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NARRATIVE FRAMES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN NOVELLAS

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For Mom

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Introduction

Frames are everywhere. They are found in fields as diverse as sociology, computer science, cognitive psychology, and, of course, literary studies. Broadly defined as structures that support or enclose a system, concept, or object, frames are used to present and store information, organize knowledge, and contextualize social interactions. Frames, it seems, are fundamental to our very way of knowing and understanding the world.

Our reliance upon frame structures to help make sense of our experiences becomes apparent in a consideration of any literary tradition across the globe. As William Nelles notes, narrative frames are "so widespread among the narrative literature of all cultures and periods as to approach universality."[1] Yet despite, or perhaps because of the ubiquity of narrative frames, their significance is often underestimated and they are written off as mere formal devices that fail to contribute substantively to the "meaning" of a text.

My primary goal in this dissertation is to give the narrative frame interpretive force. Through close textual analyses, I demonstrate the ways in which narrative frames generate a new significance or understanding that is not explicit in the texts themselves and that would not otherwise exist. My understanding of the frame, then, is not as a static structural element, but rather as a dynamic, active intervention that has the capacity to direct interpretation. I make this argument through an investigation into the function(s) of narrative frames within one specific tradition: German-language novellas of the nineteenth century. My project looks at the works of four authors from four distinct moments in literary history across this century: Clemens Brentano, Ludwig Tieck, Adalbert Stifter, and Conrad Ferdinand Meyer.

[1] William Nelles, "Stories within Stories: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative," *Studies in*

More than any other period in German literary history, the nineteenth century is characterized by systematic experimentations with narrative forms and techniques, and with the form of the novella above all. Though writers such as Christoph Martin Wieland ventured theories of the novella earlier in the eighteenth century,[2] it is generally agreed upon that the genre did not become part of the German tradition until Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* in 1795. Presented as a collection of stories orally narrated by a group of characters, *Unterhaltungen* maintains the connection between the genre of the novella and frame narratives first established by the "father" of the novella, Giovanni Boccaccio, in *The Decameron* (1351). As all four of my authors were consciously working within the novella tradition, it is necessary to address briefly the three most prominent theories of the novella to emerge from the nineteenth century, as developed by Goethe, Tieck and Heyse, and consider how they contribute to this discussion of frame narratives.

First, Goethe's famous epigram defining the novella as "eine sich ereignete, unerhörte Begebenheit," which appears in Johann Peter Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe: Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens.* While the conversation took place in 1827, the record of it was not published until 1836, and Goethe's contribution to *Novellentheorie* thus became available to the public somewhat belatedly.

> Es kam sodann zur Sprache, welchen Titel man der Novelle geben solle; wir taten manche Vorschläge, einige waren gut für den Anfang, andere für das Ende, doch fand sich keiner, der für das Ganze passend und also der rechte gewesen wäre. "Wissen Sie was," sagte Goethe, "wir wollen es die 'Novelle' nennen; denn was ist eine Novelle anders als eine sich ereignete, unerhörte Begebenheit. Dies ist der eigentliche Begriff,

[2] In the second edition of *Don Sylvio* (1772), Wieland offers the following definition of the novella: "Novellen [sind] eine Art von Erzählungen" to be differentiated from the novel "durch die Simplizität des Plans und den kleinen Umfang der Fabel." Siegfried Weing, *The German Novella: Two Centuries of Criticism* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1994), 18.

> und so vieles, was in Deutschland unter dem Titel Novelle geht, ist gar keine Novelle, sondern bloß Erzählung oder was Sie sonst wollen."[3]

In this conversation, Goethe strictly defines the novella as the narration of a unique, unexpected event that has taken place. The inclusion of "sich ereignete" in Goethe's definition excludes subject matter that may otherwise conform to his definition of an unexpected event, but which includes an element of the fantastic. Goethe thus limits the subject of the novella to that which could plausibly occur or have occurred in real life. Goethe also emphasizes the novella as a distinct genre not to be confused with other short forms of prose such as the "Erzählung." The hint of frustration that is detectable here indicates the frequency with which such generic confusion or conflation occurred during this period.

Second, though Tieck generally shied away from publishing purely theoretical texts, he expressed his thoughts on the genre of the novella in a foreword to Volume 11 of the 1829 edition of his collected works:

> …daß sie einen großen oder kleinern Vorfall in's hellste Licht stelle, der, so leicht er sich ereignen kann, doch wunderbar, vielleicht einzig ist. Diese Wendung der Geschichte, dieser Punkt, von welchem aus sie sich unerwartet völlig umkehrt, und doch natürlich, dem Charakter und den Umständen angemessen, die Folge entwickelt, wird sich der Phantasie des Lesers um so fester einprägen, als die Sache, selbst im Wunderbaren, unter andern Umständen wieder alltäglich sein könnte.[4]

I will discuss Tieck's theory of the novella in greater detail in the second chapter of this dissertation. For the moment, it is important to note how Tieck's understanding of the genre seems to align with Goethe's, particularly in his claim that the novella focuses on a single, unique incident: "einen großen oder kleinern Vorfall…[der] vielleicht einzig ist." Further, this passage is noteworthy because it includes Tieck's concept of the turning point, or

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[3] Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, ed. H.H. Houben (Wiesbaden: F.A. Brockhaus, 1959), 171.
[4] Ludwig Tieck, *Ludwig Tiecks Schriften* (Berlin: Reimer, 1829), 11:LXXXVI.

"Wendepunkt." Undoubtedly Tieck's most celebrated contribution to the theory of the novella, the turning point is defined here as a natural, yet dramatic change of direction in the story line that leads to an unforeseen, but logical, ending. Several lines later, Tieck insists again that that a genuine novella ("ächte Novelle") will always have the turning point as its distinguishing feature.

Finally, in the introduction to his *Deutscher Novellenschatz* (1871), Paul Heyse identifies what he believes to be an essential feature of the novella, thus immortalizing himself in German genre theory. Using the falcon featured in the ninth novella of the fifth day in Boccaccio's *Decameron* as an example, Heyse suggests that a genuine novella must contain a problem or a conflict around which the action revolves, and which may be represented by an object. Moreover, the *Falke* also stands for that which distinguishes a novella from all others: "Gleichwohl aber könnte es nicht schaden, wenn der Erzähler auch bei dem innerlichsten oder reichsten Stoff sich zuerst fragen wollte, wo 'der Falke' sei, das Specifische, das diese Geschichte von tausend anderen unterscheidet."[5] With this emphasis on "das Specifische," Heyse's definition of the novella thus aligns with those set forth already by Goethe and Tieck.

This brief survey of three foundational definitions within German *Novellentheorie* reveals a consistent and unsurprising insistence that the *Novelle* contains an element of the new and/or unexpected. More surprising is the utter lack of attention these thinkers give to the frame. The

[5] Paul Heyse and Hermann Kurz, ed., *Deutscher Novellenschatz* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1871), xiv. For obvious reasons, this theory would come to be known as the *Falkentheorie*, though an object acting as a symbol for the central conflict of a text is more generally known as a *Dingsymbol.* Less famous but no less enlightening is Heyse's response to Goethe's definition of the novella. While Heyse agrees that Goethe's definition was valid for the novellas of his time, he argues for a dynamic view of the genre – i.e. that it has developed over the course of the century: "Von dem einfachen Bericht eines merkwürdigen Ereignisses oder einer sinnreich erfundenen abenteuerlichen Geschichte hat sich die Novelle nach und nach zu der Form entwickelt, in welcher gerade die tiefsten und wichtigsten sittlichen Fragen zur Sprache kommen." (Ibid.)

question of terminology must be noted, of course, for the terms *Rahmenerzählung* and *Rahmennovelle* did not gain widespread traction until the 1880s.[6] Instead, when authors of this era (including those just discussed) wrote about frame narratives, they used terms such as *Zyklus*, *Erzählungsreihe*, *Einkleidung*, *Einschachtelung* or simply *Sammlung*.[7] The very lack of a common term for such a widespread phenomenon reflects the limited extent to which authors of the time felt the need to address or explain this narrative form.

While Goethe, Tieck and Heyse do not address the function or significance of narrative frames, the most famous aspects of each of their theories all emphasize restriction or limitation in some way.[8] For Goethe, it is in the single, unheard-of event; for Tieck, an identifiable moment upon which the story turns; in Heyse, we find it in the neat containment of the text's central conflict in a symbol. While the term *Rahmen* rarely arises in nineteenth-century discussions of the novella, then, the prevalence of the narrative frame reveals the genre's ability to reflect within itself its own limiting features. In a sense, the frame becomes *the* problem of the novella.

A confluence of forces in the nineteenth century led to the frame novella emerging as the preferred genre for many of the era's most prominent writers. The nineteenth century was dominated by a series of wars, revolutions and rebellions; in their dual capacity to contain and mediate, narrative frames allowed authors of the time to productively address the political and social upheaval. Each of the authors in this project can also be seen to respond to the instability

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[6] Andrea Jäggi, *Die Rahmenerzählung im 19. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Technik und Funktion einer Sonderform der Fingierte Wirklichkeitsaussage* (Bern: P. Lang, 1994), 14.
[7] Ibid.
[8] It must be noted that Heyse actually does use the term *Rahmen* once in his introduction to the *Deutscher Novellenschatz* – in reference to Goethe, in fact. Unfortunately it is only in passing, and he does not stop to dwell on the concept: "Goethe's Bahn jedoch ging bald wieder über die Novelle hinaus, und wenn er auch später zu ihr zurückkehrte, so fügte er sie fast durchaus in einen größeren Rahmen ein, worin gerade einige seiner bedeutendsten novellistischen Erzeugnisse sich unabgeschlossen verlieren." (Heyse, ix)

of their time through a shared concern for the preservation and continuation of tradition – or in other words, cultural transmission. I use this term to mean the processes and channels by which the history, values, and traditions of a given culture are passed on from one generation to the next. Frame narratives allow for the thematization of these processes by making them visible within the text, for example by depicting acts of storytelling, writing, reading, etc. The modes of transmission under consideration differ for each author; when the works at the core of this project are viewed chronologically, it is possible to trace a growing concern with materiality in the development from Romanticism (Brentano's interest in preserving, or at least making records of oral traditions) to historicism (Meyer's incorporation of historiographical techniques in his writing).

The rise of frame novellas may also be associated with a broader set of intellectual concerns that coalesced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century around the concepts of self-awareness and self-reflection. Within philosophy, for example, leading figures of German idealism such as Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel all grappled with the problem of subjectivity, of the relationship between the "I" and "not-I." A similar impulse toward self-reflection is echoed by the authors of Romanticism, and finds expression in Friedrich Schlegel's concept of Romantic art as "eine progressive Univeralpoesie."[9] In the *Athenäums-Fragment* 116, Schlegel calls for the suspension of the hierarchical system of, and strict boundaries between genres, thus making room for a historically

[9] "Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie. Ihre Bestimmung ist nicht bloß, alle getrennten Gattungen der Poesie wieder zu vereinigen und die Poesie mit der Philosophie und Rhetorik in Berührung zu setzen. Sie will und soll auch Poesie und Prosa, Genialität und Kritik, Kunstpoesie und Naturpoesie bald mischen, bald verschmelzen, die Poesie lebendig und gesellig und das Leben und die Gesellschaft poetisch machen, den Witz poetisieren und die Formen der Kunst mit gediegenem Bildungsstoff jeder Art anfüllen und sättigen und durch die Schwingungen des Humors beseelen." Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften*, ed. Wolfdietrich Rasch (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1958), 37-38.

evolving poetics. It is a model that depends upon continual self-reflection and change, prizing eternal transformation in the arts over "perfection" or the notion of an absolute ideal. Related to this project of *Universalpoesie* is the concept of Romantic irony, also developed primarily by Schlegel, and which often takes the form of an author's distance or detached skepticism toward his work, leading to a sort of literary self-consciousness. These were the some of the leading intellectual concerns that contributed, I suggest, to the particular interest in frame narratives at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The capacity of literary frames to allow for self-reflection is clear, as the frame inherently draws attention to the act of narrative production, and thereby the role of the author and/or narrator. Notably, my analyses of the four novellas at the core of this project reveal a growing uncertainty about the role of the narrator, whose presence within the text becomes increasingly problematized.

My dissertation is organized into four chapters. The first is a detailed analysis of Clemens Brentano's *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*. I take a quasi-structuralist approach to the text, unraveling the tangled knot of narrative instances that form the two embedded narratives in order to reveal an otherwise overlooked principle: unification. The principle (and process) of unification, I argue, not only drives the plot and shapes the very form of the novella, but also is crucial to understanding the novella in the broader context of Brentano's Romantic nationalism. My second chapter considers how one of Ludwig Tieck's late novellas, *Das alte Buch und die Reise ins Blaue hinein*, contributes to an understanding of one the fundamental concepts of his *Novellentheorie* – the wondrous (*das Wunderbare*) – while at the same time delivering a scathing commentary on the state of literature in the 1830s. The subject of my third chapter, Adalbert Stifter's *Bergkristall*, is not traditionally considered a frame narrative – and indeed, it does not contain a traditional narrative frame. Through a close

consideration of narrative modes, however, I identify what I refer to as the novella's "implicit frame," which, I argue, Stifter uses to enact one of the fundamental principles of his mode of realism by calling into question the relationship between the exceptional and the commonplace. My fourth and final chapter addresses several works of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, but primarily *Das Amulett* – the first in his series of historical novellas. By exploring the relationship between the author, reader, and written text in this story, I trace a model of transmission that forms the foundation of Meyer's particular mode of realism.

Chapter One:
Alle beisammen: Unification in Clemens Brentano's Romantic Nationalism

Clemens Brentano's story, *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl* (1817) holds a unique and somewhat divisive position among scholars of his works. Influenced by widely-circulated accounts claiming the novella's two embedded narratives originated as separate stories, scholars long dismissed the novella's narrative frame as superfluous and ill-conceived, and focused their analyses primarily on thematic, rather than structural, concerns.[1] While scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century gradually shifted their attention to the narratological complexities introduced by the frame narrative, they in turn neglected the importance of the embedded narratives in the overall structure of the novella. These two major trends in critical studies of *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl* alternately prioritize the embedded and frame narratives, reflecting an oppositional dynamic that pervades the novella as a whole: for example, between religious and secular institutions, "true" and "false" honor, competing notions of justice, contrasting narrative modes, etc. These thematic and stylistic tensions have caused scholars thus far to overlook a fundamental principle within the story that not only drives the plot, but also shapes the very form of the novella: the principle of unification. In the following chapter, my comprehensive analysis of the novella reveals a systematic engagement with the concept, process, and viability of unification. Moreover, I argue that this concept is crucial to understanding the novella in the broader context of Brentano's Romantic nationalism: by juxtaposing the otherwise disjointed tales of Kasper and Annerl within

[1] "…wohl alle bisherigen Interpreten von Brentanos *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl* [bezweifeln] deren künstlerische und thematische Einheit und, durch die 'Legende' der Luise Hensel beeinflusst, daß Brentano zwei ursprünglich nicht miteinander in Beziehung stehende Geschichten habe erzählt bekommen, noch überall die Bruchstellen zwischen ihnen sehen" Gerhard Kluge. *Clemens Brentano: Geschichte vom Braven Kasperl und dem Schönen Annerl: Text, Materialien, Kommentar* (Munich: C. Hanser, 1979), 78.

a frame narrative, Brentano outlines the foundations of a cohesive approach to establishing national identity that is lacking in the individual embedded narratives. In doing so, Brentano extends the principle of unification beyond the narrative cohesion of the novella and speaks to the need for a cultural and political unity he saw to be lacking in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. The stakes of this project were twofold: first, Brentano and his fellow Romantic nationalists sought to identify uniquely German stories and traditions in order to distinguish and protect their culture from ever-more aggressive foreign forces; second, only by developing this unified Germanic tradition could they ensure the continued transmission (and existence) of a distinct German culture in the future. In *Kasperl und Annerl*, Brentano masterfully intertwines the question of cultural transmission with narrative transmission through his use of a narrative frame, which allows him to thematize (and problematize) such processes. Finally, by presenting his nationalist agenda in the form of a *Rahmennovelle*, Brentano illustrates the essential role literature will play in the formation of a unified cultural tradition.

I. The Unifying Principle in *Kasperl und Annerl*

Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl begins at the stroke of eleven on a cool night in May. Walking home, the unnamed narrator encounters an elderly woman who has seated herself on the steps of a duke's house, obstinately refusing to move. As the narrator questions the woman about her situation, two tragic stories emerge out of her convoluted replies: first, that of Kasper, the elderly woman's grandson and a soldier in the Prussian army. Stationed in France, Kasper travels home for the anniversary of his mother's death, and is robbed as he approaches his hometown. Pursuing the robbers, he discovers them to be his own father and stepbrother. Torn between loyalty to family and to his own strict sense of

honor, Kasper has his father and stepbrother arrested before killing himself upon his mother's grave. The second story concerns Annerl, the elderly woman's goddaughter and Kasper's intended. As a child, Annerl undergoes a bizarre and traumatic experience when she attends an execution by beheading with her godmother, only to have the condemned man's head fly off and land in her lap. When she is older, she meets Kasper, who tries to instill in her the same strict standard of honor to which he holds himself. While Kasper is stationed in France, Annerl moves to a nearby town, where she is seduced and impregnated. After the child is born, Annerl accidentally smothers it in her apron and is sentenced to death. In the final scenes of the novella, the frame narrator convinces the town's duke to overturn Annerl's sentence, but they fail to reach the execution site in time; Annerl is beheaded and laid to rest with Kasper in their village cemetery. At their funeral, the elderly woman collapses and is buried next to her grandson and goddaughter.

While necessary to give a sense of the events that comprise *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl* (the novella's *fabula*), this straightforward summary belies the convolution of the novella's narration (*syuzhet*), which is complicated by the presence of two homodiegetic narrators[2] and multiple narrative levels. Though the unnamed figure who narrates the frame story does so in an almost perfectly linear fashion (that is, he narrates events in the order in which they occur), the grandmother's narration of the Kasper and Annerl embedded narratives unfolds in no such logical order.[3] She frequently alludes to events and characters to

[2] That is, narrators who are present as characters within the diegesis. The terms that comprise Genette's four basic types of narrative status (intra- or extradiegetic; hetero- or homodiegetic), are developed in the final chapter of *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, titled "Voice." (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) See page 248 for a chart illustrating this typology.

[3] For the sake of clarity, I follow Gordon Birrell's suggestion to refer to the elderly woman as the 'grandmother' throughout my analysis. Though she is Annerl's godmother, rather than grandmother, she fulfills a similar function in the lives of both Kasper and Annerl. Gordon

which neither the frame narrator nor the reader have yet been introduced, narrates events out of sequence, and interrupts her narration with songs and prayers that mark a return from the embedded narratives to the frame. Indeed, even before she has uttered her first line in the text, comments made by the group of men surrounding the grandmother on the stairs indicate her peculiar manner of speaking: "doch sie redet ganz verwirrt, ja sie muß wohl betrunken sein," says one; "Ich glaube, sie ist blödsinnig," declares another.[4] The men's confusion is soon shared by the frame narrator, who patiently attempts to identify the general thrust of his elderly companion's speech. Consider, for example, this early exchange between the frame narrator and the grandmother, as she sits holding a rose given to her by a passing guard:

> Die Rose ergriff sie mit einer rührenden Heftigkeit und befestigte sie sich auf ihren Hut, indem sie mit einer etwas feineren Stimme und fast weinend die Worte sprach:
>
> Rosen die Blumen auf meinem Hut,
> Hätt ich viel Geld, das wäre gut,
> Rosen und mein Liebchen.
>
> Ich sagte zu ihr: Ei, Mütterchen, Ihr seid ja ganz munter geworden, und sie erwiderte:
>
> Munter, munter,
> Immer bunter
> Immer runder
> Oben stund er,
> Nun bergunter,
> 'S ist kein Wunder!
>
> Schau' er, lieber Mensch, ist es nicht gut, daß ich hier sitzen geblieben, es ist alles einerlei, glaub er mir; heut sind es siebenzig Jahre, da saß ich hier vor der Thüre, ich war eine flinke Magd und sang gern alle Lieder. Da sang ich auch das Lied vom Jüngsten Gericht wie heute, da die Runde vorbeiging, und da warf mir ein Grenadier im Vorübergehn eine Rose in den Schooß, – die Blätter hab' ich noch in meiner Bibel liegen

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Birrell. "Paternal Order and Disorder in Brentano's 'Kasperl und Annerl,'" *Monatshefte* 88, no. 1 (1996): 60-82.

[4] Clemens Brentano. "Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl," in *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Jürgen Behrens et al. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1925), 19:402. Hereafter cited in text as *HKA*.

> – das war meine erste Bekanntschaft mit meinem seligen Mann. Am andern Morgen hatte ich die Rose vorgesteckt in der Kirche, und da fand er mich, und es ward bald richtig. Drum hat es mich gar sehr gefreut, daß mir heut wieder eine Rose ward. Es ist ein Zeichen, daß ich zu ihm kommen soll, und darauf freu' ich mich herzlich. Vier Söhne und eine Tochter sind mir gestorben, vorgestern hat mein Enkel seinen Abschied genommen, – Gott helfe ihm und erbarme sich seiner! – und morgen verläßt mich eine andre gute Seele, aber was sag' ich morgen, ist es nicht schon Mitternacht vorbei?[5]

Here, the grandmother moves seamlessly from quoting folk songs, to reminiscing about the past, to foreshadowing the grim events of the next day. While the reader may follow the thread of the conversation, she cannot yet know the significance of the grandmother's allusions – particularly those in the final lines, which refer to Kasper's suicide ("mein Enkel hat seinen Abschied genommen") and Annerl's imminent execution ("morgen verläßt mich eine andre gute Seele").

The extent of this narrative convolution contributes to the difficulty of reading *Kasperl und Annerl* as a whole. Indeed, the text resists a straightforward reading, forcing its audience to perform considerable interpretive work to connect the fragments of the Kasper and Annerl narratives before being able to construct an analysis. A thorough parsing of these embedded narratives, however, reveals that Brentano subtly enacts the principle of unification that I argue plays a central role in both the novella and Brentano's project of Romantic nationalism. In the remainder of this section, I first untangle the threads of the Kasper and Annerl narratives in order to reconstruct their events in linear timelines; I then re-present the events of these embedded narratives in the order and frequency with which they are narrated in the novella. While this structuralist methodology differs from the approach I take in subsequent chapters of this dissertation, I argue that the convoluted nature of Brentano's narrative demands such an analysis. In addition to establishing narrative clarity, the process of reconstructing a linear timeline helps identify the key moments that function as turning points in the respective characters' trajectories.

[5] Ibid., 406-407.

Through a consideration of a) the disjointed order in which the events of each embedded narrative are presented in the frame narrative and b) the degree of repetition that occurs within this process of narration, I show how the reader must reevaluate the significance of these "key" moments. Ultimately, my analysis reveals a surprising point of connection between the two embedded narratives that supports a reading of the novella as an aesthetically unified whole.

A. "Ein ehrliches Grab": The Tale of Kasper

I begin with Kasper's narrative:

1. Kasper does well in school as a child (iterative)
2. Mother dies
3. Father remarries
4. Meets Annerl
5. Father and stepbrother are conscripted by the militia (*Landsturm*)
6. Joins army (as *Uhlan*)
7. Sent to France
8. Hears story of French sergeant
9. Comes home to visit
10. Tells father and stepbrother story of sergeant
11. Father and stepbrother dismiss story/mock Kasper
12. Visits grandmother
13. Visits Annerl, speaks of honor
14. Returns to France
15. Wounded, forced to stay in hospital
16. Journeys home, bringing two tinsel wreaths
17. Horse is wounded, continues on foot
18. Stops at miller's outside of town to sleep
19. Has prophetic dream
20. Interrupts robbery at the miller's
21. Reports robbery to judge in town
22. Stops briefly at grandmother's
23. Goes to father's to borrow horses to patrol town
24. Finds robbers at father's house/discovers they are father and stepbrother
25. Father and stepbrother try to escape
26. Shoots gun/calls for help
27. Turns in father and stepbrother
28. Father and stepbrother arrested
29. Recovers wreaths, money

30. Goes to graveyard
31. Writes suicide note
32. Commits suicide
33. Judge comes with father/stepbrother in chains; learns what has happened
34. Corpse of Kasper taken to judge's house
35. Suicide note discovered; conflict with honorable burial arises
36. Grandmother travels to town to petition for honorable burial of Kasper
37. Laid to rest with Annerl in village cemetery

A few notes about the process of constructing this timeline. First, until the grandmother narrates Kasper's final journey home (#17), the reader has no clear idea of when these events take place – neither in relation to other events in Kasper's diegetic sequence, nor in relation to Annerl's embedded narrative, nor the events of the frame narrative. Second, arguably one of the most important events – the meeting of the two lovers – is also one of the most ambiguous. From what I can infer from the grandmother's narration, I have placed this meeting at #4 on Kasper's timeline, but there is little within the text that helps locate this moment more definitively – especially since it is not recounted (or even alluded to) at any point in the embedded narratives. In fact, there is only one report of an interaction between Kasper and Annerl to be found in the entire novella, and it constitutes an act of what Genette terms "iterative narration": "Mein Enkel, der Uhlan…hatte doch mein Pathgen sein lieb…und sprach der schönen Annerl, wie die Leute sie ihres glatten Spiegels wegen nannten, immer von der Ehre vor, und sagte ihr immer sie solle auf ihre Ehre halten, und auch auf seine Ehre."[6] Clearly this is not a description of a singular, unique conversation, but rather gives a sense of what Kasper would speak to Annerl about *in general*. Although such instances of the iterative provide "a sort of informative frame or background,"[7] Brentano's choice to use it as the exclusive mode in which to depict Kasper and Annerl's interactions is striking. The title of the novella, *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und*

[6] Ibid., 43.
[7] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 117.

dem schönen Annerl, leads one to expect the (singular) story of two characters, Kasper and Annerl; yet the figures are never presented together within either embedded narrative in any substantial way.[8] When one tries to situate the events of Annerl's life within that of Kasper's (or vice versa), the lack of chronological cues relating one story to the other makes the task virtually impossible.

In contrast to the iterative mode used to depict Kasper and Annerl's limited interaction, there are two notable examples of repeating narrative (i.e. the narration of a singular event more than one time), which leads to the final reunion of the two lovers in death: Kasper's suicide (#32) and his burial (#37). If we look at the order and frequency with which the events of the embedded narratives are narrated by the grandmother within the frame narrative, the significance of Kasper's death immediately becomes apparent. In the following visual representation of the novella's *syuzhet*, I use [F] to indicate when Kasper's narrative is interrupted by the frame narrative. Numbers that are separated by a hyphen (for example, [17-34]) signify that all narrative events including and between these numbers are narrated in chronological order, with no returns to the frame. To emphasize the two notable occurrences of repeated narration, I have set the numbers corresponding to Kasper's suicide (#32) and burial (#37) in bold font. Though Kasper's suicide and burial are also referenced by the frame narrator toward the end of the novella, I have restricted this reconstruction of Kasper's tale to the narrative instances articulated by the grandmother:

[8] Arguing that the novella is really about the narration *of* the story of Kasper and Annerl, Birrell points out that "Brentano's story could with some justification be renamed *Die Geschichte von der Geschichte von der Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl.*" ("Paternal Order and Disorder," 60)

[F] **[32] [37]** [F] [2] **[32]** [F] **[37]** [F] [1] [5-9] [2] [10-12] **[37] [32] [37]** [F] **[37]** [F] [13-16] [F] **[17-34]** [F] **[37]** [F] [35] [F] [36] **[37] [32] [37] [37] [37]** [F] **[37]** [F][9]

Not only do Kasper's suicide and burial occupy a place of narrative primacy, comprising four of the embedded narrative's first five narrative instances in the frame, they are also two of only three events to be narrated more than once by the grandmother. And while the death of Kasper's mother (#2) is alluded to twice, Kasper's own death is referenced five times, and his eventual burial an astonishing eleven times.[10] Further, the first reference to Kasper's suicide ("seinen Abschied") and burial also constitutes the grandmother's first utterance in the novella:

> Warum soll ich nicht hier bleiben? Ist dies nicht ein herzogliches Haus? Ich bin achtundachtzig Jahre alt, und der Herzog wird mich gewiß nicht von seiner Schwelle treiben. Drei Söhne sind in seinem Dienst gestorben, und mein einziger Enkel hat seinen Abschied genommen; – Gott verzeiht es ihm gewiß, und ich will nicht sterben, bis er in seinem ehrlichen Grab liegt.[11]

Again, the reader cannot yet know that the grandchild to whom the grandmother refers is the Kasper of the novella's title, nor that his departure ("Abschied") is a permanent one – let alone a

[9] Looking at Kasper's narrative in this order, one may notice that two events I have included in the timeline above do not appear here (the marriage of Kasper's father, and the meeting of Kasper and Annerl). These are events that are not explicitly narrated, but are nonetheless easily inferable and influence the overall embedded tale (the fact that Kasper has a stepbrother is reinforced repeatedly).

[10] I include the old woman's frequent allusions to Kasper's death (for example, when she says, "Mein Enkel hat seinen Abschied genommen") and burial (both Kasper's "ehrliches Grab" and any references to his corpse being sent to the "Anatomie") here as acts of narration (or re-narration). One may want to classify these references (which are often interjections into the frame narrative, rather than a coherent part of the embedded narrative) more specifically in the class of anachrony termed iterative proleptic analepses (giving advance notice of something that has already happened, but of which the reader is not yet aware). (Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 83) Though I was initially unsure whether or not to include these interjections in this representation of the order of the embedded narrative, Genette clarifies that such iterative anachronies do "belong to this narrative type [repeating narrative], which they bring into existence more or less fleetingly." (Ibid., 115)

[11] *HKA*, 19:402.

suicide. It is only upon a second reading that the significance of the grandmother's first words becomes clear.

Considering Kasper's tale through this structural analysis reveals that Brentano utilizes the concept of unification as a fundamental narrative mechanism in the novella. Brentano's use of repeated narration clearly establishes the disproportionate significance of Kasper's suicide and burial, which together lead to his reunion with Annerl in their shared grave. The grandmother's allusions to these events in her first utterance confirm that they function as a driving force propelling the plot forward: her primary reason for traveling to the city, after all, is not to save her goddaughter from execution, but to ensure an honorable resting place for Kasper next to his mother, where Annerl and herself (the grandmother) can join him after death. Kasper, too, envisions his grave as the site of an eventual reunion with his family and beloved. In his suicide note, Kasper twice expresses these hopes for a posthumous reunion, first writing, "ach! bitte doch Jedermann für mich, daß man mir hier, wo ich gefallen bin, ein ehrliches Grab neben meiner Mutter vergönne;"[12] then, addressing Annerl directly: "Und wenn du kannst, so bitte für mich: daß ich ein ehrliches Grab neben meiner Mutter erhalte. Und wenn du hier in unserm Ort sterben solltest, so lasse dich auch bei uns begraben; die gute Großmutter wird auch zu uns kommen, da sind wir Alle beisammen."[13] Kasper's vision of his final resting place reads almost like a family gathering, demonstrating the power of the graveyard to elide temporal (i.e. generational) distinctions through physical proximity. While his union with Annerl should hold the promise of the next generation, however, their legacy will not be evidenced by offspring, but

[12] Ibid., 422.

[13] Ibid., 423. Ironically, the final line of his note ("- ach, meine Verzweiflung ist groß!") prevents Kasper by law from receiving precisely the honorable burial next to Annerl and his family that he, and his grandmother, so desire "Es ist ein Befehl an alle Gerichte ergangen, daß nur die Selbstmörder aus Melancholie ehrlich sollen begraben werden, Alle aber, die aus verzweifelung Hand an sich gelegt, sollen auf die Anatomie." (Ibid., 424)

rather by a tombstone. The loss of this legacy is underscored by the shifting connotation of the word "Ehrentag" throughout the novella, alternately used to refer to Kasper and Annerl's wedding day (for example, when Kasper brings Annerl a wreath from France, "den sollte sie sich bis zu ihrem Ehrentage bewahren"),[14] and their funeral. The grandmother further conflates these two events by referring to their funeral *as* a wedding: "Er hat seinen Abschied schon genommen, mein Pathgen wird ihn heut erhalten, und die Aussteuer hab' ich auch schon beisammen, es soll auf der Hochzeit weiter Niemand seyn als ich."[15]

It is important to note that, as with much of the grandmother's narration, the unusual use of the word "Hochzeit" here is not apparent upon a first reading, as neither the narrator nor the reader yet know of Kasper's death and Annerl's impending execution. Similarly, it is often unclear to what kind of day or event "Ehrentag" refers. The frame narrator periodically expresses confusion on this subject: "und was ist denn das für ein Ehrentag, zu welchem ihr dem Annerl den traurigen Kranz bringet;"[16] "Was ist es denn nun mit der schönen Annerl…Bald sagt ihr, sie habe nur noch wenige Stunden, bald sprecht ihr von ihrem Ehrentag, und sie werde Trost gewinnen durch eure traurige Nachricht. Sagt mir doch alles heraus, will sie Hochzeit halten mit einem Andern, ist sie tot, krank?"[17] The repeated conflation of weddings and funerals suggests, however, that the two share a similar function or characteristic within the story: namely, I argue, a generative power through (re-)unification. While a union in marriage traditionally produces children, Kasper and Annerl's less traditional union in death produces the very story that constitutes the novella. For, as demonstrated earlier, the conditions under which the grandmother

[14] Ibid., 414.
[15] Ibid., 409.
[16] Ibid., 421.
[17] Ibid., 424.

narrates these tales are motivated by Kasper's suicide and subsequent burial arrangements.[18] Though the reader expects a love story, the titular "Geschichte" of Kasper and Annerl is, in fact, the story of their reunion after death, and thus has as its foundation the principle of unification identified at the outset of this chapter.

This principle goes beyond the thematic foundations of *Kasperl und Annerl*, however. In the following section, my analysis of Annerl's embedded narrative demonstrates how Brentano utilizes concepts of unification to reflect and reinforce the very structural integrity of his novella.

