awe "at the starry heavens above me and moral law within." Heine had explained Kant as God's executioner and his ideas about the moral law as a hedge to save the idea of God, a rather contentious reduction of Kant's consideration of mores [*Sittlichkeit*]. According to Heine, Kant's contestant and successor Hegel, who was ostensibly in awe of nothing and no one, then cynically, and not without humor, interpreted the stars as a blemish on the face of the universe, and the moral law as a banal fact of daily life. Even worse, after letting his true opinion slip in an unguarded moment at a party chatting with his wayward student, the cringing professor worries that he might be found out, and is relieved when he is not.

As regards the history of German idealist philosophy, Heine compares its entire course from Kant through Hegel to that from the French revolution through the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty. Kant corresponds to the execution of the king, the early Fichte to the reign of terror, in keeping with Fichte's own self-presentation, before his firing and self-serving turn to nationalism, as with the French under Napoleon. The mature Schelling corresponds to the revolution's betrayal in the reaction, and Hegel to the philosophical equivalent of restoration. At the end of his account Heine formulates his now often-cited prophecy of how the religious and philosophical or spiritual revolution in Germany will inevitably be followed by withering political or sensual revolution:

Revolutionary forces that only await their time to break forth and to fill the world with terror and with admiration... will mercilessly upturn with sword and axe the soil of our European life in order to extirpate the last remnants of the past... [and] conjure up the demoniac forces of old German pantheism... a crashing such as never before has been heard in the world's history.... There will be played in Germany a drama compared to which the French Revolution will seem but an innocent idyll.<sup>21</sup>

Some commentators have detected a foreshadowing of the Nazis. More accurately, Heine understood fundamental dynamics of the German political culture which would function prominently in a future history that Heine could hardly have foreseen. A central factor is the place of literature in broader considerations of philosophy and history, what I have called a 'politics of literature.' As reviewed in the previous chapter, in his companion book on *The Romantic School*, Heine interpreted Goethe's *Faust* as a personification of the Germans, who implicitly sold their soul in a pact with the devil.

Heine also balanced these darker forebodings with light-hearted assertions of his pantheist position, which would be difficult to put into practice:

We are fighting not for the human rights of the people, but for the divine rights of mankind. In this and in many other things we differ from the men of the Revolution. We do not want to be *sansculottes*, nor simple citizens, nor venal presidents; we want to found a democracy of gods, equal in majesty, in sanctity, and in bliss. You demand simple dress, austere morals, and un-spiced pleasures, but we demand nectar and ambrosia, crimson robes, costly perfumes, luxury and splendor, the dancing of laughing nymphs, music and comedies.<sup>22</sup>



Heine's advocacy of "a democracy of gods" and "nectar and ambrosia" is less a political proposal, religious credo, or philosophical system than a literary gambit. He is serious about his criticisms of others, but does not necessarily respond in kind with practical political solutions. His statements are not political tracts, but rather literary ideas, to be judged by other, aesthetic and artistic criteria, a distinction that Heine only fully articulates a decade later in his polemics against Ludwig Börne, discussed in the following chapter. At stake is once again a 'politics of literature,' although in this instance what is primarily at stake is the relation of literature to philosophy within a broader historical horizon, in some sense an historiographical 'back-story' or prolegomena to Heine's self-justification in debates with his contemporaries.

Scholars have long pointed to a correspondence between Heine's pronouncement in *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*—"They are bringing the sacraments to a dying god"—and the speech placed in the mouth of "the madman" in Nietzsche's *Gay Science*:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us?<sup>23</sup>

Nietzsche echoed the idea in an even more famous passage in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* when, alone after his discussion with an old man, Zarathustra proclaims to himself: "Could it be possible! This old saint has not heard in his forest that *God is dead!*"<sup>24</sup> In *Zarathustra*, the death of God or the Gods is coupled with the idea of the Superman or *Übermensch*.

The traditional understanding of Nietzsche's idea that God is dead as explicated by Walter Kaufmann is that after the enlightenment and the gradual erosion of religious belief, there was no other system of values to come in God's place.<sup>25</sup> Both the madman and Zarathustra are addressing something long known, of which their contemporaries remarkably still seem unaware, such as the people in the marketplace who laugh at the madman, and the old man with whom Zarathustra laughed.<sup>26</sup> Nietzsche's discourse was directed above all at a nineteenth-century society that, despite, or precisely because of its progressive programs, was in denial of the loss of religious faith. This bad faith, more than the misguided belief of earlier eras, had "killed" God. We must accordingly become Supermen, and make up new rules in God's place. Kaufmann directed his interpretation explicitly against the misappropriation of Nietzsche's ideas by the Nazis, who claimed that they were Supermen, creating new values for a new society.<sup>27</sup> The Nazis were in fact hawking familiar nationalist, anti-Semitic ideas that Nietzsche had fought against, and encouraged a "herd" mentality that Zarathustra as individual opposed.

Other authors can also be cited who expressed similar ideas. Hegel discussed the death of God as part of the cycle of redemption in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and comparable ideas in reference to the deaths of the antique Gods, and by implication the Christian god can be found in Schiller and Goethe's poems.<sup>28</sup> Yet Heine alone discussed all of this in the context of what he called pantheism as the "clandestine religion" of Germany, with its direct anticipations in prior thinkers: Kant as God's executioner; Fichte as Kant's follower and impolitic atheist professor, Hegel as disingenuous "serpent in the Garden of Eden"; Goethe in his explicit enthusiasm for antique paganism, and implicit enthusiasm for Germanic paganism, and as sworn enemy of the cross and adherent of Spinoza; Spinoza himself in his rejection of Judeo-Christian monotheism and a personal God; and beyond to antiquity, as Heine suggests through ancient Jehovah in Egypt "preparing for death." Heine did not simply invoke "bringing the sacraments to a dying god."

Rather, that phrase comes at the end of a long passage tracing what might be called a cultural relativist history of God, or of the idea of God, or even of the death of God. The passage also follows discussions of Spinoza, Goethe, and German idealist philosophy in a broader “pantheist” context. Heine did not put forward an alternative paradigm but rather absorbed existing accounts into a cultural history and above all a literary history, an account of philosophy as literature, and an historical account of philosophy that is itself literature.

Heine’s “pantheism” and Nietzsche’s “God is dead” thus stand in a reciprocal, mutually illuminating relation. Nietzsche’s powerfully distilled formula can be used as a way to approach a comparable complex of ideas in Heine, and conversely, Heine’s less familiar and perhaps more difficult concepts can help us approach Nietzsche’s formula afresh. Nietzsche’s idea that God is dead was not so much adopted as inherited from Heine. Like the madman and Zarathustra, Heine merely claimed to address an idea that others had already inherited, although they were in their own ways in denial or exercising bad faith: Kant with his moral imperative as theological cover introduced for the sake of his servant Lampe; Fichte who betrayed his radical thought for a scoundrel’s patriotism; followed by the reactionary conversions of Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel and Schelling; and Hegel’s sophism regarding “Spirit” in history. Spinoza could not be accused of bad faith in view of the personal price he had to pay for his radical thought, hence his role as hero of Heine’s narrative, nor can Goethe, who can be identified as the original Superman, creating his own rules for life through his *Bildung* as artist.

Nietzsche’s title *The Gay Science* was an explicit allusion to the tradition of the troubadours, *La Gaia Scienza*, the distant origins of Romanticism. He pursued philosophy as a “joyful wisdom” through poetic language more akin to French literature than a Germanic academic science. Heine anticipated this aesthetic turn, only he was an actual poet, who sought to challenge philosophy from a poet’s perspective. Heine was preceded in this task by Goethe, who did not feel any need to challenge philosophy, but rather proceeded self-confidently with his own priorities. A trajectory can be traced from the Great Pagan, whose poems embodied an alternative to religion and philosophy; to the great pagan no. 2, who reflected on religion and philosophy in his ironic poems and texts; to the classical philologist from Naumburg, who wrote amusing poems and a distinctly literary form of philosophy.

## B. Spinoza and Heine’s Modernity

Baruch Spinoza occupies the central, “keystone” position within Heine’s account, one that might at first seem surprising or enigmatic, for an inhabitant of The Netherlands of Jewish ancestry, in a history of religion and philosophy in Germany. Many might already find Spinoza’s texts in themselves enigmatic. As Heine insisted in his preface, the content of Spinoza’s thought is difficult to understand aside from his biography. “It is a fact that Spinoza’s life was beyond reproach and pure and spotless as the life of his divine cousin, Jesus Christ. Like Him, he too suffered for his teachings; like Him he wore the crown of thorns. Wherever a great mind expresses its thought, there is Golgotha.”<sup>29</sup> Heine surely included himself in this group, just as he associated himself elsewhere with both Spinoza and Christ.

Heine acknowledged that Spinoza’s philosophical system is difficult to follow, yet characterized his thought in poetically intuitive terms:

The mathematical form gives Spinoza’s work a harsh exterior. But this is like the hard shell of the almond; the kernel is all the more delightful. On reading Spinoza we are seized by an emotion similar to that which we feel at the sight of great Nature in her most

animated composure. A forest of heaven-aspiring thoughts whose blossoming treetops are tossing like waves, while the immovable trunks are rooted in the eternal earth. There is a certain mysterious aura about Spinoza's writings. The air of the future seems to flow over us. Perhaps the spirit of the Hebrew prophets still hovered over their late-born descendant. There is, withal, a seriousness in him, a confident pride, a solemn dignity of thought, which also seem to be a part of his inheritance; for Spinoza belonged to one of those martyr families exiled from Spain by the most Catholic of kings. Added to this is the patience of the Hollander, which was always revealed in the life of the man as well as in his writings.<sup>30</sup>

Heine specifically characterized Spinoza's outlook as "pantheism": "I shall designate by the word Pantheism, not so much the system as the point of view of Spinoza," namely that the world "is identical with God. God, called by Spinoza the Sole Substance, and by German philosophers the Absolute, 'is All that is.'"<sup>31</sup> Spinoza never actually used the term pantheism, which was first employed in Christian polemics against his philosophy at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>32</sup> Heine most likely adopted the term from the so-called "pantheism controversy" of 1785-9. After a conversation with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in 1781 two years before his death, the Christian philosopher Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi published his essay *On Spinoza's Teaching* in 1785, an attack on the ostensibly Spinozist philosophy of the late Lessing and his friend Moses Mendelssohn as total materialism and rationalism that would end in atheism. Jacobi rejected non-Christian religions including Islam and by implication Judaism, and attacked Lessing's 1779 play *Nathan the Wise* [*Nathan der Weise*] as denouncing all religion, an outlook he traced back to Spinoza. Many ridiculed Jacobi as an enemy of reason, yet his attacks also proved devastating for Mendelssohn's reputation and were often said, including by Heine, to have hastened Mendelssohn's death.<sup>33</sup>

Mendelssohn's Jewishness undoubtedly played a role in these circumstances. From a poor and unassimilated background, Mendelssohn had adopted the Germanic version of his given name 'Ben Mendel' as a gesture of assimilation, distancing himself from what he rejected as the casuistry of religious Judaism. He educated himself in German thought and literature, and through his philosophical writings and plays became an important figure in German letters. Inevitably drawn into Christian-Jewish polemics, he increasingly devoted his time to advancing the position of German Jews and ultimately became the founder of the Jewish Enlightenment or *Haskalah* and by extension of German-Jewish culture.<sup>34</sup> Lessing's *Nathan*, the first German 'drama of ideas,' was widely recognized in his time as based on and a tribute to his unprecedented friendship with Mendelssohn and a plea for tolerance, the equality of religions, and the emancipation of the Jews. Mendelssohn was perhaps sensible to distance himself from Spinoza and the scandal already associated with his name, yet Mendelssohn's efforts were rendered futile by 'the pantheism controversy' that effectively ended his career if not his life. Conversely, Jacobi and others behind the pantheism controversy had some justification to suspect that Lessing and Mendelssohn's friendship and the embrace of a plurality of traditions might undermine Christian tradition.

Few now remember the pantheism controversy, whereas Mendelssohn and Lessing's friendship is commonly celebrated as a pillar of German-Jewish history. However, that history was deeply fraught, and the pantheism controversy more representative of the norm. The controversy reminds us that tolerance and Jewish emancipation were implicitly linked to the decline of Christianity and the rise of atheism, and opposed partly for that reason by reactionary claims for German identity. On the other hand, Lessing's *Nathan* and the resulting controversy

were part of a broader counter-history of Jewish-Christian German dialogue that encompasses Heine and extends into the present.

As he had done with Lessing, Heine compared Mendelssohn to Luther, specifically insofar as the Jewish philosopher “destroyed the authority of Talmudism and founded pure Mosaism,” and he noted that Mendelssohn’s “contemporaries called him the German Socrates and... admired so reverently... his nobility of spirit and vigor of intellect.”<sup>35</sup> Heine was less generous about Jacobi:

The most furious of these opponents of Spinoza was F. H. Jacobi, who is occasionally honored by being classed among German philosophers. He was nothing but a quarrelsome sneak, who disguised himself in the cloak of philosophy and insinuated himself among the philosophers... Nothing resembles the pious, unrestrained hatred of the little Jacobi toward the great Spinoza.<sup>36</sup>

Some modern historians have offered more positive assessments of Jacobi.<sup>37</sup> In Heine’s cavalier summary of the pantheism controversy, “when his friend Lessing died and was accused of being a follower of Spinoza, [Mendelssohn] defended him with the most anxious fervor and worried himself to death over the incident.” Yet in Heine’s opinion,

Defense and zeal were as absurd as they were superfluous. Rest easy in your grave, old Moses. Your Lessing was, to be sure, on the way to that dreadful error, that wretched misfortune, namely, to Spinozism—but the Almighty, our Father in heaven, saved him by death just at the right moment. Rest easy, your Lessing was not a Spinozist, as slander maintained; he died a good deist like you.<sup>38</sup>

Heine made several simultaneous provocative points here. He agreed with the late Jacobi that Lessing was moving toward Spinozism, understood more or less as pantheism-atheism, only Heine affirmed “that dreadful error” and “wretched misfortune” as correct. Heine also belatedly assured the late Mendelssohn in his grave that like him, Lessing had remained until his end a “good deist,” although he joked that Lessing was only saved from the error of Spinozism through death by “our Father in heaven.” Heine implies that had Lessing lived longer, he would have become a Spinozist and would no longer have recognized the Almighty. By killing Lessing, God in a sense was saving himself from execution by Lessing, a task accordingly left to the man who next inherited the baton of German philosophy, Kant, himself an avowed anti-Spinozist in the interest of preserving a space for faith, although Heine dismissed Kant’s efforts in this vein as a defensive compromise to the forces of religious conservatism.

Heine characterized Lessing’s *Nathan* as “not only a good comedy, but also a philosophical-theological treatise on behalf of pure deism,” which he defined as “the attempt... to remove from Christianity all historical content and to retain only the moral portion. Christ ceased to be God’s co-regent.” Christ still received “appreciative recognition,” but “only as a private person ... There was no end to the eulogies describing what a splendid man He had been.”<sup>39</sup> Once again, Heine evokes “the death of God” insofar as Christ, no longer divine as God’s co-regent and become a private person, died on the cross an ordinary death like everyone else, despite the glowing eulogies he was given. Christ’s father, on the other hand, as

the God of deism governs the world from above... The Hebrews conceive God as a tyrant armed with thunder; Christians, as a loving father; the disciples of Rousseau and the whole Genevise school, regard him as a skillful artist, who has fashioned the world somewhat as their fathers constructed watches...

Heine will have none of this: “Deism is a religion for servants, for children, for the Genevise, for watchmakers. Pantheism is the clandestine religion of Germany, and those German writers who fifty years ago railed against Spinoza foresaw that this would happen.”<sup>40</sup> Jacobi and others feared that deism would give way to Spinozism or pantheism. Heine celebrates the same circumstances: “Pantheism is an open secret in Germany. We have, in fact, outgrown deism. We are free, and we want no thundering tyrants. We are of an age and need no paternal care.”<sup>41</sup> In explicit opposition to Kant, and following Spinoza, Heine insists that freedom and determinism are linked. Heine presented pantheism as a logical development, from servitude to liberty, or childhood to maturity, an “open secret.” On the other hand, the open secret specifically involved the controversy about the idea, whereas the actual content of the pantheism to which Heine referred remained obscure, secret, clandestine enough that it has not previously been recognized. After all, Spinoza never used the term pantheism, which also cannot easily be situated in relation to his philosophy.

Heine plausibly borrowed his phrase “Spinoza’s pantheism” from Jacobi, except that Heine embraced this concept. Before Heine, Goethe had already referred to Spinoza’s pantheism along similarly positive lines.<sup>42</sup> In his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, Heine furthermore called Goethe “the Spinoza of poetry,” cryptically signaling an analogy between Spinoza and Goethe, who was similarly enshrined at center “stage” of Heine’s *Romantic School*, the two embodying dual keystones or lynch-pins of Heine’s books that make up his answer to Madame de Staël’s *On Germany*. As reviewed in the previous chapter, Goethe preceded Heine in his bold rejection of Christianity and affirmation of paganism and more specifically literature as an alternative to philosophy as a way of understanding human existence and even a way of living life. Pantheism in Heine’s discourse thus undeniably means several simultaneous and potentially conflicting yet also potentially corresponding things: pagan antiquity and polytheistic religion; Germanic paganism and its many Gods, Spinoza’s equation of God with “all that exists”; equivalents among Spinoza’s successors in German idealist philosophy including Kant—in Heine’s tendentious reading—as “God’s executioner” and Hegel’s elastic conception of “Spirit” in history; and Goethe the “Great Pagan” who rejected Christianity and embraced pagan antiquity and offered his own version of “nature philosophy” in his poetry.

One way to understand “pantheism” as employed by Heine would therefore be all [pan] gods [theism] amounting to no gods [a-theism] or even the death of god. In his *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial* from 1840, looking back to the period of the revolution of 1830 directly preceding his move to Paris, Heine repeatedly declared “Pan is dead” and “the great God Pan is dead,” a citation from antiquity that amounted to a kind of “death of God” *avant la lettre* in pagan antiquity, a pan-thanato-theism. Roman pan-theism or the inclusion of all Gods as potential objects of worship amounted to a kind of multi-culturalism. The “open secret” and “clandestine religion” of Germany to which Heine referred through pantheism was something close to atheism or at least agnosticism—certainly the “death” of Judeo-Christian monotheism—under the cloak of “paganism,” not an actual belief system, but rather a form of cultural relativism.

The reason for the obscurity of this “open secret” is equally evident from the pantheism controversy. Spinoza had already had to couch his radical ideas in extraordinarily subtle language

to avoid condemnation from religious and political authorities in his time, which could not prevent the later controversies and condemnations under the name pantheism. Kant and Hegel likewise had to disguise the more radically atheistic components of their thought beyond a Christian façade, according to Heine, as did Goethe, specifically in relation to Fichte's own controversy involving atheism rather than pantheism, likewise reviewed by Heine in his *Romantic School*. Heine himself was embroiled in controversy and attacked by censors in Germany involving his more strident claims about God in his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, and had to walk back or qualify some statements in later editions and in subsequent prefaces where he denied his own atheism.

We do not solve the problem simply by renaming it "Heine's atheism." Heine was nothing if not ambivalent on the subject of religion and Judaism in particular. He was certainly also reacting against his teacher Hegel, inverting or up-ending a Hegelian-Christian account of the history of philosophy, which encompassed the history of religion and by extension the History of God. Heine surely also sought to affirm rather than negate Spinoza's Jewish identity in the process. Yet Heine also clearly ridiculed Mendelssohn's effort to maintain Judaic religious norms in the face of his own modernizing project, and by extension Lessing's noble efforts to embrace a plurality of religious traditions.

In his book *Spinoza's Modernity*, Willi Goetschel situates Spinoza's outlook in relation to Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine in the broader context of the process of Jewish emancipation, secularization, and liberalization.<sup>43</sup> Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* separated theology and politics as independent realms of discourse, a process begun by Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, who however both believed the state's task was to keep man's evil nature in check. Spinoza rejected the contractual model of political order proposed by Hobbes in particular in favor of a conception of power residing in the people that anticipates Rousseau's concept of the social contract, without Rousseau's sense of an organic community. Spinoza considered everything a part and therefore an expression of God, objected to any metaphysical distinction between God and nature, and moved away from hierarchies towards the dignity of all that exists. He saw politics as part of the emancipatory power of nature, of which man is part. Since he did not distinguish between mind and body, Spinoza approached the individual as the site where forces of nature collide and negotiate an equilibrium. As a result, he was able to articulate fundamental critiques of theology that anticipated modern biblical criticism. The key section relating to this issue in Spinoza's *Ethics* unfortunately remained unfinished, either because he died, could not resolve the contradictions involved, or preferred to leave the issue open rather than reach a premature closure.<sup>44</sup>

Spinoza's conception of God's nature "was a direct challenge to theological and metaphysical assumptions of modern European thought" that responded to the need to accommodate human nature, society, and culture." His new paradigm was less a scientific method than a means of reflecting on discourse.<sup>45</sup> Spinoza recognized a tautology in contemporary theologians' assertions that scripture is infallible and divine, and offered alternative explanations for prophets as "interpreters," the meaning of the original Hebrew word for prophet, and miracles as "the point in which human hermeneutic competence has been surpassed." Rabbinic scholars, whom Spinoza called "Pharisees," simply arrived at decrees which they then called "traditions."<sup>46</sup> One can recognize that Spinoza adopted Christian critiques of Judaism, although the corollary, Jewish critiques of Christianity, were equally relevant to his outlook, which rendered Christianity and Judaism obsolete. Goetschel contextualized Spinoza's radically liberal vision in terms of his Jewish background. Spinoza was not writing from the perspective of Judaism. Rather, he sought

“a philosophy in which he himself, as a legitimate representative of the whole of human society, would not want to be stamped as a Jew... but instead as a free agent on equal standing with everyone else.” Goetschel saw Spinoza employing the particular, his own marginal position as Jew, as a means to rethink the universal, anticipating later Jewish thinkers and the post-modern valorization of the particular over the universal.<sup>47</sup>

Goetschel addressed Moses Mendelssohn in comparable terms. Mendelssohn had translated the Pentateuch into high German in the late 1770s as a means to assimilate Jews to the German language and directly addressed the discourse of emancipation. In 1781, he composed a preface for a treatise by Spinoza’s contemporary Manasseh ben Israel, *Vindication of the Jews* from 1656, the year the rabbi left for England on his doomed mission to Cromwell, also the year Spinoza was excommunicated from the Amsterdam Sephardic synagogue. Seventeenth-century Amsterdam stood out for its relative degree of civil equality and acceptance, and Mendelssohn maintained the view of “natural right as the sole reference point for the constitution of civil society,” an outlook approximating Spinoza’s theory of natural right, translated into a theory of rights.<sup>48</sup> The rights of the Jews were those of humanity. Again, the particular served as the means toward the universal.<sup>49</sup>

A third figure in Goetschel’s account was Lessing. The *denouement* of Lessing’s play *Nathan* involves a scene in which Nathan, a thinly disguised Mendelssohn, asked to choose the true religion among Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, replies with a parable of the three rings: a father left his three sons a family ring and two or perhaps three indistinguishable copies. In Goetschel’s gloss, through the ring fable “Nathan performs the transmutation of truth into a plurality of traditions.” Truth is “constructed—socially, politically, legally” and “is not an intrinsic quality but rather the moment of insight and observation,” a principle also at stake in Lessing’s other plays and essays.<sup>50</sup> Goetschel saw these dimensions as based upon and following from Spinoza’s philosophical precepts.<sup>51</sup> In addition, as a wealthy, economically successful, powerful, proud, self-consciously religious Jew, Nathan “presents one of—if not the foremost—interpretational embarrassments in German literary criticism” and “represents the German Jewish complex in its unavoidable fixation.” Adapting Adorno’s epithet for Heine, Goetschel invoked “Nathan the wound.”<sup>52</sup>

Goetschel’s last case study was Heine, “the first to recognize the profound import of Spinoza for German culture, German philosophy and thought,” a surprising pronouncement given Spinoza’s importance for Goethe and other German Romantics. Previous commentators largely ignored Heine’s invocation of Spinoza’s pantheism, and Goetschel observed that “the degree of disinterest, if not repression, is formidable with regard to a text that has been acknowledged as central to Heine’s writing.” He even goes so far as to claim that “the sedimentation of canonical interpretation under which Heine has been buried has taken hermeneutic virtuosity to remarkable heights of oversight,” a polite way of saying everyone has missed the obvious. “What has been repressed here has a name: Baruch de Spinoza.”<sup>53</sup>

Goetschel pointed out that we should not expect to find Spinoza at the center of an account of the history German religion and philosophy, whereas pantheism, according to Goetschel, “is Heine’s other name for Spinoza, or rather for Heine’s progressive interpretation of Spinoza.” Following Hermann Cohen, Goetschel claimed that “Heine’s Judaism or Jewish identity is essentially determined by his Spinozist concept of pantheism, and that it is in Heine’s Spinozism that his Jewish identity finds its expression.”<sup>54</sup> Heine’s “free-handed mixing of the various brands of pantheism functions as poetic play aimed at disengaging fixed notions of pantheism before he has Spinoza take center stage”:

In order to introduce the modern meaning of the concept of pantheism Spinoza [sic] formulates, Heine employs a particularly dramatic device. Playfully casting pantheism as a primitive chthonic force—a pagan tradition that immobilizes a return of the repressed—Heine conjures a nightmarish version of an original, archaic pantheism in order to enact the staging of its name.<sup>55</sup>

Goetschel concluded that “Spinoza’s is the only modern philosophy that makes religion possible for modern consciousness. For how else are we to understand the subtle and playful irony that infuses even the most religious and touching moments in Heine’s haggling with God?”<sup>56</sup> According to Goetschel, Spinoza serves within Heine’s account specifically to demythologize or up-end his teacher Hegel’s history of philosophy culminating in Hegel himself. Hegel claimed that each nation had one chance to play an historical role, which was now over for the Jews, and emphasized Spinoza’s Jewish identity and his “Oriental” theory of absolute identity of the finite and infinite. By contrast, according to Goetschel, Heine emphasized Spinoza’s “revolutionary political theory that provides a coherent theory of freedom of religion, free speech, and self-determination in a potentially subversive concept of power.”

Once Spinoza is recognized as the radical philosopher whose uncompromising thought breaks ground for modernity, the Jew by implication no longer signifies a relic that begs for tolerance and respite. Rather Jewish culture emerges as viable and even progressive, carrying the promise of the future.<sup>57</sup>

The Mendelssohn scholar Michah Gottlieb offered several fundamental criticisms of Goetschel’s thesis. “Goetschel’s methodological approach is unclear” insofar as he speaks of a “Jewish reception of Spinoza,” yet also “a particular constellation [of shared concerns].” Gottlieb identified at least three different conflicting interpretations in Goetschel’s text of Spinoza’s relation to Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine: a “Jewish” interpretation of Spinoza’s writings; Spinoza as a decisive influence on the way these thinkers formulated their ideas; and a confluence of ideas that derives from common concerns “even though direct influence may seem out of the question.”<sup>58</sup> Gottlieb rejected the parallels Goetschel adduced between Spinoza and Mendelssohn regarding the mind-body problem as well as the separation of state and church, and insisted that Mendelssohn was in many ways opposed to Spinoza. Goetschel did not mention that lecture thirteen of Mendelssohn’s *Morgenstunden* [Morning Hours] offered an extended refutation of Spinoza, and Goetschel’s discussion of lecture fourteen omitted Mendelssohn’s rejection of “refined Spinozism” in relation to Lessing. Gottlieb also questioned “why the Lutheran Lessing is deemed a ‘Jewish’ interpreter of Spinoza.” Gottlieb concludes: “Goetschel would have done better treating each figure in their historical specificity rather than trying to draw what appears to this reviewer to be an artificial line of ‘Jewish’ descent from Spinoza through the others.”<sup>59</sup> Spinoza’s modern thought might also be characterized more accurately as ‘radical’ rather than liberal, as Jonathan Israel has done, although Israel was not particularly interested in Spinoza’s Jewish background or its impact on his thought.<sup>60</sup>

An alternative strategy and a form of compromise between Goetschel and Gottlieb would be to acknowledge Spinoza’s modernity and relevance for later thinkers, without having to insist on their direct connection as part of a consistent trajectory. Instead of forcing those who came after Spinoza into a “Spinozist” mode, we can recognize in Spinoza an iconoclastic or “renegade”



Jew whose fraught relation to his tradition established a relation to modernity echoed among the diverse perspectives of later thinkers.<sup>61</sup> Along with freeing up what Gottlieb called the historical specificity of the individual cases, we can in this way also recognize a more complex overall development that can be followed both forward and back in time. Goetschel's invocation of "Nathan the wound" is already a clear case of reading in a backward direction from Heine, and we could follow the process further back to speak of "Spinoza the wound," a particularly appropriate epithet, since his name Spinoza already means "thorn," with a secondary resonance of the crown of thorns of Christ, and he was a Christ-like thorn in the side of his Jewish and Christian contemporaries, a far more disturbing one than Heine ever was. We can accordingly invert Hermann Cohen's formula insofar as Heine's complex Jewish identity determined his account of Spinoza's pantheism. Heine in a sense already presented a thesis about Spinoza's modernity, as a way to frame Heine's own ideas, or Heine's modernity. His "free-handed mixing" of various "brands" of pantheism did not serve primarily "to allow Spinoza take center stage." Rather, through Spinoza, Heine was able to stage his own even more radically modern, and undeniably Jewish outlook, under the name pantheism.

### C. German-Jewish Questions

'The Jewish Question' was generally understood in mid-nineteenth century Europe as how to deal with the emancipation of Jews as citizens of the modern nation state.<sup>62</sup> The Young Hegelians Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx devoted essays to 'the Jewish Question' in the early 1840's. Richard Wagner, in response to the same issues, later pioneered a campaign against Jews in his *Jewry in Music* in 1850, which anticipated exclusionist or even eliminatory anti-Semitism from 1879 onward. We can also speak of more specific 'German-Jewish Questions' among Heine and his contemporaries.

Christian theology, from its origins in St. Paul onward, presented Judaism as 'the Law' concern with practical needs, materiality, or the flesh, transcended and perfected through Christianity as 'Grace' or 'Spirit.' The last term is familiar from Hegel, whose philosophical dialectic was based not, as is commonly said, on a triad of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis—but rather on *Aufhebung* [sublation, literally "lifting up," "preserving," "cancelling out"], as with the Old Testament of Judaism in relation to the new Testament of Christianity. Young Hegelians such as Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and Karl Marx adopted many elements of Hegel's scheme, yet sought to transfer the emphasis away from theology to concrete social and economic concerns.

Bauer specifically claimed that Judaism operates on a primitive level of sensual need, whereas Christianity operates on the higher level of the universal, the brotherhood of man, and freedom, leading via Protestantism to the enlightenment. Yet Bauer proposed to negate Jewish emancipation in favor of the abolition of religion altogether. He was also the first to claim that Jews were racially incompatible with the German people, earning him the sobriquet "the real father of anti-Semitism."<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps the most famous formulation of 'the Jewish Question' was Heine's friend and distant cousin Karl Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question" of 1844. The essay is among Marx's most perplexing and controversial texts, above all because of his negative references to Jews and Judaism.<sup>64</sup> Marx was primarily responding to texts on the same subject by his former professor and fellow "young Hegelian" Bauer.<sup>65</sup> Marx directed his critique against Bauer along with Feuerbach as the most powerful representative of the Christian theological strain in the young Hegelian movement, a contention Marx emphasized even more explicitly in *The Holy Family* of

1845 which he wrote together with Friedrich Engels.<sup>66</sup> Engels devoted a few pages to Bauer, whereas Marx railed against Bauer, including seemingly inappropriate and pointless invective, for hundreds of page. The two men could be described as engaged in a contest for Hegel's mantle, or that of Western philosophy and what they called political critique, in which Jews and Judaism played a crucial role.

More specifically, the struggle was between what David Friedrich Strauss, author of *The Life of Jesus* from 1835, in the course of polemics with Bauer, distinguished as "right" and "left" Hegelians.<sup>67</sup> Strauss was providing an account of the historical origins of Judaism from polytheism to a form of nationalism, and anticipated modern redaction criticism and historically relativist accounts of Christianity in relation to Judaism. Marx was the most extreme and most powerful representative of the left Hegelians and his critique of Bauer were devastating, contributing to a reversal of his fortunes from the leading young Hegelian to an effectively irrelevant reactionary anti-Semite. On the other hand, although largely unknown today, Bauer's critiques of Marx's position were equally acute. Bauer claimed that the masses were passive and conservative, they preferred religion and didn't care about political critique, and communism was deluded in pinning its hopes on the proletariat. The idea of an egalitarian society was an illusion and would result in catastrophe, despotism, extensive bureaucracy, and an intensified police force: "power will remain in the hands of a tiny minority who will exploit alleged principles of equality for the sake of its own objectives."<sup>68</sup> Responding to Bauer, Marx pointed out that religion continued to play a role even in secular states, as with the United States, which more importantly also presupposed economic inequality. As a solution, Marx proposed a shift from the abolition of religion to the abolition of economic inequality: *human* emancipation.

The key problem for Marx involved the conflict between the political state and civil society, and the reduction of individuals to their egoistic, selfish, private needs. He accordingly transposed Bauer's theological discussion of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity into secular terms. Marx contrasted the religious "Sabbath Jew" with "the actual, worldly Jew" or "everyday Jew" and claimed that "*practical need, self-interest*" was the secular basis of Judaism, *Huckstering* [*schachern*] the Jew's worldly religion, and money his God.<sup>69</sup> As noted above in connection with Wagner's treatise *Das Judentum in der Musik*, usually translated "Judaism in Music" yet perhaps more accurately rendered *Jewry in Music*. *Judentum* in German means both Judaism and Jewry, also with the connotation of "commerce"; Wagner referred to the participation of Jews and their ostensible economic rather than purely artistic priorities resulting in a *Verjudung* or "Jewifying" of music in Wagner's time. In his essay, Marx effectively collapsed or short-circuited these different associations by interpreting Judaism as a religion of money.

Following earlier authors, Marx cited Judaism's contempt for nature, for "theory, art, history, and for man as an end in himself," including the buying and selling of women. He even invoked "the lavatory as an object of divine law" in Judaism.<sup>70</sup> Yet his main concern was economics, or money and power. Marx cited examples of how a single Jew among the Rothschilds or Joseph Süß Oppenheimer in Baden-Württemberg "determines the fate of the whole [Austrian] Empire by his financial power" or "decides the fate of Europe," despite the desperately poor and powerless circumstances of Jewish masses throughout Europe.<sup>71</sup> Thus, "the contradiction that exists between the practical political power of the Jew and his political rights is the contradiction between politics and the power of money in general."<sup>72</sup>

Marx reached his main thesis through a stunning, and characteristic reversal. He claimed that money as "the practical Jewish spirit has become the practical spirit of the Christian

nations”—a play on Hegel’s term Spirit [*Geist*—thereby undermining the distinction between Christians and Jews: “the Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews.”<sup>73</sup> More specifically, Marx adapted in a secular sense the theological doctrine of “supersession” or Christians identifying themselves as the new metaphorical Jews or new ‘Chosen People’ of God following the rejection of the Jews and their covenant.<sup>74</sup> One could say that Marx deconstructed the *Aufhebung* as adopted by Hegel, still evident in Bauer, so that Judaism is preserved within Christianity, yet not canceled out or transcended. Instead, in what Freud called “a return of the repressed,” Judaism absorbs and thereby cancels out Christianity. The “pinnacle of civilization” turns out to be the complete atomization of society, the abstract universal of everyman out for his Christian self.<sup>75</sup>

All this underscored Marx’s fundamental goal of shifting from theology to social and economic concerns, from religious liberation to human liberation. In his incendiary conclusion:

Once society has succeeded in abolishing the *empirical* essence of Judaism—huckstering and its preconditions—the Jew will have become *impossible*, because his consciousness no longer has an object, because the subjective basis of Judaism, practical need, has been humanized, and because the conflict between man’s individual-sensuous existence and his species-existence has been abolished. The *social* emancipation of the Jew is the *emancipation of society from Judaism*.<sup>76</sup>

Despite the fundamental reversal of Marx’s argument, Jews and Judaism seem not only metaphorical, but also literal references, not the least because of his many concrete references to Jews and Judaism. Thus, when Marx claimed that “the Jew is perpetually created by civil society from its own entrails,” his remark could be read metaphorically to mean ‘the Christian selfishly concerned with money as a type of Jew,’ but more plausibly appears to refer to actual Jews as money-lenders, bankers, finance capitalists, and so on. On the metaphorical level, the idea that “the Jew will have become *impossible*” precludes the very reason for anti-Semitism. But that impossibility itself seems impossible, in which case, the literal sense returns, as with Freud’s repressed, and a darker reading of Marx’s rhetoric emerges, closer to what the Nazis called “the Final Solution” as a different answer to ‘the Jewish Question.’ The title of the first English translation of Marx’s essay, *A World without Jews*, clearly indicates the problem.<sup>77</sup>

Scholars have been divided about Marx’s essay. While some Marxist scholars have sought to neutralize or relativize his negative references to Jews and Judaism as commonplaces of his time, or as primarily metaphorical.<sup>78</sup> Others have interpreted these comments as an unconscious expression of Marx’s “Jewish self-hatred.”<sup>79</sup> Still other scholars have proposed that Marx’s ambivalence toward his Jewish background informed his thought.<sup>80</sup> Marx was certainly uncomfortable with his own bourgeois background, and as a result of his physical ailments, most uncomfortable in his own skin. There was a prior hatred of Jews in Christian society, which assimilated Jews sought to join, whereas Marx made Christian, bourgeois, civil society his primary target. Marx himself wrote to Otto Ruge, co-editor of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, in which the essay appeared in 1844, that his primary agenda was to get past the censors, to “make breaches” in the Christian state, and “to smuggle in... what is rational,” which we can understand as political and economic rather than theological critique.<sup>81</sup> Marx was able to smuggle in political and economic critique through a “Trojan horse” of conventional anti-Jewish attacks, which is the last place one would expect to find liberal or radical Jewish thought. Marx might even be seen as establishing his *bona fides* or good faith by demonstrating his anti-Jewish

sentiment, in an apotropaic or warding-off function, or a protectively frightening mask, a kind of anti-Jewish medusa behind which hid the radical Jewish thinker.

Marx's strategy served to negate, reverse, or perhaps sublimate, in the sense of preserve, canceled out, transcend, the central role of the *Aufhebung* in Hegel's philosophy, which itself sublated Christianity by transforming its ideas and schemes. Was Marx using Judaism or anti-Jewish attacks primarily as a means to smuggle political and economic critiques past Prussian censors, and to undo central structures of Hegel's philosophy, as a transition from religion to politics and economics? Or in undoing these structures, was Marx also reintroducing dimensions of Jewish thought? Several scholars have recognized Judaic roots in Marx's materialism and empiricism, his ethical impulse, and his redemptive messianic ambition; some explicitly identified the central role of the proletariat in Marx as equivalent to the Jews as chosen people.<sup>82</sup>

Murray Wolfson claimed to discern three distinct stages in Marx's development: a philosopher or eighteenth-century skeptic in his introduction to his essay "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," also published in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* in 1844; a humanist and universalist Christian in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844; and a historical materialist or "Old Testament Jew" in his *Thesis on Feuerbach* from 1845 onward.<sup>83</sup> Those divisions seem somewhat artificial and clear-cut for a period of three years from 1843-5, and directly contradicted by Marx's "On the Jewish Question". The early Marx might be more accurately characterized as comprising diverse and even conflicting perspectives within his vision, nowhere more evident than in his bewilderingly contradictory essay. Adapting Wolfson's terminology, we might say that Marx smuggled in a Jewish-materialist outlook behind a humanist and universalist Christian façade adorned so to speak with anti-Jewish trappings, which are not unfamiliar to humanist and universalist discourse.<sup>84</sup>

Along with precedents in Hegel, Feuerbach, and Bauer, Marx is recognized as having responded to Moses Hess' essay *On Money* [*Über das Geldwesen*], which directly associated Jews with money in negative ways.<sup>85</sup> Marx's "On the Jewish Question" probably influenced Hess' subsequent reformulations and original ideas, and then Hess influenced Marx's *Political and Economic Manuscripts* from 1844 in turn. Marx is assumed to have written "On the Jewish Question" in Bad Kreuznach in the Rhineland-Palatinate during October and November 1843, on his honeymoon as it happens, before he met Hess in Paris and presumably first saw his manuscript in the spring of 1844.<sup>86</sup> Hess went on to repudiate his negative pronouncements about Jews and Judaism and in *Rome and Jerusalem*, addressing Jewish cultural and religious autonomy, which profoundly influenced Theodor Herzl's conception of Zionism. By contrast, Marx never repudiated any of his negative assertions about Jews and Judaism in "On the Jewish Question", and he affirmed most of his prior conclusions in *The Holy Family* written together with Engels and published in 1845, although he softened his rhetoric.<sup>87</sup>

A more complex issue involves Heine's influence on Marx. Heine and Marx shared many concerns and outlooks; both worked outside the academy and in an antagonistic relation to "professional" philosophers. Heine had been an actual student of Hegel, whereas Marx only studied with Hegel's successors such as Bauer. We must leave aside until the following chapter Heine's *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial*, which in its complex juggling of literal and metaphorical understandings of 'Jew' plausibly influenced Marx's "On the Jewish Question," although that possibility has not previously been proposed to my knowledge. Heine's Börne book was published in 1840, and unleashed a major scandal throughout Germany, when Marx was still writing his dissertation.

Marx's debt to Heine is also already evident from prior texts. Two of Marx's most famous phrases have often been credited to prior formulations of Heine. The first is the reference to religion as opium discussed above. The second involves Marx's observation that "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: The first time as tragedy, the second time as farce," which appeared in his essay "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon" from 1852.<sup>88</sup> Already in his unpublished satirical novel *Scorpion and Felix*, fragments of which he published with his *Book of Verse* from 1837, Marx had observed that "Every giant... presupposes a dwarf" as with Napoleon and his nephew the bourgeois king Louis Philippe [Napoleon]. Engels had also written Marx in 1851 with a remarkably similar formulation: "it really seems as though old Hegel, in the guise of the World Spirit, were directing history from the grave and, with the greatest conscientiousness, causing everything to be re-enacted twice over, once as grand tragedy and the second time as rotten farce."<sup>89</sup> Engels could have been repeating Marx's own idea back to him, and both acknowledged Hegel's prior formulation of repetition in history.

However, it was Marx and Engels who "forgot to add" that Heine, Hegel's actual student, came up with the idea that "after the tragedy comes the farce" in his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, specifically in reference to Kant, who after acting as "God's executioner" in his *Critique of Pure Reason* decided to vouchsafe morality as "moral imperative" in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, according to Heine, for the sake of his servant Lampe.<sup>90</sup> Marx would surely have read that text, published in 1835, when he was seventeen, just as he would have read Heine's companion text *The Romantic School*, where Goethe was compared to the Romantics as a giant to dwarfs, an idea echoed in Heine's book on Ludwig Börne in contrasting Goethe and himself as giants to the dwarf Börne, also in connection with the seizing of power on the Eighteenth Brumaire by Napoleon, not Louis Napoleon.<sup>91</sup> Both the young Marx's satirical novel and his verse that he published two years later were also undoubtedly inspired partly by the poems of his friend Heine, which Marx knew well even before they met.

Yet another likely source for Marx was Heine's *Ideas—Book le Grand* published in 1827, which held up the French revolution as a model for Germany: "After the departure of the heroes come the clowns... and after the bloody scenes of the Revolution and imperial actions the fat Bourbons waddle forth again... *Du sublime au ridicule il n'ya qu'un pas, madame!* [From the sublime to the ridiculous is a single step, madame!]"<sup>92</sup> Here Heine was citing Napoleon's joke about moving from sublime France to ridiculous England in a single step: *le pas de Calais* [the land mass in Brittany that lies just below England; *pas* means "step"]. Heine shared Napoleon's dislike of England and admired Napoleon himself, who was vilified as oppressor by many of Heine's nationalistic German contemporaries including Börne. Heine naturally also disliked the restored Bourbon kings who came in Napoleon's wake, whom he characterized as ridiculous. Four years later, when he moved to Paris in the wake of a second revolution, Heine experienced for himself the farce of Louis Napoleon the bourgeois king, which he recounted in his *Letters from Paris* and elsewhere. Yet he eventually came to revise and to complicate his political position in relation to literary predecessors such as Goethe and in opposition to Börne.

Marx had undoubtedly read all these texts. We can see in these citations the underlying consistency and gradual development of Heine's thought, as well as their echo in Marx's evolving thinking. Marx's early fragments of *Scorpion and Felix* published in 1837 suggest a pastiche of several of Heine's texts: *Ideas—book le Grand*, *The Romantic School*, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*. Marx's very idea of writing a satirical novel along with poetry appears to have followed Heine's precedent. Yet Marx swerved away from literature, and

the politics of literature, to politics itself. First he turned to writing a serious dissertation on philosophy, going far beyond Heine in this discipline.<sup>93</sup> Marx continued in the early eighteenth-forties first as a journalist, increasingly repressed by Prussian censorship, and then as in exile as Paris, where he was finally able to meet his cousin Heine and enlist his contributions to Marx's publications. In his political and economic essays Marx sought to transform Hegel's thought in a way Heine had said he tried to do, but found unproductive.

#### D. Heine's Ambivalent German-Jewishness

Harry Heine was born a Jew in Düsseldorf on the Rhine, most likely in December 1797, although the actual date remains a subject of debate because of Heine's own obfuscations.<sup>94</sup> He was educated from early youth onward in Christian institutions under the liberal policies of the Rhineland under Napoleonic rule, including toward Jews. These circumstances undoubtedly contributed to the future dynamics of Heine's life and outlook, including his vision as an artist and his fate as an exile from Germany in Paris. Napoleon was defeated in 1813, and Heine already experienced anti-Jewish riots as a teenager in 1819 and later anti-Jewish pamphlets composed by German academics at the universities of Göttingen and Bonn. He was expelled from his Göttingen fraternity in 1820, he self-servingly claimed, because he had violated a chastity oath, although the cause was more likely anti-Jewish agitation. In response, he fought the first of many duels. He was subsequently subjected to anti-Jewish policies of the Prussian king Frederick William III, and personal anti-Jewish insults throughout his career.<sup>95</sup> Heine's French, gentile, working-class wife in Paris appears not to have even been aware of his Jewish descent.<sup>96</sup>

Heine's complex feelings about Jewish identity are first evident in his early play begun at Göttingen and completed in 1820-22, *Almansor*, about Moors in sixteenth-century Spain facing Christianization under Ferdinand and Isabella.<sup>97</sup> The dilemmas of Heine's characters are obviously relevant to nineteenth-century German Jewish assimilation and ultimately conversion. Sephardic Judaism, as a distinguished model of Jewish life and ancestry, was important for German Jews as an alternative image to that of the Ashkenazi Jewish Ghetto and the image of the Jew from Eastern Europe, *die Ostjude*. On the hand, the famous line about burning books and human beings spoken by the hero Almansor [the defender] in Heine's play seems relevant not so much to fifteenth-century Spain as the outdoor nationalist meetings of right-wing German fraternities commemorating the defeat of Napoleon in the early 1820's, at which books were burned and anti-Jewish slogans were chanted. Commentators have proposed that Heine's disguised reference reflects German-Jewish identity as a taboo subject about which Heine himself was ambivalent or ashamed.<sup>98</sup> Yet *Almansor* is himself explicitly ambivalent, not deeply attached to the Muslim religion, yet angry about the suppression of an important part of his identity. Heine may furthermore have intended his choice of Muslims as analogy for German-Jews deliberately as a kind of multi-cultural reference beyond merely the Jews, and thus less defensive or triumphalist than is usually implied, and more pertinent for our present circumstances. Golden Age Sephardic Jews lived in a period when Jews directly participated in a broader culture, but were also later forced to convert or to hide their origins and faith as *Marranos*. This experience later became an important reference for Heine's complex *invented, literary* relation to Jewish history and identity.<sup>99</sup>

During his stay in Berlin during 1821-4, Heine encountered an extensive community of Jews. The retired Prussian diplomat Karl August Varnhagen von Ense and his wife the Jewish convert Rahel née Levin ran a salon attended by Heine, and their marriage embodied a *de facto* German-Jewish symbiosis. Heine also joined the *Verein* or Society for the Culture and

scholarship of the Jews co-founded in 1819 by Eduard Gans, Heine's friend and a fellow student of Hegel. The *Verein* sought to allow Jews to realize their full potential and take their proper place in German society and culture, and to advance the scientific study of Jewish life and the contributions of the Jews in the context of modern European thought. Although short-lived, the *Verein* exercised an important influence on later Jewish scholarship and self-definition, as well as on Heine.<sup>100</sup> Yet the institution had difficulty addressing the challenge of integration and the maintenance of Jewish identity in response to Jewish assimilation and religious modernization. Because its journal lacked a substantial audience, it folded after one volume of three issues were published in 1824, and the *Verein* soon afterward dissolved.

As it turned out, Heine's first contact with this Jewish community also coincided with an extraordinary wave of Jewish conversions at this time, motivated by religious conviction, the pursuit of material gain, or even broader political and ideological considerations.<sup>101</sup> In Robert Holub's words, "if there still existed tension between Jews and Germans— at least on an intellectual level— then the problem was just as likely to result from Jewish backwardness as German intolerance" at this time.<sup>102</sup> In fact, there were always tensions on multiple levels between Jews and Germans throughout their interaction over a millennium. Yet the two centuries of what might be called "the experiment of German-Jewish culture," dating roughly from 1743-1940, or the young Moses Mendelssohn's arrival at the gates of Berlin until the ageing Walter Benjamin's suicide at Portbou at the gates of Spain, could be characterized as an arc leading from perceived Jewish backwardness to German intolerance.<sup>103</sup> Heine could be said to have experienced, and reflected on, this broader development in his three and half decade long career as a writer.<sup>104</sup>

Assimilated, emancipated, progressive Jews of Heine's generation were in a difficult position. The Berlin professor of history Christian Friedrich Rühs, who died shortly before Heine's arrival in that city, advocated Jewish conversion as the only means to reconcile differences.<sup>105</sup> Moses Mendelssohn's intellectual heir David Friedländer advocated a "dry baptism" of Jews as a merging of Judaism and Protestantism.<sup>106</sup> Hegel offered a more complex account of historical progression that cancelled out differences through a "sublation" [*Aufhebung*] of the Jews themselves.<sup>107</sup> Hegel also offered a highly idiosyncratic interpretation of Christianity in his concept of "Spirit" [*Geist*]. His scheme was later adapted to a materialist [implicitly atheist] outlook by "Left Hegelian" contemporaries of Heine such as Marx.<sup>108</sup> Prior to their advent, before 1830, Jewish conversion had a different aspect, since assimilation seemed plausible in the context of a liberalizing Protestant religious theology, which however Heine rejected. Heine likewise rejected the Jewish reform movement, which he saw as conservative, philistine, and inauthentic, and associated with his millionaire uncle Solomon: "a little Protestant Christianity as a Jewish company."<sup>109</sup> Heine's decision to join the *Verein* was part of an attempt to address these issues that ultimately proved unsuccessful, like the *Verein* itself. His participation, including his activity as a teacher for poor eastern European Jewish refugees and his account of a visit to Poland, *On Poland*, served instead as an opportunity for Heine to learn more about Jews and Judaism and to begin to work through questions for himself for the sake of his literary constructs.

Heine commentators have offered strikingly divergent accounts of Heine's evolving Jewish identity. On the one hand, Heine's American biographer Jeffrey Sammons referred to "Heine's failure as a student in Berlin to define an integrated Jewish identity for himself."<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, Holub, who claimed that "German-Jewish writer is an invention of literary scholars" and that Heine was instead "a German writer of Jewish origin," proposed that as "Heine was becoming acquainted with the paradigms of German-Jewish integration... [he] suffered his most severe crisis of identity with regard to his status as a German poet of Jewish heritage," and

“the identity that Heine eventually embraced was... filled with contradictions that should not be glossed over in the easy formula German-Jewish writer.”<sup>111</sup> Holub was certainly correct that “German-Jewish writer” is too easy a formula. Yet the complexities do not involve the use of that term by later commentators, who hardly invented it, so much as in its historical fact: the term “German-Jewish” already distills the fraught circumstances in its hyphen.<sup>112</sup> Heine himself recognized contradictions that are all too often glossed over. In Berlin he did not experience an “identity crisis” so much as begin to forge a non-integrated, hybrid and changing Jewish identity, realized primarily in texts or as literature, rather than as a role in society. In his texts Heine could embrace the idea of being Jewish in myriad ways without being a religious Jew or part of a Jewish community. We can accordingly extend Hannah Arendt’s characterization of Heine as “the only German Jew who could truthfully describe himself as both a German and a Jew” to include the hyphen between them that signals their conflict and the suffix “ish” to acknowledge Heine’s singular place in his literary tradition as the only truly German-Jewish writer.

Heine’s earliest activity as a poet did not involve any explicit reference to his Jewish background with one significant exception, a poem characteristic of his early style yet never published and described as “worth very little and... made only for my own amusement.”

Burst out in loud lamenting,/ O somber martyr-song,  
 That’s lain so unrelenting/ On burning hearts so long!  
 It pierces through ears and vision,/ And so into the heart and brain;  
 I’ve conjured up with precision/ The thousand years of pain.  
 They weep, little men and big powers,/ Even lords with frigid eyes,  
 The women weep, and the flowers,/ The stars weep up in the skies.  
 And all of the tears are flowing South,/ quiet and unified,  
 They’re flowing together and going/ To pour into Jordan’s tide.<sup>113</sup>

Holub observed that in this instance Heine switched from a spurned lover to a suffering Jew, and therefore claimed that “this speaker is not H. Heine, German poet, and certainly not the baptized German-Jewish writer Heinrich Heine, but most definitely Harry Heine, the German poet of Jewish origins.”<sup>114</sup>

On the other hand, Heine did not subscribe to such discrete categories. Rather, these potential identities should be seen as ambivalently contiguous and overlapping, in an evolving relation over time as part of dynamic literary constructions. The poet Harry Heine of Jewish origins began without public acknowledgement of his Jewish background, with the exception of the poem cited above. After his conversion in 1825 he began to engage these issues in complex ways in his prose texts starting in the late 1820’s, and eventually returned to them in his poetry at the end of his life in his *Hebrew Melodies* at the conclusion of his *Romancero* from 1853.<sup>115</sup> His development did not involve conventional categories of Jewish social, political, or religious identity, but rather literary responses to his predicament, much as with Goethe’s varied responses to his crises of identity. Heine in this regard heeded Goethe’s admonition that one should not *be* anything [Jewish, German-Jewish, German], but rather *become* everything.

Heine’s ambivalent German-Jewishness in this regard was as much German as Jewish. Already back in 1820, Heine declared that his “true fatherland was the German language.”<sup>116</sup> Conversely, only two years later, he wrote to his friend Christian Sethe:



Everything German disgusts me, and unluckily you are German. Everything German acts on me like an emetic. The German language grates on my ear and my own poems sometimes revolt me when I see that they are written in German. I even find it hard to write this note because German script jars on my nerves.<sup>117</sup>

Heine was already ambivalent about German-ness, which was inextricable from his ambivalence about his Jewishness. In 1823, writing to his new friend from the *Verein* Moses Moser, Heine called himself “a Jewish poet” and spoke of “our national images,” that is, the Jewish nation.<sup>118</sup> Yet he also wrote Moser that although he could not be “an enthusiast for the Jewish religion... I will be enthusiastic for the rights of Jews and their civil equality... and in bad times which are inevitable, the Germanic mob will hear my voice so that it resounds in German beer halls and in palaces.”<sup>119</sup> Heine’s sense of Jewish identity was not so much positive as *against* his would-be German opponents, quite accurately so, given his future career and posthumous reputation.

Heine made this point even more explicit in a letter to his friend Rudolf Christiani the following year:

I do not want to write any further; a patriotic German could surprise me and thrust the dagger into my un-German heart with the pathetic cry: Die infamous lackey of tyrants and traitor to the Fatherland! But I would then reach for the *Nibelungenlied* lying next to me and hold it as a shield against the Don Quixote from Jena, and the dagger would fall from his hands, and he would fold them in prayer.<sup>120</sup>

Heine’s mention of Jena suggests a reactionary, anti-Jewish university fraternity member or Romantic, hence presumably also the reference to Don Quixote. His invocation of using the *Nibelungenlied* as a shield to defend himself as Jew against a murderous nationalist German prefigures his later strategy of interpreting such German myths in sarcastic, ironic fashion, infusing the stories with everyday realism and all-too-human sexuality perversity, as a cudgel, so to speak, against Romantics and other reactionary German idealists. Wagner then recognized that he could invert Heine’s strategy in turn, adopting his modern explicit sexuality, while re-appropriating German myth as a reactionary idealist shield or cudgel against Jews.