B. "An der Schürze ins Grab gerissen": The Tale of Annerl

Annerl Narrative:

1. Mother falls in love with Jäger Jürge
2. Marries poor farmer instead, widowed
3. Jäger gets in trouble, causes mother to fall ill
4. Mother sends message with old woman to Jäger
5. Mother dies
6. Godmother goes to town with Annerl (3 years old)
7. Stops at executioner's
8. Magic sword in cupboard rattles at Annerl
9. Executioner relays folk legend of sword
10. Attempts to cut Annerl with sword
11. Mayor arrives, stops attempt
12. Mayor takes old woman and Annerl to his home
13. Godmother goes with mayor to visit Jäger Jürge in prison
14. Jäger repents after hearing mother's message
15. Jäger requests that old woman and Annerl come to execution next day
16. Godmother and Annerl go to execution
17. As Jäger is beheaded, head flies off and bites Annerl's apron

[18] In his essay *Der Erzähler*, Walter Benjamin similarly says that the conditions of an event or person's narratability lie in its having already passed or, in the latter case, in his or her death: "Der Tod ist die Sanktion von allem, was der Erzähler berichten kann. Vom Tode hat er seine Autorität geliehen. Mit andern Worten: es ist die Naturgeschichte, auf welche seine Geschichten zurückverweisen." Walter Benjamin, *Der Erzähler: Betrachtung zum Werk Nicholai Lesskows* (Suhrkamp, 2007), 114. In this section of the essay, Benjamin addresses Johann Peter Hebel's story *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen*, which is also about reunion in death.

18. Godmother rips own apron off to cover head
19. Mayor brings them to his home
20. Townspeople give gifts
21. Priest delivers warning (Annerl must be raised to fear God, or else)
22. Occasionally rips apron off (iterative)
23. Annerl meets Kasper
24. Annerl and Kasper discuss honor (iterative)
25. Works on improving self, being more honorable (iterative)
26. Kasper visits Annerl while home on leave
27. Annerl goes to city
28. Gets seduced and impregnated by Graf Grossinger
29. Kills child
30. Turns herself in
31. Writes to godmother from prison
32. Godmother comes to town
33. Godmother visits Annerl in prison
34. Sentenced/beheaded
35. Laid to rest with Kasper in village

There are several features of Annerl's storyline that must be addressed. First, I identify a notable discrepancy in emphasis between the Kasper and Annerl embedded narratives. In the Kasper narrative, Brentano gives us but a few details of Kasper's life leading up to his enlistment in the military, and the events of his final two days. In the Annerl narrative, on the other hand, Brentano focuses primarily on one definitive event in Annerl's childhood, but provides little information about her life afterward. The reader does, of course, learn of her eventual demise after she travels to the city, but the level of detail used to narrate this event is sparse compared to the passage describing the childhood incident. This focalized attention on a structural level reflects something about the defining moments in Kasper and Annerl's lives: namely, that Annerl's fate is determined at the beginning of her story; Kasper's, at the end. It may be argued, then, that their lives are out of sync, and that the brief converging of their storylines (hardly alluded to in the narrative) has little effect on the trajectory of either individual story. If the course of Annerl's narrative is already determined before she and Kasper meet, how does their

love affair affect her fate? True, one might say that it is Kasper's influence and emphasis on honor that lead Annerl to turn herself in after the murder of her child; however, the crime itself takes place in a moment of confusion, when Annerl conflates the horrific scene at Jäger Jürge's execution with the present, and accidentally smothers her child with her apron. Again, the incident in Annerl's childhood is the motivation behind this fateful moment, not her relationship with Kasper.

The argument that Kasper and Annerl's fates are determined at different times and by different events in their lives is not a new one.[19] Indeed, it may be apparent upon a first reading of the novella. One would expect, then, that the traumatizing execution of Jäger Jürge would be the primary focus of repeated narration in the Annerl narrative. In fact, however, this incident (#17) is only referenced four times, while two other events are each referenced more frequently: Annerl's judgment/execution (#34), which appears six times, and her burial (#35), which is referenced nine times. As with Kasper's tale, I have used [F] to denote when the embedded narrative is interrupted by the frame narrative, and set the two most significant instances of repeating narration (Annerl's execution (#34) and burial (#35)) in bold font. These events are also among the first in the order of narrative time, thus mirroring the narrative position of Kasper's death and burial in his embedded narrative:

[19] See Richard Alewyn, "Brentanos *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*," in *Gestaltprobleme der Dichtung. Günther Müller zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1957), 143-180; Helmut Rehder, "Von Ehre, Gnade und Gerechtigkeit. Gedanken zu Brentanos *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*," in *Stoffe. Formen. Strukturen. Festschrift für Hans Heinrich Borcherdt*, eds. Albert Fuchs und Helmut Motekat (Munich: Hueber 1962), 315-330; Walter Silz, *Realism and Reality: Studies in the German Novelle of Poetic Realism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 17-28.

[F] [33] [F] **[34]** [F] **[35]** [F] [33] [F] **[34]** [F] **[35]** [F] [24] [22] [17] **[35]** [F] [K [26]] [K [27]] [F] **[35]** [F] [32-33] [F] [5] [1-21] [F] [17] [28-29] [28] [30] **[34]** [31] [33] **[35]** [F] [29-30] **[34-35]** [33] **[35]** [F] **[34-35] [34]** [28] **[35]** [F][20]

Looking at the order in which the events of Annerl's tale are presented in the frame narrative reveals a discrepancy between the structural framework of the story and the descriptive quality of the narrative. While the incident with Jäger Jürge (#17) is described once in great detail, it is hardly referenced in the latter half of the metanarative. On the other hand, her upcoming sentencing and burial are alluded to vaguely but frequently throughout the entirety of the novella. Consequently, while the defining moment of Annerl's tale appears to be the execution of Jäger Jürge when looking at a linear timeline of the embedded narrative, Annerl's own execution and burial emerge in a structural analysis as the most narratively significant events.

As with Kasper's tale, this reconstruction of Annerl's narrative points to the principle of unification, or re-unification, that is at work within the story. Despite a lack of overlap between the two embedded narratives, Brentano's use of Kasper and Annerl's deaths and joint burial throughout each tale gives narrative weight to the characters' ultimate reunification at the end of the novella. To conclude my analysis of the embedded narratives, I consider how this principle of unification runs deeper than the thematic concerns of the story, and anticipates one of the criticisms that has long plagued the novella: namely, the question of its structural cohesion.

Since its publication, Brentano's novella has been repeatedly dissected by critics looking to identify and separate disparate parts within the whole. These same critics have generally overlooked, however, that the corporeal bodies depicted within the novella are also in constant

[20] Two events from Annerl's chronological timeline (when Kasper visits her (26) and her move to the city (27)) are actually narrated during the Kasper embedded narrative. I have indicated this in the above representation as [K[X]].

danger of fragmentation. The threat of physical dismemberment pervades both embedded narratives, and is inseparable from the most narratively significant events in the novella, as identified in the analyses above (that is, the deaths and burial of Kasper and Annerl). After all, the grandmother's failure to secure a proper burial will result not only in the eternal separation of Kasper and Annerl, but also in a grisly violation of the very "unity" of Kasper's body: if the duke does not grant him the right to a funeral, Kasper's corpse will be sent to the *Anatomie* to be dismembered and studied in the service of science.

This reads as a particularly poignant violation, as Brentano establishes a connection between Kasper and bodily concerns early on in the novella. When the grandmother first describes Kasper, she notes "es ist immer ein herrlicher Junge gewesen, und hielt etwas auf seinen Leib und auf seine Seele."[21] The concept of honor, the most prominent motif in Kasper's narrative, is also tied to body: the phrase "Ehre im Leibe" is repeated by various figures throughout the novella to describe those who "embody" honor.[22] While the grandmother does succeed in her quest to save Kasper's body from such a fate, Annerl is not so lucky. Despite the frame narrator's valiant efforts, Annerl is beheaded at the end of the novella in a grim repetition of Jäger Jürge's execution.[23] And while it is true that the grandmother, with her belief in divine justice, did not seek to prevent Annerl's death, she does react to the violation of Annerl's body by attempting to conceal the fatal wound, and thus preserve an illusion of physical unity:

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[21] *HKA*, 19:407.

[22] For example, Kasper's lieutenant uses this phrase to distinguish Kasper from others in the group, saying, "wenn meine Schwadron Ehre im Leibe hat, so sitzt sie bei dem Finkel im Quartier" (Ibid. 408). Kasper uses also the phrase when talking about the French generally ("sie haben doch viel Ehre im Leibe!"), and again after he narrates the story of the French sergeant ("das war ein Kerl der Ehre im Leib hatte!") (Ibid., 408-409)

[23] "…ich sah in den Kreis, ich sah einen Stahlblitz in der frühen Sonne - ach Gott, es war der Schwerdblitz des Richters! - Ich sprengte heran…aber der Richter hielt ihm das blutende Haupt der schönen Annerl entgegen, das ihn wehmüthig anlächelte." (Ibid., 434)

"[Annerls Leiche] lag auf dem grünen Rasen in einem schwarzen Kleide mit weißen Schleifen, die alte Großmutter, welche sich um alles was vorging, nicht bekümmerte, hatte ihr das Haupt an den Rumpf gelegt und die schreckliche Trennung mit ihrer Schürze bedeckt."[24]

The true significance of the grandmother's concern with the physical condition of her grandson and goddaughter's corpses is revealed in the anxiety she expresses when asking the frame narrator to help write a petition to the duke: "Setz' er in die Bittschrift, daß zwei Liebende bei einander ruhen sollen und daß sie Einen nicht auf die Anatomie bringen sollen, damit man seine Glieder beisammen hat, wenn es heißt, ihr Todten, ihr Todten sollte auferstehn, ihr sollt vor das jüngste Gerichte gehn."[25] The grandmother's use of "beisammen" echoes Kasper's own use of the term in his suicide note ("da sind wir Alle beisammen"),[26] again emphasizing the importance of unification. While the grandmother speaks here of Kasper's body, his corporeal integrity is not the ultimate goal: rather, he must retain all of his limbs so that he may rise up on Judgment Day and be reunited with his family. Throughout the novella, the grandmother intersperses her narration with fragments of folk songs, rhymes and hymnals, many of which reference the Last Judgment:

> Wann der jüngste Tag wird werden,
> Dann fallen die Sternelein auf die Erden.
> Ihr Todten, ihr Todten sollt auferstehn,
> Ihr sollt vor das jüngste Gerichte gehen,
> Ihr sollt treten auf die Spitzen,
> Da die lieben Engelein sitzen…[27]

[24] Ibid., 435.
[25] Ibid., 412.
[26] Ibid., 423.
[27] Ibid., 405.

The grandmother makes clear through her frequent invocations and songs that the stakes of securing a grave for Kasper and Annerl go beyond fulfilling some earthly formality or tradition. Though being buried next to loved ones does hold some importance,[28] the grandmother's focus lies primarily with securing their togetherness in the afterlife. This concern shows that the scope of the concept of unification extends beyond the events of the novella: while the story concludes with the successful joint burial of Kasper, Annerl and the grandmother, their ultimate, eternal reunion occurs off the page.[29]

The constant threat of dismemberment and quest for togetherness in the afterlife both speak to the second level on which the principle of unification is at work: that of the novella's formal structure. Scholars have long been fixated upon the origin(s) of the Kasper and Annerl narratives, yet the ultimate reunification of Kasper and Annerl in death may be read as analogous to the final resting place of their respective embedded narratives within the novella's frame. Like the many generations of occupants in a graveyard, the Kasper and Annerl tales, regardless of their origin(s), have ended up "beisammen," united and protected by Brentano's strategic use of a narrative frame. I understand the narrative emphasis placed on the characters' eternal union, then, to support a reading of the novella as a united whole, and as a caution against the impulse to "dismember" the novella into distinct narratives that are of little consequence to each other.

My analysis thus far of *Kasperl und Annerl* has demonstrated that Brentano manifests a principle of unification within his novella, and has explored the implications this has for reading the novella as a unified whole. In the next section, I suggest that Brentano's novella should also

[28] The term *beisammen* emerges again when the grandmother describes her own burial plans while visiting her daughter's grave: "hier will ich liegen, und da soll Kasper liegen, wenn ihm Gott sein Grab in der Heimath schenkt, daß wir fein *beisammen* sind, wenn's heißt: Ihr Toten, ihr Toten sollt auferstehn, ihr sollt zum jüngsten Gerichte gehn!" (Ibid., 414. Emphasis mine)
[29] Consider incorporating line from grandmother: "O, was läge am ganzen Leben, wenn's kein End nähme, was läge am Leben, wenn es nicht ewig wäre!" (Ibid., 414)

be understood as part of the larger movement of Romantic nationalism that emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In doing so, I show how Brentano extends his principle of unification beyond the scope of the novella and uses it as the foundation for imagining a coherent national identity.

II. Soldiers and Scribes: Brentano's Romantic Nationalism

During the formative years of Clemens Brentano's writing career, Germany was at a crossroads. The nation was in the midst of the so-called *Franzosenzeit* – the period from roughly 1792-1815 when much of Germany fell under French rule, and which was punctuated by the Napoleonic wars (1803-1815), the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire (1806), and the Wars of Liberation (1813). During this period of intense upheaval, the political and social climate in Germany was marked by instability and discord. While the formation of the German Confederation (1815) in the wake of Napoleon's defeat went some way toward creating feelings of solidarity among the multitude of German-speaking states, the relationships between these states were decidedly tenuous. After nearly two decades of living in France's shadow, the newly-formed confederation faced the task of not only redrawing state lines and preserving a balance of power, but developing a sense of German identity as well.

This project began, of course, long before 1815. The roots of German Romantic nationalism may be located in the eighteenth century, in the response to Enlightenment doctrines. Enlightenment thinkers championed reason and encouraged universalism, resulting in the devaluation of individual national literatures and traditional beliefs, and which then, according to

critics, led to the dissolution of organic social bonds.[30] By the end of the eighteenth century, a school of thought had emerged in Europe that worked against these trends, proposing instead an "organicist" approach to political and social theory. While Enlightenment thinkers championed the individual over the group (whether it be one's immediate community or one's nation), supporters of the organicist view understood the natural foundation of society to be the individual's relationship and responsibility *to* the group. In Germany, similar ideas emerged in the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder, who developed a concept of society and culture that highlighted populism, pluralism, and expressionism.[31] In his view, a society is comprised of its *Volk* – groups and communities bound (and defined) by shared value systems, and the mutual responsibility of its individuals to one another. The success of these systems depends upon a shared history and tradition; thus, Herder and other critics of the Enlightenment saw the universalist impulse to elide cultural and political diversity as endangering the wellbeing, even the very possibility of society.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close and France's command over its neighbors grew stronger, many of Germany's intellectuals recognized a need to distinguish, or perhaps create, a coherent national identity. While supporting the cultural plurality of the Holy Roman Empire's many small states, writers and philosophers simultaneously sought the traditions and customs that united these states as distinctly Germanic, lest these traditions be irretrievably lost in the wake of the current political upheaval. In the absence of political unity, the authors invested in this project strove for strength in cultural unity; in doing so, they believed they could contribute

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[30] Carol Lisa Tully. *Creating a National Identity: A Comparative Study of German and Spanish Romanticism With Particular Reference to the Märchen of Ludwig Tieck, the Brothers Grimm, and Clemens Brentano, and the Costumbrismo of Blanco White, Estébanez Calderón, and López Soler* (Stuttgart: H.-D. Heinz, 1997), 3-4.
[31] Ibid., 5.

to the development of a nation that might be able to withstand the onslaught of foreign influences – and, just as importantly, move forward as a stronger state. This twofold strategy of establishing tradition and ensuring its transmission was the project at hand as the authors of early Romanticism took up their pens. Though the approach to answering the question of German identity evolved over the decades that encompass literary Romanticism, the early works of this period reflect a shared concern with community, tradition and a relationship to the land – often coupled with a considerable degree of Francophobia.

Though not traditionally considered a particularly politically-engaged writer, Clemens Brentano too felt the pressure of encroaching foreign powers and the strong desire to ensure a legacy for German culture. Carol Lisa Tully, who does a particularly fine job of tracing Brentano's political engagement, argues that Brentano's nationalism was highly personal in nature, first sparked by the French occupation of his home region (the Rheingau), and further fueled when he faced losing his partner and friend, Achim von Arnim, to a *Landsturmscompagnie*.[32] By the time *Kasperl und Annerl* was published in 1817, however, Brentano's interest in politics had begun to wane, gradually replaced by a religious fervor that culminated in his work at the bedside of the Catholic visionary nun, Anna Katharina Emmerick. What emerges in *Kasperl und Annerl*, then, is not the unabashedly patriotic tone of some of Brentano's earlier writings, but rather a cautious, even critical reflection on his own nationalist agenda, which called for a renewed engagement with Teutonic folk culture and a clear rejection of foreign influence. I suggest that these two strands of Brentano's nationalism are clearly represented by the two embedded narratives in *Kasperl und Annerl*: folk culture in Annerl's tale, and the relationship to foreign powers in Kasper's. By uniting these stories within a frame

[32] Ibid., 197-226.

narrative, Brentano generates new significance that would not exist in the tales separately, while also modeling his approach to establishing a national cultural identity and ensuring its legacy through a principle of unification. As the following analysis demonstrates, however, Brentano's novella highlights how tenuous the project of a unified Germany is, and forces the reader to question whether the idea of cultural transmission is ultimately viable.

A. The Erasure of Folk Culture in *Kasper und Annerl*

Like many leading authors and intellectuals of his time, Brentano believed that the most powerful means of engendering a sense of German identity lay in literature – and more specifically, in *Volkspoesie* and *Volkslieder*. The value of *Volkspoesie* was thought to be its historicity, its potential to teach something about the present through the revival of a richer, idealized past. Contemporaneous authors such as the Brothers Grimm argued that the collective form of poetic creation necessary to construct *Volkspoesie* was no longer possible in the modern world, and thus that the songs and tales passed down from earlier times should be preserved with little to no revision.[33] While Brentano and his fellow Heidelberg Romantic, collaborator, and eventual brother-in-law Achim von Arnim agreed that *Volkspoesie* held the potential to reveal a deeper understanding of the past, they also believed in the necessity of actively engaging with these tales and songs – whether through revisions to make them more accessible to modern day readers, arranging them in meaningful collections, or by creating new *Kunstpoesie* in a similar style to accompany the older tales. Brentano and Arnim believed that only by actively engaging with the songs and tales of the past could they uncover the fundamental nature of the German

[33] It is now well known that the Grimm brothers did not always practice what they preached – many of the tales in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* came from the French tradition (not German), and were heavily edited by the brothers, despite their claims of authenticity.

Volk and awaken in their readers a strong sense of shared cultural history and identity, such that the German people could step out from beneath France's shadow once and for all.

The most obvious testament to Brentano's attempt to revive German *Volkspoesie* is *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* – a collection of "alte deutsche Lieder" co-edited by Brentano and Arnim and published in three volumes between 1805 and 1808. I argue, however, that *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*, which appeared nearly ten years after *Wunderhorn,* proves to be a more critical, complex reflection on the role of folk culture in the larger project of Romantic nationalism. Rather than compiling and presenting folk songs and old wives' tales to a contemporary audience, in *Kasperl und Annerl* Brentano instead dramatizes an encounter between a writer and a literal "old wife," who not only tells tales, but also frequently peppers her narration with snippets of songs ("Ihr Toten, ihr Toten sollt auferstehn/Ihr sollt vor das Jüngste Gerichte gehen") and rhymes ("Munter, munter/Immer bunter/Immer runder/Oben stund er/Nun bergunter/'s ist kein Wunder!").[34] In addition to the grandmother's clear ties with folk culture, Brentano scholars were also quick to identify a potential forerunner of Annerl in a folk ballad published in the *Wunderhorn*, entitled "Weltlich Recht."[35] And indeed, Annerl's story, with its rattling sword and flying heads, contains more than a few fantastical elements that encourage a reading of her embedded narrative as a folk or fairy tale. It is unsurprising, then, that

[34] *HKA*, 19:414, 406.
[35] Silz, *Realism and Reality*, 17. "Weltlich Recht" recounts the seduction, impregnation and sentencing of "die schöne Nanerl," who, it is strongly implied, has murdered her child. As in *Kasperl und Annerl*, a figure races to the execution with a pardon, but is too late – the final lines of the poem reveal that Nanerl "ist schon todt." See Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte Deutsche Lieder, Gesammelt* (Insel Verlag: Leipzig, 1808), 2:204.

the grandmother and Annerl have both been widely acknowledged in the scholarship as representative figures of *Volkspoesie*.[36]

I am less interested in classifying the figures of Brentano's novella, however, as in determining how folk culture is treated within the story. In his depiction of the grandmother telling stories to the frame narrator, Brentano not only thematizes his own project collecting folktales, he also establishes the frame narrative as a scene of cultural transmission – that is, of the oral communication of stories to a listener, who is then tasked with ensuring the stories' continued distribution. The success of such a communicative act hinges upon both the narration of a story and the successful reception of that story by a given audience, who may in turn communicate it to others. In the following discussion, I consider the reception of the embedded narrative of Annerl within the frame narrative, and question whether it can be considered a successful act of communication. In the course of this analysis, I trace the depiction and reception of folk culture back to the Annerl narrative itself, and focus on one crucial example that plays a central role in the novella – the tale of the executioner's sword. Ultimately I argue that both scenes represent communicative failures and thus cast doubt upon the viability of the nationalist project of establishing identity through a folktale revival.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the grandmother's mode of speaking is met with varying degrees of confusion by the figures in the frame narrative, including the frame narrator. Yet, despite the opacity of the grandmother's narrative style, the frame narrator appears to

[36] For example, Silz writes that the grandmother "seems to personify the immemorial anonymous, and inarticulate suffering of the peasantry, their infinite endurance, their seemingly inexhaustible spiritual resources…She herself seems to stand above time." (*Realism and Reality*, 27) See also Kluge, *Text, Materialien, Kommentar*, 90; Alewyn, *Brentano*, 112; and Benno von Wiese, *Die deutsche Novelle von Goethe bis Kafka – Interpretationen* (Düsseldorf: August Bagel Verlag, 1956), 66.

reproduce the embedded narratives as they were told to him. In other words, the novella contains no indication that the frame narrator alters the grandmother's tales in any way; instead, they are preserved, intact, upon the page. If cultural transmission relies upon the further communication of narratives, the frame narrator approaches this endeavor as a neutral mediator tasked primarily with delivering the tale(s) of Kasper and Annerl to the reader untouched.[37] Further, if the grandmother can be understood as a representative figure of folk culture, the frame narrator's preservation of her unique narrative style echoes the endeavors of Brentano, Arnim and the Grimm brothers to capture the voice of the *Volk*. The frame narrator's response to Annerl's narrative, however, points to a fundamental discrepancy between the grandmother's understanding of events and his own, and thus to a potential mis-communication.

When the grandmother finally finishes narrating Annerl's tale after pages of allusions and interruptions, the frame narrator still does not fully understand the young woman's situation and must ask for further clarification, thus marking a communicative break: "Um Gottes willen, Mutter, rief ich aus, was ist es mit der armen Annerl geworden, ist denn gar nicht zu helfen?"[38] To his horror, the frame narrator finally realizes that the young woman is to be executed in a matter of hours. The effect of this realization is instantaneous: while the frame narrator has been a largely passive audience to the grandmother's tales throughout the novella, he now asserts his voice and attempts to intervene. Though the grandmother merely asks the narrator to help write a petition to the duke allowing Kasper and Annerl to be buried together, the narrator announces his intention to save Annerl instead: "Alles, alles will ich versuchen! rief ich aus, gleich will ich

[37] Kluge also writes, "Der Erzähler ist nicht der Organisator des Stoffes: die Erzählungen der Alten nimmt er als betroffeneer Zuhörer auf, und gleichsam als Schreiber gibt er sie wieder, mit den Worten der Alten, ohne die Erzähllogik der Alten anzutasten..." (*Text, Materialien, Kommentar*, 105)
[38] *HKA*, 19:428.

nach dem Schlosse laufen, mein Freund, der ihr die Rose gab, hat die Wache dort, er soll mir den Herzog wecken, ich will vor sein Bett knien, und ihn um Pardon für Annerl bitten."[39] In the grandmother's clear and firm assertion that Annerl does not wish to be pardoned, she implores the frame narrator to "see" or "look," implying that he has, in fact, overlooked something in his assessment of the situation: "Pardon?...*Seht*, sie will keinen Pardon."[40] Ignoring this appeal, the narrator jumps into action, leaving the grandmother behind: "Ich aber eilte nun, wie ich noch nie gelaufen…"[41]

The exchange just cited marks the transition within the novella from the grandmother as primary narrator (i.e. where the embedded narratives occupy a majority of the text), to the frame narrator as primary narrator (i.e. the point at which the embedded narratives converge and "catch up" to the events unfolding in the frame). This transition is marked by a series of narrative cues subtly indicating a communicative disconnect between these two narrators: the frame narrator first reveals his failure to comprehend Annerl's tale, then the grandmother suggests that he look again before attempting to save Annerl from her grisly fate. The frame narrator's futile quest also differs sharply from the grandmother's calm acceptance of her goddaughter's upcoming execution. The difference in their responses has generally been attributed to the grandmother's strong religious beliefs and faith in divine justice in the afterlife, while the narrator is clearly concerned with Annerl's earthly fate. I would like to suggest that the frame narrator and grandmother's reactions also reflect a clear difference in their understanding of Annerl's tale *qua* tale.

[39] Ibid., 429.
[40] Ibid. Emphasis mine.
[41] Ibid., 430.

The grandmother's frequent allusions to Annerl's upcoming execution make clear that she considers her goddaughter's death to be a certainty. Though Annerl must still face the Last Judgment, the story of her life on earth has, from the grandmother's perspective, come to a close. In his reception of the Annerl narrative, on the other hand, the frame narrator reveals that he does not regard Annerl's tale as complete, but rather as an ongoing story in which he plays a role. Taking the folk- and fairytale elements of the Annerl narrative into account, the frame narrator's attempt to insert himself into the story might be read as embodying the nationalist call to actively engage with folk culture. Yet the novella's final pages indicate that the frame narrator's actions are misguided: in addition to his obvious failure to save Annerl, Gerhard Kluge has also drawn attention to the frame narrator's misidentification of one of the novella's recurring motifs – as the narrator rushes to the execution, he mistakes a veil full of roses as a sign of mercy alone (*Gnade*), though roses have been associated throughout the novella with love (*Liebe*).[42] This misidentification – or misreading – should, I argue, be understood as one of several signals to the reader that a communicative break has occurred between the frame narrator and the grandmother, in which some crucial significance has been lost. This break is evidenced again in the brief depiction of the frame narrator's re-telling of Kasper and Annerl's story to the duke.

Interestingly, when he tries to push past the duke's guard, the frame narrator is initially met with a response similar to that which the grandmother received in the opening pages of the novella: "Sie sind betrunken…schlafen Sie aus."[43] The frame narrator soon gains an audience with the duke, however, and proceeds to tell him the story of Kasper and Annerl:

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[42] Kluge, *Text, Materialien, Kommentar*, 106. While the veil may indeed be a symbol of mercy, Kluge points out that roses function unmistakably as a symbol of love throughout the text. When the frame narrator picks up the veil containing roses, however, he thinks, "ach Gott, das ist die Gnade." (*HKA*, 19:430)

[43] Ibid., 432.

> Ich trug dem Herzog Alles, was mir die Alte von dem Selbstmorde des Uhlans, von der Geschichte der schönen Annerl erzählt hatte, so gedrängt vor, als die Noth erforderte, und flehte ihn wenigstens um den Aufschub der Hinrichtung auf wenige Stunden und um ein ehrliches Grab für die beiden Unglücklichen an, wenn Gnade unmöglich sei.[44]

Unlike his seemingly faithful reproduction of the grandmother's narration on the pages of the novella, his re-telling of the embedded narratives here is both condensed ("gedrängt"), and also includes at least one new addition – the request to push back Annerl's trial. The result of this narrative intervention is evidenced by the duke's reaction to the stories: he clearly subscribes to the frame narrator's interpretation of events (i.e. that Annerl's fate is not yet sealed), first calling Annerl a victim of false honor and seduction ("Euer Durchlaut, dieses arme Mädchen ist ein Opfer falscher Ehrsucht; ein Vornehmer hat sie verführt und ihr die Ehe versprochen, ach, sie ist so gut daß sie lieber sterben will als ihn nennen"), then ordering his guard to stop the execution.[45] When the guard (who is later revealed to be Annerl's seducer and eventually commits suicide) does not arrive at the execution site in time to stop the beheading, the duke grants Kasper and Annerl an honorable burial together, and pays tribute to the two lovers with a garish monument atop their grave depicting "die falsche und wahre Ehre."[46]

While there is, of course, an emphasis on competing notions of honor throughout the text, this theme emerges even more prominently toward the end of the novella through the duke's response to Kasper and Annerl's story, the monument upon their graves, and the frame narrator's references to Kasper and Annerl as "unglücklichen Ehrenopfer."[47] These explicit and rather heavy-handed allusions to the theme of honor occur after the frame narrator has stepped into the role of primary narrator (i.e. after the grandmother has concluded her narration of the embedded

[44] Ibid., 433.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 439.
[47] Ibid.

narratives), and can be read as a reflection of the frame narrator's own interpretation of the primary focus or significance of the embedded narratives. In other words, it suggests that the frame narrator understands both Kasper and Annerl's tales to be stories primarily about conceptions of honor. The fact that the duke immediately arrives at this same conclusion after hearing only the frame narrator's summary of the tales supports this reading. It also points, I argue, to what has been lost in the communicative break between the grandmother and frame narrator, and in the latter's retelling of the embedded narratives to the duke: namely, any trace of folk culture.

While reducing the Kasper narrative to a cautionary tale about honor is somewhat understandable (indeed, many critics have done the same), viewing Annerl merely as "ein Opfer falscher Ehrsucht" ignores a critical incident in her childhood that affects the rest of her story – the execution of Jäger Jürge. Though my earlier analysis of Annerl's tale demonstrates that this is not the most narratively significant event in the embedded narrative, the scene of Jürge's beheading is nonetheless echoed in many later events in the tale (such as the murder of Annerl's child and Annerl's own beheading), and shapes some of its most prominent motifs and imagery. In their immediate responses to Annerl's story, however, the frame narrator and duke do not mention this strange incident, instead attributing her current plight entirely to a misplaced sense of honor. The sequence of events surrounding Jäger Jürge's execution are widely read as containing elements of traditional folk- and fairytales;[48] by neglecting to acknowledge the impact of these events on the trajectory of Annerl's story, the frame narrator effectively erases folk tradition from his transmission of her narrative.

[48] For a summary of discussions on the question of genre (including folk and fairy tales) in the secondary literature on *Kasperl und Annerl*, see Kluge, *Text, Materialien, Kommentar*, 66-83.

This loss of folk culture is mirrored by the grandmother's virtual disappearance from the final third of the novella, when she has completed the embedded narratives and the frame narrator takes over as the primary narrator. While the grandmother's voice and the folkish events of Annerl's tale are reproduced within the novella itself – and, consequently, for the novella's audience – Brentano nonetheless subtly suggests that the folktale element of Annerl's story is in danger of being excluded, or at least diminished, in further retellings within the diegetic sphere of the novella. Again, this omission of folk influences in the frame narrator's transmission of the tale in favor of a version emphasizing honor is already evidenced by the duke's immediate reaction to the story and later made tangible in the latter's monument to Kasper and Annerl. The frame narrator does eventually reference the beheading, indicating that the apron Annerl wore that day will be preserved in the Ducal Museum: "Die Schürze der schönen Annerl, in welche ihr der Kopf des Jäger Jürge bei seiner Enthauptung gebissen, ist auf der herzoglichen Kunstkammer bewahrt worden."[49] Compared with the visibility of the monument to honor (not to mention the public unveiling of said monument), however, the placement of the apron in the Ducal Museum reads more like an act of concealment than one of preservation. Further, the frame narrator goes on to refer to Annerl as an "Ehrenopfer" two sentences later, again downplaying the significance of the apron and reinforcing the reading that Annerl's downfall may be reduced to a misplaced sense of honor.

The subtle erasure of folktale elements from Annerl's tale within the final pages of the frame narrative reveals a degree of skepticism of the treatment of folk culture within contemporary society, and thereby of the nationalist project to develop a unified German identity through *das Volk*. While the frame narrator's intervention into Annerl's story might be read as an

[49] *HKA*, 19:458.

attempt to actively participate in the folktale tradition, his overemphasis on honor, misreading of motifs, and ultimate failure to save Annerl all suggest that he is somehow misguided in his interpretation of her tale. To conclude my analysis of the Annerl narrative, I turn now to another scene of attempted cultural transmission that takes place shortly before Jäger Jürge's execution. In addition to being a pivotal scene in the novella, I suggest that Brentano depicts a break between folk culture and modern sensibilities in this scene that represents a threat to the project of Romantic nationalism.

As the grandmother recounts Annerl's sad story, the reader learns of a strange incident that took place in the latter's childhood. Per her mother's dying request, Annerl (only three at this time) and the grandmother travel to a nearby town to attend the execution of Jäger Jürge – a man on trial for murder, and whom Annerl's mother once loved. Before the execution, the old woman and Annerl visit the home of the executioner, who is also the town's veterinarian, to pick up medicinal herbs. While there, Annerl notices a strange noise coming from a cupboard: "Als wir zurück in die Stube traten, stand Annerl vor einem kleinen Schranke, der an der Wand befestigt war, und sprach: Großmutter, da ist eine Maus drinn, hört, wie es klappert, da ist eine Maus drinn!"[50] Here is the first instance of misinterpretation, albeit an acoustic one. While Annerl innocently believes the noise in the cupboard comes from a harmless, trapped creature, she soon learns it is something more sinister: "Auf diese Rede des Kindes machte der Meister ein sehr ernsthaftes Gesicht, riß den Schrank auf und sprach: 'Gott sei uns gnädig!' denn er sah sein Richtschwert, das allein in dem Schranke an einem Nagel hing, hin und her wanken. Er nahm das Schwert herunter, und mir schauderte."[51] By stressing that the sword hangs alone in the

[50] Ibid., 425.
[51] Ibid., 426.

cupboard, Brentano eliminates any ambiguity as to the source of the noise, and emphasizes Annerl's aural misidentification.

Confronted by this sight, the grandmother is understandably alarmed. Noting her concern, the executioner acts as a mediator, interpreting the sword's "desires" as indicated by its movement and explaining the implications if they do not acquiesce: "Liebe Frau, sagte er, wenn ihr das kleine liebe Annerl lieb habt, so erschreckt nicht, wenn ich ihm mit meinem Schwert rings um das Hälschen die Haut ein wenig aufritze: denn das Schwert hat vor ihm gewankt, es hat nach seinem Blut verlangt, und wenn ich ihm den Hals damit nicht ritze, so steht dem Kinde groß Elend im Leben bevor."[52] When the executioner moves to draw blood, however, both Annerl and the grandmother scream and refuse, until finally the town mayor enters the house and inquires about their distress. In response, Annerl shrieks, "er will mich umbringen," while the grandmother recalls she was "außer mir vor Entsetzen."[53] These reactions mark the scene's second, and more egregious interpretive failure. Despite the executioner's emphasis that he only needs to scratch Annerl's neck "ein wenig," the child and grandmother alike fail to understand the folk logic that would require such a blood payment. While their horror may be understandable, young Annerl's paraphrasing ("er will mich umbringen") of the executioner's explanation exposes the extent of the communicative break here. Although the executioner seeks to remove Annerl from danger, her re-telling of the situation inverts this intention, claiming instead that he intends to end, not save, her life. If successful communication hinges upon comprehension allowing for continued transmission, then this process appears to have failed.

It is crucial to note that this communicative failure occurs at the moment that Annerl and the grandmother are confronted with an article of folk culture. When the mayor expresses his

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

disdain for the executioner's so-called superstitions ("Aberglauben"), the latter calmly replies, "So haben's meine Väter gehalten, so halt ich's."[54] Tradition is an essential and inherent component of folk culture – the transmission of narratives, beliefs and even objects from one generation to the next. By invoking his ancestors, the executioner makes clear that the sword and the legend surrounding it belong to such a tradition. Though Annerl and the grandmother are often read as folk figures themselves, this scene demonstrates that they are removed from at least some aspects and traditions of folk culture. They may instead be read, I argue, as figures of transition – neither belonging wholly to *das Volk*, nor the more modern city in which the frame narrative takes place, and whose dwellers include figures like the frame narrator, duke and Graf Grossinger.[55] It is not only the frame narrator, then, who participates in the erosion of folk culture within the novella: a communicative break has already occurred when Annerl misrepresents the executioner's intentions, and the grandmother (along with the town mayor) dismisses his warnings.

The more tangible implications of this failure in communication become apparent at Jäger Jürge's beheading. After dismissing the executioner's warnings and departing, the grandmother watches in horror the next day as the execution goes awry:

> Da gab ihm der Richter den Todesstreich. 'Jesus, Maria, Josef!' schrie ich aus; denn der Kopf des Jürgen flog gegen Annerl zu und biß mit seinen Zähnen dem Kinde in sein Röckchen, das ganz entsetzlich schrie. Ich riß meine Schürze vom Leibe und warf sie über den scheußlichen Kopf, und [der Hinrichter] eilte herbei, riß ihn los und sprach:

[54] Ibid.

[55] Reading the grandmother and Annerl, or perhaps the grandmother and the *frame narrator*, as figures of transition also establishes a productive connection to the experience of Brentano and his fellow Romantics: "Considered from a purely chronological standpoint, Brentano and his Romantic generation found themselves in many a 'threshold' condition; those writers and thinkers who matured around 1800 stood at the crossroads of numerous historical and intellectual currents. For example, in the political arena, the 'old order' had been overthrown in France during the last decade of the eighteenth century, and the new superstructure of society was groping its way through the quagmire of revolution." (Fetzer, *Romantic Orpheus*, 2)

Mutter, Mutter, was habe ich gestern gesagt? Ich kenne mein Schwert, es ist lebendig![56] Brentano's use of the word "lebendig" here underscores the vitality of folk culture, which is represented though the executioner's sword. Yet, another attempt is made to downplay the significance of the disastrous execution almost immediately after the horrified grandmother and child are whisked away to the mayor's house: "Am Abend kam der Pfarrer in's Haus und redete mir lange zu: daß ich das Annerl nur recht in der Gottesfurcht erziehen sollte, und auf alle die betrübten Zeichen gar nichts geben, daß seyen nur Schlingen des Satans, die man verachten müssen."[57] The repeated dismissal first of the executioner's warnings and then of the execution itself suggests not only a lack of connection to folk culture, but also a rejection of it.

Through the dismissal of folklore within the Annerl narrative and the subtle erasure of this folklore within the frame narrative, Brentano questions the status and treatment of folk culture within contemporary society. Moreover, by positioning the frame narrator as a figure who collects and reproduces the tales of the grandmother, Brentano draws a direct connection with his own project, and the project of Romantic nationalism more broadly. The fact that the frame narrator is shown to be misguided in his actions must be read as a critique of the viability of the project of Romantic nationalism. In the final section of this chapter, I turn my attention to the second necessary component of this project – that is, the rejection of foreign influences – and consider whether Brentano's novella offers a path to the successful implementation of Romantic nationalism.

[56] *HKA*, 19:428.
[57] Ibid.

B. *Vive la résistance*: Resisting the French

As stated at the outset of this section, the Romantic turn toward a uniquely German folk tradition in the hopes of creating a sense of national identity was often, unsurprisingly, coupled with a rejection of foreign powers. French influences in particular were viewed as especially insidious, as citizens of Germanic states felt France's domination over the landscape gradually begin to infiltrate local culture as well. With the occupation of the region he had chosen for his home (the Rheingau), Brentano felt the effects of the French invasion on a personal level.[58] Rather than join the fight to repel the onslaught of French troops, however, Brentano waged war on the cultural front, penning a series of patriotic poems, songs and tales. Some of these, such as "Als ich jüngst nach Polen kam" (1812), include satirical depictions of French soldiers, while others like "Rheinübergang. Kriegsrundegesang" (1813) strike a more earnest tone, featuring German soldiers united in their victory against a foreign enemy threatening their common homeland. And among the many soldiers that emerge in Brentano's work during his patriotic period, a forerunner of Kasper can be identified. Moreover, this figure makes his appearance alongside another familiar character: a pious grandmother.

Written in 1816 while Brentano was part of a Berlin literary circle, "Draus bei Schleswig vor der Pforte" is set in 1814 and references the final German campaign of the Napoleonic Wars. Brentano drew inspiration for the poem from an article published in the "Hamburgischen Addreß-Comptoir Nachrichten" on January 29, 1816, which recounts the strange tale of a

[58] Letters written during this period reveal Brentano's obvious disdain for the French. Carol Lisa Tully calls attention to many of these, including an 1805 letter addressed to Achim von Arnim in which Brentano laments the French destruction of castles along the river Rhine to be used as building materials ("Stelle dir das Schreckliche vor: die Franzosen verkaufen die alten Schlösser am Rhein um ein Lausegeld, Krämer kaufen sie dann und lassen sie als Baumaterialen abbrechen, das ist unsre Zeit!") and another, also to Arnim, critiquing the French gardening aesthetic ("Der Schloßgarten, der ehedem von beschnittenen Hecken und Baumwänden in härtesten französichen Geschmack starrte…") (Tully, *Creating a National Identity*, 198-199)

grandmother and grandson whose home was protected during an enemy raid by a wall of snow.[59] The poem opens by emphasizing the vulnerable position of those living at the city's border: "Draus bei Schleswig vor der Pforte / Wohnen armer Leute viel, / Ach des Feindes wilder Horde / Werden sie das erste Ziel."[60] The poem's focus then narrows to one of these homes, in which "ein frommes Mütterlein" and her grandson ("zwanzigjährig neuster Zeit") cower. As the soldiers approach, the grandmother begins singing, appealing to God for protection. Her refrain, "Eine Mauer um uns baue" is repeated (with slight variation) ten times throughout the poem – evidence of her unwavering faith in God's power, which contrasts her grandson's skepticism. Characterized as "ohn Vertrauen" in the first line in which he is mentioned, the grandson is depicted as a skeptical foil to his grandmother's religious devotion. When morning breaks the following day, however, the grandson opens the door to find an astonishing sight: "Ja der Herr kann Mauern bauen, / Liebe fromme Mutter komm, / Gottes Mauer anzuschauen, / Sprach der Enkel und ward fromm."[61]

The contrast between the pious grandmother and skeptical grandson in "Draus bei Schleswig" foreshadows the relationship between Kasper and his grandmother, whose conflicting notions of honor (secular on the one hand, divine on the other) are a consistent source of tension throughout the novella. While the parallel between the figures in the poem and novella has been recognized, if fleetingly, in the Brentano scholarship, I would like to draw attention to another dynamic shared by the poem and novella that has hitherto been unacknowledged: namely, the threat of enemy forces acting upon the central figures of each text. In the poem, this

[59] Sabine Gruber, "Ein 'schönes Beispiel Von Gebetserhörung in Der Neuen Zeit': Die 'Gottesmauer' Bei Brentano, Rückert, Fouqué und als Geistliches Lied," *Jahrbuch Für Liturgik Und Hymnologie* 44 (2005): 184-98.
[60] *HKA*, 3:10.
[61] Ibid., 12.

threat is countered by the grandmother's faith, as well as the wall that her repeated prayers seem to bring into being as a tangible manifestation of God's divine protection. This structure is both physical (the wall of snow) and poetic: the repeated line "eine Mauer um uns bauen" itself forms a sort of wall within the poem, enclosing strophes 3-9 and reinforced via repetition throughout. In the novella, the wall of snow is mirrored in the narrative structure of the novella: the frame. Crucially, however, the frame does not function as protection against outside influences – rather, these influences have already penetrated the text and taken hold of two of its primary characters: the frame narrator and Kasper.

Early in the novella, Brentano establishes a connection between Kasper and the concept of honor. In the grandmother's brief description of Kasper as a boy, she remarks, "Unter allen Burschen war er immer der reinlichste und fleißigste in der Schule, aber auf die Ehre war er vor Allem ganz erstaunlich. Sein Lieutenant hat auch immer gesprochen: wenn meine Schwadron Ehre im Leibe hat, so sitzt sie bei dem Finkel im Quartier."[62] Upon joining the lancers (*Uhlanen*), Kasper travels to France and hears a story about a French sergeant that has a profound effect upon his life. Returning home from France on leave, Kasper narrates the tale to his father and stepbrother – an act that allows Brentano to reproduce the story within the novella.[63] It is also worthwhile, I believe, to include this moment in its entirety here:

> ich will ein Stückchen von einem französischen Unteroffizier erzählen [sagte Kasper], das gefällt mir besser. Unterm vorigen König sollten auf einmal die Prügel bei der französischen Armee eingeführt werden. Der Befehl des Kriegsministers wurde zu Straßburg bei einer großen Parade bekanntgemacht, und die Truppen hörten in Reih und Glied die Bekanntmachung mit stillem Grimm an. Da aber noch am Schluß der Parade ein Gemeiner einen Exzeß machte, wurde sein Unteroffizier vorkommandiert, ihm zwölf Hiebe zu geben. Es wurde ihm mit Strenge befohlen, und er mußte es thun. Als er aber

[62] *HKA*, 19:408.
[63] The reproduction of the tale also introduces another diegetic level within the novella - that is, Kasper's narration of the story can be read as another embedded narrative within Kasper's own embedded narrative.

> fertig war, nahm er das Gewehr des Mannes, den er geschlagen hatte, stellte es vor sich an die Erde und drückte mit dem Fuße los, daß ihm die Kugel durch den Kopf fuhr und er tot niedersank. Das wurde an den König berichtet, und der Befehl, Prügel zu geben, ward gleich zurückgenommen; Seht, Vater, das war ein Kerl, der Ehre im Leib hatte! Ein Narr war es, sprach der Bruder -freß deine Ehre, wenn du Hunger hast! brummte der Vater.[64]

The parallels between the sergeant in this tale and Kasper's own characterization and trajectory are numerous. The phrase Kasper chooses to describe the sergeant's commitment to honor, "Ehre im Leib(e)," is the same phrase used by the lieutenant to describe Kasper shortly before. The identification between the two figures is further strengthened when Kasper, after returning to France and suffering a wound, is promoted to sergeant ("Unteroffizier"), thus attaining the same rank as the French soldier in the tale.[65] Finally, both figures die from self-inflicted gunshot wounds after their sense of honor has, in their minds, been irreparably damaged – though Kasper shoots himself through the heart, while the French sergeant opts for his head.[66] Before discussing the implications of Kasper's identification with the French sergeant, however, I would first like to acknowledge that he is not the only figure in the novella to harbor admiration for the French.

When the grandmother asks the frame narrator what his profession is, he finds it difficult to answer. Rather than merely reporting his eventual reply, the narrator includes an extended account of his internal thought process upon hearing her question – the only digression of this sort in the novella. His hesitation in answering the grandmother lies in his dissatisfaction with the German term(s) for one who makes his living from writing: "Da wußte ich nicht recht, wie ich es ihr deutlich machen sollte, daß ich ein Schriftsteller sei. Ich bin ein Gestudierter, durfte ich nicht sagen, ohne zu lügen. Es ist wunderbar, daß ein Deutscher immer sich ein wenig schämt, zu

[64] Ibid., 409. Kasper's plea to his father in this passage ("Seht, Vater") will be echoed later in the grandmother's appeal to the frame narrator not to hinder Annerl's execution.
[65] "…als er wieder zu seinen Kammeraden kam, und zum Unteroffizer ernannt wurde…" (Ibid., 413)
[66] "Kasper lag todt auf dem Grabe seiner Mutter, er hatte sich die Kugel durch das Herz geschossen." (Ibid., 420)

sagen, er sei ein Schriftsteller…" The frame narrator continues on to enumerate the varying degrees of shame one might feel upon stating he is a "Gelehrte" or "Dichter," especially when speaking with members "aus den untern Ständen."

The frame narrator's excursus on his position reflects the Romantic preoccupation with the status of the writer in German culture. While Romantic authors such as Brentano, Schlegel and Tieck believed writers could play a crucial role in creating a national identity, they were constantly confronted by the limits of their standing within society, as well as their own self-doubt. The word that the frame narrator ultimately lands upon – "Schreiber" [67] – even invites identification with Brentano himself: as Gerhard Kluge has highlighted, this was the author's nickname in the aforementioned *Christlich-Teutschen Tischgesellschaft* to which he belonged in Berlin when he composed "Draus bei Schleswig"; a rather modest designation (in contrast to *Dichter*) that speaks to Brentano's self-conception around this time.[68] The frame narrator's internal monologue is not merely a reflection of Brentano's position, or the status of the writer more generally in German society, however: buried within his lament is praise for a different culture that appears to have more respect for its writers:

> Der Name Schriftsteller ist nicht so eingebürgert bei uns, wie das homme de lettres bei den Franzosen, welche überhaupt als Schriftsteller zünftig sind und in ihren Arbeiten mehr hergebrachtes Gesetz haben, ja, bei denen man auch fragt: Où avez-vous fait votre philosophie? Wo haben Sie Ihre Philosophie gemacht? wie denn ein Franzose selbst viel mehr von einem gemachten Manne hat.[69]

By invoking the French "homme de lettres," the frame narrator presents an alternative model to the situation of the "Schriftsteller" in Germany. Notably, writers are not merely honored in France, but rather supported by the very structure of the society via guilds and regulations. While

[67] "Da fiel mir ein wort ein, das mir vielleicht eine Brücke zu ihrem Verständniß schlagen könnte: Liebe Mutter, sagte ich, ich bin ein Schreiber." (Ibid., 411)
[68] Kluge, *Text, Materialien, Kommentar*, 57.
[69] *HKA*, 19:409-410.

this is the extent of the frame narrator's praise of the French, it nonetheless allows the reader to draw a connection between the narrator and the novella's more obvious Francophile, Kasper. And indeed, Brentano seems to encourage this association: the frame narrator's remarks come directly after Kasper's retelling of the French sergeant's tale in the embedded narrative.

In acknowledging the French connection between the frame narrator and Kasper (which, to my knowledge, has not yet been addressed in the scholarship), we must consider the context in which their admiration is expressed. For Kasper, this is through the story of the French sergeant; for the frame narrator, it is through a comparison of his position as a writer, or poet, with that of writers in France. What emerges through a consideration of these characters' relationship to the French, then, is a tentative model of the writer on the one hand (the frame narrator), and the reader, or audience, on the other (Kasper) – in other words, a model of the production and reception of stories. This is not the only such model in the novella: the frame narrator is also audience to the grandmother's narration, while the grandmother and Annerl in turn are audience to the brief tale of the sword (as we have seen), and Kasper himself momentarily steps into the role of narrator when he tells the French sergeant's tale to his father and stepbrother.[70] Viewing Kasper as the audience of a French story and the frame narrator as an author envious of French writers is essential, however, if we are to understand the novella in the broader context of Brentano's nationalism.

While Kasper's fate is most often read as the result of a misplaced sense of honor, I argue that his suicide may instead be read as a hermeneutic failure that is inextricably bound to his relationship to a foreign culture. First, the connection between Kasper and the sergeant goes beyond their similarly grim fates: Kasper inscribes his own final moments in the same notebook

[70] Crucially, however, Kasper's primary relationship to the tale is as an audience, rather than an author, in so far as he makes no creative intervention into the story.

in which he has recorded the story of the French sergeant. The grandmother recalls making this discovery before handing the notebook to the frame narrator: "[in der Schreibtafel] standen mancherlei Rechnungen drinn, einige Geschichten von der Ehre und auch die von dem französischen Unteroffizier, und hinter ihr war mit Bleistift etwas geschrieben. Da gab mir die Alte die Brieftasche, und ich las folgende letzte Worte des unglücklichen Kaspers…"[71] By including his suicide note alongside the French sergeant's tale, Kasper not only aligns himself with the sergeant, but also relegates his final words to the status of the other "Geschichten" in the notebook. This decision speaks to Kasper's inability to distinguish between reality (i.e. his own life) and a fictional morality tale – for that is precisely how the story of the French sergeant should be read. This is Kasper's hermeneutic failure as an audience: rather than doing interpretive work and performing a reading of the sergeant's tale in order to determine its message or moral, Kasper instead takes it as a literal model of how to act honorably. As a reader, then, Kasper falls short. Moreover, considering the historical moment in which the novella was written, Brentano's choice to have Kasper idolize a *French* sergeant cannot be overlooked. Rather than finding inspiration within the stories of his own culture, Kasper instead models himself after a foreign figure. Kasper's failure as a reader thus occurs on both a hermeneutic and a cultural level. Like the grandson in "Draus bei Schleswig," Kasper can be said to lack faith, or "Vertrauen" – both in God (revering instead the French sergeant) and his country; unlike the poem's grandson, however, Kasper ultimately cannot be saved.

Kasper's admiration for the French sergeant should be viewed critically by the novella's readers; yet, unchecked Francophobia does not seem to be promoted in this text either. The two figures in the novella who do express blind hatred of the French – Kasper's father and

[71] Ibid., 422. It remains ambiguous whether "hinter ihr" indicates that the note is written on the back of the same sheet of paper as the sergeant's tale, or simply after the story.

stepbrother – are also portrayed unambiguously as immoral, lazy thieves.[72] If the novella is to be understood, in part, as a reflection of Brentano's nationalism, it seems to suggest a more nuanced approach to German-French relations than many of his earlier, more explicitly patriotic works. One figure that may offer a model of this more moderate approach is the frame narrator.

In his digression on the role of the "Schriftsteller" in Germany, the frame narrator offers praise for the treatment of the "homme de lettres" in France while outlining the negative associations Germans have with writers in their own country. Though the reader may initially suspect the narrator of the same harmful idolization of which Kasper is guilty, I argue that the text suggests that this mode of reflective thinking is a necessary component of Brentano's nationalist program. The clearest evidence of this may be found in Brentano's construction of the novella itself: as seen at the beginning of this chapter, the convoluted narrative mode of the grandmother requires considerable effort from readers to render the embedded narratives comprehensible. Within the novella, Brentano also discourages and shows the dangers of an uncritical attitude through Kasper and his hermeneutic failure. This is emphasized again in the frame narrator's own interpretive failure of Annerl's tale, which leads him on a futile, chaotic quest to save Annerl and threatens to erase a key component of her story: folk culture. In contrast, the frame narrator's digression on writers in Germany demonstrates an ability to evaluate a cultural issue, and to reflect upon his own role in society. Looking at the structure of the passage, the narrator turns only briefly to France before returning to the situation in his own country, essentially cataloguing the various ways to make a living as a writer in Germany.

[72] As Kasper, home on leave, tries to tell his father and stepbrother about his experiences with in France, they "[wollten die Franzosen] ganz schlecht machen." When Kasper states the French are honorable people, the father, recalling his own time in the military, replies, "[ich] habe manchen vorlauten Burschen fünf und zwanzig aufgezählt; hätte ich nur Franzosen in der Compagnie gehabt, die sollten sie noch besser gefühlt haben, mit ihrer Ehre." (Ibid., 408)

The frame narrator's treatment of this subject differs sharply from Kasper's relationship to honor: though it is clear that Kasper always had an obsession with honor, even as a child, his final actions show the extent to which the French sergeant's tale shaped his conception of honor in adulthood. This wholesale adoption of the sergeant's model of honor is reminiscent of the early enthusiasm among many German intellectuals (including early Romantics) for the French Revolution, which was soon replaced by fear as the French invaded and took control of the Rhineland. The frame narrator's reference to France when discussing the role of the writer, on the other hand, shows a more mature relationship to Germany's rival than either Kasper's devotion, or the outright Francophobia of his father and stepbrother (and Brentano's own earlier patriotic works). Rather, through a reflection on the status of the writer, this passage models a balanced approach to considering foreign cultures: neither an outright rejection, nor a naïve embrace, the passage encourages the reader to consider how some aspects of French culture might benefit Germany, while taking into account the specific situation of the German writer. Here, Brentano promotes the nationalist agenda of identifying and highlighting uniquely German values and traditions: the focus of the passage remains on the particularly German nature of the writer's position, and concludes with a decidedly German term: "Schreiber." Moreover, the frame narrator's declaration of his occupation is met with a positive response from the grandmother: "Nun, sagte sie, das hätte er gleich sagen sollen, er ist also ein Mann von der Feder, dazu gehören feine Köpfe und schnelle Finger, und ein gutes Herz, sonst wird Einem drauf geklopft."[73] The frame narrator's careful deliberation is thus rewarded, to his surprise, by the grandmother's affirmation of his worth and standing in society.

[73] Ibid., 411. The grandmother also later refers to the frame narrator as "lieber Schreiber," thus positively reinforcing his status as a writer. (Ibid., 423)

I would like to conclude by considering one final aspect of the frame narrator's discussion of the writer that not only offers another point of connection to Kasper's tale, but also returns us to the principle of unification that I have argued is central both to the novella and Brentano's nationalist agenda. Toward the end of this passage, the frame narrator argues that among writers, those who make their living as poets are in the worst position of all:

> Aber ein sogenannter Dichter ist am übelsten daran...Man kann sehr leicht zu ihm sagen: mein Herr, ein jeder Mensch hat wie Hirn, Herz, Magen, Milz, Leber und dergleichen, auch eine Poesie im Leibe, wer aber eines dieser Glieder überfüttert, verfüttert, oder mästet, und es über alle andre hinüber treibt, ja es gar zum Erwerbzweig macht, der muß sich schämen vor seinem ganzen übrigen Menschen. Einer der von der Poesie lebt, hat das Gleichgewicht verloren, und eine übergroße Gänseleber, sie mag noch so gut schmecken, setzt doch immer eine kranke Gans voraus.[74]

The phrase "Poesie im Leibe" should immediately remind the reader of Kasper and the French sergeant, both of whom are said to have "Ehre im Leibe." The critique levied against poets here – that they have overdeveloped or indulged one part of themselves and become internally imbalanced – could be easily applied to Kasper and his obsession with honor as well. Though the critique is framed as being delivered through the anonymous third-person pronoun "man," it is important to note that the frame narrator offers no counterargument or defense of the poet. Indeed, we may even read this passage as evidence of his (and perhaps Brentano's) own reservations about adopting the title of "Dichter."[75]

The use of a bodily metaphor here is also particularly important in the context of this chapter, because it underscores the principle of unification that is so crucial to the novella. I have already shown in the first section of this chapter how Brentano uses corporeal threats to Kasper and Annerl (dismemberment on the one hand, beheading on the other) to draw attention to the narrative unity of the story, and encourage a reading of the novella as a complete, unified text.

[74] Ibid., 410-411
[75] For more on Brentano's self-doubt as a writer, see Kluge, *Text, Materialien, Kommentar*, 57.

While these threats are external to the body, in the frame narrator's discussion of the status of the writer, the body is failing from within. Looking at the passage on the writer as a whole, the discussion begins from a foreign perspective (the writer in France), moves to local concerns (the writer in Germany), before finally turning inward and examining the condition of the writer himself. Reading this passage, as we have been, in the context of Brentano's nationalist approach, Brentano again seems to suggest the importance of self-reflection – and self-criticism – in the project of Romantic nationalism. This must occur not only on the level of the individual, but of the German state (the body politic, as it were) itself. More than this, however, the passage expands upon the principle of unification and suggests the next step: a principle of harmony.

If Brentano does see a path forward for a united German state, then the passage just discussed underscores the importance of fostering all aspects of the nation. If we broaden this reading to apply to the novella as whole, it is clear that although Brentano manifests a principle of unification throughout, the text does not claim to have achieved a state of harmony. Communication occurs, but it is a laborious process for both the reader and many of the characters within the text, and we are left with the sense that much is lost in this process. We cannot ignore, for example, that nearly every character is dead by the end of the tale, suggesting a permanent loss of communicative and cultural sources. Yet the inclusion of the frame narrative enables a more optimistic reading by making visible the avenues by which communication and tradition may persist. Kasper, Annerl and the grandmother may lie in their graves, but the very existence of the text ensures they will live on.

Chapter Two:
Alles ist wie Märchen und Traum: Ludwig Tieck's Late Romanticism

No study of nineteenth-century German novellas would be complete without mention of Ludwig Tieck. Between 1822 and 1841 he published over thirty novellas, establishing himself as a master practitioner of the genre. Not all are masterpieces, however – indeed a considerable number were dismissed by contemporary audiences and are still considered unworthy of serious critical analysis by literary scholars today.[1] The fact that many have no discernible turning point (*Wendepunkt*) and that several are of such length and/or narrative breadth as to be, in effect, novels, and thus fail to meet Tieck's own criteria for a *Novelle*, further adds to their collective status as "nuisance" among many Tieck scholars.[2] Nonetheless, these novellas are a significant component of Tieck's later period, and together form a picture of the author's development from an early figure of Romanticism to a forerunner of poetic realism. In addition to texts like *Des Lebens Überfluß* and *Das Zauberschloß*, which have already been acknowledged as some of Tieck's most accomplished later novellas, there are gems among this collection that have yet to be mined.

[1] Joseph von Eichendorff echoed one of the frequent criticisms of Tieck's late novellas in the 1852 treatise *Der deutsche Roman des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts in seinem Verhältnis zum Christentum*, calling them "Zwecknovellen" that are "nur mehr oder minder glückliche dialogisirte Kunstkritiken," and which use "die Dichtkunst im Dienste der modernen Conversations-Geistreichigkeit." *Sämtliche Werke Des Freiherrn Joseph Von Eichendorff*. (Regensburg: J. Habbel, 1908), 8.2:212-213

[2] Roger Paulin. *Ludwig Tieck, a Literary Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 309.

One such work deserving of greater consideration is Tieck's 1835 novella, *Das alte Buch und die Reise ins Blaue hinein*.[3] Alternating between biting satire aimed primarily at the younger generation of German authors, and earnest reflections on nature and the power of imagination, *Das alte Buch* is a self-referential text that offers a glimpse into Tieck's concern for the state and future of German literature. Contemporary reception of this novella was mixed: some critics decried it as a distasteful polemic against the literary trends of the day, while others hailed it as a renaissance of Tieck's earlier Romantic style.[4] Other than these initial reviews, however, the novella has been largely ignored by Tieck scholars.[5] The English-language scholarship in particular has given little critical attention to *Das alte Buch* (and Tieck's later body of work more generally), especially when compared with the mountains of literature dedicated to earlier works

[3] Henceforth I will refer to the novella simply as *Das alte Buch*. When discussing the fairy tale that makes up a significant portion of the novella, I will refer to it by its title as stated within the text: *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*.

[4] Several authors of the Young Germany movement, which is a frequent target in many of Tieck's later novellas and *Das alte Buch* in particular, wrote scathing responses to the text. Ludwig Börne, who is named in the novella, even went so far as to write a parody, presented as the introduction to a fictional sequel to Tieck's novella, titled *Des alten Buches zweiter Teil. Eine Käsenovelle (Käsemärchen) von Ludwig Börne*. The title is in reference to a dispute about butter that plays a prominent role in *Das alte Buch*. In his parody, Börne claims to make (literary) cheese by purifying and distilling the unrefined "butter" of Tieck's text. See Ludwig Tieck and Manfred Frank, *Schriften in Zwölf Bänden* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 11:1276-1277. Henceforth cited in text as *LTS*.

[5] The novella is mentioned in passing in a handful of articles and book chapters on Tieck, and is the primary focus of even fewer. Two of the most substantial contributions to the scholarship on *Das alte Buch* are Ingrid Oesterle's article "Arabeske Umschrift, poetische Polemik und Mythos der Kunst. Spätromantisches Erzählen in Ludwig Tiecks Märchen-Novelle 'Das alte Buch und die Reise ins Blaue hinein'" in *Romantisches Erzählen*, ed. Gerhard Neumann and Alexander von Bormann (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995), 167-194; and Youn Sin Kim's book *Als die Lumpen Flügel bekam. Frühromantik im Zeitalter des Buchdrucks* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004). The lack of scholarship devoted to this novella is particularly apparent when looking at bibliographies such as Roger Paulin's comprehensive *Ludwig Tieck: A Literary Biography*, which organizes resources by text and lists only a handful of sources for *Das alte Buch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). The novella is left out altogether of Dwight A. Klett's *Ludwig Tieck: An Annotated Guide to Research* (New York: Garland, 1993).

like *William Lovell*, *Der blonde Eckbert,* and *Der Runenberg*. Yet the novella offers important insights into Tieck's views on the trajectory of literature in Germany in a moment when the nation's writers were grappling with the death of Goethe and the way forward seemed uncertain. Moreover, presented as a *Märchen-Novelle* and featuring a subterranean realm of imagination, the text sheds light on a concept that is fundamental to Tieck's theory of the novella: the wondrous (*das Wunderbare*).

With two narrative frames enclosing the novella's central fairy tale, *Das alte Buch* is composed of three distinct diegetic levels. The first frame is an address to the reader by an unnamed narrator, who relates the story of his friend Beeskow's journey in search of a manuscript the latter encountered many years ago. The second frame consists of Beeskow's letters to this unnamed narrator, describing various encounters and escapades he has during his quest for the manuscript. The third and final diegetic level is the tale contained within the sought-after manuscript itself, the titular *Reise ins Blaue hinein*. While the frame narratives unfold in Tieck's present (i.e. the 1830s), *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein* is a medieval legend about Athelstan, a young nobleman who finds his way into a subterranean realm of fantasy and imagination, ruled by the fairy queen Gloriana. The structure of the novella is as follows, with 'Frame 1' corresponding to the unnamed narrator's frame, 'Frame 2' corresponding to Beeskow's letters, and 'Manuscript' indicating the tale of *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*:

Frame 1 (4p)
    Frame 2 (16p)
        Manuscript (53p)
    Frame 2 (14p)
        Manuscript (26p)
    Frame 2 (2p)
Frame 1 (4p)
    Frame 2 (1p)
Frame 1 (<1p)

The novella's dual frame structure serves two primary functions: first, to situate the novella within German literary history. With references ranging from Hans Sachs to Goethe within the first few pages, Tieck pays homage to the greatest writers Germany has produced. With this honored literary heritage at the fore of his readers' minds, the scathing critiques Tieck then delivers of some of his contemporaries are all the more effective. Engaging in this criticism on all three diegetic levels of the novella – including blatantly anachronistic references to authors like E.T.A Hoffmann and Victor Hugo in the supposedly 'medieval' tale of Athelstan – allows Tieck to emphasize the depths of abuse German literature was, in Tieck's view, suffering at the hands of young authors. The consequences of letting these emerging trends to go unchecked are made clear in the novella: if the quality of literature is allowed to further deteriorate, the legacy of literary forefathers like Goethe will be irreparably tarnished and German culture may never recover.

The second function of the narrative frames is to facilitate the delivery of the core fairy tale – *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein* – to the reader. Rather than simply presenting the story of Athelstan, Tieck makes visible the (fictional) avenues by which the tale has reached the audience. By depicting Beeskow's retrieval of the manuscript and including an account of the many revisions it has undergone, Tieck thematizes processes of literary transmission, production

and reception.[6] More is at stake here than the transmission of texts, however. The tale of *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein* is essentially about a young man's discovery of the wondrous – a concept that is fundamental to Tieck's theory of the novella. Variations of the term (*das Wunderbare*, *wunderbar*, *wunderlich,* etc.) appear 35 times in the fairy tale and nearly 80 in the novella as a whole, suggesting that the text may be read as a deliberate exploration of the concept.[7] Like the fairy tale at the center of the novella, the presentation of the wondrous in this text is indirect. Tieck does not try to provoke an experience of the wondrous in his reader as he might have done in his earlier works (an argument I will make at greater length in the chapter that follows), and his depiction of the wondrous realm of Gloriana is buried within two narrative frames that seem firmly rooted in the mundane.

The dual concerns just discussed – literary tradition on the one hand, the wondrous on the other – are already found in twin subjects of the novella's title. "Das alte Buch" represents the textual tradition that is in danger of deteriorating and being irretrievably lost, while "Die Reise ins Blaue hinein" represents an exploration of the wondrous. Thus, my overriding objective here is to show how *Das alte Buch* contributes to our understanding of the wondrous*,* and how this concept becomes a crucial part of Tieck's attempt to reclaim and preserve Germany's literary heritage. Ultimately I argue that what is at stake in saving Germany's literature from further deterioration is access to that which gives life meaning. Tieck calls this *das Wunderbare*, but, I suggest, we may simply call it literature.

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[6] Like Meyer's *Das Amulett* and Brentano's *Die Geschichte vom braven Kasper und dem schönen Annerl*, which are discussed in this project's first and fourth chapters respectively, this story accounts for its own production. Tieck's text does this, however, in a more detailed, material and transmission-oriented way.

[7] This first figure is found in Ralf Stamm, *Ludwig Tiecks späte Novellen: Grundlage und Technik des Wunderbaren* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973), 95. The second is based on my own survey of the novella.