In the same letter to Christiani Heine confessed to the hopeless ambivalence of his German-Jewishness, since despite his recognition of the opposition,

I know that I’m one of the most German beasts that exist. I know only too well that Germany is to me what water is to the fish and I cannot leave this life-giving element... At heart I love everything German more than anything else in the world. It fills me with pride and joy; and my breast is an archive of German feelings, just as my books are archives of German song.<sup>121</sup>

Clearly, Heine was both a victim and a master of ambivalence, as comfortable in Germany as a fish in water, yet at other times drowning; hopelessly in love with and also hating everything German, much as he felt toward the Jews and Jewishness, There was possibly a synergy between Heine’s ambivalence as a Jew and his ambivalence as a German.

Heine’s ambivalence was not a function of bipolar disorder, but well thought-through. He knew what he liked and disliked, or loved and hated. Heine was also embroiled in conflicts, in large part because of his Jewish background, which he did not try to hide or deny, but also did not

simply embrace in any conventional way. His most famous declaration about German-ness is probably the one in his preface to *Germany a Winter's Tale*:

Plant the black, red, gold flag at the pinnacle of German thought, make it the banner of a free humankind—then I will shed my heart's blood for it. Calm yourselves. I love the Fatherland just as much as you do.<sup>122</sup>

Heine envisaged another Germany, not as an authoritarian state of intolerance and censorship, but a state of culture, a philosophical and literary Fatherland. This idea was inevitably bound up with his Jewish background. But there was no formula. Rather, his outlook and identity were inseparable from and slowly worked through over the course of his career and oeuvre.

The closest Heine came to an actual “identity crisis” was likely his conversion to Protestantism at Heiligenstadt near Göttingen on June 28, 1825, just after he had obtained his dissertation.<sup>123</sup> He legally adopted the name Christian Johann Heinrich, which he never used, just as he kept the specific event of his baptism secret from most of his intimates. His family members had nothing against his baptism and some encouraged it, but soon after he wrote to his friend from the *Verein* Moses Moser: “I am now hated by Christian and Jew... I bitterly regret that I had myself baptized; I cannot see at all that things have gotten better for me since then, on the contrary, I have since had nothing but misfortune.”<sup>124</sup> The reasons for his regrets are already evident from his earlier statements: he was forced to undertake the step because of changed Prussian laws that precluded Jews from assuming university or other public positions, yet felt that he was betraying his origins, and recognized that it would not prevent others from seeing and attacking him as a Jew. After all, Moses Mendelssohn’s grandson the composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, who was baptized as a Lutheran at the age of seven, and marked the event through his adopted Christian name of Bartholdy, was usually called simply Mendelssohn, as he is today, and thought of as Jewish by most of his contemporaries, including Heine, and most notoriously, by Wagner. Even worse, Heine could now be attacked as a “baptized Jew”—as Platen did within three years—and by implication as a “self-hating Jew,” a complex notion in the genesis of which Heine arguably played a role.<sup>125</sup>

Heine’s act of conversion thus merely confirmed his already non-integrated status and identity. He subsequently published his works as Heinrich Heine and is now universally known by that name with its attractive doubling of the syllable “Hein,” yet Heine always referred to himself as “H. Heine,” the abbreviation perhaps marking the undecidable difference between Jew and Christian German, already before his conversion. Heine later sarcastically quipped that his baptismal certificate was “the entrance ticket to European culture,” as if European culture were an opera house.<sup>126</sup> In truth, Heine gained entrance to European culture through his education and his own reading, and his Jewish background and family did not impede him in any concrete way. Only after the overthrow of Napoleon and the incorporation of the Rhineland under Prussian authority, with new restrictive laws, did it become necessary for Heine to convert in order to obtain a university position, which he seemingly tried but failed to do in Munich in 1828-9.<sup>127</sup> Otherwise his baptismal certificate made no difference to his career. As he predicted, his conversion did not prevent others from seeing him as Jewish, often in negative ways. His *bon mot* could have been a way to disguise all of this, making his conversion sound like a normal, necessary, positive step, a characteristic subterfuge that speaks volumes about Heine’s ambivalent German-Jewishness.

In his undated poem “To an Apostate,” Heine is presumed to have specifically attacked Gans, Hegelian co-founder of the *Verein*. Gans had converted in that same year of 1825 in order to assume a position at the University of Berlin, penetrating to the level of the academic mandarins, an achievement that eluded Heine. Yet Heine’s poem could just as well have been and perhaps was about himself:

Oh the holy spark of youth—/ Oh how fast it’s by the board!  
In cold blood you have in truth,/ Made a deal with the good Lord.  
To the cross you crawled your way/ That you scorned with scorn profound,  
Cross that, just the other day,/ You would trample to the ground.  
You read Schlegel, Haller, Burke,/ Whom reaction keeps in vogue—  
Once you did a hero’s work,/ Now you’re nothing but a rogue.<sup>128</sup>

Heine’s reference to the conservative thinkers Friedrich Schlegel, the jurist Karl Ludwig von Haller, and the philosopher Edmund Burke has puzzled commentators, since they were not particularly important for either Gans or Heine.<sup>129</sup> The first two had converted to Catholicism and Burke defended the rights of Catholics against the French revolution, so Heine could have meant to compare Jewish conversion to Protestantism to Protestant conversion to Catholicism, a witty twist on the conventional Protestant analogy of comparing Catholics to Jews. Heine’s allusion to “crawling to the cross” further recalls Goethe’s anti-Christian polemics that Heine later praised in his *Romantic School* and elsewhere. Regardless of his conversion for legal-institutional purposes, Heine retained and if anything progressively internalized “the holy spark of youth” in his literary career, understood in the sense of rebellion and resistance to authority and conformism.

Holub contended that “it would be inaccurate to call [Heine] simply a German Jew; his disavowal of Judaism was forced upon him to a certain degree, but there were also reasons for his conversion that had to do with a commonly held notion that Protestantism was the most progressive religion of the time.”<sup>130</sup> Heine’s relatively positive view of Protestantism corresponded to that of most of his contemporaries, and contributed to his polemics against reactionary Catholicism among the Romantics and in association with Platen. At the end of his life, he also affirmed that “if I remain a member of the evangelical faith at all, it is because it does not embarrass me now in the least, just as it never embarrassed me very much earlier.”<sup>131</sup> Yet his qualification “at all” betrays his relative indifference toward what was a necessary choice of confession for practical social and institutional purposes that did not involve his personal faith or embarrassment. Nor did he “disavow” Judaism, and his conversion was not “forced upon him” in any meaningful sense. He had not been a believing religious Jew, and he made a practical decision that he nevertheless came to regret.

Heine could not seriously embrace the Jewish religion, and his *pro-forma* conversion to Protestantism was not an embrace of Protestantism either. Early on he declared himself “a born enemy of all positive religions”<sup>132</sup> In the voice of his comic character the servant Hirsch-Hyacinth in his *Baths of Lucca*, Heine clearly set out the possible choices of religious confession:

I can’t see what pleasure is to be got from the Catholic religion. It is a religion in which it always seems as if God (which God forbid) had just died... If there were no organs in the Protestant churches that wouldn’t be a religion at all... Don’t talk to me about the old Jewish religion; I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy. There’s nothing but sorrow and shame to be had from it. Believe me, it’s not a religion at all; it’s a misfortune.<sup>133</sup>

Judaism was a misfortune, Catholicism amounted to an admission that God was dead, and Protestantism came close to no religion at all. Heine subsequently characterized Kant as “God’s executioner,” succeeded by Fichte, whose open admission of atheism cost him his job, and then Hegel who preferred to disguise his philosophical kernel within a shell of religious terminology. Heine, who was born a Jew and converted for practical reasons, had little or nothing to lose in this regard, and repeatedly returned to the idea that God had died.

An important watershed in Heine’s evolving and multifarious Jewish identities was his *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial* from 1840, discussed in the following chapter. Heine’s outrageous and scandalous “memorial” actually attacked and impeached the reputation and memory of his fellow exile in Paris, the late political journalist Ludwig Börne, another baptized, secular, liberal Jew. Heine’s critique was based partly on Börne’s crypto-religious worldview, which Heine categorized as “Nazarene,” a category that lumped together Jews and Christians. These complex issues clearly deserve further elucidation on their own, yet can be noted here insofar as a central component of Heine’s “Jewish identity” encompassed precisely the capacity to attack “Jewish identity,” as well as other Jews.

Another compounding factor in these fraught issues was the so-called “blood libel” against Jews in Damascus in 1840.<sup>134</sup> Heine responded to this central event in the origins of modern anti-Semitism with a series of newspaper articles, his so-called *Damascus letters* of 1840. These appeared after the publication of his Börne book, and were possibly partly in response to the scandal caused by his book. Heine railed against the stupidity and absurdity of the blood libel and its French defenders, yet he also characteristically allowed himself to make negative accusations against Jews. He observed that “money is the God of our time and [the baron James de] Rothschild is his prophet,” and called Rothschild and Achille Fould, a rival director of Parisian transport railways, “the rabbis of finance.”<sup>135</sup> Heine’s remarks, which he later regretted, were more playful than those of either Marx or Hess, and Heine emphasized that not only French Jews, but all Frenchmen regarded gold as God. That was the spirit of Marx’s point in *On The Jewish Question* about Christians as the new Jews or metaphorical Jews, yet the letter of Marx’s text was unmistakably harsher and could be perceived as anti-Semitic, whereas Heine’s texts, even his strange Börne book, could never have been. Heine internalized anti-Jewish critiques in humorous, subversive, outrageous ways, yet never repeated let alone endorsed conventional anti-Jewish attacks.

At the end of his life, ill and confined to what he called his “mattress grave,” Heine increasingly turned toward his own Jewish heritage, partly in response to ongoing persecution of Jews in Europe and abroad, without however embracing religious Judaism. He declared his admiration for the bible as “the portable homeland for the Jews,” and took up Jewish history and culture in his *Hebrew Melodies* in his late poem cycle *Romanzero*, and in his unfinished novel *The Rabbi of Bacherach*.<sup>136</sup> Yet these texts also encompassed radical critiques of Judaism and Heine did not abandon his fundamental skepticism. His ambiguous ostensible last words, that God would of course forgive Heine since that was his, i.e. God’s *métier*, reflect the ironic, provocative detachment of a thinker who also recognized his pronouncements about God, religion, identity, and redemption as literary texts, and thus in fact his own *métier*.<sup>137</sup>

All men are either Jews or Hellenes,  
men with ascetic drives, hostile to images, and addicted to spiritualization,  
or men with a realistic nature, with a cheerful view of life, and proud of evolving.

—Heinrich Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial*

This chapter's title, "The Börne Identity," plays on *The Bourne Identity*, one of Robert Ludlum's popular German-American spy thrillers, which were made into films with Matt Damon.<sup>1</sup> Heine's *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* from 1840 was a sustained polemical attack on, in the guise of a memorial to, his late peer and sometime opponent Ludwig Börne, as well as a monument to Heine himself.<sup>2</sup> The book represented either the peak or the nadir of his development, depending on who was passing judgment.<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx's collaborator Friedrich Engels pronounced Heine's *Ludwig Börne* "the most worthless thing ever written in the German language."<sup>4</sup> Engels' verdict was echoed by over 300 negative commentaries, as well as later virulent anti-Semites such as Alfred Bartels.<sup>5</sup> Surprisingly, Marx disagreed with his comrade Engels and even sent Heine a letter of support: "I will write a thorough critical review for a German journal about your book on Börne. A more idiotic treatment than what it has received from the Christian-Germanic donkeys can hardly be found in any period of literature and yet there is no period of German literature lacking in idiocy."<sup>6</sup> Heine himself declared his book "the best work that I have written," echoed by a few later commentators, including Matthew Arnold, Thomas Mann, and Jeffrey Sammons, the text's English translator and Heine's biographer.<sup>7</sup>

The fundamental significance of Heine's Börne book has been largely overlooked: Heine's contribution as a thinker of identity. A unique genre unto itself, his *Memorial* distilled and elaborated on much of his earlier work and ideas. These included his reflections on himself as poet and his reputation, Goethe and their relation, poetry in relation to prose, aesthetics in relation to politics, and all of these in relation to religion. Heine's primary offense, and most original idea, lay in his remarkable distinction between Nazarene and Hellene, or between Börne as mediocre political writer and ascetic, moralizing converted Jew, and Heine as great poet and aesthetic, sensual Jewish "pagan." Not just Börne's identity, but also Heine's in relation to Börne, and identity itself on the fault lines of German-ness, German-Jewishness, nationalism, literary tradition, political engagement, and aesthetics were at stake. The "Börne identity" is above all a composite and conflicted one, opposed to reductive formulas and grand delusions.

The tactics and strategies of the battle between Börne and Heine revisited and carried further in Heine's *Memorial* have been addressed in complex, and seemingly conflicting ways, involving sexuality, doubling, and Jewish humor, among other things. Heine's efforts can also be placed in a broader context of other radical German-Jewish thinkers of modern identity, Marx and Sigmund Freud, who together with Nietzsche—himself drawn into a German-Jewish orbit through Heine—are often identified as pillars of modernity. This "short list" of thinkers of modernity reminds us that 'German-Jewish' transcends national boundaries, just as the thinkers in question transcended their chosen fields.

In an oft-quoted phrase, Heine proclaimed: "I do not know whether I may one day deserve that a laurel-wreath be laid upon my coffin. . . . But lay a sword on my coffin; for I was an honest soldier in the war for the liberation of mankind."<sup>8</sup> Scholars have debated whether Heine's goals as "liberator" were primarily political or rather artistic, and whether he saw himself chiefly as a poet

or a writer.<sup>9</sup> Heine undoubtedly felt he deserved a laurel wreath as poet, and he did; that was not a demand he felt he needed to make for his coffin. His “verbal epitaph” requested instead that he be honored with an honest soldier’s sword, surely a metaphorical one, or sword-pen of a political soldier-poet, who liberated humanity through his radical thought. Yet Heine was accused in his time, most vociferously by Börne, of being apolitical if not reactionary, an accusation bound up with his being a poet. Heine was proud of being a poet, allied with Goethe against their mutual critic Börne and his allies. Once again, at issue was a politics of literature: of politics being literary, and literature being political. In this sense, and above all in his book on Börne, Heine deserves to stand alongside Marx and Freud as a liberator of mankind.

#### A. Heine on (top of) Börne

Ludwig Börne was born Loeb Baruch in 1786 in Frankfurt to a family of Jewish bankers, and was emancipated together with the other Jews of Frankfurt and those of Heine’s Düsseldorf as a result of Napoleon’s occupation of Germany.<sup>10</sup> The teenage Loeb was sent away to study medicine, first at Gießen, and then Berlin, where he was introduced to new ideas at the literary salon of Henriette Herz, with whom he fell in love. Baruch went on to obtain a doctorate at the University of Heidelberg in Law and Political Science, and found a clerical position with the Frankfurt police bureau in 1811. Because of new laws passed following the departure of the French that excluded Jews from civil service positions, he was forced to resign by 1814. He therefore had himself baptized in 1818 as Karl Ludwig Börne, a name that he subsequently “earned” through his highly original writings. In that year he began publishing his periodical *Die Waage* [The Scale of Justice], a title that signaled Börne’s concern with justice and morality specifically in the realm of politics.

After their initial meeting in Frankfurt in 1827 Börne and Heine got along, and in his pre-Parisian texts Heine echoed some of Börne’s ideas. Both were assimilated, baptized, liberal German Jews, who wrote humorous and provocative texts as a means to engage public opinion. Börne first, and later Heine, pioneered a new kind of subjective and anecdotal way of writing about a changing society. As a result of their conflicts with censors, and their enthusiasm for the July revolution of 1830, both men soon ended up in Paris as exiles. They were understandably associated in the public imagination as the two most prominent German dissidents.

Already before their mutual exile in Paris, Börne and Heine had become associated with a younger generation of writers that came to be collectively called Young Germany. The other prominent members of the group were Karl Gutzkow, Theodor Mundt, Heinrich Laube, and Ludolf Wienburg. All advocated liberal positions including separation of church and state, and emancipation of Jews in German-speaking areas, although only Heine and Börne were Jewish. Wienburg first coined the name “Young Germany” in 1834, which became famous in 1835 when the Prussian Diet passed a ban on all Young Germany writers and included Heine in the group, much to his dismay. Conversely, Börne, whose reputation as moral pillar was considered beyond reproach, was not initially included. In Paris Börne was widely perceived as the leader of the German émigré community, and the primary spokesman for critique of the July monarchy in France and conditions in Germany. For Börne a sense of community and solidarity were crucial and he sought to collaborate with Heine. In January 1831, Börne proposed a new journal to their mutual publisher Julius Campe, the centerpiece of which was to be a published correspondence between them. Given Heine’s fame, Börne had more to gain from such a relationship. Heine never responded to Börne’s proposal.

In his popular *Letters from Paris*, Börne began to accuse Heine of a lack of political commitment, as well as cowardice, aristocratic posing, and dissolute behavior. Börne generally presented Heine as committed more to elitist self-fashioning than to serious political engagement, a view not entirely at odds with Heine's self-presentation. While Börne was alive, Heine never confronted him openly. Yet Börne and others detected an indirect attack against him in Heine's repudiation of republicanism in his *French Painters*.<sup>11</sup> Heine scorned the shabby mediocrity of most of the radical German exiles in Paris and the petit-bourgeois radicalism of Börne himself, whereas Heine played up his aestheticism and dandyism partly in order to antagonize Börne. Heine sought to establish his own autonomy from the émigré community, and to provoke Börne, who was particularly humiliated and bitter because he had been turned from an ally of Heine into a rival.

As the opposition between Börne and Heine grew increasingly intractable, Börne began to compile a catalogue of attacks on Heine in letters to his confidant Jeanette Wohl. Börne's project also gradually came to include others, and to involve Heine's personal, domestic affairs, including his relation with his mistress, Augustine Crescence, whom he called "Mathilde" and later married. After Börne's death in 1837, Heine became concerned about the negative material about him that Börne had collected and sent in letters to Wohl. Heine also knew that Karl Gutzkow, a member of the Young Germany group, was planning a biography of Börne, and feared for his own declining reputation in relation to Börne, both in his time and in posterity. Heine accordingly conceived the task of undoing the myth of Börne, undermining his canonization, taking him down from his pedestal, restoring to him his true, all-too-human place, in Heine's phrase, "neither a genius nor a hero," both of which Heine considered himself to be. His strategy was calculated to infuriate Börne's followers, and in that goal he wildly succeeded.<sup>12</sup>

Heine's publisher Campe initially decided to bring out Heine's book under the title *Heine über Börne*, a *double entendre*: *über* can mean both 'on,' i.e. about, or "above." We might even say "Heine on top of Börne," riding his back in the humiliating manner of the apocryphal story of Phyllis on Aristotle, an image relevant to Heine's account of Börne's relation to Jeanette Wohl, or worse, Heine's anti-homoerotic polemics against Platen, "on top of" Börne in a sexual sense. When Heine discovered Campe's initiative, he immediately had the title changed to *Ludwig Börne. Eine Denkschrift* [Ludwig Börne. A Memorial]. Authors in antiquity had dedicated entire books to attacking their opponents, although Heine was surely the first to present his attack as a memorial to a dead opponent, an outrageous idea that by itself already earned him a place in the literary canon.

Heine's alternative title not only advanced the provocative claim that his insulting lambasting of Börne was to serve as his memorial, but also subtly conveyed darker ideas: that Heine's text underscored Börne's death, rendered him irrelevant, or worse, replaced Börne's life and work in memorial fashion, reducing him to a humiliating parody of himself, all of which were true on some level. The struggle effectively continued in subsequent historians' accounts of the significance of these men and their relation. A further distinction can be made between a *Denkmal*, a physical memorial, like the Börneplatz in Frankfurt, which commemorates his significance as liberal revolutionary writer, and a *Denkschrift*, a memorial text, which gives pause for thought for the memory of the person in question, yet might also be translated literally as "thought-text," or more colloquially, thought-piece. Commemoration was in the moralistic and righteous vein of Börne; Heine's fearlessly destructive humor was anti-commemorative.

A primary factor in the conflicting outlooks of Heine and Börne was the relation of politics and art, or the status of the political.<sup>13</sup> Heine's evolving political position was bound up with his reversal regarding Goethe, and the priority of art and the aesthetic over the purely

political in the sense of social or class liberation or warfare and party politics. Heine's "aesthetic turn" began after his move to Paris in 1831 in the wake of the 1830 Revolution. Equally important was the death of the "Great Pagan no. 1" in 1832, which was directly connected to Börne who together with other liberals rejected Goethe as reactionary. Heine's turn likely also followed in part from his confronting what we might call "real existing" liberal German nationalism and its "human face" in the person of Börne and other exiles. Heine had also taken increasing distance from the ideals and aims of his friend and fellow-exile Marx. Heine restated his position in no uncertain terms in his book on Börne:

For beauty and genius no place will be found in the commune of our new puritans, and both will be flayed and oppressed, still far more grievously than under the older regime. For beauty and genius are also a kind of monarchy, and they do not fit into a society where everyone in the ill feeling of his own mediocrity seeks to demean all higher endowment down to the banal level.<sup>14</sup>

Börne recognized that Heine's position was precariously situated between two stools, for which Börne found his own strange metaphor, duly cited by Heine in his book:

Nature has fortunately given to us other miserable people only one back, so that we fear the blows of fate only from one side, but poor Heine has two backs; he fears the blows of the aristocrats and the blows of the democrats, and to evade both he must go forward and back at the same time.<sup>15</sup>

What Börne called Heine's double-backed nature was from Heine's perspective the result of independent thinking, instead of choosing party political sides with comrades who would "have one's back." He also shared his predicament with Goethe, although no one in Goethe's time was delivering political blows, least of all to Goethe. For Börne the choice was between justice or injustice, democrats or aristocrats; for Heine, the choice was between beauty and genius in Goethe and Heine or their absence in Börne.

Börne sharpened his rhetoric in his review of the French edition of Heine's *On Germany*, published in Börne's *Letters from Paris*, in which he characterized Heine as escaping down mouse holes and compared him to a boy chasing butterflies on the battlefield. In Börne's view, Heine should simply stick to poetry. Heine found these claims absurd and cited them at length in his book, allowing Börne to have his say, yet turning his own words against him:

The passage in Börne's Parisian letters where he most unhesitatingly attacked me is at the same time so characteristic for the assessment of the man himself, his style, his passion, and his blindness, that I cannot refrain from communicating it here. Despite his bitterest purpose, he was never able to wound me, and everything he brought forward to my disadvantage... I could read with a serenity as though it had been directed not against me, but, say against... Frederick the Great, who ordered that the lampoons against his person that were hanging somewhat too high on the Berlin street corners be tacked lower so that the public might more easily read them.<sup>16</sup>

Heine characteristically sought to score several points in this way: he demonstrated his self-confidence by citing his own worst critic at length; he compared his magnanimous attitude



with that of the great Prussian king, and thereby also provoked Börne's hostility to monarchy; and he cruelly implied through his concrete analogy that his quoting Börne's *Letters from Paris* was equivalent to lowering lampoons on street lamps, because he presented Börne's accusations in a way that others could understand them, or because Heine's own book would be more popular and widely disseminated than Börne's, or both.

All these points were proved by Heine's actual citation from Börne:

Shall I speak a reasonable word about Heine's *Conditions in France*? I dare not. The insect-like discomfort that buzzed around my head while reading the book and alighted now on this, now on that feeling, put me into an irritable mood, so that I cannot guarantee—I do not say, correctness of my judgment, for I would never assert such an arrogant claim—even the honesty of my judgment... I can make allowances for childish games, for the passions of a youth. But when, on the day of the bloodiest battle, a boy chasing butterflies in the battlefield gets tangled with my feet, when, on a day of the greatest urgency, when we fervently pray to God, a young fop comes by seeing nothing in the church but the pretty girls and flirts and whispers with them—that can, notwithstanding our philosophy and humaneness, well make us angry.

Heine is an artist, a poet, and the only thing lacking in the most general acknowledgement of this is his own. Because he often wants to be something other than a poet, he often loses himself. For one for whom form is the highest thing, it must also remain the only thing; for as soon as he steps over the edge he overflows into boundlessness and the sand swallows him up.<sup>17</sup>

Heine sought to use Börne's words against him. When Börne insists, "I do not say, correctness of my judgment..." he protests too much. When Börne calls Heine "a boy chasing butterflies" on "the day of the bloodiest battle," he sounds pompous and petulant. Besides, Heine liked the idea of chasing butterflies, a metaphor for poetry, and flirting with pretty girls. Most of all Heine embraced being an artist: "what have I to do with Börne, I am a poet!" he incredulously exclaimed. For Börne poetry was something trivial, only formal play, and he defined politics equally narrowly as programmatic positions. Heine took poetry seriously as an expression of thought, including political thought, and he wanted to be seen as not just a poet but also a writer and a thinker.

Heine brilliantly tied together all these dimensions in his now famous distinction between the moralistic, ascetic Nazarenes, including both Jews and Christians, and the pagan, sensualist Hellenes, lovers of art and culture.

In his statements about Goethe, Börne also always betrayed his Nazarene narrowness in his judgments of other writers. I say Nazarene in order to employ neither the expression "Jewish" nor "Christian," although both of these terms are synonymous for me and I use them not to denote a belief but rather a temperament. "Jews" and "Christians" are for me quite homologous words, in contrast to "Hellene," with which I also do not mean a particular people, but a mentality and viewpoint both congenital and cultivated. In this connection I would like to say: all men are either Jews or Hellenes, men with ascetic drives, hostile to images, and addicted to spiritualization, or men with a realistic nature, with a cheerful view of life, and proud of evolving.<sup>18</sup>

The dichotomy of Hellene and Nazarene has a long trajectory in Heine's oeuvre, including the opposition of sensualism and spiritualism in his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*. In his *Elementary Spirits* of 1837, Heine first invoked Nazarenes as a sub-set of Judaism in contrast to "Hellenic" attitudes of ancient Greece and later Hellenism.<sup>19</sup> The term Nazarene was historically associated with the early Christians, and in Heine's time also with Catholic Romantic painters at the turn of the nineteenth century who sought to return to an earlier naïve and "pure" world-view, the German equivalent of "pre-Raphaelites." The Nazarenes stood for everything that was anathema to Heine and produced what some perceive as awkward, unattractive art, so he likely derived his neologism partly from them. In his Börne book Heine expanded the term Nazarene to include both Jews and Christians, including non-believing assimilated and baptized Jews such as Börne, on the basis of their ascetic and moralizing attitude. Conversely, he replaced "Hellenic" with Hellene, which included Heine alongside Goethe because of their affinity for classical beauty and art, even though Heine did not emulate classical forms, and excluded the likes not only of Börne but also the poet count August von Platen-Hallermünde because he could not understand or achieve either beauty of art, despite his avowed classical allegiances.<sup>20</sup>

Heine's dichotomy has most often been understood through the lens of Matthew Arnold's reformulation as "Hebraic and Hellenic."<sup>21</sup> Yet as Willi Goetschel noted, Arnold "stripped [Heine's dichotomy] of the more subtle nuances of ambivalence and irony," whereas Nietzsche "followed Heine more critically in preserving—if only subliminally—some degree of critical tension that kept Heine's play with the distinction unstable."<sup>22</sup> Goetschel himself situated Heine's dichotomy in the context of Europe's dual Hebrew and Greek cultural inheritance, arising from the shift from Enlightenment to Romanticism and the secularization of religious concepts resulting in the modern concept of culture and religion as a "cultural practice." He proposed that "Nazarenes and Hellenes do not represent independent forms of existence but rather a contrastive relationship of interrelated differentiation whose constituent aspects formed a conceptual whole." In his view, "each side constantly reminds the other of its insufficiency. Just like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, the two parties depend on each other and only represent humanity's potential when combined." In conclusion, Goetschel proposed that the "continuous interplay between opposites playfully undoes any claim for stable distinctions."<sup>23</sup>

Like Matthew Arnold before him, Goetschel was surely correct that Heine's dichotomy takes up Europe's dual inheritance of Hebrew and Greek culture, later elaborated in Erich Auerbach's classic overview of literary criticism, *Mimesis*.<sup>24</sup> Heine also undeniably plays with his ambiguous dichotomy throughout, including his exaggerated if not caricatured presentations of Börne and himself, his elaborate quotation and ventriloquism between them, in parts confusing or collapsing their outlooks. Inge Rippmann proposed that "the vehemence with which Heine tries to distance himself from Börne, leads one to suspect that he was trying to overcome a division in his own personality and that he transferred some of the darker aspects of his own personality onto Börne."<sup>25</sup> Heine himself characterized his book as a "double portrait" in order to justify dividing his attention between his ostensible subject and himself.<sup>26</sup> His position within the dichotomy was also complicated as its creator, who inevitably contained both sides within himself.<sup>27</sup> Heine furthermore played loose and fast with his terminology, as in the lengthy passage cited above, where he says "all men are either Jews or Hellenes" without quotation marks around "Jews," using the term in the metaphorical sense of Nazarene, which denotes both Jews and Christians, and a temperament rather than a belief.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, Heine clearly intended an important distinction between Börne as the moralistic, ascetic, humorless, dogmatic, self-righteous, pedantic, nationalist Nazarene-Jew, and Heine as the sensualist, hedonist, self-mocking, life-affirming, artistic, cosmopolitan, open-minded Hellene-Jew, allied with the late Goethe.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, this distinction constitutes the foundation and *raison d'être* of Heine's book. Heine openly identified with Don Quixote on many levels.<sup>30</sup> Yet the ascetic and idealistic knight's humorous insanity is precisely the inverse of Börne's irritating self-righteousness. Heine as sensualist could also be compared to Sancho Panza, yet would have vehemently rejected the thought of himself as Börne's sidekick.

Heine's attack on Börne also followed directly from Börne's attack on Goethe.<sup>31</sup> The opposition between Heine and Börne thus served to underscore Heine's own reversal regarding Goethe. According to Heine, Börne attacked Goethe as "a wimp, a servile sycophant and a dilettante," a hyperbolic elaboration of statements made by Börne that made him look especially bad.<sup>32</sup> Yet Heine's claim that Börne had no understanding for Goethe's "objective freedom" and his sensitivity to plastic form, and Börne's ostensible comparison of Goethe's poetry in "its rigidity and coldness" to a Greek statue, uncannily echoes Heine's own earlier statements. In the *Romantic School*, Heine openly admitted his envy towards Goethe, and addressed what he saw as Goethe's negative characteristics, such as his vanity.<sup>33</sup> Heine could thus be said to have overcome his envy or resentment toward Goethe, a self-overcoming, partly by projecting or transferring these qualities onto Börne, even though, or precisely because the shoe fit.

Goethe can be seen as a central dividing line between Börne and Heine on several levels. From Börne's perspective, political positions were at stake. Goethe was associated with the political right because of his attitude toward the aristocracy and the Weimar court that employed him, as well as in contrast to his early collaborator Schiller, a progressive prophet of freedom and social advancement. Goethe and his followers were accused of being indifferent to political movements and thereby having a "harmful influence on the political development of the German people."<sup>34</sup> From Heine's perspective, the issues were aesthetic. Börne failed to recognize Goethe's artistic significance, which doubled Börne's failure to recognize Heine's significance. More specifically, Börne failed to recognize Goethe as a thinker. Goethe took distance from his time, religion, nationalism, and Romanticism as "sick." The development of Heine's own thinking was also at play. In his Börne book Heine distanced himself from the aesthetically compromised and politically driven literature of his day. Here he raised for the first time the issue of Börne's "secret envy" of Goethe, corresponding to what Nietzsche would call *ressentiment*, using a French word for a subtlety that seemed to escape Germans. The differences consisted chiefly in judgments about greatness and mediocrity, which for Heine were not questions of politics but aesthetics, although these questions could be political in their implications.

Ultimately at the heart of the conflict between Börne and Heine was the question of whether the aesthetic should be subordinated to the political or *vice versa*. Börne's texts were always primarily political in their aims and content, and he felt that the aesthetic should serve political commitment, as with his theater criticism that he wrote partly in the attempt to subvert increasing Prussian censorship. Conversely, Heine's writings, although explicitly political, did not serve specific groups or parties, and he worried about the place of the artist in a post-revolutionary society. Following Wolfgang Menzel, Börne distinguished between talent and 'character' as commitment to a programmatic political position, which he claimed both Goethe and Heine lacked. Heine found this interpretation of character simplistic, suited to the mediocre and the masses, in contrast to the complex vision of the talented artist. He underscored his claim by punning on Börne's name:

With quite outstanding spirits towering above their age the crowd can therefore never know whether they have character or not, for the great crowd does not have vision enough to comprehend the circles in which such elevated spirits move... Less gifted people, whose more superficial and narrow view of life is more easily fathomed and summoned up, and who, so to speak, proclaim their life program in the marketplace once and for all in popular language, such people can always be grasped coherently by the honorable public... it is then delighted by its own intelligence as though having solved a charade, and rejoices: behold, there is a person of character!

It is always a sign of narrow-mindedness [*Borniertheit*] when one is easily comprehended by the narrow-minded [*bornierten*] crowd and explicitly celebrated for having character.<sup>35</sup>

Heine cited Börne's criticisms of him in some cases because he was proud of the ostensible offense. Regarding Heine's extreme religious skepticism, Börne asked: "How can you ever believe anyone who does not believe anything himself? Heine is so very ashamed to believe anything that he has the 'LORD' God printed with all capital letters, in order to show that is a technical term for which he is not responsible."<sup>36</sup> Here Börne pedantically explained what Heine had merely left implied. Heine equated Börne's earnest moralism and idealism with the Catholicism that he came close to embracing at the end of his life, which Heine contemptuously dismissed as naïve credulity. In an extraordinary passage that simultaneously recalls Heine's farcical account of Moses Mendelssohn's earnest defense of Lessing's deism, anticipates a famous slogan of Marx, and looks forward to Nietzsche's account of Christian *ressentiment*, Heine proposed that

It was perhaps good luck for Börne that he died. If the death had not saved him, perhaps we would see him today disgraced as a Roman Catholic... Catholicism is, after all, the ghastly charming blossom of that doctrine of despair whose swift spread over the earth no longer appears as a great miracle when one considers in what a dreadfully painful condition the whole Roman world languished. Just as the individual hopelessly opened his veins and sought in death Asylum from the tyranny of the Caesars, so the great crowd plunged into asceticism, into the doctrine of mortification, into the obsession with martyrdom, into the whole suicide of Nazarene religion, so as to throw off the sufferings of life... For people to whom life offers nothing more, heaven was invented. Hail to this invention! Hail to a religion that pours sweet, soporific drops into suffering mankind's bitter cup, spiritual opium, a few drops of love, hope, and faith!"<sup>37</sup>

In his collection of aphorisms *Blüthenstaub* from 1798, the poet Novalis had already put forward that "so-called religion works simply as an opiate—stimulating; numbing; quelling pain by means of weakness."<sup>38</sup> The idea is straightforward enough: religion, specifically Christianity, does not cure suffering but merely offers a means to hide from its effects, a delusion. Four years after Heine's Börne book, in his introduction to his essay on "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," which he published in 1844, Marx asserted that "religion... is the opiate of the people," as part of his broader effort to achieve a transition from religion and theology to political and economic action as a real solution for concrete social problems and the suffering of the poor.<sup>39</sup>

Heine's pronouncement was similarly ironic, directed against Börne's ascetic, "soporific" Nazarene mentality, based on resentment and life-denial as opposed to Hellene sensuality and joy. Yet Heine's beautiful formulation also suggests ambivalence, evoking drops of Christ's blood in the chalice as a "spiritual opium," in contrast to the actual opium invoked by Novalis and Marx. Heine was against religion in its negative dimensions, yet did not seek to move beyond religion to reach politics and society, where he saw the same principles, derived in part from religion, at work. Conversely, Heine sought to draw on the positive dimensions of religion when invoked pantheism as a "democracy of Gods" and "nectar and ambrosia" for everyone as non-addictive substitute for opium. Heine was also ambivalent about Christ, whose suffering he compared to his own and juxtaposed with the Greek gods in a way that undermined their own earthly forms of power and beauty.

In some passages Heine greatly over-stated his case, making himself look bad and Börne look better, presumably a deliberate strategy to balance out their peculiar dialectic:

Whether anything I accomplished in this life was good or bad, we will not contend about it. It is enough that it was great; I was aware it was from the painful expansion of my soul, out of which these accomplishments came forth and I'm aware of it also from the pettiness of the dwarfs that stand before them and get dizzy blinking up at them. Their gaze does not reach to the top, and they only bump their noses on the pedestal of those monuments that I planted in the literature of Europe to the eternal fame of the German mind. Are these monuments completely flawless, are they completely without fault and sin? Truly I will not make any specific claims about that. But what the little people have to object testifies only to their own droll obtuseness.<sup>40</sup>

Heine's self-praise concerning "those monuments that I planted in the literature of Europe to the eternal fame of the German mind [*Geist*, also 'spirit']" was intended in a humorously ironic sense. Yet Kraus seized on this passage to attack Heine.<sup>41</sup> Heine also added to the wound of his self-aggrandizement the injury of insulting his detractors as dwarfs dizzied by his accomplishments, bumping their noses against the pedestals of his monuments, an amusing conceit, but also somewhat painful in view of his book's actual reception, in his time and up to the present. His rhetorical question as to whether his texts were "without fault and sin" could have been posed by any author. Yet this particular writer had ruined his reputation by placing ugly polemics at the center of his prose texts such as his *Baths of Lucca* and *Ludwig Börne*, just as his poetry had to be "de-thorned" for broad public consumption.

Heine was no stranger to controversy, since his attacks in his *Baths of Lucca* on the homosexuality of the poet Platen, a Cotta author, had alienated Heine's potential publisher Cotta. Heine showed his Börne manuscript to his friend Laube, who responded: "Your Börne book is a total failure." Laube correctly predicted that the text would be perceived as flippant, negative, and unfair, to which Heine responded: "but is it not beautifully expressed?"<sup>42</sup> The book is filled with unfair and irresponsible insults, the most profound insights, and a brilliant, hilarious pretzel logic in the relation of the author to his subject. Partly in response to Laube's critique, Heine sought to incorporate more positive material in the second chapter, including his entertaining account of his vacation on the North Sea island of Helgoland where he ostensibly heard about the July Revolution in Paris in 1830. Yet this material did not necessarily counteract the negative elements, and instead primarily added to his book's richness, and strangeness.

By far the most contentious element of Heine's book were his personal attacks on Börne and on Jeanette Wohl, Börne's close friend, supporter, and literary executor. Heine harshly referred to Wohl's face as looking "like old matzoh" and humorously insinuated a *ménage à trois* between her, her husband Solomon Strauss, and Börne, which involved either sexual depravity or impotence on Börne's part. The charges resulted in a public scandal. Heine and Strauss fought a duel in which Heine was lightly wounded with a nick in the hip. Others became embroiled, including Wagner as Heine's defender, a stance Wagner later tacitly repudiated in his *Jewry in Music* through his explicit attack on Heine in the conclusion. Heine also came to regret his excesses, and even promised Wohl that he would remove the passages about the *ménage à trois*, to no avail since she went ahead with publishing the posthumous volume of Börne's attacks on Heine. Heine died without ever removing the offending material, which remains set in stone, so to speak, in his *Denkschrift*. Heine's book ended up boosting Börne's popularity at the expense of Heine's, and provided a more welcome reception for Karl Gutzkow's hagiographic biography of Börne, which Heine had meant to pre-empt. The scandal constituted a genuine low-point in Heine's career. Yet the man who dared to provoke in this way, and outrageously assailed the sterling character of the great Ludwig Börne in such low-handed ways, was a hero to the philosopher Sloterdijk. He recognized in Heine an exceptional independence from what constituted acceptable discourse: "Heinrich Heine was one of the last authors of classical enlightenment who literally defended, in open satire, the rights of ideology critique to 'just atrocities'; here, the public has *not* followed him."<sup>43</sup>

#### B. Germans, Jews, and "their" literature

The Young Germany writers were not particularly popular or influential in Germany, and in some cases inspired vehement attacks as a result of their association with liberalism and alleged Jewish identities. Wolfgang Menzel, a pioneer of the field of German literary history, sarcastically referred to the group as "young Palestine," although some, such as Laube, were not only not Jewish, but even anti-Semites, as evident from Laube's preface to his play *Struensee*, which spoke of the Jews' direct association of art with money.<sup>44</sup> Menzel had at first enjoyed Börne's humor, defended him in public debates, and was even something of a Börne apologist. Yet partly as a result of disputes about the censorship involving the Young Germany group, Menzel turned against Börne, accusing him of negative Jewish humor among other things. At stake was implicitly German identity, German-Jewish identity, and even German literature.

Although he was not subject to the 1835 ban, Börne was perceived as a leader of Young Germany. He also directly challenged Menzel so that the two came to personify the dichotomy of liberal-universalist left-wing and ethnic-essentialist right-wing perspectives among German nationalists in the period after the 1848 liberal revolutions.<sup>45</sup> Just as Heine's battles [*Auseinandersetzung*] with Börne served to clarify Heine's own position, Börne's disputes with others played an important part in his evolving vision. Börne responded to Menzel with his essay "Menzel, the Frenchman-eater," his best-known text. The conflict between Börne and Menzel accordingly represented the prototype of the conflict between Heine and Börne, and later Nietzsche and Wagner. In each case, a writer—Börne, Heine, Nietzsche—became best known in relation to his opponent, a structure peculiar to nineteenth-century German culture and, directly or indirectly, German-Jewish culture.

Börne's peculiar methods of argument are clear from the following passage in his "Frenchman-eater":

Every time my enemies are in danger of foundering upon *Börne* and suffering an intellectual shipwreck, they throw out their emergency anchor *Baruch* [a reference to his Jewish background]. Herr Menzel is more cautious in this regard than the others. He only begins his maneuvers against me once he is anchored himself firmly upon my Jewishness. Despairing of his capacity to counter me with arguments of truth and justice, he seeks to dramatize this cause, describing me in terms of a romantic villain. Someone should write a novella with me as the main character.<sup>46</sup>

Börne thus made the anti-Jewish discourse of Menzel and other opponents explicit, which he attacked as a subterfuge of *ad hominem*, or rather *ad judaeum* remarks, in contrast to addressing the substance of the discussion and Börne's concern with truth and justice. Menzel in particular did not even wait to resort to this tactic as needed, throwing out an anchor during an intellectual shipwreck, but rather from the outset beached his ship on the ground of Börne's Jewishness as a conscious strategy. Börne further sought to trivialize such anti-Jewish attacks by comparing himself to a "romantic villain"; Fagin in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* of 1837-9 comes to mind, although that was presumably not what Börne meant. By citing Börne's own texts against him, letting them speak instead for Heine, in some cases even using Börne's arguments, and even playing on Börne's name, Heine was thus employing Börne's own strategies in relation to opponents such as Menzel.

Börne specifically used the opposition of Jews and Germans, and of Jewish and German identity, as a metaphor for the place of Germans within Europe:

Is not Germany the ghetto of Europe? Does not every German wear a yellow star on his hat?... Are not the people of Frankfurt, my former masters, in the same position as the Jews of yore? Are not the Austrians and Prussians their Christians? The insult that was once called out around the clock at every Jew by high and low, young and old—*Obeisance, Jew*—are they not now forced to hear it themselves?<sup>47</sup>

In Börne's time, the monarchies of Prussia and the Austrian Empire were opposed by liberal reform movements of German nationalists. Yet Börne's opposition sounds strange to our ears because Otto von Bismarck later embedded German nationalism within the Prussian monarchical state. Börne's comparison of Frankfurt Germans in relation to Prussia and Austria to Jews seems particularly absurd after the successful Nazi fusion of German nationalism and anti-Semitism. The connection of right-wing German nationalism and anti-Jewish agitation dates back to the university fraternity celebrations of 1820, of which Heine was painfully aware, and which Börne appears to overlook or at least undermine by equating the cause of the Jews with that of German nationalism, in a humanistic appeal to the dignity of mankind.

In one passage Börne's rhetoric echoes the speech of Shakespeare's Shylock with the famous line "when you prick us, do we not bleed?":

The curse of these people weighed heavily upon him. When he traveled abroad, his passport was contemptuously marked: *Juif de Francfort*. Am I not a man like all others?, he exclaimed. Has not God provided me with every power of imagination—why should you be permitted to denigrate me? I will take the noblest of revenge. I will help you fight for your liberty.<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, Shylock is a hateful character, whose humiliation and abjection is ultimately celebrated by everyone involved. An appeal to common humanity, Shakespeare understood, is unlikely to win over one's sworn enemies. Börne appears to have been deaf to such subtleties in tone. Conversely, we might credit Shakespeare with insight into a specifically Jewish quality of self-righteous moral pomposity, over-determined by the Jews' unique position in society, that was echoed a few centuries later by Börne. Börne's text, it must be admitted, is worded in a far less interesting way, and the stakes have atrophied from a pound of flesh, or life and death, to the right to an unmodified passport, which seems relatively minor. When Börne again reverses expectations by having his Jewish victim declare his intention to help fight for the liberties of the German who denigrates him, the effect is unintentionally comic.

Börne's purpose was to expose injustice and immorality in his time to the light of reason. He sought to advance a liberal agenda and to resolve fundamental conflicts between nationalism and antipathy toward Jews. Yet in the process he also made the debate explicitly about his own person and his Jewishness, the names *Börne* and *Baruch*, conventional insults and persecution directed at Jews. It is understandable that Börne's contemporaries saw his approach as characteristically Jewish, and that it reinforced rather than dissolving anti-Jewish prejudice. His aims were perhaps laudable, yet Heine saw his means as ineffective, even potentially ridiculous, and rejected Börne's ideals as hopelessly naïve, involving misplaced passion:

Yes, this Börne was a great patriot, perhaps the greatest to suck from Germania's stepmotherly breasts the warmest life and the bitterest death! Rejoicing and bleeding in the soul of this man was a touching love of the Fatherland that, bashful by nature like any love, liked to hide under growling invective and carping surliness, but in an unguarded moment burst out all the more violently."<sup>49</sup>

Heine recognized an implicit contradiction and hypocrisy in the way Börne engaged in polemics, taking his opponents to task for their subterfuges, and at the same time declared their mutual love for the Fatherland. The image of Germany as a nursing stepmother is a particularly unnerving way to suggest Börne's misplaced sentiment, whereas Börne's patriotism bursting out violently calls to mind a bawling baby.

On the other hand, no one was closer to Börne's situation than Heine's, so that his mocking also disguised some measure of identification with Börne's sentiments. The latter would

declare in sobs that Germany was the best land in the world, and the most beautiful land, and the Germans were the most beautiful and most noble people, a true pearl of a people, and nowhere were people cleverer than in Germany, and even the fools were wise there, and churlishness was actually high spirits, and he longed for the homeland's beloved jabs in the ribs, and sometimes he lusted for a really juicy German stupidity like a pregnant woman for a pear. It is also true that his separation from the homeland was a genuine martyrdom, and this suffering wrung out many an angry word in his writing. Whoever does not know exile does not comprehend how garishly it colors our agonies and how it pours night and poison into our thoughts. Dante wrote his *Hell* in exile. Only those who have lived in exile know what love of the fatherland is, love of the fatherland with all its sweet terrors and yearning sorrows!<sup>50</sup>



In this passage Heine clearly speaks for himself, using his argument with Börne as an occasion to introduce his own agenda, and even lends Börne's ostensible thoughts or words an undeniable Heine-like humor and pregnant concision: "a true pearl of a people," "even the fools were wise there," "the homeland's beloved jabs in the ribs," and "lusted for a really juicy German stupidity like a pregnant woman for a pear" are all vintage Heine. One of the most fascinating dimensions of Heine's Börne book is the way he enshrined the dispute between them by presenting both sides, hardly in an objective or fair way, and sometimes exchanging and confusing their respective positions. Heine's book presents a dizzying range of both overtly insulting and seemingly supportive remarks about Börne, with whom he appears to identify at times. Heine also attributes sentiments to Börne that are clearly Heine's own, and at times appears to appropriate Börne's ideas as if they were Heine's. What Börne would wrongly have called "merely formal play" in poetry clearly had major consequences for the content of Heine's prose text. This play constituted a central part of his text's brilliance, yet also confirmed Börne's attacks on Heine from Börne's perspective, which many undoubtedly shared, and likely contributed to the scandal in Heine's time and his book's subsequent obscurity.

The status of German literature played a central role in these issues. In the accounts of Menzel and others of the period, Goethe and Schiller embodied German culture's highpoint. Subsequent German culture was seen as a decline, and in some critics' minds this depreciation was due to the vulgar and mercantile influence of Jews such as Heine and Börne, arguments that anticipated Wagner's discussion in his *Jewry in Music*. Some of Börne's opponents even accused him of running down Goethe in order to put Heine in Goethe's place!<sup>51</sup> Heine's case was more complicated insofar as he explicitly addressed the commercial dimension of writing that was repressed in idealizing accounts of German literature by the likes of Menzel, and was also later the rule rather than the exception. Even after Heine's reversal in his outlook on Goethe in the early 1830's, his relation to Goethe remained complex, ambivalent, and competitive, including deliberate parody and the introduction of vulgar everyday reality into idealizing schemes. In his Börne book Heine disparaged Börne's attacks on Goethe as betraying a misunderstanding of aesthetic and artistic value. Yet Börne and Heine's critiques of Goethe also shared common elements, particularly in opposition to Menzel.<sup>52</sup> Menzel had also partly set the terms of the debate by emphasizing an author's personal character as more important than literary talent, priorities taken up in turn by Börne, which Heine sought to invert.

The commercial side of literature was especially relevant for Heine's relation to Johann Friedrich Cotta, the leading publisher of the period, largely because his firm had by accident ended up with the sole rights to German classics such as the collected works of Goethe and Schiller. As Jefferson Chase proposed in his highly original study *Inciting Laughter: The Development of "Jewish Humor" in 19<sup>th</sup>-century German Culture*, Cotta was protecting his brand in his reluctance to take up Heine as an author because of Heine's "Jewish" polemics and vulgarity and his explicit consideration of the commercial side of literature.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to Goethe's self-appointed epigones who insisted on conformity to past literary models and rehashed empty literary formulae, Heine explicitly addressed the clichéd and fetishized character of the reception of literature itself, including those who espoused the "Classics" without understanding them. Yet Heine may have over-estimated the intelligence of the public and the appeal of his satiric wit. The high reputation of the poems in Heine's *Book of Songs* was based largely on his audience's appreciation for his skilled reproduction of clichés, whereas they tended to ignore the ironic dimension of Heine's poetry or dismissed this as an irritating flaw. In addition, in a characteristic vicious circle identified by Chase, Heine's mocking of cliché attitudes toward

Classic literature, and acknowledgment of the commercial realities behind literature, was seen as vulgar and commercial, and characteristically Jewish.<sup>54</sup>

German-ness, or “Germanity” as Chase provocatively named the issue, was an ongoing construction at this time, from which Jews were progressively being excluded in culture, literature, and politics. These dynamics played a key role in Börne’s development, and he played a central role in debates about these topics in turn. Börne specifically embraced assimilation through discursive competence, or the mastery of High German, yet the brunt of his Jewish humor gradually shifted over time from attacking particular individuals to the Germans as a whole, and their political passivity in particular. He both made fun of Germans, and thought of himself as one of them. Conversely, his opponents gradually came to lump him together with Heine as part of a broader cabal or conspiracy of “Jewish literary artifice.”<sup>55</sup> Attitudes towards Jews also gradually shifted, not only regarding their ostensible “unpleasant attributes,” but also their supposed erosion of traditional social restraints. Jews came to be seen as representing not just a separate nation, but one with the opposite qualities of Germans, a kind of anti-nation. The fear that Jews could not be assimilated was gradually displaced by fears about the consequences of their assimilation.<sup>56</sup> Heine may have been a major contributing factor to such fears through his outrageous polemics and attacks on German limitations, although he hardly endorsed a separate Jewish anti-nation and responded to anti-Semites such as with Platen in the fiercest way.

Fears about Jews eroding German ideals were a primary motivating factor in Wagner’s *Jewry in Music*, first published in 1850, a decade after Heine’s Börne book. In his conclusion Wagner rejected Heine and embraced Börne, although only because Börne’s attempt to assimilate amounted to negating himself or “going under” as Jew, with the *double entendre* of eliminating the Jews altogether. That was more or less the exact opposite of Börne’s admonition to integrate the cause of the Jews and German nationalism. Heine’s position was somewhere in between. Instead of defending the Jews on moral grounds, and asserting their equality and commonality with Germans, Heine distinguished between Börne as Nazarene and himself as Hellene: between a moralizing, ascetic, self-righteous Jew, despite or because of his conversion and aspiration to assimilation, and an artistic, sensual, mocking Pagan, despite or because of his Jewish background, conversion, and assimilation.

When Heine identified Goethe and himself as Hellenes, and lumped together Jews and Christians as Nazarenes, he not only differentiated himself from and antagonized Börne. He also antagonized anti-Jewish agitators and later anti-Semites and German nationalists whose identities were founded in large part on their difference from Jews, and the fetishism of German culture and its literary heroes in opposition to Jews. Heine also mocked reductive attacks against Jews, who were often simply equated with a liberal viewpoint.<sup>57</sup> Both Menzel and a Bavarian minister involved in the 1835 Federal Diet’s ban on Young Germany identified one of its gentile members, Karl Gutzkow, as Jewish. Heine went a step further when he hilariously referred to the nationalist critic of German literature as “the Jew Menzel,” and claimed that he “puffs his Germandom like A Jewish peddler his junk.”<sup>58</sup> Heine thereby ridiculed both Menzel’s anti-Semitism and his claim to be a spokesman for great German literature. In doing so, Heine also contributed in a significant way to German literature, with one of its most brilliant lines, although that kind of judgment is necessarily made belatedly.

### C. Polemics and Jewish humor

Heine’s book also undeniably involved outrageous polemics against Börne. Heine demonstrated an underlying tendency toward polemics throughout his career, beginning already

with his early rivalry with Goethe, which was gradually transformed into praise for and identification with his great predecessor, together with polemics against Goethe's detractors. The passages in Heine's *Romantic School* ridiculing August Wilhelm Schlegel, Heine's early supporter and generous interlocutor, as impotent, like the passages in his *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* lambasting the philosopher Fichte for his delusional self-aggrandizement, make sense in the context of humorously anecdotal, provocative romps through German literary and intellectual culture. These passages are also hilariously entertaining precisely because they are so inappropriate, and do not appear to have offended anyone except, we can assume, the individuals in question.

By contrast, the attacks on Platen in Heine's *Baths of Lucca* unleashed a major controversy, anticipating the even greater scandal of his Börne book. Heine himself admitted in a letter to Immerman to excessive cruelty in his treatment of Platen, which effectively "ruined" Heine's novel, and cost him dearly in terms of his reputation. Heine's approach was not simply a 'mistake,' so much as a necessary part of the unfolding of his vision, whatever the cost. Heine was who he was. Yet that does not mean all his decisions can be explained in terms of a rational master plan. The same principles apply to his Börne book. One of Heine's primary assertions was that Börne's reputation as a pillar of morality was a façade, hiding an all-too-human hypocrisy. Yet Heine could have made that point just as easily, indeed, far more effectively, without delving into lurid character assassination. Whether ostensibly depraved like Platen or ostensibly impotent like both Platen and Schlegel, Heine's attacks on Börne's sexuality hardly underscored, and perhaps even undermined, Heine's main distinction between the ascetic Nazarene and sensual Hellene.<sup>59</sup> We should bear in mind in this regard E. M. Butler's sardonic observation: "anyone less wise than Heine in the conduct of his own affairs it would be impossible to imagine. He was always cutting his own throat."<sup>60</sup>

Chase's focus on polemical Jewish humor in German literature provides key insights into Heine's strategy.<sup>61</sup> As reviewed by Chase, polemics were regarded in Heine's time as characteristically Jewish, although Jews were also responding to personal attacks, so a vicious circle was at stake. Chase addressed three German-Jewish writers: Moritz Gottlieb Saphir, Börne, and Heine. Saphir, a pioneer of merciless satire in his essays, reviews, and pamphlets, was born in Budapest and studied literature there, moved first to Vienna, then Berlin, Munich, Paris, and eventually back to Vienna, with some imprisonments along the way. In Berlin he established the first German language papers to review cultural events as they happened, and thus became the father of modern journalism in Prussia, creating a new forum for cultural exchange and collective identity. He also made enemies, was accused of scandal-mongering, and attacked as a Jew, leading to a "pamphlet war" in 1826.<sup>62</sup> All three writers in Chase's account displayed a gradual, cumulative development of Jewish self-consciousness about Jewish humor in the context of Jewish assimilation and anti-Jewish agitation in the German-speaking lands during the years 1820-50.