I. From the Supernatural to the Mundane: Locating the Wondrous

As Tieck generally shied away from purely theoretical writing, his notions on any given concept are most frequently found in paratextual contributions – primarily in forewords and introductions either to his own works or that of a close colleague. This is true also of his *Novellentheorie*: some of his most significant – and certainly his most famous – statements on the novella are located in the introduction to volume eleven of his collected works, published in 1829.[8] Here, Tieck begins by criticizing the emerging trend among authors of his day to label any short narrative prose as a novella: "Wir brauchen jetzt das Wort Novelle für alle, besonders kleineren Erzählungen; manche Schriftsteller scheinen sogar in diese Benennung eine Entschuldigung legen zu wollen, wenn ihnen selbst die Geschichte, die sie vortragen wollen, nicht bedeutend genug erscheint."[9] Invoking the masters of the form ("Boccaz, Cervantes und Goethe"), Tieck presents the novella as a distinct genre with a well-defined literary history and argues that the term "Novelle" must not be used synonymously with "Begebenheit, Geschichte, Erzählung, Vorfall, oder gar Anecdote."[10] Tieck highlights various characteristics by which the novella may be distinguished from these genres in the following passage:

> …daß sie einen großen oder kleinern Vorfall in's hellste Licht stelle, der, so leicht er sich ereignen kann, doch wunderbar, vielleicht einzig ist. Diese Wendung der Geschichte, dieser Punkt, von welchem aus sie sich unerwartet völlig umkehrt, und doch natürlich, dem Charakter und den Umständen angemessen, die Folge entwickelt, wird sich der Phantasie des Lesers um so fester einprägen, als die Sache, selbst im Wunderbaren, unter andern Umständen wieder alltäglich sein könnte. So erfahren wir es im Leben selbst, so

[8] Further comments on the genre of the novella can be found in Tieck's foreword to *Der junge Tischlermeister* (*LTS*, 11:9-12), in the introduction to Eduard von Bülows' *Novellenbuch* (*LTS*, 11:1081-1091), and in the foreword to the *Gesammelte Novellen von Franz Berthold* (i.e. Adelheid Reinbold), which Tieck helped publish (*LTS*, 12:933-938). Theoretical remarks are also made in the text of Tieck's *Das Zauberschloss*, shortly before one of the characters reads aloud "eine kurze, nicht viel bedeutende Novelle" titled "Die wilde Engländerin." (*LTS*, 9:745)
[9] Tieck, *Ludwig Tiecks Schriften*, 11:LXXXIV.
[10] Ibid.

> sind die Begebenheiten, die uns von Bekannten aus ihrer Erfahrung mitgetheilt, den tiefsten und bleibendsten Eindruck machen.[11]

First, it should be noted that many aspects of Tieck's definition of the novella resonate with other theories of the time. Goethe famously defined the novella as "eine sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit" in an 1827 conversation with Johann Peter Eckermann. Though the record of this conversation would not be published until 1836, Tieck's understanding of the genre seems to align with Goethe's, particularly in his claim that the novella focuses on a single, unique incident – "einen großen oder kleinern Vorfall…[der] vielleicht einzig ist."[12] Second, this passage is particularly noteworthy because Tieck introduces the concept of the turning point, or "Wendepunkt," for the first time.

Undoubtedly, the turning point is Tieck's most celebrated contribution to *Novellentheorie*. Several lines after the passage quoted above Tieck again emphasizes that the turning point is fundamental to the genre of the novella, writing "die ächte Novelle…wird immer jenen sonderbaren auffallenden Wendepunkt haben, der sie von allen andern Gattungen der Erzählung unterscheidet."[13] Yet, despite being inextricably linked to Tieck, the concept of the turning point has caused scholars of Tieck's own works no shortage of headaches. While Tieck claims that the turning point is essential, many of his own novellas fail to have an identifiable *Wendepunkt* that, as Tieck states in the passage above, results in an unexpected but natural change of narrative direction. The apparent discrepancy between Tieck's theory of the novella

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[11] Ibid.

[12] This conversation is purported to have taken place on January 25, 1827, but Eckermann's record of it did not appear until the 1836 publication of *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens,* ed. H.H. Houben (Wiesbaden: F.A. Brockhaus, 1959). Tieck would have been familiar, however, with Goethe's *Novelle*, which was published in 1828, and his earlier novella cycle *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* (1795), the latter of which includes discussions about storytelling that can be read as an early guide to Goethe's theory of the genre.

[13] Ibid.

and his practice baffles and frustrates many scholars who search in vain for some surprising event in Tieck's novellas around which the rest of the narrative turns. I argue, however, that the key to Tieck's theory of the novella is not the infamous *Wendepunkt*, but rather another concept that appears in this same passage: the wondrous *(das Wunderbare*).

A. Tieck's Theory of *das Wunderbare*

To better understand Tieck's conception of the wondrous, his 1793 essay *Abhandlung über Shakespeares Behandlung des Wunderbaren* must be taken into consideration. As the only text in which Tieck thoroughly and systematically addresses the topic, the essay provides important insights into how Tieck viewed the respective relationships of the writer and the audience to the wondrous. Though his theory of *das Wunderbare* does change significantly in the following decades, this early essay is important to understanding Tieck's later writings on the subject, and his portrayal of the wondrous in *Das alte Buch* in particular.

Like his theory of the novella in the 1829 *Schriften*, *Abhandlung über Shakespeares Behandlung des Wunderbaren* was published as a foreword – in this case, to his translation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (*Der Sturm*).[14] In the essay, Tieck uses the term *das Wunderbare* primarily in reference to the supernatural – describing, for example, how Shakespeare populates his "wunderbare Welt" with "übernatürlichen Wesen" from folk traditions, such as fairies, witches and spirits (rather than with mythological or allegorical creatures).[15] The majority of the discussion focuses on the following question, which Tieck states as the primary concern of the

[14] More precisely, Tieck wrote a foreword (*Vorrede*) to his essay on Shakespeare and the wondrous, which was itself a foreword to his translation of *The Tempest*.
[15] *LTS*, 1:686

essay: "Wie gewinnt der Dichter nun die Täuschung für seine übernatürlichen Wesen?"[16] He approaches the wondrous, then, as a question of technique – specifically, how to suspend the audience's sense of disbelief and make the unbelievable believable.[17] As Tieck outlines the strategies by which Shakespeare accomplishes this, a clearer picture of the wondrous emerges: it is not merely a property of fantastical beasts and creatures; rather, the wondrous is a state of mind. The following passage reveals more about this state and highlights how the poet must work continuously to sustain it for the spectator:

> Wenn die Täuschung des Wunderbaren also dadurch entsteht, daß der Zuschauer nie auf irgend einen Gegenstand einen festen und bleibenden Blick heftet, daß der Dichter die Aufmerksamkeit beständig zerstreut, und die Phantasie in einer gewissen Verwirrung erhält, damit seine Phantome nicht zu viele körperlich Konsistenz erhalten, und dadurch unwahrscheinlich werden…[18]

The language that Tieck uses here (*zerstreuen, Verwirrung*) suggests that the poet must not only keep the spectator from looking too closely at the illusion of the wondrous, but must also prevent the fixation of the spectator's very imagination. In other words, the wondrous is characterized by a certain unceasing movement of the imagination generated by the spectator or reader's engagement with a work of art.

Throughout the essay, Tieck insists that a clear division between the realm of the wondrous and that of the everyday is necessary. This is reflected in the first and most essential of the four strategies that Tieck identifies in Shakespeare's approach: "Durch die Darstellung einer

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[16] Ibid., 689.
[17] Ibid., 50. Tieck views Shakespeare as the master of such deception or illusion (*Täuschung*), and outlines four ways in which the poet successfully sustains the sense of the wondrous in *The Tempest* and several other plays. The four strategies are as follows: 1. "Durch die Darstellung einer ganz wunderbaren Welt, damit die Seele nie wieder in die gewöhnliche Welt versetzt, und so die Illusion unterbrochen werde. - Dadurch, daß die dargestellten Wunder nicht ganz unbegreiflich scheinen," 2. "Durch Mannigfaltigkeit der Darstellungen, und durch die Milderung der Affekte," 3. "Durch das Komische," and 4. "Durch Musik." (Ibid.)
[18] Ibid., 702.

ganz wunderbaren Welt, damit die Seele nie wieder in die gewöhnliche Welt versetzt, und so die Illusion unterbrochen werde. – Dadurch, daß die dargestellten Wunder nicht ganz unbegreiflich scheinen."[19] Tieck also stresses that the wondrous must be presented with sufficient context so as not to appear isolated to the audience, and reiterates this point several times, writing, "Wie wenig das Wunderbare wirkt, wenn es der Dichter zu einzeln stehen läßt…" and again, "...wie wenig das Wunderbare wirkt, wenn nicht Alles im Schauspiel wunderbar ist."[20] The success of the wondrous illusion depends, then, both on the consistent separation from everyday reality and on the sufficient development of a wondrous realm.

The separation of the wondrous and the commonplace contrasts sharply with Tieck's later statements on *das Wunderbare*, which will be further highlighted in the following discussion. What remains consistent, I argue, is the suggestion that the relationship of the audience to the wondrous is a highly mediated one – in other words, that the audience can only experience the wondrous indirectly, via the mediation of the artist. Though some of the challenges and strategies Tieck describes in this essay apply only to theater, he makes clear that the illusion of the wondrous is possible in prose as well – in fact, it is easier to achieve. Tieck makes this generic distinction between drama and prose narratives early in the essay:

> Dem erzählenden Dichter wird es ungleich leichter, den Leser in eine übernatürliche Welt zu versetzen: Schilderungen, poetische Beschreibungen stehen ihm zu Gebot, wodurch er die Seele zum Wunderbaren vorbereitet; man sieht die Erscheinungen erst durch das Auge des Dichters, und der Täuschung widersetzen sich nicht so viele Schwierigkeiten, da sie auch nie so lebhaft werden kann, als die Täuschung des Drama's werden soll.[21]

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[19] Ibid., 689.
[20] Ibid., 698. And again: "Wenn das Wunderbare aber isoliert steht, und für sich einen Teil des Schauspiels ausmacht, so kann es uns auf keine Weise in jene Illusion versetzen, die unentbehrlich ist, wenn uns die Komposition des Dichters nicht abgeschmackt erscheinen soll." (Ibid., 697)
[21] Ibid., 690.

While the prose writer may have an easier time achieving his illusion, the reader's experience of the wondrous is more heavily mediated than that of his counterpart in the theater. Though the spectator of a play is never allowed to fix his gaze too steadily on the representations of the wondrous in Shakespeare's plays, he nonetheless sees it for himself ("im Schauspiele sieht der Zuschauer selbst").[22] The reader of a prose narrative, on the other hand, can only view the wondrous through the eye of the poet ("durch das Auge des Dichters").

By the time Tieck begins systematically experimenting with the genre of the novella in the 1820s and 30s, he no longer conceives of the wondrous as a separate, autonomous realm into which the poet must carefully guide her audience, lest the illusion be shattered; instead, the wondrous is presented in Tieck's *Novellentheorie* as a part of everyday life that the poet must help the reader to see. This connection first appears in an 1822 letter to his brother, where Tieck mentions his plans to publish a series of novellas, remarking, "Ich bilde mir ein, eigentlich unter uns diese Dichtart [die Novelle] erst aufzubringen, indem ich das Wunderbare immer in die sonst alltäglichen Umstände und Verhältnisse lege."[23] Though the novellas that appeared in the years immediately following this letter (*Die Gemälde* (1822), *Die Reisenden* (1823), *Die Verlobung* (1823), *Die Gesellschaft auf dem Lande* (1825)) did not contain such obvious instances of the wondrous as to make it an immediate hallmark of Tieck's work in this genre, the letter contains an essential kernel of Tieck's eventual theory of the wondrous – one that will reappear seven years later. In the passage from the 1829 *Schriften* cited earlier, Tieck again brings the wondrous (*das Wunderbare*) and the commonplace or everyday (*alltäglich*) into dialogue ("die Sache, selbst im Wunderbaren, [könnte] unter andern Umständen wieder alltäglich sein"), and adds an

[22] Ibid.
[23] Stamm, *Grundlage und Technik*, 10.

additional concept to the constellation: the turning point (*die Wendung der Geschichte*). Though the turning point should be unexpected in some capacity, it cannot be any arbitrary event; instead, it is something in the narrative through which a higher force – the wondrous – may be glimpsed in everyday life, thus elevating the commonplace and giving it new significance. The *Wendepunkt* may be thought of, then, as the entry point for the wondrous into the world.

Tieck underscores the relationship between the wondrous and the everyday by citing two of Goethe's works: the novellas in the cycle *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*, for example, depict "ein solcher alltäglicher und doch wunderbarer Vorfall," while "Das sonderbare Verhältniß der Sperata im *Meister*, ist wunderbar und doch natürlich, wie dessen Folgen."[24] Tieck's repeated use of "doch" indicates that while the connection between the wondrous and the commonplace may be surprising, it is irrefutable. Significantly, the example of Sperata also puts pressure on the concept of the turning point as a single moment in the narrative, as it is traditionally understood to be.[25] The turning point is that which reveals the unexpected connection between the wondrous and the mundane; here, Tieck uses Sperata's relationship with Augustin and its "consequences" (namely, their daughter Mignon), as an example of the wondrous, rather than a specific moment within the text. This suggests that the turning point may

[24] Tieck, *Schriften*, 11:LXXXVI-VII.

[25] In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Sperata unwittingly engages in an incestuous relationship with her brother Augustin ("The Harper"). Their union produces Mignon, a character who in turn upends natural categories (e.g., gender) and social conventions. When Augustin discovers that his wife is, in fact, his sister, he tries to defend their union, using some of the same language Tieck later employs: "Nichts schien [Augustin] heilig als das Verhältnis zu Sperata, nichts schien ihm würdig als der Name Vater und Gattin. 'Diese allein,' rief er aus, 'sind der Natur gemäß, alles andere sind Grillen und Meinungen. Gab es nicht edle Völker, die eine Heirat mit der Schwester billigten?'" Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, ed. Erich Trunz, (München: C.H. Beck, 2002), 7:583.

be a feature of a novella's content rather than a formal device.[26] Whether momentary or continuous, what is crucial here is the intersection of two worlds – the wondrous and the mundane.

By proposing this intersection, Tieck essentially claims the novella as a post-Romantic genre, in which the wondrous no longer stands in opposition to the everyday – a notable departure from his own early works. Consider *Der Runenberg,* for example: whether Christian has gone mad or has truly had an encounter with the wondrous, his experiences on the mountain make everyday life unsustainable. The same may be said of Bertha in *Der blonde Eckbert*: her early experiences in a fairy tale realm ultimately permeate and destroy her seemingly mundane marriage. In Tieck's later novellas, on the other hand, the wondrous exists alongside – and within – the commonplace. Following Tzvetan Todorov's model as set forth in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, Tieck's early works would be considered examples of the "fantastic,"[27] while Tieck's later novellas retain none of the ambiguity that characterizes this genre. It is not clear that Tieck would distinguish between the "fantastic" and that which he calls *das Wunderbare* in the 1822 letter and the 1829 *Schriften*. Rather, it seems his understanding of the wondrous has evolved.

While Tieck's early theory of the wondrous is outlined thoroughly in *Shakespeares Behandlung des Wunderbaren*, his later writings on the subject are sparse. To gain a real

[26] Roger Paulin interprets the turning point similarly, writing, "Tieck is not speaking of a formal, tectonic device, but of a moment in the story where 'das Wunderbare'…may intervene and give everyday events a new significance." (*Literary Biography*, 309) Though Paulin still seems to fixate on the turning point as a single moment here, I believe that the revelation of the wondrous may occur over the course of a text.

[27] Indeed, *Der blonde Eckbert* in particular is often pointed to as paradigmatic of the genre of the fantastic. See Maria Tatar. "Unholy Alliances: Narrative Ambiguity in Tieck's 'Der Blonde Eckbert.'" MLN 102, no. 3 (1987): 608-26.

understanding of the wondrous in Tieck's late period, we must turn to his novellas. In *Das alte Buch*, both conceptions of the wondrous – that is, from the essay on Shakespeare and from the *Schriften* – seem to be at work. In the core fairy tale of the novella (*Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*), the wondrous is depicted as a realm separate from the everyday reality perceptible to most; in the frames, however, the reader must work to detect the wondrous at play behind the seemingly mundane events that unfold. I argue that a close analysis of the text reveals that the wondrous permeates all levels of the novella, and becomes manifest in the very processes of storytelling depicted.

B. The Wondrous in *Das alte Buch und die Reise ins Blaue hinein*

In *Ludwig Tiecks späte Novellen: Grundlage und Technik des Wunderbaren*, Ralf Stamm notes that no other novella in Tieck's oeuvre contains as many references to the wondrous as *Das alte Buch.*[28] Curiously, in his (albeit brief) discussion of the novella Stamm ignores the two narrative frames entirely and focuses instead on the "die eigentliche Märchennovelle" (that is, the tale of Athelstan). In doing so, Stamm overlooks several key discussions of the concept.

Over the course of the novella, Beeskow delivers three long speeches, the last of which concerns fairy tales. It is an illuminating passage from which much can be gleaned about Tieck's concept of the wondrous and the relationship between the wondrous and the mundane. This particular speech takes place during a celebration in the small mountain town where Beeskow spends time during and after his search to find the manuscript. When the mayor and other local officials express surprise that an educated man like Beeskow should devote so much time and

[28] Stamm, *Grundlage und Technik*, 95. By Stamm's count, the word *Wunder* appears in various forms (as adjective, substantive, composite, etc.) 35 times in the *Binnerzählung* alone. (Ibid.) A search of the entire novella turns up nearly 80 results.

attention to a fairy tale, he gives the following explanation (henceforth referred to as the *Märchenrede*):

> Das echte Märchen, so sagte ich ungefähr, erschließt mit seinem Kinderton und dem Spielen mit dem Wunder eine Gegend unsers Gemüte, in welche die übrige Kunst und Poesie nicht hineinreicht. Unsre ersten und heiligsten Verhältnisse zur Natur und der unsichtbaren Welt, die Basis unsers Glaubens, die Elemente unsers Erkennens, Geburt und Grab, die Schöpfung um uns her, die Bedürfnisse unsers Lebens, Alles dies ist wie Märchen und Traum und läßt sich nicht in Das auflösen, was wir vernünftig und folgerecht nennen. Darum die Heiligkeit und das Wunderliche, Unbegreifliche aller alten Sagen. Die Schöpfung, die Entstehung des Guten und Bösen, der Fall der Engel, die Erlösung, man nenne, was man will, bei Griechen, Heiden, Juden oder Christen, das Ursprüngliche der Legende sowohl wie unsers nächsten alltäglichen Lebens ist, wenn wir das Wort heilig und ernst nehmen, ein Märchen.[29]

Let us recall Tieck's definition of the novella from volume eleven of his 1829 *Schriften* alongside this explication of the fairy tale and consider the role of the wondrous in each. By shining a light on a single event, which in its very novelty may be wondrous, the novella has the capacity to reveal *das Wunderbare* in the commonplace. The wondrous itself, then, is that which elevates the everyday and gives it new meaning. This new meaning in turn rests in a way of seeing and feeling in which the world is given to us as it appears to the child's eye and mind. It is a way of seeing the wonder of the world itself – not the world as defined by the concerns of the everyday. In doing so, the fairy tale opens up something in the reader that is otherwise unreachable by art or literature: "Das echte Märchen…erschließt mit seinem Kinderton und dem Spielen mit dem Wunder eine Gegend unsers Gemütes, in welche die übrige Kunst und Poesie nicht hineinreicht." As the passage goes on, Tieck uses the term *Märchen* to encompass the phenomena that make up life's deepest mysteries and which form the basis not only of the great legends that seek to explain these mysteries, but of everyday life itself ("das Ursprüngliche der

[29] *LTS*, 11:818.

Legende sowohl wie unsers nächsten alltäglichen Lebens ist…ein Märchen"). In other words, Tieck uses *Märchen* more or less synonymously with *das Wunderbare*.

This helps resolve the mystery of Tieck's seemingly paradoxical generic subtitle for *Das alte Buch*: "Märchen-Novelle." On the genre of the *Märchennovelle*, Maria Tatar writes:

> The term Märchennovelle points to the presence of two normally separate and discrete modes: the one admitting the presence of the supernatural, the other knowing nothing more than natural laws. This co-presence of two contradictory levels of fictional reality can produce a radical sense of disorientation: in a world governed by natural laws, the supernatural is forever making its presence felt. [30]

Tatar uses this term (*Märchennovelle*) in reference to *Der blonde Eckbert*, which is celebrated for its ability to sustain the tension between the supernatural and 'natural' realms. None of this tension exists in *Das alte Buch*, however: the supernatural elements are neatly contained within a fairy tale, the very fictionality of which is emphasized by the narrators of the two frames, who recount the origins of the tale and the many revisions it has undergone – including by their own pens. Yet, while scholars often refer to *Der blonde Eckbert* as a *Märchennovelle*, Tieck gave only two of his works this generic subtitle: *Das alte Buch* and *Die Vogelscheuche* (another novella written in 1835).[31] Beeskow's *Märchenrede* sheds light on this distinction in that it offers a broader definition of what Tieck considers a *Märchen* to be at this point in his career – namely, something akin the wondrous, which imparts meaning into everyday life. As we have seen, the association between the wondrous and the commonplace is a fundamental component of Tieck's *Novellentheorie*; thus the distinction *Märchennovelle* is not as contradictory as it may initially appear.

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[30] Tatar, "Unholy Alliances," 608-609.

[31] Like *Das alte Buch*, Tieck's 1835 novella *Die Vogelscheuche: Mährchen-Novelle in fünf Aufzügen* combines criticism of contemporary literary circles (*junges Deutschland* in the former, *der Dresdner Liederkreis* in the latter) with a narrative populated by fantastical figures who would not be out of place in Tieck's earlier works.

The questions remains, however: what should the reader expect from the very *Märchen* that prompts Beeskow to make his speech, which features a wondrous realm, and which stands in a place of structural significance at the center of the novella – *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*?

In the fairy tale *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*, the young nobleman Athelstan leaves home in search of experiences deeper and more meaningful than life within the confines of his father's castle can offer him.[32] That Athelstan feels out of place within this sphere is made clear when his friend and traveling companion accuses him of speaking "von lauter Märchen," to which Athelstan responds, "Freilich, Märchen! So nennt ihr Alles, was nicht alltäglich ist."[33] This brief exchange demonstrates Athelstan's yearning for the wondrous and his rebellion against the dominance of the everyday, *der Alltag*. Not long after the tale begins, his wish is granted as he gains access to a subterranean realm of imagination ruled by the fairy queen, Gloriana. Athelstan quickly woos Gloriana, and together they travel the world bestowing their blessings upon various poets throughout the ages. Taken by itself, the fairy tale closely follows the approach to "die Täuschung des Wunderbaren" that Tieck outlines in his essay on Shakespeare. The tale begins at the threshold between Athelstan's unfulfilling everyday life and his fantastical future so that the reader is taken quickly into a wondrous world populated by supernatural beings such as fairies and gnomes, and, after the first few pages, is spared any reminders of the commonplace that might shatter the illusion.

Yet, we cannot take the fairy tale by itself, for it does not stand alone – it is found within a novella and encompassed by two narrative frames. And while the diegetic level of the fairy tale itself does not break the illusion of the wondrous with references to the everyday, the fairy tale is

[32] "O Fritz, was mich lockt, ist die Einsamkeit, jene Süße, die uns aus Wald und Berg anredet, das Geheimniß, das uns der flüsternde Bach verrathen will." (*LTS*, 11:755)
[33] Ibid., 754.

not intact within the novella; instead, it is interrupted by Beeskow's narrative frame, which, with its lengthy discourses on provincial life promptly returns the reader to a reality that is decidedly mundane (see page 3 of this chapter for a visual representation of the structure of the novella). This interruption, coupled with the unambiguous status of the fairy tale as fictional and heavily edited by several authors (a fact emphasized throughout both narrative frames), seems to prevent the reader from entering into the wondrous state of mind as described in the Shakespeare essay. This is unsurprising, of course, when we recall how Tieck's approach to the wondrous has developed from the time he wrote this early essay; yet, if the role of *das Wunderbare* in literature is no longer to suspend the reader's disbelief so that the supernatural seems, if only temporarily, believable, why does Tieck present his reader with a thoroughly "wondrous" tale?[34]

I suggest that rather than reading the fairy tale as an instance of the wondrous itself (as scholars such as Stamm and Jean Clark Field do),[35] we must instead consider a) the treatment of the wondrous within the tale, and b) the tale's position relative to the narrative frames; together, these form a model of how to approach the wondrous. In other words, the fairy tale should not be considered an attempt to evoke an experience of the wondrous for the reader; instead, by examining the position of the wondrous in the fairy tale, and of the fairy tale in the novella, the reader can gain insight into the true nature of the wondrous. This approach, I argue, gives a better sense of Tieck's later conception of the wondrous than the few statements he makes in the 1822 letter and 1829 *Schriften*. What emerges is a picture of the wondrous as a phenomenon that must be highly mediated; unlike the mediation of the supernatural in *Shakespeares Behandlung des*

[34] That is to say, a tale not only populated by the type of supernatural figures Tieck cites in his Shakespeare essay, but also one that refers constantly to the wondrous. As cited elsewhere in this chapter, some variation of the term 'wunder' appears 35 times in the fairy tale alone.
[35] See Stamm, *Grundlage und Technik*; Jean Clark Field. *Das Wunderbare Bei Ludwig Tieck* (Zürich: E. Lang, 1939).

Wunderbaren, however, the poet is no longer tasked with deceiving his readers, but rather with opening their eyes.

C. Mediation of the Wondrous

Before turning to the frames, let us consider the presentation of the wondrous within the tale of *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*. Although Athelstan seeks to escape the confines of his father's home, his journey leads him almost immediately into another confined space: Gloriana's realm. To be sure, life within this wondrous world is everything Athelstan dreamt of, and yet Athelstan's newfound freedom from familial and social obligations is not spatially reflected in the wide-open spaces one might associate with such freedom. Instead, the realm of the wondrous is characterized by a sense of enclosure and containment. Consider the moment in which Athelstan, standing at the threshold of Gloriana's kingdom, binds himself to the fairy queen and enters the realm as its new king: "Der grüne Berg stand weit offen, drinnen schimmerten in Pracht die weiten Säle, Alle neigten sich vor Athelstan als ihrem Herrn, und von der weißen Hand der schönen Gloriana geführt trat der Jüngling in den Hügel hinein, der sich alsbald, als er Alle aufgenommen hatte, wieder verschloß."[36] The wide-open entrance and sparkling halls beyond suggest a future full of possibility for Athelstan. The use of "hinein" here echoes the title of the fairy tale (and the novella), which itself evokes a journey of discovery and unlimited possibilities: "Die Reise ins Blaue hinein." It also echoes, more subtly perhaps, the movement of the imagination that a true fairy tale makes possible, as described in the *Märchenrede*: "Das echte Märchen, so sagte ich ungefähr, erschließt mit seinem Kinderton und dem Spielen mit dem Wunder eine Gegend unsers Gemüte, in welche die übrige Kunst und Poesie nicht

[36] *LTS*, 11:806.

*hinein*reicht."[37] As he steps into the green hill, into this otherwise unreachable realm, Athelstan seems physically to be recreating this movement of the imagination.

It is important to note that once the young man and his new subjects pass through the entrance, the hill shuts itself behind Athelstan, enclosing him in his new home. Though he makes occasional forays into the ordinary world, everyday reality and the world of wonder where Athelstan now dwells otherwise remain separate. The wondrous is presented, then, as accessible only through certain limited avenues (the green hill), or through certain figures who can pass through both realities (Athelstan, Gloriana, etc.) and bestows something of the wondrous upon a few chosen poets. Having identified this model of the wondrous within the content of the tale, we can now consider how Tieck mirrors this model in the structure of the novella.

Tieck's inclination to deliver his theories on literature in the form of introductions and forewords makes a careful consideration of the novella's double-frame structure even more critical. As we have already seen with Beeskow's *Märchenrede*, these pseudo-paratextual introductions may reveal as much – or more – about the wondrous as the central fairy tale. As the realm of imagination is located under the mountain, so too is the fairy tale embedded within the frame narratives. If the green hill provides access to the world of wonder, then the frames themselves provide an analogous access point to the fairy tale. What emerges through these parallels is a suggestion that the wondrous must in some way be contained – or, as I have said elsewhere, that it must be mediated by the artist before the reader or spectator can experience it. Notably, the concept of containment is present in Tieck's theory of the novella as set forth in Volume 11 of the *Schriften*:

[37] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

> Es wird sich auch anbieten, daß Gesinnung, Beruf und Meinung, im Contrast, im Kampf der handelnden Personen sich entwickeln, und dadurch selbst in Handlung übergehen. Dies scheint mir der ächten Novelle vorzüglich geeignet, wodurch sie ein individuelles Leben erhält. Eröffnet sich hier für Räsonnement, Urtheil und verschiedenartige Ansicht eine Bahn, auf welcher durch poetische Bedingungen das klar und heiter in beschränktem Rahmen anregen und überzeugen kann, was so oft unbeschränkt und unbedingt im Leben als Leidenschaft und Einseitigkeit verletzt, weil es durch die Unbestimmtheit nicht überzeugt und dennoch lehren und bekehren will, so kann auch die Form der Novelle jene sonderbare Casuistik in ein eigenes Gebiet spielen, jenen Zwiespalt des Lebens, der schon die frühesten Dichter und die griechische tragische Bühne in ihrem Beginn begeisterte.[38]

According to Tieck, the genre of the novella is particularly well suited to navigating the fundamentally dichotomous nature of life ("jenen Zwiespalt des Lebens"), noting that the genre can reveal the noble in the ignoble by portraying the latter "in beschränktem Rahmen."[39] The description of this relationship could also apply to the wondrous and the mundane, which together make up another, more fundamental "Zwiespalt des Lebens." Though the wondrous might be something undefined or ephemeral in reality, literature makes it accessible to the reader by containing it within literal (narrative) "Rahmen." Further, consider that *das Wunderbare* in the Shakespeare essay is characterized by a constant movement of the imagination as stimulated by the poet. I suggest that a similar movement of the imagination is engendered in the novella by the very interruptions – i.e. the narrative frames – that would seem to destroy the wondrous. While Tieck's conception of *das Wunderbare* in the Shakespeare essay required a strict separation of the wondrous and commonplace, we have seen that his later writings emphasize the

[38] Tieck, *Schriften*, 11:LXXXVIII.
[39] Though Tieck does not name *das Wunderbare* here, he elaborates further on the ability of literature to reveal deeper truths about the nature of reality as the passage continues: "so ist in allen Richtungen des Lebens und Gefühls ein Unauflösbares, dessen sich immer wieder die Dichtkunst, wie sie sich auch in Nachahmung und Darstellung zu ersättigen scheint, bemächtigt, um den todten Buchstaben der gewöhnlichen Wahrheit neu zu beleben und zu erklären." (Ibid. LXXXIX)

intersection of these two worlds. By repeatedly shifting between diegetic levels, Tieck enacts this intersection in the very structure of the novella.

This same language of containment or *Beschränkung* that Tieck uses in his *Novellentheorie* also appears in *Das alte Buch*. Curiously, however, it is not in reference to a text, but to a figure: Beeskow:

> Und so war denn Freund Beeskow ein geordneter, rechtlicher Mann, der anständig von seinem mäßigen Vermögen lebte, immerdar ruhig, beständig vernünftig war, gewöhnlich im Nachtrabe hinter der Zeit, ihr niemals vorauseilend, stets mäßig in Gedanken und Worten, und ein solcher Liebhaber der *Beschränkung*, daß er nicht nur jeden tiefsinnigen, kecken, sondern selbst oberflächlichen Gedanken gerne noch beschnitt und moderirte, um ihm alles noch etwanig Anstößige zu nehmen.[40]

This passage establishes Beeskow as a figure of mediation and moderation: as "ein solcher Liebhaber der Beschränkung," Beeskow is a model of restraint, moderating his own thoughts and words ("mäßig in Gedanken und Worten") as well as the opinions of others to suit his own comfort ("daß er nicht nur jeden tiefsinnigen, kecken, sondern selbst oberflächlichen Gedanken gerne noch beschnitt und moderirte"). This extreme fondness for moderation makes Beeskow a model of the mundane, obsessed with "trimming" anything that might be considered extreme or out of the ordinary.

Keeping in mind the inextricable relationship between the commonplace and the wondrous, this characterization of Beeskow suggests that he may be essential to understanding the concept of the wondrous in this novella. And after all, it is this man of moderation who makes the wondrous accessible to the reader: it is Beeskow who sets out in search of the manuscript of the fairy tale, and Beeskow who rescues it from a careless old schoolmaster who has let the book decay in a corner of his home for many years. After restoring the book and story

[40] *LTS*, 11:735. Emphasis mine.

as best as he can (a process that will be detailed in the next section of this chapter), Beeskow mails it to a friend – the narrator of the frame – who publishes it and thereby puts it in the reader's hands. Beeskow is, then, the medium through which the wondrous becomes accessible.

Finally, just as the mundane is elevated by the wondrous, so too is Beeskow elevated by his connection to the fairy tale. At the beginning of the novella, the frame narrator calls Beeskow a philistine (*Philister*) and remarks upon his thoroughly "unpoetic" nature.[41] After the narrator comes into possession of Beeskow's belongings, which include the manuscript, however, he acknowledges that he and his comrades have perhaps underestimated their old friend: "Denn es zeigte sich nun (wie es so oft geschieht) daß wir ihm Alle Unrecht getan hatten. Er war im Innern nicht so ohne Poesie gewesen, wie unserer eigensinniger Widerspruch angenommen hatte."[42] Again, it is possible to read Beeskow as the embodiment of the everyday: the narrator acknowledges that Beeskow always contained an element of *Poesie* within himself, but that it was only made apparent through his engagement with the fairy tale. Similarly, the wondrous is always present within everyday reality, if one only knows where or how to look. If we remember Beeskow's *Märchenrede* and the presentation of the fairy tale as analogous to the wondrous as that which imparts meaning into life, it becomes apparent that literature itself is the key to finding this intersection between the wondrous and the commonplace.

In the discussion thus far, the true significance of literature has begun to emerge. In the final section of this chapter, I will expand upon this consideration of the role of literature by more closely analyzing the thematization of texts and textual transmission in the novella – specifically, I will demonstrate how literature is shown to be under attack and what may be lost if

[41] "Ich war nicht wenig erstaunt, als ich nach einigen Wochen fünf Hefte, als das Vermächtnis des alten unpoetischen Beeskow empfing." (Ibid., 736)
[42] Ibid.

it is not protected. Keeping in mind the relationship between literature and the wondrous, it ultimately becomes clear that what is at stake in preserving the German literary tradition is access to a higher force that helps make sense of life's mysteries and impart meaning into the world. The loss of literature (or rather, its irreparable deterioration) would result in a world that only consists of the mundane – a grim fate of which Tieck offers a glimpse in the second frame of the novella, when Beeskow spends time in a small town whose villagers can think and speak of nothing else but butter.