Many previous authors have characterized Jewish humor as a "talmudic" elaboration on or kibitzing about trivial matters—echoed in contemporary society by the T.V. show *Seinfeld*. Jewish humor was also rightly understood as a defensive response to a powerless minority position. Sander Gilman in his book *Jewish Self-Hatred* emphasized the masochistic element of Jewish humor in Heine, or an internalization of minority status, equivalent to what Freud called "reaction formation": "what [Heine] fears most is in himself... a form of self-hatred that draws on both anti-anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism."<sup>63</sup> S. S. Praver similarly observed that Heine "takes a self-lacerating delight in projecting [Jewish] stereotypes onto himself. Jews... have often shown

themselves surprisingly ready to be amused by jokes and caricatures that exploit their enemies' view of them [as with] Heine's... startlingly masochistic exhibition."<sup>64</sup> Chase explicitly rejected such accounts, which assumed an unarticulated, unchanging essence of Jewish humor, in favor of an interpretation of his three subjects in relation to concrete conflicts over Jewish assimilation in a highly specific German historical context.

Critics of Saphir, Börne, and Heine accused all of them, sometimes in connection with one another, of using Jewish humor, which they characterized as sharp or bitter, juvenile, sadistic, lascivious, mercenary, destructive, satiric, interested or un-objective, and anti-Germanic. These attacks were part of a broader anti-Jewish sentiment that was intensifying at this time. Saphir, Börne, and Heine in turn responded to these accusations with self-conscious Jewish humor, as a way of combating anti-Jewish feeling, which however inevitably fed back into anti-Jewish feeling, establishing a vicious circle. The phenomenon can only be understood, Chase argued, against the background of Jewish legal emancipation and social integration and the rise of free-lance oppositional journalism.

Saphir inaugurated this broader strategy in a famous passage that satirized the limited intellect and imaginations of his anti-Jewish attackers:

All they could scrape together by way of imagination, satire and criticism was... 'They're all Jews!' They had mustered every last bit of grey matter and native wit they had, but they couldn't come up with an argumentative retort any better than this old wives' weapon. Admittedly it is very cheap to produce and still very much a part of German literature's standard arsenal—to its shame.<sup>65</sup>

Heinrich von Treitschke, later one of Heine's primary opponents in Germany, condemned Saphir's "indomitable impertinence."<sup>66</sup> As Chase observed, Saphir had been able to forge a career, yet failed to establish a positive reputation, so that he

proved to be the first enemy figure for conspiracy theories about the "Jewish" undermining of German culture and society. The same arguments would also recur in the scandals surrounding Börne and Heine a few years later [...Saphir's] Berlin pamphlet war thereby inaugurated a discourse that had epochal repercussions for literary history.<sup>67</sup>

In retrospect, Saphir's wit seems tepid at best. 'They're all Jews!' is a little humorous, and undoubtedly exposed actual sentiments among his less gifted contemporaries, which remain all too familiar today. Yet this formulation cannot be called a devastating *riposte* or a good reason for his opponents to stop their activities. Jews were after all disproportionately represented in the fields of literary history, modern journalism, political science, and public relations. "This old wives' weapon" likewise sounds ineffective as an objection to the violent and destructive actions of anti-Jewish agitators, whereas Saphir's admonition that this weapon remained standard in the arsenal of German literature "to its shame," sounds self-righteous and preachy, the kind of thing that reinforces anti-Jewish sentiment, whence Chase's "vicious circle."

Saphir's response to his detractors was echoed in turn, and taken several steps further, in Börne's response to Menzel. Börne was a far more important figure than Saphir as a political satirist in the public sphere, and the criticism he provoked was accordingly more intense and more codified in terms of his Jewish humor. He also developed his Jewish humor in subtler and varied ways, including persiflage, mockery, and personal insult as a strategy to discuss sensitive issues,

to avoid censors, and to counter anti-Jewish attacks. Unfortunately for Börne, he is now most often seen through the lens of Heine and his “memorial,” which was Heine’s intention. An important part of Chase’s research involved recovering Börne’s innovations that were later adapted by Heine in ways that effaced Börne’s contributions.

Heine achieved an altogether different level of fame than his predecessors, above all because he was a great poet, and not just a curiosity of German-Jewish history. Yet reconsidering Heine in the context of German-Jewish history provides much-needed new light on Heine the great poet. Most authors have focused on Heine’s Jewishness primarily in terms of clarifying biographical issues relating to his repudiation of or solidarity with his Jewish heritage. By contrast, Chase emphasized the deep entwinement of ethnicity and humor in Heine’s works such as *The Baths of Lucca*, which included an extended riff on anti-Jewish stereotypes:

Now and then Count Platen gets his hands on the best of motifs and does not how to use them. If he only had a tiny bit more imagination he would have at least depicted me as a covert pawnbroker, what comic scenes suggests themselves! It pains me to the very depths of my soul to see the poor Count miss every opportunity for good jokes.<sup>68</sup>

Chase also takes issue with previous scholars, such as Prawer and Gilman, who interpreted this passage as an instance of Heine’s Jewish self-loathing.<sup>69</sup> Rather, Heine’s insistence on “every opportunity for good jokes” clearly corresponds to Chase’s examination of Jewish humor. The sentiment also directly echoes Saphir’s earlier taunt that all that the anti-Jewish agitators could “scrape together by way of imagination, satire and criticism was... ‘They’re all Jews!’” Heine’s own contribution to this discourse is evident in his characters of the Jewish convert Gumpelino and his assistant Hirsch-Hyacinth, who demonstrate how far Heine’s anti-Jewish imagination extended beyond Platen’s. As Chase formulated the issue:

By letting his satiric imagination loose upon Jewish stereotypes—upon the ethnic background which was, socially speaking, *his* Achilles’ heel—he puts his own views to the test.... By treating negative images of Jewishness as a mere rhetorical weapon, which he as a skilled satirist can wield at will, Heine demonstrates their irrelevance to his own sense of self and diverts their potential sting.... This satirical demonstration thus discredits the anti-Semitic attempt to exclude him from community membership with a vigor impossible by means of a non-humorous response.<sup>70</sup>

Chase’s study undoubtedly put a finger on a wound, one that had been over-looked by previous commentators and for the most part also since. Yet by opening up this topic, Chase inevitably left his account open to elaboration in turn. The task Chase set himself, at which he brilliantly succeeded, was to discover common threads in the production and reception of the Jewish writers Saphir, Börne, and Heine’s texts as humorous responses or counter-punches to anti-Jewish attacks, in the context of Jewish assimilation and a nascent German and German-Jewish identity. Yet precisely for this reason Chase necessarily downplayed or even ignored the conflict between Börne and Heine memorialized in Heine’s *Ludwig Börne*, which would have complicated or undermined Chase’s foundational argument.

Ironically, one way to adapt Chase’s explanation is through a much earlier commentator, Sigmund Freud. Chase acknowledged Freud’s *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* as a “seminal model” for his study, yet claimed that Freud “focuses on verbal jokes, seeing their

absurd content as the key to laughter's social import," and more specifically "covert individual rebellion against collective constraint." Freud was "sensitive... to issues of Jewishness" and "writing very much in the wake of Heine and the controversies" he provoked.<sup>71</sup> Yet Chase did not otherwise concern himself with Freud's explanation and pivoted instead to Susan Purdie's theory of comedy as "mastery of discourse."<sup>72</sup>

Freud referred throughout his study to Heine and specifically to Heine's joke in his *Baths of Lucca* about Salomon Rothschild treating Hirsch-Hyacinth "as his equal—quite famillionairely [*famillionär*]."<sup>73</sup> The joke illustrated Freud's principle of "condensation," yet he also came back to the *mot* near the end of his study. "There are not a few passages in which the poet himself seems to be speaking, under a thin disguise, through the mouth of Hirsch-Hyacinth, and it soon becomes a certainty that this character is only a self-parody." Freud further observed that the way Hirsch changed his name to Hyacinth for reasons of economy, preserving the "H" on his signet ring, corresponds to Heine's baptismal name Heinrich preserving the "H" of Harry. Rothschild's first name Salomon further corresponds to that of Heine's millionaire uncle, whereas *familiär* can also mean "belonging to the family." Yet another of Freud's observation, derived from his aunt, who he proudly informs us married into Heine's family, involves Heine's often impoverished and miserable circumstances in comparison with his rich relations.<sup>74</sup> All this reminds us of the biographical, personal and, to use Freud's term, "unconscious" dimensions of Heine's humor.

Freud's sense of the personal and unconscious dimension of Heine's jokes is the exact corollary of Chase's account, following Purdie, of Heine's jokes as linguistic mastery, which through their "irrelevance to his own sense of self" serve to discredit anti-Semites. Chase may in this regard have over-reacted against Gilman and Praver's admittedly reductive readings of Heine's jokes as a manifestation of Jewish self-hated and masochism. Freud's much subtler and more differentiated account provides for the possibility of both Heine's mastery and his irrational or unconscious excess. He mocked the very language and terms by which others sought to condemn him, yet his mocking could not escape or eliminate his own ambivalence. Rather, his mastered his ambivalence, which was also a source of his mastery. The same configuration is discernable in his love poetry of gratifying disappointments, which may well have had concrete biographical sources in his personal experience and at the same time he self-consciously constructed as a paradigm.

Heine's ambivalence was also one of the fundamental differences between Börne and himself, which made Heine a much greater humorist. Like Heine, and even before him, Börne responded to anti-Semitism with provocative humor. Yet Börne maintained a sense of identity, both Jewish and German. In his effort to resist reductive, anachronistic, teleological readings of German-Jewish writers under the long backward shadow cast by the Holocaust, Chase insisted on the complexity of their situation, and their belief that they too were German.<sup>75</sup> Börne appears to have sincerely believed that he was German, and Jewish, whereas Heine knew on some level and made explicit in his texts that he could never be an ordinary German, or for that matter, could never embrace a conventional Jewish identity.<sup>76</sup> A corollary of Hannah Arendt's claim about Heine would be that Börne was mistaken in thinking himself both German and Jewish because he denied to himself the *de facto* conflict between these identities. If as Arendt proposed only Heine was truly both German and Jewish, that was because he recognized the conflict and belonged to a club, so to speak, with one member.

As Sloterdijk reminded us, Heine stands apart in the ways he remained outside conventional discourses, and in the "holy nonseriousness" of his polemics, "combining theory and satire, cognition and entertainment." Herein lay the fundamental difference between Börne's

politics of black and white, and Heine's more complex and ambivalent literary politics, a politics of literature. J. P. Stern, in bestowing the praise on Heine's *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, likewise recognized the seriousness of Heine's jokes:

Is the whole thing then a huge and heavy Germanic joke, carried on over 180 pages of quite exacting reasoning? This is somewhat closer to the point, except that, far from being in the least heavy, the "Germanic" joke is as subtle and light as an early Hock. But, if it is a joke, could it possibly repay the prolonged mental effort of understanding it? Another piece of irony: the joke of the joke is that so much of it is true, that so much of the book consists of brilliant, apparently casual and quite unexpected insights—that more truth and good sense is said here about certain important aspects of German history and culture, about the German mind, than in any other single book I know.<sup>77</sup>

#### D. Jews on Jews

Heine's conflict with Börne and Heine's dichotomy of Hellene and Nazarene ultimately raise the question: "what is a Jew?" More specifically, what is the meaning of Jewish existence for those who identify, however tenuously or ambivalently, as being Jewish? Religious Judaism, however it is categorized or modified, prescribes its own set of rules for what is a good Jew, whereas secular Jewishness is often an inescapable condition, not least because of the intractable outlooks of non-Jews.<sup>78</sup> Heine's own take on what is a Jew was more complex and elusive than many of his contemporaries, yet bears comparison with the outlooks of some major Jewish thinkers of European modernity.

Elaborating on Max Weber's notion of the Jews as a pariah people within Europe, Hannah Arendt first put forward the idea of certain exceptional Jews as "conscious pariahs."<sup>79</sup> The conscious pariah became marginal within his or her own community, and was thereby placed at the forefront of the modern condition, weaving strands of Jewish genius into the texture of European life. The foremost example might well be Heine, whom Arendt identified as "the only German Jew who could truthfully describe himself as both a German and a Jew." Arendt's idea was taken up by the likes of J. P. Stern in his account of Heine's modernity. In a sense, they were elaborating on Heine's own self-evaluation.

John Cuddihy took up some of these questions in his provocative book *The Ordeal of Civility* from 1974.<sup>80</sup> Cuddihy claimed that "the genius of all giants of the diaspora is connected to their being social pariahs." He specifically proposed that Marx and Freud, among others, experienced shame about the less-civilized Jews from the East, *Ostjuden*, which enabled them to see through the hypocrisy of gentile "civility" as a mask for less idealized economic or sexual conduct.

In the West, the ascetic ethic of Protestantism was in the process of penetrating, mastering, and transforming both the public world of economic and social intercourse... and the private world of sexual intercourse. Inner-worldly restraint was to be the great instrument of this transformation... The fierce giants of Diaspora intellectual Jewry [Marx and Freud] scorned all this emergent bourgeois-Christian "niceness" as so much hypocrisy... The Western-Christian claim to have linked decisively the outer with the inner, to have integrated outer conduct—economic, social, and sexual—with the inwardness of feeling and conviction, was rejected by the descendants of Judaism... [through] an essentially

reductive analysis that that would strip the apparently “superior” culture of its apparent superiority (thus elevating the apparently “inferior” and marginal subculture).<sup>81</sup>

Because of their Jewish backgrounds, Marx and Freud saw through and over-turned the “ordeal of civility” as hypocrisy and repression. Being “civil” was mere appearance, an ideology, which Cuddihy humorously called “games Goyim play.” Marx and Freud saw the modern bourgeois world as “*ecclesia super cloacam*,” a church suspended above a latrine, and accordingly revealed the hypocrisy of modern Western economic and sexual behavior.<sup>82</sup> According to Cuddihy, the pariah Eastern Jews in particular, with their overt greed or lust, served to unmask the mysteries of the bourgeoisie, its gentile civility and “social ethics,” as a superstructure covering a rapacious underside of bourgeois capitalism and repressed sexuality. In Cuddihy’s provocative, if not outrageous formula: “the id of the ‘Yid’ is hid under the lid of Western decorum (the ‘superego’).”<sup>83</sup> Cuddihy thus claimed that Marxism and Freudian psychoanalysis provided “the transformation formulas by which the ‘Jewish Question’—that is, the normative ‘social conflicts’ of emancipating Jewry (their ‘offensive behavior’)—could be translated into cognitive ‘scientific problems.’”<sup>84</sup>

Cuddihy claimed that Marx’s knowledge of Eastern Jewish attitudes toward money allowed him to critique Western Protestant capitalism. At stake were not superior and inferior cultures, but precisely a critique of superiority, using attitudes toward Eastern Jews as a lever with which to attack gentile Western, modern, bourgeois hypocrisy. Marx was not an Eastern Jew, and was baptized at an early age, yet his family background lacked the full or true Protestant Ethic of asceticism and etiquette, which he accordingly later experienced as a quasi-tyranny of repression and hypocrisy and revolted against, particularly in the realm of economics. According to Cuddihy: “the core of Marx’s ‘scientific socialism,’ the insight that the determining realities of the socioeconomic ‘substructure’ are masked by the cultural ideology of the ‘superstructure’—was ‘discovered’ as a Jewish experience.”<sup>85</sup>

Cuddihy invoked the “stubborn resistance of Jewish particularism” in Marx as opposed to the false universalism of Hegel and Bauer’s secularized Christian theodicy: “Jewry, then, rebutted Hegel’s dream of the state assimilating and sublating into itself [the *Aufhebung*] all egoistic interests (individual, family, guild), transforming civil society into a new community.”<sup>86</sup> In contrast to gentile economists like Smith, who embedded the exchange of goods in a social exchange of civilities, Marx recognized the primal savagery of capitalism. He thereby transformed Jewish haggling “into a ‘symptom’ of a *general* deficiency: bourgeois capitalism,” and universalized Jewish particularism.<sup>87</sup> According to Cuddihy, “to the economic naturalism of Marx, emergent Western capitalism was mere greed all dressed up in Sunday clothes.”<sup>88</sup> Marx’s “On the Jewish Question” thereby violated “both gentile decorum and the Jewish taboo on revealing in group secrets to the Goyim.”<sup>89</sup>

As regards Freud, Cuddihy claimed that “the core of Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, the ‘Oedipus complex,’ is a universalization of his father’s social humiliation.” Cuddihy referred to the famous story from Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* of how a gentile knocked his father’s hat into the gutter for walking on the sidewalk, which Freud himself explained in terms of his own identification with Hannibal, the sworn enemy of Rome, i.e. the West.<sup>90</sup> Cuddihy focused on the story specifically in terms of an assumed ‘civility’ of Freud’s father in relation to a gentile bully. Freud ostensibly avenged his father on the bourgeois West by rejecting “the Protestant claim to an alchemy that turned base sexuality into the gold of love” and revealing the “erotic sublimation of sexuality” as “sentimentality and moral hypocrisy.” In Cuddihy’s formulation, “to the sexual



naturalism of Freud, ‘love in the Western world’ ... is ‘id’ tricked out as ‘Eros,’ is like a ‘Yid’ trying to ‘pass’ as *goy*.”<sup>91</sup>

Cuddihy’s provocative overall thesis is certainly worth taking seriously, although fundamental criticisms have been levelled against his specific arguments. Most egregiously, he reduced ‘the Jewish Question’ to “social conflicts” or the “offensive behavior” of emancipating Jewry, and almost entirely ignored the role of anti-Semitism, also evident from his gloss of the story of Freud’s father and the bully as involving “civility.”<sup>92</sup> Both this blind-spot and Cuddihy’s central insight into the Jewish background of Jewish genius, so to speak, could be attributed to his not being Jewish: only a gentile could forget about anti-Semitism, and most Jews would be reluctant to discuss the Jewishness of Jewish genius.<sup>93</sup> Another caveat involves the outsize role that Cuddihy assigned to Eastern-European Jews in Marx and Freud’s thought, which is not supported by their actual texts.

More specifically, Cuddihy’s claim that Marx violated “gentile decorum” and revealed taboo “in group secrets” of Jews in “On the Jewish Question” could be characterized as curiously inverted. If anything, Marx violated Jewish decorum in his use of the most hateful anti-Semitic stereotypes, and revealed taboo secrets of Christianity by exposing its ideology. Yet the question of the relation between Marx’s Jewish background and his singular thought remains open. With regard to Freud, Cuddihy’s implicit claim that Jews exemplify un-repressed sexuality in contrast to “civil” gentile love is naively reductive.<sup>94</sup> His proposal that the Oedipus complex derived from the public humiliation of Freud’s father, rather than, say, the role of Freud’s mother, both echoes Freud’s own account and exaggerates this in a reductive way.<sup>95</sup> Freud openly admitted his Jewish background and most of the early practitioners of psychoanalysis were Jews, yet he never explained exactly in what ways his science was “Jewish.”

An important application of and corrective for Cuddihy’s is Heine.<sup>96</sup> Even more than Marx or Freud, Heine corresponded to the “conscious pariah,” and he more explicitly discussed the issue of Jewish identity. He was not afraid to attack Christianity, indeed preceded Marx in important respects on this score, and also echoed Goethe before him. Yet Heine also made open criticisms of Jews and Jewish identity, more concrete and specific than Marx’s abstract, metaphorical argument in “On the Jewish Question.” Heine also directly addressed Eastern-European Jews in his essay *On Poland*, which critiqued German Jews as comparatively hypocritical, yet Heine did not valorize Eastern-European Jews as authentic, and later critiqued them in turn.<sup>97</sup>

What Cuddihy claimed of Marx’s “On the Jewish Question”, that it violated “gentile decorum” and at the same time revealed taboo “in group secrets” of Jews, was actually true of Heine’s *Ludwig Börne*. Heine’s book revealed internal distance from Judaism on the part of secular and even converted Jews that was normally hidden as a taboo in Gentile public discourse, and did so by means of outrageous attacks on another secular Jew, openly violating the decorum of Gentile public discourse. He internalized anti-Semitism and equated Jews and Christians in a manner intended to de-fang anti-Semitic opponents, as Chase suggested, but which also expressed his own personal ambivalence, not unlike Freud. Like Marx and Freud after him, Heine used his pariah status as Jew as a lever to over-turn conventional Gentile public pieties and hypocrisies. Yet Heine simultaneously placed himself outside the pariah category by demonizing the Jew Börne and identifying himself as Hellene and allying himself with Goethe, perhaps even thereby making Goethe into something of a pariah. Heine reserved for himself as Jewish “Hellene” the privilege “not to belong.”<sup>98</sup>

Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud are regularly cited as pillars of modernity in their critiques of society, religion, and the human psyche, and Heine can be understood as Nietzsche's direct precursor. Heine furthermore influenced both Marx and Freud in their outlooks. Marx's "On the Jewish Question" could be said to have taken up the gauntlet of Heine's *Börne* book from four years earlier in its outrageous use of Jewish stereotypes. Marx never openly addressed the issue of anti-Semitism, and although he sought to restrict the relevance of the category of Jew to purely economic terms, he reified it as a dubiously literal metaphor, like anti-Jewish writers before him and anti-Semitic writers after him including Wagner. Cuddihy's discussion of love and sex in relation to Freud can also be traced back to Heine's ironic love poetry in opposition to Romanticism. Goethe occupied an exceptional place in between insofar as his idealized love was always concretely particular and balanced by his ironic sense of reality, already evident in his internal distance from Werther.

A last and particularly profound approach to the problem of secular Jewishness is offered in Yosef Yerushalmi's *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable*:

Throughout the nineteenth century Jews who had lost faith in the God of their fathers sought and found a spectrum of novel secular Jewish surrogates. Some expressed their Jewish identity through passionate devotion to the new critical historical scholarship (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*), others through varieties of Jewish nationalism, socialism, philanthropy, fraternal organizations, Hebrew or Yiddish culture. There were and still are ideological Jews, cultural Jews, even culinary Jews ("I love your cooking more than your religion," Heinrich Heine observed at one point). These are some of the broad categories but there are exquisite shadings and permutations in between.<sup>99</sup>

Yerushalmi cited Freud as a unique specimen among what Philip Rieff called Psychological Jews: "If, for all secular Jews, Judaism has become 'Jewishness' of one kind or another, the Jewishness of the Psychological Jew seems, at least to the outsider, devoid of all but the most vestigial content; it has become almost pure subjectivity." Psychological Jews tend to insist on inalienable Jewish traits:

Intellectuality and independence of mind, the highest intellectual and moral standards, concern for social justice, tenacity in the face of persecution—these are among the qualities they will claim, if called upon, as quintessentially Jewish. The first great culture-hero all of modern secular Jews was Spinoza (to be joined later by Marx and eventually by Freud himself). Psychological Jews tend to be sensitive to anti-Semitic prejudice in particular way. Floating in their undefined yet somehow real Jewishness, they will doubly resent and fiercely resist any attempt on the part of the surrounding society to define them against their own wishes.<sup>100</sup>

Yerushalmi's account of the Psychological Jew resisting any attempt to define him uncannily echoes Freud's definition of Jewish jokes as "covert individual rebellion against collective constraint."

Along with being a "culinary Jew," Heine belongs among these 'Psychological Jews.' The category can also be extended back to Spinoza, of whom Heine was one of the earlier champions. Since Spinoza insisted on the priority of God, rather than God's death, Heine might also be called the first secular Jew. In his extended reflection on Freud's profoundly ambivalent and iconoclastic

relationship to Judaism in his *Moses and Monotheism*, Yerushalmi returned once more to Heine as parallel for Freud's "remarkable feeling that, for better or worse, one cannot really cease being Jewish, and this not merely because of current anti-Semitism or discrimination, and certainly not because of the Chain of Tradition, but because one's fate in being Jewish was determined long ago."<sup>101</sup> In his *Moses and Monotheism* Freud himself cited Heine's poem "The New Jewish Hospital in Hamburg"

A hospital for sick and needy Jews,/ For those poor mortals who are triply wretched,/ With three great modern maladies afflicted:/ With poverty and pain and Jewishness/ The worst of these three evils is the last one,/ The thousand-year-old family affliction,/ The plague dragged with them, From the valley of the Nile,/ The old Egyptian unhealthy faith./ Incurable deep-seated hurt: No treatment/ By vapor bath or douche can help to heal it,/ No surgery, nor all the medications./ This hospital can offer to its patients/ Will Time, Eternal goddess, some day end it,/ Root out this dark misfortune that the father/ Hands down to the son? And someday will the grandson/ Be healed and rational and happy? I do not know...<sup>102</sup>

Yerushalmi observed: "Paradoxically, the sense that Jewishness is both inherited an indelible could be shared equally by Jews who, like Heine at this moment, would discard their Jewish identity if they could, as well as by Jews who passionately affirmed that identity."<sup>103</sup> Yet Heine would not necessarily have discarded his Jewish identity if he could, either when he published the poem near the end of his life in 1844, or at other periods in his life, including the time of his conversion. Yerushalmi also did not point out that the Jewish hospital in question was founded by Heine's uncle Solomon in 1840, or that Heine's explicitly referred to Solomon in the second half of the poem, with his humorous reference to Jewish monetary 'inheritance.'<sup>104</sup> On both a personal, familial level, and as a reflection of Heine's broader ambivalence toward his own Jewishness in his texts, his "new Jewish Hospital in Hamburg" both resents and fiercely resists any attempt on the part of his surrounding society to define him against his own wishes.

Even more than Spinoza, Marx, or Freud, in his willful defiance of attempts to define him, Heine represents the Psychological Jew *par excellence*, who in the course of his struggle, contributes to modernity. Heine's Hellene in opposition to the Nazarene is both Pagan and Jewish and neither of these. By inventing his own category, Heine stood outside categories into which he would be forced. At stake was not "Heine's identity" or even "the Heine identity" as a stable category encompassed by his proper name, but rather an identity subversively instable in its appropriation of the proper name of another, who was ridiculed in his "Memorial" and at the same time inextricable entwined with Heine in an endlessly ambivalent dialectic. In opposing himself to Börne on aesthetic and intellectual grounds that transcended religion and politics, Heine liberated himself not only from Judaism, Jewishness, or "Jewry," but also from identity as a category that forces individuals to fit in with a self-identical group. He thereby introduced a more modern conception of identity that speaks to our own time. In exploding concepts, through the use of polemics and self-deprecation, Heine could also be said to initiate a form of self-overcoming. That is "the Börne identity," an important component of the laurel crown that Heine wished for himself as a "liberator of humanity." His outlook would have important consequences for subsequent debates about Jews and Judaism, to which we now turn.

One day it will be said that Heine and I have been by far the foremost artists of the German language—at an incalculable distance from everything mere Germans [e.g. Wagner] have done with it.

— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*

In a review of recent books about Nietzsche in the September 2014 *Times Literary Supplement*, the philosopher Tom Stern identified seven different “types” of Nietzsche and archly observed: “it sometimes feels like you can order whichever Nietzsche you want.”<sup>1</sup> One of the items on Stern’s menu was Nietzsche the “inoffensive humanist who sailed the Atlantic,” a reference to Walter Kaufmann’s now standard 1950 account, which sought to rehabilitate Nietzsche for the American public after his appropriation by the Nazis as ostensible prophet for their cause.<sup>2</sup> Stern’s gambit echoes in cavalier form Steven Aschheim’s magisterial 1992 study, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890-1990*, which reviews a wide range of responses to Nietzsche, illustrating “nothing less than a cultural history of twentieth-century Germany, seen in a single, but particularly revealing perspective.”<sup>34</sup> According to Aschheim, Nietzsche studies by Kaufmann and others from after the second World War were “essentialist approaches in which the history of the Nietzsche legacy is rendered either as a record of deviations from, or as faithful representations of, a prior interpretative construction of the ‘real’ Nietzsche,” and thereby furnish “static histories in the apologetic or condemnatory mode.”<sup>5</sup> Conversely, Aschheim cites the philosopher of deconstruction Jacques Derrida’s lapidary assertion that “the effects or structure of a text are not reducible to its ‘truth,’ to the intended meaning of its author or even its supposedly unique and identifiable signatory.”<sup>6</sup>

Nietzsche is inevitably our construct, and our diverse interpretations unavoidably reflect our cultural history, both inside and outside Germany. Yet precisely for this reason it is our responsibility to distinguish between more and less plausible constructs of Nietzsche, which are also responses to an historical figure in relation to his culture. As intellectual historians we do not order among independent items on a menu—let alone “whichever Nietzsche we want”—so much as reconsider these different constructs, their origins and motivations, errors and insights, in order to construct our own Nietzsche anew. Significant points in the broader arc of the history of Nietzsche’s reception include the few reactions to his work during his career; his own late-career account of himself in his *Ecce Homo* including his “attempt at self-criticism”; his sister Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche’s efforts during the prolonged period of his madness to promote his reputation, edit and publish his works, many posthumously, and establish his archive at Naumburg as a key factor in his subsequent reception; the Nazi appropriation and distortion of his legacy in Germany; Kaufmann’s post-war project of re-establishing Nietzsche’s original vision; and the efforts of French post-structuralist thinkers to reveal Nietzsche as a theorist of language and semiotics, seemingly divorced from his historical and cultural context, the so-called “new Nietzsche.”<sup>7</sup> Our efforts to adjudicate these different perspectives and broader history serve both as an approximation “how things actually were” in the famous phrase of the historian Leopold von Ranke—himself a fierce opponent of Heine—and as an expression of our own culture.

This chapter focuses specifically on a reconsideration of Nietzsche’s relation to the composer Richard Wagner, triangulated through Heine. All scholars have recognized that

Nietzsche repudiated Wagner, although the conventional assessment of that repudiation in relation to Nietzsche's attitudes toward Jews has recently been questioned by Robert Holub, providing a welcome opportunity for a reconsideration.<sup>8</sup> Both Nietzsche and Wagner can also be placed in a new light in relation to Heine. Several scholars acknowledged Nietzsche's affirmation of Heine's importance in one famous passage, and Kaufmann in particular emphasized Heine's extensive impact on Nietzsche, although not in relation to Wagner in particular.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, those scholars who addressed the relation of Wagner and Heine largely overlooked Nietzsche in this connection.

As with Nietzsche, the changing receptions of both Heine and Wagner reflect Germany's dynamic cultural and intellectual history, and these three towering figures were among the first in each other's receptions. The Nietzsche that emerges from this process was not necessarily a humanist, and anything but inoffensive, yet he was certainly an implacable foe, following Heine's lead, of tendencies that would become central tenets of Nazism, including German nationalism and anti-Semitism. More importantly, Nietzsche's reception of Heine is profoundly illuminating for an understanding of Heine, just as a reconsideration of their relation helps us to refine our construct of Nietzsche in turn.

#### A. Nietzsche's anti-anti-Semitism, or, overcoming Wagner in oneself

The young and peerless professor of philology Friedrich Nietzsche had been appointed to his position at the University Basel even before earning a doctorate, an unprecedented achievement. He soon became part of the extended entourage of Richard and Cosima Wagner in Tribschen Switzerland, where they introduced him to an anti-Semitic ideology, before the term was coined and the political movement was founded in 1879.<sup>10</sup> In 1850 Wagner had published under the anonymous pseudonym K. Freigedank ["K. Free-thought"] *Das Judentum in der Musik*, usually translated as "Judaism in Music," but more accurately rendered *Jewry in Music*; *Judentum* means both "Judaism" as a religion and "Jewry" as a group of people or race.<sup>11</sup> *Judentum* also had secondary associations related to "commerce," which was central to Wagner's argument.<sup>12</sup> He condemned Jews as unattractive, unpleasant, unoriginal, parasitic, and exploitative, a milestone in the gestation of modern anti-Semitism. Wagner later republished his treatise in 1869 under his own name with a postscript detailing his supposed persecution at the hands of a vast conspiracy of Jews responding to his earlier publication. 1869 was the year in which Wagner's friendship with Nietzsche blossomed.

In a passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* from 1886 Nietzsche acknowledged that in proximity to Wagner he had briefly succumbed to a form of anti-Semitism, which he subsequently repudiated in favor of a militant anti-anti-Semitism as well as unambiguous praise for Jews as central participants in modern culture:

during a brief daring sojourn in very infected territory I, too, did not altogether escape this disease [anti-Semitism] and began like everyone else to develop notions about matters that are none of my business: the first sign of the political infection. For example, about the Jews: only listen!

I have not met a German yet who is well disposed toward Jews: and however unconditionally all the cautious and politically-minded repudiated real anti-Semitism [*antisemiterei* "anti-Semitizing around"], even this caution and policy are not directed against the species of this feeling itself but only against its dangerous immoderation, especially against the insipid and shameful expression of this immoderate feeling—about

this one should not deceive oneself... The Jews, however, are beyond any doubt the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe; they know how to prevail even under the worst conditions (even better than under favorable conditions), by means of virtues that today one would like to mark as vices—thanks above all to a resolute faith that need not be ashamed before “modern ideas.”<sup>13</sup>

As regards Wagner, Nietzsche informs us in greater specifics about how their relationship had begun to deteriorate a decade earlier in *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* from 1888:

By the summer of 1876 during the time of the first *Festspiele*, I said farewell to Wagner in my heart. I suffer no ambiguity; and since Wagner had moved to Germany, he had condescended step by step to everything I despise—even to anti-Semitism.<sup>14</sup>

Nietzsche was not without ambivalence in this score, as he confessed more openly in letters to friends. Shortly after Wagner’s death on February 13, 1883, Nietzsche wrote Malwida von Meysenbug:

It was difficult, very difficult to be the adversary for six years of someone whom I so respected and loved as I loved Wagner; and even as adversary to have to be condemned to silence—for the sake of the respect that the man deserved in general. W[agner] insulted me in a mortal fashion—I want to tell you about it!—his gradual retreat and creeping back into Christianity and to the church I experienced as a personal affront: my entire youth and its trajectory seemed to be soiled insofar as I paid homage to a spirit that was capable of the step.<sup>15</sup>

The next day Nietzsche wrote his Franz Overbeck with similar words: “Wagner was by a great distance the most complete person I have known, and in *this* regard I have suffered a great privation during the past six years. But there was between the two of us something like a mortal insult and it could have become terrible if he had lived longer.”<sup>16</sup>

Scholars have identified this mortal insult in various ways. One possibility was Wagner having criticized one of Nietzsche’s musical compositions back in 1874.<sup>17</sup> Another concerned Nietzsche having consulted a doctor about his eyesight problems and headaches in 1877; Wagner wrote the doctor proposing that the cause was excessive masturbation.<sup>18</sup> These were certainly embarrassing moments for Nietzsche, although he would unlikely have been eager to tell his friend Malwida about either occasion. Rather, Nietzsche clearly meant Wagner’s creeping return to the Church, above all in his *Parsifal*, which was bound up with his nationalism and anti-Semitism, a “mortal insult” that affected, so he tells us, Nietzsche’s “entire youth and its trajectory.”

Nietzsche’s seemingly near traumatic experience with Wagner directly inspired one of his central ideas: self-overcoming. In one of his most famous and most frequently decontextualized aphorisms, “what does not destroy [kill] me, makes me stronger,” appears in his *Twilight of the Idols or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer* from 1888.<sup>19</sup> That title plays on Wagner’s last opera in the ring cycle, *Twilight of the Gods*, but displaces gods by idols, and presumably Wagner the God by Wagner the Idol, which must be smashed with a hammer by the iconoclast Nietzsche. Nietzsche had idolized Wagner, and Wagner’s influence is palpable in Nietzsche’s first published book *The Birth of Tragedy* from 1872. His aphorism referred specifically to overcoming Wagner,

and his disease of anti-Semitism, which almost killed Nietzsche, but ultimately made him stronger:

I could not have endured my youth without Wagner's music. For I was *condemned* to Germans... Wagner is the antitoxin against everything German *par excellence*... Given the way I am, strong enough to turn even what is most questionable and dangerous to my advantage and thus to become stronger, I call Wagner the great benefactor of my life.<sup>20</sup>

This new, stronger Nietzsche furthermore corresponds to his idea of the “superman” or overman [*Übermensch*] personified by Zarathustra. The *Übermensch* is not, as the Nazis claimed, a Teutonic “blond beast” who lords it over weaker human beings, but rather something closer to the opposite, a German who finds the strength, by means of the anti-toxin Wagner, to overcome the disease of nationalism and anti-Semitism in order to become a good European.

These circumstances were complicated by Nietzsche's earlier introduction of his sister Elizabeth to Wagner's circle, where she met and eventually married Bernhard Förster, a prominent anti-Semite in Wagner's entourage. Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche was herself politically conservative, and she later became a fervent supporter of Adolf Hitler. After her husband's suicide and her brother's mental collapse she nursed Nietzsche until his death. Elizabeth also labored to establish her brother's posthumous reputation and his archive. She doctored and even forged some of his letters, suppressed some of his publications such as *Ecce Homo*, and arbitrarily assembled the last “volume” of his collected works as “*The Will to Power*.” Several scholars including Kaufmann assigned her a major role in the Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche, a view that continues to be widely embraced.<sup>21</sup>

A different perspective on these matters was opened in Robert Holub's book *Nietzsche's Jewish Problem: between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism* from 2016. His claims are worth addressing at length, for his own contributions to the ongoing discussion, as well as the ways much of his research can be said to lead in the opposite direction from his thesis, and toward the view of Nietzsche as anti-anti-Semite, with new twists. Holub proposed that Nietzsche “opposed anti-Semitism as a political movement for personal and philosophical reasons and could still maintain long-held anti-Jewish sentiments,” somewhere between anti-Semitism and “anti-Judaism.”<sup>22</sup> Holub sought to elucidate Nietzsche's gradual growing anti-Jewish sentiments over the course of career, focusing on five principal topics: Nietzsche's family and early experience; Nietzsche and Wagner; Nietzsche's relations with particular Jews; Nietzsche's concern with ‘the Jewish Question’; and Nietzsche's “anti-Judaism” in his late writings. Holub thereby countered Kaufmann's post-war view of Nietzsche as anti-anti-Semite, how Nietzsche described himself, and came closer to the Nazis' account of Nietzsche as anti-Semite, except that they affirmed whereas Holub condemned Nietzsche's supposed anti-Semitism. Holub's discussion re-opens central questions that potentially transform our understanding of Nietzsche, particularly the nature of his relationship to Wagner and its impact on Nietzsche's outlook on Jews. As I have argued in my own review of Holub's book, Nietzsche had less of a Jewish problem, than a Wagner problem.<sup>23</sup> The ways in which he overcame the potential anti-Semite in himself was a crucial component of his philosophy.

There is no evidence of anti-Jewish sentiment in Nietzsche's home and milieu as a youth. He first assimilated negative stereotypes about Jewish merchants from his peers at the University of Leipzig in 1865, including references in his letters to “oily butter and Jewish mugs [faces],” “the smell of fat and the numerous Jews,” and “everywhere you look there are Jews and

associates of Jews.”<sup>24</sup> These remarks situate Nietzsche in his historical context, yet hardly reveal a particular problem with Jews on his part. In a draft of a lecture from 1870 that Nietzsche sent to the Wagners related to his *Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* published the following year, Nietzsche claimed that “the Socratism of our times... is the Jewish press: I’ll say nothing more.” The Wagners rebuked him for being too explicit, so he removed the obscure allusion, presumably intended to ingratiate himself to them. For a long period afterward, Nietzsche in fact said “nothing more” about Jews.<sup>25</sup> Then, in a well-known passage from *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* cited above, Nietzsche claimed that Wagner “had condescended step by step to everything I despise—even to anti-Semitism.”

Holub insisted in this connection that “Nietzsche is clearly rewriting history... he portrays Wagner as changing his views, and, by implication, he acts as if he himself had remained faithful to the ideals he and Wagner held in the early 1870s.”<sup>26</sup> Here Holub touched the deepest nerve of Nietzsche’s personal history and original outlook as a philosopher. Holub was correct that Nietzsche rewrote history here, but Holub did not ask himself why. Nietzsche was likely ashamed of what he had been drawn into. He repeatedly confessed that he loved and desperately wanted to please Wagner, the only great genius he was privileged to know in person. Not Wagner but rather *Nietzsche* had condescended step-by-step to everything he despised—even to anti-Semitism. His insistence that “I suffer no ambiguity” presumably referred to his now despising anti-Semitism, rather than his ambiguous account of who had changed their outlook and when. Nietzsche’s assertion indicates that he foresaw being misunderstood as an anti-Semite, as if in protest against the kind of misappropriation of his thought and reputation that the Nazis would later undertake, and by extension the revisionist interpretation offered by Holub.<sup>27</sup>

Holub’s primary contribution to Nietzsche scholarship rests on his re-evaluation of the role of Nietzsche’s sister Elizabeth. Holub points out that she insisted “my brother was never an anti-Semite,” and confessed that anti-Semitism, which she naively thought harmed Hitler, “was always unpleasant for me.”<sup>28</sup> Kaufmann and others clearly misrepresented Elizabeth’s role as a “straw-woman” or foil for their own accounts. However, Holub’s reversal on this point may have led him to treat Kaufmann as a straw man in turn. In fact, Elizabeth’s testimony that her brother was never an anti-Semite confirms Nietzsche’s own account of himself as anti-anti-Semite, echoed by Kaufmann and others, and contradicts Holub’s counter-thesis.

After Wagner, in the later 1870s and early 1880s, Nietzsche developed intense relationships with several ethnic Jews, all of them atheists, and made positive pronouncements about Jews. Nietzsche’s extended sojourn in Italy with the writer Paul Rée and Lou Andreas Salomé ended disastrously as a result of her choosing Rée over Nietzsche, circumstances that help explain his few private negative references to Rée as Jewish.<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche was influenced by the books of his former student the scientist and author Joseph Paneth, as well as their conversations in the south of France; he assured Paneth that “from his youth onwards he has held himself free from any prejudices regarding race and religion.”<sup>30</sup> Nietzsche declared the Viennese student and writer Siegfried Lipiner to be “a genius,” and asked him if he had “any connection to Jews. I have recently had so many experiences that arouse in me *very great* expectations, especially from men of this ancestry,” a comment Holub characterizes as “puzzling.”<sup>31</sup> There is no contradiction in Nietzsche seeking the approval and support of Jews and at the same time growing more tolerant or possibly even fond of them. These developments also reinforced his alienation from Wagner, and conversely, his estrangement from Wagner’s anti-Semitism led him to increasing familiarity with Jews.<sup>32</sup>



Nietzsche's only statement relevant to 'the Jewish Question,' made directly after the long passage cited above from *Beyond Good and Evil* in which he observed that "it might be useful and fair to expel the anti-Semitic screamers from the country", was his proposal that intermarriage between Jews and the Prussian nobility would best serve the interests of both groups as well as Germany.<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche's childhood friend and Basel colleague Franz Overbeck later expressed a seemingly similar outlook to Nietzsche on this issues when Overbeck said that "whatever grievances we have against the Jews, and whatever, as a rule, is repulsive about them," he was against "the blindness, thoughtlessness, tactlessness, and narrow-mindedness" of anti-Semitism. Yet in the passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* cited above Nietzsche explicitly mocked the position expressed by Overbeck as hypocritically "cautious and politically-minded," whereas Nietzsche—who liked to think of himself as descended from Polish nobility—excluded himself from the category of Germans such as Overbeck who were ill-disposed toward Jews.<sup>34</sup>

Kaufmann had earlier observed that the Nazi Richard Oehler quoted the same passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* in order to prove that "Nietzsche's thoughts... agree with the race views and strivings of the National Socialist movement."<sup>35</sup> Holub claimed that "the issue of Nietzsche's fascist affiliation cannot be adjudicated by appeals to his writings which were inconclusive on this topic."<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, we can easily reject any claims for "Nietzsche's fascist affiliation" on the grounds of its anachronism, as well as his vehement opposition to German nationalism and anti-Semitism. Even after his collapse into insanity, Nietzsche scrawled across his last letter to Jacob Burckhardt the phrase: "Abolish [Kaiser] Wilhelm, Bismarck, and all anti-Semites" and his last note to his friend Franz Overbeck ends: "Just now I am having all anti-Semites shot."<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche's ravings appear to manifest an effort to cleanse his soul. In *The Genealogy of Morals* and *The Antichrist* Nietzsche referred to "slave morality" originated by Jews, i.e. Hebrews, as opposed to Aryans and fair-haired peoples. Yet numerous commentators from Kaufmann to Leiter have noted that Nietzsche's attacks on "slave morality" were directed primarily against Christianity, and his critiques of biblical Judaism were not related to contemporary Jews.<sup>38</sup>

An alternative and in this context most relevant way to approach Nietzsche is through Heine. Nietzsche derived his notion of "slave morality" in part from the Heine's distinction between "Nazarenes" and "Hellenes" in his *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial*, which was scandalously infamous in Nietzsche's time.<sup>39</sup> By connecting religious Jews and Christians as Nazarenes in a broader critique of religion antagonizing reactionary nationalist, Christian Germans of his time, the direct precursors of anti-Semites, Heine anticipated Nietzsche's efforts along similar lines. Nietzsche furthermore asserted his profound affinity with Heine in opposition to ordinary Germans. In *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, he invoked "Heinrich Heine—*l'adorable Heine*, they say in Paris—who as long become part of the very flesh and blood of the more profound and soulful lyrical poets in France. How could German oxen be anything but dumbfounded by the *délicatesses* of such a nature!"<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche made the same point and his own identification with Heine even more explicit in a passage in his *Ecce Homo*:

The highest conception of the lyric poet was given to me by *Heinrich Heine*. I seek in vain in all the realms of history for an equally sweet and passionate music. He possessed that divine malice without which I cannot imagine perfection: I estimate the value of men, of races, according to the necessity by which they cannot conceive the god apart from the satyr.

And how he handles his German! One day it will be said that Heine and I have been by far the foremost artists of the German language—at an incalculable distance from everything mere Germans have done with it.<sup>41</sup>

By “mere Germans” and “German Oxen” Nietzsche likely meant Wagner and his followers, the greatest possible insult to a man who considered himself an ideal German, particularly in opposition to Heine, a German Jew, and Nietzsche, with his—likely spurious—claim to Polish aristocratic descent. We might also ask whether the day Nietzsche predicted has yet come: the recognition of the underlying affinity of Heine and Nietzsche as “by far the foremost artists of the German language.”

#### B. Wagner’s anti-Semitism, or, Heine going under

Much as with Nietzsche, Wagner’s reputation had to be rehabilitated after 1945 because of his enthusiastic appropriation by the Nazis, as well as the open embrace of Hitler by Wagner’s granddaughter Winifred Wagner, who was in charge of the Bayreuth festival from 1930-45. Although Wagner remains enormously popular today throughout the world, the process of intellectual “de-Nazification,” so to speak, has proven much more difficult in his case, primarily because of his *Jewry in Music* and other anti-Jewish writings as well as the Nazi embrace of Wagner, facilitated by Winifred Wagner.<sup>42</sup> Most of Wagner’s anti-Jewish ideas had been expressed before, although he gave many of these ideas their most concentrated and powerful formulation. In contrast to many spokesmen for anti-Semitism, who were often marginal or pathetic figures, such as Nietzsche’s brother-in-law Bernard Förster, by the end of his life Wagner was a leading figure of German culture, who legitimated anti-Semitic discourse as no other could. In the words of Berthold Auerbach, spoken in the Reichstag in 1880 in response to an anti-Semitic petition: Richard Wagner “was the first to acknowledge himself as a Jew-hater, and he proclaimed Jew hatred to be quite compatible with culture.”<sup>43</sup> Heine in particular was the focus of Wagner’s conclusion to his treatise, which recommended that Jews should “go under,” that is, cease to exist.

Part of Wagner’s polemic in *Jewry in Music* involved conventional ideas about the unique characteristics of Jews: their distinctly whining way of speaking, their peculiar obstinacy, their isolated, dispersed, and uprooted nature, and their being shut off from the bearers of the folk spirit [*Volksgeist*]. These ideas had never been brought together coherently as part of a sustained critique addressing particular major public figures. Wagner also coined an important new term in the anti-Jewish and later anti-Semitic lexicon: *verjudet* [“Jewified”], describing locales, events, and disciplines that had ostensibly become sullied, poisoned, or ruined by a preponderance of Jewish attendants, participation, or approaches.<sup>44</sup> A pertinent historical example was Wagnerism in Wagner’s own time. He recognized that Jews played a disproportionate role in the reception of music of his time. At his own concerts, he grew accustomed to seeing Jewish faces in the front rows, as the most enthusiastic of the Wagnerians. As evident from most of the names of the authors cited here, the same circumstances continue to apply to Wagner studies today. Part of the complex calculations in Wagner’s polemics, including the publication history of *Jewry in Music*, involved striking a delicate balance between his financial dependence on Jewish patrons and groups, and—perhaps partly because of these circumstances—his visceral reaction against Jews.

A primary concern of Wagner’s *Jewry in Music* was economics: “modern conditions had brought the public artist of our time between the busy fingers of the Jew.” What the great artists of past centuries “had wrought with all-consuming efforts, today the Jew converts into an art-

commodity-exchange [*Kunstwarenwechsel*].”<sup>45</sup> Wagner asserted that the relation of Jews to art was identical to their relation to wares and commerce. The taint of the Eastern Jewish peddler was transferred first to the educated Western Jewish banker and now the Western Jewish artist. Wagner relied in this vein partly on stereotypes emphasized by predecessors such as Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx, who projected supposed characteristic qualities of Jews onto a metaphorical, supra-personal reification of “the Jew.”

Wagner was primarily concerned with his own triumph, which he felt threatened by the Jews, although they could also be seen as foils for his triumph. We should recall here Wagner’s concern about Jewish control of public opinion through the press, indirectly reflected in Nietzsche’s obscure reference to “the Jewish Press” in his 1870 lecture. Wagner further invoked “the unconscious feeling, which among the people takes the form of the most profound repugnance for the Jewish nature... instinctive antipathy... a natural aversion.” These feelings were necessarily concealed or repressed for the sake of the ideology of emancipation, but could be unleashed after the abandonment of liberal illusions.<sup>46</sup> This last argument was new and ominous, anticipating increasingly bold anti-Jewish agitation and anti-Semitism as a political movement at the end of the nineteenth century. Also new was Wagner’s focus on music. His two primary examples, Felix Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer, the most famous musicians of German-Jewish descent, were both from prominent Berlin banker families, and both had generously helped Wagner at earlier points in his career. According to Wagner, his musical epoch was one of enervation and mediocrity, a decomposing corpse on which Jewish worms swarmed.<sup>47</sup> This outlook served Wagner’s purposes insofar as he presented himself as the answer to the ostensible artistic failings of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, as the great gentile German genius who would take up the mantle of Beethoven and redeem his musical culture.<sup>48</sup>

The association of Meyerbeer with Jewry was obvious enough. Although he had changed his birth name Jacob Liebmann Beer, he had never converted, unlike Mendelssohn and Heine, and continued to practice the Jewish religion in the most reformed sense. His younger brother Michael Beer was also involved in the earliest efforts of *Der Verein für Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, along with Heine and others. By combining German orchestral strategies with Italian opera vocal tradition, Meyerbeer established the grand opera style and Paris as the opera capital of the nineteenth century. The charge that Meyerbeer was a peddler of an art-commodity-exchange at the Paris Opera was also relatively self-evident, although Wagner himself had desperately sought to enter that market with Meyerbeer’s help.

Wagner specifically accused Meyerbeer of superficiality and fraud, using money and tricks as a means to compensate for his thin talent. These were surprisingly uncontroversial positions, already partly put forward by Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer’s distant cousin, as well as Heine. Robert Schumann, the young Johannes Brahms’ defender, had likewise objected to Meyerbeer specifically in connection with his Jewish background, noting of a performance of *Les Huguenots*: “We had to turn away in disgust... One may search in vain for a sustained pure thought, a truly Christian sentiment.”<sup>49</sup> Another likely direct source and inspiration for Wagner’s essay was Heinrich Laube’s preface for his play *Struensee*, in which he denounced Meyerbeer’s alleged attempt to obstruct the production of his play as an intrusion of Jewish commercial ethics into the independent world of art.<sup>50</sup>

The young Wagner had been economically dependent on his more successful colleague Meyerbeer. In one letter, Wagner obsequiously called him “deeply revered lord and master,” and went on to declare: “My head and my heart are no longer mine to give away—they are your property my master... I realize that I must become your slave, body and soul... Signed your

property: Richard Wagner.”<sup>51</sup> Commentators have noted a logical transformation from abject fawning into vicious resentment. Wagner also apparently felt a powerful need to differentiate himself, as he later observed: “Meyerbeer [is] my total antithesis, a contrast I am driven loudly to proclaim by the genuine despair that I feel whenever I encounter, even among many of my friends, the mistaken view that I have something in common with Meyerbeer”<sup>52</sup> Meyerbeer’s great popularity in his time plummeted after his death, partly as a result of Wagner’s polemics.

The same kind of charges against Mendelssohn were far less convincing. Wagner’s relations with Mendelssohn, who had died in 1847, had likewise initially been friendly. Yet Wagner later claimed that in 1836, at the age of twenty-three, he had sent his C-major Symphony to Mendelssohn, who never replied, which could have provoked Wagner’s unspoken resentment. Mendelssohn was also the leading composer at this time, whereas his lineage, as grandson of Moses Mendelssohn, the famous philosopher and spokesman for Judaism in the German cultural realm, made him a particularly inviting target for Wagner’s critique. Felix was born in 1809, left uncircumcised, and raised as a boy without religion. From 1812 on the family adopted the name Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to distinguish themselves as Christians, and Felix was baptized into Protestantism at age 7 in 1816, followed by his parents in 1822. Wagner specifically claimed that despite his technical achievements and whimsical imaginative powers, Mendelssohn did not have access to deep and genuine feelings of the human heart and lacked transcendent artistic vision because he lacked an historical and racial connection to the national community. According to Wagner, Mendelssohn’s expression of melancholic resignation stemmed from his depressive sense of incapacity, and his inability to see his own Jewishness as the problem.

In Wagner’s bold conclusion, Heine makes a surprise appearance, as poet rather than musician, although one whose poems were often set to music by Wagner’s greatest peers and even Wagner himself, which ostensibly justifies Heine’s inclusion here:

I said above, the Jews had brought forth no true poet. We here must give a moment’s mention, then, to HEINRICH HEINE. At the time when Goethe and Schiller sang among us, we certainly know nothing of a poetizing Jew; at the time, however, when our poetry became a lie, when every possible thing might flourish from the wholly un-poetic element of our life, but no true poet—then was it the office of the highly-gifted poet-Jew to bare with fascinating taunts that lie, that bottomless aridity and jesuitical hypocrisy of our Versifying which still would give itself the airs of true poesis. His famous musical congeners, too, he mercilessly lashed for their pretense to pass as artists; no make-believe could hold its ground before him: by the remorseless demon of denial of all that seemed worth denying was he driven on without a rest, to all the mirage of our modern self-deception, till he reached the point where in turn he duped himself into a poet, and was rewarded by his versified lies being set to music by our own composers—He was the conscience of Judaism, just as Judaism is the evil conscience of our modern Civilization.<sup>53</sup>

In a subsequent brief yet ominous last paragraph, Wagner cited Heine’s antagonist, Ludwig Börne, a Jew who aspired to complete assimilation as a German national, as exemplary of the principle that “to become a man ... means firstly for the Jew as much as ceasing to be Jew... But bethink ye, that only one thing can redeem you from the burden of your curse: the redemption of Ahasuerus—*Going under!*”<sup>54</sup> By “going under,” Wagner meant ceasing to exist. Cosima recorded in her diary how on the 18 December 1881, “Richard says as a vehement joke that all Jews are to be burnt at a performance of [Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s] *Nathan the Wise*.”<sup>55</sup>

Scholarly debate about Wagner's anticipation of anti-Semitism has focused on two primary questions: whether there was covert anti-Semitic content in his operas and if his outlook renders his music unacceptable, and whether the Nazis' appropriation of Wagner and his work implicates him in the Holocaust.<sup>56</sup> Discussions have concentrated on particular figures as implicit representations of Jews or anti-Semitic allegories, notably the pedantic singer-critic Beckmesser in "The Master Singers of Nuremberg" [*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*], Siegfried's evil foster-father Mime ["actor"] in "The Ring of the Nibelungen" [*Der Ring des Nibelungen*], and the Jewish figure of Kundry in *Parsifal*. The overtly mystical Christian themes of redemption, Christ's blood, and the Eucharist in Wagner's *Parsifal* have also been interpreted as having explicit anti-Semitic connotations.<sup>57</sup> These connections have been hotly contested and are sometimes dismissed as irrelevant.<sup>58</sup>

There are no recorded references by Wagner or his contemporaries to characters in his operas as Jewish. A significant semi-exception is Gustav Mahler's later recorded reference to Mime's Jewishness, or more specifically his identity as *Ostjude*, an eastern European Jew in contrast to the German Jewish community. Mahler only mentioned the issue because the singer was exaggerating Mime's Jewishness to the point of caricature, which Mahler thought might cause trouble for the Vienna Opera House, as if the character's Jewishness itself were a given.<sup>59</sup> Later authors observed that explicit caricatures of Jews in the operas would be inappropriate and unnecessary from Wagner's point of view.<sup>60</sup> One scholar invoked a possible "conspiracy of silence" on the topic, which would be in keeping with the Wagners' admonition to the young Nietzsche not to address the Jewish press openly in a public lecture, out of fear for retribution.<sup>61</sup>

As regards Wagner's implication in the Holocaust, debates range from claims that Hitler was obsessed with Wagner and acknowledged him as his "one predecessor" to Wagner's music supposedly being played in concentration camps.<sup>62</sup> There was undeniably some degree of continuity between the anti-Semitic tone that Wagner established at Bayreuth, continued long after his death by Cosima, and taken up by the Nazis in turn. Yet it is not feasible or productive to "prosecute" Wagner for crimes committed a half-century after his death. On the other hand, although humanist exhortation to perform Wagner and to investigate the history of his reception is unassailable, Wagner's ideology in relation to his music is not necessarily an historical curiosity, as is sometimes claimed.<sup>63</sup>

We can also reverse the usual priorities and ask how an understanding of Wagner's art might illuminate his ideology. Two scholars have offered very different, yet ultimately related answers. In *The Darker Side of Genius: Richard Wagner's Anti-Semitism*, Jacob Katz proposed that Wagner disliked Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer for reasons involving his personal circumstances and career, yet only connected their supposed flaws with being Jewish after his 1850 treatise: Wagner's condemnation of Jews was not "due to his anti-Jewish sentiments, but quite the contrary... his anti-Jewish sentiments flowed from his rivalry with the two Jews."<sup>64</sup> Katz also presented Wagner's anti-Semitism as something totally irrational and was completely at a loss to account for Wagner's conclusion about Heine, which

abounds in ambivalent statements, since Wagner's thesis of the artistic barrenness of Judaism meshes poorly with his high opinion of Heine's poetic talent. The concluding sentence is almost incomprehensible... and it probably has to be seen as an attempt to elude embarrassing difficulties with a rhetorical flourish.<sup>65</sup>

Many commentators have interpreted Wagner's obsequious dependence on Meyerbeer in Paris as an obvious cause for Wagner's resentment, as his power and independence grew. In his self-promoting tract he also naturally opposed himself to two of the leading composers of the period, who were Jewish. Wagner equally disliked Johannes Brahms, who opposed Wagner and Franz Liszt's concept of "the music of the future," although Brahms admired Wagner's music. Yet Brahms would have made a poor target as a gentile and German nationalist, despite his *verjudet* milieu in Vienna. Wagner's own account that he repressed his anti-Jewish feelings early on for the sake of "liberal illusions" is plausible, reinforced perhaps by fear of reprisals or loss of Jewish financial support. After all, Richard and Cosima still recommended to their young professor friend Nietzsche as late as 1870 that he should disguise any open criticism of the Jewish Press. After the emergence of anti-Semitism as a public political movement, Wagner still refused to ally himself with or support the movement, and even took distance from it in many ways. He apparently wanted to have it both ways: to assume the mantle of a pioneer of an anti-Jewish movement and yet protect his own privileged position and personal freedoms. Even his chosen conductor for his opera *Parsifal*, Hermann Levi, was Jewish.<sup>66</sup>

Paul Lawrence Rose offered precisely the contrary explanation: Wagner's "attack on Heine can be seen as an explosive uncoiling of the inner logic of Wagner's basic attitudes."<sup>67</sup> According to Rose, Heine influenced Wagner in two contrary directions: universal revolution and German Romantic myth. Heine sought to reconcile these insofar as his rediscovery of the sensual, anti-Christian currents in medieval legends anticipated a modern revolutionary outlook, yet he maintained a healthy skepticism toward both. By contrast, Wagner pursued both agendas earnestly as a revolutionary in Dresden and by plumbing the depth of the German mythology:

To maintain this contradictory amalgam of right and left-wing prejudices, Wagner needed urgently a unifying harmonizing idea—and this he found to hand in the Jews. For the Jews were the villains in the eyes of both the right and left... In the ecstasy and incitement of the release of his full revolutionary and romantic instincts in 1848 Wagner could no longer deny the racial meaning of the Nibelungen legend. Instead of being something shamefully illiberal, hatred of the Jews burst forth as something beautiful and moral, marvelously gratifying both to the emotions and the intellect... [and] a keystone of Wagner's world vision. [...In his *Jewry in Music*] Wagner reverted to type and cleared up at one stroke all the contradictions in his earlier misplaced espousal of Heine.<sup>68</sup>

Like Katz, Rose interpreted Wagner's anti-Jewish ideology as a convenient mask that he assumed in order to reconcile underlying conflicts in his career: rivalries with Jewish musicians according to Katz, or a dual trajectory adopted from Heine according to Rose. In contrast to Katz, Rose assumed that Wagner's anti-Jewish ideology reverted to his natural feelings. Also unlike Katz, Rose recognized Heine's importance for Wagner, yet took Wagner's stated aims at face value. If Katz erred on the side of incomprehension of Wagner's outlook, Rose did so regarding its "inner logic." A reconsideration of the relation of Heine and Wagner yields surprising results in this regard.

### C. Wagner as Heine's un-humorous Double

Wagner borrowed many central ideas from Heine, yet he ultimately adapted these in systematically inverted forms, transforming Heine's humor, ambivalence, and irony into earnest, straightforward, and idealizing aims, while retaining elements of their provocative appeal.

Wagner could accordingly be called Heine's un-humorous double. Their relation is essential to understanding Wagner's anti-Semitism, as well as Nietzsche's reaction against Wagner and his anti-anti-Semitism.

Wagner and Heine were first introduced in 1839 through their mutual friend in Paris, the playwright Heinrich Laube, the same Laube whose reflections on Jewish commerce in art influenced Wagner's *Jewry in Music*, as well as some of Heine's discussions of the topic.<sup>69</sup> The composer and the poet had many common concerns, including the artist's creative freedom and the independence of art from claims of politics. In 1840 Wagner set to music Heine's poem *Les Deux Grenadiers*, a story of two soldiers from Napoleon's army, following Robert Schumann's enormously popular setting of the same poem from the same year. Heine also lent money to Wagner, a striking gesture given Heine's own proclivity towards debts. Wagner was furthermore one of the few to come to Heine's defense after the scandal unleashed by the publication of his 1840 book attacking Börne in the guise of a Memorial. In a newspaper essay that year Wagner castigated the Germans for banishing Heine, a talent "the likes of which Germany has few to boast of... which with more fortunate care might have attained the level of the greatest names of our literature," exactly the contrary of his judgment about Heine in the conclusion of his *Jewry in Music* of 1850. Their last known contact took place in 1842.<sup>70</sup>

Heine appreciated Wagner's abilities as a composer of texts, and Wagner consulted Heine about a French scenario by the librettist Eugène Scribe based on Heine's story of "The Flying Dutchman" recounted in his *Memoirs of Mr. von Schnabelowopski* from 1833. Heine elaborated on a legend taken up by several previous authors of a ghost ship, into which he introduced the idea of the Dutchman's redemption in the form of his wife Senta, who must destroy herself, with a leap into the ocean, in order to set the Dutchman free. The composer Giacomo Meyerbeer submitted the sketch to the director of the Paris Grand Opera. Many passages were lifted directly from *Schnabelowopski* and the action likewise takes place in Scotland. Further librettists completed the work, yet Heine rejected the final product as "a sad failure."<sup>71</sup> Wagner eventually made up a new scenario, libretto and music for his now famous opera "The Flying Dutchman" [*Der fliegende Holländer*] in 1841.

In his *Autobiographical Sketch* of 1843, Wagner initially gave credit to Heine's story "of the redemption of this Ahasuerus [i.e. the wandering Jew] of the ocean" as his source and noted that the two "came to an understanding."<sup>72</sup> Heine explicitly identified with the character and acknowledged a connection between the motif of the wandering Jew and his story of "the flying Dutchman," both condemned to wander the earth seeking redemption, although Heine introduced an important shift away from Ahasuerus' fated destruction in the Dutchman's redemption through love.<sup>73</sup> Redemption through love will become a repeated central theme or *leitmotif*—if we can adapt his musical term in that way—of Wagner's oeuvre. The redemption through destruction, self-annihilation, or "going under" of the suffering, exiled Jews, personified by the figure of the wandering Jew, also become a conceptual *leitmotif* of Wagner's thought as anti-Semitic ideologue and appeared as the final conclusion of his essay on *Jewry in Music*. Wagner also gradually moved away from acknowledging Heine. His revised *Autobiographical Sketch* misleadingly referred to the story as "taken by Heine from a Dutch theater piece," a fictional conceit within Heine's narrative, and Wagner's *Mein Leben* [My Life] of 1867 omitted Heine's name altogether.<sup>74</sup> He also claimed that much of the inspiration for his opera came from his sea voyage to Norway in 1839, where he relocated the action in a final revision.

A crucial consideration involves the complementary approaches to the story of the poet and the composer. Heine ironically concluded his account with these sarcastic and humorous

words: “The moral of the play is that women should never marry a Flying Dutchmen, while we men may learn from it that through women, under favorable circumstances, we perish.”<sup>75</sup> He was partly mocking the idea of a folk tale by updating it to modern times, and partly commenting on relations among the sexes. Heine was loath to embrace Romantic clichés or over-idealization, yet he was attracted to the material of Romanticism. Wagner adapted the same story in a serious and ponderous manner, as a manifestation of different temperament and artistic vision, although he also recognized what was dramatic and successful. Wagner understood Heine’s genius in creating this story, yet also sought to make his ideas more accessible and popular, by removing the irony and humor. Wagner’s *Flying Dutchman* became the transition to his mature success.

Heine’s texts also played a complex role as source for Wagner’s next opera *Tannhäuser*. The medieval legend of the knight Tannhäuser [“back-woodsman”] survives in a 1515 version from Nuremberg, possibly adapted from a prior Italian story, or based on a historical figure of a poet.<sup>76</sup> The story begins with the knight arguing with the goddess Venus in the *Venusberg* [Venus-mountain, also a term for the female genitals, *mons venus* or *mons veneris*]. She pleads with him to stay but he wants to leave in order to return to a virtuous Catholic path represented by Mary. Tannhäuser goes to the pope for absolution, but is declined, and he returns to Venus. The legend appeared once more in a 1614 collection and was taken up by German Romantic writers interested in medieval German myths as a foundation for modern German identity. In 1799 Ludwig Tieck rewrote the legend as a short story in a Romantic mode and the 1515 version was reprinted Arnim and Brentano’s 1806 collection of folktales *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* [The Boy’s Magic Horn], which Heine particularly admired.

Heine’s version of the story in his story *Elemental Spirits* from 1837 was influenced by Tieck’s Romantic conception of the suffering knight, but transforms this tendency from earnest to comic. Heine’s *Tannhäuser* is more overtly comic and ironic than his “Flying Dutchman,” lending modern form to medieval characters. Venus is a sex-starved and abused woman whom Tannhäuser regularly beats, whereas he wishes to leave, not primarily out of Christian piety, but because of masochistic boredom, along the lines of Heine’s ironic love poetry:

Dame Venus, loveliest of dames,/ My soul is sick, too—  
Of kisses, roses, and sweet wine/ And craveth bitter fare...  
It’s tears for which I’m pining;/ I’d like a crown of thorns around  
My head, not roses twining...  
Thy lily-white body fills me/ With loathing, for I see  
how many more in years to come/ shall enjoy the after me.<sup>77</sup>

Heine also displays a mocking, blasphemous tone toward Christianity, already evident in the motif of the desired crown of thorns in place of roses, which also recalls the metaphor of Heine’s sweetly ironic love poems as roses with thorns, which the public preferred to consume in de-ironized way or “de-thorned,” a principle Wagner grasped and adapted for his appropriation of Heine’s idea. Heine’s account of Tannhäuser’s visit to the Pope, recounted belatedly as a travelogue along the lines of Heine’s earlier travel sketches, served as an occasion to lambast different German cities and to settle scores with opponents such as Tieck. The medieval Catholic knight also eats Jewish food at Frankfurt, where “they have the best religion,” i.e. Judaism. Heine claimed that he had found this version of the legend by an unknown author, a means of evading the censor, although Heine’s unique literary voice and self-projection are unmistakable. His Tannhäuser story also develops his dichotomy of “spiritualism” and “sensualism” from his



*Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* from 1835, now embodied in the Catholic Church, the Pope, and the holy order of knights on the one hand and Venus on the other. The Tannhäuser legend surely appealed to Heine in part for its eccentric combination of pagan Gods and Christian culture, a strategy he exploited to remarkable effect.

It was part of Wagner's genius to recognize Heine's genius. As he had done with Heine's "Flying Dutchman," Wagner adapted Heine's *Tannhäuser* in his own opera of that name, first performed at the Dresden Opera House in 1845, where Wagner had come with help from Meyerbeer. In this case as well, Wagner stripped the story of Heine's irony and humor, making it earnest and pompous.<sup>78</sup> In doing so, he demonstrated an affinity with the idealizing German Romantics, who saw in medieval folk tales a serious foundation for a new German identity. Wagner's de-humored version, which to adapt Wagner's term he thereby also "de-Jewified" [*ent-Jüdet*], was much more popular among the German public.

Wagner furthermore made a major addition of a song contest at the Wartburg, adapted from E. T. A. Hoffmann's story *The Singers' Contest*, as evident from the full title of Wagner's opera: "Tannhäuser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg" [*Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg*]. In the thirteenth-century the Wartburg had been the home of Saint Elizabeth, an archetype of Christian charity and self-sacrifice, whom Wagner incorporated into his opera as a stand-in for the virgin Mary as Tannhäuser's ideal and a rival to Venus. Wagner's knight longs to leave Venus to experience the sufferings of the real world, but in an earnest rather than ironic or comic sense, closer to Tieck's version. On his way to Rome Tannhäuser meets a band of pilgrims including Elizabeth, with whom he falls in love. At the song contest at the Wartburg, Tannhäuser sings of his love for Elizabeth, which has broken Venus' spell, and she reciprocates. After the Landgrave's insipid hymn in praise of chaste love, Tannhäuser cannot help himself and begins to sing of the physical love he knew with Venus. He taunts the other knights as "poor mortals, who true love have never tasted," and tells them that they should "make haste, haste to the *Venusberg*." Elizabeth has to stop them from killing him. She reminds them that the Savior died for Tannhäuser too. He confesses that he has soiled the chaste Elizabeth with his sly and lustful gaze. The pilgrims leave for Rome, but the Pope does not absolve Tannhäuser, and in his absence Elizabeth sacrifices her life for his redemption as he discovers on his return, an echo of the redemption through love motif in both Heine and Wagner's Flying Dutchman.

Like Heine, Wagner juxtaposed pagan sensualism and Christian spiritualism, profane and sacred or physical, sexual and emotional love, yet reconciled them through a remarkable twist. Heine revealed the modern sexuality and conflicts implicit in the medieval story behind the idealized scheme that appealed to Romantic writers, which he rejected as sentimental and hypocritical. Wagner inverted and thereby sublimated Heine's self-conscious, explicit, and potentially alienating ambivalence by disguising modern sexuality and its conflicts behind an idealizing Romantic façade of German conventionality and bourgeois respectability. Tannhäuser's song of lust lets slip the truth of Wagner's eroticism and his self-conception as artist. Yet Wagner was not ironic or humorously self-deprecating. His transformation of Heine's source betrays a deliberately more accessible and therefore more successful presentation.

The Wartburg as location of the song contest had further connotations as the medieval fortress overlooking the city of Eisenach in Thuringia at the center of Germany, where Luther hid in 1521 after his excommunication by the Pope, and translated the New Testament into German. Meyerbeer's opera *The Huguenots* incorporated as a repeated theme—the precursor of Wagner's *Leitmotif*—a refrain adapted from Luther's hymn, "My God is a Mighty Fortress," a musical counterpart of the Wartburg, which however, as many critics pointed out, was inappropriate in

this context since Huguenots were French Calvinists. In the context of the Tannhäuser story, Wagner employed the Wartburg as the setting for a foundational myth of German nationhood.

In his essay “A Communication to My Friends,” Wagner also recounted his first encounter with the Wartburg as inspiration and setting for his opera. On his return from Paris to Germany with his first wife in 1842, their carriage passed by the Wartburg, resulting in an epiphany: “it seemed particularly prophetic indication that I should first sight the Wartburg, so rich in history and myth, at precisely this moment.... an antidote to... the wind and the weather, Jews, and Leipzig fair.”<sup>79</sup> Wagner saw the occasion as a turning point in his career:

My true nature—which in my loathing of the modern world and ardor to discover something nobler and beyond all noblest, had quite returned to me—now seized, as in a passionate embrace, the opposing channels of my being... With this work I penned my death-warrant: before the world of Modern Art, I now could hope no more for life.<sup>80</sup>

As with Wagner’s voyage to Norway as ostensible inspiration and the revised setting for *Der fliegende Holländer*, the story of Wagner’s encounter with the Wartburg served partly as a means to hide his appropriation of Heine’s ideas. As Leah Garret observed, in

Wagner’s masterful spin on how he wrote his latest opera... [the Wartburg] arose like a beacon from the German soil, and it was based on the mythos of the *Volk* as exemplified by the castle in the medieval accounts of German knights and saints. The opera was homegrown, German, and a buffer against modernism. But of course none of this was really true. Wagner could not let anyone know that the central inspiration for his German folk opera was to be found within the writings of the Jewish poet Heinrich Heine.<sup>81</sup>

Wagner never acknowledged his debt to Heine, and claimed instead that a chapbook with the legend had mysteriously fallen into his hands.<sup>82</sup> He clearly sought to present his opera as a thoroughly and organically German creation, derived from the genius of the folk, as opposed to the “modern” works of the likes of Meyerbeer at the Paris Opera.

On the other hand, Wagner’s account is more than a blatant lie to cover his theft of Jewish intellectual property, which had itself been appropriated from a sixteenth-century German folk source, by way of Romantic writers such as Tieck, Arnim, and Brentano, and then transformed or made perverted and modern. Rather, Wagner’s account suggests how the Wartburg provided him with the means to transform and thereby ultimately disguise or erase Heine as source, and could have involved an actual epiphany, as the different threads of his opera and his vision came together, and he re-invented himself as a mature artist. Wagner seems to reveal a glimpse of the truth when he invokes the castle as antidote to “the wind and the weather, *Jews*, and Leipzig fair.” The Wartburg had already served a comparable function as the site of a famous commemoration in 1817 on the one-year anniversary of Napoleon’s defeat at the battle of Leipzig, celebrated by anti-Jewish German fraternities, where among things books were burned. The Wartburg thus signaled one of the origins of the nascent anti-French, anti-Semitic German nationalism that Wagner eventually embraced and that came to embrace him and his art. He made these dimensions into part of the structure of his opera insofar as the Wartburg and the *Venusburg* implicitly figured Germany and the France of Paris. Yet Wagner, like Tannhäuser, had it both ways, incorporating a sophisticated modernism influenced by Jewish and French sources behind his reactionary traditionalist German nationalist façade.

Lest there be any doubt about Wagner's uncanny recognition of Heine's importance as a source—which he would nevertheless never openly admit—he revised his opera for its second Parisian premiere in 1861, more than a decade after his anonymously published *Jewry in Music*, with an opening dance scene modeled directly on Heine's "Dionysian" ballet scenario or dance-poem "the Goddess Diana" [*Die Göttin Diana*] from 1846.<sup>83</sup> Heine described how Venus with Tannhäuser, "Scantly clad, with garlands of roses on their heads," dance "an intensely sensual *pas de deux* reminiscent of the most illicit dances of the modern period," later culminating in a bacchanalian orgy.<sup>84</sup> Wagner similarly invoked: "a wild, and yet seductive chaos of movements and groupings, of soft delight, of yearning and burning, carried to the most delirious pitch of frenzied riots."<sup>85</sup> Wagner's revised introduction for the premier at the Paris Opera, which resulted in a debacle—or rather, *une succès de scandale*—demonstrated that he was much less than dead to, or more profoundly invested in, the world of modern art than he claimed.

Despite his difficulties in Paris, Wagner had secured his reputation in Germany, and eventually won a primary patron in Ludwig II of Bavaria, which allowed him to expand his vision in subsequent works. Wagner's innovation of the *Leitmotif* or leading theme may have distantly echoed Meyerbeer's repeated refrain of Luther's "A Mighty Fortress," i.e. the Wartburg, in *The Huguenots*. Yet Wagner's idea also elaborated on his use of the sailors' song in his *Flying Dutchman* and the competing sensual and spiritual strains of his *Tannhäuser* and ultimately into a musical narration in *Tristan und Isolde* and other works, subsuming the action of plot and dialogue to the music as the action itself. Wagner's "total work of art" [*Gesamtkunstwerk*] brought together story, speech, setting, and music as an inextricable organic whole.<sup>86</sup> In contrast to the "modern" entertainment of Meyerbeer, Wagner sought to achieve something more serious, high art, with an implicit philosophical, cultural, social, national meaning, a rebirth of ancient Greek tragedy in Germany, also a central theme of Nietzsche's Wagnerian *Birth of Tragedy*.<sup>87</sup>

Although Wagner's debts to Heine are most obvious in Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*, he continued to elaborate on Heine's fundamental dichotomy of sensualism and spiritualism, as well as the themes of redemption through love or destruction through love or both, in later operas such as *Tristan und Isolde*. "Twilight of the Gods" [*Götterdämmerung*], the conclusion of Wagner's crowning achievement, *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, can be traced in part to Heine's 1823 poem *Götterdämmerung* and his fundamental initiative of re-imaging pagan Gods in a modern Christian context. Several motifs explored by Heine, including the Nibelungen hoard and Siegfried's sons loved by the Valkyrie who disobeyed her father Wotan, anticipated ones taken up by Wagner.<sup>88</sup> As in other cases, Heine's interpretation of legends of the Germanic gods is pessimistic and ironic, exposing them as all-too-human, to borrow Nietzsche's phrase, part of a provocative, humorous, and blasphemous perspective. Wagner performed his characteristic reversal, presenting a straightforward, un-humorous glorification of German myth, disguising characters with remarkably compelling, modern, bourgeois problems.

With this understanding of the relation of Wagner and Heine, we can return to and combine Katz and Rose's conflicting explanations of how Wagner's ideology was derived from his art. What Katz identified as Wagner's jealousy of and rivalry with his Jewish colleagues, in this case of the poet Heine, also coincided with what Rose recognized as Wagner's appropriation and transformation of Heine's ideas. Yet Wagner did not reconcile, as Rose claimed, so much as invert and pervert Heine's dual trajectory. Heine did not simply maintain "a healthy skepticism" toward what he called sensualism and revolution. Rather, he recognized that these were in conflict, and ultimately impossible, which did not stop him from advocating a sensual revolution with "nectar and ambrosia" for all mankind as a literary rather than a practical, political aim.<sup>89</sup>

Conversely, despite Wagner's professed earnestness as revolutionary and advocate of German mythology, both were primarily masks for him, strategies to further his artistic career, whereas his anti-Semitism was sincere. Wagner's supposed epiphany at the Wartburg can thus stand as part for the whole of his vision.

Whereas Heine was truthful about his ideals, yet realistically ironic about the possibility of achieving them, Wagner was cynical about his supposed ideals, which he took on as a pose, including his opposition to modernism. Wagner's anti-Jewish ideology helped to disguise his appropriation of his Jewish rival Heine's ideas, and to present his own modernist art behind an ostensibly "revolutionary" nationalist façade. Wagner's ideology was neither an irrational, belated justification for his career machinations in relation to specific Jews, as Katz claimed, nor a masterful synthesis of his artistic and political aims, as Rose proposed, but rather something in between, an attempt to justify an internal contradiction at the heart of his vision and career. The revolutionary elements of Wagner's art were never reconciled with his reactionary ideology, but merely brought together as a fantastic illusion, a different kind of seductive sweetness combined with bitterness, a German gentile rose with thorns.

Wagner's conclusion in his *Jewry in Music* regarding Heine was both a rhetorical flourish and the essay's keystone. Wagner acknowledged the "highly-gifted poet-Jew" Heine as the conscience of Judaism, and Judaism as "the evil conscience of our modern civilization." J. P. Stern proposed something similar when he declared: "what is so fruitful about [Heine's] precarious position is that he never ceased to be Germany's European conscience and in this too Nietzsche was his ally."<sup>90</sup> In his self-conscious irony, Heine was the foremost interpreter of modernity, of a period after idealism, in Wagner's words, when "poetry was a lie." In keeping with his adopted or newly liberated anti-Jewish ideology, Wagner characteristically inverted these circumstances, placing the word "evil" [*übel*] before "conscience of our modern civilization"—only in a later revision of his essay—interestingly rendered in Katz's translation as "bad [i.e. guilty] conscience," and echoed in Nietzsche's later invocation of Heine's "divine malice [*Bosheit*]." Like the German fraternity brothers on the Wartburg before him, Wagner demonized and scapegoated the Jews as representatives of an evil modernity and a dialectical other to the phantasm of a pure German nationalism, which dovetailed with Wagner's personal resentments and hypocrisies, obscured his artistic debts, and aided his careerist machinations. Wagner's closing admonition for the wandering Jews including Heine to "go under," i.e. disappear, was not far off for Heine, who was gravely ill on what he called his "mattress grave" [*Matrazengruft*], and would be dead within six years. This admonition too was perhaps a rhetorical flourish on Wagner's part, as Katz proposed, a theatrical close to his essay, akin to the deaths of the Dutchman's wife Senta, the self-sacrificing Saint Elizabeth, Tristan and Isolde, and the damned Gods of the *Ring*.

#### D. Heine and Nietzsche *contra* Wagner

Rose provocatively questioned why Heine, who was otherwise so eager to engage in the fiercest polemics with his opponents, made no response to Wagner. Laube had personally called Heine's attention to Laube's 1848 preface to *Struensee*, in which he attacked "Jewish art" and Meyerbeer in particular, directly anticipating Wagner's *Jewry in Music* from 1850.<sup>91</sup> Heine may not have been aware of Wagner's tract, which was published anonymously in a German musical journal six years before Heine's death. Yet Wagner's ostensible anonymity was primarily a ruse, and Rose reasonably assumed that Heine's interlocutors would have informed him of this major betrayal involving his former supporter and collaborator.

As one provisional explanation for Heine's silence, Rose observed that Heine had offered comparable critiques of both Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, which could have inhibited him from responding to Wagner:

But perhaps what really silenced Heine was the guilty feeling that Wagner might also been right about him too. Wagner's attack played cunningly on Heine's fear—generally well-hidden—of the destructiveness of his own skepticism... The sudden recognition of what he had in common with two Jewish composers—guilt by association—might plausibly have paralyzed Heine's response to Wagner... Wagner had cunningly latched onto Heine's deepest sense of identity and turned it against him... Heine could not really defend himself from Wagner's charge that he was not a *truly* German poet.<sup>92</sup>

Rose's provocative thought-experiment in intellectual history is worth following, even if this study comes to a different conclusion. As proposed in the previous chapter, Heine did not embrace a conventional sense of identity, "Heine's identity," but rather a deeply iconoclastic and subversive one, "The Börne identity," through which he enjoyed inter-mingling his outlook in dialectics with others, including Börne and Goethe, his "enemies" and "allies." Heine's book demonstrated that he was afraid of no one and nothing, including his own destructive skepticism: he attacked Christianity and Judaism, the political left and right, without losing his own sense of purpose and vision, which did not correspond to a conventional identity. He admittedly felt bad about going too far in his scurrilous *ad hominem* attacks on Börne, yet surely because of the adverse consequences, rather than for aesthetic reasons. Heine's Börne book furthermore involved attacks by a Jew-Hellene on a Jew-Nazarene for qualities associated with Jewishness. If Bruno Bauer was the father of anti-Semitism in formulating its foundational principle of the racial incompatibility of Jews and Germans, we might say that through their discourses Heine, Marx, and Wagner were all strange varieties of step-father in anti-Semitism's complex genesis.

For these and other reasons, Heine unlikely accepted Wagner lumping him together with other Jewish artists, even as their implicit foremost example, or Wagner's condemnation of him as "false." Heine was certainly aware that he was not a *truly* German poet, yet he celebrated those circumstances, which were bound up with his artistic strength. Heine proudly felt himself to be both German and Jewish, without attempting to mediate or compromise but rather openly addressing their conflict, and their individual hypocrisies and inadequacies. Hence Arendt's assertion that Heine was the only successful example, not excluding Marx and Freud, of both a German and a Jew. Heine surely also recognized his own satirical ideas transformed into a form devoid of humor in Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* of 1843 and his *Tannhäuser* of 1845 (Wagner's *Ring* was composed after Heine's death). He may have also understood their relation as precisely the inverse of what Rose proposed. Wagner more likely guiltily recognized that Heine was right about both Germans and Jews, revolution and sensualism, yet Wagner nevertheless made his strategic adaptations for the sake of success.

We cannot be sure why Heine remained silent about Wagner. He might have felt it would be too petty to respond to Wagner's un-humorous appropriation of his own ideas and public betrayal directly with counter-accusations in a game of tit for tat. The posthumous battle with Börne and the scandal it unleashed could have also finally soured him on polemics, or conversely satiated his lust for polemics in a way he could not possibly go beyond. Perhaps Heine genuinely did not know about *Jewry in Music*. He was getting too old and weak for this kind of thing, and

had turned full-time to putting his own artistic house in order, which also could have encompassed indirect responses to Wagner's attacks.

Heine was *literally* paralyzed by this point and was sublimating his energies into the creation of some of the greatest poems of his career. These included his dance-poems *The Goddess Diana* and *Doctor Faust*, produced in 1846-7 with the onset of his final illness, just before his complete physical collapse in 1848. *Doctor Faust* was in part a belated response to Goethe, which Heine had apparently been considering from the outset of his career. In their Dionysiac exuberance, both dance-poems could also be seen as belated artistic responses, in place of polemics, to Wagner's appropriation of Heine's modern-sensualist re-interpretation of the medieval legend of Tannhäuser, who plays a prominent role in *The Goddess Diana*. In 1851 Heine completed his third great poem cycle *Romancero* [*Romanzero*], which is widely recognized as his crowning achievement, including its last three poems, his *Hebrew Melodies*. Their subject matter was explicitly Jewish and these poems are usually seen together with several of his prose self-descriptions from this time, notably his "Correction" of 1849 and *Confessions* of 1854, as comprising a late "conversion" to Judaism. These late texts clearly emphasize positive elements of Heine's Jewish background and identity, without embracing conventional Jewish religious faith, or compromising his fundamental critiques of Judaism.<sup>93</sup> Heine's late texts can certainly be understood as an artistic response to Wagner and other anti-Jewish detractors, part of an extended history that Heine experienced throughout his life.

A different kind of answer to Rose's question about Heine's silence would be that Nietzsche responded to Wagner on Heine's behalf. Nietzsche's reaction against Wagner directly involved the latter's anti-Semitism, as Nietzsche himself made clear, although Holub's objections on this score allow us to recognize that Nietzsche had to overcome possible tendencies toward anti-Semitism encouraged by Wagner, by opposing Wagner and by extension the anti-Semite within himself. There is in fact indirect evidence that as a result of his efforts to accommodate himself to Wagner, Nietzsche initially adopted a slightly disapproving attitude toward Heine, which underscores our understanding that Nietzsche's turn away from [*contra*] Wagner was also a return to [*pro*] Heine. Near the outset of the unpublished introduction from 1870-1 foreseen for his *Birth of Tragedy* of 1872, Nietzsche directly addressed Wagner:

I know that you, my dear friend, share with me an ability to distinguish between the true and false concept of Greek serenity... We should be content if it is not interpreted as placid sensualism; which is the sense in which Heinrich Heine usually used the term, always exclaiming it with longing emotion.<sup>94</sup>

Nietzsche still unambiguously positioned himself here *contra* Heine and *pro* Wagner, so to speak, on the specific concept of "Greek serenity" first introduced into German letters by Johann Joachim Winckelmann and by extension the interpretation of antiquity among German Hellenists, a topic discussed in the following chapter. On the other hand, both Nietzsche, and by implication Wagner whom he addressed, thereby acknowledged Heine as Wagner's contestant on this point, which would constitute a crucial lever in Nietzsche's later reversal in relation to Wagner. Sensualism was precisely the term that Heine had opposed to spiritualism, particularly in his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* of 1835.<sup>95</sup> Yet "placidity" specifically sounds Apollonian rather than Dionysian, and the later Heine unambiguously sided with the Dionysian, as Wagner surely knew since he adapted the later Heine's Dionysian ideas in his own operas, as reviewed above. Nietzsche's mention in his unpublished dedication of how

“Heine *usually* used the term” also further complicates the issue, leaving room for an evolving view on Heine’s part and in Nietzsche’s view of Heine.

Nietzsche’s second early ambiguous reference to Heine occurs in another unpublished fragment from 1873, in which he contrasts Heine with Hegel:

The influence of Hegel and Heine on German style! The latter destroys the barely finished work of our great writers, the barely achieved feeling for the uniform texture of style. He loves the motley fool’s cloak. His inventions, his images, his observations, his sentiments, his vocabulary are not compatible. He controls all styles like a virtuoso, but uses this mastery only to confuse them totally. With Hegel everything is an unworthy gray; with Heine, an electric fountain of color [*das Schimmern der elektrischen Farbenspiele*], which, however, attacks the eye as much as the gray dulls it. As a stylist Hegel is a factor, Heine, a *farceur*.<sup>96</sup>

Sander Gilman characterized these passages as Nietzsche’s “attack on Heine,” “condemnation of Heine,” and “antipathy towards Heine.”<sup>97</sup> In Gilman’s view, Nietzsche later reversed his position when he came to discover Heine’s “ironic mask,” which served “not to conceal but to reveal,” so that “Nietzsche saw Heine as his historical *Doppelgänger*... parallels between his fate and that of Heine lead to this total identification with the poet.”<sup>98</sup> Gilman can be said to have exaggerated both Nietzsche’s supposed early attacks on Heine and Nietzsche’s supposed later total identification with Heine. Young Nietzsche appears instead to have been working through fundamental yet still confused issues in these unpublished thoughts. His claim that Heine “destroys the barely finished work of our great writers”—August von Platen-Hallermünde? Ludwig Börne? Goethe?—appears to convey a grudging respect. As he had done with Heine and Wagner, Nietzsche presented Heine and Hegel as counter-types in German thought and culture. He did not endorse Hegel, nor did he condemn Heine—“factor” is not clearly superior to “*farceur*”—and Heine would likely have been flattered to be characterized in this way. Nietzsche’s unusual phrase “electric fountain of color” [*elektrischen Farbenspiele*] recalls a similar phrase “lively play of color” [*bunte Farbenspiele*] that Heine used as a term of approbation against what he called the eclectic form of Romanticism in his early 1820 essay on *Die Romantik*, which Nietzsche possibly remembered, consciously or otherwise.<sup>99</sup> The juxtaposition also recalls the famous line in Goethe’s *Faust*—“Dear friend, all theory is gray, and green the golden tree of life”—as an analogy for the relation of philosophy and literature.<sup>100</sup>

One way to explain Nietzsche’s changing attitude toward Heine is through Wagner. The young Nietzsche, the idealistic German nationalist and Wagnerite, author of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and possibly nascent anti-Semite under the influence of Wagner and others, appears initially to have been uncomfortable with Heine’s irony, humor, and chaos. Hence Nietzsche’s references to the “*farceur*,” the “motley fool’s cloak,” and the “electric fountain of color” as ways to identify Heine’s virtuosic capacity to master any style. Yet Nietzsche’s discomfort does not correspond to attacks, condemnation, or antipathy so much as a fascination with something he does not yet understand, or obstacles he has not yet learned to overcome. The mature Nietzsche, the polemical opponent of Wagner and inveterate anti-nationalist and anti-anti-Semite, author of *Nietzsche contra Wagner* and *Ecce Homo*, was a zealous convert to Heine’s irony and humor, if not explicitly to a cultural Jewishness.

Nietzsche did not confuse himself with Heine, or with the Jews, but rather consciously transformed Heine’s ideas, strategies, attitudes, and even his situation. Regarding antiquity,

Heine's outlook as pantheist and sensualist was not so much placid Apollonian as the opposite: Dionysian, dissonant and chaotic, an "electric fountain of color." Young Nietzsche mistook Wagner for the Dionysian, yet Wagner actually adapted several of his ideas about Dionysus from Heine, disguised behind a façade of moral, Christian, nationalist idealist Romanticism. Nietzsche later came to recognize this error and effect a reversal, toward a more ironic, comic Dionysus, a 'Jewish Dionysus.' Nietzsche turned *contra* Wagner and *pro* Heine, which was also a return to Heine, for whom Nietzsche had an affinity in his youth, and even to an earlier, more innocent or "un-infected" Nietzsche, another form of self-over-coming. Kaufmann recognized this trajectory yet in his effort to rehabilitate Nietzsche may have simplified some issues involving his sister. As the corollary of Wagner's *Jewry in Music* justifying his personal animus toward Jews, Nietzsche's late declarations of anti-anti-Semitism allowed him to overcome any personal animus towards Jews he may have previously had or affected for Wagner's sake. Judaism nevertheless remained a primary target of Nietzsche's critique as anti-moralist and anti-Christian. In these regards, he was following the lead of the "Hellene" Heine.

Hence Nietzsche's characterization in his *Ecce Homo* of Heine's poetry as "sweet and passionate *music*," in implicit opposition to the heavy-handed passion and ideologically sour flavor of Wagner's compositions. Nietzsche's affirmation of Heine and himself as the foremost *artists* of the German language constitutes a further jab at Wagner, Nietzsche's former prototype of the artist, whose German language libretti and ideological writings did not measure up to the quality of his German music. Heine's distinguishing feature according to Nietzsche was his "divine malice," the corollary of Wagner's Heine as the "evil conscience," via Jewry, of modern Civilization. Heine's "touch of malice" contributed to perfection, the lie that truthfully recognizes itself, in contrast to Wagner's lie of false idealization. Nietzsche's transvaluation makes malice or evil into the good, and the German Jew into the best kind of German. Infected by Wagner's illness, and inspired by his predecessor the German-Jewish poet Heine, Nietzsche found the strength to heal himself, to overcome nationalism and anti-Semitism and to become a superman as good European.

As cited at the outset of this chapter, in approaching Nietzsche's varied reception in Germany, Steven Aschheim invoked Jacques Derrida's claim that "the effects or structure of a text are not reducible to its 'truth,' to the intended meaning of its author or even its supposedly unique and identifiable signatory." Derrida made this statement in his essay, "Otobiographies. The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," in which he proposed a "new analysis of the proper name and the signature" in relation to Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo. How one Becomes What one Is*.<sup>101</sup> In his preface, Nietzsche confessed: "one has neither heard nor even seen me. I live on my own credit; it is perhaps a mere prejudice and I live."<sup>102</sup> In *The Anti-Christ* he similarly predicted: "the time for me hasn't come yet," "some [of my writings] will be born only posthumously."<sup>103</sup> More ominously, in *Ecce Homo* he predicted:

I know my fate. One day my name will be associated with the memory of something monstrous—a crisis without equal on earth, the most profound collision of conscience, a decision that was conjured up *against* everything that had been believed, demanded, hallowed so far. I am no man, I am dynamite.<sup>104</sup>

Derrida explained these assertions insofar as "Nietzsche's signature does not take place when he writes" but rather "it is the ear of the other that signs." He did not engage in autobiography, telling one's story for oneself, but rather "otobiography," telling one's story for



the ear of the other [*oto*]: “It is we who have to honor his signature by interpreting his message and his legacy politically.”<sup>105</sup> Derrida’s claim is borne out by the examples of Kaufmann and Holub, who countersigned for Nietzsche with very different interpretations. Other counter-signatories included Nietzsche’s sister Elizabeth and the Nazis. In the end, we have to recognize that “Nietzsche” necessarily involves our constructs, which merit careful re-examination. Derrida acknowledged that “one can imagine the following objection: Careful! Nietzsche’s utterances are not the same as those of the Nazi ideologues.”<sup>106</sup> Yet he also insisted that “the only politics calling itself—proclaiming itself—Nietzschean will have been a Nazi one,” and “there is nothing absolutely contingent about the fact that the only political regimen to have *effectively* brandished his name as a major and official banner was Nazi,” whereas Derrida questioned if “we as yet know how to think what Nazism is.”<sup>107</sup> He further cited Nietzsche’s early unpublished lectures *On The Future Of Our Educational Institutions* from 1872, at the time he was still part of Wagner’s circle, in which Nietzsche recounted that he

was able to learn on the field of battle... that one needs a *grosse Führer* and that all formation [*Bildung*] begins with obedience... All culture [*Bildung*] begins with the very opposite of that which is now so highly esteemed as ‘Academic freedom’: *Bildung* begins with obedience, subordination, discipline, and subjection. Just as great leaders [*Führer*] need followers, so those who are led need the leaders [*Führer*].<sup>108</sup>

These passages undeniably contain elements which the Nazis would have embraced. On the other hand, Nietzsche did not publish these lectures, which were presumably unknown to the Nazis, and he declared to his friend Malwida von Meysenburg that “I swore not to publish any book that doesn’t leave me with a conscience as clear as an angel’s.”<sup>109</sup> The term leader [*Führer*] was furthermore given a highly idiosyncratic content by Hitler. The material adduced by Derrida is akin to Nietzsche’s private anti-Jewish remarks uncovered by Holub. Both vividly place Nietzsche in his historical context, yet also potentially serve to underscore how he transcended that context during the course of his development. Notwithstanding his disdain for democracy and the levelling of modern life, Nietzsche eventually made his position against nationalism and anti-Semitism clear in relation to Wagner.

Admittedly, these matters are complex. Holub’s intervention has demonstrated the need for a revision of Kaufmann’s account, particularly regarding the role of Nietzsche’s sister Elizabeth, and Derrida was surely also correct that our thinking about Nazism continues to evolve. Ultimately, however, Derrida’s pronouncement cited by Aschheim does not mean that all interpretations are equivalent—“ordering off the menu” as Tom Stern put it—or that we must forsake attempts to establish the truth of Nietzsche’s text, his intended meaning as author, or even his role as unique and identifiable signatory. On the contrary, Derrida’s insistence that these issues cannot be definitively resolved is a precondition for such attempts. The interpretation of Nietzsche put forward here has considered many of these prior attempts, yet above all offered Heine as a largely overlooked factor who could be called a counter-signatory for Nietzsche’s text, just as Nietzsche served as a counter-signatory for Heine’s text.

I am no longer the great pagan no. 2  
who was compared to the vine-wreathed Dionysus...  
I am now only a mortally ill Jew.

—Heine, “Correction” [*Berichtigung*], 1849

Perhaps Heine’s greatest and at the same time least well-known or understood contribution to Western letters involves his iconoclastic and multifarious approach to Greek myth. The term ‘Jewish Dionysus’ is meant to capture this broader complex. On the one hand, Heine turned away from the German Hellenists’ reigning gods of Zeus and Apollo to Dionysus, the irrational, chaotic, orgiastic god of wine and celebration, a seismic shift in German cultural and intellectual history that was later fully realized in Nietzsche’s writings. On the other hand, Heine’s approach to myth, Greek and otherwise, can be understood in relation to his evolution as an artist and thinker, including his supposed late “conversion” to Judaism or Jewishness at the time of his final illness. Heine was nothing if not ambivalent, about his Jewishness, and about his “paganism” as self-described ‘Hellene.’ Heine’s ambivalences were mutually reinforcing and also cross-fertilizing, central components of his genius and unique vision.

Heine’s interpretation of Greek gods was opposed to the history of German Hellenism, inaugurated by Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s texts, particularly through his interpretation of the sculpture called *The Laocoön* (Fig. 1). Winckelmann’s texts directly provoked responses from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Hölderlin and Heine. The reception of *The Laocoön* itself presents a fascinating case study of cultural and intellectual history, which demonstrates the originality of Heine’s cultural relativist approach to antiquity, best explicated in E. M. Butler’s brilliant but now widely overlooked 1935 study of German Hellenism.<sup>1</sup> Heine’s “Dionysian” outlook also reflected his broader development, including his position within a younger generation of German writers in the Romantic period and outside the ‘club’ of German Hellenists, his evolving relation to Goethe, and his polemics with August von Platen and Ludwig Börne, involving homoerotic and Jewish identity, among other issues. Heine’s exceptional perspective also profoundly impacted Nietzsche’s reflections on Greek culture and the Dionysian in particular in relation to modern Germany in his *Birth of Tragedy* and later writings. Reacting against his earlier embrace of Wagner, Nietzsche articulated his own ambivalence as German Hellenist, and even as a German. Heine and Nietzsche’s attitudes toward Dionysus are crucial to understanding both their unique contributions and their complex relations. At stake was the very definition of German culture.

A. German Hellenism and the tyranny of Greece over Germany

In 1506, outside the hills of Rome in the vineyard of Felice de Fredis near the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, above what is assumed to be the former location of the house of the Roman emperor Titus, workers set about uncovering a statue that had been discovered in the ground. Pope Julius II sent his court artist the Florentine architect Guiliano da Sangallo, who brought with him Michelangelo, then at work designing Julius’ tomb. As the sculpture was unearthed, Da Sangallo declared: “That is *The Laocoön*, which Pliny mentions” (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> In his *Natural History*, the Roman historian Gaius Plinius Secundus, known as Pliny the Elder, described *The Laocoön* as

preferable to any other production of the art of painting or of statuary. It is sculptured from a single block, both the main figure as well as the children, and the serpents with their marvelous folds. This group was made in concert by three most eminent artists, Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, natives of Rhodes.<sup>3</sup>

Unearthing the statue caused a sensation, as the most elaborate and complex ancient sculpture discovered during the Renaissance, and one of only two mentioned by Pliny; the other, *The Capitoline Wolf*, a bronze she-wolf suckling the babies Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, turned out to be a medieval invention, and an effective recreation of the lost statue Pliny invoked.<sup>4</sup> The Trojan priest Laocoön, flanked by his two sons, was attacked by two sea serpents sent by the gods, punishment for his attempt to expose the giant Trojan Horse, an ostensible gift from the gods, in fact a means for the Greeks to conquer the Trojans. Virgil made this version of the story famous in his *Aeneid*, in which the priest Laocoön is given the book's most famous line: "beware of Greeks bearing gifts."<sup>5</sup> The story was particularly important to the Romans and Italians insofar as Virgil's hero the Trojan Aeneas was the supposed ancestor of the Romans.

Since classical antiquity was thought to possess superior knowledge and taste in matters of art, Pliny's claim about *The Laocoön's* superlative status made this the artistic model *par excellence*. The statue was furthermore unearthed during a period devoted to the rediscovery and the revival of ancient art and culture, even if the actual name "Renaissance" [rebirth] was only first coined by a nineteenth-century French historian, Jules Michelet, responding in part to the German scholars addressed here. As Leonard Barkan observed, such "rediscovery of ancient sculptures is not only the place where a canon is being formed; it is also a place where canonicity itself is receiving some of its crucial modern definitions."<sup>6</sup>

The statue was rediscovered again, over two and a half centuries later, by a German, Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Winckelmann was born into abject poverty, the only son of a cobbler in a small town called Stendhal (later adopted for this reason as *nom de plume* by the great French author of *The Red and the Black*). Winckelmann's soaring ambition, and his peculiar constitution, including his homoerotic preferences, led him back to the ancient Greeks. First, he learned to read ancient Greek texts, and then, after converting to Catholicism and gaining employment as secretary and librarian to Roman cardinals, he was able to observe and to write about ancient art. His *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* from 1755 made him famous and introduced a broad public to the excellence of antique art, captured under his capacious formula, usually translated into English as "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" [*edle Einfalt und stille Größe*].

Winckelmann declared that "there is but one way for the moderns to become great, and perhaps unequalled; I mean, by imitating the ancients" and connected his famous formula with *The Laocoön* in particular:

The general and most distinctive characteristics of the Greek masterpieces are, finally, a noble simplicity and quiet grandeur, both in posture and expression. Just as the depths of the sea remain always calm however the surface may rage, so does the expression in the figures of the Greeks reveal a great and composed soul even in the midst of passion.

Such a soul is reflected in the face of Laocoön—and not in the face alone—despite his violent suffering. The pain is revealed in all the muscles in sinews of his body, and we ourselves can almost feel it as we observe the painful contraction of the abdomen alone

without regarding the face in other parts of the body. This pain, however, expresses itself with no sign of rage in his face or in this entire bearing. He emits no terrible scream such as Virgil's Laocoön, for the opening of his mouth does not permit it; it is rather an anxious and troubled sighing... The physical pain and the nobility of soul are distributed with equal strength over the entire body and, as it were, held in balance one another. Laocoön suffers, but he suffers like Sophocles' Philoctetes; his pain touches our very souls, but we wish we could bear misery like this great man.<sup>7</sup>

Winckelmann continued to write about the statue and assign this a prominent role in his seminal *History of Ancient Art* from 1764.<sup>8</sup> As a result of his growing reputation Winckelmann was eventually offered the post of Frederick the Great's librarian in Berlin. He changed his mind at the last minute, and visited Vienna instead, where the Austrian empress awarded him gold medals, and continued on to Trieste, then still part of the Austrian empire. In 1768 Winckelmann, likely following his homoerotic impulses, showed his gold medals to a man he did not know, Francesco Arcangeli, who murdered him in a Trieste hotel room.<sup>9</sup>

One of the earliest and most important scholars of the history of German Hellenism, Eliza Marian Butler, a classicist and Germanist at Cambridge University, composed her masterpiece, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*, in 1935. She was surprised by her own conclusion concerning the originality of Heine's emphasis on Dionysus within his tradition. Butler's eccentric ways of writing and thinking are now outdated and longer acceptable within the narrowly defined strictures of contemporary scholarship, another kind of politics of literature.<sup>10</sup> Yet despite—or perhaps precisely because of—these qualities, Butler's insights offer a precious resource. The history of scholarship encompasses more than just changing styles and methods, since these cannot be separated from vastly different conclusions.

Butler characterized Winckelmann's contribution as “the rediscovery of the lost art of antiquity for Europe,” and “one of the permanent achievements of the human mind.” On the other hand, she noted that even though he was given several chances to visit Greece with patrons, which was then relatively inaccessible as part of the Ottoman empire, Winckelmann repeatedly declined the opportunity. Although Winckelmann had important insights into Greek art, his reading of *The Laocoön* was dubious. Butler asked “Why he should have chosen this particular group as an example of the very qualities it lacks,” and offered as possible answers that the statue embodied “a line of demarcation between old and new,” and that “he was uttering truths which did not apply to the object before him, but were associated with it in his great mind.”<sup>11</sup> There are also more obvious reasons for Winckelmann's choice: *The Laocoön*'s superlative qualities as a work of antique sculpture, confirmed by Pliny's account of the statue as the greatest work of art of antiquity; its presumed original location in the emperor's palace; its discovery in the Renaissance and in Michelangelo's presence; and its subsequent display in a place of honor in the Vatican's *Cortile de Belvedere* or scenic courtyard, together with the *Apollo Belvedere* and *Belvedere Torso*. All these factors undoubtedly contributed to Winckelmann's focus on *The Laocoön*, although he did not address any of these dimensions, nor did they illustrate his point.

What Butler presented as a peculiar irony of intellectual history may be more accurately characterized as a function of the limitations of the modern discipline of art history at its origins. The autodidact Winckelmann had limited knowledge about and access to works in private collections in Rome, and made fundamental errors about their dating, including which works were Greek and which Roman.<sup>12</sup> He was not focused on details, tended to get carried away with his own rhetoric, and was easily fooled by his friend Anton Mengs' fake—a fresco of *Jupiter visited*

by *Ganymede*—which was admittedly composed with Winckelmann’s homoerotic proclivities in mind.<sup>13</sup> All this hardly constitutes legitimate criticism of an individual who first envisioned the possibility of what later became several scholarly disciplines, including art history, archaeology, historical aesthetics, and profoundly influenced major figures of German letters and culture. What was begun by Winckelmann, a giant in the interpretation of culture, was later taken up by armies of scholars who would fill in empirical particulars, yet were often remote in outlook from Winckelmann’s preoccupations with larger questions of beauty and concrete emotional states.<sup>14</sup>

Winckelmann’s impact was greatly magnified by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s equally famous polemical response in his *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* published in 1766.<sup>15</sup> Lessing did not contest Winckelmann’s contention that Laocoön’s ostensibly stoic expression of pain represented the “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” of Greek art. Instead, Lessing took issue with Winckelmann’s comparison of the statue with Sophocles’ Philoctetes, a Greek participant in the Trojan war who was wounded by a snake-bite on an island, and the implication that Virgil’s account of the priest screaming was somehow deficient. The Greeks were not afraid to portray figures screaming, as many literary examples show, and as Sophocles’ lost play *Laocoön* undoubtedly would have done, had it survived. Nor was crying inconsistent with a noble soul. According to Lessing, Winckelmann simply did not recognize the reason for the sculpted Laocoön’s restraint: the limits of the visual arts as a spatial medium, as opposed to literature as a temporal one. Visual art can only depict an instant ekphrastically, and strives to depict the beautiful and therefore cannot show a figure screaming, whereas plays and poems represent extended narratives and encompass all of reality.<sup>16</sup>

Such comparison and competition [*paragone*] among artistic media was a popular theme in the Renaissance. Yet Lessing took up the contest as a new polemic, opposed to neoclassical aesthetics and the conventional Horatian dictum *ut pictura poesis* [“as painting, so poetry,” relating the two media], which he believed detrimental to both painting and poetry or playwriting, the latter his special concern.<sup>17</sup> Lessing’s efforts corresponded to a broader turn in German letters away from the hegemony of classical ideals based on French thinkers and towards alternative modern German priorities of the time. Although these tendencies were later associated specifically with Romanticism, Lessing’s argument nevertheless proceeds against the background, established by Winckelmann, of classical antiquity as a standard or benchmark. Lessing was accordingly also more interested than Winckelmann in the relation between *The Laocoön* and Virgil’s account of the same episode, and discussed the possible priority of either version, or their derivation from a common earlier precedent.<sup>18</sup> Butler noted that Lessing preferred a plaster cast of *The Laocoön*, neglected to visit the original on his own Italian journey in 1775, and likewise did not travel to Greece when given the opportunity.<sup>19</sup> Lessing was in fact less concerned with this sculpture or Greek visual arts than with Winckelmann’s ideas in his essay as an opportunity to address the limitations of different media.<sup>20</sup>

By this point, the discourse among German writers around *The Laocoön* had taken on a life of its own, independent of *The Laocoön* itself, as it perhaps had been to some degree from the outset. Johann Gottfried Herder wrote a poem, *Laocoön’s Head*, in 1769, and his pioneering literary criticism countered Winckelmann and Lessing’s preoccupation with beauty and classical antiquity by emphasizing “sublime” native German and Northern European literary precedents, particularly folk-tales and myths. Herder’s discussion built partly on Lessing’s polemics against neo-classicism, yet he also defended Winckelmann against Lessing, and distinguished in his 1778 essay *Plastik* between painting and sculpture, as Leonardo and others had done. Herder further introduced a new dimension in the *paragone* between Germany and Greece when he emphasized,

beyond visual art and poetry, the importance of myth. For Herder, myths were not important primarily as religious truths for the ancient Greeks or some kind of sacred relic, but rather the basis for new artistic creations.<sup>21</sup>

Herder and the young Goethe met in Strasbourg, and Herder's initiatives profoundly impressed Goethe. The young Goethe gave the strongest impetus to the turn toward German language, history, and culture in the *Sturm und Drang* and Romantic movements, overthrowing the dominance of French neo-classicism. Yet he was also preoccupied early on with classical antiquity, as evident from works such as his *Tasso* and *Iphigenia in Taurus*, later performed at the Weimar court theatre with Goethe himself playing the male lead.<sup>22</sup> Goethe's concern with classicism is reasonably associated partly with his position at court and elitist political outlook. Yet he also abandoned the court to go on his Italian journey, where Italy and classical antiquity were associated in his mind with the free artist, rather than the worldly man of power, issues he continued to work through in his *Tasso*. Upon his return to Weimar, Goethe eventually joined forces with Schiller, and the two were profoundly concerned with the model of classical antiquity as a Golden Age, in forging what has since come to be known as 'Weimar Classicism.'

Goethe first encountered plaster casts of antique statues including *The Laocoön*, which impressed him most of all, in Mannheim in 1769, and he wrote an essay on the sculpture for the journal he edited with Schiller, *Propyläen*, in 1798. Goethe correctly recognized that the priest Laocoön could not cry out because he was struggling against the snake and explained his predecessors' errors insofar as "no genius is universal." He also moved on from the distinction between painting and sculpture to concern with the physical body in pain, the snake's bite, and the relation of fathers and sons.<sup>23</sup> Goethe had in the meantime travelled to Italy, following Winckelmann's precedent, and also wrote an essay on Winckelmann. He compared Winckelmann to Columbus before discovering the New World and claimed: "you don't learn a thing from him, but you become something."<sup>24</sup> Presumably, one became *gebildet* ["educated, "formed"] and more specifically, a classicist. Winckelmann's sense of "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur," the beautiful and harmonious, reflected in antique sculpture and poetry, remained the highest model for Goethe, which he pronounced "the healthy," whereas the Romantic was "the sick."