II. A Literary Legacy

The fate of German literature plays a role in all of the chapters of my dissertation. More than any other novella in this project, however, *Das alte Buch und die Reise ins Blaue hinein* show an explicit concern for the status of the written text and the German literary tradition. While Brentano, Stifter and Meyer all depict the transmission and reception of narratives, these acts of storytelling always have a dual function: they are a reflection on the role of literature, but are also in service of another agenda – specifically, ensuring a unified national identity (Brentano), integrating the individual into the community (Stifter), and determining our relationship to the past (Meyer). By contrast, Tieck's primary concern in *Das alte Buch* is the past, present and future of German literature, which he felt was in jeopardy. Tieck was skeptical of many of the up-and-coming authors in the 1830s, who sought not only to break from their literary forefathers, but to disparage them as well.[43] On all three diegetic levels of the novella, this concern for survival of literary traditions emerges. Before considering in greater depth how

[43] Of course, the writers in the Young Germany movement were not the first to break with their intellectual predecessors – consider, for example, the Romantic rejection of the values espoused by Enlightenment thinkers.

this concern is addressed in the second frame (Beeskow's letters) and the fairy tale, let us first look to the opening frame of the novella, where Tieck first takes up the question of literary heritage by paying homage to the writer who loomed largest in his own life: Goethe.

In the first narrative frame of the novella, the unnamed narrator references Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* while describing his friend Beeskow. After lamenting Beeskow's "unerschüttlicher Prosaismus," the narrator launches into a brief discussion about the term *Philisterei*, noting that it has undergone a complete reversal of meaning since it first appeared in Goethe's *Werther* in 1774.[44] Several paragraphs later, the narrator declares Beeskow a philistine, but immediately clarifies that he uses the term in the Goethean sense – that is, to describe the "Alberts" of the world: "jene Anti-Enthusiasten, Unpoeten, die Kinder und Schüler des Herkommens und der Gewöhnlichkeit wollten."[45]

Tieck's reference to *Werther* has not been completely ignored in critical readings of *Das alte Buch*: the discussion on philistinism is generally read as the first of many attacks on the intellectual climate of the day – particularly the values espoused by the group of authors known collectively as Young Germany (*Junges Deutschland*). This group, which included Heinrich Heine, Theodor Mundt, Ludwig Börne, and Karl Gutzkow (among others), was united by a belief in social justice, democracy and rationalism, and in a rejection of many facets of Romanticism, which the proponents of *Junges Deutschland* considered to be dangerously out of touch with the

[44] In the May 26 letter of *Werther*, Goethe uses the word "Philister" in an analogy to describe "ein Mann in öffentlichen Amt" who cautions against passion and encourages using rationale and reason in matters of love. The term did not, however, truly become popular among contemporary intellectuals and authors until after the publication of Goethe and Friedrich Schiller's joint endeavor, *Die Xenien* - a collection of distichs in which the term is used repeatedly. For more, see Estelle Morgan. "Goethe and the Philistine." *The Modern Language Review* 53, no. 3 (1958): 374-79.
[45] *LTS*, 11:734.

everyday political and social reality of the time. The Young Germany movement marked a turn away from the central role of the mythic, of imagination, and poetic transformations of the world toward a political, functional (i.e. engaged) literature directed toward contemporary conditions. When Tieck writes, then, of the "liberale, politische, religiöse *Alberts*" of the modern day, who would criticize Werther as "einen kleinlichen, sentimentalen *Philister*…der sich weder für Staat, Menschheit, Freiheit noch Natur begeistern könne, sondern der nur einer armseligen Liebe lebt und stirbt," he is alluding to this group of young authors who (in his eyes) sought not only to break free of their literary predecessors, but also to distort the tradition the latter had worked to establish.[46]

As the first of numerous literary allusions in the novella, Tieck's use of *Werther* in the opening pages helps position the novella within the German literary tradition on the one hand, and contributes to a more general discussion about the fate of this tradition on the other. Essential to this argument is understanding that Tieck's dislike of emerging literary trends (Young Germany and French Romanticism above all) was not merely a matter of taste, but rather stemmed from the belief that these authors 1) were irreparably damaging the quality and standards of literature and thereby jeopardizing its future, and 2) as part of the German literary tradition,[47] were forcing a reconsideration of the works of their predecessors. The implications of Tieck's present thus radiated in both directions, calling literature's past and future alike into question.

The opening frame of the novella establishes a set of concerns regarding the state of literature that resurface repeatedly throughout the novella and which, as I will demonstrate, are

[46] Ibid., 734.
[47] Tieck saw French Romanticism as an outgrowth of a certain strain of German Romanticism. This will be further addressed in the following discussion.

often addressed through the thematization of texts and processes of textual transmission (writing, editing, reading). These processes are detailed more thoroughly in Beeskow's letters and the fairy tale, but appear for the first time in the opening frame. As discussed, the frame narrator initially draws a comparison between Beeskow and Goethe's Albert for their philistinism. As we have already seen, however, the narrator later admits "daß wir ihm Alle Unrecht gethan hatten. Er war im Innern nicht so ohne Poesie gewesen, wie unser eigensinniger Widerspruch angenommen hatte."[48] And in fact, in many ways, Beeskow as a literary figure has much more in common with Werther than with Albert. Consider, for example, that *Das alte Buch* bears some structural similarities to *Werther*: in both texts, an unnamed narrator comes into the possession of a dead man's (one-sided) correspondence, which he then publishes. In this comparison (one that Tieck obviously invites), Beeskow plays a similar role to Werther as the author of the documents that make up much of the actual text. Further, when each man meets his respective untimely death, he is unmarried and has no known children; the only legacy he leaves behind is a textual one. For Werther, this literary legacy is comprised only of his personal letters; Beeskow, however, leaves behind something more: *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*. In the following discussion, I will examine how this fairy tale becomes a site of cultural transmission: first, on the level of the text itself, which dramatizes the very origins of *Poesie*, and finally in Beeskow's letters, where the manuscript itself is shown to be an object of cultural inheritance passed down through various hands until it is finally bequeathed to the frame narrator as "das Vermächtnis des alten unpoetischen Beeskow."[49]

[48] Ibid., 736.
[49] Ibid.

A. The Fairy Tale

When *Das alte Buch* was first published, the majority of the praise it received was directed at the core fairy tale – the titular *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein* – which many saw as a revival of Tieck's Romantic spirit. Some even believed that Tieck had revised an older, unfinished text and used it as the basis for the novella, only later adding the double-frame structure. And indeed, with its dreamy protagonist, depictions of nature and a subterranean realm of imagination, the fairy tale does seem to contain every trope and tool in Tieck's narrative arsenal. What has received little critical attention, however, are the prosaic beginnings of Athelstan's adventure.

At the opening of the fairy tale, Athelstan argues with his friend Friedrich, who suggests that it is time for them to end their journey and return home: "Athelstan…kehren wir nun bald zurück? Was wird Dein Vater, der strenge Freiherr zu unserer Reise sagen? Unser Hofmeister, der gelehrte Mann, wird in Verzweiflung seyn, das Schloß und die ganze Familie ist gewiß in der größten Verwirrung"[50] These appeals do not reach Athelstan, however, who tersely reminds Friedrich that he has tried for several years to get his father's permission to take a long journey, and reveals that he has no intentions of returning home prematurely. Clearly unsettled by this revelation, Friedrich tries a slightly different tack by reminding Athelstan of his betrothed:

> Aber Deine schöne Muhme, die liebe Hedwig, wie wird es ihr indessen ergehen? sagte Friedrich mit einem Seufzer.
>
> Athelstan lachte laut und sprach dann mit flüchtiger Rede: Sieh, Herzensbruder, die Schönheit dieses Mädchens, ihre Zärtlichkeit zu mir, und die Absicht meines Vaters, mich nur recht bald in diese Ehe zu schmieden, konnten mich bewegen, lieber als Kesselflicker durch das weite ferne Land zu laufen, als da auf meiner Hufe zu sitzen….[51]

[50] Ibid., 753.
[51] Ibid.

Although Athelstan also expresses more poetic grounds for his desire to travel, this passage reveals that on the most basic level, he is a young man fleeing familial obligations and domestic responsibilities. Athelstan is unable to position himself happily within the world of his father, and the very mention of his intended makes him laugh scornfully. His use of the word "schmieden" here reflects a view of marriage (at least, to Hedwig) as something akin to a chain or bondage. Athelstan's troubles thus represent a legacy that is danger from two sides: the past (his fraught relationship with his father) and the future (his lack of interest in the uninspiring Hedwig).

As an iteration of Tieck's Romantic protagonists, Athelstan is alienated from his everyday life because of his interest in the deeper truths of reality, which is manifested in his "unnatural" desire to travel.[52] Unlike many of his Romantic forerunners, however, who feel deeply conflicted about their strange unhappiness and latent attraction to the fantastic, Athelstan can articulate his desire to seek a wider range of experiences:

> O Freund! was man so von alten Zeiten singt und sagt, als Gottheiten zur Erde herabstiegen, als der ewig gerühmte Alexander siegend durch die Welt zog, als in Berg und Tal sich Wunder der Natur hervortaten, als der große Poet Virgilius auch der größte Zauberer war, als der unverwundbare Siegfried Riesen und Zwerge überwand und den Gesang der Vögel begriff, als es dem Orpheus erlaubt war, in die Hölle hinabzusteigen, um seine Geliebte wiederzuholen - [53]

In Athelstan's understanding of the world, literary and historical figures hold the same degree of importance – Alexander the Great and Virgil's accomplishments are listed next to the legends of Siegfried and Orpheus. In other words, as far as Athelstan's motivations are concerned, there is no separation between literature and reality. Athelstan's allusion to Orpheus also foreshadows

[52] Friedrich refers to Athelstan's "Reiselust" as a "Thorheit oder Krankheit," and that is then escalated "zum Wahnsinn." (Ibid., 756)
[53] Ibid., 754.

his own fate: after striking out on his own, Athelstan eventually gains access to an underground realm where he meets his own eventual "Geliebte," Gloriana. Athelstan eventually attains the status of the literary figures he so admires and becomes part of literary history himself: after he assumes the duties of king beside his queen Gloriana, the pair are referred to interchangeably by alternate titles: Oberon and Titiana. This is a reference to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer-night's Dream*, suggesting that Athelstan becomes the very "Oberon" immortalized in the play.[54] Together, Athelstan and Gloriana, or Oberon and Titiana, rule the kingdom of imagination, bestowing favor upon various poets and writers throughout time. Though they are absent from Germany for many years, Athelstan is finally seen once again, embracing a young Goethe.[55]

The tale of *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein* contributes to the text's investigation of literary legacy by dramatizing the origins of the European literary tradition. The fairy tale does this primarily through its depictions of many figures from the pantheon of great European authors as Athelstan travels the world and bestows his blessings upon them. In a nod to the origins of the novella, for example, Boccaccio and Cervantes are among the authors favored by Athelstan, while Shakespeare is said to be embraced "am innigsten."[56] Goethe's appearance in the tale also brings the text full circle and allows the novella to better account for its place in literary history.

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[54] In the play, Oberon and Titiana are King and Queen of the fairies.

[55] "Da traf in stiller Nacht in feierlicher Einsamkeit Oberon den Jüngling, der, wie er uns selbst so schön erzählt, von Zabern nach Straßburg wiederkehrend sich im Anschaun seines Genius vertiefte. Er setzte sich zu ihm und gab ihm in Umarmungen die höchste Weihe." (Ibid., 846)

[56] "Seitdem ward Athelstan oder Oberon in jenen deutschen Landschaften nicht wieder gesehn, aber in Italien begegnete er nachher dem großen Dante; Petrark, Boccaz und Ariost erzählten auch wohl später von einem seltsamen Mann, welcher sie begrüßt und umarmt habe.

In der Einsamkeit von Warwikshire, dort in den schönen Wäldern begrüßte Athelstan manchen Jüngling: am innigsten umarmte er jenen William, auf welchen sich alle unsre neuere Poesie stützt und lehnt. Chaucer war früher schon von ihm anerkannt, sowie der liebliche Spencer, und wie er durch Italien, England und Spanien streifte, um dort Heroen, vor Allen Cervantes, Camoens, Lope und Calderon zu grüßen, so schien er lange unser Deutschland zu vergessen." (Ibid., 845)

Recall the reference to *Werther* in the opening frame, which already positions the novella as part of Goethe's legacy. The fairy tale extends this legacy by depicting Goethe's own heritage as one of Athelstan and Gloriana's favored poets.

Not all of the writers mentioned in the fairy tale are featured in such a favorable light, however: the authors of French Romanticism (Victor Hugo in particular) are depicted as under the control of a fleet of evil gnomes and goblins, while E.T.A. Hoffmann is suspected of being a goblin himself.[57] These depictions reflect Tieck's well-known opinion of the younger generation of Romantic authors (in both Germany and France) as decadent and grotesque. This was a personal matter for Tieck, for while he held Hoffmann in large part responsible for inspiring French Romanticism, he could not deny the role his own works may have played in leading to this moment in literary history. This comes to expression several times in the novella, as Tieck alternates between acknowledging his status as a predecessor to the new generation of Romantic authors and trying to shift blame onto evil forces outside of his control, as embodied by the gnomes.[58] It is not only the larger literary tradition that is at stake, then, but Tieck's in particular.

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[57] "Ein ausgezeichneter Gnome (man will sogar Hannes nennen) soll als ein Hoffmann Deutschland entzückt und sogar die Franzosen, die große Nation, neu revolutionirt haben. Ich sage: unwahrscheinlich. Hoffmann, als ächter Deutscher, war viel zu sehr redlich und selbst sentimental in Kobolde und Teufelslarven verliebt, um selber Kobold seyn zu können. Aber in Frankreich erhebt sich ein neues großes Jahrhundert, was, den Musen zum Trotz, von jenen Gnomen und Kobolden zu einer wundervollen Höhe hinauf getrieben wird. Unter diese hat man wirklich […] den Arsenikprinzen Hannes und seine Freunde losgelassen, um ein neues großes Säculum zu stiften." (Ibid., 850)

[58] In one of his speeches, Beeskow ponders the relationship between the younger generation of Romantic authors and Tieck himself: "Auch in der Entartung, im Mißverstehn und Uebertreiben wirkt dies unbesiegbare Element oft. So hat der gewiß nicht vollendete Hoffmann bei den Franzosen eine neue Literatur erregt. Und wären Hoffmann, Fouqué und Aehnliche da, ohne den gestiefelten Kater, Zerbino, getreuen Eckart, blonden Eckbert, die verkehrte Welt und andere frühere Anklänge, die in die Weite, oft unbegriffen, hineintönten, und erst in nachahmender Uebertreibung von den Zeitgenossen verstanden und beantwortet wurden?" (Ibid., 818) Within the fairy tale, this relationship is also pursued: "…ihr Romantiker, ihr echten Romantischen seid

By including so many authors from different moments and traditions across time, and by attributing their poetic inspiration to the same single source (i.e. Athelstand and Gloriana), Tieck presents something like a united literary history. In the same way that the wondrous is made accessible through its containment in the novella's narrative frames, the concept of a literary legacy that spans centuries, languages, and national boundaries is made possible by uniting authors from these discrete traditions within the fairy tale (and, on the level of content, within the physical space of Gloriana's realm). Viewing literary history in this way adds weight to any given national tradition, but also makes the stakes of intervening and correcting dangerous trends even higher. Athelstan and Gloriana have already been known to disappear from Germany for long stretches of time; if the younger generation of authors are allowed to continue producing grotesque or otherwise unworthy literature, then the German literary tradition may be permanently removed from the care of Athelstan and Gloriana and left instead to the mischievous gnomes. Though still within the realm of imagination, authors under the control of the gnomes are separated from the rest of the realm.[59] Thus, Germany's position within the glorious and united literary tradition just described is threatened by those authors who indulge and befriend the gnomes.

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also die Vorbilder und begeisternden Muster jener Schamlosen, die das Laster, die Verwesung, das Scheusal und die Werke der Finsternis singen? Nein, man muß jener Nachricht glauben, daß jene chaotischen Gnomen und wüsten Zwerge sich dieser Armen bemächtigt haben, von denen jetzt die große, französische Nation elektrisiert wird." (Ibid., 851)

[59] As Athelstan tours the brilliant realm of imagination with Gloriana for the first time, they come upon a dark region: "Auf ihrer Reise gelangten sie in eine sonderbare bergige Gegend, in welcher zerrissene, unzusammenhängende Hügel, auf welchen einzelne Tannen dunkel standen, ein verworrenes Bild darstellten. Hier ist es melancholisch, sagte der König. Freilich wohl, antwortete Gloriana, hier hausen die Zwerge und Gnomen. Viele unter diesen sind schadenfrohe und tückische Wesen, die an Verdruß und Unglück ihre Freude haben." (Ibid., 825)

In the fairy tale, gnomes embody the forces that threaten the future of literature. These forces are work in Beeskow's frame as well, and are shown through the gradual deterioration of the manuscript containing the legend of Athelstan. Rather than gnomes and goblins, however, the greatest threat to literature on this narrative level is the writers and readers themselves.

B. The Manuscript

In the first frame of the novella, the narrator describes Beeskow's quest to find the manuscript of *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein* as follows:

> Bei seiner letzten Reise war es auffallend, daß er von einem Buche, Gedichte oder einer Erzählung sprach, welche er in einem Dorfe, dem höchst gelegenen des Gebirges, aufsuchen wolle, und die er schon in seiner Jugend dort angesehen, aber nicht gehörig beachtet habe. Er behauptete, die sonderbare Legende sei gewiß um die Zeit des Hans Sachs und der Schule der Meistersänger niedergeschrieben worden, es scheine ihm aber ein älteres Gedicht, welches man nur verändert habe, und in welchem manches fehlende Blatt durch spätere, sonderbare Prosa sei ersetzt worden. So zöge sich, seiner verwirrten Beschreibung nach, der Ursprung der Erzählung wohl bis in die echt poetische Zeit des Mittelalters hinaus, und sei verstümmelt, ergänzt, und durch neue Zusätze von Schulmeistern, Predigern, oder fahrenden Schriftstellern in Grund und Boden verdorben worden.[60]

According to this account, Beeskow is clearly concerned with the origins of the sought-after manuscript and seeks to situate the story in literary history. Hans Sachs and the Meistersänger in particular are referenced, and the "echt poetische Zeit des Mittelalters" more generally. In many frame narratives, this sort of appeal to history is intended to impart a sense of authority and legitimacy to the embedded narrative that follows. Something else is at work here, however, for the reader is informed at the outset that the text Beeskow is in search of has undergone such heavy revisions that it has been spoiled: "durch neue Zusätze…in Grund und Boden verdorben worden." Rather than the fairy tale's legitimacy as an authentic or original text, then, what is

[60] Ibid., 735-736.

foregrounded are the processes of revision – and more specifically, the negative effects of these processes. This passage highlights the impact of irresponsible writers upon a work that represents the very origins of the German literature, distorting the text until it is unrecognizable – indeed, even the genre of the story is uncertain as this point, referred to alternately as a book, poem, narrative ("Erzählung"), and legend.[61] By drawing attention to the erosion of the original text by later writers, Tieck suggests that the past – specifically the German literary tradition – is vulnerable to the actions of the present.

The notion that literature is under threat emerges even more clearly in the frame formed by Beeskow's letters. In these letters, Beeskow recounts his journey to claim the manuscript from his old schoolmaster, who has possessed it for many years. The schoolmaster in turn delivers to Beeskow an oral history of the manuscript, the revisions it has undergone, and its reception by various readers. Beeskow learns that the text had already seen significant changes by the time the schoolmaster received it from an elderly priest: "ich habe das Büchel schon in meiner Jugend von einem uralten Priester erhalten, der hatte es schon völlig ruiniert […] denn er hatte fast alle Reime schon in Prosa verändert und willkürlich weggelassen, was er nicht verstand, und hinzugesetzt, wo ihm etwas zu fehlen schien."[62] The priest's impulse to alter the text to his own liking is repeated in the various readers who encounter the manuscript through the old schoolmaster. Each tries to impose his own agenda upon it, though it is unclear whether

[61] This continues throughout the novella. The story is referred to at various points as: ein Gedicht, Erzählung, die sonderbare Legende, Roman, jene alte Geschichte, das kleine Buch, Fabel, das Büchel, die hübsche Erzählung, das Manuscript, dies mixtum compositum von Aberwitz und Poesie, die Schnurre, das Geschreibsel, die Schreiberei, Mähr, Mährlein, Märchen, das Scharteke, das Zeug, and, of course, das alte Buch.

[62] Ibid., 748-749.

or to what extent the schoolmaster allows any of them to make revisions.[63] "Ein Altertumsforscher, oder Grammatikus," for example, is horrified by the number of anachronisms in the text and seeks to remove them, while "ein ältlicher Offizier" critiques the absence of a Christian moral.

Tieck levies a two-pronged critique here: first, of writers who cause irreparable damage to literature.[64] In the novella, this happens on the level of a single text; in Tieck's own time, he saw a similar scenario playing out on a national (or even continental) scale. Take the writers of French Romanticism, for example, whom Tieck notoriously despised.[65] In Tieck's view, the works produced by these writers sullied the very legacy of Romanticism. So while they did not perform revisions upon texts as occurs in *Das alte Buch*, they did force a revaluation of the works that preceded their own within the Romantic tradition. Second, Tieck criticizes readers who expect texts to suit their own agenda. The writers of Young Germany were, in Tieck's estimation, guilty of this. Like the old officer who complains about the lack of a Christian message in *Die Reise ins Blaue hinein*, the Young Germany movement criticized the work of others that did not meet their own political needs. Tieck's frustration at these expectations finds expression through the schoolmaster, who responds first to the grammarian's complaints about historical inaccuracies, saying, "Was Anachronismen und Kleidungsstücke! In einem

[63] The complete sequence of readers and/or editors as narrated by the schoolmaster is as follows: the elderly priest, the schoolmaster, "ein altdeutscher Professor," "ein anderer Altertumsforscher, oder Grammatikus," "ein ältlicher Offizier," and "ein jünger Jäger." Beeskow then takes the manuscript and makes his own changes before sending it to the narrator, who admits to making revisions as well.

[64] Though I am unable to address the topic here, there is something to be said also about the depiction of editorial practices in this text – i.e. Tieck's criticism not just of writers in general, but of editors in particular. Youn Sin Kim touches upon this to some extent in *Als die Lumpen Flügel bekamen*.

[65] See Christian Gneuss, *Der Späte Tieck Als Zeitkritiker* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1971.)

träumerischen Mährchen, welches nur ergötzen soll!" and later counters the officer's objections by reminding him, "Gnädiger Herr Kriegsobrister, das Ding ist, was unsere Vorfahren eine Mär, späterhin Märlein, wir jetzt noch mit unbedeutenderm Ton ein Märchen betiteln."[66]

The schoolmaster's remarks raise the question of the very purpose of fairy tales. From Beeskow's *Märchenrede* we know that Tieck likened fairy tales to the wondrous itself in their capacity to impart meaning into the world. Though the schoolmaster perhaps underestimates the power of the fairy tale when he says its purpose is to simply delight or amuse ("welches nur ergötzen soll"), his fear for the integrity of the fairy tale is justified. The schoolmaster's concern – and Tieck's – is that this fairy tale is in danger of being utilized for other agendas, and that fairy tales in general can no longer exist without some other functional purpose. [67] The revisions proposed by the various readers who read the tale go beyond formal changes and threaten to destroy the spirit of the text – whatever is left of it, at least. The erosion of this spirit has already begun to take place, and with it, the wondrous capacity of the tale. This becomes apparent when Beeskow finally reads the story for the first time since his youth and laments the loss of a certain "Stimmung" due to the revisions it has undergone in the meantime.[68] By highlighting this series of revisions and their cumulative effect on the fairy tale, Tieck thus draws attention to what is at

[66] *LTS*, 11:750-751.
[67] A similar sentiment is echoed by some of the townspeople, who do not understand why an educated and respectable man like Beeskow has spent so much looking for a fairy tale: "Der Bürgermeister sowie noch einige Senatoren wunderten sich, daß ich, als ein gescheidter und gelehrter Mann, einem Mährchen so viele Aufmerksamkeit widme; ja, wenn es noch eine Erzählung wäre, oder ein Punkt aus der vaterländischen Geschichte, oder ein moralisches und erhebendes Werk." (Ibid., 817-818)
[68] "Ich las das Manuskript und es erschien mir viel anders, wie vor mehreren Jahren. Jene Stimmung war mir verschwunden, und da ich den Inhalt fast ganz vergessen hatte, so las ich es jetzt kritisch, um mir das Wesentliche einzuprägen." (Ibid., 752)

stake if the quality of literature in his own time is allowed to further deteriorate: namely, our access to the wondrous.

The precarious position of literature is further highlighted by the physical abuse the manuscript withstands. After the schoolmaster initially receives the book from his elderly priest, he is so frustrated by the latter's revisions that he throws the book in a corner and forgets about it. When he finds it years later, the book is "im erbarmungswürdigsten Zustande," having been damaged by water, mold and mice. The schoolmaster makes an attempt to fill in the lost text, but grows weary of the criticism of the readers discussed above and abandons the book again. Later, when a young hunter briefly lodges with the schoolmaster, the former finds the manuscript and rips pages out of it to light his pipe.[69] The neglect of the schoolmaster results in the physical deterioration of the manuscript, mirroring the textual deterioration of the tale it contains and causing further passages to be irretrievably lost. When Beeskow takes the manuscript, then, he not only rescues the tale from further revisions (other than his own, of course), but also ensures the physical existence of the book and thus the continued transmission of the tale.

Interestingly, in the descriptions of the physical deterioration of the book, a motif of consumption emerges. The book becomes food for mice ("Dazu hatten sich einige Mäuse […] darüber gemacht und manche der wichtigsten Stellen zernagt")[70] and worms ("die Lücken, wo Würmer in das Papier hinein gefressen hatten"),[71] and even water "eats" into it: "Sie kennen gewiß die eigne Erscheinung an Büchern, wenn sich die Nässe hineingefressen hat..."[72] By using

[69] "Er sucht nach Papier, um Kartätschen, Cartuchen oder Patronen zu machen (ich weiß nicht, wie man's nennt), und findet das Büchel… So riß er auch gleich ein Blatt heraus, und zündete seine Jägerpfeife damit an." (Ibid., 751-752)
[70] Ibid., 749-750.
[71] Ibid., 748.
[72] Ibid., 749.

the pages of the book to light his pipe, the young hunter, too, physically consumes – or at least inhales – the text. The motif of consumption forms a connection to the narrative thread that comprises a large part of Beeskow's letters, but which has not yet been addressed in this chapter: his time spent in a town whose residents are obsessed with butter.

On his journey to find the legend of Athelstan, Beeskow stops in a small mountain town somewhere in the vicinity of the old schoolmaster's home. Beeskow spends time here before and after retrieving the manuscript, and recounts his experiences in great detail in his letters. When he first arrives in the town, he discovers that the townspeople have an obsession with butter: each household insists upon making their own, and rifts have begun to form over whose butter is best (specifically, over who produces "die gebutterste Butter").[73] By the time Beeskow returns with the manuscript in hand, these rifts have blossomed into a full-fledged war. Beeskow manages to resolve the conflict through a moving speech, but alas – at the feast celebrating the families' reconciliation he is too polite to decline the many helpings of "Versöhnungsbutter" offered to him and dies of indigestion shortly thereafter.[74]

Considering the relative dearth of scholarship on *Das alte Buch*, a fair amount has been written about the butter war. It has been read as a cultural critique, a reflection on the breakdown of sociability, and as a metaphor for the excess of bad literature in Tieck's time.[75] Particularly relevant to my argument is this last interpretation, proposed by Christian Gneuss, who understands the dynamics of the butter war primarily as a critique of Young Germany. Like the

[73] Ibid., 744.
[74] Ibid., 853. After receiving Beeskow's final letter, the narrator explains, "Aber es folgte nichts mehr von seiner Hand, sondern nur eine Nachschrift vom Bürgermeister und dem Stadtarzt, daß mein alter Freund an einer Indigestion verschieden sei, die er sich unvorsichtigerweise bei einem großen Familienfeste zugezogen habe." (Ibid., 853-854)
[75] Gloss arguments – Paulin, Kim, Oesterle.

town's families, Gneuss argues, the authors of Young Germany fought with others and amongst themselves, each insisting that his "product" was the best and that all other attempts (whether at making butter or writing literature) were "abscheulich, schmutzig, ekelhaft."[76] Gneuss makes a convincing argument for reading the butter war as a satire about Young Germany, but stops short of investigating the deeper ramifications of these butter-based disputes and how they might parallel the potential impact of Young Germany and other bourgeoning movements on the future of literature.

The most dire implications of the butter war are reflected, I argue, in the fate of a young couple in the mountain town. When Beeskow first visits the town, the families of this couple are celebrating their engagement; by the time he returns from retrieving the manuscript, however, the families have had a falling out over butter and forced the betrothed to call off the wedding. Though Beeskow had already expressed disdain for the butter war in his letters to the frame narrator, the young couple's situation pushes him to openly chastise the townspeople and urge them to be reasonable. In a long speech, he likens the townspeople's attitude about butter to several of history's greatest conflicts, and compares their treatment of the young couple to that of Romeo and Juliet:

> Aber hier, im fernen Gebirge wollt ihr die Zwiste der Ghibellinen und Welfen, der Weißen und Schwarzen, der Montecchi und Capilletti, an denen Romeo und Julia zu Grunde gingen, die Kriege der Albigenser erneuern? und zwar um einen Gegenstand, der fast an das Komische, wenigstens einigermaßen gränzt, um die Frage, welche Kuh und welche Familie die beste Butter hervorbringt? […] Schon ist die Rede davon, das Glück zweier Liebenden zu trennen, den Vortheil bedeutender Geschäfte zu vernachlässigen, die Wohlfahrt der Stadt zum Sinken zu bringen.[77]

[76] Gneuss, *Der späte Tieck*, 66-67.
[77] *LTS*, 11:816.

In this passage, the fate of the town is explicitly tied to that of the young couple. The motif of transmission is thereby brought to the fore: with the arrival of future generations that a successful union implies, the marriage of the couple represents the continued growth and stability of the community. The generative potential of the couple allows the town to produce something more valuable than butter – it allows for the continuation of their very way of life. In other words, the union of the couple represents the transmission of tradition. By comparing the couple to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Tieck establishes a literary connection that supports a reading of the situation as analogous to the state of literature in his time. Further, the symbolic significance of this young couple is deepened through their implicit connection to the only other pair of lovers in the novella: Athelstan and Gloriana. Like Athelstan and Gloriana are responsible for the continuation of the literary tradition, the young couple in Beeskow's letters are responsible for the future of the town and its community. This community depends upon the transmission of tradition to future generations, while the fate of German literature is dependent upon the continued transmission of texts. This textual transmission constitutes, of course, literary tradition itself. With the community driven by a group of people focused only on producing "butter" (i.e. bad literature, according to Gneuss's reading), the future of German literature is shown to be in danger of being lost. Some hope remains, however.

While the literary couple Beeskow invokes – Romeo and Juliet – meets a tragic fate, the two lovers in the novella's small mountain town find a happier ending. Beeskow's speech to the townspeople is successful and the young couple is set to marry in a matter of days:

> Es war mir gelungen, alle Herzen durch meine eindringliche Rede tief zu bewegen. Alle Feinde umarmten sich in schöner Rührung und schworen sich eine neue und unerschütterliche Bruder- und Schwesterliebe. Sogleich wurden die jungen Verliebten

> mit einander verlobt, und man beschloß zugleich, daß die Hochzeit in acht Tagen seyn sollte.[78]

Ironically, the food served at the wedding celebration (which becomes part a larger "Versöhnungsfeier") is the cause of Beeskow's death-by-indigestion.

Before his untimely end, however, Beeskow helps to ensure two futures – first of the manuscript, and then of the mountain town as embodied by the young couple. Though in his novella Tieck presents an undoubtedly critical view of the state of literature in the 1830s, Beeskow's role in securing the fate of the manuscript and the town suggest that Tieck still had hope for the future. And while Beeskow laments the loss of "jene Stimmung" within the fairy tale, which we may read as the loss of *das Wunderbare*, there is a suggestion in the unnamed narrator's frame that it is not irretrievably lost after all. When the narrator reads the manuscript for the first time, he notes that is fragmented, full of holes, and a confusing mixture of old and new styles. And yet,

> Indem ich las und über das Gelesene sann, entwickelten sich auch in meiner Phantasie neue Vorstellungen, Zusätze, Änderungen drängten sich mir unwillkürlich auf, und ehe ich noch gewiß war, ob es erlaubt sei, das bunte Geflechte eines fremden Geistes noch mit andern Farben und Bändern zu bereichern oder zu verderben, war in heitern Stunden die Arbeit schon vollendet.

It appears that through his work on the manuscript, Beeskow is able to revive something of the *Stimmung* that was lost, and which now awakens the imagination of the frame narrator. As the manuscript of the fairy tale remains a work in progress, so too has the future of literature yet to be written. Like the frame narrator, and like Beeskow, all that Tieck can do is send his story into

[78] Ibid., 817.

the world and hope it resonates: “indessen mögen auch diese Worte, wie alle, in die Welt hineinfahren, und sehn, ob die Aufnahme finden.”[79]

[79] Ibid., 854.

Chapter Three: *Ansichten über Großes und Kleines:* On Iteration in Adabert Stifter's "Bergkristall"

Originally published in 1845 as "Der heilige Abend," "Bergkristall" is one of the six novellas included in Adalbert Stifter's collection *Bunte Steine* (1853). Set against a dramatic mountain landscape, "Bergkristall" tells the story of two young siblings, a sister and brother, who get lost in a blizzard as they return home from their grandparents' village one Christmas Eve. The children spend a harrowing night high on the mountain, during which they nearly succumb to hypothermia while taking refuge in an ice cave, but are kept awake and enlivened by the marvelous appearance of dazzlingly bright lights in the night sky. The children are rescued by a search team the next morning (Christmas) and are reunited with their distressed parents and grandparents before being brought home to eat, sleep, and open their presents.

On the level of both plot and structure, "Bergkristall" is deceptively straightforward – especially when compared to the other five novellas in *Bunte Steine*, which, in their use of plot twists, flashbacks, and multiple narrators, appear narratologically more complex. It is well acknowledged, however, that "Bergkristall" is more than a simple Christmas tale. Scholars have traditionally focused on three aspects of the novella: the possibility of rebirth and/or redemption as expressed through the Christmas motif;[1] the social integration that occurs at the end of the story;[2] and the depiction of nature (for example, as potentially demonic, ambivalent, or a site of

[1] Hugo Schmidt, "Eishöhle und Steinhäuschen. Zur Weihnachtssymbolik in Stifters *Bergkristall*," *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht, deutsche Sprache und Literatur* 56 (1964): 321-335; Frederick J. Stopp "Die Symbolik in Stifters *Bunten Steinen*," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 28 (1954): 165-193.; John Whiton, "Symbols of Social Renewal in Stifter's *Bergkristall*," *Germanic Review* 47.4 (1972): 259-280.

[2] Eric A. Blackall, *Adalbert Stifter. A Critical Study* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1994); Robert Kauf, "Interpretation und 'Relevanz' – Am Beispiel von *Ritter Gluck, Bergkristall,* und *Der blonde Eckbert*," *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, V, No. 1 (1972); Egon Schwarz, "Zur Stilistik von

the sublime).[3] More recently, scholars have developed readings of "Bergkristall" that address less traditional themes such as madness[4] and monotony,[5] showing that there is still much to be gained through thoughtful study of Stifter's tale.

In the present chapter, my own close analysis of the novella reveals an unconventional mode of narrative framing that, I claim, reflects the most essential qualities of Stifter's particular realist worldview. Though "Bergkristall" may be relatively uncomplicated in terms of plot, I demonstrate that through subtle narrative and structural strategies Stifter successfully integrates a type of literary frame that I refer to as the "implicit frame" of the novella. Stifter uses this frame in order fundamentally to call into question the relationship between the exceptional and the commonplace, both in storytelling and in our experience of everyday life. I argue that Stifter explores the interplay between the extraordinary and the ordinary through a systematic use of two narrative modes – the iterative and the singulative – throughout the novella.[6]

Stifters *Bergkristall*," *Neophilologus* 38 (1954): 260-268; John Whiton, "Symbols of Social Renewal in Stifter's *Bergkristall*," *Germanic Review* 47.4 (1972): 259-280.

[3] Roman C. Struc, "The Threat of Chaos: Stifter's *Bergkristall* and Mann's *Schnee*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 24.4 (1963): 323-332; Hans Dietrich Irmscher, "Die Verkündigung auf dem Berge: Zur Theodizee in Adalbert Stifters Erzählung 'Bergkristall,'" *Sprachkunst* 30.1 (1999): 1-9.; Claudia Nitschke, "Chaos und Form, Raum und Ethos in Stifters *Bunte Steine*," *German Life and Letters* 68.4 (2015): 554-568; Frank Nobbe, "Das Erhabene in Stifters 'Bergkristall,'" in *Die Dichter lügen nicht: Über Erkenntnis, Literatur und Leser*, ed. Carola Hilmes and Dietrich Mathy (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994), 149-162.

[4] Hans P. Gabriel, "The Final Irrationality of Existence: The Language of Madness and the Madness of Language in Stifter's 'Abdias' and 'Bergkristall,'" in *Crime and Madness in Modern Austria: Myth, Metaphor and Cultural Realities*, ed. Rebecca S. Thomas (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 1-28.

[5] Peter Küpper, "Literatur und Langeweile: Zur Lektüre Stifters," in *Geborgenheit und Gefährdung in der epischen und malerischen Welt Adalbert Stifters*, ed. Jattie Enklaar and Hans Ester (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), 59-72.

[6] I rely again on Gérard Genette's work, particularly the chapter titled "Frequency" in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, where he considers the capacity for repetition in narration. He draws a distinction between singulative modes of narrative (narrating once what happened once, or five times what happened five times), repeating narrative (the practice of narrating multiple times what happened just once), and finally, most significant for this analysis, iterative narrative, where "a single narrative utterance takes upon itself several [similar or repeated] occurrences

Although quite common both in literature and everyday speech, in literature the iterative is often functionally subordinate to the singulative, providing background information necessary to understand the more crucial singulative scenes. My analysis shows, however, that Stifter's deliberate use of the iterative in "Bergkristall" challenges this hierarchy of narrative modes, allowing the iterative to take on new importance in the narrative process. Rather than using the iterative merely to give his readers the basic information necessary to understand the story, or even to enrich his tale with details, Stifter employs it as a structural device, opening and closing his tale in this narrative mode. Stifter thus challenges the typical understanding of the iterative and heightens its importance in relation to the singulative. In doing so, I claim, Stifter forces the reader to reconsider the iterative mode's potential for storytelling. I suggest, moreover, that by privileging the general over the particular, the iterative performs one of the key values of realist literature, and may be considered *the* narrative mode of poetic realism. Finally, after a thorough analysis of the interplay between the iterative and singulative modes, I conclude my argument by considering an additional narrative strategy that Stifter uses to further develop the implicit frame: the dissolution of the individual identity of the novella's narrator into the first-person plural. Through these narrative elements (the narrative mode(s) and the narrator), the implicit iterative frame of "Bergkristall" reflects a fundamental tension in Stifter's particular form of realism between the commonplace and the exceptional. By identifying and analyzing the frame, I show how this tension plays out not only on the level of content, but also in the very narration of the story.

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together" – or more simply stated, narrating once what has occurred many times. (*Narrative Discourse*, 116)

I. "Bergkristall" as a Novella of Poetic Realism

Stifter's famous collection of novellas, *Bunte Steine*, is often considered an early example of poetic realism.[7] Though one of realism's defining characteristics is, somewhat ironically, its resistance to being defined, it is helpful to distinguish between realism in art more generally, and realism as a specific moment in literary history. Realism in general refers to modes of representation that attempt to represent a truthful reality.[8] Realism also refers, however, to an artistic movement that emerged in the nineteenth century and to the collection of texts identified by later literary scholars as belonging to this movement. The debate about which authors and texts fall into this category is ongoing and a topic I will discuss in greater detail in the final chapter of this dissertation. The present chapter is neither intended to propose a radically different definition of realism, nor to argue the extent to which the novellas of *Bunte Steine* should be counted as flawless expressions of poetic realism (the German-language iteration of the realist period). Instead, I consider how classically realist values transcend the content of "Bergkristall" and emerge in the story's narrative structures.

When seeking the central features of Stifter's realist program, scholars most often look to the preface (*Vorrede*) to *Bunte Steine*. Written in part as a response to Friedrich Hebbel's 1849 critique of Stifter's fixation on minute details, the preface reads as a philosophy of aesthetics and contains some of the clearest expressions of Stifter's particular epistemology. The cornerstone of this worldview is the so-called gentle law (*das sanfte Gesetz*) – a universal principle that governs the natural world and "guides the human race": "Wir wollen das sanfte Gesez zu erbliken

[7] In Eric Downing's words, it is seen as "a prophetic formulation of many of the principles, and problems, of the literary movement that would dominate German letters for the next forty years." *Double Exposures: Repetition and Realism in Nineteenth-century German Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 25.

[8] Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Bern: A. Francke, 1946), for example, is a study of the evolution of realist modes of representation in literature from Homer and the Old Testament to Virginia Woolf.

suchen, wodurch das menschliche Geschlecht geleitet wird."[9] Stifter states that this law does not find expression in violent, catastrophic events, but rather in the small, quiet phenomena that make up everyday life. In order to understand this governing principle, Stifter suggests that we fix our attention not on the fire-spewing volcano or devastating earthquake, but rather on the rippling of water or the slow growth of grain. The former may be dramatic, but the latter, taken together, more accurately reflect the underlying lawfulness of the universe:

> Das Wehen der Luft das Rieseln des Wassers das Wachsen der Getreide das Wogen des Meeres das Grünen der Erde, das Glänzen des Himmels, das Schimmern der Gestirne halte ich für groß: prächtig einherziehende Gewitter, den Bliz, welcher Häuser spaltet, den Sturm, der die Brandung treibt, den feuerspeienden Berg, das Erdbeben, welches Länder verschüttet, halte ich nicht für größer als obige Erscheinungen, ja ich halte sie für kleiner, weil sie nur Wirkungen viel höherer Geseze sind. Sie kommen auf einzelnen Stellen vor, und sind die Ergebnisse einseitiger Ursachen. […] Die Einzelheiten gehen vorüber, und ihre Wirkungen sind nach kurzem kaum noch erkennbar.[10]

Stifter thus calls for a reversal in our evaluation of both natural and human phenomena: in his view, extraordinary events are, in fact, ephemeral and relatively insignificant, while the commonplace events of life should be considered great. The privileging of the commonplace over the exceptional – and the manifestation of this principle in Stifter's notoriously detailed narrative style – resonates with many later theories of literary realism, which identify a superfluity of detail as one of the hallmarks of realist modes of representation.[11] Further, it is

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[9] Adalbert Stifter, *Werke und Briefe: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Alfred Doppler, Wolfgang Frühwald, Hermann Kunisch, Hartmut Laufhütte (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1978), 2.2: 12. Hereafter cited in text as *HKG*.

[10] Ibid., 10.

[11] Roland Barthes famously explores this phenomenon in "The Reality Effect," noting that the exhaustive descriptive details in realist texts generally serve no function in the narrative's semiotic structure, and instead actually appear "resistant to meaning." This resistance is part of a broader realist strategy of deviating from traditional narrative conventions, which, by virtue of being recognizable *as* conventions, risk undermining the text's status as an 'authentic' representation of reality. ("The Reality Effect" in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard [Oxford: Blackwell, 1986], 141-148)

impossible to ignore the implications this passage, and the preface in general, has for our understanding of the six tales of *Bunte Steine* within the literary tradition of the German *Novelle*.

The question of genre has, inevitably, been addressed in the "Bergkristall" scholarship.[12] As the novellas of Romanticism distinguished themselves from those of Boccaccio and Cervantes, so too do Stifter's novellas mark a departure from both the classical novella cycles and the individual novellas of the German tradition that was established in the first half of the nineteenth century. Compared to the plague in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, or the Napoleonic Wars in Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* – i.e. crises that occur on a national and/or historical scale – the events that unfold in the novellas of *Bunte Steine* instead reflect a concern for the local and the commonplace. Most of the novellas, for example, take place in small, often isolated communities and focus on familial relationships, local customs, and, of course, the natural world surrounding these communities. With this emphasis on the everyday, Stifter's novellas seem antagonistic to a genre that, as its name suggests, traditionally focuses on the new or novel. The second novella in the collection, "Kalkstein," even begins with a claim that seems intentionally to resist the classical definition of the novella as a genre that features new or extraordinary events: "Ich erzähle hier eine Geschichte, die uns ein Freund erzählt hat, in der *nichts Ungewöhliches* vorkommt und die ich doch nicht habe vergessen können."[13] In the Introduction to this dissertation, I detail several of the most significant names and ideas associated with nineteenth-century *Novelletheorie*, all of which place some emphasis on novelty – consider, for example, Goethe's "sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit," or Tieck's "Vorfall…der, so leicht er sich ereignen kann, doch wunderbar, vielleicht einzig ist." In the

[12] Donald LoCicero, "Stifter and the Novelle: Some New Perspectives," *Modern Austrian Literature 1*, no. 3 (1968): 18-30; Birthe Hoffmann. "Die Schönheit der Leere: Perspektivische Brechungen in Adalbert Stifters *Bergkristall.*" *Euphorion* no. 105.2 (2011): 153-185.
[13] *HKG*, 2.2:63. Emphasis mine.

preface to *Bunte Steine,* on the other hand, Stifter pointedly and repeatedly eschews the extraordinary. How, then, do we reconcile the principle of the gentle law with these canonical definitions of the German novella?

First, we must differentiate between the theories Stifter espouses in the preface to *Bunte Steine*, and the content of the novellas themselves. Donald LoCicero argues convincingly that while Stifter may have rejected the extraordinary in the preface, the novellas of *Bunte Steine* actually contain many features that are characteristic of the traditional novella, including the "unheard-of event."[14] LoCicero demonstrates this by systematically surveying each novella in *Bunte Steine* and locating examples of the unexpected and/or novel.[15] The fateful snowstorm in "Bergkristall," for example, is described at various points in the story as *fürchterlich*, *wunderbar* and – significantly – *unerhört*.[16] Many other traditional characteristics of the novella can be found across the tales of *Bunte Steine*, such as the literary depiction of oral narration and the use of frame narratives (including the unconventional frame of "Bergkristall," as we will see). It is justifiable, then, to classify *Bunte Steine* as a collection of novellas.

Where LoCicero falls short, however, is in reconciling the worldview presented in the preface with the extraordinary events of the novellas. It is crucial to note that while Stifter rejects the notion that dramatic, singular events are true reflections of the gentle law that governs the universe, he does not (and cannot) deny that these events occur. Though he believes the small phenomena of everyday life should be the focus of the modern poet's attention, volcanoes

[14] For more on reading the preface independently from the novellas of *Bunte Steine*, see Alfred Doppler, "Das sanfte Gesetz und die unsanfte Natur in Stifters Erzählungen," in *Geborgenheit und Gefährdung in der epischen und malerischen Welt Adalbert Stifters*, ed. Jattie Enklaar and Hans Ester (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), 13-22.
[15] LoCicero, "Stifter and the Novelle," 18-30.
[16] Ibid., 25. In "Bergkristall": "Hatte sich nun der Gewitterstoff des Himmels durch den *unerhörten* Schneefall so gespannt, daß er in diesen stummen herrlichen Strömen des Lichtes ausfloß, oder war es eine andere Ursache der unergründlichen Natur." (*HKG*, 2.2:228. Emphasis mine)

nonetheless erupt alongside the growing grass. The question becomes, then, how to understand these phenomena relative to each other – that is, the relative significance (or insignificance) of extraordinary events in relation to the commonplace. We have already seen that Stifter calls for a reversal of the traditional categories of great and insignificant, but what does this look like in practice – in everyday life? If we accept that this is one of the central questions of *Bunte Steine*, it is perhaps more fruitful to view the collection of novellas as an elucidation of the preface, rather than the reverse. From this perspective, the various unusual and wondrous events depicted throughout *Bunte Steine* should not be read as a violation or contradiction of the gentle law; rather, as I will demonstrate through the following analysis of "Bergkristall," the novellas show how such events may be integrated into, and eventually subsumed by, the commonplace.

II. The Implicit Frame

In the chapter entitled "Painting as a Model" in *S/Z* (the famous structural analysis of Balzac's "Sarrasine"), Roland Barthes writes:

> Every literary description is a view. It could be said that the speaker, before describing, stands at the window, not so much to see, but to establish what he sees by its very frame: the window frame creates the scene. To describe is thus to place the empty frame which the realistic author always carries with him[…]before a collection or continuum of objects which cannot be put into words without this obsessive operation[…]; in order to speak about it, the writer, through this initial rite, first transforms the 'real' into a depicted (framed) object; having done this, he can take down this object, remove it from his picture: in short: de-depict it[…][17]

[17] Roland Barthes and Honoré de Balzac, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 54-55. The original reads, "Toute description littéraire est une vue. On dirait que l'énonciateur, avant de decrier, se poste à la fenêtre, non tellement pour bien voir mais pour fonder ce qu'il voit par son cadre meme; l'embrasure fait le spectacle. Décrire c'est donc placer le cadre vide que l'auteur transporte toujour avec lui ou un continu d'objets inaccessibles à la parole sans cette operation maniaque…pour pouvoir en parler, il faut que l'écrivain, par un rite initial, transforme d'abord le 'réel' en objet peint (encadré); après quoi il peut décrocher cet objet, le tirer de sa peinture: en un mot: le dé-peindre…" (Barthes, *S/Z* [Paris: Seuil, 1970], 61)

With his metaphor of the removable frame, Barthes' description of literary realism in this passage is relevant to my project for obvious reasons, and particularly so with regard to Stifter. Though there is no obvious structural device framing "Bergkristall" (in other words, the frame seems to have been removed), it is in fact doubly framed: first by the preface to *Bunte Steine*, and second by an extended descriptive introduction – what I claim as the novella's implicit frame. This introductory frame is 'unseen' or 'implicit' in the sense that it is not a traditional and therefore immediately recognizable narrative frame; yet the first pages of the story serve a similar function as a traditional narrative frame insofar as they provide important orientation for the reader.

Rather than beginning the novella immediately with the story of Konrad and Sanna, Stifter instead spends several pages gently situating his audience, moving between a discussion of Catholic holidays and a tour of the valley surrounding the small mountain village of Gschaid. This opening gives the reader information about the region and traditions featured in the coming tale and thereby provides a broader context into which the unique events of Konrad and Sanna's story will eventually be integrated. Thinking about these opening pages as part of a frame rather than merely an introduction or exposition contributes to a deeper understanding of the story by forcing the reader to reevaluate the status of the novella's central narrative – particularly because the implicit frame is, I argue, a closed frame. Most narrative frames involve multiple diegetic levels; thus a closed frame is generally marked by a return to the diegetic level that preceded the embedded narrative. This is not the case in "Bergkristall," which unfolds continuously on one narrative plane. Instead, Stifter utilizes the iterative narrative mode to create a frame that encloses the central narrative. By returning to the iterative mode at the end of the text (i.e. closing the frame), as the children stand looking at the mountain, the novella's final gesture is to

absorb the otherwise singulative story of Konrad and Sanna into the iterative frame. By using the iterative mode almost exclusively to open and close the novella, Stifter thus emphasizes the significance of the repeated event over that of the singular and shows how it is possible to absorb the individual into the communal or collective. Finally, in addition to the iterative mode, the narrator's use of the inclusive first-person plural (us, we, ours; *uns, wir, unser-*) contributes to the implicit frame by further emphasizing the general and collective. Through my analysis of these narrative components, I show that Stifter's particular realist worldview is not only reflected in the content of his stories but also can be found in the narrative structures of the stories themselves.

A. The Narrative Mode

The opening pages of "Bergkristall" are written almost exclusively in the iterative mode. Here, as in the preface to *Bunte Steine,* Stifter addresses both the human and the natural spheres. While the preface begins with a discussion of nature, however, the implicit frame opens with a topic firmly located in the human realm – the church: "Unsere Kirche feiert verschiedene Feste, welche zum Herzen dringen." The role of the church in Stifter's poetic realism warrants its own discussion; for the purposes of this argument, however, it is most important to note which aspect of religion Stifter chooses to emphasize in the opening line of the novella: festivals.[18] The religious festivals listed in the frame – namely, those associated with Easter and Christmas – are, by their nature, iterative events. Celebrated annually, these festivals thus lend themselves to being narrated in the iterative mode. When Stifter describes walking along a familiar mountain path to a village church on Christmas Eve, for example, this description takes upon itself many

[18] Downing considers the role of God in Stifter's realism in the chapter "Real and Recurrent Problems: Stifter's Preface to 'Many-Colored Stones.'" (*Double Exposures*, 24-40)

Christmas Eves celebrated by many people in many villages.[19] Further, these particular religious festivals mark the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ; in other words, they celebrate the miraculous repetition of an otherwise singulative event.

After describing these religious festivals, the narrator homes in on a small mountain village and the surrounding valley. The cyclical repetition of the Christmas and Easter holidays is mirrored by life in this community, which, in its relative isolation, forms something like a closed loop of traditions and customs:[20]

> Daher bilden die Bewohner eine eigene Welt, sie kennen einander alle mit Namen und mit den einzelnen Geschichten von Großvater und Urgroßvater her, trauern alle, wenn einer stirbt, wissen, wie er heißt, wenn einer geboren wird, haben eine Sprache, die von der der Ebene draußen abweicht, haben ihre Streitigkeiten, die sie schlichten, stehen einander bei und laufen zusammen, wenn sich etwas Außergewöhnliches begibt.[21]
>
> Sie sind sehr stetig, und es bleibt immer beim Alten. Wenn ein Stein aus einer Mauer fällt, wird derselbe wieder hineingesetzt, die neuen Häuser werden wie die alten gebaut, die schadhaften Dächer werden mit gleichen Schindeln ausgebessert, und wenn in einem Hause scheckige Kühe sind, so werden immer solche Kälber aufgezogen, und die Farbe bleibt bei dem Hause.[22]

In this passage, Stifter shows how iteration occurs in the human, social and even animal spheres. The cycle of life and death is evident and felt deeply by the villagers as time marches on, but there is continuity within the town and its history – the community remains stable, or "stetig."

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[19] "[I]n den meisten Gegenden wird schon die Mitternachtstunde als die Geburtsstunde des Herrn mit prangender Nachtfeier geheiligt, zu der die Gloken durch die stille, finstere, winterliche Mitternachtluft laden, zu der die Bewohner mit Lichtern oder auf dunkeln, wohlbekannten Pfaden aus schneeigen Bergen an bereiften Wäldern vorbei und durch knarrende Obstgärten zu der Kirche eilen, aus der die feierlichen Töne kommen, und die aus der Mitte des in beeiste Bäume gehüllten Dorfes mit den langen, beleuchteten Fenstern emporragt." (*HKG*, 2.2:183)

[20] The notion of a loop or circle is reflected by the valley in which the village is located: "Das Dörfchen liegt gerade mitten in einem ziemlich weiten Thale, das fast wie ein länglicher Kreis gestaltet ist." (Ibid., 185) Notably, however, the valley is not a perfect circle: while a perfect circle would represent a perfectly repeating cycle, the almost-elliptical shape of the valley suggests the potential for the cycle to gradually change or go off-kilter.

[21] Further, this formulation ("wenn sich etwas Außergewöhnliches begibt") evokes Goethe's "sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit" in such a way that it is unlikely to be accidental.

[22] Ibid., 186-187.

Yet, try as the villagers might to resist it, the unfamiliar ("etwas Außergewöhnliches") does occasionally creep into their lives. The villagers' response to the strange and unfamiliar illustrates Stifter's broader strategy for coping with the extraordinary or singular – that is, by absorbing it into the whole or general. Before the intrusion of the unfamiliar into this passage, the villagers are shown to stand by each other, but still remain, to a degree, separate. This is illustrated by the use of "einander," which denotes a division between one (*ein*) and the other (*ander*): "[sie] stehen einander bei." Faced with the extraordinary, however, the members of the village merge into one cohesive unit ("laufen zusammen") in order to absorb the unusual. The next sentence reads as reassurance that the community has – and will – remain relatively unchanged by its encounter with the unfamiliar: "Sie sind sehr stetig, und es bleibt immer beim Alten."

This passage nicely illustrates Stifter's view of the extraordinary by demonstrating its place in relation to the commonplace. Though the existence of the unfamiliar is registered, it is mentioned only in passing in a much longer description of the villagers' everyday lives and surroundings. By the time one finishes reading about generations of brindled cows at the end of the passage, the extraordinary is already forgotten. In the original *Journalfassung*, the passage reads, "…[sie] stehen sich gegenseitig bei, und laufen insbesondere zusammen, wenn sich etwas Außergewöhnliches begibt*, das eine Abwechslung in ihre einfache Zeit bringt*."[23] By omitting any mention of change brought about by the unfamiliar in the *Bunte Steine* version of the tale, Stifter reinforces the relative insignificance of the extraordinary in relation to the commonplace. Finally, by virtue of being included in the description of the village and its history in the implicit frame, the intrusion of the unfamiliar itself becomes an iterative event: "*wenn* sich etwas Außergewöhnliches begibt" should be read as "*whenever* anything unusual happens." Whatever

[23] *HKG*, 2.1:140. Emphasis mine.

shape the unfamiliar may take, the unique details of any given event or encounter are lost as it gets subsumed under the general category of "etwas Außergewöhliches." As we will see, the process of subsuming the unique into the general, of integrating the singulative into the iterative, is repeated throughout the implicit frame.

Just as important to the story as the village is the landscape that surrounds it. The most prominent feature of the region, and the pride of the villagers, is a great mountain that looms above the town. This "Schneeberg" features prominently in the implicit frame, and Stifter focuses his description of the mountain primarily on the effects of the passing seasons upon its peaks:

> Wenn man auf die Jahresgeschichte des Berges sieht, so sind im Winter die zwei Zeken seines Gipfels, die sie Hörner heißen, schneeweiß, und stehen, wenn sie an hellen Tagen sichtbar sind, blendend in der finstern Bläue der Luft[…]Im Sommer, wo Sonne und warmer Wind den Schnee von den Steilseiten wegnimmt, ragen die Hörner nach dem Ausdruck der Bewohner schwarz in den Himmel[…][24]

Explicitly drawing attention to the passing of seasons reminds the reader again that these pages unfold in the iterative; that she is reading about events that happen repeatedly, every day or every year. And these seasonal changes do not go unnoticed – they are reported by the narrator in part as perceptions of the villagers: "…ragen die Hörner *nach dem Ausdruck der Bewohner* schwarz in den Himmel."[25] Though snow falls and the sun shines without human observation, the fact that Stifter presents the seasonal changes through the lens of the villagers indicates that these passages have significance beyond the natural realm and that they reflect something about mankind's experience of the world. This becomes clearer as the narrator continues his

[24] *HKG*, 2.2:188-189. While sections of the passages describing the seasonal conditions upon the mountain were present in the original *Journalfassung*, Stifter lengthened these passages considerably for *Bunte Steine*, revealing a particular interest in highlighting the changing of the seasons in this version. The term "Jahresgeschichte," for example, was first used in the *Bunte Steine* version of the tale.
[25] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

description of the seasons on the mountain, making note not only of the vast changes that occur from summer to winter, but also of the small differences between summers across the years: "So spinnt es sich ein Jahr um das andere mit geringen Abwechslungen ab, und wird sich fort spinnen, so lange die Natur so bleibt, und auf den Bergen Schnee und in den Thälern Menschen sind. Die Bewohner des Thales heißen die geringen Veränderungen große, bemerken sie wohl, und berechnen an ihnen den Fortschritt des Jahres."[26]

In their estimation of small changes as great – and by noting these changes in the first place – the inhabitants of the valley evoke the behavior of a key figure described in the preface to *Bunte Steine*: the *Forscher.* In the preface, the figure of the *Forscher*, or more specifically the *Menschenforscher,* emerges as a model for the modern poet, who should be a keen observer and researcher of humankind and nature alike. While extraordinary events may catch the eye of the novice, the researcher should instead direct his attention to the small phenomena that together make up the whole: "Nur augenfälliger sind diese Erscheinungen, und reißen den Blik des Unkundigen und Unaufmerksamen mehr an sich, während der Geisteszug des Forschers vorzüglich auf das Ganze und Allgemeine geht, und nur in ihm allein Großartigkeit zu erkennen vermag, weil es allein das Welterhaltende ist."[27] If we read the figure of the researcher as a model for the realist poet, as is generally accepted in the scholarship, then the connection between the villagers of "Bergkristall" and the researcher of the preface elevates the villagers to the level of the poet – or rather, grounds the poet within the everyday. In contrast to the conception of the artist as genius that was prevalent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Stifter suggests through this connection that the observations of the poet are rooted in modes of perception that are part of common life.

[26] Ibid., 189
[27] Ibid., 10.

Throughout the implicit frame, Stifter uses the iterative to draw a direct connection between the human and natural realms, between the religious festivals ritually celebrated each year, the rhythm of life and death in the village, and the unceasing cycle of the seasons. Suddenly, however, the iterative is interrupted by a singulative event:

> Es ist einmal ein Bäker, welcher Brod in seinem Korbe über den Hals trug, an jener Stelle tot gefunden worden. Man hat den todten Bäker mit dem Korbe und mit den umringenden Tannenbäumen auf ein Bild gemalt, darunter eine Erklärung und eine Bitte um ein Gebet geschrieben, das Bild auf eine rot angestrichene hölzerne Säule gethan und die Säule an der Stelle des Unglükes aufgerichtet.[28]

And just as suddenly, the narrator returns to his tour of the valley, and to the iterative, as he goes on to explain how timber is always brought down via this pathway during a certain time of year and how the pathway then always becomes overgrown with grass:

> Bei dieser Säule biegt man von dem Wege ab, und geht auf der Länge des Halses fort, statt über seine Breite in das jenseitige Thal hinüber zu wandern. Die Tannen bilden dort einen Durchlaß, als ob eine Straße zwischen ihnen hin ginge. Es führt auch manchmal ein Weg in dieser Richtung hin, der dazu dient, das Holz von den höheren Gegenden zu der Unglüksäule herab zu bringen, der aber dann wieder mit Gras verwächst.[29]

Again Stifter uses the iterative mode as he narrates events that are repeated annually and again he bridges the human and natural realms by showing the interaction between the human activity of hauling timber and the natural processes that at once enable this (the pines that form a natural thoroughfare) and erase any lasting trace (the grass that grows over the path tread by humans into the earth). Notably, this is one of several occurrences of erasure in the novella - specifically, the rendering imperceptible of some sign or marker that indicates a path. This motif returns at a crucial point later in the story, as we will soon see.

The first break of the singulative into the narrative is significant, even more so because in the original *Journalfassung* of the novella the incident involving the baker's death occurred

[28] Ibid., 190.
[29] Ibid., 190.

much later and in far less detail.[30] By placing it earlier in the tale, Stifter emphasizes the most singular, or least repeatable, event in an individual's life to introduce the singulative narrative mode – that is, death. However, through the villagers' memorialization of the baker on this sign, the location of his death is turned into a site of repeated action. First, the writing on the sign includes a request for prayers for the baker – "eine Bitte um ein Gebet." This prayer might be repeated by many different travelers as they encounter the sign for the first time, but the reader can also imagine the pious villagers of Gschaid pausing each time they pass the sign to say a prayer for the fallen baker. Second, the baker's memorial serves as a landmark for those traveling in the area, marking the spot where one may continue into the valley, or turn and follow another path higher into the mountains: "Bei dieser Säule biegt man von dem Wege ab." Here, Stifter has seamlessly integrated the baker's death into his otherwise iterative narration, and thus actually reverses the typical function of the iterative and singulative. As stated above, the iterative typically operates in service of the singulative, providing context or background information. Here, however, the unique or individual event (death) is cited merely by way of explaining a repeated action (turning at the marker) and becomes subsumed by the larger iterative narrative.

After describing the baker's death and memorial, the narrator returns to his description of the valley, the village, and the villagers for another several pages. Finally, the narrator moves

[30] In the *Journalfassung*, the baker is mentioned for the first time by Konrad, who tells his sister about the memorial as they pass it going to and from their grandparent's house: "Manchmal erzählte ihr der Bruder Geschichten, und wenn sie an der rothen Martersäule vorbei gingen, wo der Weg seitwärts gegen die Anhöhen zu und gegen den Schnee hinauf führte, sagte er ihr, wie hier vor alten Zeiten einmal ein Bäker, der mit Semmeln über das Gebirge gehen wollte, von dem jähen Tode betroffen und auf seinem Korbe liegend gefunden worden ist." (*HKG*, 2.1:150) This version of the passage reveals more about the conditions of the baker's death – namely, that it was sudden and he was found lying upon his basket. Though unlike the *Journalfassug*, the passage in *Bunte Steine* does not mention the baker was carrying rolls, the "Semmel" do appear in the later description of the memorial in *Bunte Steine*.

into the singulative mode, and the specific figures and events of Konrad and Sanna's tale are introduced into the story. The reader learns of a roguish young shoemaker in the village of Gschaid who falls in love with the daughter of a rich man in the rival village of Millsdorf, which lies on the other side of the mountain. After working hard, earning money, and acquiring land, the shoemaker has finally established himself well enough to court the girl, named Susanna, and the two are eventually permitted to marry. Susanna leaves her family in Millsdorf to live with her new husband across the mountain pass in Gschaid, and the young couple soon has two children, Konrad and Sanna. Their grandmother occasionally makes the journey over the pass from Millsdorf to Gschaid (the grandfather refuses, being a staunch Millsdorfer), but eventually grows too old, and the children learn to navigate the pass on their own, thus setting the scene for their catastrophic Christmas Eve.

There are several iterative interludes in the main body of the novella. Though they mostly constitute what Genette views as a typical use of the iterative (i.e. as something close to description, which enriches the story by providing more detail about, for example, the history of the town), one passage in particular has significant implications for the story and for my analysis of the novella's implicit frame. In the following quote, the narrator recounts how often Konrad and Sanna would cross the mountains to visit their grandparents in Millsdorf, first accompanied by their mother or maid, but later alone:

> Die Mutter brachte sie selber öfter in einem Wagen, öfter aber wurden sie, da sie noch im zarten Alter waren, eingemummt einer Magd mitgegeben, die sie in einem Fuhrwerke über den Hals brachte. Als sie aber größer waren, gingen sie zu Fuß entweder mit der Mutter oder mit einer Magd nach Millsdorf, ja, da der Knabe geschickt, stark und klug geworden war, ließ man ihn allein den bekannten Weg über den Hals gehen, und wenn es sehr schön war und er bat, erlaubte man auch, daß ihn die kleine Schwester begleite.

This passage is salient for this analysis in that it situates the main singulative event of the novella – Konrad and Sanna's catastrophic Christmas Eve – within an iterative tradition. The children did not make the journey to their grandparents' house alone for the first time that fateful evening; rather, as this passage makes clear, it is a path they had tread many times before. By detailing each stage of their training to eventually cross the mountains between Gchaid and Millsdorf on their own, Stifter establishes the routine nature of Konrad and Sanna's journey.

When the narrative arrives at the day on which the children will get lost, however, Stifter signals a decisive turn to the singulative, employing the same language used to introduce the baker's death in the frame: "Es ist *einmal* ein Bäker," and here: "*Einmal* war am heiligen Abende."[31] Stifter thus alerts the reader that the following events, like the baker's death, are unique and unrepeatable. This connection to the baker and his ill-fated journey also subtly foreshadows the children's upcoming brush with danger on the mountain.[32] We have seen, however, that the baker's death becomes subsumed by the iterative, his memorial sign serving less as a reminder of the individual man and event and more as a reminder to enact the repeated action of turning off the trail. Crucially, this sign has fallen down when the children make their journey on Christmas Eve, and it is at precisely this point where they take a wrong turn on their return journey and climb higher into the mountains rather than safely down to their home in Gschaid.

The children first notice that the sign has fallen down on their journey to their grandparents: "An der roten Unglüksäule des Bekers bemerkte Sanna zuerst, daß sie heute gar

[31] *HKG*, 2.2:203.

[32] There is one moment of repetition at the beginning of this section, however: after the shoemaker had said the day before that the children could visit their grandparents if the weather was fine, their mother agrees to let them go – if they can secure their father's permission once more: "Die Kinder, welche noch in ihren Nachtkleidchen da standen, liefen in die Nebenstube, in welcher der Vater mit einem Kunden sprach, und bathen um *die Wiederholung der gestrigen Erlaubniß*, weil ein so schöner Tag sei." (Ibid., 203. Emphasis mine)

nicht dastehe. Sie gingen zu dem Plaze hinzu und sahen, daß der runde roth angestrichene Balken, der das Bild trug, in dem dürren Grase liege, das wie dünnes Stroh an der Stelle stand, und den Anblik der liegenden Säule verdekte."[33] Because the snow has not yet begun to fall, the children still recognize the site of the post, even in its absence.[34] Additionally, because the sign has fallen down, the children can actually examine the image and read the text closely for the first time:

> [A]ber da sie einmal lag, so machte es ihnen Freude, daß sie das Bild und die Schrift so nahe betrachten konnten, wie es sonst nie der Fall gewesen war. Als sie alles – den Korb mit den Semmeln, die bleichen Hände des Bekers, seine geschlossenen Augen, seinen grauen Rok und die umstehenden Tannen – betrachtet hatten, als sie die Schrift gelesen und laut gesagt hatten, gingen sie wieder weiter.[35]

The reappearance of *einmal* here signals again that the narrative at this moment unfolds in the singulative. Lest this be too subtle, the novelty of the scene in relation to the many other times Konrad and Sanna have made this journey is made evident by the narrator's declaration that the children were never before able to look closely at the sign: "wie es sonst nie der Fall gewesen war." The unusual case ("Fall") of the fallen post may provoke a sense of foreboding in the perceptive reader, but Konrad and Sanna merely derive joy from the fact that they can see the image and text properly for the first time ("so machte es ihnen Freude") and blithely continue on their way.