Goethe discovered Prometheus in Aeschylus, which he formulated in his poem *Prometheus* as a self-projection of the artist as a young genius. As such, Prometheus provided an implicit replacement for the "Rococo" Christ that Goethe had inherited as a youth and already abandoned when he met Herder in Strasbourg. He remained vocally "un-Christian" throughout his career, and preferred antique religion and myth, whence his nickname "the great pagan." Yet particularly after Schiller's death, in the second half of his career, Goethe resigned himself to the impossibility of a return to the beauty of Greece, an outlook anticipated in several of Schiller's poems and essays. The most acute formulation of this outlook is the episode in the second half of Goethe's *Faust* when Helen disappears in Faust's arms, a metaphor for not only Goethe's relation to classical antiquity, but also his joint efforts with Schiller and Weimar classicism, and German Hellenism overall, starting with Winckelmann. The episode revealed the elusiveness of Greece for Germany. In Butler's words, "Helen, the symbol of Greek beauty, never had a real existence in this life, and never can. Winckelmann's Greece, for all its beauty, was an illusion."<sup>25</sup>

Schiller pursued a classical ideal in relation to his progressive social and moral ideas, and was in many ways more of a "pure" classicist than his collaborator Goethe.<sup>26</sup> It was Schiller who first articulated the conception of Elysium as a golden age and place of untroubled bliss: it is no accident that Beethoven adopted the lyric of Schiller's *Ode to Joy* from the final version of 1803 for the conclusion of his *Ninth Symphony*: "Joy, thou beauteous godly lightning,/ Daughter of

Elysium,/ Fire drunken we are ent'ring,/ Heavenly, thy holy home!"<sup>27</sup> This example vividly illustrates Butler's *aperçu* that many of Schiller's poems were valued less for their content than as a "magnificent orchestration of sound."<sup>28</sup> Hence their suitability for Beethoven's purposes.

Even more than Goethe, Schiller embraced Winckelmann's concept of the dignity and grace of classical antiquity, the law of restraint in the portrayal of suffering for the sake of beauty, which Lessing had restricted to the fine arts, yet Schiller extended to tragedy and poetry. He responded to *The Laocoön* in his poem *On the Pathetic* from 1793, in which he agreed with Lessing's premises, yet went on to explore the topic of the pathetic.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps Schiller's crowning effort, his second revised edition of his poem *The Gods of Greece* of 1795, from which he eliminated references to Christianity, achieved an "infinite and unattainable ideal" and "flung open the door to the gods of Greece," who thereafter "passed back into German literature."<sup>30</sup> Schiller's poem was both an affirmation and a challenge to his own society, and a tragic admission that Greek art and culture was something of the past:

Well might each heart be happy in that day—  
For gods, the happy ones, were kin to man!  
The beautiful alone the holy there!  
No pleasure shamed the gods of that young race...

The meadows mourn for the old hallowing life;  
Vainly we search the earth of gods bereft;  
Where once the warm and living shapes were rife,  
Shadows alone are left!<sup>31</sup>

It is difficult to extricate Schiller's elegiac vision of ancient Greece and vanished gods from his devastating illness that consumed the last years of his life, and which he defied with Herculean discipline and productivity, as a kind of walking dead man, laboring to achieve his ideal.

In his essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* of 1796, Schiller accepted the underlying antithesis between paganism and Christianity, and claimed that "we moderns must really resign ourselves to the impossibility of ever again re-establishing Greek art, because the philosophical genius of [our] age and modern art altogether are unfavorable to poetry."<sup>32</sup> Yet he nevertheless proclaimed the superiority of the moderns over the Greeks, exalting Goethe's play *Iphigenia* at the expense of Euripides' version, which implicitly meant that Schiller was close behind Goethe in challenging the ancients. Schiller sought to resolve the disparity between himself and Goethe, like that between himself and Greece, by means of his distinction, the naïve corresponding to Goethe and the Greeks, and the sentimental to Schiller and Romantic poetry. Yet the distinction was not as solid as Schiller liked to think, since both the Greeks and Goethe comprised tendencies toward the sublime.<sup>33</sup>

A strange corollary of the dialectic between Schiller and Goethe, and between Goethe and Heine, is found in the work of the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin.<sup>34</sup> Hölderlin attended seminary in Tübingen with both G. W. F. Hegel and Friedrich Schelling, but neither philosopher was able to help their poet friend, who was working as a tutor and in love with his employer's French wife. He suffered a mental collapse into schizophrenia in 1805 at the age of thirty-five, living on in a tower in Tübingen for four more decades until age seventy-three. Hölderlin's most important poems were not collected until after his death in 1846. Practically unknown in his own time, he was discovered in the twentieth century, although as an important exception Nietzsche

knew and revered his work. The philosopher Martin Heidegger later shared Hölderlin's obsession with the purity of Greek origins. Hölderlin was also obsessed with Schiller's poetry, and closely followed his themes, rhythms, and techniques, yet refused to accept that ancient Greece was an unattainable ideal. What was for Schiller an elegy, a dream of glory that was past, became in Hölderlin a tragedy, or in his own word, borrowed by Butler, a tyranny, which tormented him and likely contributed to his mental collapse, insofar as he could never realize the beauty of Greece of his ideal.<sup>35</sup> Hölderlin sent his poems to both Schiller and Goethe, but Schiller may have considered Hölderlin a little too close for comfort, whereas Goethe did not understand him and was little inclined to help the numerous supplicants for his support.

Hölderlin felt compelled to construct a bridge over the yawning gulf between paganism and Christianity, and did so in his poem *Bread and Wine*. Dionysus was sent to earth to prophesy the departure of the gods, who left behind them the gifts of bread and wine as a pledge that one day they would return. The sacramental bread and wine fuse Dionysus and Christ as one. Dionysus-Christ is a minor god, "the last god on earth, the sunset radiance shed by the glory of the departing gods, a mediator between the deities and humanity."<sup>36</sup> The promise of Winckelmann's vision of ancient Greek "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" may have been realized in its purest form in Hölderlin's poems. One can also already detect in Winckelmann a form of tyranny, the elusiveness of an unattainable standard of beauty and excellence, that culminated in Hölderlin's poetry, and his madness. Hölderlin not only embodied an end to this tradition, but also lead beyond, to Nietzsche, who signed his *Ecce Homo* as "Dionysus/ the Crucified," and less obviously to Heine, who in his doubling of Goethe uncannily doubled Hölderlin's doubling of Schiller.<sup>37</sup> In Butler's account, Heine took up where Hölderlin left off, transforming Dionysus from a minor, transitional figure, to the leader, who displaced Apollo or Jupiter, so that Heine up-ended German Hellenism and "razed Mount Olympus to the ground."<sup>38</sup>

Unlike Hölderlin, Heine also returned to *The Laocoön* as a motif in a poem from 1821:

Now come and embrace me sweetly,/ You beautiful bundle of charms;  
Entwine me supply, fealty,/ With body and feet and arms  
She has coiled and twisted round me./ Her beautiful sinuous shape—  
Me, the most blest of Laocoöns,/ She, the most wonderful snake.<sup>39</sup>

Heine characteristically replaced tragedy by comedy or farce, his own formula that his friend Karl Marx made famous, and just as characteristically collapsed the genres of Hellenism or critical writing about classical antiquity with his own peculiarly ironic brand of love poetry.

Winckelmann's "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" was thereby undone, made common, convoluted, and loudly ridiculous. In Heine's poem, suffering was transformed into pleasure, which was arguably the point of the sculpture in the first place, and possibly at work in the pleasure Winckelmann took in describing the figure's physical torment. Heine echoed Pliny's reference to the serpents' "marvelous folds," now compared to a woman's sinuous curves. In this way, Heine may have come closer to an accurate account of the statue than any of his German Hellenist predecessors, although that was a relatively low bar since they projected so much onto *The Laocoön*, and Heine did not discuss the actual statue at all.

As Butler emphasized, Winckelmann, Lessing, and Herder all ignored particulars of *The Laocoön*. Butler was eager to point out these *Laocoön-lacuna*, yet did not fill in the gaps in her own text. The reason is easily explained: despite her wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of literary texts, Butler was less concerned with the visual arts. The reproductions of *The*



*Laocoön*, along with portraits of Winckelmann, Goethe, and Stefan George in later editions of her book were the initiative of subsequent editors, whereas her first readers had no images and could not check for themselves whether the remarks of Winckelmann and company pertained to the visual evidence of the statue in question or not. Butler's problem to some degree echoed that of the German Hellenists, who with the exception of Goethe concentrated on texts, despite their visits to collections in and out of Italy.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever its place in Western or global art, which is very much open to debate, and difficult to extricate from German Hellenist discourse, *The Laocoön* cannot accurately be said to exemplify "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur," nor is it necessarily even "Greek." Michelangelo and other artists were already obsessed with the statue several centuries before Winckelmann, yet they approached it primarily as a challenge for their own visions as Renaissance and Baroque artists—in whom Winckelmann was not particularly interested.<sup>41</sup> Michelangelo was also first to recognize that Pliny was mistaken about *The Laocoön* being carved from a single piece of marble, unless he saw some other version, which is unlikely.<sup>42</sup> The group includes a piece of marble at the back from the Luna quarry opened under Augustus, and was therefore most likely a copy or variant from that time. After the discovery in the 1950's of statues with similar content and form in a grotto-cave in Sperlonga, south of Rome (Fig. 2), signed by Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, the three Rhodian sculptors mentioned by Pliny, *The Laocoön* was recognized as cut by the same chisels. These early imperial Roman sculptures, illustrating motifs from Greek literature, were most likely made for the emperor Tiberius and appear to have been based on lost Hellenistic originals. Roman culture was in many regards founded on Greek precedents, just as Virgil emulated Homer.<sup>43</sup> The original context of sculptures like the Sperlonga group indicate a spectacular piling on of physical and emotional effects, suited to the circumstances and tastes of emperors such as Tiberius.

Another key issue involves *The Laocoön*'s various restorations, or rather reconstructions, the physical analogues of attempts by scholars to interpret the statue's significance. In the first restoration, the form of the statue that Winckelmann and German Hellenists knew, Laocoön's right arm extended straight out on the diagonal to the left, mirroring his left foot extended straight out to the right (Fig. 1).<sup>44</sup> This version was more heroic and approached the group as a relief-like whole, reflecting a pictorial strategy, possibly influenced by paintings. The likely mistaken outstretched arm would have reinforced or could even have inspired Winckelmann's conception of the figure's stoic resistance, accepted by Lessing. In Baccio Bandinelli's second restoration and replica now in Florence from 1525, the right arm was extended straight up. The third, current restoration by Filippo Magi from the late 1950's has the priest's right arm bent back (Fig. 1a), based on an arm found near the discovery site, the comparable Sperlonga sculptures, and what the historian of Roman art Richard Brilliant called a more "Catholic" attitude toward Greek and Roman art.<sup>45</sup> This version is more three-dimensional, more plausibly for a marble sculpture of this type, and closer to realistic description, as opposed to a beautiful abstraction, the inverse of Lessing's polemic. Laocoön is not screaming, but rather with his arm bent-back concentrates all his effort on fighting off the snake.

A consensus accordingly developed by the 1960's that the original sculpture should be dated to the second to first century BC, and was characteristic of the "distinctive melodramatic manner" of the Rhodian school, derived from what is called the "Pergamene Baroque" from Pergamon on Asia Minor. The works commissioned in the second century BC by tyrants of the Attalid dynasty, successors to one of the generals of Alexander the Great who divided his empire, emphasized wildly expressive and dramatic poses and gestures, the very opposite of the qualities

invoked by Winckelmann and his successors.<sup>46</sup> Eventually, the fortunes of the Vatican sculpture declined in the early Twentieth Century as a result of what was seen as the lower status of the circumstances of its production, and as a reaction against its previous canonical fame.<sup>47</sup>

Our word “culture” is derived from the Latin *cultura*, associated with cultivation, as of fruits in a garden. The Romans were renowned for their eclectic borrowing of whatever they found most useful from diverse peoples and traditions. They also adapted the precedent of Hellenism from the period before Rome, when Alexander the Great had spread Greek language, learning, and customs to diverse communities throughout the Mediterranean and near east as far as India. Pliny’s reference to sculptors from Rhodes, the Greek island closest to Asia minor, evokes this broader Hellenistic context. The Greeks and those living in the subsequent Hellenistic period never referred to a specifically “Greek” culture, so much as civilized practices and peoples as opposed to those of Barbarians, an outlook still echoed among the German Hellenists. *The Laocoön* was accordingly situated at the center of several nesting abysses, of what we call Greek culture and its subsequent receptions, the world-historical *translatio* from Greek-Hellenic to Latin civilization, followed by an equivalent *translatio* in the Italian Renaissance, and then the German reception of classical antiquity, from Winckelmann through Heine to Nietzsche.<sup>48</sup>

The reception of *The Laocoön* among German Hellenists reveals above all a remarkable case of projection (Fig. 1). The statue is actually closer to “spectacular complexity and loud theatricality.” The Trojan priest does not exhibit any apparent “restraint,” the conception is not particularly characteristic of Greek art but rather a late Hellenistic example, and does not necessarily manifest specific limitations of the visual arts. The sculpture does not appear to be based on Virgil’s narrative, although the politically charged foundation myth of Rome underscores the subject’s relevance. The conception also relates to contemporary Roman concern with the representation of pain, among other places, in Petronius’ *Satyricon*, Stoic moralizing about the demands of fate, Senecan tragedy, and the concept of enduring pain as manliness [*virtutis*].<sup>49</sup> Neither Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, nor Goethe were interested in the content of the sculpture in this straightforward historical sense. Lessing recognized its relatively late, i.e. Roman date, yet that did stand in his way of adopting Winckelmann’s general account of *The Laocoön* as an embodiment of his Greek ideal, even though Lessing rejected Winckelmann’s specific explanation for how and why it did so.

Like Butler, Richard Brilliant asked how Winckelmann and his successors in his wake could have so grossly misrepresented *The Laocoön*, and likewise offered several possible answers. Winckelmann approached these works primarily as individual masterpieces; his historical markers were dubious; he did not want *The Laocoön* to be ranked lower; he was invested in “Stoic self-control” and “the classical resolution of a momentary tension of body and mind in a steadfast soul.”<sup>50</sup> Brilliant further glossed German Hellenists’ readings as “an early instance the triumph of text, when interpretations held sway, increasingly detached from the interpreted object” and “the more recent phenomena of criticism replacing art as the center of aesthetic interest.”<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, all this was predicated on Winckelmann who, it should be noted, recognized in his *History of Ancient Art* how

much more difficult... is the knowledge of art in the works of the ancients, in which we are continually making discoveries, even after looking at them a hundred times. Most persons, nevertheless, think that this knowledge is to be obtained in the same way as they get theirs who gather their erudition from monthly periodicals... in this *history of art*, I have exerted myself to discover the truth.<sup>52</sup>

Despite his ideal, Winckelmann was perhaps more of a tortured, tragic soul, akin to the suffering Laocoön, wrestling with and ensnared by a supposedly classical tradition as a result of his own efforts. The same could be said of Lessing, whereas Goethe, an undeniable embodiment through his calm confidence of “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” in his person, sublimated his “Dionysian” feelings in artistic creations such as *Götz*, *Werther*, and *Faust*, all struggling, suffering, Laocoön-like figures.<sup>53</sup> Heine was the most Laocoön-like of all, not in relation to classical antiquity, which he approached with humor, distance, and irony, but in his underlying struggle with his German and Jewish identity. These circumstances are directly relevant to what Butler called Heine’s up-ending of German Hellenist tradition, since he can be seen as shifting from the projection of an Apollonian outlook to a different Dionysian one, in relation not only to *The Laocoön*, but also to ancient Greek culture generally.

#### B. Heine and Classical Antiquity

Heine’s attitude toward classical antiquity is difficult to separate from his attitude toward all other topics in his writings and aspects of his life circumstances. Scholars nevertheless routinely delimit and separate categories of investigation, in part because these lend themselves more easily, if not necessarily more productively, to academic study. By contrast, Butler’s text embedded diverse aspects of Heine’s concerns within his relation to classical antiquity and the broader history of German Hellenism and theorized these connections:

It might be said of Greek art, Greek poetry and the gods of Greece that Winckelmann unearthed them, and that Lessing and Herder revived them. And there, more or less, the matter remained until the appearance of Heine. For what Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin did and suffered for Winckelmann’s Greece is a much more important factor in their lives and works than what they made of his golden age, which they recreated, idealized or spiritualized but never radically altered.

The reverse is true of Heine. This most impressionable of men could never be fundamentally modified by any one influence because he was open to all. On the contrary, partly because he was destructive, partly because he was highly original and imaginative, he changed every subject he touched upon, and the Greeks were no exception. He altered the current notions about them entirely. He deprived the Olympian shibboleth “noble simplicity and serene greatness” of its power by interpreting it to mean lifelessness and rigidity.<sup>54</sup>

This passage is characteristic of Butler’s writing, which is exceptional in its original insights, bird’s eye-view summaries, and spectacular conclusions, yet is reductive. She succinctly conveyed how Winckelmann laid the foundations for a tradition of German Hellenism encompassing Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin, which Heine transformed. Yet Winckelmann did not actually unearth Greek art, Greek poetry, and the gods of Greece, nor did Lessing and Herder “revive” them. Rather, these German humanists reconsidered their significance in new ways. One could claim, as Butler did, that Winckelmann’s efforts ultimately led to those of the archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann, so that German words inspired German actions.<sup>55</sup> The trajectory of German Hellenism was thus encompassed by another, larger arc leading from a Roman farmer’s accidental discovery of *The Laocoön* in the ground in 1506 to Schliemann’s deliberate excavations of the lost city of Troy, where the story of Laocoön took

place, in 1871, a century after Winckelmann wrote. Schliemann also went on to dismantle the medieval buildings built around the Parthenon, so that archaeology came full circle to influence the field of art history and aesthetics that gave rise to it.

Butler also explained Heine's exceptional outlook insofar as according to her he was precisely *less* invested in classical antiquity than the German Hellenists, who could not take distance from and were *tyrannized* by a Greek ideal. By maintaining his distance, Heine was able to approach classical antiquity in an original way. Yet Butler unfairly claimed that Heine reduced "noble simplicity and serene greatness" to lifelessness and rigidity. Although he made references to "cold statues" as a way to indicate, among other things, the sterility of neo-classicism, Heine shared this outlook with the German Hellenists. They had sought to displace French neo-classicism, for which the model was Roman art and culture, with a more concrete, organic, and vivid relationship to ancient Greece. Heine's remarks were certainly not directed at Winckelmann, whom he never mentioned in his writings. In his poem on *The Laocoön*, he proceeded in the opposite manner, bringing the sculpture to life through a levelling humor, seeing in its predicament everyday complexity and engaging realism characteristic of his own vision. Most importantly, Heine derived from classical antiquity and ancient Greece a diverse group of ideas and qualities, closer to a living culture with real and imperfect human beings, rather than idealized projections or petrified remains in museums.

Heine took greater distance than his predecessors among the German Hellenists, although this was not solely a function of his peculiar character. He was also the last in the group, and belonged to a different generation, born on the cusp of the nineteenth century, and the only one to live into its second half. Heine accordingly had a different type of education than his predecessors, or to use the German word, was differently shaped [*gebildet*]. Educated under the more liberal regime of Napoleon's Rhineland occupation, Heine was more at home with French than Latin or Greek, and was not a Hellenist. His predecessors were ostensibly reacting to ancient Greece, whereas he was reacting to German Hellenists.<sup>56</sup> As a result, he was more realistic about what was at stake: an imagined connection, a tyranny in the mind, rather than an actual relationship between two cultures.

Heine's relation to classical antiquity was accordingly less dogmatic, deferential, or emulative, and also less exclusive, monogamous, or static. According to Butler, Heine's "classical allusions are innumerable; they recur constantly throughout his work, generally with some original twist of his own, and nearly always in juxtaposition, comparison or contrast with Jewish, Christian or even Eastern mythology."<sup>57</sup> We might therefore say that Heine was multi-cultural or a cultural relativist, closer in outlook to Herder. As Butler observed, both Herder and Heine "experienced Greece relatively," whereas "the golden age of Greece for Winckelmann, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin had stood for something eternal, perfect and beyond the ravages of time, whether they placed it in the past, the present or the future."<sup>58</sup> Herder was a confessed cultural relativist, who had inaugurated the Germans' interest in their own myths and folk tales, central to Romanticism. Heine went a step further, combining conflicting cultural references in a single perspective, including broader synthetic schemes, as with his dichotomy of sensualism and spiritualism associated with pagan antiquity and Christianity, respectively, in his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*.

Already in his early poem, *The Gods of Greece*, from his *Book of Songs* from 1827, Heine took up the elegiac tone of Schiller's poem of the same name, echoed more tragically by Hölderlin, and made witheringly pitiful in Heine's concretely naturalistic vision:

... These are the gods of Hellas, the gods themselves,  
Who once so joyously ruled the world,  
But now, displaced and departed,  
Ride like giant specters  
Through the heavens of midnight.

... Those were the better days, O Zeus,  
When you took your heavenly delight  
With striplings and nymphs and hecatombs;  
But not even the gods do not rule forever,

... I have never loved you, you ancient gods!  
For the Greeks are repulsive to me,  
And even the Romans are hateful.

... And when I consider how craven and hollow  
The gods are that conquered you,  
The new, sad gods that rule in your places,  
That gloat over woe, in sheep's clothing of meekness—  
Oh, then black rancor seizes my soul.<sup>59</sup>

Heine characteristically uses the Greek gods as an occasion to bash the new 'sad' gods of Judaism and Christianity: his invocation of rancor looks forward to Nietzsche. Yet the Greek gods do not come off unscathed. Eternity itself is relative, or subject to time.

Among the German Hellenists, Heine was concerned above all with Goethe, called "the great pagan" by his contemporaries including Heine. Butler traced the origin of this dynamic to Heine's visit to Goethe in Weimar on October 2, 1824, where he was "rather coldly received, perhaps even curtly dismissed." Initially he pretended, to others and to himself, that nothing had happened. Yet he gradually began to express criticism and bitterness toward Goethe, particularly as a means to define his own outlook:

it was a tragedy for the aspiring young poet; but it enlarged his vision. He had stood face to face with an Olympian god, an experience he was never to forget, and now he knew what the gods of Homer were like... Olympianism had rejected him [... Yet he] certainly profited by the lesson.<sup>60</sup>

With her term "Olympianism," Butler combined Goethe's implicit rejection of Heine, Heine's failure to adopt classical antiquity as a standard, and the more general issue of Heine's status, his ambiguous place on or off Olympus as part of a canon of giants. In truth, we cannot be certain what happened between Heine and Goethe, let alone interpret their meeting as the cause for Heine's relation to classical antiquity. Yet if we substitute for Butler's definitive "rejection" a less certain "non-recognition" or "not-belonging," we can agree that Heine's attitude toward antiquity was intertwined with his relation to Goethe and sense of himself, his lacking membership in the club of German Hellenists, to which he did not want to belong. He "profited from the lesson" in the sense that he self-consciously articulated these circumstances, and turned potential weakness into a strength.

Heine was not simply different in character, from a later generation, and less invested in ancient Greece, but also had ambiguous status in his own culture. His relation to Greece thus doubled his relation to Goethe. These circumstances help to explain Heine's distance from German Hellenism. Whereas Hölderlin's doubling of Schiller was deadly earnest and bound up with his mental collapse, Heine humorously parodied both Schiller and Goethe's poems and could be said to exemplify an extreme of Schiller's category of the sentimental or self-conscious poet associated with Romanticism, with the key difference that this sentimental quality was itself ironic. Heine was acutely aware of his own belated place within his tradition, which extended to himself, his own circumstances, and his poems.

Heine's relation to classical antiquity, by way of Goethe, involved a gradual process of differentiation over time. Heine's *Harz Journey*, in Butler's words, "dragged in Goethe's name at every opportunity" and was also the occasion for Heine's first recorded mythological dream, in which he confronted the *Venus de' Medici* and the *Belvedere Apollo*. Heine and classical antiquity constituted "the attraction of opposites; but it could never end in a marriage of true minds." He turned instead to the North Sea as "a timely antidote to the poison of self-distrust which his rejection by Goethe the Olympian had instilled into his veins."<sup>61</sup> Heine continued to work through his ambivalence toward the classical tradition through Goethe in his Italian Journeys. *From Munich to Genoa* made Heine's imitation of Goethe's example explicit, yet swerved in itinerary and outlook, replacing antiquity as a focus with the fraught cultural and political conditions of modern Italy.

In his *The Town of Lucca*, Heine began to juxtapose Greek and Christian gods in incongruous ways, prefigured in his early *Gods of Greece*:

So feasted they all day till the setting of the sun; nor was their soul aught stinted of the fair banquet, nor of the beauteous lyre that Apollo held, and the Muses singing alternately with sweet voice.

Then suddenly there came panting in a pale Jew, dripping with blood, a crown of thorns upon his head and a great wooden cross upon his shoulders; and he threw down the cross on to the high table of the gods, so that the golden bowls trembled, and the gods fell silent and grew pale, and became ever paler, until they finally dissolved away altogether into mist. And now a sad time followed. The happy gods were gone, and Olympus was turned into a lazaret, where gods who had been flayed, roasted and turned on the spit slunk boringly about, dressed their wounds and sang dreary songs. Religion no longer gave happiness but only consolation. It was a sorrowful, blood-stained religion for the use of delinquents.

But perhaps it was necessary for ailing and down-trodden humanity? He bears his own pains more easily who sees his god suffer too. The former sunny gods who felt no pains themselves had no notion how wretched a poor, tormented human being could feel... They were holiday-gods... And that is why they were never really whole-heartedly loved. In order to be loved whole-heartedly one must be suffering. Pity is the final consecration of love, perhaps it is love itself. Of all the gods who have ever lived Christ is therefore [by] far the most beloved. Especially by women.<sup>62</sup>

In Butler's gloss, "this remarkable passage shows that the only relationship in which Heine deigned to stand to any god was pity, which might at a pinch be reciprocal."<sup>63</sup> More accurately, he recognized the all-too-human qualities of the gods, as the ancient Greeks had done,

but within a modern, multi-cultural range, reflecting his own religious inheritance. The “pale Jew” driving the Olympians from Parnassus approximated an Hegelian view of the historical development of the gods, although one Hegel himself would have abjured.<sup>64</sup> The scheme also evokes Heine in relation to the German Hellenists. Heine proceeded “by speaking as if the gods of the various cults were all on the same footing and not mutually exclusive; or alternatively by bringing them down to his level, sometimes in sorrow, sometimes in anger, sometimes with scathing wit.” Butler went on to add: “To become the equal of the gods by aspiring upwards is *hybris*; to establish the equality by bringing them down is blasphemy,” and Heine’s works “are as full of blasphemy as a sieve is full of holes.”<sup>65</sup>

Goethe anticipated Heine’s blasphemies in his subtle mocking of Christianity in *Faust* and his *Venetian Epigrams* among other places, although he was careful to maintain his professional and social positions despite controversy and even scandal. Classical antiquity and the modern Christian era also remained separated in his oeuvre, or only briefly integrated in Faust’s encounter with Helen of Troy, which ended with her disappearance in Faust’s arms, leaving only her empty robe, evoking the evanescence of the broader encounter of Goethe and his fellow German Hellenists with antiquity. We might say that Heine focused on the empty robe itself, and its unsavory connotations, recognizing the event not as an encounter between two cultures, but the projections of a single culture. Butler claimed that “the unreal idealism of German classicism, incarnate in Goethe’s Helen, waned out utterly in the daylight of [Heine’s] common sense, his realistic representation of the Homeric gods, or his matter-of-fact treatment of the subject of homosexuality.”<sup>66</sup> In this she came closer than any other commentator to a coherent account of Heine’s evolving vision of antiquity, although she perhaps simplified the issue of homoeroticism in particular, particularly Heine’s polemics with Platen.

Homoeroticism had been an essential component of antique Greek culture, increasingly marginalized in Roman antiquity, although it was practiced by many in Roman society, notably emperors. Platen’s homoeroticism offered an implicit connection with the founder of German Hellenism, Winckelmann, who had kept his homoerotic proclivities a private matter, although they were nevertheless known. Lessing ignored this dimension of Winckelmann’s activity. Herder openly addressed homoeroticism as a determining feature of Greek life, which he deprecated, and advised against the publication of Winckelmann’s letters, which were ultimately published in 1781, although not widely read.<sup>67</sup> Goethe did not address the topic in his essay on Winckelmann or his other classically themed or inspired texts. Only Heine directly addressed the issue. In Butler’s formulation:

Heine came boldly into the open and noisily shattered what had been a rather ambiguous semi-silence. He used homosexuality not only as a stick with which to belabor Platen’s back (an action which was regrettable, to put it mildly) but also, and here he was on firmer ground, as a weapon against modern imitations of Greek literature altogether. The fundamental difference between the ancient Greeks and modern Europeans on this subject, he declared (supporting his declaration with libelous remarks and quotations from Platen’s sonnets), made relations, which had once been open, beautiful and heroic, abject, ugly, shamefaced and mean; they were no fit subject for modern poetry; any imitation of Greek literature which ignored this manifestation was one-sided; but only a Platen (no true poet and a contemptible person) would find a place for it either in literature or in life.<sup>68</sup>

On the other hand, however much it symbolized the over-idealization and artificiality of classicism or neo-classicism, the “taint” of Platen’s homoeroticism was difficult to separate from that of Heine’s Jewishness. These were opposing thrusts in their dueling polemics, and Heine himself hopelessly collapsed them in the narrative of his *Baths of Lucca*. Classicism was furthermore predicated at least partly on an indirect connection between antiquity and modern Europe mediated by the Roman Empire as a foundation for Christianity. Heine was not only not a Hellenist, he was also not, in Nietzsche’s phrase, a “mere German.” His Jewish heritage left him marginalized outside the club of German Hellenists, yet also prior to them as a part of an ancient race, contemporary with and rival to gentile antiquity, an important part of the way Heine thought of Jewish identity.

Butler admitted that Heine could be “vindictive, malignant and cruel; cowardly and even treacherous; prone to self-pity and conceit; no stranger to envy, and not above indulging in spite,” whereas at other times he could be “generous, warmhearted, kind, courageous and loyal. How are we to reconcile his quixotry with his gutter-snipe abuse?”<sup>69</sup> Butler’s word “gutter-snipe” echoes the term Goethe is supposed to have used about Heine, *Gassen-jungen* [street-boy]. Both also lend themselves to anti-Jewish substitutions, such as gutter-Jew or street-Jew. As Jefferson Chase has shown, Jews at this time including Saphir, Börne, and Heine, to which we might also add Marx, developed a concrete strategy of absorbing and thereby disarming anti-Jewish attacks in their polemics, a strategy Heine characteristically took a step further.<sup>70</sup> Just as he had regretted his baptism, he also came to regret his attacks on Platen. In Heine, we see extremes of human behavior that do not necessarily require reconciliation, but rather exemplify the conflicted, often ambivalent and inconsistent nature of humanity, akin to what Nietzsche characterized as “all-too-human.” Heine was a master of ambivalence who was also mastered by it.

Heine’s ambivalence was carried to its furthest point in his *Memorial* to and attack on Ludwig Börne. In this case the differences between Heine and his antagonist were less obvious. Börne was not a classicist, a member of the nobility, or a homosexual, but rather another assimilated and baptized liberal Jew. As with Platen, Heine sought to differentiate himself from Börne by means of underlying principles, but had to invent the new terms of “Hellenes” and “Nazarenes.” Heine’s opposition to Börne and inclination toward Goethe marked a shift in his relation to classical antiquity. He espoused this fundamental reversal, from political critique of the “art period” or “Goethe era” to aesthetic empathy and alliance with Goethe’s achievements, in explicit opposition to the strident politicization and mediocrity of literature in Heine’s time.<sup>71</sup> The shift was also part and parcel of his rejection of Romantic nationalism and Christianity, which he shared with Goethe.

On the other hand, “the great pagan” Goethe was born a Christian, sympathetic to certain aspects of a Christian outlook, and remained part of a Christian culture despite his explicit rejection of an anti-sensual and life-denying Christianity. Thus, Goethe was able to frame his great epic *Faust* with a prologue and conclusion in heaven that made him Dante’s natural heir, despite his good-natured ridicule of the Christian faith and morality. By contrast, Heine was born and remained an outsider, despite his baptism, so that both his sympathy for aspects of his Jewish heritage and its connections with Christianity and his attacks on Judaism and Christianity were more serious or scandalous. In choosing the liberation of mankind through art rather than purely political liberation, Heine nevertheless preserved religion as a vehicle of artistic ideas. In the spirit of Dante and Goethe, religion provided Heine with metaphors for understanding man. For that reason, the gods in classical antiquity remained particularly important for him.



In his earlier poems Heine had already presented Venus in relation to the medieval German myth of the knight Tannhäuser, in unexpectedly negative fashion: “Of all the devils in hell below, Venus is far the foulest.”<sup>72</sup> Wagner then adapted Heine’s idea for a Romantic, idealized purpose in his opera *Tannhäuser* in 1845. Presumably partly in reaction to Wagner’s appropriation of his ideas, Heine returned to a similar theme in his “dance-poem” *The Goddess Diana* from 1846. The occasion for this work was an invitation from Benjamin Lumley, the director of His Majesty’s Theatre in London, for Heine to write ballet scenarios. Heine was well paid, yet his works were never performed. He had been thinking for over a decade about ballet, a medium that allowed him to move in new directions, also related to Wagner’s operas; ballet played a more prominent role in the Parisian “grand Opera” tradition of Giacomo Meyerbeer, from which Wagner had learned much, before he cynically rejected Meyerbeer as mediocre and commercial in his later anti-Semitic writings.<sup>73</sup>

*The Goddess Diana* begins with Diana’s temple surrounded by nymphs. Diana informs an errant knight that “the old gods are not dead, but concealed in mountain caves and ruined temples.”<sup>74</sup> They are gradually joined on stage by Apollo and the nine muses, Dionysus and his train of revelers. Diana and the knight engage in a “*pas de deux* in which Greek and pagan divine joyousness dances a duel with German spiritual domestic virtue.” Later, at the Venusberg, the knight is killed by Eckart to save his soul, yet Dionysus revives him with wine, and they all join in a Bacchic dance together with Helen of Sparta, the Queen of Sheba, Cleopatra, Herodias, Judith, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, King Arthur, and “Wolfgang Goethe” among others.<sup>75</sup> The last figure evokes a resolution of the implicit unbridgeable gap in Goethe’s *Faust* embodied in the vanished Helen in Faust’s arms, insofar as Goethe takes his rightful place alongside Helen in an trans-historical chorus line. As a cultural relativist, Heine was able to encompass these diverse elements within the sphere of literature, set upon a stage. Goethe in a sense has been transferred from the club of Hellenists or Olympianists to the Hellenes, the sensual lovers of pleasure and art. Heine had already incorporated a Bacchic dance in the wild chase at midnight in his poem *Atta Troll* of 1843 and returned to the motif in his poem *The Gods in Exile* with a Bacchic chorus.<sup>76</sup>

*The Goddess Diana* was composed with a corollary dance-poem the following year, also for Benjamin Lumley of His Majesty’s Theatre, Heine’s *Doctor Faustus* of 1847. In his preface, Heine observes that “our great poet” Goethe got his material from a puppet show and “in literature every son has a father, whom he certainly does not always know, or whom he would even fain deny.”<sup>77</sup> If, as does Butler, we believe the account of Heine’s brother Maximilian regarding the poet’s fateful meeting with Goethe in 1824, according to which he is supposed to have claimed to have been working on his own ‘Faust,’ he finally finished it in a very different form twenty-three years later. In Heine’s version, Lucifer is a woman, Mephistophela, and they engage in *pas de deux* along with choruses of dancing girls. At the request of a duke and duchess, Faust conjures King David dancing before the ark with guards dressed as Polish Jews with caftans. Mephistophela brings forth Helen of Troy, who vanishes and reappears to dance before the temple of Venus. A terrible storm of death leaves Helen a skeleton in a white shroud. Faust flies off with Mephistophela, who has transformed herself into a horrible serpent that winds about and strangles him, in Laocoön-like fashion.<sup>78</sup>

Butler pronounced the “unambiguous message” of these late dance-poems: “Where Greek gods reign there is happiness, beauty and life. Where Christian gods hold sway is darkness and death.”<sup>79</sup> The macabre Christian mythology of death thus presented the flip side of the joyous Dionysian in Heine’s “pantheism.” Yet Heine’s pantheism was not a principle of human

psychology or sexuality but rather a formulation of his own idiosyncratic philosophy, world-view, and even literary strategy, which combined aspects of ancient Greek paganism, Germanic folk traditions, and a Spinozist rejection or transcendence of Judeo-Christian tradition. Butler recognized that Heine's attitude toward classical antiquity was inextricable from other dimensions of his outlook and career, including his rivalry and identification with Goethe, his polemics with contemporaries, his Jewish ancestry and interpretations, what we might now call his "sexual orientation" and conception of love, and political circumstances of his time. For the purposes of her study, Butler emphasized the implicit triumph of Dionysus over Apollo in late Heine as one conclusion of the German Hellenist tradition, and as a crucial precursor of Nietzsche, and thus the implicit beginning of a new, post-Hellenist tradition:

Although it remained for Nietzsche to reveal the tragic pessimism of the ancient Greeks whom Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin all in their different ways persisted in regarding as sunny, happy, naive and radiant, Heine turned the whole subject into a tragedy by considering the Greek gods, not as they were in the days of their glory, but as they became after the victory of Christ: mournful wraiths, melancholy marble statues, destructive demons, or hunted fugitives. By exploding the mine of relativity he razed Mount Olympus to the ground.<sup>80</sup>

Robert Holub offered a comparable view to Butler of Heine's relation to antiquity.<sup>81</sup> Whereas Butler erred on the side of the coherence of the trajectory of German Hellenism and Heine's evolving artistic vision as his tradition's conclusion, Holub emphasized discrete categories. He also claimed that Butler "fails to note the massive influence of Aristophanes in Heine's Hellenic leanings" and devoted a chapter to what he called "the Aristophanic tradition" in Heine's works.<sup>82</sup> In fact, Butler had observed that Heine "admired Aristophanes intensely, recognizing a kindred spirit in the comedies, and characterizing them in some half-dozen lightning phrases which left Schlegel nowhere."<sup>83</sup> Heine's contribution encompassed both Dionysus and Aristophanes, combining the mythic and the comic, high and low, ancient and modern. Heine may have been the German Aristophanes, but he was also a 'Jewish Dionysus.'

### C. Heine's late "Conversion"

A central dimension of any account of Heine's broader development and vision must include what is often called his late "conversion," ostensibly to God and religion and more specifically to Judaism, although the nature of his conversion remains something of a riddle. The most palpable evidence of Heine's "conversion" or turn toward Jews and Judaism in his poetry were his *Hebrew Melodies*, three poems concluding his poem cycle *Romancero* from 1851. Heine also made explicit remarks about his turn to God and his Jewish identity in several prose texts, including his "correction" of 1849, his "postscript to *Romancero*" from 1851, and his *Confessions* from 1854.

The development coincided with Heine's last, astoundingly productive period following his physical collapse in March 1848, resulting in his partial blindness and complete paralysis so that he was unable to move from his "mattress grave." As it turns out, the onset of Heine's physical debility took place at the same time as revolutions across Europe, which ultimately failed, yet profoundly impacted European society and culture. Germans referred to the preceding period as *Der Vormärz*, the period "before March" 1848, and we might well refer to the following period as *Der Nachmärz*, "after March" 1848. Heine's condition gradually deteriorated over the

next eight years up to his death in 1856. He left us an amusing and moving account of his condition and circumstances in his postscript to his poem-cycle *Romancero*:

...here in my mattress grave in Paris, where early and late I hear only the rattling of carriages, hammering, scolding, and strumming on the piano. A grave without repose; death without the privileges of the dead, who need not hand out money and write letters or even books—this is indeed a sad state of affairs. Long ago my measure was taken for a coffin, and also for an obituary notice, but I am dying so slowly that it is all gradually becoming as tiresome for me as for my friends. But patience—everything has an end. One fine morning you will find the booth closed where so often you were entertained by the puppet show of my humor.<sup>84</sup>

Heine's *Hebrew Melodies* comprise three long free-verse poems concluding his poem cycle *Romancero* of 1851, composed during the earliest period of his physical paralysis. Heine referred to Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness throughout his writings, including his *Baths of Lucca* and *Memoirs of Herr Schnabelowopski*, yet his only works with explicitly Jewish subjects were his unpublished early poem cited above, his late satirical poem *Donna Clara* about an anti-Jewish medieval maiden seduced by a rabbi's son in knightly disguise, his fragment of a novel *The Rabbi of Bacherach*, which he published in 1840, and his *Hebrew Melodies*. The last title was borrowed from Lord Byron's 1815 poem cycle about biblical figures and events. Heine's subject matter was entirely different, concerned with Jews and Judaism rather than the Bible, yet he admired Byron's iconoclastic, ironic, subversive attitude, including toward religion, whereas the title, as Bluma Goldstein reminded us, "highlight[s] the nexus between language and music, between the ancient Hebrew and modern languages" and suggests "a kind of textual diaspora."<sup>85</sup> As she pointed out, previous scholars explained Heine's *Hebrew Melodies* as or sought in them an "evidential source for ascertaining revisions to his religious orientation." By contrast, Goldstein saw a "poetic articulation of the connection between a new understanding of diasporic life and the construction of Jewish identity."<sup>86</sup>

Three poems make up Heine's *Hebrew Melodies*: *Princess Sabbath*, about impoverished Jews celebrating the Sabbath; *Jehuda ben Halevy*, about a medieval Sephardic poet; and *Disputation*, about a staged theological dispute in medieval Spain between rabbis and Capuchin friars. The title *Princess Sabbath* already signals a manipulation characteristic of Heine insofar as in traditional Judaism the Sabbath is referred to as the Queen, sent as bride to Israel by God the King, whereas "princess" derives from Heine's admixture of elements from *The Arabian Nights*. Goldstein's observed that Heine's mistakes regarding facts and names in Judaism in the poem are less likely a function of his ignorance or for the sake of meter, as previous commentators proposed, so much as a means to establish the poet-narrator as an outsider to Jewish religious faith. He can thereby portray "and perhaps even honor the Sabbath, but also deride certain aspects of Jewish life and ritual."<sup>87</sup>

In one of the most entertaining passages of *Princess Sabbath* and most relevant for our concerns, Heine presents a parody of Schiller's *Ode to Joy* in describing the traditional Jewish dish Sholet [*Cholent*], made of barley, beans, smoked meat, onion and paprika, and left to bake over-night as a means to avoid cooking on the Sabbath:

But this noon, as compensation,/ There shall smoke for you instead  
A repast that's truly godlike—/ noon today you'll feast on Sholet.

Sholet, lovely spark of heaven,/ daughter of Elysium!  
 Thus would sound the ode of Schiller,/ had he ever tasted Sholet.  
 Sholet is the dish of Heaven,/ whose immortal recipe  
 God himself once gave to Moses/ Long ago upon mount Sinai...  
 Sholet is the true creator's,/ Kosher banquet of ambrosia,  
 Rapture-bread of Paradise;/ And, compared with such refreshment,  
 Nothing more than Devil's filth/ are the platters of ambrosia  
 Eaten by the false Greek gods,/ who were masquerading devils.<sup>88</sup>

Here Heine stages his own theological disputation between Ancient Greeks and Jews, the false gods and true creator, extended through Schiller's *Ode to Joy* to his own competition with Weimar classicism. The passage is in jest, although bearing in mind Butler's observation that Schiller's words are compelling primarily because of their magnificent sounds rather than the particular content, Heine's effort is *apropos*. His own subject is not Judaism but rather a traditional Jewish repast, in keeping with what Yerushalmi called a "culinary Jew." As Goldstein emphasized, the poet-narrator, i.e. Heine, is an outsider to Jewish religious faith, which he both honors and mocks, in contrast to the one-sidedly distorted, sentimental accounts of Heine's "conversion" among later commentators.

The title of the second poem of Heine's *Hebrew Melodies*, *Jehuda ben Halevy*, is a poetic variation of the historical names of one of the foremost Hebrew poets, both secular and sacred: Jehuda or Judah Halevy or Jehuda ben Samuel Halevy (ca. 1075-1141).<sup>89</sup> Heine also referred to him at points as "Don Jehuda ben Halevy" to evoke the secular court poet, as opposed to one of sacred verse. Golden Age Spain embodied an ideal for nineteenth-century European Jews as a highpoint of Jewish culture in world history, including Jehuda Halevy. Heine already set his early play *Almansor* in medieval Spain, although his subject was Muslims as implicit analogy for German Jews. Goldstein interpreted Heine's *Jehuda ben Halevy* as "both articulating a critique of the disabilities of Jewish exilic life and reconstructing an historically grounded diasporic alternative." As opposed to "the 'orientalization' of Eastern European Jewry," Heine ostensibly presented a "positive Orientalism" in "the glorification of medieval Sephardi culture" encompassing "social and political equality" and "a truly integrated relationship between subdominant and dominant cultures" as an analogy for German Jews.<sup>90</sup>

Heine wrote an early essay on Polish Jews, yet Eastern European Jewry play no role in his *Hebrew Melodies*. Nor does Heine present Golden Age Spain in an unambiguously positive light; rather, as Goldstein recognized, "negative images of diasporic life and identity haunt all three poems."<sup>91</sup> There is no reason to assume that Heine longed to transcend his ambivalent German-Jewish identity, a goal more akin to Romantic idealism than Heine's ironic realism.<sup>92</sup> As with his *Princess Sabbath*, in which Halevy also figures, at stake in Heine's *Jehuda ben Halevy* is precisely secular Jewishness, the poet in exile from the Temple and the Holy Land in a diaspora context, and by extension, in Goldstein words, "the ability of an outsider, here probably a non-traditional Jew, to sing his song of the Sabbath" an issue Heine also took up through poems based on psalm 137, about the Hebrew sacred poets in exile in Babylon.<sup>93</sup> Heine's *Jehuda ben Halevy* directly addressed the relation of Halacha and Haggadah, law as "fencing-school" and stories or songs as "garden." It is only in the garden of poetry that Heine finds his Jewish identity and his own form of salvation and immortality.

Heine's last poem, *Disputation*, presents the greatest difficulties for commentators' efforts to interpret his late "conversion" in a positive, consistent sense. The theological battle or

“tournament of minds” between capuchins and rabbis was based on a historic debate in 1263 between Maimonides and friar Paulo, a baptized Jew.

That his God’s the rightful Godhead/ each of them Shall try to show,  
By reducing ad *absurdism*/ the position of his foe.  
This is certain: that whichever/ Shall at last be overthrown  
must acknowledge the religion/ Of the victor as his own.  
That the Jew with holy water/ Shall be sprinkled and baptized,  
While the Christian, vice versa,/ Shall be duly circumcised.<sup>94</sup>

Religion is reduced here, *ad absurdum*, yet arguably to its essence, to a resentful “I’m right and you’re wrong.”

The specifics of the debate are even more unpleasant, although also hilarious. Friar Joseph as leader of the capuchins utters a blood-curdling stream of invectives that match the darkest moments in the history of anti-Semitic texts, reaching back to the New Testament:

That was you—the tribe of hatred,/ Jews, who drove him to the grave—  
Always you’ve assassinated/ the Redeemer come to save  
Israelites, you are a carcass/ in whose heart the demons dwell,  
And your bodies are a barracks/ for the calvaries of Hell...  
Jews, oh Jews, you’re hogs, baboons,/ Every vile and bloody beast,  
Crocodiles, rhinoceri,/ Vampires flying to a feast.  
You are vipers, yea, and blind-worms,/ Crawling things of hate and lust,  
Rattlesnakes and poison toads,/ Christ will trample you to dust.<sup>95</sup>

The friar then claims, seemingly contradictorily, that “Love’s our God, a gentle lamb... always humble and forgiving—/ And we strive to be the same.”<sup>96</sup> He goes on to recount his fantasies of how beautiful he will look and be dressed in heaven.

The rabbis led by Judah of Navarre respond with amusing sarcasm:

This Divinity called Jesus/ is a God unknown to me  
and the Virgin, too, I never / Have been privileged to see.  
For the hardships that twelve hundred/ Years ago he may have met  
In Jerusalem, I give you/ My assurance of regret.  
Whether Hebrews caused his murder/ It is difficult to say  
Since the chief *corpus delicti*/ Three days later flew away.  
Just as doubtful is the story/ That he was our Lord’s relation,  
Since the latter had no children,/ Judging by our information.<sup>97</sup>

Rabbi Judah goes on to brag of his God’s power and vengeful nature, “a healthy God; he’s no feeble fairy-tale... like wafers—thin and pale.” They dispute more until the king asks his queen to adjudicate their battle and she replies: “they both—forgive me—stink.”<sup>98</sup>

Most commentators have registered dismay at Heine’s *Disputation*. Praver proposed that after the first two poems as “paean to the spirit of the Jewish faith,” Heine felt obligated to reaffirm “the tartness of his unsweetened imagination and the refusal of his free ranging intellect to be fettered by orthodoxies of any kind.”<sup>99</sup> Sammons glossed *Disputation* as “an attempt to

expose the vulgarity of zealous religious faith where it is not ennobled by poetic imagination.”<sup>100</sup> Goldstein objected that it is not “the ‘vulgarity’ of absolutely rigid religious positions or their articulation that is at stake in this poem, but the social and cultural conditions they represent and reproduce.”<sup>101</sup> All these explanations seek to excuse what is plainly a negative or at least ambivalent view of Judaism and religion generally, which often claims to name the true God in contrast to the false gods of others. Heine himself adopted these formulas in his *Princess Sabbath* in the parodic context of a secular “culinary Jewishness.” Heine’s *Hebrew Melodies* present a complex, ambivalent picture of Jewish identity and Judaism, with the possible exception of *Disputation*, which presents an un-ambivalently negative image of Jewish religious faith. Heine also found attractive, compelling elements in both Judaism and Christianity, or at least Christ, sometimes precisely in their absurdities.

Heine also enormously complicated the commentator’s task when he commented on his poems, his writings, and himself, as did Nietzsche in turn. Heine carried on this self-appraisal from the outset, in his self-conscious poems and prose texts, yet grew more adept at the activity over time. He is recorded as having declared in 1850: “I make no secret of my Judaism, to which I have not returned because I never left it.”<sup>102</sup> In the preface to the second German edition of his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* from 1852, he both straightforwardly and cryptically declared: “In truth, it was neither a vision, nor a seraphic revelation, nor a voice from heaven, nor any strange dream or other mystery that brought me into the way of salvation; and I owe my conversion simply to the reading of a book... The Bible.”<sup>103</sup> One of his best-known self-characterizations was his “correction” written on April 15, 1849 and printed shortly after in a Paris newspaper. Here he confessed that his illness:

has seriously undermined not only my nervous system, but my philosophy as well. At certain times, especially when the pain moves agonizingly up and down my spinal cord, I am torn by doubts as to whether man is actually a two-legged God, as the late professor Hegel assured me in Berlin five and twenty years ago. In the month of May last year I had to take to my bed, and have not gotten up from it since. In the meantime, I admit frankly, a great change has come over me. I am no longer the divine biped. I’m no longer the “freest German since Goethe,” as [Arnold] Ruge once called me in healthier days. I am no longer the great pagan no. 2 who was compared to the vine-wreathed Dionysus, while my colleague no. 1 was given the title Grandducal Weimarian Jupiter; I am no longer a zestful, somewhat corpulent Hellene smiling down on gloomy Nazarenes—I am now only a mortally ill Jew, an emaciated image of misery, an unhappy man!<sup>104</sup>

This may well be Heine’s clearest statement of his “conversion” from pagan back to Jew, although he never “converted” to paganism, nor was ever a member of a Jewish religious community. Rather, Heine was born Jewish, raised in a secular enlightened context of Napoleon’s *code civile*, and as a young adult began to confront anti-Jewish prejudice and Prussian anti-Jewish laws, and to research Jewish history and culture at the *Verein* in Berlin. He formally converted to Protestantism at the age of twenty-eight and continued to explore issues of Jewish identity in his texts, including in his polemics with Platen and Börne, themselves a complex form of disputation. In his increasing identification and alliance with Goethe, his subversive “pantheism” as a response to existing religious and philosophical viewpoints, his self-identification as Hellene as opposed to Nazarene, and his original interpretations of classical antiquity and emphasis on the Dionysian, Heine gradually adopted the mantle of paganism, partly as a convenient means to

settle scores, against the Romantics, Börne, and others. Ironically, or perhaps characteristically, his position as pagan was first and most clearly stated precisely in his “correction,” where he also ambivalently renounced that position.

No one beside Heine ever actually called him “great pagan no. 2” and he was unlikely ever compared to “the vine-crowned Dionysus,” whereas in asserting these claims Heine also took them away as “no longer” the case. In truth, Heine was never really a pagan, but always a Jew, yet never a faithful adherent of Judaism. Nor by his own account did he ever believe himself to be a god or completely embrace Hegel’s philosophy, although he adapted many of Hegel’s insights. Heine certainly varied his tactics and particularly his emphases and underwent a dynamic development over the course of his life and career. At the time of his Börne book he over-stated his “pagan” sensibility as Hellene, something he implicitly corrected in his newspapers articles against the blood libel later that year, seemingly part of an oscillating movement that is already evident in the chapters of *Ludwig Börne*. His illness after 1848 understandably transformed his outlook, or at least his self-presentation, as he makes clear in his “correction.” Yet even this statement remains ambiguously dialectical, acknowledging the impossibility of a paralyzed man assuming the position of a joyous Hellene, yet not necessarily embracing that of an ascetic, moralistic, resentful Nazarene, but rather moving somewhere between the “great pagan no. 2” and “mortally ill Jew.”

Heine’s implicit transition from ‘pagan’ back to ‘Jew’ is also reflected in descriptions of his changing physical appearance. The poet Théophile Gautier recorded that shortly after his arrival in Paris in 1831 Heine was

A fine man of 35 or 36 years with every appearance of robust health; one would have said a German Apollo to see his high white forehead, pure as a marble table, which was shadowed with great masses of brown hair. His blue eyes sparkled with light and inspiration; his round, full cheeks, graceful in contour.<sup>105</sup>

Gautier further noted “a slight pagan *embonpoint* [fleshy, plump parts], which was expatiated later on by a truly Christian emaciation,” a transformation echoed in Gautier’s painful description of Heine from a visit in 1856, the last year of his life:

Illness had attenuated, emaciated, dissected him at will, and with the unwearied patience of an artist from the Middle Ages; from the statue of a Greek god it had shaped a Christ gaunt as a skeleton, in which the nerves, the tendons, and the veins were revealed. Thus ravaged, he was still beautiful. When he raised his heavy eyelid a flash shot from his half-blinded pupil. Genius resuscitated this dead face. Lazarus came forth from his grave for a few minutes.<sup>106</sup>

Another watershed in Heine’s self-descriptions was his postscript to *Romancero* that appeared two years later in 1851. He had one copy printed without the postscript for his mother, from whom he had hidden any knowledge of his illness. Here he observed that he had wanted to include his *Doctor Faust* in *Romancero* but decided against it

in order not to break the unity of mood that holds sway in *Romancero* and gives it its coloration. In point of fact I wrote this dance-poem in 1847, at a time when the bad state of my health had already advanced to a serious degree but had not yet cast its grim shadow

over my spirit. At that time I still had flesh on me and some paganism in me, and I had not yet emaciated down to a spiritual skeleton now awaiting its final dissolution. But do I still really exist?<sup>107</sup>

Heine's account anticipated Gautier's description of a fleshy, rosy-cheeked pagan poet who first arrived in Paris in 1831 and the Christ-like figure at the end of his life after 1848. The last question further recalled Heine's early letter in which, after having a French-speaking Spinoza call into question whether God exists, Heine asked whether we exist. For with or without God, we are not gods ourselves. Heine's editorial decision further suggests a distinction in the chronology of his oeuvre between the "Dionysian" *Goddess Diana* and *Doctor Faust* of 1846-7 and the "Jewish" works composed during his illness from 1848 onward.

As regards his conversion, Heine's postscript informs us

When one lies in one's deathbed, one becomes very sentimental and softhearted, and would like to make peace with God and the world... Poems that contain any sort of offensive remarks against the dear Lord I consigned to the flames of anxious zeal. It is better for the verses to burn the verse maker. Yes, I have made peace with the Creator as with his creatures, to the great chagrin of my enlightened friends who reproached me for this relapse into the old superstition, as they liked to call my return to God... I have returned to the old superstition, to a personal God... But I must expressly deny the rumor that has me returning in the door of any church whatever or indeed to its bosom. No, my religious convictions and views have remained free from any attachment to a church.<sup>108</sup>

We might ask how Heine's viewed his own illness in relation to Goethe's pronouncement that the classical was "the healthy" and Romanticism "the sick." Illness as a metaphor for cultural malaise and even of literature itself, as in Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, likewise comes to mind. Furthermore, what exactly did a return to a personal God without a church mean, particularly for a poet of Jewish background who had formally converted to Protestantism yet since then also repeatedly attacked both Christianity and Judaism? Heine was exercising his right as ageing, sick, "poor Jew" to contradict himself. He was a church of one, and believed in himself, of which his "personal God" was an extension.