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[33] Ibid., 205

[34] The construction of this sentence is somewhat curious, however: "An der roten Unglüksäule des Bäckers bemerkte Sanna zuerst, daß sie heute gar nicht dastehe." The children cannot be "at" the memorial if the memorial is not there. It is as if the name of the very site has become "die rote Unglücksäule," suggesting a merging of locus, event, and narrative.

[35] Ibid., 205-206. The *Journalfassung* reads: "Nachdem sie eine Weile das Bild, die Erzählung des Todes und die Bitte um ein Gebet in der Nähe betrachtet hatten, was sie sonst immer nur von oben herab glänzend hatten erbliken können, gingen sie ihres Weges wieder weiter." (*HKG*, 2.1:153) Here, Stifter says that they looked closely, while in the *Bunte Steine* version he details the contents of the perception.

It is seldom acknowledged that the children's examination of the sign is the only scene of reading in the novella.[36] Taking into consideration that the sign includes both text and image, the passage may be understood more broadly as a scene of interpretation, specifically one that calls into question Konrad and Sanna's interpretive abilities. Understood in this way, this passage supports a reading common to much of the "Bergkristall" scholarship of the children as figures of innocence, who are ignorant of death and unable to perceive signs of danger, including the significance of the memorial.[37] Indeed, though the description of the memorial clearly suggests a corpse (pale hands, closed eyes), and though the text on the sign explains the baker's fate,[38] the words "death" and "dead" ("Tod"/"tod") are conspicuously absent from this passage, as if Konrad and Sanna cannot grasp the concept even when confronted with a physical marker of its existence. They suffer a similar interpretive failure when they first notice the signpost lying on the ground: "Sie sahen zwar nicht ein, warum die Säule liege, ob sie umgeworfen worden oder ob sie von selber umgefallen sei; das sahen sie, daß sie an der Stelle, wo sie in die Erde ragte, sehr morsch war, und daß sie daher sehr leicht habe umfallen können."[39] Stifter offers a clear explanation for the fallen sign (the rotten wood), yet Konrad and Sanna seem unable to connect the dots (or at least, they seem unwilling to commit to the most obvious interpretation of events). Although they see ("das sahen sie"), they do not understand ("Sie sahen zwar nicht ein").

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[36] More accurately, it is the only scene in which text is read. One might argue that other scenes of reading occur whenever an act of interpretation takes place – for example, when the villagers predict summer weather by observing small changes in the winter, when a member of the search party notices bent blades of grass near the baker's memorial and deduces that the children were there, or when Sanna takes the bright lights in the sky to be the Christ child.

[37] See Margit M. Sinka, "Unappreciated Symbol: The 'Unglücksäule' in Stifter's 'Bergkristall,'" *Modern Austrian Literature* no.16.2 (1983): 1-17.

[38] Man hat den todten Bäker…auf ein Bild gemalt, darunter eine *Erklärung* und eine Bitte um ein Gebet geschrieben." (*HKG*, 2.2:190. Emphasis mine)

[39] Ibid., 206.

As Konrad and Sanna's interpretive faculties are called into question in this scene, so too is the potential of artistic expression. In its depiction of death through word and image, the sign serves as a self-reflective symbol of the limits of representation. Like the novella, the sign uses a frame to present an abstract concept (death): the baker, lying dead with his basket, is encircled by trees: "Man hat den todten Bäker mit dem Korbe und mit den umringenden Tannenbäumen auf ein Bild gemalt[…][40] As the implicit frame orients the central narrative of the novella, the trees likewise provide context for the baker's death by depicting the environment in which he met his end (and thus underscoring man's powerlessness in the face of nature), on the one hand, and by evoking the Christmas season on the other. Stifter references the tradition of decorating a tree in the implicit frame as he describes Christmas Eve celebrations: "Man zündet Lichter, und meistens sehr viele an, die oft mit den kleinen Kerzlein auf den schönen, grünen Ästen eines Tannen- oder Fichtenbäumchens schweben, das mitten in der Stube steht."[41] By framing the baker's body with a circle of evergreens, Stifter thus situates his death within the Christian (and Christmas) tradition.[42] Further, this is not the first instance of an arboreal frame in the story: we encounter one in the implicit frame as well.

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[40] Ibid., 190.

[41] Ibid., 184. The tradition of the Christmas tree became popularized over the course of the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the German Christmas carol "O Tannenbaum." Based on a Silesian folksong, the version still sung today was written in 1824 by composer Ernst Anschütz. Though the original folksong was about a tragic love story, Anschütz added lyrics that referenced the *Weihnachtszeit*.

[42] The Christian symbolism surrounding the baker and his death has been acknowledged by many critics. The baker, for example, may be read as a Christ-like figure – as Christ died for the sins of others so they may safely be brought "home" to God, so too does the baker's death allow others to arrive safely home: without the memorial to clearly mark this particular crossroads, many villagers and travelers may have taken the wrong path into the mountain and met their death. Though the baker is not resurrected, obviously, he does achieve a certain degree of eternal recognition through the sign on the pillar – and the narrative itself, which also provides a certain "afterlife" by memorializing his death. In the *Journalfassung*, the religious connotations are even more obvious as the memorial is referred to as a "Martersäule" rather than an "Unglücksäule." (*HKG*, 2.1:150) The Flagellation of Christ (otherwise known as the Scourging at the Pillar), a

When the narrator describes Gschaid, he mentions that there is a square in the town, at the center of which stand four Linden trees. In the middle of these trees is a stone cross: "[Das Dörfchen] enthält außer der Kirche eine Schule, ein Gemeindehaus und noch mehrere stattliche Häuser, die einen Platz gestalten, auf welchem vier Linden stehen, die ein steinernes Kreuz in ihrer Mitte haben."[43] The linden trees that frame the cross recall the trees that frame the baker's body on the sign of the *Unglüksäule*, which in turn mirror the actual trees that surround the site of the baker's death.[44] This series of frames contributes to the novella's broader project of integration, which we have already seen at work in Stifter's use of the iterative mode. The frames of trees in the town square and on the signpost enact a sort of spatial containment that reflects the attempt to mediate the experience of death by integrating or absorbing it into the collective. This

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scene from the Passion of Christ, is sometimes referred to as the *Martersäule* in German. While the Christian symbolism throughout the novella, not to mention the role of religion in literary realism, is significant and warrants longer discussion, I will note only one further point that is particularly relevant to this chapter: namely, that both the baker and Christ are figures of repetition. The livelihood of any baker is dependent upon repetition – the ability reliably to reproduce a product. For the baker in "Bergkristall," repetition also characterizes his afterlife: as we have seen, his memorial serves as the site of a repeated action (turning down a specific path). Even the *Semmel* that the baker carries are iterations of one another, while at the same time evocative of the Eucharist. And while Christ's life is characterized primarily by extraordinary events, his resurrection represents a form of repetition – first, in that he was once again brought to life, and second, as a symbol for the cycle of life and death of human existence. Finally, the ritualized festivals and traditions that form the heart of Christian life, and which are described in the frame, are entirely dependent upon repetition. These parallels invest the realist mode of integrating the singulative into the iterative with a certain Christian sensibility. For a fine analysis of the religious connotations in this passage and the significance of Christian symbolism (particularly the myth of death and resurrection) and community in "Bergkristall," see Birthe Hoffmann, "Die Schönheit der Leere: Perspektivische Brechungen in Adalbert Stifters *Bergkristall*," *Euphorion* no. 105.2 (2011): 153-185.

[43] *HKG*, 2.2:185

[44] The presence of a cross at each site deepens the parallel between the two, especially when one notes that neither cross was included in the *Journalfassung*. As Margaret Sinka observes, "With its black cross and its location exactly in the middle of the mountain area that the villagers are able to see from Gschaid, the signpost is connected with the black cross the villagers erected on the main square in the middle of Gschaid. Surely Stifter himself wished to suggest such a connection in the second version, for nowhere does the first version mention a cross either in the village or on a signpost."(Sinka, "Unappreciated Symbol," 4)

mirrors the community of Gschaid and their treatment of the baker's death (i.e. integrating it into local legend), and on a larger scale within the Christian tradition, which mediates the concept of death by providing the tools (i.e., stories) to approach an unavoidable yet unfathomable part of human existence.

Yet, as the children stare down at the baker's memorial, carefully examining the image and even reading the text aloud, they still cannot comprehend the concept of death. It is only later, when they are in peril themselves, that the children begin showing signs of fear and thus an awareness of the possibility of death as the necessary counterpart to life.[45] As an object of artistic representation, then, the sign fails to convey the reality of a phenomenon with which the children seem unfamiliar; though they will later recognize its significance, death is ultimately unknowable until one meets it oneself. And while death is, to some extent, at the center of "Bergkristall," as it is in the center of the fir trees on the sign and the linden trees in town, there is another fundamentally unknowable concept at work in the novella: the gentle law. Like the children, the reader of *Bunte Steine* is confronted with the existence of a phenomenon that she may never before have perceived; like the artist memorializing the baker's death on the signpost, Stifter faces the challenge of depicting this phenomenon.[46] Stifter's efforts in the preface and novellas of *Bunte Steine* to offer glimpses of how the gentle law functions reflects one of the

[45] While some scholars claim that the children maintain their innocence throughout, I agree with the readings that have demonstrated a decisive shift in the tone and language used to describe the children's night on the mountain, and which reflects a growing awareness of death and danger, particularly by Konrad.

[46] Later I will argue that Stifter attempts to absorb the individual voice of the narrator in "Bergkristall" into the collective voice of the villagers. A similar erasure of the artist as the specific source of artistic representation also occurs with regards to the *Unglüksäule*. In the following passage, the identity of the sign's creator(s?) is lost in the use of the impersonal, anonymous "man": "Man hat den toten Bäcker mit dem Korbe und mit den umringenden Tannenbäumen auf ein Bild gemalt, darunter eine Erklärung und eine Bitte um ein Gebet geschrieben, das Bild auf eine rot angestrichene hölzerne Säule getan und die Säule an der Stelle des Unglücks aufgerichtet." (*HKG*, 2.2:190)

fundamental concerns of poetic realism: that is, the attempt to put forth an authentic representation of reality. With this in mind, the failure of the *Unglüksäule* to adequately convey the abstract concept of death for the children reads like a self-reflective consideration of what is (or is not) possible to communicate through artistic representation.[47] In trying to represent the gentle law, Stifter perhaps reaches the limits of literature. The children's growing awareness of death suggests, however, that a deeper knowledge of such fundamental, abstract truths is possible – if not through art, then through lived experience. Turning now to the decisive event of the narrative, the turning point of the novella, we can take up the children's effort to make their way home.

By the time Konrad and Sanna embark on the journey home from their grandparents' village, snow has completely covered the fallen *Unglüksäule*. While the memory of the baker may have been resurrected earlier in the day when the children were able to examine the sign lying on the ground, the physical landmark that represented this memory for so long has been momentarily erased.[48] This erasure of the sign makes it impossible for the children to enact, or reenact, a journey they have made repeatedly. Thus, the fallen sign acts as a sort of catalyst for the events of the story – had it still been standing, the reader may presume that the children would have found their way home, and this Christmas Eve would have been recounted in the

[47] Hans P. Gabriel makes a similar point about Stifter's depiction of the gentle law in the preface to *Bunte Steine*, writing that "a comprehensible human explanation of unfathomable natural processes will always precede and never fully encompass the observed physical data that ostensibly support it […]Yet Stifter's narrator nonetheless remains determined to use his powers of literary representation to continue to test our hypotheses and/or faith." (Gabriel, "Language of Madness," 4)

[48] Here again is the motif of erasure, which first appeared in the implicit frame and which will appear again later in the story as the children descend the mountain after surviving the night. Emerging from their cave of ice, they attempt to retrace their steps in the hopes of finally finding the *Unglüksäule* and reorienting themselves, but the footsteps from their journey the day before have disappeared: "Heute ließen sie frische Spuren in dem Schnee zurück; aber gestern sind alle Spuren von dem fallenden Schnee verdeckt worden." (*HKG*, 2.2:232)

iterative mode ('When we were young, we would (always) visit our grandparents on Christmas Eve'), with little to distinguish it from many other Christmas Eves. Again, Stifter draws attention to the relationship between singular and repeated events – where the singular death of a man became the site of repeated action, the loss of this site then, logically, disrupts the continuation of this repetition. A new, tragic cycle of repetition threatens to begin, however, as the death of the baker is almost repeated in the deaths of the children.

Even though the post has fallen and the sign has been covered by snow, the baker's memorial does not disappear from the text. Indeed, the memorial is mentioned twenty-six times in the novella, and many of these instances occur after the signpost has fallen. In its physical absence, the memorial paradoxically becomes more present in the text, as Konrad and Sanna continually search for the missing landmark. It is Sanna who first expresses concern about the fallen sign, though Konrad does not yet believe it will be problematic:

> "Werden wir heute auch die Unglüksäule sehen?" fragte das Mädchen, "sie ist ja umgefallen, und da wird es darauf schneien, und da wird die rothe Farbe weiß sein."
>
> "Darum können wir sie doch sehen," antwortete der Knabe, "wenn auch der Schnee auf sie fällt, und wenn sie auch weiß ist, so müssen wir sie liegen sehen, weil sie eine dike Säule ist, und weil sie das schwarze eiserne Kreuz auf der Spitze hat, das doch immer heraus ragen wird."[49]

When they fail to reach the memorial ("Die Unglüksäule hatten sie noch immer nicht erreicht"),[50] however, Konrad's confidence in their reliable landmark begins to waver: "'Werden wir bald zu der Unglüksäule kommen?' fragte Sanna. 'Ich weiß es nicht,' antwortete der Knabe, '…Die Unglüksäule werden wir wohl gar nicht sehen, weil so viel Schnee liegen wird, daß sie verhüllt sein wird, und daß kaum ein Gräschen oder ein Arm des schwarzen Kreuzes hervor

[49] Ibid., 210.
[50] Ibid., 211.

ragen wird'"[51] Without the memorial, the children become disoriented and lose their way on the mountain.

The significance of this disorientation goes beyond the novella – it is a reflection of the importance of the iterative in organizing our experience of the world. Our lives, after all, are primarily composed of commonplace, mundane actions, and only peppered with the occasional extraordinary event. Though these singulative moments are often perceived as the definitive moments in life, there would be no continuity in or cohesion to existence without the iterative. Significantly, the *Unglüksäule* disappears from the story as night descends and the children are brought to the brink of death. The memorial is mentioned again only after they have survived the night and have renewed hope of returning home: "Da wollten sie die Richtung suchen, in der sie gekommen waren, und zur rothen Unglüksäule hinabgehen. Weil es nicht schneit, und der Himmel so helle ist, so würden sie, dachte der Knabe, die Stelle schon erkennen, wo die Säule sein solle, und würden von dort nach Gschaid hinab gehen können."[52] The return of the memorial in the text signals a return to order and comes shortly before the children are rescued.

As mentioned earlier, the story concludes with the children in bed, while all of the villagers who are not in church (it is Christmas, after all) are down at the pub swapping stories about the day. The narrator emphasizes that this event will remain a topic of conversation and local legend for a long time to come: "Das Ereigniß hat einen Abschnitt in die Geschichte von Gschaid gebracht, es hat auf lange den Stoff zu Gesprächen gegeben, und man wird noch nach Jahren davon reden, wenn man den Berg an heitern Tagen besonders deutlich sieht, oder wenn man den Fremden von seinen Merkwürdigkeiten erzählt."[53] In other words, the community takes ownership of the children's individual experience and integrates it into local legend, where it

[51] Ibid., 211-212.
[52] Ibid., 232.
[53] Ibid., 239.

becomes part of their collective history. By using both the past and future tense in this sentence, Stifter indicates that the story has already been absorbed into an iterative process of repetitive narration, and that it will continue to be told and retold as time goes on.

In another instance of inclusion, the narrator goes on to describe how the children and their mother (Susanna), until now still considered relative outsiders in Gschaid because of Susanna's origins in Millsdorf, are finally accepted wholeheartedly by both village communities.[54] This passage leads most scholars to read the conclusion as happy and harmonious and to consider the tale as an example of successful social integration. And indeed, this reading may be compelling, particularly for the *Journalfassung*, which ends on this point – that is, with the children being accepted by their village and even stating that they will go on to tell this story to their own children, and their children's children, as long as they live.[55] This is not, however, quite how the version of "Bergkristall" published in *Bunte Steine* ends. Instead, Stifter leaves his reader with a slightly more troubling image: "Die Kinder aber werden den Berg nicht vergessen und werden ihn jetzt noch ernster betrachten, wenn sie in dem Garten sind, wenn wie in der Vergangenheit die Sonne sehr schön scheint, der Lindenbaum duftet, die Bienen summen, und er so schön und so blau wie das sanfte Firmament auf sie herniederschaut."[56]

This passage marks a return of the iterative, thus closing the implicit frame. This use of the iterative is especially interesting in that it projects both into the past and into the future: the

[54] "Die Kinder waren von dem Tage an erst recht das Eigentum des Dorfes geworden, sie wurden von nun an nicht mehr als Auswärtige, sondern als Eingeborene betrachtet, die man sich von dem Berge herabgeholt hatte. Auch ihre Mutter Sanna war nun eine Eingeborene von Gschaid." (Ibid., 239-240)
[55] "Die Kinder waren von nun an, da sie von den Gschaiden gerettet wurden, erst rechte Eingeborne des Dorfes, und sie werden von diesem heiligen Abende reden, so lange sie auf dem Schusterhause in Gschaid leben, und ihre Kinder und Kindeskinder werden noch davon erzählen, wenn von dem Berge die Rede ist, den man vom Wagnergarten aus so schön sieht." (*HKG*, 2.1:175)
[56] *HKG*, 2.2:240.

children standing in the garden, the bees humming, the sun shining – this has all happened many times before and will happen repeatedly in the future. In fact, this passage is actually foreshadowed in an earlier scene in the novella. When Konrad and Sanna are on the mountain, Konrad tries to comfort his sister by making the treacherous surroundings seem familiar (and giving them a sense of orientation, which they lose in the absence of the baker's memorial):

> "Wir sind jetzt bis zu dem Eise gekommen," sagte der Knabe, "wir sind auf dem Berge, Sanna, weißt du, den man von unserm Garten aus im Sonnenscheine so weiß sieht. Merke gut auf, was ich dir sagen werde. Erinnerst du dich noch, wie wir oft nachmittags in dem Garten saßen, wie es recht schön war, wie die Bienen um uns summten, die Linden dufteten, und die Sonne von dem Himmel schien?"[57]

The picture painted here by Konrad contrasts starkly with their icy surroundings. Even the sun that shines so brightly down upon the remembered scene and which shines "sehr schön" in the final passage contrasts with the winter sun as described in the implicit frame: in the very first paragraph of the novella, the narrator notes that Christmas is celebrated "fast mitten im Winter, wo beinahe die längsten Nächte und kürzesten Tage sind, *wo die Sonne am schiefsten gegen unsere Gefilde steht*[…]"[58] Claiming the final scene of the story as part of the implicit iterative frame allows the reader more easily to recognize this winter sun as the counterpart to the sun that shines upon the idyllic scene in the garden.

Just as the winter sun casts long shadows, so, too, does the children's experiences on Christmas Eve have a lasting effect on their lives. As the narrator says, they will never forget, and thus they look at the mountain, the world around them, with more gravity: "noch ernster betrachen." The regular, repeated events of the children's everyday lives resume, but this singulative experience has now become a landmark like the baker's memorial, providing a point of orientation for their lives. And indeed, the use of "betrachten" here recalls the scene in which

[57] Ibid., 218.
[58] Ibid., 183. Emphasis mine.

the children encounter the fallen sign and are able to examine it closely for the first time. In their earlier act of contemplation, the children failed to apprehend the concept of death even though it was depicted upon the sign in front of them; in this final moment of "betrachten," the mountain has become a symbol for and reminder of this very same phenomenon.[59]

Throughout the novella, Stifter explores the relationship between the iterative and singulative, the commonplace and the unique. While it would be difficult to say that Stifter clearly privileges the iterative – the novella is still, after all, centered on the events of a single Christmas Eve – I believe he does suggest a way of constructing our own narratives that emphasizes the role of the repeated event. Rather than thinking of our lives as composed of a series of spectacular, defining moments, separated by periods of the mundane, Stifter shows how we may instead focus on the everyday, the regular and ritual, and use the unique as signposts to help direct our interactions with the world and our broader world view.

III. Coda: The Narrator

In concluding this chapter, I will now briefly consider how another central narrative feature – the narrator – contributes to the development of the implicit frame and to our understanding of the interplay between the iterative and the singulative. Although the narrator of "Bergkristall" remains an unnamed, mostly featureless figure throughout the novella, the very first word of the story reveals a key element of his identity – namely, that he is a member of a community: "*Unsere* Kirche[…]"[60] From the very beginning of the novella, then, the individual, or singular, is subordinate to the group, as the narrator's unique identity is subsumed under the

[59] Stifter's use of the verb "herausragen" to describe both the mountain and the signpost at various points in the novella supports a reading of the mountain as a sort of *Unglüksäule*.
[60] Ibid., 183. Emphasis mine.

plural possessive of "*our* church." Further, the appearance of the first-person plural here is no anomaly: Stifter uses it no fewer than four times in the opening paragraph:

> *Unsere* Kirche feiert verschiedene Feste, welche zum Herzen dringen. Man kann sich kaum etwas Lieblicheres denken als Pfingsten und kaum etwas Ernsteres und Heiligeres als Ostern. Das Traurige und Schwermütige der Karwoche und darauf das Feierliche des Sonntags begleiten *uns* durch das Leben. Eines der schönsten Feste feiert die Kirche fast mitten im Winter, wo beinahe die längsten Nächte und kürzesten Tage sind, wo die Sonne am schiefsten gegen *unsere* Gefilde steht und Schnee alle Fluren deckt: das Fest der Weihnacht. Wie in vielen Ländern der Tag vor dem Geburtsfeste des Herrn der Christabend heißt, so heißt er bei *uns* der heilige Abend, der darauf folgende Tag der heilige Tag und die dazwischenliegende Nacht die Weihnacht.[61]

This paragraph provides the reader with some sense of the shape and scope of Stifter's notion of community. The community invoked by the first two instances of the first-person plural is the Christian community. Considering that the following story takes place primarily on Christmas Eve and was once titled *Der heilige Abend*, it is not surprising that Christianity occupies a place of such narrative prominence in Stifter's novella. Crucially, however, Stifter's narrator claims the church as his own – it is "our" church, rather than "the" church. Even as the narrator shifts to the impersonal "man" when listing Catholic holidays in the second sentence, he returns to the first-person plural in the third to describe the lasting emotional impact of these holidays: "Das Traurige und Schwermütige der Karwoche und darauf das Feierliche des Sonntags begleiten *uns* durch das Leben."[62]

The second community invoked in this paragraph is somewhat more nebulous. Though it does appear in a sentence describing Christian holidays, the second instance of the plural

[61] Ibid., 183. It is important to note that Stifter revised this opening sentence from the *Journalfassung*, which reads: "So wie in manchen, vorzüglich in protestantischen Ländern der Tag vor dem Geburtsfeste des Herrn der Christabend heißt, so heißt er in vielen katholischen Gegenden, namentlich in den schönen Gauen unseres engeren Vaterlandes vorzugsweise der heilige Abend, so wie darauf folgende Tag der heilige Tag heißt und die dazwischen liegende Nacht den Namen Weihnacht führt." (*HKG*, 2.1:137) In the *Bunte Steine* version, Stifter places far greater emphasis on the inclusive first-person plural, revealing a clear concern with the relationship between the community and the individual.

[62] *HKG*, 2.2:183.

possessive has a spatial rather than strictly religious connotation: "Eines der schönsten Feste feiert die Kirche fast mitten im Winter, […] wo die Sonne am schiefsten gegen *unsere* Gefilde steht."[63] Here, the narrator shifts the focus of his discussion from the general Christian community to that of a specific region. The concept of regionality is emphasized again in the fourth and final instance of the first-person plural: "Wie in vielen Ländern der Tag vor dem Geburtsfeste des Herrn der Christabend heißt, so heißt er bei *uns* der heilige Abend."[64] As the narrative continues, it becomes evident that the region in question is a specific valley in a specific mountain range, which contains the small, isolated village of Gschaid. Within the first paragraph, then, Stifter gestures toward two communities: a religious community and a regional community. As demonstrated in this chapter, these two communities represent models for integrating the singulative into the iterative: through the ritual and repetition of Christian holidays on the one hand, and the absorption of individual fates (the baker, Konrad and Sanna) into communal history on the other. By aligning the narrator with both communities and foregoing any other defining characteristics, Stifter privileges the communal voice over that of the individual artist.

Finally, the first-person plural serves another function: it projects outward toward the reader in an inclusive gesture and invites her to identify with the narrator. By bringing the reader into a relationship with the narrator and his communities, Stifter simulates the dynamic of an oral narrator and his audience. Instances of oral storytelling appear several times in the novella, most notably at the beginning and end of the story, thus helping to form the implicit frame. As the narrator describes for the first time the great mountain that looms above Gschaid, he notes that

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

the villagers often spend evenings together talking about the mountain and their experiences acting as guides to foreigners who come into the region:

> Der Berg gibt den Bewohnern außerdem, daß er ihre Merkwürdigkeit ist, auch wirklichen Nutzen; denn wenn eine Gesellschaft von Gebirgsreisenden hereinkommt, um von dem Tale aus den Berg zu besteigen, so dienen die Bewohner des Dorfes als Führer[…]Sie reden oft davon, wenn sie in der Wirthsstube beieinander sitzen und erzählen ihre Wagnisse und ihre wunderbaren Erfahrungen und versäumen aber auch nie zu sagen, was dieser oder jener Reisende gesprochen habe, und was sie von ihm als Lohn für ihre Bemühungen empfangen hätten.[65]

Here, Stifter highlights two functions of storytelling: first, as a means of building community. As the defining feature of the landscape and everyday life in Gschaid ("ihre Merkwürdigkeit"), the mountain becomes the source of many stories. Gathering together in the local pub to swap and compare tales contributes to the villagers' communal sense of identity – an identity not shared by the foreigners who pass through the area. This is connected to the second function of storytelling as a source of profit. This relationship is established more clearly at the end of the novella, in a passage that strongly echoes the one just discussed:

> In dem Wirthshause in Gschaid war es an diesem Abend lebhafter als je. Alle, die nicht in der Kirche gewesen waren, waren jetzt dort, und die andern auch. Jeder erzählte, was er gesehen und gehört, was er getan, was er geraten, und was für Begegnisse und Gefahren er erlebt hatte. Besonders aber wurde hervorgehoben, wie man alles hätte anders und besser machen können.
>
> Das Ereigniß hatte einen Abschnitt in die Geschichte von Gschaid gebracht, es hat auf lange den Stoff zu Gesprächen gegeben, und man wird noch nach Jahren davon reden, wenn man den Berg an heitern Tagen besonders deutlich sieht, oder wenn man den Fremden von seinen Merkwürdigkeiten erzählt.[66]

This passage suggests that in their capacity as guides, the villagers not only lead travelers safely through the mountains, but also share local myths and legends that can then be further disseminated. The image of a villager recounting the mysteries of the mountain to a foreigner mirrors, of course, the narrator's own project – or, more accurately, Stifter's. Though most of

[65] Ibid., 187.
[66] Ibid., 239.

Stifter's tales focus on small, regional communities, his readership was more likely an urban one. His role as a writer drawing attention to these (albeit fictional) communities – and earning money doing so – thus resembles the villagers physically and orally guiding foreigners through their homelands. Stifter also seems to gesture toward the tradition of the novella in this passage: first, by depicting an act of oral storytelling, which is a technique often used in novella cycles (consider Boccaccio's *Decameron*), and second, in his use of the word "Ereigniß," which recalls Goethe's famous formulation of the novella as a "sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit."

This connection to the genre of the novella serves as a reminder that while Stifter invokes the tradition of oral storytelling, "Bergrkristall" is, of course, not an oral tale. The stories told by the villagers have the possibility of being transmitted by many speakers who produce different iterations; Stifter's novella, on the other hand, is a tale produced by a single figure and will be replicated exactly. Stifter's efforts to conceal this by emphasizing group storytelling and effacing the individuality of his narrator through the frequent use of the first-person plural in the implicit frame points to the fundamental tension in his works between the singular and the general.

The role of the author is a question taken up by all four writers featured in this dissertation, as I discuss in the Introduction. While Brentano and Tieck highlight the potential for writers to intervene in and through their stories, and in doing so to shape national discussions, Stifter's treatment of the narrator in "Bergkristall" indicates a growing problematization of the author's presence within texts. While Stifter attempts to absorb the singular authorial voice into a collectivity, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer explores the possibility of eliminating the writer altogether, as I will show in the next, and final, chapter.

Chapter Four: *In die Sprache unserer Zeit*: Translating Past into Present in C.F. Meyer's *Das Amulett*

In the first three chapters of this dissertation, I explore the way in which German-language authors of the nineteenth century employ framing devices to make political statements through literature (Brentano), develop a self-reflexive critique of the German literary tradition (Tieck), and expand the notion of framing altogether via a masterful manipulation of narrative modes (Stifter). In this final chapter, I turn to the works of Swiss author Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and conclude my project with a consideration of narrative frames in his series of historical novellas.

A leading author of German poetic realism, C.F. Meyer is a particularly fruitful figure of study for this project on account of his deliberate engagement with framing devices, and with the genre of the novella more broadly. In this chapter, I consider how Meyer uses contemporary methods of historiography in his first novella, *Das Amulett* (1873), to navigate some of the fundamental concerns shared by authors of poetic realism. By exploring the relationship between the author, the reader and the written text in *Das Amulett*, I am able to trace a model of transmission that forms the foundation of Meyer's particular mode of realism. I conclude the chapter by discussing several of Meyer's later works that also share a concern for the status of the written text, but which are set in a different era from *Das Amulett*: the Renaissance. This final discussion investigates the development of Meyer's narrative approach as he sheds some of his early dependence on historiographical techniques, and considers how Renaissance models of cultural transmission inform Meyer's own project.

I. Situating Meyer in Poetic Realism

Though realism has proven notoriously difficult, even impossible, to define, it is helpful to distinguish between 'Realism' as such, and 'realism' as a specific moment in literary history. Realism as a general term can be used to describe any work of art that attempts to represent its subject matter in a way that is true to life. Realism also refers, however, to an artistic movement that emerged in the nineteenth century, and the collection of texts identified by later literary theorists as emblematic of this movement. The debate over which authors and texts fall into this category is ongoing, but one chief concern all works seem to share involves the relationship between text, reader and lived reality. In his 1991 study, *Reflections of Realism: Paradox, Norm and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century German Prose*, Robert C. Holub elaborates on this relationship. He writes, "In general, one can say that realist works impress upon the reader that the words of the text point outside themselves to an external or nontextual world…What is essential is not a particular narrative technique or particular style but, rather, that the combination of elements leads the reader to believe that the text has a mimetic relationship with the world."[1] By referring to aspects of reality familiar to the reader, the author of a realist text infuses the textual world with an impression of authenticity.

Holub's explanation of realism is useful in that it draws attention to the particular concern of realist authors with the reader (or rather, the "implied reader"), and how she shapes the text.[2]

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[1] Robert C. Holub, *Reflections of Realism: Paradox, Norm and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century German Prose* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 15-16.

[2] Coined by Wolfang Iser, this term refers to the presumed, hypothetical addressee of a text, whose ideological and cultural knowledge must be taken into account if the work is to be understood. The term may also encompass the actual reader's experience, if the understanding she brings to the work overlaps with that of the presumed reader: "This term incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process. It refers to the active nature of this process - which will vary historically from one age to another." Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1972), xii.

If the reader of a realist text must be able to identify some correspondence between the represented world and her own reality, then it follows that this "combination of elements" will necessarily differ according to the cultural and historical moment in which a text is produced.

These shifting modes of realist representation contribute to the difficulty of establishing a clear set of characteristics that can be said to define realism. Some of the most prominent twentieth-century theorists on the subject, however, have all drawn attention to a fundamental tension within realism that stems from the attempt to put forth a recognizable representation of reality.[3] In this attempt, authors of literary realism waver between an adherence to established literary codes as meaning-making devices, and a rejection or violation of these same conventions in order to achieve a more "authentic" representation of the world as it is. By utilizing traditional literary forms and devices, the author engages with a set of aesthetic conventions already familiar, and thus more readily intelligible, to the reader. At the same time, however, the reader may recognize these codes *as* codes (i.e. artificial structures), thereby calling attention to the fictionality of the text and undermining its status as an authentic representation of the reader's experience of reality (which is not, after all, governed by such neat conventions).