As regards classical antiquity, Heine tells of his last visit to the Louvre, a justly famous anecdote that changes how we see a world-historical sculpture, a corollary to *The Laocoön*, and also indicates that the transition from pagan or Dionysian to Jew was over-determined by factors of mobility, from the outside world to the interior or interiority of the mattress grave:

I have forsworn nothing, not even my old pagan gods: To be sure, I have turned away from them, but we parted with love and friendship. It was in May 1848, on the day I went out for the last time, that I said goodbye to the gracious idols I worshipped in more fortunate times. I dragged myself to the Louvre only with great effort, and I almost broke down altogether when I entered the lofty hall where the blessed goddess of beauty, Our Lady of Milo [the Venus de Milo], stands on a pedestal. I lay at her feet for a long time, and I wept so hard that I must have moved a stone to pity. The goddess also gazed down on me with compassion, but at the same time so disconsolately as if to say: Don't you see that I have no arms and so cannot help?<sup>109</sup>



In the same year, Heine also composed his last will and *Testament* from 1851, which further “clarified” his religious position:

Although I belong to the Lutheran confession by act of baptism, I do not desire that the ministers of the church should be invited to my burial, and I would also forgo the services of any other priest at my funeral. This desire does not spring from any sort of free-thinking prejudice. Four years ago I renounced all philosophical pride and I have returned to religious ideas and sentiments. I die in the faith of one God, the eternal creator of the world, whose mercy I beseech for my immortal soul. I regret having sometimes in my writings spoken of sacred things without due reference, but I was led astray more by the spirit of my times than by my own inclinations. If I have unwittingly offended against good morals or decency, which are the true essence all the monotheistic doctrines of faith, I ask pardon God and man. I forbid that any speech be made at my grave, either in German or French.<sup>110</sup>

Heine’s phrase about dying “in the faith of one God, the eternal creator of the world, whose mercy I beseech for my immortal soul” has the ring of an oath or ritual formula that one was required to repeat rather than a personal admission. After so many outrageous, blasphemous observations—as Butler reminded us, Heine was as full of blasphemies as a sieve was full of holes—it is strange to read of his regret about possible lack of reverence or unwitting offence against good morals or decency as “the true essence all the monotheistic doctrines.” We can’t be certain of his motives, but defanging his opponents was certainly a plausible one, and in his *Testament*, addressing a funeral ceremony as the public conclusion of his life, his entire legacy was at stake. Perhaps his request for no ministers or priests at his burial required such caveats so as not to provoke more scandals associated with his free-thinking. He was particularly concerned that the event not be exploited for the sake of others’ agendas—as such occasions invariably are—including assertions about Heine’s beliefs or relation to religion and God. A similar impulse is evident in the subsequent history of scholarly attempts to interpret Heine’s thought, such as this text. Heine’s solution was therefore a double move. He made a *pro-forma* rejection of anything inappropriate, or any possible offense, and at the same time insisted on no ministers, priests or rabbis, indeed no words at all, which says a great deal about Heine’s relation to institutional religious faith, namely: none.

Even more surprising, coming from one of the most contrary individuals in history, who was nothing if not at odds with his contemporaries, is Heine’s assertion that he was “led astray” by “the spirit of his times” rather than his own inclinations. His previous texts indicate his tremendous capacity for irony, complexity, and ambivalence, and it would be entirely characteristic of his humor to say precisely the opposite of what he believed, taking his opponents’ words into his own mouth, as a way to subvert their opposition to him. He had employed similar strategies in his *Börne* book. Heine claimed that four years earlier, in 1848, he “renounced all philosophical pride” and “returned to religious ideas and sentiments,” but he had always challenged “philosophical pride,” savagely so in *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, and had always been invested in religious ideas and sentiments. He could have exaggerated his actual change in outlook, staging his “conversion” for his own purposes. His gesture was itself also an example of his contrariness, ostensibly renouncing his previous beliefs. In short, one must read between the lines, especially when the lines contradict one another or constitute an impossible construct.

Heine's *Confessions* from 1854 was the last and most thorough of his self-characterizations. Here he made explicit a central component of his new-found opposition to atheism in particular:

I saw that atheism had entered into a more and less secret compact with the most terrible, repulsive, undisguised communistic communism... That which disquiets me is the secret dread of the artist and scholar, who sees our whole modern civilization, the laboriously-achieved product of so many centuries of effort, and the fruit of the noblest works of our ancestors, jeopardized by the triumph of communism.<sup>111</sup>

This had been one of Heine's fundamental disagreements with Börne, and by extension ultimately with Marx. In opposing Börne in 1840, Heine had emphasized his own aesthetic and artistic priorities in opposition to the purely political, yet also equated Börne's outlook as "Nazarene" with religion, specifically Christianity. Now, in the wake of Marx's "On the Jewish Question" and other publications from the 1840's, as well as Wagner's anonymously published *Jewry in Music* from 1850, Heine allied his own outlook with religion and God, albeit somewhat enigmatically, and in opposition to atheism. He thereby turned both Hegel and Marx into something of straw-men as ostensible atheists who considered themselves gods.<sup>112</sup> On a personal level, Heine informed his readers that "playing the role of a god," and presumably a Hellene, required two things he no longer possessed: "money and robust health."

I am only a poor human creature, that is not overly well; yea, that is even very ill. In this pitiable condition it is a true comfort to me that there is someone in the heavens above to whom I can incessantly wail out the litany of my sufferings, especially after midnight, when my wife has sought repose that she oft so sadly needs. God be praised! in such hours I at all alone, and I can freely pray, and weep without restraint; I can pour out my whole heart before the Almighty, and confide to him some things which one is wont to conceal even from his own wife.<sup>113</sup>

Heine also affirmed once again his indifference to distinct churches and denominations in relation to misunderstandings being circulated about him and inquiries whether:

now that I am ill and in a religious frame of mind, I cling with more devotion than heretofore to the Lutheran evangelic faith, which until now I have only professed after a lukewarm, formal fashion. No, ye dear friends, in that respect no change has taken place in me, and if I continue to adhere to the evangelic faith at all, it is because now, as in the past, it does not at all inconvenience me. I will frankly avow that when I resided in Berlin, like several of my friends, I would have preferred to separate myself from the bonds of all denominations, had not the rulers there refused a residence in Prussia, and especially in Berlin, to anyone who did not profess one of the positive religions recognized by the state. As Henry IV. once laughingly said, '*Paris vaut bien une messe*' [Paris is worth (sitting through) a Mass], so I could say, with equal justice, Berlin is well worth a sermon.<sup>114</sup>

Heine claimed that "I could easily tolerate the rationalistic Christianity which was preached in some of the churches of Berlin. It was a Christianity purged of all superstition, and from which even the doctrine of the divinity of Christ had been eliminated, a Christianity without

Christ, like mock-turtle soup without turtle.”<sup>115</sup> Judaism was less hypocritical in this regard, yet presented other problems, which Heine had often rehearsed. He acknowledged that in his earlier *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* he had prized Luther’s freedom of thought leading directly to the revolution of German Idealist philosophy. “Now I chiefly honor Protestantism for its agency in rediscovering and circulating the Holy Scriptures,” which the Jews kept “carefully concealed in their ghettos.”<sup>116</sup> In his *Baths of Lucca*, Heine had characterized Protestantism as coming close “to being no religion at all.” Now he emphasized Protestantism’s return to the Bible, which was less accessible in Judaism.

Heine had always been concerned with the Bible in both his poetry and prose, but primarily as literature, rather than a means to salvation. One must distinguish in this regard between religious faith and literary vision. According to Heine, the poet “can dispense far more easily than other mortals with positive religious dogmas.”<sup>117</sup> Heine thereby anticipated Harold Bloom’s theory in *Ruin the Sacred Truths* that the great poets never adhere to church theologies but instead create their own literary religions.<sup>118</sup> One part of Heine’s motivation in presenting his “conversion” could have been to establish a foundation from which he could defend Jews against attacks, as opposed to his previous role as a notorious critic of religion. His effort reached back at least to his 1840 newspaper articles concerning the Damascus blood libel. Since that time there had been continuing anti-Jewish agitation, including Wagner’s 1850 treatise. Heine thus gave an account in his *Confessions* of religious struggles including the persecution of Jews by Christians:

Such murders, is it is true, were in those days committed under the mantle of religion, and the cry was, “we must kill those who crucified our God.” How strange! The very people who had given the world a God, and whose whole life was redolent of the worship of God, were stigmatized as deicides!<sup>119</sup>

Heine further offered reasons for easing anti-Jewish feeling on the part of Germans. “The Jewish people... have always had a great affinity with the Germans,” he proposed, contradicting several of his earlier observations. “Judea has always seemed to me a fragment of the West which has somehow gotten lost in the East.” He contrasted the “luxurious and voluptuous” nature of neighboring Near Eastern countries, with their “bacchanalian revels” and “lascivious orgies... the mere depictions which even now makes the hair stand on end,” whereas “Israel sat piously under its fig trees and chanted the praises of the invisible God, and righteousness,” effectively the contrary of his “Dionysian” approach in his *Tannhäuser* and *Doctor Faustus* and *The Goddess Diana* of 1847-8.<sup>120</sup>

An important part of Heine’s *Confessions* comprised his reflections on Moses, whom he had earlier opposed because of “my Hellenic temperament, which was repelled by Jewish asceticism.”

I see now the Greeks were only beautiful youths, but that the Jews were always men, strong, unyielding men not only in the past, but this very day, in spite of eighteen centuries of persecution and suffering... Were not all pride of ancestry a silly inconsistency in a champion of the revolution and its democratic principles, the writer of these pages would be proud that his ancestors belonged to the noble house of Israel, that he is a descendent of those martyrs gave the world a God and a system of morality, and who have fought and suffered on all the battle-fields of thought.”<sup>121</sup>

Heine had always been proud of his Jewish background, but had expressed it in curious ways, in polemics with Platen or even more complex disputes with Börne about what was at stake in being Jewish. Now, having long since clarified his position in relation to Börne, and facing more urgent threats from the outside world, he was downright strident in his Jewish pride.

After distancing himself from communism in the strongest terms, Heine also sought to establish his progressive political *bona fides* by way of the biblical figures of Moses and Christ: “No socialist was more of a terrorist than our Lord and Savior.”<sup>122</sup> When slavery was legal and flourished in neighboring countries, Israel insisted on freedom. Yet, Heine was at pains to emphasize: “Moses did not want to abolish private property. Rather, it was his wish that everyone should own some, so that no one might be forced by poverty to become a bond slave.” Moses could not completely overcome slavery in his time, “but if a slave thus eventually set free refused to depart from his master’s house, then Moses commanded that the incorrigibly servile villain be nailed by his ear to the doorpost of his master’s house.” Heine used this anecdote to weave together his love of the Bible and idiosyncratic Jewish identity, liberal politics, and opposition to a reactionary German nationalism in the form of Prussia’s authoritarian rule and its willing supplicants among the sheepish Germans:

Oh Moses, our teacher! Moshe Rabenu, august warrior against slavery, give me a hammer and nails that I may nail to the Brandenburg gate by their long years our complacent slaves in liveries of black red and gold!<sup>123</sup>

Heine’s Jewish background informed or even made possible his uniquely iconoclastic, outsider’s perspective on classical antiquity and his resistance to the tyranny of Greece over Germany. Similarly, his distinctively subversive position among German Hellenists could have informed his unique “Dionysian” approach to Jewish identity. This was an iconoclastic, non-identical, literary identity, engaging a politics of literature, embracing fundamental contradictions, and eschewing unrealistic ideals: a ‘Jewish Dionysus.’

## Epilogue Heine and Nietzsche's Fates

This study has endeavored to provide a new perspective on Heine's contribution and significance as a writer and thinker, beyond the once-beloved poet now primarily familiar through the German *Lieder* tradition, against Heine's numerous detractors, and in keeping with Heine's own self-presentation as a 'contested monument.' Heine's original ideas can be brought to the fore through his complex relation to his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors. Among the latter, Friedrich Nietzsche holds pride of place, by virtue not only of his own pre-eminent status today, but also the intimacy and insights of his engagement with Heine's thought.

Nietzsche is famous today in part as an advocate of Dionysus, a topic he first introduced in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* from 1872. Here he provocatively argued that the "Apollonian" light, reason, and clarity of the ancient Greeks was a refuge from the Dionysian dark, irrational, chaos of life. Nietzsche's book was commonly referred to in his time as "The Rebirth of Tragedy," with good reason, since he had yoked his subject to Richard Wagner's operas or "music-dramas" as a new form of tragic experience born out of the spirit of music in contemporary Germany. Nietzsche had first intended to call his book "the origins and end of tragedy" and then "tragedy and philosophy," but changed the name to "the birth of tragedy out of the spirit of music" in order to accommodate Wagner to his scheme.<sup>1</sup> The fundamental idea appears to go back to some notes sketched out by Wagner in 1849, when Nietzsche was five years old: "Birth from music: Aeschylus. Decadence—Euripides."<sup>2</sup> Wagner considered Aeschylus the creator of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* [the total work of art] that Wagner sought to re-invent, and Euripides a symptom of the decadence of ancient Greek culture, so that a rebirth of a comparable culture was necessary in Wagner's time, points re-iterated in Nietzsche's book. Such a rebirth was particularly fitting given that Dionysus' name was supposed to mean "twice born."

The goal to imitate, to recreate, or to surpass ancient Greece in Germany had been inaugurated by Winckelmann, and was taken up by Lessing and Schiller in turn, both of whom were specifically concerned with tragedy and thus important precursors of Wagner's practice and Nietzsche's theories. Lessing had further explored the competition and limits of different media, which Nietzsche expanded to include music, whereas his term "spirit" [*Geist*] recalls Hegel's dialectic. Nietzsche's scheme was therefore yet another conclusion to the broader trajectory of German Hellenism, from tyranny to tragedy, so to speak, the sought after "rebirth" equivalent to yet another belated renaissance of antiquity in the North. The peculiar "collaboration" between the composer Wagner and the classicist-philosopher Nietzsche was also the occasion for several other "births of tragedy": their inevitable public and painful break, the ruin of Nietzsche's academic career, a self-inflicted and possibly necessary wound, and ultimately the rise of Nazi Germany with some ideological foundation in Wagner's texts and ostensibly Nietzsche, a true tyranny of Germany over much of Europe including Greece. Lastly, Nietzsche's ruminations on Dionysus can be seen as a rebirth of Heine's similar reflections in a different idiom, and by extension his personal tragic-comedy.

Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* was also the occasion for one of the most famous scandals in the history of scholarship, between Nietzsche and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, a promising young classicist and fellow graduate of *Schulpforta Gymnasium* [high-school] in Naumburg. Nietzsche's radically iconoclastic debut book, and his unprecedented alliance with the simultaneously *avant-garde* and reactionary artist Wagner, were intended to provoke, and succeeded fabulously. Yet the book was also met with incomprehension and silence among classical philologists. One of Wilamowitz's mentors apparently proposed as "a joke" that he review Nietzsche's book. Wilamowitz's took up the challenge, he claimed, out of moral

indignation at Nietzsche's impudent attack on his teacher Otto Jahn, rival of Nietzsche's teacher Friedrich Ritschl, and "in defense of his threatened discipline."<sup>3</sup>

Later pronounced "the greatest Hellenist of our time," Wilamowitz characterized Nietzsche as an "ignorant charlatan" rather than a *bone fide* scholar and his text as nothing but sloppiness. Nietzsche's boyhood friend Erwin Rohde responded with a counter-attack in his defense, ostensibly in order to explain to Wagner, provoking a second round of attacks from Wilamowitz.<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche did not respond directly, but referred to his antagonist in letters as *Wilamops*, a play on his name that compared him to a pug [*mops*]. Nietzsche's reputation as a scholar was effectively destroyed, and the following semester no students enrolled for his courses. Later scholars declared Wilamowitz's criticisms "essentially correct" and in his memoirs in 1928, he maintained that "Apolline and Dionysiac are aesthetic abstractions like naïve and sentimental poetry in Schiller, and the old gods only supplied sonorous names for the contrast, in which there is some truth."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, "the greatest Hellenist" of his time was peculiarly rigid, and not even a Hellenist in the sense of Winckelmann through Hölderlin, all of whom thought of ancient Greek culture in terms of its productive impact on Germany in the present. Perhaps Wilamowitz was simply too tyrannized by Greece, or too tyrannical about what he accepted as evidence or compelling connections.

After Nietzsche's bitter disappointment at the philistine, nationalist, anti-Semitic Bayreuth festival, his world-view shifted away from Wagner as pseudo-Dionysus and the dream of Greece reborn in Germany. In his later "Attempt at Self-criticism" in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche declared that he would rather have called his first book "The Birth of Tragedy, or, Hellenism [*Griechentum*] and Pessimism," that is, *not* out of the Spirit of Music. This was an *affirmative* pessimism, "the pessimism of strength," that the ancient Greeks demanded. "It was *against* morality that my instinct turned with this questionable book so long ago" and discovered the opposite "valuation of life—purely artistic and *anti-Christian*... As a philologist... I called it *Dionysian*."<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche had moved from a Hegelian dialectic of Apollo and Dionysus to Dionysus alone and all but admitted that Dionysus was a mask for his own vision as *Antichrist*, to cite another of his books. In *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, he even revealed himself as the Anti-Wagner.

M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern have proposed that Wilamowitz's personal jealousy played the primary role in his attacks, underscored by his and Nietzsche's shared history as the two most promising students at *Schulpforta*, along with Wilamowitz's aristocratic background. Conversely, Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* was a "public affirmation" of his difference from his field. Silk and Stern acknowledged that Nietzsche's ideas of tragedy originating in Dionysus worship and the satyr chorus derived from Aristotle's *Poetics* cannot be definitely proven or disproven in relation to other theories, and that his text was "gratuitously and offensively slovenly in parts" because he did not care, and included numerous errors such as the association of Apollo with sculpture and Dionysus with music.<sup>7</sup> Nietzsche's opposition of Apollo and Dionysus derived from antiquity and had been addressed earlier by Schelling, yet Nietzsche undeniably also misrepresented many factors in order to sharpen his antithesis.

One of Silk and Stern's more ambitious claims is that "the suffering hero of Greek tragedy, Oedipus or Prometheus, is the original model for Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, and Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, accordingly, the prototype of his whole philosophy."<sup>8</sup> The authors are thus skeptical of the way Nietzsche dismissed his book "as adolescent bad taste, rather than as a set of thought-out and coherent positions."<sup>9</sup> However, there are good reasons to side with the author in this instance. A better model than the tragic Oedipus or Prometheus for Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is Nietzsche himself, in his tragic self-overcoming in relation to Wagner.<sup>10</sup>

In their encyclopedic summary of scholarship, Silk and Stern also did not address Butler or include her book in their index or bibliography, and even more remarkably included on their first page her uncited title in the phrase: “While the reasons for ‘the tyranny of Greece over Germany’ are many...”<sup>11</sup> They recognized that Nietzsche’s emphasis on earlier, sixth-century religious ideas and myth was a turn away from the rational toward the irrational, in explicit opposition to the ideal of fifth-century Athens in Winckelmann through Weimar Classicism. They further invoked Heine’s name on a few pages, yet unlike Butler, they did not examine the fundamental dynamics of the German Hellenic tradition.

In Butler’s view, “Heine had mocked at Olympianism, but had accepted it as the outstanding feature of a race which at heart he disliked,” whereas Nietzsche’s *“Birth of Tragedy”* was the first positive, unequivocal answer to Winckelmann’s conception of Greece, striking at the very root of his optimistic assumptions by denying that a people who had produced Greek tragedy could ever have been sunny and serene.”<sup>12</sup> Butler admitted that “Hölderlin, rather than Heine probably colored Nietzsche’s last thoughts about Dionysus,” yet “it was the hero of *The Gods in Exile* whom Nietzsche depicted so unforgettably in *The Birth of Tragedy*.” Butler also saw Heine’s influence on the later Nietzsche:

Heine’s conception of paganism and his poetical vision of the antithesis between Hellenism and Christianity underlie Nietzsche’s attitude to these two cultural forces, expressed finally with such venom in *Ecce Homo* and *The Anti-Christ*. Heine was quite as truly an Anti-Christ as Nietzsche.<sup>13</sup>

Butler provides one of the strongest accounts of the profound connections, and differences, between Heine and Nietzsche. Here the case has been made more particularly that Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy* was *not* inspired by Heine’s *Gods in Exile*, but rather by Wagner, as Silk and Stern re-iterated. Yet as it turns out, Wagner borrowed heavily from Heine, and in the process inverted his ideas. In turning against Wagner, Nietzsche found his way back to another, more pertinent artist, Heine. Also worth recalling in this connection is Kaufmann’s straightforwardly succinct note to Nietzsche’s “Attempt at Self-Criticism” as preface to his republished *Birth of Tragedy*:

The conception of the Dionysian in *The Birth* differs from Nietzsche’s later conception of the Dionysian. He originally introduced the term to symbolize the tendencies that found expression in the festivals of Dionysus, and contrasted the Dionysian with the Apollonian; but in his later thought the Dionysian stands for the creative employment of the passions in the affirmation of life in spite of suffering—as it were, for the synthesis of the Dionysian, as originally conceived, with the Apollonian—and it is contrasted with a Christian negation of life and extirpation of the passions. In *The Twilight of the Idols*, written in 1888, the outlook of the old Goethe can thus be called Dionysian.<sup>14</sup>

Nietzsche’s affirmation of the old Goethe as Dionysian echoes Heine’s prior affirmation of “the great pagan no. 1,” just as Nietzsche’s embrace of the Dionysian was predicated on Heine.

Nietzsche’s belated dialogues with Heine’s ideas are now much harder to recognize in part because subsequent Nietzsche scholarship moved away from concrete developments in his life and his exchanges with his contemporaries and predecessors, and toward more abstract philosophical issues. One important example is the philosopher Martin Heidegger, whose wartime

lectures on Nietzsche from 1936-46 were published in his *Nietzsche* in 1961.<sup>15</sup> Heidegger saw Nietzsche as the last and most powerful thinker of metaphysics, a corresponding book-end to Plato at the start of Western philosophy. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche's central idea was never expressed in his published writings, but rather lay in what Heidegger called Nietzsche's "un-thought." This un-thought was to be found primarily in the compilation of Nietzsche's unpublished fragments from his *Nachlass* [the materials he left behind] brought together by his sister Elizabeth as "the will to power," the last volume of his collected works.<sup>16</sup> Heidegger referred dismissively to "the so-called major work," yet felt obligated to reconstruct what Nietzsche was moving toward.<sup>17</sup> He saw Nietzsche's other primary idea as "the eternal return of the same" and saw the eternal return and the will to power as irreconcilable thoughts that correspond to Being and the attempt to go beyond Being. Heidegger further equated Nietzsche's "God is dead" with nihilism, and characterized Nietzsche's metaphysics as the ultimate entanglement in nihilism.<sup>18</sup> Heidegger presented his own philosophical project as a demolition, dismantling, or taking apart of metaphysics, which he called *Destruktion*, a de-structuring.<sup>19</sup> He thereby sought to reach beyond metaphysics to Being, which in order to mark as beyond metaphysics he wrote with the word crossed out as ~~Being~~.<sup>20</sup> After the war, Heidegger underwent a "turn" [*die Kehre*] toward art and 'poetic' language as a more direct, compelling form of thought.

Heidegger's approach to Nietzsche relates to Heidegger's own historical context insofar as he was a member of the Nazi party in the early 1930's and as Rector of the University of Freiburg advanced the process of "coordination" [*Gleichschaltung*] with the party.<sup>21</sup> He later fell out of favor with the Nazi administration and claimed to have become disillusioned with Nazism, yet the evidence is ambiguous. Even in a 1953 publication of a lecture he gave in 1935, he retained the passage referring to the "inner truth and greatness" of the Nazi movement. Recent publication of Heidegger's "black notebooks" has since confirmed his authoritarian, anti-Semitic outlooks.<sup>22</sup> As with Wagner, discussion has focused on the relevance of Heidegger's personal outlooks for his public philosophy.<sup>23</sup> Heidegger intended for his black notebooks to be published, and last of all, as if his final words, and never repudiated the Nazis in any way, as Nietzsche did German nationalism and anti-Semitism. Heidegger also never mentioned Heine. Relevant in this connection is Butler's proposed explanation for the oversight of previous Nietzsche scholars regarding Heine that they "would prefer that one of their greatest men of genius had not been so deeply influenced by a Jew."<sup>24</sup> Conversely, Heine's oppositional and outsider position, and his defiance of genre boundaries, or politics of literature, made him easier to avoid. Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche is in any case more accurately characterized as reflecting Heidegger's own concerns, so that Heidegger rather than Nietzsche was responsible for what Heidegger claimed was a failure to go beyond metaphysics and a plunge into nihilism.

A subsequent strain of Nietzsche interpretation, responding both to and against Heidegger, involved what was called "the new Nietzsche" or post-war French interpretations of the philosopher as theorist of language and power.<sup>25</sup> This "new Nietzsche" or perhaps more accurately "French Nietzsche" is now relatively old, yet remains influential in Nietzsche scholarship. Maurice Blanchot first emphasized Nietzsche's tendency toward the aphoristic, the fragmentary, and the self-contradictory in his writings as a major turning point in the history of thought.<sup>26</sup> Other French Nietzsche interpreters include Georges Bataille, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, who was both a follower and a primary contestant of Heidegger's thought.<sup>27</sup> Instead of attempting to penetrate to the essence of Nietzsche's philosophy like Heidegger, and following Blanchot instead, these commentators tended to celebrate contradictions among Nietzsche's statements and his literary sensibilities. Derrida asserted: "if there is style, Nietzsche



reminded us, it must be *plural*.”<sup>28</sup> This Nietzsche is a self-conscious, ironic, and skeptical writer, who deliberately sought to be light and capricious, with an inexhaustible capacity for play. Like the later Heidegger, Derrida presented himself as more akin in his language play to the poets and writers he admired and discussed than to previous philosophers.

As an example of a tendency toward self-contradiction, Derrida cited the final words of Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*: “Have I been understood? *Dionysus versus the Crucified*.”<sup>29</sup> According to Derrida, “Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, Christ but not Christ, nor even Dionysus, but rather *versus*, the adverse or countername, the combat called between the two names—this would suffice, would it not, to pluralize in a singular fashion the proper name and the homonymic mask?”<sup>30</sup> Derrida further claimed: “All statements, before and after, left and right, are at once possible (Nietzsche said it all, more or less) and necessarily contradictory (he said the most mutually incompatible things and said that he said them).”<sup>31</sup> However, Derrida himself offered highly specific interpretations of things Nietzsche said, which presumably would not have been possible if Nietzsche had also said precisely the opposite. Even more troubling is Derrida’s citation of an unpublished fragment included in the critical study edition of Nietzsche’s collected works: “I have forgotten my umbrella.”<sup>32</sup> In a virtuoso reading, entirely characteristic of Derrida, he was able to make the phrase carry all kinds of meanings pertinent to his broader discussion of Nietzsche, involving Heidegger and Freud, interpretation, and sexuality.<sup>33</sup>

In this instance Derrida echoed Heidegger’s strategies, both turning to unpublished texts as a manifestation of Nietzsche’s supposed essence, and interpreting his text in a manner that appears to have little to do with what Nietzsche actually said. The French commentators employed alternative strategies to Heidegger, and Derrida in particular cannot plausibly be accused of anti-Semitism.<sup>34</sup> Yet the French Nietzsche interpreters shared Heidegger’s emphasis on abstract concepts of language and truth.<sup>35</sup> As a result, they likewise tended to neglect concrete dynamics and particular individuals in Nietzsche’s life, including Heine, who moreover lacks a significant post-war reception in France. This is unfortunate, given Heine’s embrace of French thought, the enthusiastic embrace of Heine by his French contemporaries in turn, and his having lived the last quarter of his life in Paris, where he was also buried.

Following Heine, Nietzsche explicitly associated his discourse with the more spirited and playful tendency of French writing, against heavy and deliberative German philosophy. He underscored this preference by affirming the light-hearted, joyful music of the French opera composer Georges Bizet as contrasted with Wagner’s Germanic opera, following Nietzsche’s supposed self-over-coming of his enthusiasm for Wagner’s music, which was not entirely convincing.<sup>36</sup> Nietzsche also appears to have anticipated the emphasis among French Nietzsche commentators on the relativity of language in a well-known passage that characterized truth as

A mobile army of metaphors metonymies and anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins.<sup>37</sup>

Here and elsewhere Nietzsche identified language as a system that generates meaning through relations: in Derrida’s semiotic terminology, the coin is no longer recognized as a signifier, and is instead mistaken for the signified itself. Nietzsche’s playful acknowledgment of

the literary dimension of language, including the language of philosophy, looks forward to Derrida's concept of 'deconstruction,' an alternative to Heidegger's *Destruktion* that does not seek to move beyond, but rather "inhabits" the structures (e.g. language, "texts") being examined.<sup>38</sup> These ideas can be traced further back, for example, to Lessing's parable of the rings in *Nathan the Wise*, which asserts the relativity of truth in relation to different religious traditions. Notwithstanding 'the Pantheism controversy' that erupted shortly after his death, Lessing would likely have acknowledged that his ideas had roots in turn in Spinoza's radical skepticism regarding textual authority. According to Heine in his *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, Spinoza himself elaborated on the foundation of doubt laid by Luther in opposition to the Catholic Church. Were Heine writing today, he might have extended his narrative of a 'Reformation of thought' forward to encompass the likes of Nietzsche and Derrida.

Nietzsche's declaration in his *Birth of Tragedy* that "the world is only justified as an aesthetic phenomenon" could also be said to anticipate the turn toward art and aesthetics in the later Heidegger and in Derrida.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Nietzsche's "Gay Science" was a direct answer to the death of God: in God's wake, the artist gives meaning and purpose to the world. Nietzsche furthermore turned to art and aesthetics as actual poetry or opera, not philosophy imitating poetry as with his successors. He even wrote his own playful and ironic poetry, such as his aptly-titled "poems of prince Vogel-frei [free-as-a-bird]," whereas *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* can reasonably be called great literature, rather than philosophy assuming a literary in style.<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche's Zarathustra as poet-philosopher is himself implicitly an idealized self-portrait of Nietzsche. Nietzsche was therefore already thinking in aesthetic terms when he turned back to Heine. Unlike Nietzsche, Heine did not turn from philosophy to art and aesthetics, but wrote as a poet addressing philosophy. Before Nietzsche, Heine had also already announced the death of God, specifically in the context of his humorous account of the history of religion and philosophy in Germany, so that religion was already displaced by art. Heine's rejection of the Judeo-Christian tradition as Hellene in opposition to the Nazarenes was also bound up with his cultural relativist position on religion, implicitly inherited from Hegel, despite the latter's Christian rhetoric.

Twentieth century commentaries have gone to great length to establish Nietzsche as a philosopher, as opposed to a literary writer, cultural critic, philologist, poet, and so on. In the move to demonstrate Nietzsche's earnest philosophical agenda, his affinities for Heine's literary or aesthetic ideas and approach have been largely side-lined or altogether overlooked. Because of this 'politics of literature,' it has been more difficult for most academic scholars of the history of philosophy to take seriously Heine's writings on what J. P. Stern called "the German mind." In his life and career, Heine pioneered an ambivalent middle-ground between philosophy and literature, prose and poetry, politics and art. He stood as would-be liberator of humanity against reductive categories. His outrageous disregard of conventional rules constituted an essential part of his appeal to Nietzsche, who adapted these strategies in ways that may initially seem alien, yet eventually reveal themselves to be uncannily similar.

Nietzsche's central concept of "the eternal return [or recurrence] of the same," which Heidegger glossed as "Being" and opposed to "The Will to Power" as the effort to penetrate beyond Being, can in this regard be approached more productively through Heine. Nietzsche summarized his idea as "the unconditional and infinitely repeated circular course of all things," equivalent to the affirmation of or saying "yes" to all that has happened, both joyous and painful, which he called "Dionysian," precisely the opposite of Heidegger's nihilism.<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche's principle was also opposed to the *ressentiment* of Christianity against this life in favor of another, metaphysical world. Nietzsche acknowledged that his concept had possibly partly lost antecedents

among the pre-Socratic philosophers and “earlier thinkers.”<sup>42</sup> Kaufmann claimed that “not all these ‘earlier thinkers’ belong to classical antiquity, and apparently Heinrich Heine, whom Nietzsche fervently admired, was one of them,” citing Heine’s *Journey from Munich to Genoa*:

And she answered with a tender voice: “Let us be good friends.”—But what I have told you here, dear reader, that is not an event of yesterday or the day before... For time is infinite, but the things in time, the concrete bodies, are finite. They may indeed disperse into the smallest particles; but these particles, the atoms, have their determinate number, and the number of the configurations that, all of themselves, are formed out of them is also determinate. Now, however long a time may pass, according to the eternal laws governing the combinations of *this eternal play of repetition*, all configurations that have previously existed on this earth must yet meet, attract, repulse, kiss, and corrupt each other again... And thus it will happen one day that a man will be born again, just like me, and a woman will be born, just like Mary—only that it is to be hoped that the head of this man may contain a little less foolishness—and in a better land they will meet and contemplate each other a long time; and finally the woman will give her hand to the man and say with a tender voice: “Let us be good friends.”<sup>43</sup>

Heine’s repeated phrase “Let us be good friends” in the cited passage ambiguously calls to mind both ‘German love’ based on true friendship as opposed to Italian or French love involving deception and theatrical games, and the disappointments of love, when the would-be beloved prefers to be only “good friends.” Either way, Heine sees both love and its loss as part of a single phenomenon or cycle of repetition: the couple “meet, attract, repulse, kiss, and corrupt each other again.” As Kaufmann pointed out, “the details of the theory, as here stated, are as similar to Nietzsche’s later version of [the eternal return] as the playful context is dissimilar.”<sup>44</sup> Yet Kaufmann did not elaborate on this rather complex divergence.

Heine’s outlook was not limited to the prose passage identified by Kaufmann, but can also be found throughout Heine’s love poetry. Examples include some of his poems made into unsurpassable *Lieder* by among others Robert Schumann in his *Dichterliebe* [poet love], which reward listening over and over again, another kind of eternal play of repetition:

A young man loves a maiden,  
Who choseth another instead;  
this other loves still another  
And these two haply wed.

*Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen,  
die hat einen Andern erwählt;  
der Andre liebt’ eine Andre,  
und hat sich mit dieser vermählt.*

The maiden out of anger  
Marries, with no regard  
The first good man she runs into—  
The young lad takes it hard.

*Das Mädchen nimmt aus Ärger  
den ersten besten Mann  
der ihr in den Weg gelaufen;  
der Jüngling ist übel dran.*

It is so old a story  
Yet somehow always new;  
And he that has just lived it,  
It breaks his heart in two.

*Es ist eine alte Geschichte  
doch bleibt sie immer neu;  
und wem sie just passieret,  
dem bricht das Herz entzwei.*<sup>45</sup>

The story corresponds to Heine's own experience, which was over-determined insofar as his life and poetic conception were mutually influenced by and reinforced one another. He may have been embittered, but did not consider himself an exception. Heine's irony about love in this instance also involves no polemics or even sarcasm. Rather, he tells a familiar bitter-sweet story that Schumann, himself a troubled soul, was able to set to the universal language of music. As with the prose passage cited above, the lovers in Heine's poem evoke the authenticity of 'German love,' yet in a sophisticated, ironic context at odds with the naïve sentimentality of the Romantics.

The difference between Heine and Nietzsche's concepts of eternal repetition or return distills the essence of their distinction as thinkers. Heine's conception is akin to Nietzsche's affirmation of both joy and pain. Heine aggressively affirmed the sensual, the beautiful, and pleasure as Hellene and rejected the ascetic, moralistic, life-denying outlook of the Nazarene. Yet in contrast to Nietzsche, Heine acknowledged the instability of the distinction within himself, and did not believe that his choice either way had any effect on the underlying course of events, or history. For Nietzsche, the existential philosopher, the stakes involved a singular decision of one individual, Zarathustra on the mountaintop, or by extension the isolated Nietzsche in the Swiss Alps, formulating a philosophical credo as an earnest liberator of mankind. For Heine, the ironic poet of love, the everyday course of life proceeded apace regardless of our joyous affirmation or resentful denial of this as individuals. Heine considered himself a "liberator of mankind" primarily in aesthetic and artistic senses, based on his poetic vocation and singular vision, rather than any concrete impact he had on humanity or history. Heine and Nietzsche's respective attitudes toward love, as with their experience of joy and pain, and their respective fates, were echoed in their different outlooks regarding the death of God. Both turned in the wake of God to art, but in complimentary ways, which can be simplified in short-hand as that of 'the poet' and 'the philosopher,' as long as we recognize these categories as insufficient.

Many dimensions of Heine's thought were anticipated in turn by Goethe, the "Great Pagan" poet who mocked Christianity, made fun of love's foibles along with the exaggerated sentimentality of the Romantics, and critically interrogated the "grey" of philosophy in contrast to "life's golden tree." Heine derived his notion of the artist, and perhaps his conception of the Dionysian, partly from "the great pagan no. 1." Heine's struggle with his towering predecessor presents a more fraught analogue of the more reticent relation of the philologist turned philosopher Nietzsche toward his precursor, the Jewish poet and polemicist Heine. Goethe further acknowledged Spinoza as his predecessor, whose *de facto* independence from both Judaism and Christianity was an implicit rejection of the Judeo-Christian tradition and metaphysics. On the other hand, Heine made explicit, in a way his predecessors Spinoza and Goethe did not, both the rejection of religion or death of God, and the triumph of art and aesthetics over philosophy and politics, most vividly in Heine's distinction between Nazarenes and Hellenes.

In his category of the Nazarene, Heine had already attacked what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*, and Heine's dichotomy of Nazarene and Hellene was taken up in Nietzsche's opposition of slave and master morality. Heine's *Ludwig Börne. A Memorial* furthermore "may have been the model for *The Case of Wagner* and for the title *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*," as Kaufmann acknowledged.<sup>46</sup> Even Nietzsche's combat "between the two names" of the Crucified and Dionysus can be traced back to Heine's identification as "a great mind" with Christ at Golgotha, and conversely with Dionysus, the chaotic God who up-ended the order of Olympus. Nietzsche, who might be called "Dionysus no. 2," found his way back from Wagner to a prior, and different Dionysus. What for Nietzsche, following Hölderlin, was a late crisis in identity, and a last echo of the tyranny of Greece over Germany, was for Heine a humorous over-throwing of

convention, and a dynamic and self-contradictory (“Börne”) identity.<sup>47</sup> In his multifarious, ambivalent, polemical, hilarious, and outrageous texts, Heine did not have to turn from the death of God to art and aesthetics, but rather combined these himself, as Jewish Dionysus.

## ENDNOTES

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### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> George Lukács, *German Realists in the Nineteenth Century* trans. J. Gaines and P. Keast (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1993), p. 96: “Heine was without doubt the most popular and widely read German author of this period”; Jeffrey Sammons, *Heinrich Heine: Alternative Perspectives 1985-2005* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), p. 33, citing the piano manufacturer William Steinway, “The Heine-Fountain Controversy,” *Forum* 20 (1895-6), p. 740: “incomparably the most popular of all German poets, not excepting Goethe or any other.”

Primary works on Heine include Jeffrey Sammons, *Heinrich Heine. A Modern Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), Siegbert Praver, *Heine’s Jewish Comedy: A Study of his Portraits of Jews and Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), George Peters, *The Poet as Provocateur: Heinrich Heine and his Critics* (Rochester [NY]: Camden House, 2000), and the collections of essays in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik / and Romanticism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997) and Jost Hermand and Robert Holub eds., *Heinrich Heine’s Contested Identities. Politics, Religion, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Reitter, in an annotation to Jonathan Franzen’s translation of Karl Kraus, “Heine and the Consequences” in Karl Kraus, *The Kraus Project. Essays by Karl Kraus*, trans. and annotated J. Franzen with additional notes from P. Reitter and D. Kehlmann (bilingual edition) (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), p. 69 n. 56, observed that “Heine’s tactic of framing his poems as ‘songs,’ from his early *Book of Songs* to his autumnal *Hebrew Melodies*, proved to be a brilliant success, for there was hardly a composer in Germany who failed to take Heine up on the invitation to set his words the music... By the 1950s, the number of settings ran to about 3000, which is surely some kind of record.”

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard Höhn, “‘Sauerkraut mit Ambrosia’: Heines Kontrastästhetik” in *Heine Jahrbuch* 48 (2009), pp. 1–27.

<sup>4</sup> See Willi Goetschel, “Heine’s Aesthetics of Dissonance,” *The Germanic Review* 90 (2015), p. 304 ff. See also Willi Goetschel, “German Studies in a Post-National Age,” *Rutgers German Studies Occasional Papers* 9 (2009), pp. 13-17. I thank Willi Goetschel for our discussions and for sharing his unpublished manuscripts with me.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason* trans. M. Eldred (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> J. P. Stern, “History and Prophecy: Heine” in Stern, *Re-interpretations. Seven studies in nineteenth-century German literature* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age* (New York: Random House, 1978), p. 74.

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<sup>9</sup> E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany: a Study of the Influence exercised by Greek Art and Poetry over the great German Writers of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 [1935]).

## Prologue Heine as Contested Monument

<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Schubert, “Jetzt wohin?” *Heinrich Heine in seinen Verhinderten und errichteten Denkmälern* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), p. 71. The original hand-written version of the *Aufruf*, kindly supplied by Christian Liedtke of the *Heinrich-Heine Archiv* Düsseldorf, lists fifteen members of the committee, with two crossed out. Perhaps these persons withdrew because of a controversy before the known controversy; their absence effectively left the committee with an inauspicious number of members.

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Kahn, *Der Kampf um das Heine-Denkmal. Ein Rückblick* (Leipzig: Bruno Volger Verlag, 1911), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Already at the end of 1887, two polemical broadsheets [*Flugschriften*] appeared in Düsseldorf: Friedrich Frey’s „*Warum wir kein Heine-Denkmal wollen. Ein offenes Wort von einem Deutschen Mann*“ [Why we don’t want any Heine monument. Candid words from a German man] and C. Christoph’s “*Ein Beitrag zum Heine-Denkmal*“ [A contribution to the Heine Monument]. Both broadsheets opposed the Heine monument as anti-Prussian and anti-Christian. See Dietmar Goltschnigg and Hartmut Steinecke, eds., *Heine und die Nachwelt. Geschichte seiner Wirkung in den deutschsprachigen Ländern, Texte und Kontexte, Analysen und Kommentare* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006), vol. 1, p. 49. See also Dietrich Schubert, “Jetzt wohin? Das ‘deutsche Gedächtnismal’ für Heinrich Heine,” *Heine Jahrbuch* Vol. 28 (1989), pp. 43-66, Dietrich Schubert, “Frühlingslied? Das Heinrich-Heine-Denkmal von Georg Kolbe in Frankfurt/Main (1910-1913),” *Heine Jahrbuch*, 34 (1995), pp. 119-145.

<sup>4</sup> Brigitte Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress. A Biography of Empress Elisabeth of Austria* trans. R. Hein (New York: Knopf, 1986), pp. 279, 285-286. See also Ute Kröger, *Der Streit um Heine in der deutschen Presse 1887-1914: ein Beitrag zur Heine-Rezeption in Deutschland* (Aachen: Alano Verlag, 1989), p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Höhn 2009, pp. 1–27. Adolf Stöcker, *Heinrich Heine und Sein Denkmal* [1888] in Dietmar Goltschnigg and Hartmut Steinecke, eds., *Heine und die Nachwelt. Geschichte seiner Wirkung in den deutschsprachigen Ländern, Texte und Kontexte, Analysen und Kommentare* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006), vol. 1, p. 267.

<sup>6</sup> Goltschnigg and Steinecke 2006, vol. 1, p. 269.

<sup>7</sup> Schubert 1999, pp. 36, 78, Goltschnigg and Steinecke 2006, vol. 2, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> Hamann 1986, pp. 301-3, Paul Reitter, “Heine in the Bronx,” *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 74 (1999), p. 332.

<sup>9</sup> Kahn 1911, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> Adolf Bartels, *Heinrich Heine. Auch ein Denkmal* [1906] in Karl Theodor Kleinknecht, ed., *Heine in Deutschland. Dokumente seiner Rezeption 1834-1956* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1976), p. 124, Peters 2000, p. 375.

<sup>11</sup> Bartels, *Heinrich Heine* in Kleinknecht 1976, p. 124.

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- <sup>12</sup> Steven Fuller, *The Nazis' Literary Grandfather. Adolf Bartels and Cultural Extremism, 1871-1945* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 63, 100, 105.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 105, 115.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 166, 177
- <sup>15</sup> Peters 2000, pp. 54, 84. Cf. Xanthippus [Franz Sandvoß], *Was dünket euch um Heine? Ein Bekenntnis* (Leipzig: Grunow, 1888), reprinted in Kleinknecht 1976, pp. 71-6.
- <sup>16</sup> Peters 2000, p. 85.
- <sup>17</sup> Peters 2000, p. 86. Wilhelm Bölsche, "Heine" 1899, *Frankfurter Zeitung* in Goltschnigg and Steinecke 2006, vol. 1, pp. 417-425, Conrad Alberti, "Eine Schmutzschrift gegen Heinrich Heine" (1888) in Kleinknecht 1976, pp. 76-90.
- <sup>18</sup> Fuller 1996, p. 63.
- <sup>19</sup> Peters 2000, 71.
- <sup>20</sup> Günter Häntzschel, "Ein entdornter Heine: Zur Sozialgeschichte der Lyrik des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Heine-Jahrbuch* 21 (1982), pp. 89-110.
- <sup>21</sup> Stöcker, "Heine und Sein Denkmal" in Goltschnigg and Steinecke 2006, 269, 582 n. 20. Heine's poem *Sehnsüchtelei* juxtaposes flowers and the abyss. His phrase about the "renegade monk" was cited in F. Crawford, *With the Immortals* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1892), p. 188.
- <sup>22</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Almansor* lines 243-4 in *The Complete Poems of Heinrich Heine* trans. H. Draper (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1982), p. 187. Heinrich Heine, *Almansor* in Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Werke* ed. A. Neuhaus-Koch (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 1987), vol. 5, p. 16. All citations of Heine's texts in German refer to this "*Düsseldorfer Heine Ausgabe*," henceforth cited as "DHA."
- <sup>23</sup> See Na'ama Rokem, "Heinrich Heine, Theodor Herzl and the Poetics of Space," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 8 (2009), pp. 65-82.
- <sup>24</sup> Kahn 1911, pp. 6-7.
- <sup>25</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial*, trans. J. Sammons (New York: Camden, House, 2006), p. 120 (I have rendered Heine's *des deutschen Geistes* as "the German mind" in place of Sammons'—all too Hegelian—"the German spirit"); Heinrich Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Ein Denkschrift* in Heinrich Heine DHA vol. 11, p. 128.
- <sup>26</sup> Karl Kraus, *Um Heine* [1906] in Goltschnigg and Steinecke 2006, vol. 1, pp. 544-7.
- <sup>27</sup> Karl Kraus, *Heine und die Folgen* (Munich: A. Langen, 1910), Karl Kraus, "Heine and the Consequences" in Kraus 2013, pp. 21, 41: "It is the French disease that [Heine] has imported into Germany. How easily one becomes sick in Paris! [a play on Heine's physical collapse near the end of his life from what was thought to be syphilis, "the French disease."] How the morality of the German feeling for language is loosened! The French language surrenders to every *filou* [trickster]. Faced with the German language a fellow has to be a real man to make her come around."
- <sup>28</sup> Kraus 2013, p. 19 n. 12. As summarized in Reitter's annotation, the feuilleton was initiated in Julien Louis Geoffrey's Parisian *Journal de Débats* on January 18, 1800, using leftover space in an advertising insert, a policy subsequently taken over as part of the regular newspaper and



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emulated soon after in Germany, at the time of Heine's infancy. Kraus' assertion "without Heine no feuilleton" (p. 19) was groundless.

<sup>29</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* trans. H. Mustard in *The Romantic School and other Essays* eds. J. Hermand and R. Holub (New York: Continuum, 1985), p. 129; Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 13. On this text see Chapter Two below.

<sup>30</sup> Kraus 2013, p. 59: "it's by no means urgent to talk about his work. What is increasingly urgent is to talk about his influence, and about the fact that his work isn't capable of bearing up under an influence that German intellectual life will little by little cast off as unbearable."

<sup>31</sup> Sammons 1979, p. 350: "From the evidence I have seen, I cannot share the opinion that Heine was easily imitable. On the contrary, most imitations exhibit the symptoms of imperceptive reading."

<sup>32</sup> Kraus 2013, pp. 63, 71-5, 105, 131, mockingly claimed that "grown-ups don't have to put up with anyone who wants to dispute their belief that Heine is a greater poet than Goethe." He contrasted Goethe's line "silence on every peak" with Heine's line about a solitary pine tree with the comment: "Seeing an artful fake like this in the show window of the confectioner or a feuilletonist might put you in a good mood if you're an artist yourself. But does that make its manufacturer one?" Most bombastically, Kraus proposed that Goethe's single word "farewell" in his play *Iphigenie* "outweighs the *Book of Songs* and a hundred pages of Heine's prose." Kraus further questioned "how many German philistines wouldn't know what Heine means if Herr [Friedrich] Silcher hadn't set "I know not what it means" [from the beginning of Heine's *Lorelei*] to music." In truth, Silcher is known today only by virtue of having set Heine's poem to music.

<sup>33</sup> See Reitter 2008. Kraus' diagnosis of psychoanalysis is cited in Karl Kraus, *No compromise: Selected Writings of Karl Kraus* (New York: Ungar, 1977), p. 227. A completely contrary view was offered by Walter Kaufmann, "On Karl Kraus," *New York Review of Books* August 9 (1973), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1973/08/09/on-karl-kraus>, in response to what he considered an overly enthusiastic account of Kraus by Erich Heller, provoking Heller's response in turn, objected that Kraus "ignored Kafka and Rilke, denigrated Stefan George and [Hugo von] Hofmannsthal," wrote that "in twenty years not one sentence of [Nietzsche] will survive," and took the side of the opponents of Alfred Dreyfus. Kaufmann concluded that "in the end Kraus remained a pedant whose flashes of wit did not compensate sufficiently for his consuming resentment, his appalling lack of judgment, his bigotry, and his unscrupulous methods."

<sup>34</sup> Kraus made indirect allusions to Heine's Jewish background throughout his text, most explicitly in alluding to the transition "from chopped liver to the blue flower" and "today every Itzak Wisecrack can probably outdo him," a reference to Daniel (H)Itzig, echoing an allusion in Heine's late poem *Jehudah ben Halevy* in his *Hebrew Melodies* of 1851. Kraus 2013, pp. 15, 61. On these poems see Chapter Five below.

<sup>35</sup> Kraus 2013, p. 119.

<sup>36</sup> Reitter in his annotations to *Ibid.*, p. 91 n. 67, noted that Kraus was mistaken, since Heine also inspired Nietzsche's interplay of Apollonian and Dionysian in his *Birth of Tragedy*. Other connections between Heine and Nietzsche are addressed in Chapters Two, Three, Four, and Five below.

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<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* in Walter Kaufmann ed. and trans., *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), p. 701: “One day it will be said that Heine and I have been by far the foremost artists of the German language—at an incalculable distance from everything mere Germans have done with it.” On this passage see Chapter Four below.

<sup>38</sup> Ludwig Marcuse, “Geschichte des Heine-Denkmal in Deutschland,” *Das Goldene Tor* 1 (1946), p. 135.

<sup>39</sup> Theodor Adorno, “Heine the Wound” [1958] in *Notes to Literature* trans. by S. W. Nichol森 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 80-5. See also George Peters, “Usurpation and Rehabilitation: Heine in East and West Germany (1945-1990)” in Peters 2000, pp. 127-62, including “‘Die Wunde Heine’: An Essay and its Influence,” pp. 127-34. As reviewed by Peters among others, the pervasively negative view of Heine largely concluded with the end of World War II, followed by one-sided interpretations of Heine as pioneer of socialism in East Germany and as critic of authority in West Germany, notwithstanding Adorno. Sloterdijk 1987, p. xxxvi, extended Adorno’s epithet of wound (sore), beyond Germany’s self-regard, as critique that enables thought, to Rousseau, Schelling, Heine, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Spengler, Heidegger, Theodor Lessing, Freud, and Adorno himself: “Out of the self-healing of deep sores come critiques that serve epochs as rallying points for self-knowledge.”

<sup>40</sup> Adorno 1991, vol. 1, pp. 82-3.

<sup>41</sup> We can accordingly invert Kraus’ formulation: it is by no means urgent to talk about Heine’s influence or that his work was cast off little by little as unbearable in German intellectual life. What is urgent is to talk about his work.

<sup>42</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “Heinrich Heine and the Intellectual in Germany” in *The New Conservatism. Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate* trans. S. Nichol森 (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 71-99. On the mandarins, see Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins; the German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 1969).

<sup>43</sup> Habermas 1989, pp. 81-3.

<sup>44</sup> Karl Popper, “The Open Society Today: Its great yet limited success,” unpublished manuscript, London School of Economics.” p. 30. I thank Mary Kaldor for this reference.

<sup>45</sup> Habermas 1989, pp. 74, 85-6.

<sup>46</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Origins of German Tragic Drama* trans. J. Osborne (London, 1977), p. 182. On this point, see also Charles Rosen, “The Ruins of Walter Benjamin” in *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections*, ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge [MA], MIT Press, 1988), pp. 140-1, 151.

<sup>47</sup> Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and its Origins” trans. K. Forster and D. Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25 (1982), pp. 21, 28.

<sup>48</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Literary History and the Study of Literature” in *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings*, M. Jennings et al. eds. vol. 2 1927-1934 (London: Belknap, 1999), p. 464.

<sup>1</sup> Important recent texts on Heine's relation to Goethe include Hanna Spencer, "Spiel mit Goethes Erdmantel" in *Dichter, Denker, Journalist: Studien zum Werk Heinrich Heines* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1977), pp. 37-51, Sammons 1979, pp. 98-107, Robert Holub, *Heinrich Heine's Reception of German Grecophilia. The Function and Application of the Hellenic tradition in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1981), pp. 59-86, George Peters, *Der grosse Heide Nr. 2: Heinrich Heine and the levels of his Goethe reception* (New York: P. Lang, 1989), Jost Hermand, "A View from Below: H. Heine's relationship to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe" trans. H. Fehervary in Klaus Berghahn and Jost Hermand eds., *Goethe in German-Jewish Culture* (Suffolk [UK]: Camden House, 2001), pp. 44-62. These studies also cite a voluminous previous literature on the same topic reaching back to the 1880's.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Heinrich Heine, "Correction" in Heine 1948, pp. 455-6; Heinrich Heine, "Berichtigung" DHA vol. 11, pp. 112-13. Heine sent his "Correction" to German newspapers in 1849. I have followed the translation of *Heide* as "pagan" in Sammons 1979, p. 308, over the old-fashioned "heathen" in earlier translations; *Heide* also rhymes visually and aurally with "Heine." On this text see also Chapter Five below.

<sup>3</sup> Rüdiger Safranski, *Goethe: Life as a Work of Art* trans. D. Dollenmayer (New York: Liveright, 2017), pp. 383-92, acknowledged Goethe's complex relation to Romanticism, a relation that is often simplified. Robert Holub, "Personal Roots and German Tradition. The Jewish Element in Heine's Turn Against Romanticism" in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik. Heinrich Heine and Romanticism Erträge eines Symposiums an der Pennsylvania State University (21.-23. September 1995)*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), p. 40, observed that Heine is usually considered a Romantic abroad, whereas within Germany there is more awareness of Heine's fraught relation to Romanticism that Holub addressed on his essay.

<sup>4</sup> See Heinrich Heine, *Die Stadt Lucca* DHA vol. 7, pp. 157-203, Heinrich Heine, "Don Quixote," "I am Only Don Quixote" from *The Town of Lucca* [1830] in Heine 1948, pp. 382-6.

<sup>5</sup> See M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* ed. H. Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), Rüdiger Safranski, *Romanticism: A German Affair* trans. R. Goodwin (Evanston [IL]: Northwestern University Press, 2014), Warren Breckman, *European Romanticism: a brief history with documents* (Boston: St. Martins, 2008). I thank Warren Breckman for our lively discussions of Romanticism and allowing me to consult his unpublished manuscript on the subject.

<sup>6</sup> Wagner is frequently characterized as working in a Romantic vein through much of the second half of the nineteenth century, and his successor Richard Strauss extended "late Romanticism" well into the twentieth century.

<sup>7</sup> The Romantic period's supposed 1848 "cut off" excludes the last decade of Heine's life, whereas Wagner is frequently characterized as working in a Romantic vein through much of the second half of the nineteenth century, and his successor Richard Strauss extended "late Romanticism" well into the twentieth century.

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<sup>8</sup> Jerome McGann, *The Romanticism Ideology: a critical investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 49-56, pointed to Romanticism's ideological presuppositions, ignored by most commentators, and cited Heine as an exception who questioned the self-presentation of the Romantics on ideological grounds.

<sup>9</sup> August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Literature* [1808] trans. W Hazlitt (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson and Son, 1818).

<sup>10</sup> See Frederick Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: the concept of early German Romanticism* (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *From My Life: Poetry and Truth* in Goethe 1989, vol. 4, p. 22; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit* in Goethe 1996, vol. 9, pp. 11-12.

<sup>12</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Eine Kindheitserinnerung aus *Dichtung und Wahrheit*" in *Gesammelte Werke* vol. 10 (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer, 1969), p. 266.

<sup>13</sup> See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Against Pure Reason. Writings on Religion, Language and History* trans. and ed. M. Bunge (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "On German Architecture" [1772] in Goethe 1989, pp. 3-14; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Von deutscher Baukunst" in Goethe 1996, vol. 12, pp. 7-15.

<sup>15</sup> Safranski 2017, pp. 53-4, 111, 237-241.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 383-4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 437.

<sup>19</sup> Spinoza and pantheism, also in relation to Goethe, are discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Safranski 2017, p. 150.

<sup>21</sup> Safranski 2017, pp. 333, 459, 465, 468, Roberston 2016, pp. 65-83.

<sup>22</sup> Safranski 2017, pp. 412-14, 433.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 323, 433.

<sup>24</sup> Scholarship is divided as to whether Goethe himself wrote the essay as Heine thought or rather had Heinrich Meyer, his close confidant and one of the "*Weimar Kunstfreunde*" [Weimar friends of art], write the essay at Goethe's instruction as Goethe claimed. The essay is included in the Frankfurt edition of Goethe's collected works, but not the Hamburg edition used here. See Frank Büttner, "Der Streit um die 'Neudeutsche Religios-Patriotische Kunst,'" *Aurora* 43 (1983), pp. 55-76, who identified Meyer as the author.

<sup>25</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Confessions in Prose Miscellanies from Heinrich Heine* trans. S. Fleishman (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1876), pp. 247-8 (I have modified "unfroked" as "defroked" "Romanticist" as "Romantic" and "most deadly" as "deadliest"); Heinrich Heine, *Geständnissen* DHA vol. 15, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> See Gerold Seigel, "Homology and Bildung: Herder, Humboldt, and Goethe" in Seigel 2005, pp. 332-60, also Warren Breckman, *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory. Dethroning the Self* (Cambridge [UK]: Cambridge University Press, 2001), "The

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Social and Political Discourse of Personality, 1835-1840,” pp. 131-76; *Bildung* and the self or “personality” are inextricable and even homologous.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. David Sorkin, “Wilhelm von Humboldt: The Theory and Practice of Self-Formation (*Bildung*), 1791-1810,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44, (1983), pp. 55-73.

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter Five below.

<sup>29</sup> J. J. Rousseau, *Julie, or, The new Heloise: letters of two lovers who live in a small town at the foot of the Alps* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> Safranski 2017, p. 130.

<sup>31</sup> Novalis (*Friedrich von Hardenberg*), *Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe Friedrich von Hardenbergs* ed. M. Frank (Frankfurt/Main: Hanser, 1978-87), vol. 2, p. 801.

<sup>32</sup> Lotte in *Werther* was based loosely on Goethe’s infatuation with Charlotte Buff; his ambiguous relationship with the married noblewoman Charlotte von Stein in Weimar, which was subject to endless gossip, appears to have influenced his conception of *Iphigenia in Taurus* and classicism generally; his erotic *Roman Elegies* were ostensibly informed by his activities with his mysterious Roman mistress Faustina and then his decidedly carnal relations with his bed-partner and common-law wife Christiane Vulpius; his *West-Eastern Divan* was inspired by and partly written together with Marianne von Willemer in a spirit of collaboration recalling that of Goethe and Schiller; Goethe’s erotic infatuations continued into his late seventies, past their actual plausibility, as testified by his *Marienbad Elegy*; even the Gretchen story in *Faust* had its origin in an event from Goethe’s childhood. Cf. Safranski 2017, *passim*.

<sup>33</sup> Goethe, *Faust*, Act 1, scene 1, lines 681-2 in Goethe 1989, vol. 2; Goethe, *Faust* in Goethe 1996, vol. 3, p. 29.

<sup>34</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Willkommen und Abschied* [1771], Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Welcome and Farewell* trans. C. Middleton in Goethe 1989, vol. 1, pp. 8-9.

<sup>35</sup> My literal translation. The poem concludes: “My love, however much you protest,/ Still I know what you’ll allow./ Yet I’ll believe whatever you swear;/ And I’ll swear, whatever you believe.” Cf. also Heine 1982, p. 175. Peters 1989, pp. 172-3 ff. reviewed this and other comparisons of poems by Goethe and Heine .

<sup>36</sup> Cited in Peters 1989, p. 184, 285 n. 3 (my English translation), citing Michael Werner, *Begegnungen mit Heine: Berichte der Zeitgenossen, in Fortführung von H. H. Houbens “Gespräche mit Heine”* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1973), vol. 1, p. 192, citing Heine’s friend Ludolf Weinbarg, as ostensibly recorded by Wilhelm Neumann (admittedly a meandering provenance): “*Den Gärtner nährt sein Spaten,/ Den Bettler dein Lahmes Bein,/ Den Wechsler seine Dukaten,/ Mich meine Liebespein./ D’rum biun ich dir sehr verbunden/ Mein Kind, für dein Treulos Herz:/ Viel Geld hab’ ich gefunden/ Und Ruhm im Liebesschmerz./ Nun sing’ ich bei näch’ger Lampe/ Den Jammer, der mich traf:/ Er Kommt bei Hoffman und Campe/ Heraus in klein Octav.*”

<sup>37</sup> Heine 1982, p. 52; DHA 1.1 p. 134: “*Aus meinen Thränen sprießen/ Viel blühende Blumen hervor/ Und meine Seufzer werden/ Ein Nachtigallenchor./ Und wenn du mich lieb hast, Kindchen,/ Schenk’ ich dir die Blumen all,/ Und vor deinem Fenster soll klingen/ Da Lied der Nachtigall.*”

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- <sup>38</sup> Heine 1982, p. 69; DHA 1.1 p. 185: “*Vergiftet sind meine Lieder;—/ Wie könnt’ es anders seyn?/ Du hast mir ja Gift gegossen/ Ins blühende Leben hinein.*”
- <sup>39</sup> Sammons 1979, p. 74, proposed that Heine sought to make up for his nervous disposition by over-compensating in this way.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- <sup>41</sup> Peters 1989, p. 201. On Marx’s affair see most recently Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 324-5.
- <sup>42</sup> Peters 1989, pp. 285-6 n. 4.
- <sup>43</sup> Peters 1989, pp. 201-2, cited Hans Kaufmann, *Heinrich Heine: Geistige Entwicklung und künstlerisches Werk* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1970), Helmut Brandt in Renate Francke, *Heinrich Heine. Gedichte, 1845-1856: Kommentar*. Helmut Brandt contributor (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), and Erich Mayser, *H. Heines ‘Buch der Lieder’ im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag H.-D. Heinz, 1978).
- <sup>44</sup> Peters 1989, p. 221.
- <sup>45</sup> Leonard Foster, *The Icy Fire. Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge [UK]: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 8, cited in Peters 1989, pp. 206-7.
- <sup>46</sup> Peters 1989, p. 208.
- <sup>47</sup> Peters 1989, p. 233. See also Ernst Behler, “Heinrich Heine und Madame de Staël zum Thema >>De l’Allemagne<<” in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik / and Romanticism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), p. 118.
- <sup>48</sup> Peters 1989, p. 183 ff.
- <sup>49</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen* in Goethe 1996, vol. 12, p. 487 (no. 863).
- <sup>50</sup> George Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), discusses the importance of *Bildung* for secular German Jews, whose primary model could be said to be Heine.
- <sup>51</sup> Friedrich Schiller, “On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry” in Schiller 1993, pp. 179-260; Saffranski 2017, pp. 410-11.
- <sup>52</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Werke, Briefwechsel, Lebenszeugnisse. Säkularausgabe*, ed. Stiftung Weimarer Klassik and centre national de la recherche scientifique (Berlin & Paris: Akademie Verlag & Editions du CNRS, 1970), vol. 20, p. 125. This Heine Säkular Ausgabe of Heine’s letters and other documents is hereafter cited as “HSA.” The passage was cited and translated in Hermant 2001, p. 47 and Peters 1989, p. 42, both of whom expressed skepticism about Heine’s statement, following Ulrich Maché, “Der junge Heine und Goethe: Eine Revision der Auffassung von Heines Verhältnis zu Goethe vor dem Besuch in Weimar (1824),” *Heine Jahrbuch* 4 (1965) pp. 42-7. Heine’s numerous allusions amply demonstrate that he knew as much about Goethe’s work as anyone with the exception of Goethe, and perhaps Schiller.
- <sup>53</sup> HSA vol. 20 p. 46. The passage was cited and translated in Philip Kossoff, *Valiant Heart: A Biography of Heinrich Heine* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1983), p. 54.
- <sup>54</sup> Peters 1989, p. 42.

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<sup>55</sup> Hermand 2001, p. 47.

<sup>56</sup> Werner 1973, vol. 1, pp. 83, cited in Peters 1989, p. 116.

<sup>57</sup> Heine 1948, p. 355; HSA vol. 20 p. 175.

<sup>58</sup> According to Peters 1989, p. 3, “[Heine’s] luck might have been better had he been a geologist, portrait painter, or American tourist.”

<sup>59</sup> Maximilian Heine, *Erinnerungen an Heinrich Heine und seine Familie. Von seinem Bruder Maximilian Heine* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1868), p. 123, as cited Peters 1989, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> E. M. Butler, *Heinrich Heine: A Biography* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), p. 42, and Hermand 2001, p. 48 were skeptical; Peters 1989, p. 5, was less so.

<sup>61</sup> Heinrich Heine, *The Romantic School* trans. H. Mustard in Heine 1985, p. 45: “I told him... that the plums along the road between Jena and Weimar tasted very good. During so many long winter nights I had thought about how many lofty and profound things I would say to Goethe if I ever saw him. And when at last I saw him, I told him that the Saxon plums tasted very good. And Goethe smiled.” Heinrich Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 163.

<sup>62</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Harzreise* DHA vol. 6, pp. 81-138. On Heine’s *Harzreise* as a response to and parody of Goethe, see Jost Hermand, *Der frühe Heine. Ein Kommentar zu den Reisebildern* (Munich: Winkler, 1976), pp. 59-80.

<sup>63</sup> HSA vol. 20, p. 199. The passage was cited and translated in Peters 1989, pp. 6-7, and Hermand 2001, p. 53.

<sup>64</sup> HSA vol. 20, p. 199. The passage was cited and translated in Peters 1989, p. 6, and Hermand 2001, pp. 50-1.

<sup>65</sup> HSA vol. 20, p. 205. The passage was cited and translated in Peters 1989, p. 6, and Hermand 2001, p. 50.

<sup>66</sup> Heinrich Heine, “Englische Fragmente”, in *Reisebilder* III DHA vol. 7.1, p. 271, cited and translated in Hermand 2001, p. 53.

<sup>67</sup> HSA vol. 20, p. 304, cited in Peters 1989, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> Diana Behler, “Heine and Early German Romanticism” in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik / and Romanticism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), pp. 86-103, underscored this dialectic.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Gretchen Hachmeister, “Subverting Tradition: Heine and the German Myth of Italy” in *Italy in the German Literary Imagination: Goethe’s “Italian Journey” and Its Reception by Eichendorff, Platen, and Heine* (Rochester [NY]: Camden House, 2002), pp. 143-72, and Hermand 1976, pp. 59-80. Lukas Bauer, *The South in the German Imaginary: The Italian journeys of Goethe and Heine* (Oxford; Peter Lang, 2015), characterized the relation between the two poets’ Italian journeys such that Goethe established German identity in relation to the classical tradition, whereas Heine sought to include German-Jewish identity within German identity. Bauer’s thesis is unconvincing. Goethe was primarily focused on his own development as an individual and an artist and was opposed to what we now call identity politics. He explicitly opposed German nationalism, and thought of himself as part of European tradition, particularly during his Italian journey. Heine was likewise opposed to reductive notions of

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identity, and his invocation of Jewish identity included many inherent contradictions and was provocative, subversive, and even scandalous in the extreme, leaving aside what would constitute German-Jewish identity within German identity. On these issues, see the following two chapters.

<sup>70</sup> Markus Winkler, “Weltschmerz, europäisch. Zur Ästhetik der Zerrissenheit bei Heine und Byron” in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik / and Romanticism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), pp. 173-90.

<sup>71</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in Goethe 1996, vol. 7, p. 145, Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, book 3, chapter 1; Heinrich Heine, *Reise von München nach Genua* DHA vol. 7.1, p. 63. Heinrich Heine, “Journey from Munich to Genoa” in *Journey to Italy* trans. C. Leland revised by C. Johnson (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1998), book II, p. 43, cited in Holub 1981A, p. 101.

<sup>72</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Die Nordsee* DHA vol. 6, pp. 283-306, Heinrich Heine, “The North Sea” in *Travel Pictures* trans. P. Wortsman (New York: Archipelago Books, 2008), pp. 69-96. On this topic see Jost Hermand, “Heine contra Platen: Zur Anatomie eines Skandals” in R. Hosfeld ed. *Heinrich Heine und das neunzehnte Jahrhundert: Signaturen. Neue Beiträge zur Forschung* (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1986), pp. 108-20. See also Chapter Four below.

<sup>73</sup> August (Graf) von Platen-Hallermünde, *Der Romantische Oedipus* in *Werke* ed. K. Wölfel, J. Link (Munich: Winkler, 1982).

<sup>74</sup> Hermand 1986, pp. 108-20, Holub 1981A, pp. 91-7.

<sup>75</sup> Jefferson Chase, *Inciting Laughter: The Development of “Jewish Humor” in 19<sup>th</sup>-century German Culture* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Hermand 1986, pp. 108-20, Holub 1981A, pp. 91-7, Chase 2000, pp. 152-72.

<sup>77</sup> Hermand 2001, p. 52.

<sup>78</sup> Heine to Immermann December 29, 1830, cited in Kossoff 1983, p. 102; HSA vol. 20, p. 383.

<sup>79</sup> Heine to Varnhagen von Ense 1830 HSA vol. 20, p. 384. The passage was cited and translated in Kossoff 1983, p. 106.

<sup>80</sup> Johann Peter Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1946), p. 360; Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* (Berlin: Tempel, 1958) p. 756.

<sup>81</sup> Hermand 2001, p. 51.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>83</sup> Heine to Moser 30 October 1827 HSA vol. 20, p. 303. The passage was cited and translated in Hermand 2001, p. 51.

<sup>84</sup> See the discussion in the last section of the previous chapter.

<sup>85</sup> Heinrich Heine, “Die deutsche Literatur von Wolfgang Menzel, 1828” DHA vol. 10, pp. 247-8. The passage was cited and translated in Hermand 2001, p. 52. Cf. also Wolfgang Menzel, *Die deutsche Literatur* (Stuttgart: Gebrüder Franckh, 1828).

<sup>86</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Über die Denunzianten* DHA vol. 11, pp. 154-68.



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<sup>87</sup> On the fraternity celebrations see Poliakov 2003, pp. 390-1.

<sup>88</sup> Heine, “Die Romantik” [1820] DHA vol. 10, pp. 194-6.

<sup>89</sup> Sammons 1979, p. 74, noted that an earlier duel was associated with an “anti-Semitic [i.e. anti-Jewish] remark.”

<sup>90</sup> On these issues see Robert Holub “Personal Roots and German Traditions. The Jewish Element in Heine’s Turn Against Romanticism” in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik / and Romanticism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), pp. 40-56.

<sup>91</sup> See Ernst Behler, “Heinrich Heine und Madame de Staël zum Thema >>De l’Allemagne<<” in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik / and Romanticism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), pp. 116-28.

<sup>92</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 1; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 125.

<sup>93</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 38; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1 pp. 156-7.

<sup>94</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 37; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 155.

<sup>95</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 41-2; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 160.

<sup>96</sup> See Stern 2010, pp. 220-2, 228, 236.

<sup>97</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 38; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 157.

<sup>98</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 37; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 156.

<sup>99</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 39; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 157-8.

<sup>100</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 38; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 157.

<sup>101</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 33; Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 151.

## Chapter Two                    Heine’s Jewish Pantheism

<sup>1</sup> Arendt 1978, p. 74. See also Gerschom Scholem, “Against the myth of German-Jewish dialogue,” “Once more: The German-Jewish dialogue” in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: selected essays* ed. W. Dannhauser (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), pp. 61-4, 65-70, who argued against the “myth” of German-Jewish dialogue.

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<sup>2</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 165; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 61-2.

<sup>3</sup> Stern 2010, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 129; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Stern 2010, p. 209.

<sup>6</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 174; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, 1985, pp. 151, 154, 157; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 33, 36: “*daß Luther nicht bloß der größte, sondern auch der deutscheste Mann unserer Geschichte ist*”; “*daß man seine Lehre nur durch die Bibel selber, oder durch vernünftige Gründe, widerlegen müsse...*”

<sup>8</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 145, 149; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 27, 31. Russell 1972, pp. xix-xx, possibly borrowing from Heine, made similar observations.

<sup>9</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 195; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 73.

<sup>10</sup> Lessing’s relation to Moses Mendelssohn and their roles in the “pantheism controversy” are addressed in the following section. Lessing’s reflections on classical and modern art and tragedy are addressed in chapter five below

<sup>11</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 200, 203; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 77-78, 81.

<sup>12</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, 1985, p. 212.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214-32.

<sup>15</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 234; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 110.

<sup>16</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 237; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 113.

<sup>17</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 215; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 92.

<sup>18</sup> Heinrich Heine, “Preface to the Second German Edition,” *Religion and Philosophy in Germany, A Fragment*, trans. J. Snodgrass (London: Trübner & Co. 1882) p. 13. Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 498.

<sup>19</sup> See Stern 2010, p. 210, Sammons 1979, pp. 76-80.

<sup>20</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 263; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 34.

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- <sup>21</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 158-9; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 118-19.
- <sup>22</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 180-1; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 61.
- <sup>23</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), book three, section 125 “The Madman,” p. 181. Leo Berg, *Heine-Nietzsche-Ibsen; Essays* (Berlin: Concordia, 1908), first noted the connection between Heine and Nietzsche related to the death of God, later taken up by Georg Brandes, *Heinrich Heine* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1922), Kaufmann 1974, p. 100, and Reinhold Grimm, “Antiquity as Echo and Disguise: Nietzsche’s ‘Lied eines theokritischen Ziegenhirten,’ Heinrich Heine, and the Crucified Dionysus,” *Nietzsche-Studien* (1985), pp. 212-24.
- <sup>24</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, part 2 of Zarathustra’s prologue in Nietzsche 1976, p. 124.
- <sup>25</sup> Kaufmann 1974, pp. 96-120.
- <sup>26</sup> Nietzsche 1974, pp. 167, 279-80, also broached the topic in two other sections of *The Gay Science*. In section 108 “New Struggles,” he noted that “After Buddha was dead, they still showed his shadow in a cave for centuries—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way people are, there may still for millennia be caves in which they show his shadow. In section 343 “The Meaning of our Cheerfulness,” he invoked “The greatest recent event—that ‘God is dead’; that the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable—is already starting to cast its first shadow over Europe... At hearing the news that ‘the old god is dead,’ we philosophers and ‘free spirits’ feel illuminated by a new dawn; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, forebodings, expectation.”
- <sup>27</sup> Kaufmann 1974, pp. 4-8, 15-18, *passim*.
- <sup>28</sup> See for example Eric von der Luft, “Sources of Nietzsche’s ‘God is Dead!’ and its Meaning for Heidegger,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1984), pp. 263–76. See also Peter Fritzsche, *Nietzsche and the Death of God. Selected Writings* (Longrove [IL]: Waveland Press, 2007), pp. 1-40, Jerrold Seigel, “Being and transcendence: Heidegger” in Seigel 2005, pp. 568-602. On German poetry about the classical Gods see chapter five below.
- <sup>29</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 173; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 54.
- <sup>30</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 173; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 54.
- <sup>31</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 176; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 57.
- <sup>32</sup> Willi Goetschel, *Spinoza’s Modernity, Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), pp. 73-4.
- <sup>33</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 13, 15, Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 195, Frederick C. Beiser, “Jacobi and the Pantheism Controversy” in Beiser 1987, pp. 44-82, John H. Zammito, “The Most Hidden Conditions of Men of the First

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Rank': The Pantheist Current in Eighteenth-Century Germany 'Uncovered' by the Spinoza Controversy," *Eighteenth-Century Thought* 1 (2003), pp. 335-68.

<sup>34</sup> Amos Elon, *The Pity of it All. A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch 1743-1933* (New York: Picador, 2002), p. 1, dates German-Jewish culture from Mendelssohn's arrival in Berlin.

<sup>35</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 73-4, 193. Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 193; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 71.

<sup>36</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 182-4; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Beiser 1987, pp. 44-82, James Schmidt, *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-century Answers and Twentieth-century Questions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

<sup>38</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 198; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 75-6.

<sup>39</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, p. 188; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 67, 76.

<sup>40</sup> Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 182-4; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, pp. 61-2.

<sup>41</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 78-9; Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* DHA vol. 8.1, p. 61.

<sup>42</sup> See Horst Lange, "Goethe and Spinoza: A Reconsideration," *Goethe Yearbook* 18 (2011), pp. 11-33.

<sup>43</sup> Goetschel, Willi. *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

<sup>44</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 47-8, 67-9, 71-3, 77, 80, Baruch Spinoza, *The Ethics* trans. S. Shirley (Indianapolis [IN]: Hackett, 1982), part V "Of the Power of the Intellect or of Human Freedom" pp. 203-225. See also David Bell, *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984), pp. 147-70.

<sup>45</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 7-8.

<sup>46</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 53-5, 59, 63, Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* trans. S. Shirley (Indianapolis [IN]: Hackett, 1991).

<sup>47</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 11, 260.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>49</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 135-6, 137-9, Cf. Mendelssohn, Moses. *Jerusalem: Or on Religious Power and Judaism* trans. A. Arkush (Lebanon [PA]: Brandeis University Press, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 232, 245.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

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<sup>53</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 257, 320 n. 13, in opposition to Ritchie Robertson, *Heine (Jewish Thinkers Series)* (London: Halban, 1988), pp. 36-49, who dismissed Heine's discussion of pantheism as unserious. Stern 2010, p. 214, referred to a "catchword." Breckman 2001, pp. 187-91, situated Heine's pantheism in relation to conventional philosophical discourses of his time.

<sup>54</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 262-3, Hermann Cohen, *Spinoza on State and Religion, Judaism and Christianity* trans. R. Schine (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2014). Cohen later reversed his position and became of one Spinoza's foremost detractors. Cf. also Benjamin Lazier, *God Interrupted: Heresy and the European Imagination between the World Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> Goetschel 2004, pp. 258, 260-1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 262-3.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>58</sup> Michah Gottlieb, "Defending Spinoza? Review of Nancy Levene, *Spinoza's Revelation: Religion, Democracy, and Reason*; Willi Goetschel *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine*," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 30 (2006), p. 430. Goetschel 2004, pp. 5, 90.

<sup>59</sup> Gottlieb 2006, pp. 432-3.

<sup>60</sup> Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially pp. 157-74, 230-94.

<sup>61</sup> See Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, *Betraying Spinoza: The Renegade Jew Who Gave Us Modernity* (New York: Schocken Books, 2006).

<sup>62</sup> Sven-Erik Rose, *Jewish Philosophical Politics in Germany, 1789/1848* (Waltham [MA]: Brandeis University Press, 2014), provides a useful overview and accounting of the extensive primary and secondary literature on this topic. See also Paul Lawrence Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton, Princeton U. Press: 1990).

<sup>63</sup> Bruno Bauer, *Die Judenfrage* (Braunschweig: 1843), pp. 62-3. Rosen 1977, p. 147. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* trans. G. Eliot (New York: Harper, 1957 [1841]), pp. 117, 120, had already discussed "the unfathomable depth of Hebrew Egoism" and Judaism as "circumscribed by the limits of a particular national interest."

<sup>64</sup> Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" [1844] in Marx and Engels 2010, vol. 3 pp. 146-74.

<sup>65</sup> Bruno Bauer, "Die Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen, frei zu werden [The Capacity of Present-day Jews and Christians to Become Free.]," *Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz* (Zurich-Winterthur: 1843). See also Zvi Rosen, *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx. The Influence of Bruno Bauer on Marx's Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977).

<sup>66</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Holy Family," in Marx and Engels 2010, vol. 4, pp. 5-211. Already in his dissertation Marx emphasized inverting the roles of God and man (and subject and predicate) in Hegel. See Breckman 2001, pp. 90-130, and the afterlife of these ideas in Warren Breckman, *Adventures of the Symbolic: Post-Marxism and Radical Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), pp. 41-56.

<sup>67</sup> Breckman 2001, p. 139.

<sup>68</sup> Rosen 1977, pp. 223-6, 228,

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<sup>69</sup> Marx and Engels 1975, vol. 3, pp. 170, 174.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>71</sup> Marx and Engels 1975, vol. 3, p. 170, Bauer 1843, p. 114.

<sup>72</sup> Marx and Engels 1975, vol. 3, p. 170.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> On the doctrine of supercession see Daniel Boyarin, *Border lines: the Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 52, *passim*.

<sup>75</sup> Breckman 2001, pp. 292-7, emphasized a common opposition to “the Christian self” among the young Hegelians, and he concluded his discussion with Marx’s “On the Jewish Question.” Yet Breckman did not discuss Marx’s relation to Jews, Judaism, or the Jewish self.

<sup>76</sup> Marx and Engels 1975, vol. 3, p. 174.

<sup>77</sup> Karl Marx, *A World without Jews* trans. Dagobert Runes (New York, Philosophical Library: 1960).

<sup>78</sup> Allan Megill, *Karl Marx. The Burden of Reason (Why Marx Rejected Politics and the Market)* (Oxford, Roman and Littlefield: 2002), p. 144, claimed that Marx meant “something closer to what the Canadian political theorist C. B. Macpherson meant when he coined the phrase ‘possessive individualism’—namely, an attitude in which the acquisition of private property becomes the central reality of social life.” David McLellan, *Marx before Marxism* (New York, Harper & Row: 1970), pp. 141-2, glossed Marx’s remarks were “an extended pun at Bauer’s expense.” See also Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press: 1968); Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question. A Marxist Interpretation* (New York, Pathfinder: 1970); Enzo Traverso, *The Marxists and the Jewish question: the history of a debate (1843-1943)* (Atlantic Highland, NJ: Humanities Press: 1994); Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (New Brunswick, Transaction publishers: 2001); Breckman 2001; Kevin Anderson, *Marx at the Margins. On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (Chicago, Chicago U. Press: 2010).

<sup>79</sup> E. J. Lesser, “Karl Marx als Jude,” *Der Jude* 3 (1924), pp. 173-81; Edmund Silberner, “Was Marx an Anti-semite?” *Historia Judaica* 11 (1949), pp. 3-52, reprinted in Ezra Mendelsohn, *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left* (New York, New York University Press: 1997), pp. 340-61; Arnold Künzli, *Karl Marx, Eine Psychographie* (Vienna, Europa Verlag: 1966); Julius Carlebach, *Karl Marx and the radical critique of Judaism* (Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul: 1978), pp. 311-17, 331-4, 368; Poliakov 1985; Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York, Norton: 1986); Gilman 1986, pp. 194-208.

<sup>80</sup> Arendt 1978; Murray Wolfson, *Marx, Economist, Philosopher, Jew: Steps in the Development of a Doctrine* (New York, Columbia University Press: 1971); Siegel 1993.

<sup>81</sup> Marx and Engels 1975, vol. 1, pp. 398-9, Marx letter to Ruge March 13, 1843.

<sup>82</sup> Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago, U. of Chicago Press: 1958), p. 44. Künzli 1966, pp. 634-5, Carlebach 1978, p. 317, Gilman 1986, p. 205, Siegel 1993, pp. 112, 118.

<sup>83</sup> Wolfson 1971, pp. xii-xiii.

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<sup>84</sup> See Eliyahu Stern, *Jewish Materialism: the Intellectual Revolution of the 1870s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

<sup>85</sup> Moses Hess, “On Money” in *The works of Moses Hess: an inventory of his signed and anonymous publications, manuscripts, and correspondence* ed. E. Silberner (Leiden, E. J. Brill: 1958).

<sup>86</sup> As reviewed in Carlebach 1978, pp. 110-24, Silberner, Megill, and Tucker all claimed that Marx’s “On the Jewish Question” was profoundly influenced by Hess’s *Über das Geldwesen*. Carlebach also provides a table (pp. 120-2) detailing the parallels between Hess’ essay and Marx’s *Economic and Political Manuscripts* from 1844. A related question was whether or not Marx intended to publish Hess’ essay in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbuch*.

<sup>87</sup> Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem: a study in Jewish nationalism* (Whitefish [Mont.]: Kessinger, 2005). Isaiah Berlin, “The Life and Opinions of Moses Hess” in *Against the current: essays in the history of ideas* (New York: Viking Press: 1980), pp. 213-51.

<sup>88</sup> Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon” 1852 in Marx and Engels 2010, vol. 11, pp. 99-197.

<sup>89</sup> Cited in Carlebach 1978, p. 80.

<sup>90</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1986?, p. 119.

<sup>91</sup> Heine, *The Romantic School* in Heine 1985, p. 30.

<sup>92</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Ideas—Book Le Grand* in *The Works of Heinrich Heine*, trans. Charles Godfrey Leland (London: William Heinemann, 1906) vol. 2, pp. 332-333; Heinrich Heine, *Ideas—Buch Le Grand* DHA vol. 6, pp. 200-1. I thank Warren Breckman for this reference.

<sup>93</sup> Breckman 2001, pp. 259-71, Stedman Jones 2017.

<sup>94</sup> On the controversy about Heine’s birthdate and his early years see Sammons 1979, pp. 11-15.

<sup>95</sup> See Sammons 1979, Praver 1985, Robert Holub, “Confessions of an Apostate: Heine’s Conversion and Its Psychic Displacement” in J. Hermand and R. Holub eds., *Heinrich Heine’s Contested Identities. Politics, Religion, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 69-88.

<sup>96</sup> Franz Kafka, *Letters to Milena* (New York: Schocken, 1962), pp. 19-20, offered an amusing anecdote on this topic in his letter to Milena Jesenská from May 30, 1920: “Then there’s the question of being Jewish. You ask me if I’m a Jew... As a woman from Prague you can’t be as innocuous in this respect as was for instance Mathilde, Heine’s wife... Meissner, a German-Bohemian writer—not Jewish— tells it in his memoirs. Mathilde was always annoying him with her outbursts against the Germans: the Germans are malicious, pedantic, self-righteous, petty, pushy; in short, unbearable. ‘But you don’t know the Germans at all,’ Meissner finally replied one day, ‘after all, the only people Henry sees are German journalists, and here in Paris all of them are Jewish.’ ‘Oh,’ said Mathilde, ‘you’re exaggerating, there might be a Jew among them here and there, for instance Siefert—.’ ‘No,’ said Meissner, ‘he’s the only one who isn’t Jewish.’ ‘What?’ said Mathilde, ‘you mean that Jeitteles (a large strong blond man) is Jewish?’ ‘Absolutely,’ said Meissner. ‘But what about Bamberger?’ ‘Bamberger too.’ ‘But Arnstein?’ ‘The same.’ And they went on like this exhausting all of their acquaintances. Finally, Mathilde

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got annoyed and said: ‘you’re just pulling my leg, in the end you’ll claim that Kohn is a Jewish name too, but Kohn is one of Henry’s nephews and Henry is Lutheran.’ Meissner had nothing to say to that.”

<sup>97</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Almansor* [1820-22] DHA vol. 5, pp. 7-68, Heinrich Heine, *Almansor* in Heine 1982, pp. 179-237.

<sup>98</sup> Holub 1999, p. 75.

<sup>99</sup> Bluma Goldstein, “Heine’s ‘Hebrew Melodies’: A Politics and Poetics of Diaspora” in J. Hermand and R. Holub eds., *Heinrich Heine’s Contested Identities. Politics, Religion, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 49-68, addressed Heine’s use of Golden Age Spanish Jewry in his *Hebrew Melodies* in particular, addressed in chapter five below.

<sup>100</sup> Praver 1985, pp. 11-12. Holub 1999, pp. 71-5

<sup>101</sup> Holub 1999, pp. 72-3, Katz, Jacob. *Jewish emancipation and self-emancipation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986), Debra Hertz, “Seductive Conversions in Berlin, 1770- 1809,” *Jewish Apostasy in The Modern World* ed. T. Endelman (New York: 1987), pp. 48-82.

<sup>102</sup> Holub 1999, p. 72.

<sup>103</sup> Elon 2002, p. 1, saw in Moses Mendelssohn the origin of German-Jewish culture. German Jews and particularly Russians claiming this mantle continue to be active in Germany after World War II, but one cannot say that German-Jewish culture itself has survived there. See Benjamin Lapp et al., *Rebirth of a Culture: Jewish Identity and Jewish Writing in Germany and Austria Today* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).

<sup>104</sup> Holub 1999, p. 85, proposed that “the confusion and displacement of Heine’s autobiographical writings make them of dubious value for facts and actual occurrences, but it makes them invaluable if we hope to understand the complex workings of Heine’s mind,” hence the subtitle of Holub’s essay, “Heine’s Conversion and Its Psychic Displacement.” But Heine’s texts are not primarily valuable as implicit evidence to establish facts about his life or even his state of mind, so much as explicit instances of his *art*, which is the manifestation of his mind.

<sup>105</sup> Holub 1999, pp. 71-3.

<sup>106</sup> Elon 2002, pp. 66-75.

<sup>107</sup> Breckman 2001, pp. 258-97.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Sammons 1979, p. 91.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>111</sup> Holub 1999, pp. 73, 76, further insisted that “we should exercise caution in applying the label German-Jewish to Heine (or to any writer who was converted), lest we fall into the same camp inhabited by a certain breed of racist who contends that Jewishness is located in the blood or some other un-alterable part of a person’s being or upbringing.” Recognizing Jewishness as something ethnic or racial is not necessarily racist, and there is no plausible alternative, unless we are to proceed as Goebbels famously did, deciding for ourselves who is German-Jewish, or simply allowing individuals to decide for themselves. The label “German-Jewish” is furthermore



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relevant *precisely* for converts, who could never become simply “Germans,” whereas those who did not convert could instead be called Jews living in Germany. Jeffrey Sammons, “Who did Heine Think He Was?” in J. Hermand and R. Holub eds., *Heinrich Heine’s Contested Identities. Politics, Religion, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 9, characterized Holub’s account as “a potentially productive effort to pick a fight with everyone,” but did not clarify any of these points.

<sup>112</sup> See Scholem 1976. Holub 1999, p. 73, asserted that “Heine’s identity crisis, which marked of course simultaneously a number of social crises in German life, became resolved in the next *post facto* German-Jewish synthesis, [so that] he became known primarily as the composer of a Romantic poetry, in which there are few overt traces of his actual personal conflicts or ethnic heritage.” One could formulate the circumstances in exactly the opposite way. What Holub called a “German-Jewish synthesis” was based on the repression of conflicts, just as the bitter and ironic dimensions of Heine’s poems, not just his “personal conflicts,” were repressed in his “de-thorning,” and these circumstances later resulted in the explosion of conflicts and open wounds of anti-Semitism and of Heine’s reputation.

<sup>113</sup> Heine 1982, p. 285, cited in Holub 1999, p. 77; DHA vol. 1.1, p. 526-7: “*Brich aus in lauten Klagen,/ Du düstres Martyrerlied,/ Das ich so lang getragen/ Im flammenstillen Gemüth. / Es dringt in alle Ohren,/ Und durch die Ohren ins Herz;/ Ich habe gewaltig beschworen/ Den tausendjährigen Schmerz./ Es weinen die Großen und Kleinen,/ Sogar die kalten Herr’n,/ Es weinen am Himmel die Stern’./ Und alle die Thränen fließen/ Nach Süden, im stillen Verein,/ Sie fließen und ergießen/ Sich all’ in den Jordan hinein.*”

<sup>114</sup> Holub 1999, p. 78.

<sup>115</sup> On these topics, see Chapter Five below.

<sup>116</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften* Munich 1975-8, vol. 2, p. 92, cited in Elon 2002, p. 118.

<sup>117</sup> Heine to Christian Sethe April 14, 1822, cited in Butler 1957, p. 24, Holub 1999, p. 73. HSA vol. 20, p. 49.

<sup>118</sup> HSA 20: 87, cited in Holub 1999, p. 74.

<sup>119</sup> Heine to Moser 23 August 1823, cited in Sammons 1997, p. 91.

<sup>120</sup> Heine to Rudolf Christiani, March 7 1824, cited in Holub 1999, p. 74; HSA vol. 20, p. 148.

<sup>121</sup> As cited and translated in Butler 1957, p. 26 (cf. also Holub 1999, p. 74); HSA vol. 20, p. 147.

<sup>122</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Germany a Winter’s Tale*, preface, p. iv; Heinrich Heine, *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen* DHA vol. 4, pp. 300-1.

<sup>123</sup> Sammons 1997, pp. 107-10.

<sup>124</sup> Heine to Moser 9 January 1826, cited in Sammons 1997, p. 109; HAS vol. 20, p. 234.

<sup>125</sup> Gilman 1986, pp. 167-87, devoted an extended meditation to Heine, but applied a flat-footed exegesis.

<sup>126</sup> Heinrich Heine, *prosanotizen* DHA vol. 10, p. 313: “*Der Taufzettel ist das Entreebillet zur europäischen Kultur.*” Cf. the insightful discussion in Praver 1985, pp. 11-12, 71-6, Holub 1999, pp. 70-71.

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<sup>127</sup> On the Munich position, see Jan-Cristoph Hochschild, “Professor Heine? Von der Lockungen einer akademischen Karriere” in W. Gössmann and M. Windfuhr eds., *Heinrich Heine im Spannungsfeld von Literatur und Wissenschaft. Symposium anlässlich der Benennung der Universität Düsseldorf nach Heinrich Heine* (Düsseldorf: Hagen, 1990), pp. 41-52, Sammons 1997, pp. 136-8, Holub 1999, pp. 94-5.

<sup>128</sup> Heine 1982, p. 286. Sammons 1997, pp. 93, 108. See also Robertson 1988, pp. 84-5; DHA vol. 1, p. 529: “*O des heiligen Jugendmuthes!/O wie schnell bist du gebändigt!/Und du hast dich kühlern Blutes/Mit den lieben Her'n verständigt./Und du bist zu Kreuz gekrochen/Zu dem Kreuz das du verachtest/Das du noch vor wenig Wochen/In den Staub zu treten dachtest!/O das thut das viele Lesen/Jener Schlegel, Haller, Burke./Gestern noch ein Held gewesen/Ist man heute schon ein Schurke.*”

<sup>129</sup> Holub 1999, p. 79.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 81: he “abandoned his heritage without apparent gain.”

<sup>131</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 274; Heine, *Geständnissen* DHA vol. 15, p. 42. In the same text Heine noted that if he had not had an identifiable denomination (“confession”) in Berlin he wouldn’t have been allowed to be a resident. According to Jacob Toury, *Soziale und politische Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland 1847-1871: Zwischen Revolution, Reaktion und Emanzipation* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1977), p. 61, having no denomination was not a practical possibility before 1848.

<sup>132</sup> Heine to Wohlwill, 1 April 1823, cited in Sammons 1997, p. 91; HSA vol. 20, p. 71. “...*mich zur schneidendsten und feindseeligten Bitterkeit verstimmen.*”

<sup>133</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Baths of Luca*, as cited and translated in Butler 1957, p. 79; Heine, *Die Bäder von Lukka* DHA vol. 7.1, pp. 115-16.

<sup>134</sup> See Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: “Ritual murder,” Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>135</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Lutezia* in Heine 1948, p. 693-4, Heinrich Heine, *Lutezia* DHA vol. 13.1, p. 123.

<sup>136</sup> These texts are addressed in Chapter Five below.

<sup>137</sup> As quoted in Sigmund Freud, *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905) in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. J. Strachey 24 vols. (London, 1955), vol. 8, p. 114.

## Chapter Three            The Börne Identity

<sup>1</sup> Robert Ludlum, *The Bourne Identity* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980). Part of the attraction of the Bourne story, as both a novel and movie, is the way the protagonist is “reborn” so to speak into a different identity, and an exciting one at that. He is both “relatable” to the mass audience as an ordinary American and something more than that, an individual who not only possesses extraordinary personal combat skills but also speaks several European languages fluently, in short, and American James Bond. Heine mastered several European languages, and demonstrated

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uncanny skills in personal combat of a literary kind, but is also “relatable” to many Americans, because of his Jewish sense of humor, a central topic of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Heine 2006; Heinrich Heine, *Ludwig Börne. Eine Denkschrift* in *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed., Helmut Koopmann (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1978) DHA vol. 11, pp. 11-132.

<sup>3</sup> See Hanna Spencer, “Gipfel oder Tiefpunkt? Die Denkschrift für Ludwig Börne” in *Dichter, Denker, Journalist: Studien zum Werk Heinrich Heines* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1977), pp. 101-49, and the literature cited there.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx/ Friedrich Engels—Werke. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1976) vol. 1, p. 441, Sammons in Heine 2006, pp. xxxviii-xxxx, Paul Reitter, “The Story of a Friendship Gone Bad: Heinrich Heine on Ludwig Börne” in *Bambi’s Jewish Roots, and other Essays on Jewish-German Culture* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Bartels, *Heinrich Heine, Auch ein Denkmal* (Leipzig: I. A. Kochs, 1906).

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx in Brussels to Heinrich Heine in Paris, the beginning of April 1846, *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe*, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1975), vol. 1, p. 284. Sadly, Marx never wrote the essay.

<sup>7</sup> HSA vol. 21, p. 347; Matthew Arnold, “Hebraism and Hellenism” in *Culture and Anarchy* ed. Samuel Lippman (New Haven CT: Yale University press, 1994), pp. 86-96; Thomas Mann, “Über Heinrich Heine” [1927] in *Schriften zur Literatur* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1977), p. 112.

<sup>8</sup> Heine, “Journey from Munich to Genoa” in Heine 1998, chapter 31, p. 25; Heine, *Reise von München nach Genua* DHA vol. 7.1, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Jost Hermand, “Tribune of the People or Aristocrat of the Spirit? Heine’s Ambivalence Towards the Masses” in Hermand and Holub 1999, pp. 155-73.

<sup>10</sup> On Börne see Alfred Esterman, *Ludwig Börne: Zum 200. Geburtstag des Frankfurter Schriftstellers* (Frankfurt/Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1986), Hans Magnus Enzensberger ed., *Ludwig Börne und Heinrich Heine. Ein deutsches Zerwürfnis* (Frankfurt/Main: Eichborn, 1987), Frank Stern and Mara Gierlinger eds., *Ludwig Börne: Deutscher, Jude, Demokrat* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2003). Studies of Börne in relation to Heine, now Börne’s primary historical significance, are addressed below.

<sup>11</sup> Heinrich Heine, “‘The Salon’: Exhibition of Paintings in Paris” (“French Painters”) [1831] in Heine 1876, pp. 51-82. Heinrich Heine, *Französische Mahler* DHA vol. 12, pp. 9-62

<sup>12</sup> On these points see especially Inge Rippman, “Heines Denkschrift über Börne: Ein Doppelporträt,” *Heine Jahrbuch* 12 (1973), pp. 43-7. See also Amos Elon, “Heine and Börne” in Elon 2002, pp. 01-148.

<sup>13</sup> See Zvi Tauber, “Aesthetik und Politik: Der Streit zwischen Heine und Börne” in Stern & Gierlinger eds., *Ludwig Börne: Deutscher, Jude, Demokrat* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2003), pp. 203-21.

<sup>14</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 122; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 129.

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<sup>15</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 117; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 125.

<sup>16</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 114; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 122.

<sup>17</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, pp. 114-15; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, pp. 122-3.

<sup>18</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, pp. 9-10; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, pp. 18-19.

<sup>19</sup> Heine, *The Gods in Exile* in Heine 1892, vol. 6, p. 307: “The real question is: whether the dismal, meager, over-spiritual, ascetic Judaism of the Nazarenes or Hellenic joyousness, love of beauty, and fresh pleasure in life rule the world?” Heine also used the two terms in his unfinished *Rabbi of Bacherach* from 1840, I 498, when Don Isaac, replying to the rabbi’s reproach of paganism, confesses that he associates the joyless Hebrews with the torture-seeking Nazarenes. Cf. also Holub 1981, p. 136.

<sup>20</sup> Holub 1981, pp. 144, 153, 157, repeatedly used the word “Hellenists” in reference to Heine’s Hellenes, and at one point even substituted “Greeks,” which indicates insufficient attention to the originality and subtlety of Heine’s concept.

<sup>21</sup> Arnold 1994, pp. 86-96.

<sup>22</sup> Willi Goetschel, “Hellenes, Nazarenes, and Other Jews” in *The Discipline of Philosophy and the Invention of Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press: 2013), pp. 22, 23, 37, also cited “Nietzsche’s later interplay between the Apollonian and Dionysian difference” in his *Birth of Tragedy*. As discussed in Chapters Four and Five below, the more pertinent concepts in Nietzsche are master and slave morality in *The Genealogy of Morals*, whereas *The Birth of Tragedy* is more pertinent for Heine’s discussion of Dionysus.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 25, 27, 34.

<sup>24</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* trans. W. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Rippmann 1973, pp. 41-42, 54.

<sup>26</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, pp. 110-11.

<sup>27</sup> Rippmann 1973, p. 41 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Goetschel 2013, pp. 24, 27, 34, also tended to elide terms, as when he repeatedly referred to “the distinction between Hellenes and Nazarenes, Jews and Greeks,” “the deconstruction of the distinction between Hellenes and Hebrews, Greeks and Jews,” or “the distinction between Hellenes and Hebrews, Greeks and Nazarenes,” as if these terms were interchangeable. Heine revealed slippage in his construction, yet for precisely that reason his dichotomy cannot be reduced to “Jews and Greeks,” “Hellenes and Hebrews,” or “Greeks and Nazarenes.”

<sup>29</sup> Goetschel claimed that “Along this trajectory, Heine is able to expose the confusion between patriotism and cosmopolitanism, between doctrinarism and free-spiritedness, and eventually between character and talent.” *Ibid.*, p. 26. The contrary case could also be made: despite his

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playful dialectic, Heine clearly opposes the Nazarene Börne's patriotism, doctrinarism, and "character" to the Hellene Heine's cosmopolitanism, free-spiritedness, and talent.

<sup>30</sup> Heinrich Heine, "Don Quixote," and "I am Only Don Quixote" from *The Town of Lucca* [1830] in Heine 1948, pp. 382, 383-6.

<sup>31</sup> Heine 2006, p. 45.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>33</sup> Rippmann 1973, p. 43. See also Spencer, "Gipfel oder Tiefpunkt?," p. 107.

<sup>34</sup> See Rippmann 1973, p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 112; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 120.

<sup>36</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 116; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 124.

<sup>37</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 95; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 103.

<sup>38</sup> Novalis, *Blüthenstaub*, 1798, in Novalis (*Friedrich von Hardenberg*), *Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe Friedrich von Hardenbergs* ed. M. Frank (Frankfurt/Main: Hanser, 1978-87).

<sup>39</sup> Marx, "introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbuch* 1844 in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 3, p. 175: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."

<sup>40</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 120 (I have rendered Heine's *des deutschen Geistes* as "German mind" in place of Sammons'—all too Hegelian—"German spirit"); Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Ein Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 128.

<sup>41</sup> Kraus 2013, p. 105.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Sammons, "introduction" to Heine 2006, p. xxvii.

<sup>43</sup> Sloterdijk 1987, p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Heinrich Laube, *Struensee* (Leipzig: 1847), preface pp. 3-21. Richard Wagner was profoundly influenced by this idea, as discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>45</sup> Chase 2000, pp. 65-66, 114, 128, took issue with Jost Hermand, "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?: Börne *contra* Menzel" in Alfred Estermann, *Ludwig Börne: Zum 200. Geburtstag des Frankfurter Schriftstellers* (Frankfurt/Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1986), pp. 199-209.

<sup>46</sup> Ludwig Börne, "Menzel der Franzosenfresser" [1837] in *Sämtliche Schriften* eds. I and P. Rippmann 5 vols. (Düsseldorf: Melzer, 1964-68), vol. 3, pp. 88-9, as cited and translated in Chase 2000, p. 262.

<sup>47</sup> Börne, *Franzosenfresser*, as cited and translated in Chase 2000, p. 263.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>49</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 97; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Ein Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 105.
- <sup>50</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 98; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Ein Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 105.
- <sup>51</sup> Chase 2000, pp. 112, 138.
- <sup>52</sup> See Rippmann 1973, p. 43.
- <sup>53</sup> Chase 2000.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 156.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-13, 131.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- <sup>57</sup> Chase noted that the tendency persists among modern Heine commentators. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- <sup>58</sup> Heine, *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* in Heine 2006, p. 94; Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Ein Denkschrift* DHA vol. 11, p. 101.
- <sup>59</sup> Robert Holub, "Heine's Sexual Assaults: Towards a Theory of the Total Polemic," *Monatshefte* 73 (1981), pp. 415-22, argued that Heine's sexual polemics served primarily political ends. In Holub's view, in resisting his natural inclinations, Platen anticipates the "ascetic" type in Heine's later dichotomy, a reading that is difficult to follow. Other possible explanations of Heine's conflict with Platen are explored in Sammons 1979, pp. 141-6 and Jost Hermand, "Heine contra Platen: Zur Anatomie eines Skandals" in *Heinrich Heine und das neunzehnte Jahrhundert: Signaturen. Neue Beiträge zur Forschung* ed. R. Hosfeld (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1986), pp. 108-20. Chase's emphasis on Jewish humor seems most relevant, although aesthetic considerations always preceded political ones for Heine.
- <sup>60</sup> Butler, *Heinrich Heine: a biography* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), p. 69.
- <sup>61</sup> Chase 2000.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-2.
- <sup>63</sup> Gilman 1986, p. 187; Sander Gilman, *Inscribing the Other* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p. 129.
- <sup>64</sup> Praver 1985, p. 154.
- <sup>65</sup> Cited in Chase 2000, p. 57.
- <sup>66</sup> As cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.
- <sup>68</sup> Heine, *The Baths of Luca*, as cited and translated in Chase 2000, pp. p. 169 n. 67.
- <sup>69</sup> Chase 2000, pp. 33, 157, 168 n. 66; Praver 1985, pp. 154-5; Gilman 1986, pp. 169-74.
- <sup>70</sup> Chase 2000, pp. 169-70.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

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<sup>72</sup> Other more recent accounts of Jewish humor of interest in this connection include Ruth Wisse, “Heine” in *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 35-51, and Jeremy Dauber, *Jewish Comedy: A Serious History* (New York: Norton, 2017).

<sup>73</sup> Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* in Freud 1955, vol. 8, pp. 16-20. Chase 2000, p. 162 n. 53, mentioned but did not address Heine’s joke.

<sup>74</sup> Freud 1955, pp. 17 n. 1, 141-2.

<sup>75</sup> Chase 2000, p. 150.

<sup>76</sup> Like Chase, Goetschel 2013, pp. 24, 34, recognized Jewish assimilation as a key issue, yet proposed that Heine confronted “the false promise of assimilation... In a typically ‘assimilationist’ posture of provocation, Heine acts as the Hellene, reminding his readers of the act’s comedic irony.” Goetschel’s idea that Heine considers assimilation a “false promise” is convincing, yet not necessarily because Heine “acts” or “postures” as Hellene. Börne was the one who postured as German and Jewish, and sincerely, albeit mistakenly believed himself to be both. Heine genuinely considered himself a Hellene, yet rightly recognized this category as unstable, and that he would nevertheless remain a Jew. He shared some things in common with Börne, yet they were nevertheless opposed in many ways.

<sup>77</sup> Stern 2010, p. 209.

<sup>78</sup> See David Biale, *Not in the Heavens: the Tradition of Jewish Secular Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), Scott Spector, *Modernism without Jews?: German-Jewish Subjects and Histories* (Bloomington [IN]: Indiana University Press, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> Arendt 1978, pp. 18 40-2, 64, 66.

<sup>80</sup> John Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Lévi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (New York, Basic Books: 1974).

<sup>81</sup> Cuddihy 1974, pp. 3-4, 66, 233.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6, 132.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1, 141-14.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-2.

<sup>88</sup> Marx, “On the Jewish Question” in Marx and Engels 1975, vol. 3, p. 173, noted that “Christianity had only in semblance overcome real Judaism. It was too *noble-minded* [*vornehm*], too spiritualistic to eliminate the crudity of practical need in any other way than by elevation to the skies.” See Cuddihy 1974, p. 133.

<sup>89</sup> Cuddihy 1974, pp. 130, 135.

<sup>90</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* in Freud 1955, vol. 4, pp. 196-8. Interestingly, Börne discussed this common practice by gentiles in relation to the Jews of the Frankfurt Ghetto.

<sup>91</sup> Cuddihy 1974, pp. 65, 67, 126.

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<sup>92</sup> See Daniel Boyarin, “Épater L’Embourgeoisement: Freud, Gender, and the (De)colonized Psyche,” *Diacritics* 24 (1994), p. 20.

<sup>93</sup> Boyarin, referring to Cuddihy’s disregard of anti-Semitism, noted that his position was bizarre “for a man who declares himself glad to be a Catholic... As Martin Jay points out to me... an Irish Catholic... ought to have resented English colonial control.” *Ibid.*, p. 20. On the other hand, Cuddihy’s Irish Catholic background helps explain his overall thesis.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>95</sup> As the corollary of Cuddihy’s outlook, Sander Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton, Princeton U. Press: 1993), pp. 38-9, equally reductively interpreted psychoanalysis as a “reactive reflex to anti-Semitism,” or its internalization, a kind of negative “wax impression.” Gilman further discovered that in Viennese parlance of Freud’s time *der Jude* [the Jew] was the usual slang term for the clitoris and “playing with the Jew” meant female masturbation. Gilman accordingly proposed that these names arose because both the clitoris and the circumcised Jewish penis were read as truncated versions of the truly masculine uncircumcised male organ. Boyarin 1994, pp. 30-1, took up Gilman’s argument, and elaborating on a proposal by William McGrath, interpreted the ‘primal scene’ of Freud’s father’s knocked-off hat as “(the?) source of the castration (circumcision?) complex and penis (foreskin) envy.” These theories can lead far afield. The pertinent issue was whether or not Freud’s ideas of sexual repression and the unconscious were related to his being Jewish.

<sup>96</sup> Cuddihy’s third subject, Claude Lévi-Strauss, could be said to be less well-suited as a peer of Marx and Freud.

<sup>97</sup> Heinrich Heine, “Über Polen,” *DHA* vol. 6, pp. 476-517. Cf. also Paul Reitter et al., “The Polish Question and Heine’s Exilic Identity” in J. Hermand and R. Holub eds., *Heinrich Heine’s Contested Identities. Politics, Religion, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 135-54.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Hannah Arendt’s letter from to Gershom Scholem from July 29, 1959 in Marie Luise Knott ed., *The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem* trans. A. David (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 195: “Jews are all secretly of the opinion that I’m an anti-Semite. They don’t see how much I liked Rahel [Varhagen] when I was writing the book, they don’t understand how one could be both friendly and tell the truth, to oneself for instance. For this reason these gangs never understood Heine. What undoubtedly made a Heine even harder for them, on top of everything else, was his ability to laugh at everyone.”

<sup>99</sup> Josef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud’s Moses: Judaism Terminable or Interminable* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 9-10.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>102</sup> Heinrich Heine, “The New Jewish Hospital in Hamburg” in Heine 1948, p. 285; Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* in Freud 1955, vol. 23, pp. 30-1.

<sup>103</sup> Yerushalmi 1991, p. 32, notes a comparable sentiment expressed by Solomon Ibn Verga, a Spanish Jewish refugee baptized by force, in his *Scepter of Judah* from 1497: “Judaism is one of the incurable diseases.”



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<sup>104</sup> Heine, “The new Jewish Hospital in Hamburg” in Heine 1948, p. 285, concludes: “He gave with open hand-yet almost more costly/ Fell from his eyes: tears fair and very precious,/ With which he often wept the vast and hopeless/ Incurable affliction of his brothers [*Ob der unheilbar großen Brüderkrankheit*].” The last phrase refers to Judaism as interminable disease, but also to Solomon’s brother Samson, Heine’s father, and his apparently incurable affliction of poverty, handed from father to son, in part because Solomon preferred to fund public institutions like the hospital rather than his wayward poet nephew, aside from his yearly stipend of 4,800 francs.

#### Chapter Four            Nietzsche *contra* Wagner *pro* Heine

<sup>1</sup> Tom Stern, “On Analysis,” *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 5814, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Anti-Christ* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1974 [1950]).

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890-1990* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1992), p. 2; Kaufmann 1974, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Aschheim 1992, pp. 4, 8, Kaufmann 1974, p. 414.

<sup>5</sup> Aschheim 1992, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Aschheim 1992, p. 3 n. 7, citing Jacques Derrida, “Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name” trans. A. Ronell in Christie McDonald ed. *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation* trans. P. Kamuf (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), p. 29. On these texts and issues see the concluding section of the following chapter.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Alan Schrift, *Nietzsche’s French Legacy. A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> Robert Holub, *Nietzsche’s Jewish Problem. Between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Some of the most important accounts of Nietzsche’s relation to Heine include in addition to Kaufmann 1974, also Butler 1958, Ronald Floyd, *Heine and Nietzsche—parallel studies in paradox and irony* (dissertation) University of Washington at Seattle (1969), Hanna Spencer, “Heine and Nietzsche,” *Heine Jahrbuch* 11 (1972), pp. 121-61, Herdwig Friedl, “Heinrich Heine und Friedrich Nietzsche” in W. Gössmann and M. Windfuhr eds., *Heinrich Heine im Spannungsfeld von Literature und Wissenschaft. Symposium anlässlich der Benennung der Universität Düsseldorf nach Heinrich Heine* (Düsseldorf: Hagen, 1990), pp. 195-214, Sander Gilman, “Heine, Nietzsche and the idea of the Jew” in Jacob Golomb ed., *Nietzsche & Jewish Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 76-100, Karl Knispel, *Heinrich Heine und Friedrich Nietzsche. Eine Untersuchung zur Kongruenz im Denken beider Autoren* Magisterarbeit an der Gerhardt-Mercator-Universität Duisburg (1997), Iliev Welisar, “Nietzsche und Heine. Chronik einer (lebenslänglichen?) Beziehung,” *Germanica* 4 (1997), pp. 247-66, Stern 2010.

<sup>10</sup> See Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism* vol. 3: *From Voltaire to Wagner* trans. M. Kochan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 380-457.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Wagner, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Baden: Klaus Fischer Verlag, 2010), Richard Wagner, *Judaism in Music, and other essays* W. A. Ellis trans. (Lincoln: U. of Nebraska Press,

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1995). Wagner's pen name *Freigedank* is usually translated "freethinker," which sounds pioneering and emancipatory, whereas the more literal translation "free-thought" adopted here more accurately and ominously evokes ideas that are normally censored or repressed. Robert Holub, "Nietzsche and the Jewish Question," *New German Critique* 66 (1995), p. 98, offered the provocative alternative "Jewishness in Music," but returned to the conventional translation in his 2016 book.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Wagner, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Baden: Klaus Fischer Verlag, 2010), Richard Wagner, *Judaism in Music, and other essays* W. A. Ellis trans. (Lincoln: U. of Nebraska Press, 1995). Wagner's pen name *Freigedank* is usually translated "freethinker," which sounds pioneering and emancipatory, whereas the more literal translation "free-thought" adopted here more accurately and ominously evokes ideas that are normally censored or repressed. On the monetary and commercial connotations of *Judentum* see Jerrold Seigel, *Marx's fate: the Shape of a Life* (University Park [PA]: Pennsylvania State University Press: 1993), p. 117, Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (New Brunswick, Transaction publishers: 2001), p. 111. I return to these issues in chapter four below. Robert Holub, "Nietzsche and the Jewish Question," *New German Critique* 66 (1995), p. 98, offered the provocative alternative translation "Jewishness in Music," but returned to the conventional one in his 2016 book.

<sup>13</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* in Nietzsche 2000, pp. 377-8.

<sup>14</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche contra Wagner* in Walter Kaufmann ed. *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 675-6.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe Briefe*, ed. G. Coli and M. Montinari 8 vols. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), vol. 6, p. 335 no. 382, as cited by Holub 2016, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> Nietzsche 1986, vol. 6, p. 337 no. 384, as cited by Holub 2016, p. 93.

<sup>17</sup> Holub 2016, p. 93

<sup>18</sup> Holub 2016, p. 93. For Nietzsche as forerunner of the theorization of masturbation, rather than alleged masturbator, and on masturbation more generally, see Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer* in Nietzsche 1976, no. 8 p. 467.

<sup>20</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* II: 6, in Nietzsche 2000, pp. 705-6. See also Jerrold Seigel, "Will, reflection, and self-overcoming: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche" in *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 537-67.

<sup>21</sup> Kaufmann 1974, pp. 4-8, 15-18, passim.

<sup>22</sup> Holub 2016, p. 207. Holub helpfully summarized his conclusions at the end of the book, this being his conclusion no. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Alex Soros, "Nietzsche, Wagner, and the Jews. Review of Robert Holub, *Nietzsche's Jewish Problem: between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism*," *Journal of Intellectual History*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17496977.2018.1447346>. Previous reviews of Holub's book either embraced his account as an implicit rejection of Nietzsche, or rejected Holub's account in affirming Nietzsche's importance. Among the latter, Brian Leiter,

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“Nietzsche’s Hatred of ‘Jew Hatred,’” review of Holub, *Nietzsche’s Jewish Problem*, *The New Rambler*, <http://newramblerreview.com/book-reviews/philosophy/nietzsche-s-hatred-of-jew-hatred>, convincingly set out in detail how Holub misrepresented Nietzsche’s outlook “largely through letters and unpublished material—as well as a good deal of innuendo and speculation—rather than systematic engagement with Nietzsche’s actual philosophical work.”

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Holub 2016, pp. 43, 204-5.

<sup>25</sup> Holub claimed that Nietzsche adopted from the Wagners a “cultural code” of veiled references to wealth, concern with money, cleverness. Holub thereby twisted a lack of evidence for his argument in his own favor. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70, 205-6.

<sup>26</sup> Holub claimed that Nietzsche fully embraced Wagner’s anti-Semitic world-view, and insisted that Nietzsche’s “break with Wagner had nothing to do with Wagner’s attitude towards Jews,” in direct contradiction to Nietzsche’s published texts. *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 204.

<sup>27</sup> A related instance involved what Nietzsche called a “mortal insult” as the reason for his break with Wagner, discussed above. Holub objected that Nietzsche had long since known about Wagner’s crypto-Christianity evident in his *Parsifal*, which Nietzsche had read through when he first met the composer. *Ibid.*, p. 93. Rather, as a means of saving face, Nietzsche presented his break with Wagner in retrospect as the result of a change in Wagner—the mortal insult—rather than Nietzsche himself.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2, p. 204.

<sup>29</sup> Kaufmann 1974, pp. 48-9.

<sup>30</sup> Holub 2016, p. 111.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>32</sup> Holub seeks to counter this evidence insofar as Nietzsche “merely reversed traditional stereotypes”—as he readily admitted in the long passage above, making modern virtues of the Jews’ perceived vices—and sought to “curry favor with Jews,” ostensibly out of concern for his career. *Ibid.*, pp. 206-7.

<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 378-9. Holub 2016, p. 206, asserted that Nietzsche “recognized the seriousness of the Jewish Question [...but] regarded the solutions of the anti-Semitic movement to be both too crude and ultimately inefficacious.” The implication is that Nietzsche sought a more sophisticated and efficacious solution. However, Holub offered no concrete evidence for this assertion, and also used the term “Jewish Question” in a vague and imprecise sense to mean ‘Nietzsche’s relation to Jews,’ closely related to the phrase “Nietzsche’s Jewish Problem” in Holub’s title. By Holub’s own account, the origins of his book lay in his essay from two decades earlier called “Nietzsche and the Jewish Question,” in which he observed: “The designation ‘Jewish Question’ is, of course, vague and imprecise, but it is in some ways more appropriate than terms such as anti-Semitism, Judaism, or the Jews, because previous commentators on these matters have conflated precisely these issues, which need to be considered separately.” Holub 1995, p. 96. Holub’s 2016 book conflated these issues in relation to both the terms “Jewish Question” and “Jewish Problem.” In his concluding sentence, Holub declared: “Our best hope for understanding [Nietzsche], his writings, and, in particular, his complex relationship to the Jewish Question, will result from the most rigorous endeavor to

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envelop him in the discourses to which he responded and in the nineteenth-century context in which he formulated his controversial views” (p. 214).

<sup>34</sup> Holub 2016, pp. 164, 214, concluded: “The harmony that exists between Overbeck and Nietzsche with regard to the Jewish Question and anti-Semitism contains a cautionary lesson for today’s readers not to evaluate matters of race and racial bias without the relevant historical context.” Cf. also Holub’s concluding sentence cited in the previous note: “...endeavor *to envelop him in the discourses* to which he responded” (my emphasis). Holub equated Nietzsche’s “relevant historical context” with the views of his contemporaries, yet Nietzsche as an original thinker mostly resisted or opposed his contemporaries.

<sup>35</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 378 n. 27.

<sup>36</sup> Holub 2016, p. 212.

<sup>37</sup> Kaufmann 1974, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> Holub 2016, pp. 206-7, identified Nietzsche’s comments and his discussion of “the Law Book of Manu” as instances of “anti-Judaism.” David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism. The Western Tradition* (New York: Norton, 2013) had previously used the term “anti-Judaism” in a different context which Holub should have acknowledged. Holub also never demonstrated any connection or continuity between his idiosyncratic sense of “anti-Judaism” and anti-Semitism, nor did he situate Nietzsche between these poles as implied by his subtitle. More generally, in pursuing his case for Nietzsche’s ostensible “Jewish problem,” Holub could be said to have abandoned the effort to understand his philosophy. Kaufmann 1974, p. 76, foresaw this issue when he warned that “[the] attempt to view Nietzsche’s ideas as merely biographical data—dissolving them existentially or viewing them psychologically—seems based on resignation that despairs of finding any coherent body of thought.”

<sup>39</sup> The book is discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* in Nietzsche 1976, p. 672. On this passage see also Gunter Martens, “‘Was wüßte deutsches Hornvieh mit den délicatesses einer solchen Natur anzufangen!’ Nietzsche über Heinrich Heine,” *Nachmärz* (1996), pp. 246-66.

<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 701.

<sup>42</sup> On these issues See Michael P. Steinberg, *Listening to Reason: Culture, Subjectivity, and Nineteenth-century Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Thomas Grey, “The Jewish Question” in Thomas Grey ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2008), p. 218, Daniel Pedersen ed., *Cosmopolitanism, Heidegger, Wagner—Jewish Reflections* (Stockholm: Jewish Culture in Sweden, 2017), .

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Paul Lawrence Rose, *Wagner: Race and Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 127.

<sup>44</sup> Wagner 1995, p. 82.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. the fascinating range of essays on German music and national identity in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter. *Music & German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>49</sup> As cited in Henry Pleasants, *The Musical World of Robert Schumann* (London: Victor Gollancz, (1965), pp. 137–8.

<sup>50</sup> Laube 1847, pp. 3-21. See Paul Lawrence Rose, “Heine and Wagner Revisited: Art, Myth and Revolution,” *Heine Jahrbuch* (1991), p. 108.

<sup>51</sup> Cited in Grey 2008, p. 206.

<sup>52</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Wagner 1995, pp. 99-100.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>55</sup> As cited in Rose 1992, p. 124.

<sup>56</sup> Following the overview in Grey 2008, p. 203. David Levin, “Reading Beckmesser Reading: Antisemitism and Aesthetic Practice in The Mastersingers of Nuremberg,” *New German Critique* 69 (1996), pp. 127-146, provided a balanced survey of the literature on the topic, including extensive critique of Rose 1992.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Gutman, *Richard Wagner: The Man, His Mind and His Music* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1968), Rose 1992, pp. 158-69, Marc Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the anti-Semitic Imagination* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 183-93, 228-59. Hartmut Zelinsky, “Die ‘Feuerkur’ des Richard Wagner, oder die ‘neue Religion’ der ‘Erlösung’ durch ‘Vernichtung’” in Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Reiner Riehm eds., *Richard Wagner: Wie anti-semitisch darf ein Künstler sein?* (Munich: 1978), pp. 99, 103-12, argued that the formula “redemption for the redeemer” at the conclusion of *Parsifal* refers to the cleansing of a true, Aryan Jesus from the Hebraic or Semitic Jesus of the Gospels.

<sup>58</sup> Bryan Magee, *The Tristan chord: Wagner and philosophy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001), pp. 343-80, and Michael Tanner, *Wagner* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), pp. 239-58, both dismiss Wagner’s anti-Semitism as irrelevant; Tanner also disturbingly compared Wagner’s anti-Semitism to his adultery and other “character flaws.”

<sup>59</sup> Grey 2008, p. 214. See also Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* (London: NLB, 1981).

<sup>60</sup> Grey 2008, p. 212.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Leah Garret, *A Knight at the Opera. Heine, Wagner, Herzl, Peretz, and the Legacy of Der Tannhäuser* (West Lafayette [IN]: Purdue U. Press, 2011), p. 1 ff., cited these claims at the outset of her study of different receptions of the Tannhäuser myth in Wagner and Jewish writers. An unambiguous connection of Wagner and Hitler is posited already in the titles of Joachim Köhler, *Wagner’s Hitler: The Prophet and his Disciple* (Malden [MA]: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) and Christopher Nicholson, *Richard and Adolf: Did Richard Wagner Incite Hitler to Commit the Holocaust?* (New York: Geffen Books, 2007). Pamela Potter, “Wagner and the Third Reich: myths and realities” in *Cambridge Companion to Wagner*, pp. 235-45, refutes a number of these claims.

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Grey 2008, p. 211: “Wagner only matters anymore as the author of his operas or music dramas, while the opinionated ideologist faded from cultural relevance along with the phenomenon of ‘Wagnerism’ nearly a century ago.” Conversely, Na’ama Sheffi, *The Ring of Myths: The Israelis, Wagner and the Nazis* (Brighton [UK]: Sussex Academic Press, 2000), reviewed the history of the unofficial ban on Wagner’s music in Israel since its founding in 1938 until 1948 in response to Kristallnacht. As discussed in Leon Botstein, “German Jews and Wagner” in Thomas Grey ed., *Richard Wagner and his World* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2009), pp. 151-97, Daniel Barenboim provoked a scandal by asking audience members to listen to part of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde* as an encore at the Israeli Music Festival in Jerusalem in 2001, leading mostly German musicians from the Berlin Staatskapelle, Heated arguments ensued, some audience members stormed out in protest, and others listened and rewarded the musicians with a standing ovation. In Botstein’s view, we must reject a simple trajectory connecting Wagner to Hitler and assigning art and culture a key causal role in shaping political realities, in favor of an acknowledgment of “the weakness of culture in history.”

<sup>64</sup> Jacob Katz, *The Darker Side of Genius: Wagner’s Anti-Semitism* (London: Brandeis U. Press, 1986), pp. 21, 29, 32.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>66</sup> On Wagner and Herman Levi see Peter Gay, “Hermann Levi: A Study in Service and Self-Hatred” in *Freud, Jews and Other Germans. Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1978), pp. 189-230.

<sup>67</sup> Rose 1991, pp. 110-12.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110-12.

<sup>69</sup> On Laube see Sammons 1979, pp. 206-8, Rose 1992, p. 23-4, 41-4.

<sup>70</sup> Rose 1991, p. 94.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>73</sup> Rose 1991, pp. 104-5, 106: “the wandering Jew is a key to Heine, for it unifies the poet’s literary sensibility with his personality... integrating the various stages in the development of Heine’s thought and outlook.” See also Hans-Jürgen Schrader, “Schnabelewopskis und Wagners >>Fliegender Holländer<<,” in Markus Winkler ed., *Heinrich Heine und die Romantik / and Romanticism. Erträge eines Symposiums an der Pennsylvania State University 21-3 September 1996* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), pp. 191-224.

<sup>74</sup> Rose 1991, p. 107.

<sup>75</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Aus den Memoiren des Herren von Schnabelowski* DHA vol. 5, 174.

<sup>76</sup> Garret 2011, pp. 8-10.

<sup>77</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Tannhäuser* in *The Poetry and Prose of Heinrich Heine* trans. F. Ewen (New York: Citadel Press, 1948), p. 120. See also Heine 1982, p. 348; Heinrich Heine, *Tannhäuser* DHA vol. 9, pp. 57-8: “*Frau Venus, meine schöne Frau,/ Von süßem Wein und Küssen/ Ist meine Seele worden krank;/ Ich schmachte nach Bitternissen... Ich sehne mich nach Thränen,/ Und statt mit Rosen möcht ich mein Haupt/ Mit spitzigen Dornen krönen.... Dein schöner liljenweißer*

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*Leib/ Erfüllt mich fast mit Entsetzen,/ Gedenk' ich, wie viele werden sich/ Noch späterhin dran ergetzen!?"* On Heine's love poetry, see Chapter One.

<sup>78</sup> Dieter Borchmeyer, *Drama and the World of Richard Wagner* trans. D Ellis (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2003), p. 136, asserted that despite his own claims to the contrary there is "no doubt" that Wagner first encountered the Tannhäuser material in Heine's *Elemental Spirits*, which republished the 1515 version along with Heine's version. See Heinrich Heine, *Elementary Spirits* in *The Works of Heinrich Heine*, trans., C. Leland (London: William Heinemann, 1892) vol. 6, pp. 107-212.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Wagner, *My Life* trans. A. Grey, (Cambridge [UK]: Cambridge U. Press, 1983), p. 219, cited in Garret 2011, pp. 40-1.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Wagner, "A Communication to My Friends" in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works* trans. W. Ellis, (New York, Broude Brothers, 1966), vol. I, p. 315, cited in Garret 2011, p. 41.

<sup>81</sup> Garret 2011, p. 42, offered the most pointed formulation of points made by others. Her account encompassed Heine and Wagner's treatment of the story, Theodor Herzl's reception of the opera, and I. L. Peretz's rewriting of the story, in the context of German nationalism as opposed to Jewish Identity.

<sup>82</sup> Wagner 1966, p. 311, cited in Garret 2011, p. 49.

<sup>83</sup> Heinrich Heine, *The Goddess Diana* in Heine 1892, vol. 4, pp. 379-99. The connection was first observed by Max Brod, *The Artist in Revolt*, trans. by Joseph Witriol (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1956), p. 199. On the "Dionysian" in late Heine see the following chapter.

<sup>84</sup> Heine, *The Goddess Diana* in Heine 1892, vol. 4, p. 396; Heine, "Die Göttin Diana," DHA vol. 9, pp. 74-5.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Wagner, "On the Performing of *Tannhäuser*" in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works* trans. W. Ellis, (New York, Broude Brothers, 1966), vol. 3, p. 194. See also Borchmeyer 2003, p. 136.

<sup>86</sup> For a succinct account of Wagner's musical innovations see Botstein 2009, pp. 168-71.

<sup>87</sup> On these issues see Chapter Five below.

<sup>88</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Götterdämmerung*, 1823, Brod 1956, p. 199, Rose 1991, p. 97.

<sup>89</sup> See Chapter Two above.

<sup>90</sup> Stern, "History and Prophecy: Heine" in Stern 2010, p. 226.

<sup>91</sup> Laube 1848, pp. 3-21, Rose 1991, pp. 117-18.

<sup>92</sup> Rose 1991, pp. 117-18.

<sup>93</sup> These topics are addressed in the following chapter.

<sup>94</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden* G. Colli and M. Montinari eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), vol. 7, p. 351-2, as cited and translated in Sander Gilman, *Nietzschean Parody. An Introduction to Reading Nietzsche* (Bonn, Bouvier Verlag: 2001 [1976]), p. 76.

<sup>95</sup> Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 128-244.

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<sup>96</sup> Nietzsche 1999, vol. 7, p. 595. The passage is cited and translated in Gilman 2001, p. 80, who mistakenly gives the date as 1876.

<sup>97</sup> Gilman 2001, pp. 66, 72, 78.

<sup>98</sup> Gilman 2001, pp. 80, 86. Gilman 1997, pp. 76, 80, 93, had previously argued for a distinction between “the ‘good’ Jew (with whom Nietzsche identified) and the ‘bad’ Jew, against whom Nietzsche (still his pastor father’s son) defined himself,” so that “The Jews became Nietzsche and Nietzsche became the Jews”; “No longer Jew, no longer *farceur*, Heine becomes, for the older Nietzsche, the one socially acceptable vision of himself as diseased. He is the ill poet Heine—the image which he had so long denied.” See also Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-hatred. Anti-Semitism and the hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press: 1986).

<sup>99</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Die Romantik* [1820] DHA vol. 10. pp. 194-6.

<sup>100</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I*, scene 7, lines 2038-9 in *Goethe* (New York: Suhrkamp, 1989), vol. 2; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I* in *Goethes Werke* (Hamburger Ausgabe) ed. E. Trunz. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1996), vol. 3, p. 66: “*Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.*”

<sup>101</sup> Derrida 1985, p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 673.

<sup>103</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist* in Nietzsche 1976, p. 568, cited in Derrida 1985, p. 20, who interpolated the words in brackets.

<sup>104</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 782, cited in Derrida 1985, pp. 31-2 (substituting “monstrous” [*Ungeheures*] for Kaufmann’s “tremendous”).

<sup>105</sup> These remarks by Derrida came in the question period after his lecture recorded and translated in Derrida pp. 50-51.

<sup>106</sup> Derrida 1985, pp. 23-4, 30.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31. Derrida earlier claimed that “One may wonder why the only teaching institution or the only beginning of a teaching institution that ever succeeded in taking as its model the teaching of Nietzsche on teaching will have been a Nazi one” (p. 24), but never offered any evidence for this, only Nietzsche’s own thoughts on teaching.

<sup>108</sup> Cited and translated in *Ibid.*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>109</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 25.

## Chapter 5 Jewish Dionysus

<sup>1</sup> Butler 1953.

<sup>2</sup> The story was related by Da Sangallo’s son Francesco in a later manuscript. See Leonard Barkan *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1999), p. 4, Richard Brilliant, *My Laocoön. Alternative Claims in the Interpretation of Artworks* (Berkeley [CA]: U. of California Press, 2000), p. 29.



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<sup>3</sup> Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus), *Natural History* trans. C. Andrews (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 1938). p. 5 (xxxvi).

<sup>4</sup> On the bronze she-wolf cf. Barkan 1999, pp. 52-3.

<sup>5</sup> Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro), *Aeneid* trans. F. Ahl (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2.49. Other versions of the story recount that Laocoön was punished for having sex with his wife before the altar or another form of disrespect.

<sup>6</sup> Barkan 1999, p. 3; the name ‘canon’ is derived from the fifth-century Attic sculptor Polykleitos, meaning “measure, rule, or law.” Brilliant 2000, p. 37, called the term ‘rediscovery’ inaccurate since the statues were not previously discovered, yet they were previously renowned, so ‘discovery’ would be equally inaccurate.

<sup>7</sup> Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* from 1755 trans. E. Heyer and R. Norton (La Salle [Ill]: Open Court, 1987), pp. 33, 35. Butler 1958, p. 46 rendered *stille Größe* as “serene greatness”; David Irwin in Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Writings on Art* trans. D. Irwin (London: Phaidon, 1972), p. 72 offered “sedate grandeur.”

<sup>8</sup> Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of Ancient Art* trans. G. Lodge (New York, F. Ungar, 1968), p. 16: “Laocoön is a statue representing a man in extreme suffering who is striving to collect the conscious strength of his soul to bear it. While the muscles are swelling and the nerves are straining with torture, the determined spirit is visible on the turgid forehead, the chest is distended by the obstructed breath and the suppressed outburst of feeling, in order that he may retain and keep within himself the pain which tortures him...”

<sup>9</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 41-3, Winckelmann 1972, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Robert Holub, *Heinrich Heine’s Reception of German Grecophilia. The Function and Application of the Hellenic Tradition in the First Half of the Nineteenth-century* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 44, 47.

<sup>12</sup> On Winckelmann’s errors, see Winckelmann 1972, pp. 55-60, Brilliant 2000, pp. 53-4.

<sup>13</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 29. George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: H. Fertig, 1978), p. 28, proposed an indirect connection between Winckelmann’s ideal of beauty and Nazi aesthetics and racial stereotypes, for which Winckelmann admittedly bears no responsibility.

<sup>14</sup> Brilliant 2000, pp. 60-61: “...The group fell into the hands of 19th-century classical archaeologists who took Winckelmann’s exalted view of Greek art as their credo and concentrated their efforts in dating the *Laocoön* in establishing its iconography and style, while making themselves immune to his visual rhetoric.”

<sup>15</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* trans. E. Frothingham (Mineola [NY]: Dover, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Lessing 2005, pp. 7 13 21-22, 61, 90.

<sup>17</sup> On this doctrine see Rensselaer Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: Norton, 1967).

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<sup>18</sup> Lessing 2005, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 56-7, 168.

<sup>20</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 56-7, 168, claimed that Lessing's essay, although "ostensibly about aesthetics, is really about liberation," following Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* in Heine 1985, pp. 195-9, who similarly discussed Lessing in terms of political ramifications of religion, rather than aesthetics.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Against Pure Reason. Writings on Religion, Language and History* trans. and ed. M. Bunge (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Butler 1958, pp. 71-76, 77.

<sup>22</sup> On these issues see most recently Safranski 2017, pp. 215-18, and Chapter One above.

<sup>23</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Letter to C. T. Langer, 30 November 1769, in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe on Art* trans. J. Gage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 77: "it is the climax of the action... a moment when the three victims are discovered at three different stages of danger: the father is being bitten, the younger son is about to be bitten, the elder son is ensnared but as yet unharmed. The spectator is filled with terror at the plight of the father, he fears a similar fate for the younger boy, he is touched by the sympathetic horror with which the elder boy regards the suffering of his father, but is not without hope that this lad may escape destruction. The cause of this momentary action is the bite of the serpent in Laocoön's hip, but the effect is not merely physical pain; Laocoön's feeling is the woe of a father who exerts himself to the utmost but is helpless to defend his sons. His fate is tragic, as is life itself; it is not horrible... and through the hope that remains for the elder son there is even in this sudden and undeserved calamity at least an element of consolation." See also Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Über Laokoon" in Goethe 1996, vol. 12, pp. 56-66. Cf. also Butler 1958, pp. 69, 100, 132-33.

<sup>24</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe "Winckelmann and his Age" trans. E. von Nardroff and E. H. von Nardroff in Goethe 1989, vol. 3, pp. 99-121; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Winckelmann," in Goethe 1996, pp. 96-129. Cf. Butler 1958, pp. 133-4.

<sup>25</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 144-7, 150.

<sup>26</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 157, 162, 179. On Schiller in relation to Goethe see also Safranski 2017, pp. 330-70.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Ode to Joy* [1803] trans. M. Wertz in *Friedrich Schiller, Poet of Freedom* (New York: New Benjamin Franklin House, 1985), p. 308, Friedrich Schiller, "An die Freude," in *Werke* (Nationalausgabe), ed. Julius Petersen & Friedrich Beißner (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1943) vol. 1, pp. 169-172: "Freude, schöner Götterfunken, Tochter aus Elysium! Wir betreten feuertrunken, Himmlische, Dein Heiligtum."

<sup>28</sup> Butler 1958, p. 167.

<sup>29</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *On the Pathetic* trans. D. Dahlstrom in *Essays* ed. W. Hinderer and D. Dahlstrom (New York: Continuum, 1993), pp. 45-69.

<sup>30</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 164, 168, 178, 180-1, 185.

<sup>31</sup> Friedrich Schiller, "The Gods of Greece" in *Complete Works of Friedrich Schiller* (New York: P. P. Collier & Son, 1902), pp. 75-6, Friedrich Schiller, "Die Götter Griechenlandes" in Schiller 1943, vol. 1, pp. 193-4: "Glücklich sollten alle Herzen schlagen,/ Denn euch war der Glückliche

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*verwandt./ Damals war nichts heilig, als das Schöne./ Keiner Freude schämte sich der Gott... Ausgestorben trauert das Gefilde./ Keine Gottheit zeigt sich meinem Blick./ Ach, von jenem lebenswarmen Bilde/ Blieb der Schatten nur zurück.”*

<sup>32</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* trans. D. Dahlstrom in Schiller 1993, pp. 179-260, Butler 1958, p. 178.

<sup>33</sup> Butler 1958, p. 123, also Holub 1981, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> See Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments* trans. M. Hamburger (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp. 1-17.

<sup>35</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 211, 216, 219, 221, 238-9. See also George Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany. Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 234-83, Kaufmann 1974, pp. 376-8.

<sup>36</sup> Hölderlin 1968, pp. 243-254. Butler 1958, pp. 229-30.

<sup>37</sup> The four greatest German poets, however we rank them, constituted among themselves a semiotic square or ‘Klein group’ embodying four fundamental alternatives in relation to one another. Schiller represented the ‘sentimental’ sincere moral utopian or idealist and Goethe the ‘naïve’ ambivalent, iconoclastic, relativist. Their opposition was folded onto another, between the second generation Hölderlin and Heine, crippled by self-consciousness as opposed to their predecessors’ self-confident activity, with corresponding diagonal relations: Heine’s ambivalent identification with Schiller in his relation to Goethe, and Hölderlin’s incapacity to relate to Goethe at all because of his obsession with Schiller. Hölderlin’s unfathomable earnestness and mono-maniacal adulation for ancient Greece further contrasted with Heine’s boundary-destroying humor and creative skepticism toward antiquity.

<sup>38</sup> Butler 1958, p. 299.

<sup>39</sup> Heinrich Heine, supplement to *Lyrical Intermezzo* no. 19, as cited and translated in Butler 1958, p. 251; cf. Heine 1982, p. 171; Heinrich Heine, *Lyrische Intermezzo* DHA vol. 1.1, p. 461: “*Du sollst mich liebend umschließen,/ Geliebtes, schönes Weib!/ Umschling’ mich mit Armen und Füßen,/ Und mit dem geschmeidigen Leib./ Gewaltig hat umfangen,/ Umwunden, umschlungen schon,/ Die allerschönste Schlangen/ Den glücklichsten Laokoon.*”

<sup>40</sup> Butler did not discuss Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel’s Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art* trans. T. Knox 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 769, 817, 823, which did not have much new to say about *The Laocoön*. Hegel glossed the statue as “the expression of the grief of noble beings [...who] still keep their grandeur and large-heartedness,” almost a paraphrase of Winckelmann’s “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur.” On the other hand, Hegel took up Friedrich Schlegel and Schiller’s efforts to historicize Kant’s aesthetics. Whereas Schiller mourned the vanished gods and unrecoverable art of Greece, Hegel constructed a scheme of a progressive historical development. Spirit [*Geist*, also “mind”] recognizing itself had reached an unsurpassable point in the fully sensual art of Greece and since that time had taken increasingly inward or spiritual forms, culminating in Hegel’s own philosophy replacing art, hence “the end of art.” Hegel’s teleological scheme revolutionized the study of history and related disciplines such as art history at German universities, and offered a different conclusion to the narrative arc begun with Winckelmann, the two serving as complimentary founding fathers of the academic discipline of art history.

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<sup>41</sup> Winckelmann 1987, p. 39, claimed to recognize the same qualities in Raphael, “which he attained through imitation of the Greeks.” Yet despite Raphael’s minor role in the statue’s restoration, it does not appear to have influenced Raphael’s painting. By contrast, Michelangelo responded to *The Laocoön* in numerous works, including his *Dying Slave* and *Rebellious Slave* originally intended for Pope Julius’ tomb, and the *ignudi* of the *Sistine Ceiling*. Titian likewise adapted *The Laocoön* in diverse ways in his paintings as well as openly mocking such imitation with his now lost Simian version preserved in an engraving—the monkey was a standard emblem of imitation. Rubens later made astoundingly beautiful drawings of the individual figures and used elements of the figures in his high altarpieces for Antwerp churches, *The Raising of the Cross* and *The Descent for the Cross*.

<sup>42</sup> Barkan 1999, p. 6. Other images of Laocoön reproduced on gems and in manuscripts may reflect other versions, but could also imperfectly represent the Vatican sculpture.

<sup>43</sup> Brilliant 2000, pp. 10-13, 42.

<sup>44</sup> Barkan 1999, pp. 9-11. This restoration was made by the Venetian architect Jacopo Sansovino for a 1510 contest organized by Donato Bramante and judged by Raphael, repeated in Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli’s restoration in the 1530’s, and reflected in replicas in the Vatican and elsewhere.

<sup>45</sup> Brilliant 2000, p. 48.

<sup>46</sup> Hegel’s teleology and the apex he assigned to fifth-century Attic art, followed by inevitable decline, posed serious problems for accounts of the history of art. The earliest resolution of this problem was offered by Aloïs Riegl, a Viennese art historian and theorist working at the turn of the twentieth century, who adapted Hegel’s normative scheme toward a cultural relativism related to different materials, media, and artistic goals or “wills of art.” Ancient Egyptian sculpture was not less skilled, beautiful, or significant than Greek sculpture, Riegl argued, but rather sought to accomplish different aims of stability, solidity, and density in relation to the afterlife. Ancient Roman sculpture similarly did not simply manifest a decline, but moved in new directions of emphasis on public spectacle, addressing the viewer within a common space, and an “appendage aesthetic,” a tendency that may have influenced Renaissance restorations of *The Laocoön*. See Aloïs Riegl, *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts* trans. J. Jung (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

<sup>47</sup> Brilliant 2000, pp. 43-5, 60: “The sculpture was late, and therefore aesthetically defective... in the era when Greek art was up and Roman art, even Greek art for Romans, down... The statue of Laocoön represented a physical impossibility and was thus counterfactual and unrealistic... It’s ‘Baroque’ extravagance was distasteful... Cannons have a great staying power, but only when the spirit of the works contained in them retain their prestige. Unfortunately, the Vatican *Laocoön* fell from favor, if not from the cast galleries.”

<sup>48</sup> We should further bear in mind that even the Parthenon was not originally as “classical” as we now see or imagine it, but rather painted with bright colors and decorated with hundreds of tiny decorative details

<sup>49</sup> Brilliant 2000, pp. 13, 15-16, 46-47.

<sup>50</sup> Brilliant 2000, pp. 53-4, Butler 1958, pp. 44, 47.

<sup>51</sup> Brilliant 2000, pp. 62-3.

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- <sup>52</sup> Winckelmann 1968, p. 114, cited in Brilliant 2000, p. 54.
- <sup>53</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 87, 90-8, 101-7, 111, 116-19, 123, 126, 131, 146-54, repeatedly referred to Goethe's "daimon" or demonic side as artist as implicit embodiment of Dionysus, which is more her conceit than a logical argument.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.
- <sup>55</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 303-7. On Schliemann and Troy see Moses Finley, *Schliemann's Troy: One Hundred Years After* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
- <sup>56</sup> Butler 1958, p. 250. Holub 1981, p. 162-3.
- <sup>57</sup> Butler 1958, p. 250.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.
- <sup>59</sup> Heinrich Heine, *The Gods of Greece* from *The Book of Songs* in Heine 1982, pp. 152-4; Heinrich Heine, "Die Götter Griechenlands," *Das Buch der Lieder* [1826-27] in DHA vol. 1.1, pp. 413-17 "...*Das sind sie selber, die Götter von Hellas,/ Die einst so freudig die Welt beherrschten,/ Doch jetzt, verdrängt und verstorben,/ Als ungeheure Gespenster dahinziehn/ Am mitternächtlichen Himmel.../ Das waren bessere Zeiten, o Zeus,/ Als du dich himmelisch ergötztet/ An Knaben und Nymphen und Hekatomben;/ Doch auch die Götter regieren nicht ewig... Ich hab' Euch niemals geliebt, Ihr Götter!/ Denn widerwärtig sind mir die Griechen,/ Und gar die Römer sind mir verhaßt... Und wenn ich bedenke, wie feig und windig/ Die Götter sind, die euch besiegten,/ Die neuen, herrschenden, Tristen Götter,/ Die Schadenfrohen im Schafspelz der Demuth—/ O da faßt mich ein düsterer Groll.*"
- <sup>60</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 253-4.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 254, 258.
- <sup>62</sup> Heinrich Heine, *The Town of Lucca*, chapter 6, translation from Butler 1958, p. 261, Cf. also Holub 1981, p. 136-7; Heinrich Heine, *Die Stadt Lukka* DHA vol. 7.1, pp. 172-3.
- <sup>63</sup> Butler 1958, p. 262.
- <sup>64</sup> Holub 1981, pp. 32-9.
- <sup>65</sup> Butler 1958, p. 284.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.
- <sup>67</sup> See Winckelmann 1972, p. 9, Butler 1958, p. 263.
- <sup>68</sup> Butler 1958, pp. 263-4. Cf. Holub 1981, p. 107.
- <sup>69</sup> Butler 1958, p. 245.
- <sup>70</sup> Cf. Chase 2000 and Chapter Three above.
- <sup>71</sup> Cf. Chapter Three above.
- <sup>72</sup> Heinrich Heine, *New Poems*, cited in Butler 1958, p. 276. Heine, *Neue Gedichte*, "Der Tannhäuser," Heinrich Heine, *Neue Gedichte* DHA vol. 2, p. 57: "Der Teufel, den man Venus nennt, Er ist der Schlimmste von allen."
- <sup>73</sup> See the previous chapter.

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<sup>74</sup> Heinrich Heine, *The Goddess Diana* in Heine 1892, vol. 6, p. 385; Heinrich Heine, *Die Göttin Diana* DHA vol. 9, p. 70.

<sup>75</sup> Heine, *The Goddess Diana* in Heine 1892, vol. 6, pp. 385, 388, 393-7.

<sup>76</sup> Heine, *The Gods in Exile* in Heine 1876, pp. 216-44.

<sup>77</sup> Heinrich Heine, preface to *Doctor Faustus* in Heine 1892, vol. 6, p. 220, Heinrich Heine, *Der Doktor Faust* DHA vol. 9, p. 81.

<sup>78</sup> Heine, *Doctor Faustus* in Heine 1892, vol. 6, pp. 228, 231, 237, 240-2, 248.

<sup>79</sup> Holub 1981.

<sup>80</sup> Butler 1958, p. 299. Grimm 1985, pp. 201-49, also explored the connection of Heine and Nietzsche in relation to Dionysus in particular.

<sup>81</sup> Holub 1981, pp. 162-3.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 162, 159-173.

<sup>83</sup> Butler 1958, p. 250.

<sup>84</sup> Heinrich Heine, "Postscript to *Romancero*" in Heine 1982, p. 693, Heinrich Heine, "Nachschrift to *Romanzero*" DHA vol. 3.1, pp. 177-8. On Heine's illness cf. Sammons 1979 p. 295. In his "Correction" from 1849, Heine said: "whether it be a family illness (such as runs in one's family), or is one of those private illnesses from which Germans suffer who live abroad; whether is a French *ramollissement de la mœlle épinière* [softening of the spinal cord], or the German consumption of the spine—whatever it be, it is horrible, racks me night and day." Heine 1948, pp. 455-6. Heine, "Berichtigung" DHA vol. 15, pp. 112-13.

<sup>85</sup> Goldstein 1999, p. 52.

<sup>86</sup> Goldstein discerned a positive message in Heine's poems insofar as he sought a means of "transcending his own physical and existential suffering... into an alternative positive conception of diaspora... Despite, or perhaps because of, the bleak and foreboding social and ideological circumstances portrayed in 'Disputation,' that Golden age lives on [in 'Jehudah ben Halevy']." *Ibid.*, p. 49, 63. However, *Jehudah ben Halevy* is already profoundly ambivalent about Judaism, and comes earlier in the cycle than *Disputation* with its devastating critique. Goldstein was correct to shift the emphasis from reconstructing Heine's religious identity to his achievement in his poems, although these do not necessarily present a positive message about Judaism.

<sup>87</sup> Goldstein 1999, p. 53 n. 10, objecting to Praver 1983, pp. 554-62 and Jeffrey Sammons, *Heinrich Heine, The Elusive poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 387-9.

<sup>88</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Princess Sabbath* in Heine 1948, p. 266; Heinrich Heine, *Prinzessin Sabbat* DHA vol. 3.1, p. 128: "Dafür aber heute Mittag/ Soll dir dampfen, zum Ersatz,/ Ein Gericht, das wahrhaft göttlich—/Heute sollst du Schalet essen!"/ Schalet, schooner Götterfunken,/ Tochter aus Elysium!/ Also klänge Schillers Hochlied/ Hätt' er Schalet je gekostet./ Schalet ist die Himmelspeise,/ Die der liebe Herrgott selber/ Einst den Moses kochen lehrte/ Auf dem Berge Sinai, ... Schalet ist das wahren Gottes/ Koscheres Ambrosia,/ Wonnebrod des Paradieses,/ Und mit solcher Kost verglichen/ Ist nur eitel Teufelsdreck/ Das Ambrosia der falschen/ Heidengötter Griechenlands,/ Die verkappte Teufel waren."

<sup>89</sup> Goldstein 1999, p. 65 n. 1.

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<sup>90</sup> Goldstein 1999, pp. 49, 50-3, 57, 65 nn. 3-4, citing Steven Aschheim, “The Eastern European Jew and German Jewish identity” and Paul Mendes-Flohr, “Orientalism, the Ostjude, and Jewish self-affirmation” in Jonathan Frankel ed., *Studies in Contemporary Jewry I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 3-25, pp. 96-139. Goldstein invoked Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), pp. 1-28, which argued that Orientalism had little to do with the reality the Orient and everything to do with Western strategies to construct and reinforce Occidental superiority. The example of medieval Spain was both concrete and positive for Heine, and thus has no connection with Orientalism in Said’s political sense. Cf. on these issues also Jonathan Skolnik, *Jewish Pasts, German Fictions: History, Memory, and Minority Culture in Germany, 1824-1955* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

<sup>91</sup> Goldstein 1999, p. 63.

<sup>92</sup> Goldstein 1999, p. 64, following Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, “Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity,” *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993), pp. 720-1, posited as her concluding thesis that exile is bad whereas diaspora is potentially good. However, it is not certain that Heine would have endorsed this conclusion. Reitter et al., “The Polish Question and Heine’s Exilic Identity” in Hermand and Holub 1999, pp. 135-54, challenged the now theoretically “hip” idea that exile is a good thing insofar as Heine was clearly ambivalent about exile. Heine was surely also ambivalent about the diaspora.

<sup>93</sup> Goldstein 1999, pp. 60-1.

<sup>94</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Disputation* in Heine 1948, pp. 268-9; Heinrich Heine, *Disputation* DHA vol. 3.1, p. 159: “*Will ein jeder Kämpfe seinen/ Gegner ad absurdum führen/ Und die wahre Götlichkeit/ Seines Gottes demonstrieren./ Festgestellt ist: daß derjen’ge/ Der im Streit ward überwunden,/ Seines Gegners Religion/ Anzunehmen sey verbunden,/ Daß der Jude sich der Taufe/ Heil’gem Sakramente füge,/ Und im Gegentheil der Christ/ Der Beschneidung unterliege.*”

<sup>95</sup> Heine, *Disputation* in Heine 1948, pp. 272-3; Heine, *Disputation* DHA vol. 3.1, p. 163: “*Seine Mörder, Volk der Rachsucht,/ Juden, das seydt Ihr gewesen—/ Immer meuchelt Ihr den Heiland,/ Welcher kommt, Euch zu erlösen./ Judenvolk, du bist ein Aas,/ Worin hausen die Dämonen;/ Eure Leiber sind Kasernen/ Für des Teufels Legionen... Juden, Juden, Ihr seydt Säue,/ Paviane, Nashornthiere,/ Die man Rhinozerosse,/ Crokodile und Vampyre... Ihr seydt Vipern und Blindschleichen,/ Klapperschlangen, gift’ge Kröten,/ Ottern, Nattern—Christus wird/ Eur verfluchtes Haupt zertreten.*”

<sup>96</sup> Heine, *Disputation* in Heine 1948, p. 273; Heine, *Disputation* DHA vol 3.1, p. 164: “*Unser Gott, der ist die Liebe, Und er gleichet einem Lamme;... Seine Duldsamkeit und Demuth Suchen wir stets nachzuahmen.*“

<sup>97</sup> Heine, *Disputation* in Heine 1948, p. 275; Heine, *Disputation* DHA vol. 3.1, p. 166: “*Unbekannt ist mir der Gott,/ Den Ihr Christum pflegt zu nennen;/ Seine Jungfer Mutter gleichfalls/ Hab ich nicht die Ehr zu kennen./ Ich bedaure, daß er einst,/ Vor etwa zwölfhundert Jahren,/ Ein’ge Unannehmlichkeiten/ Zu Jerusalem erfahren./ Ob die Juden ihn getödtet,/ Das ist schwer jetzt zu erkunden,/ Da ja das Corpus Delicti/ Schon am dritten Tag verschwunden./ Daß er ein Verwandter sey/ Unsres Gottes, ist nicht minder/ Zweifelhaft; so viel wir wissen/ Hat der letztre keine Kinder.*”

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- <sup>98</sup> Heine, *Disputation* in Heine 1948, pp. 276, 280; Heine, *Disputation* DHA vol. 3.1, pp. 167, 172: “*Unser Gott, und der ist auch/ Ein gesunder Gott, kein Mythos /Bleich und dünne wir Oblaten...*”, “*Daß sie alle beiden stinken.*”
- <sup>99</sup> Praver 1985, p. 599, cited in Goldstein 1999, p. 62.
- <sup>100</sup> Sammons 1979, p. 395, cited in Goldstein 1999, p. 62.
- <sup>101</sup> Goldstein 1999, pp. 61-2.
- <sup>102</sup> Cited in Hugo Bieber, *Heinrich Heine, Jüdisches Manifest. Eine Auswahl Aus Seinen Werken, Briefen und Gesprächen* (Hamburg: Mary Rosenberg, 1946), p. 297.
- <sup>103</sup> Heine, “Preface to the Second German Edition” in Heine 1882, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>104</sup> Heine, “Correction” in Heine 1948, pp. 455-6 (I have adopted the more fluent and modern translation in Sammons 1979 p. 308), Heine, “Berichtigung” DHA vol. 15, p. 112.
- <sup>105</sup> Cited in Heine 1948, p. 25
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- <sup>107</sup> Heine, “Postscript to *Romanzero*” in Heine 1982, p. 693, Heine, “Nachschrift zu *Romanzero*” DHA vol. 3.1, p. 177. Sammons 1979, pp. 313-4, reviewed how Heine’s publisher Campe preferred not to include the text because of its obscenities, although in the course of arranging for a separate publication he invented the book jacket.
- <sup>108</sup> Heine, “Postscript to *Romanzero*” in Heine 1982, pp. 694-6, Heine, “Nachschrift zu *Romanzero*” DHA vol. 3.1, pp. 179-80.
- <sup>109</sup> Heine, “Postscript to *Romanzero*” in Heine 1982, p. 696, Heine, “Nachschrift zu *Romanzero*” DHA vol. 3.1, pp. 180-1.
- <sup>110</sup> Heine 1948, p. 500, point no. 7.
- <sup>111</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, pp. 261-2; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 30.
- <sup>112</sup> Sammons 1979, pp. 305-7, made this point. Hegel presented himself as a Christian, whereas Marx sought to transcend discourse about religion and God in favor of economics. Heine was not concerned with addressing their systems in particulars.
- <sup>113</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 267; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 37.
- <sup>114</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 274; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 42.
- <sup>115</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 275; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, pp. 42-43.
- <sup>116</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 276; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 43.
- <sup>117</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 274; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 42.
- <sup>118</sup> Harold Bloom, *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present* (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- <sup>119</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 277; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 44.
- <sup>120</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, pp. 280, 282; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 46.
- <sup>121</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1876, p. 272-3; Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, pp. 41-42.



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<sup>122</sup> Here and in the following passages I cite the more picturesque translations in Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1948, p. 666 (Cf. Heine 1876, p. 283); Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 46.

<sup>123</sup> Heine, *Confessions* in Heine 1948, p. 667 (Cf. Heine 1876, p. 283); Heine, *Geständnisse* DHA vol. 15, p. 47.

## Epilogue Heine and Nietzsche's Fates

<sup>1</sup> M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge [UK]: Cambridge U. Press, 1981), pp. 66-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 115-6, 120, 125, 153-4, 158.

<sup>4</sup> Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Zukunftsphilologie! Eine Erwiderung auf Friedrich Nietzsches ord. professors der classischen philologie zu Basel "Geburt der Tragödie"* (Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1872) reprinted in Karlfried Gründer, *Der Streit um Nietzsches "Geburt der Tragödie": die Schriften von Erwin Rohde, R. Wagner, U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1969), as cited in Silk and Stern 1981, pp. 115-6, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Future Philology! A Reply to Friedrich Nietzsche's Ordinarius Professor of Classical Philology at Basel 'Birth of Tragedy'" trans. G. Postl, B. Babich, and H. Schmid, *New Nietzsche Studies* 4 (2000), pp. 1-33.

<sup>5</sup> Silk and Stern 1981, pp. 120, 125, 153-4, 158.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "Attempt at Self-Criticism" preface to *The Birth of Tragedy* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Silk and Stern 1981, pp. 117, 125, 130, 155, 159-61, 170-5, 185-6, 194, 200, 204, 210, 215, 224, 254-5. On these points see also Hugh Lloyd-Jones, "Nietzsche and the Study of the Ancient World", Max Baumer, "Nietzsche and the Tradition of the Dionysian" trans. T. Sellner in James O'Flaherty et al. *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 1976), pp. 9 ff., pp. 165-189.

<sup>8</sup> Silk and Stern 1981, p. 355. These lines are also printed on the back of the volume as if the book's central insight.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter Four above.

<sup>11</sup> Silk and Stern 1981, p. 1. Even more strangely, Butler's name appears on their page 6 n. 5 crediting her translation of Winckelmann as "Miss E. M. Butler's translation, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*, Cambridge, 1935, p. 46" as if her text were primarily relevant for its translations of Winckelmann, or perhaps as a way of indirectly acknowledging her.

<sup>12</sup> Butler 1958, p. 310. Cf. also on this point Kaufmann 1974, pp. 128-9.

<sup>13</sup> Butler 1958, p. 308.

<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche, "Attempt at Self-Criticism" preface to *The Birth of Tragedy* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 20 n. 5.

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- <sup>15</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche vol. 1: The Will to Power as Art* trans. D. Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).
- <sup>16</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* ed. W. Kaufmann trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967).
- <sup>17</sup> Heidegger 1979, pp. 10-14. See also Ernst Behler, *Confrontations: Derrida/ Heidegger/ Nietzsche* trans. S. Taubeneck (Stanford [CA]: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. vii-viii, 10-14.
- <sup>18</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God is Dead’” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* trans. W. Lovitt (New York: Harper, 1982), pp. 53-114. Heidegger characterized nihilism as infinite emptiness or universal hopelessness and associated it with the American age of cybernetics and computers, which he called “thought-machines.”
- <sup>19</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Task of Destroying the History of Ontology,” *Being and Time* trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 41-9.
- <sup>20</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question of Being* trans. W. Kluhbach and J. Wilde (New York: Twayne, 1958), pp. 80-4.
- <sup>21</sup> Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and “the Jews”* trans. A. Michel and M. Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).
- <sup>22</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Reflections II-VI (Black Notebooks 1931-1938), VII-XI (Black Notebooks 1938-1939), XII-XV (Black Notebooks 1939-1941)* ed. P. Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2016).
- <sup>23</sup> See Peter Gordon, “Heidegger in Black,” *New York Review of Books* 61 (2014) <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/10/09/heidegger-in-black/>, who cited Heidegger’s assertion that “The Führer alone is the present and future German reality and its laws” and his denunciation of “the rising power of Jewry” with their “empty rationality” and “tenacious aptitude for calculating and profiteering and intermingling.”
- <sup>24</sup> Butler 1958, p. 308.
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. Schrift 1995, David Allison ed., *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation* (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1999).
- <sup>26</sup> Maurice Blanchot, “Nietzsche et l’écriture fragmentaire” in *l’Entretien infini* (Paris: 1969), pp. 227-55, translated and excerpted as Maurice Blanchot, “The Limits of Experience: Nihilism” in Allison 1999, pp. 121-8.
- <sup>27</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles = Éperons: les styles de Nietzsche* trans. B. Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).
- <sup>28</sup> Jacques Derrida, “The Ends of Man” in *Margins of Philosophy* trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 135, cited in Behler 1991, p. 52. see also Ernst Behler, *Derrida—Nietzsche, Nietzsche—Derrida* (Munich: Schöningh, 1988).
- <sup>29</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 791, Derrida 1985, p. 11.
- <sup>30</sup> Derrida 1985, p. 11.
- <sup>31</sup> Derrida 1985, p. 15. The statement is cited approvingly by Behler 1991, pp. 126-7.

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<sup>32</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. G. Coli and M. Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999) vol. 9, p. 587.

<sup>33</sup> Derrida 1979, pp. 123-39. The apparent crux was Derrida's seemingly incomprehensible pronouncement: "One doesn't just happen onto an unwonted object of this sort in a sewing-up machine on a castration table [...*objet insolite qu'on ne trouve pas toujours par simple rencontre avec une machine à recoudre sur une table de castration*]" (pp. 128-31). The statement is cited approvingly by Behler 1991, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> Derrida's own background as an Algerian Jew, oppressed by both the Nazi and French regimes during World War II, who later emigrated to mainland France, directly informed his self-conscious resistance to authoritarian structures and his critique of national, religious, or racial identity in Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other, or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> Derrida 1985, pp. 29, 32, also sought to mediate Heidegger's Nazi past, including his admonitions that we may not "as yet know how to think what Nazism is," or that "such things would have been quite complicated—the example of Heidegger gives us a fair amount to think about in this regard." He also referred to "a Hegelianism of the left and a Hegelianism of the right, a Heideggerianism of the left and a Heideggerianism of the right." In this instance it is *not* Nietzsche, but rather *Derrida* who appears to be claiming that "all statements, before and after, left and right, are at once possible." Nietzsche knew how to distinguish himself from [*sich auseinandersetzen mit*] Wagner, and presumably could have done so with Heidegger.

<sup>36</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 613.

<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" 1873 was only published posthumously. Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche* 1976 cited in Behler 1991, p. 84.

<sup>38</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* trans. G. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 73. See also Jacques Derrida, "No apocalypse, Not Now: Full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives" in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other* vol. 1 ed. P. Kamuf and E. Rottenberg (Stanford [CA]: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 387-93.

<sup>39</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy* in Nietzsche 2000, p. 141.

<sup>40</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "Songs of prince Vogelfrei [free-as-a-bird]," appendix to *The Gay Science* in Nietzsche 1974, pp. 349-75, Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in Nietzsche 1976, pp. 115-439, Friedrich Nietzsche, "Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei," anhang zu *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in Nietzsche 1999, vol. 3, pp. 639-51, vol. 4, 9-408.

<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Die Geburt der Tragödie" in Nietzsche 1999, vol. 6, pp. 312-13, Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "The Birth of Tragedy" in Nietzsche 2000, pp. 729-30, cited in Kaufmann 1974, p. 317.

<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche 1967, # 1066, p. 548, cited in Kaufmann 1974, p. 317.

<sup>43</sup> As cited and translated in Kaufmann 1974, pp. 318-19. Heine, *Reise von München nach Genua* DHA vol. 7.1, pp. 816-18, cited in Kaufmann 1974, pp. 318-19, who pointed out that Nietzsche could have read the text in Heinrich Heine, *Letzte Gedichte und Gedanken von H. Heine* ed. A. Stodtmann (Hamburg: Hoffman and Campe, 1869), which was in Nietzsche's library, preserved in his archive in Weimar.

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<sup>44</sup> Kaufmann 1974, pp. 319.

<sup>45</sup> Heine, *Lyrical Intermezzo*, *The Book of Songs* in Heine 1982, poem 39, p. 65; Heine, “*Lyrisches Intermezzo*,” *Das Buch der Lieder*, in DHA vol. 1.1, pp. 315, Robert Schumann, *Dichterliebe* op. 48, no. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Kaufmann 1974, p. 366.

<sup>47</sup> Butler 1958, p. 313, asked whether “speaking symbolically one is perhaps justified in saying that Hölderlin had been communing with Heine’s spirit during his madness and had entered Nietzsche’s body... [Nietzsche’s] vision of the re-birth of tragedy and a new heroic age was a wish-dream, the self-intoxication not of a prophet but of a martyr; of a great decadent (he knew it himself), in whom the unearthly hopes of Hölderlin fought the tragic despair of Heine.”

## 'Jewish Dionysus': Heinrich Heine and the Politics of Literature

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