This led realist authors of the nineteenth century to deviate from certain literary tropes and narrative strategies in order to establish new modes of representation. The most frequently cited example of such deviation is the superfluity of detail present in many realist texts. Barthes explores this phenomenon in "The Reality Effect," noting that the exhaustive descriptive details in such texts generally serve no function in the narrative's semiotic structure, and instead

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See also Iser. *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (München: Fink, 1976); and Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[3] See Barthes, "The Reality Effect"; Roman Jakobson, "On Realism in Art," in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. L. Matejka and K. Pomorska (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1971), 38-55; and Auerbach. *Mimesis*.

actually appear "resistant to meaning."[4] In his influential book, *Double Exposures: Repetition and Realism in Nineteenth-Century German Fiction* (2000), to which my discussion of German poetic realism is deeply indebted,[5] Eric Downing furthers the discussion of realism by rethinking some of the (by now) classic theories proposed by Barthes and Jakobson, but also by thinkers such as Freud, Adorno and Lacan. Downing focuses on modes of repetition and doubling, which he identifies as inherent to literary realism and which led to the tenuous relation between reality and representation just described. Whereas earlier theories of realism claim that any reminder or explicit foregrounding of a text's status as a work of art would "destroy the effect of realism,"[6] Downing instead argues that such ruptures lead the reader to experience moments of self-reflection that are an essential characteristic of poetic realism.[7]

The inherent instability in the narratological strategies of realism indicates a clear concern with one of the fundamental interests of this dissertation: namely, the limits of communication. More specifically, so-called 'realist' authors explore whether it is possible, within the limits of literature, to communicate a truthful representation of experience that will resonate with their audience in a meaningful way. While I seek to extend the work done by Downing and the earlier scholars of poetic realism to whom he is indebted, it is not my intention

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[4] Barthes, "The Reality Effect," 146.
[5] First coined by author and critic Otto Ludwig in an 1871 treatise entitled "Der poetische Realismus," the term is now used to refer broadly to German-language realist texts of nineteenth century. Though some scholars use 1848 as a point of division between *Frührealismus* (before 1848) and *poetischer Realismus* (after 1848), most use the term to encompass works from the entire nineteenth century.
[6] Holub *Reflections of Realism*, 16.
[7] Ansgar Nünning makes a similar argument regarding metanarration, claiming that self-reflective narratorial comments can strengthen the impression of authenticity. See "On Metanarrative: Towards a Definition, a Typology and an Outline of the Functions of Metanarrative Commentary," in John Pier (ed.), *The Dynamics of Narrative Form: Studies in Anglo-American Narratology* (Berlin: 2004), 11-58.

here to propose a new or radically different definition of poetic realism.[8] My contribution instead will be to the scholarship on C.F. Meyer: first, my analysis of Meyer's first and frequently overlooked novella *Das Amulett* (1873) reveals fundamental aspects of Meyer's narrative approach by a) investigating the extent to which Meyer relies on emerging contemporaneous historiographical methods to develop his particular mode of poetic realism, and b) focusing on the specific constellation of the reader, the writer and the written text in this early work. Second, by tracing instances of textual production and reception throughout the novella, I identify a connection between the protagonist, Hans Schadau, and the *Nebenfigur* of Admiral Coligny that I believe has not yet been recognized in the scholarship, and which contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between cultural transmission and the role of the author in Meyer's works. Finally, turning my attention to Meyer's engagement with the Renaissance in his later novellas and lyric poetry, I shed light on what lies at the heart of Meyer's work: the very establishment of tradition.

II. "…in der Art Cervantes": Meyer's first novella

In the spring of 1857, the thirty-two year old Meyer undertook a journey from his home in Switzerland to Paris that would have a lasting effect on his career and works. During his three months in the French capital, the aspiring author grew to appreciate the deep sense of history that pervaded the buildings he passed – Notre Dame, "mit ihren finsteren Erinnerungen," and particularly the Louvre, "woran das Blut der Hugenotten klebt."[9] Nearly ten years later, having established himself primarily as a lyric poet, Meyer's interest turned to prose and returned to the

[8] See Rene Welleck, *The Rise of the Modern German Novel: Crisis and Charisma* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986); and Russel Bermann, *Concepts of Criticism*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols, Jr (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).
[9] Gerhard P. Knapp. *C.F. Meyer: Das Amulett: Historische Novellistik auf der Schwelle zur Moderne* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1985), 27.

bloody history of the sixteenth-century French Wars of Religion. Delving deep into contemporary historical and literary accounts of the era, Meyer's fascination eventually manifested itself in what would be the first of his many historical novellas: *Das Amulett* (1873).

Unfortunately, *Das Amulett* proved to be neither a popular nor critical success. Only 350 copies were sold in the first year after its publication and, aside from a few positive reviews, received a largely lukewarm response from contemporary critics.[10] Nor did Meyer's first novella fare much better in following century.[11] As such, there remains much interpretive work yet to be done on *Das Amulett*, particularly with regard to its foundational role in the narrative approach that Meyer takes in his series of historical novellas, and which characterizes his particular mode of realism.

As established, the principal narrative of *Das Amulett* takes place during the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598). The story focuses on, and is primarily narrated by, a young Swiss, Calvinist soldier named Hans Schadau, who travels to Paris to fight under the famous Admiral Cologny. Shortly before arriving in the city, Schadau meets two figures whose fates become intertwined with his own: a young Protestant Frenchwoman, Gasparde, whom he ultimately marries, and a Swiss soldier of Catholic faith, Wilhelm Boccard. Despite their severe religious differences, Boccard and Schadau form a bond through their shared national heritage and develop a friendship after they reach Paris, where tensions between Huguenots and Catholics are

[10] Knapp, *Historische Novellistik*, 123.

[11] While Meyer's later novellas have been praised for their complex narrative structures and psychological insights, and have even been claimed as forerunners to modernism, *Das Amulett* is often disregarded as a "Lehrlingsarbeit." This general dismissal is evidenced by the fact that *Das Amulett* did not become the subject of a book-length study until Knapp's in 1985. In this book, Knapp provides a thorough overview of the novella's origins, narrative structure, and key themes, as well as an account of its critical reception. This latter section provides an opportunity for Knapp to acknowledge some positive exceptions in the novella's otherwise underwhelming reception. This includes a 1934 article by John C. Blankenagel, in which he praises the unity of the narrative and objectivity of the narrator, both of which "betoken marked skill rather than the hand of the beginner." (Knapp, *Historische Novellistik*, 279)

at a breaking point. [12] Weeks later, on the bloody eve of what would come to be known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Schadau and his new bride narrowly escape a violent death with the aid of Boccard, who is shot and killed as he helps them flee the city. The novella ends with the young couple's safe arrival at Schadau's childhood home in Switzerland several weeks later.

The narrative structure of *Das Amulett* is most notable for its double narrative frame: first, a two-sentence foreword from an unnamed translator: "Alte vergilbte Blätter liegen vor mir mit Aufzeichnungen aus dem Anfange des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts. Ich übersetze sie in die Sprache unserer Zeit."[13] These lines open onto the novella's second narrative frame: a brief account of a trip Schadau takes in 1611 to see Boccard's father. This visit sparks memories of his old friend and their ill-fated time together in Paris nearly four decades earlier, prompting Schadau to write down his recollections. These memories constitute an embedded narrative within the text, and form the central narrative of the novella. Both the second frame and this embedded narrative are presented as accounts written by Schadau; thus, the novella not only contains two frames, but also two narrators on different diegetic levels: the translator and Schadau. In order to develop an understanding of Meyer's broader narrative strategy, we must first consider the function of each of these frames, and how they impact the transmission of the central embedded narrative to the novella's reader.

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[12] In addition to historical accounts (will be addressed in the subsequent discussion), Meyer also drew inspiration from Prosper Mérimée's historical novel *Chronique Du Règne De Charles IX* (Paris: Charpentier, 1829). The novel takes place during the French Wars of Religion, and depicts the fates of two brothers of opposing faiths – a relationship that can be compared to the dynamic between Schadau and Boccard. Mérimée's novel also served as a key source of inspiration for Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera *Les Huguenots*.

[13] Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, "Das Amulett," in *Sämtliche Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Hans Zeller and Alfred Zäch (Bern: Benteli, 1959), 11:3. Cited hereafter in text as *HA*.

A. (Pseudo)Translation as Narrative Strategy

Though a mere two sentences, the first narrative frame (hereafter referred to as the 'translator's preface') contributes significantly to the text's realist orientation. The translator's preface imparts a sense of authenticity to the subsequent account(s) by suggesting the existence of an original source text. With this suggestion, Meyer evokes the non-textual world beyond the novella (i.e. the reader's world), and thus establishes a connection between representation and reality that helps orient the reader. Meyer makes the significance of the source text clear by privileging the "original" account as the subject of the novella's first sentence: "Alte vergilbte Blätter liegen vor mir…" The translator is relegated to the status of observer here, a witness who can testify both to the existence of an original account, and to the physical evidence of the passage of time upon its very pages. The yellowing of the pages does more than establish the historicity of the account, however, which is made explicit in the latter half of the sentence ("aus dem Anfange des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts") and further specified in the second narrative frame ("Heute am vierzehnten März 1611…").[14] Rather, the yellowing of the pages hints at a more fundamental transformation: the translation of the original account.

In the second sentence of this opening narrative frame, the unnamed narrator replaces the yellowed pages as subject, adopting an active role that establishes his relation to the following text - that of translator: "Ich übersetze…" The designation of a figure in the frame narrative as narrator or author is a common trope within the genre of the novella, and one that Meyer readily embraces in the majority of his historical novellas. Meyer's systematic use of *Rahmenerzählungen* to depict scenes of narration constitutes a "repetition, or transference" of Meyer's own narrative act, and is fundamental to the principle of exchange that Downing

[14] Ibid. 3.

identifies as the chief characteristic of Meyer's realism. [15] Unlike many of Meyer's subsequent narrator-figures, however, the translator's presence in the text is limited to two sentences: the translator in *Das Amulett* neither interrupts the following story with interjections, nor reappears at the end of the novella to close the initial narrative frame.

Though the structure of the translator's preface may be more limited than the frames of Meyer's later works, it nonetheless has significant implications for the novella. First, it foregrounds the process of transmission: within this preface, after all, the only action that occurs *is* translation.[16] The communication between writer and reader, then, stands in a crucial position *vis-à-vis* the rest of the novella. Further, by presenting the text as a translation, Meyer effectively generates an intradiegetic audience for Schadau's account. The embedded narrative is presented as a personal memoir, which Schadau is motivated to write in order to ease his mind: "…daß ich mit mir einig wurde, den ganzen Verlauf dieser wundersamen Geschichte schriftlich niederzulegen und so mein Gemüt zu erleichtern."[17] If the reader accepts Schadau's explanation, then the subsequent story appears as a text composed with no clear audience in mind. With no intended audience but the author himself, Schadau's account is at risk of going unread, and thus failing in the course of transmission. The translator, however, rescues the account from history by making it available to readers in "unserer Zeit," and, in doing so, posits the very existence of an audience: by its nature, a translated text implies a reader beyond the translator, who is already familiar with both the source and target languages (and thus has no need for a translation). With

[15] Downing, *Double Exposures*, 173. Downing uses the figure of Dante in *Die Hochzeit des Mönches* as one such example, calling the figure "a substitute stand-in" for Meyer's own role as narrator.
[16] Downing makes a similar claim regarding *Die Hochzeit des Mönches*: namely, that the only "real action or event" to take place in the frame narrative, and thus the entire novella, is the exchanging of places. (*Double Exposures*, 170-171) Notably, however, Downing does not consider Dante's narration *of* the embedded narrative as an action or event.
[17] *HA*, 11:8.

the translator's preface, Meyer thus accounts for all parties necessary for an act of textual transmission.

Second, the translator's preface invites the reader to look more closely at the structure of the following text, which is neatly divided into ten chapters. If the reader accepts Schadau's motivation for writing down his memories (i.e. to ease his own mind), this structuring would be unnecessary and thus seems to come from an external source.[18] The reader must then question the degree of the translator's intervention into the account, as well as the resulting text's fidelity to the "original." From the first two sentences, then, the novella already locates itself in that space between original (or reality) and representation that lies at the heart of poetic realism. Crucially, however, Meyer successfully displaces this instability from the extradiegetic sphere and contains it within the novella. That is, by foregrounding the potential discrepancies that inevitably arise between a translation and a source text, Meyer's role as the author of the novella recedes behind that of the translator. It is the relationship between the 'translation' and an inaccessible source text that is questioned by the reader, rather than the relationship of the novella to lived reality itself.

This leads to my third point: as a result of the translator's preface*, Das Amulett* can be classified as an example of pseudotranslation. While the scholarly work done in this field thus far has focused almost exclusively on texts that are presented as translations from a language and culture different to that of the target audience, however, *Das Amulett* deviates from this norm and functions instead as an intracultural pseudotranslation. The term *pseudotranslation* originated in 1823 as a synonym of "free translation", and reemerged in Anton Popovič's 1976 *Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation* (a taxonomy of translation types) to refer to

[18] The "publisher" of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* comes to mind here as a possible forerunner to Meyer's translator.

'fictitious translations' – that is, original works published by their authors as if they were translations, when, in fact, no specific source text exists. "Pseudotranslation" thus refers both to an author's narrative practice or strategy and to the texts themselves. While the basic criteria for what constitutes a pseudotranslation (i.e. pseudotranslation as textual object) has remained consistent since Popovič, the concept of pseudotranslation as narrative practice remains a source of debate. Most early discussions focus on the author's intention to have the pseudotranslation regarded as a genuine translation by his or her target audience – i.e. that most pseudotranslations are not intended to be recognized as such. The motivations for such an approach are varied, as detailed by translation theorists such as Gideon Toury and André Lefevere.[19] For example, having an original text regarded as a translation of a source text from a different culture gives the pseudotranslation a position of authority on the source culture. Under the guise of translator, then, the author (as pseudo-translator) is free to explore and comment upon this source culture with the authority of an expert or native. Alternately, pseudotranslation allows authors to criticize their own cultures (the pseudotranslation's "target culture") with less fear of repercussion, by displacing the source of the criticism onto the (non-existent) author of the putative source text. More recently, Brigitte Rath has suggested thinking of pseudotranslation not merely as a textual property, but also as "a mode of reading that oscillates between seeing the text as an original and as a translation pointing towards an imagined original, produced in a different language and culture for a different audience."[20] This understanding of pseudotranslation resonates strongly with one of the key features of realism identified earlier – namely, the dynamic process of establishing a literary approximation of reality.

[19] Gideon Toury, "Descriptive Translation Studies- and Beyond," in *Benjamins Translation Library* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co, 1994); André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routeledge, 1992).
[20] Brigitte Rath. "Pseudotranslation," State of the Discipline Report 2014-15, ACLA, last revised April 1, 2014, https://stateofthediscipline.acla.org/entry/pseudotranslation. Emphasis mine.

Meyer's narrative strategy in *Das Amulett* complicates these processes, as both the target and source culture of the pseudotranslation are Swiss. More specifically, the target culture of the translator's preface is Meyer's own nineteenth-century Switzerland, while the "source text" locates itself in 1611, and introduces the primary narrative of the novella (the embedded narrative), which takes place in 1572. The temporal distance between the first narrative frame and the second, however, functions very differently than a pseudotranslation that bridges the cultures of two different nations. There is a historical continuity between Meyer's Switzerland and sixteenth-century Switzerland that exists outside of the novella. A criticism leveled within the second frame of the embedded narrative, then, also has implications for Meyer's time. The scholarship surrounding pseudotranslation also points out that such texts offer a way to introduce new norms and traditions into a society via the source culture. As Toury writes, "Having normally been regarded as a secondary mode of text-generation…there can be no wonder that deviations occurring in texts which are culturally acknowledged as translations often meet with much greater tolerance."[21] Again, this model looks somewhat different in *Das Amulett*: here, the pseudotranslation can be said to re-introduce traditions and belief structures that were once prevalent in Switzerland to the modern reader. As a result of this historical and cultural continuity, Meyer establishes a chain of transmission across the various diegetic levels of his text that a) constitutes an uncommon, if not unique use of pseudotranslation as narrative strategy, and b) succeeds in bringing the events of sixteenth century Switzerland into the unnamed present of the implied reader.

Too often, critics of Meyer fixate on his frequent use of historical materials as evidence of an unwillingness to engage with his historical present. In *Das Amulett*, however, the inextricability of the past and present in Meyer's approach is more apparent than in any of his

[21] Toury, "Descriptive Translation Studies," 41.

subsequent works, specifically because of the narrative frame created by the translator's preface. I argue that this preface, which may also be called a 'pseudotranslational paratext,' contains the foundations of the narrative approach Meyer repeatedly takes in his historical novellas: not a displacement of the present into the past, as Downing suggests, but an active translation of the past into the present. Meyer does not simply transpose contemporary concerns onto past events; rather, he draws a connection between the two that reveals the past's dynamic relationship to the present. Note that the translator's preface is written in the present tense: "Ich übersetze sie…", while the use of the accusative in "in *die* Sprache" likewise establishes translation as an active endeavor. Like Meyer, the translator is engaged in an ongoing project; and just as the translator of *Das Amulett* rewrites the accounts on the yellowed pages 'into the language of our time,' so too does Meyer retrieve historical events and make them intelligible and relevant for the historical moment he and his contemporary audience occupy, and for future audiences as well.

In all of his historical novellas, Meyer is engaged in a process of transmission – thus, the directionality of the relationship he establishes between past and present is significant: a displacement of the present into the past has a finite trajectory; a retrieval of events from the past into the present, on the other hand, creates a connection to history that remains relevant for any present – not just Meyer's. [22] In the following section, I demonstrate how Meyer's narrative approach to bringing the past into the present has roots in contemporaneous emerging

[22] It is telling that while the second frame and the events in the embedded narrative of *Das Amulett* are given specific dates, the translator's preface is not. "In die Sprache unserer Zeit" can refer to any time, and even encourages the reader to draw an association to her own time with the inclusive *unser-*. Andrea Krauß also raises this point in "L'effet d'histoire: Historiography in C. F. Meyer's Novella *The Amulet*," *MLN* 128, no.3 (April 2013): 502-529. She notes, "No date, no datum is given to anchor this translating. What remains open is not only the time of this translating-reading—'translated' from the first person singular to the plural, from *I* to *our* —the time of its *being read* by others remains open as well." (Ibid., 503)

historiographical methods, and therefore contributes to the larger project of cultural transmission that unfolded during the nineteenth century.

B. Historiographical Influences: Leopold von Ranke

Both Meyer's retrieval of the past and his emphasis on the significance of original records in the translator's preface puts his novella in dialogue with one of the leading historians of his time: Leopold von Ranke. As an avid scholar of history and occasional translator of historical accounts,[23] Meyer was familiar with the historiographical practices of the era, which were shifting in large part due to Ranke's influence. Often referred to as the father of modern historiography, Ranke laid the foundation for a new historiographical approach, and helped establish history as an independent academic discipline. In his first publication, *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514* (1824), Ranke positioned himself as a staunch critic of the humanist tradition of historiography, and introduced his work as a scholarly investigation seeking historical truth.

Rather than laying judgment upon history or utilizing it as an instructional tool for the present, Ranke argued that historians should strive only to present the past as it really had been: "wie es eigentlich gewesen."[24] Ranke's commitment to an "authentic" account of the past echoes some of the fundamental concerns of poetic realism: namely, establishing a relationship to, and recognizable representation of, reality in a written text. Like realist authors, Ranke emphasized the importance of details in constructing such an account, as well as a clear and objective writing

[23] Meyer translated Augustin Thierry's *Récit des Temps Mérovingians* in 1855. Meyer's translation can be found under the title *Erzählungen aus den merowingischen Zeiten mit einleitenden Betrachtungen über die Geschichte Frankreichs* (Elberfeld: R.L. Friderichs, 1855).
[24] "Man hat der Historie das Amt, die Vergangenheit zu richten, die Mitwelt zum Nutzen zukünftiger Jahre zu belehren, beigemessen: so hoher Aemter unterwindet sich gegenwärtiger Versuch nicht: er will blos zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen." Leopold von Ranke, *Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1874), 33:7. Cited hereafter in text as *SW*.

style. In the appended treatise to the *Geschichten*, entitled "Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber," Ranke called for "nackte Wahrheit ohne allen Schmuck: gründliche Erforschung des Einzelnen, das übrige Gott befohlen; nur kein Erdichten, auch nicht im Kleinsten, nur kein Hirngespinst."[25] In order to present a truthful representation of the past, then, historians must strip their accounts of embellishment and rhetoric, and focus instead on factual details uncovered through thorough research. This could best be accomplished, according to Ranke, by working closely with primary sources such as diaries, memoirs and letters. In the new historical approach that Ranke envisioned, historians would rely less on works composed by their predecessors, and instead look to eyewitness accounts:

> Ich sehe die Zeit kommen, wo wir die neuere Geschichte nicht mehr auf die Berichte, selbst nicht der gleichzeitigen Historiker, ausser in so weit ihnen eine originale Kenntnis beiwohnte, geschweige denn auf die weiter abgeleiteten Bearbeitungen zu gründen haben, sondern aus den Relationen der Augenzeugen und den echtesten, *unmittelbarsten* Urkunden aufbauen werden.[26]

Ranke places weight on the unmediated nature of primary sources for two reasons: first, to ensure that historians present the purest, most truthful representation of the past, and second, to narrow the distance between history and the reader. By using unmediated sources as the basis of his historical accounts, Ranke hoped to afford his audience greater access to history, and the opportunity to actively develop their own understanding thereof. In order to do this, Ranke, like Meyer, sought to bring the past into the present: "Alles hängt zusammen: kritisches Studium der echten Quellen, unparteiische Auffassung, objektive Darstellung. Das Ziel ist die Vergegenwärtigung der vollen Wahrheit."[27] According to Ranke, a realization of the past's 'full

[25] Ibid., 24
[26] Ibid., 1. Emphasis mine.
[27] From "Englische Geschichte" in *SW*: 21:114.

truth' within the present depends first on an impartial reception of primary sources, and then upon the objective representation of events.

Ranke took this approach one step further when he called for the historian to remove – even extinguish – himself in order to access this historical truth. In the fifth volume of his *Englische Geschichte* (1859-1869), Ranke articulates this desire: "…ich wünschte mein Selbst gleichsam auszulöschen und nur die Dinge reden, die mächtigen Kräfte erscheinen zu lassen, die im Laufe der Jahrhunderte mit und durch einander entsprungen und erstarkt, nunmehr gegen einander aufsstanden und in einen Kampf gerieten…"[28] In the absence of the subjective historian, a new voice could emerge, allowing the forces that have shaped the past to finally become visible to the reader. If we consider frames as rhetorical or narrative devices used to construct, refine and deliver messages, then Ranke essentially sought to eliminate (or at least obscure) the 'frame' of history by extinguishing the presence of the historian and thereby offering an unmediated account. Otherwise stated, Ranke's texts try "not to describe reality, but to induce it."[29] This self-extinction remains, of course, merely a wish: one cannot extinguish the historian without also eliminating the possibility of history itself. Again, the parallels between Ranke and the authors of poetic realism become evident as a familiar struggle arises within the historian's program: to address the intrinsic divide between reality and representation. For Ranke, this emerges as a tension between his desire to present "nackte Wahrheit," and the unavoidable condition of historical accounts as constructed, aesthetic objects.

Though Ranke urged his fellow historians to remain neutral and to extract themselves from their work, his own methodology proves that maintaining complete objectivity in a historical account is unfeasible. While criticizing earlier historians for allowing personal

[28] Ibid. 15:103.
[29] Kathrin Mauer, "The Rhetoric of Literary Realism in Leopold von Ranke's Historiography," *Clio* no. 35.3 (2006): 321.

preferences and interpretations to color their work, Ranke was at the same time carefully curating the sources he used to support his own presentation of historical events. In response to a review of *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker*, for example, in which fellow historian Heinrich Leo criticized Ranke's use of a source generally considered unreliable, Ranke concedes that he chose to include the contentious account over other, more trusted sources in part because the writing was more vivid.[30] This is notable for two reasons: first, this admission highlights a notable discrepancy between Ranke's standards for historians on the one hand, and primary sources on the other. If historians should strive to extinguish traces of themselves from their writing, it seems they may compensate for any narrative lack by selecting particularly detailed, even florid sources on which to base their accounts. Second, the decision to privilege writing style over historical reliability reveals a potential bias in Ranke's method that seems to run counter to notions of objectivity, and to destabilize the concept of an impartial or scientific historiographical approach.

I do not wish to criticize Ranke here, but merely to draw attention to the apparent contradiction between his desire to allow primary sources to speak for themselves ("die Dinge reden [lassen]"), and the necessity for historians to nonetheless serve as mediators. And indeed, this is a tension of which Ranke was well aware. Though Ranke promoted a representation of history based on empirical evidence and rigorous academic inquiry, he never viewed the writing of history as a purely scientific endeavor. Rather, he positioned historiography between science and art:

[30] J.D. Braw draws attention to this exchange in his article "Vision as Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern History," *History and Theory* 4 (2007): 45-60. Braw argues that Ranke's selection of primary sources reflects the crucial role of visual perception in Ranke's historical method.

> Die Historie unterscheidet sich dadurch von den anderen Wissenschaften, daß sie zugleich Kunst ist. Wissenschaft ist sie: indem sie sammelt, findet, durchdringt; Kunst, indem sie das Gefundene, Erkannte wieder gestaltet, darstellt. Andre Wissenschaften begnügen sich, das Gefundene schlechthin als solches aufzuzeichnen: bei der Historie gehört das Vermögen der Wiederhervorbringung dazu.[31]

If an authentic impression of history can be gained from an intensive study of sources, the historian is still required to analyze and re-produce his findings in a depiction (*Darstellung*) that is comprehensible to the reader. That the successful *Wiederhervorbringen,* or *Vergegenwärtigung*, of history requires a certain level of narrative or poetic talent reveals the necessity of the historian. Simply restating the facts as-is (*schlechthin*) will not suffice – nor will the reproduction of the source texts themselves. It is crucial to note that while Ranke championed the use of primary sources as the foundation of his method, he did not reproduce or integrate them in his historical accounts. Rather, Ranke would simulate the tone and language of source texts, distilling them "into a literary concentrate, which is, to him, a far more effective tool for convincing the reader of his status as a scholarly historian."[32] Ranke's acknowledgement of art, or aesthetics, as a fundamental component of historiography is essential to a more nuanced understanding of his body of work – one that looks beyond Ranke's proclamations on the nature of historiography, and considers the narrative strategies employed in his historical accounts as well.

Over the last century, scholars have investigated the relationship between emerging historiographical and literary practices in the nineteenth century, and drawn connections between Ranke's narrative strategies and those employed in the historical novels and novellas of the

[31] Ranke, "Idee der Universalhistorie," in *Vorlesungseinleitungen*, eds. Volker Dotterweich and Walther Peter Fuchs (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975), 72.
[32] Mauer, *Rhetoric of Literary Realism*, 323.

time.[33] Kathrin Maurer's recent work has explored how a shared "rhetoric of realism" can be identified across Ranke's works and those of poetic realism.[34] Maurer argues that Ranke combines recognizable *techné* of realism (for example, catalogues of facts and a terse writing style) with more subtle narrative strategies (such as imitating the tone of a source text) to produce a comprehensible and convincingly authentic historical account. Conversely, authors of realist fiction in the nineteenth century incorporated elements like footnotes and bibliographies into their works to give an impression of academic legitimacy and authority. A discourse was thus established between the realms of historiography and literature that had a tangible effect on the narrative practices of each.

C. Meyer's "tendenzlos historische Auffassung"[35]

From his correspondence with historian Hans Georg von Wyss, we know that C.F. Meyer was familiar with the works of Leopold Ranke, and even relied on the latter's account of the French Revolution as one of several key sources while composing *Das Amulett*.[36] With Ranke, Meyer shared not only an interest in historical subject matter, but also a commitment to the

[33] For more on the literary and rhetorical elements in Ranke's work, see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 1973); and Hartmut Eggert, Ulrich Profitlich and Klaus R. Scherpe, eds., "Rhetorik und Ästhetik der Geschichtsschreibung: Leopold von Ranke," in *Geschichte als Literatur: Formen und Grenzen der Repräsentation von Vergangenheit* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990), 1–11.
[34] See Maurer, *Discursive Interaction : Literary Realism and Academic Historiography in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2006); and Maurer, ed., *Visualizing the past: the Power of the Image in German Historicism* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013).
[35] Knapp, *Historische Novellistik*, 56.
[36] Ranke, *Französische Geschichte, Vornehmlich Im Sechzehnten Und Siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta, 1856). Other historical sources include: Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France au seizième siècle; tome IX: Guerres de religion* (Paris: 1856); Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, *Geschichte Des Protestantismus in Frankreich Bis Zum Tode Karl's Ix* (Leipzig: F. U. Brockhaus, 1855). For more, see Knapp *Historische Novellistik*, 28-29.

Vergegenwärtigung of the past for the reader via objectivity in his writing.[37] This concern for objectivity is reflected in the comments Meyer made about *Das Amulett* in his correspondence. In an 1873 letter to Swiss historian Louis Vulliemin, which contains Meyer's first reference to *Das Amulett*, he writes, "Die Novelle […] ist stark genug durchdacht, aber einfach und objektiv ausgeführt in der Art von Cervantes."[38] A year later, Meyer again describes *Das Amulett* as "eine rein objectiv gehaltene, nach dem Vorgange der altitalienischen Meister knapp erzählte Novelle."[39]

Meyer clearly associates narrative objectivity with the genre of the novella, as evidenced by his allusions to Cervantes and Boccaccio. Though Meyer never formulated a definition of the genre himself, his comments here – and, more importantly, the subject matter and formal structure of his novellas – indicate a familiarity with the theories advanced by Goethe, Tieck and Heyse. Like Goethe's "sich ereignete, unerhörte Begebenheit" and Ranke's portrayal of history "wie es eigentlich gewesen," Meyer's understanding of the novella involves a foundation in reality (something that has, or could have, occurred), rather than the realm of fantasy, and thus requires an objective narrative approach.[40] And like Ranke, Meyer believed this could be accomplished by eschewing overly stylized, embellished writing in favor of a simpler, more concise style. Consequently, Ranke and Meyer received similar critiques for their terse (*dicht*)

[37] Meyer's success in cultivating an objective aesthetic is evidenced by fellow author Jakob Julius David's praise: "Meyer wird unter den deutschen Schriftstellern der Gegenward wohl der objektivste sein, derjenige, der darum den großen historischen Stil, der sicher und still dahinflutet, am meisten zu eigen und in seiner Gewalt hat." (Ibid., 26)
[38] Ibid., 56.
[39] This appears in a letter from March 3rd, 1874 to the German lexicographer Franz Brümmer. (Ibid., 57).
[40] A passage from Wieland's *Novelle ohne Titel* (1805) also emphasizes the relationship between the genre of the novella and reality: "Bei einer Novelle, sagte [der Erzähler], wird vorausgesetzt dass sie sich…in unserer wirklichen Welt begeben habe, wo alles natürlich und begreiflich zugeht, und die Begebenheiten zwar nicht alltäglich sind, aber sich doch unter denselben Umständen alle Tage allenthalb zutragen könnten." (Passage cited in Mitchell McBurney, "Goethe's Theory of the Novella: 1785-1827," *PMLA* 30, No. 2 [1915]: 215-236)

texts. The question of narrative style arose early in Meyer's career, and resulted in his transition from lyric poetry to prose. Reflecting on this decision some years later, Meyer wrote, "Meine Lyrik […] 'verachte' ich nicht, weil sie 'gefühlvoll,' sondern weil sie mir nicht (oder wenigstens nicht mehr), sei es wegen der Zeitentfernung, sei es wegen Verschärfung des Wahrheitssinnes - weil sie mir - *nicht wahr genug* erscheint. *Wahr* kann man (oder wenigstens ich) nur unter der dramatischen Maske al fresco sein."[41]

Though pairing the concept of "truth" with metaphors of masking or concealing may seem contradictory, we should recall Ranke's claim that a truthful depiction of the past is only possible when the historian removes himself as much as possible from his representation of it. By looking at a letter to close friend and fellow historian Felix Bovet on January 14, 1888, we can gain a better understanding of what Meyer sought to express:

> …je me sers de la forme de la nouvelle historique purement et simplement pour y loger mes experiences et mes sentiments personnels, la preferant au *Zeitroman*, parce qu'elle me masque mieux et qu'elle distance davantage le lecteur. / Ainsi, sous une forme très objective et éminemment artistique, je suis au dedans tout individual et subjectif.[42]

Meyer has frequently been criticized for his use of the terms *masque/Maske* here and in the previous quote (earning him the moniker "der Dichter der Maske"),[43] particularly by those who view his choice of historical subject matter as a refusal to engage directly with his own time. I argue, however, that these passages should instead be read as Meyer's attempt to acknowledge

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[41] Though Meyer uses the term *dramatisch* here, he then references his novel *Jürg Jenatsch* and novella *Der Heilige*, explaining that both were "ursprünglich dramatisch konzepiert." This passage appears in a letter to friend and fellow writer Marie Louise von François from April 8, 1882. (Knapp, *Historische Novellistik*, 43)

[42] Ibid., 284. "I use the form of the historical novella simply to house my experiences and my personal feelings; I prefer it to the *Zeitroman*, because it better masks me, and keeps the reader at a greater distance. In this way, I can remain fully individual and subjective behind a highly objective and eminently artistic form" (translation my own).

[43] Louis Wiesmann, *Conrad Ferdinande Meyer: der Dichter des Todes und der Maske* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1958). See also Carol Klee Bang, *Maske und Gesicht in den Werken Conrad Ferdinand Meyers* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1940).

the tension between the subjective and the objective that is typical of poetic realism and, as we have seen, the Rankean historical approach. Here, Meyer makes clear that this tension hinges upon the mediation of the author, and his relationship to the reader (*lecteur*). In order to create an impression of reality that is recognizable to the reader, the author must strike a balance between the particular and the general, and thus avoid infusing the text with too much of his own self. Familiar with the historiographical techniques of the time, it is not surprising that Meyer then selects the specific genre of the historical novella to create the necessary distance between himself and the reader, which in turn creates the conditions for a successful act of textual transmission by allowing the reader to establish a closer connection to the text.[44] For Meyer, this distance is a product of the particular relationship that arises between the form of the novella and the historical subject matter.

In his depiction of history, Meyer was ultimately engaged in a fundamentally different project than Ranke. As an author and poet rather than pure historian, Meyer was one step further removed from the past in his historical novellas, relying primarily on historians to provide inspiration rather than attempting to navigate the primary sources themselves. Perhaps due to the more explicitly creative endeavor of writing fiction, Meyer understood the impossibility of "extinguishing the self" completely in his texts, using imagery of concealment to discuss the self instead. These metaphors of masking appear across Meyer's writings, and play an important role in his approach to writing. He evokes another image in the passage quoted earlier, however, that has been overshadowed by the mask, and which also sheds light on how Meyer understands the role of the self in his works. Meyer views his subjectivity as something that must not only be

[44] Meyer's description of his method also echoes the approach that Ranke takes in simulating, rather than reproducing, primary sources. For example, when Ranke imitates the narrative style and tone of Christopher Columbus' travel logs, rather than quoting Columbus himself, is this not a mask? For more, see Mauer, "The Rhetoric of Literary Realism," 323-24.

masked, but rather "housed" completely within the objective artistic form of the novella. With this term (*loger*) Meyer articulates what I refer to as a "poetics of containment" that can be traced throughout his historical novellas.

Andreas Gailus uses this term in an article on Goethe's collection of novellas, *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*.[45] In his discussion, Gailus focuses on the breakdown of communication when confronting 'unresolvable' internal conflict – specifically, the imminent dissolution of sociability, the very concept of which, Gailus states, "owes its stability to the articulation of its own boundaries."[46] Though the notion of sociability (*Geselligkeit*) does not feature prominently in Meyer's novellas, I argue that a similar poetics is at work – namely, one that underscores the necessity of boundaries for successful communication. If we consider the logic of such a poetics with regard to Meyer's concept of *loger* and subjectivity, we arrive at the same point of tension that we encountered in Ranke's attempt to construct an objective approach to history: that is, by "housing" or containing his subjectivity within the objective form of his historical novellas, Meyer creates the potential for his subjective experience to be transmitted – and thus calls into question the very possibility of objectivity in his work. By the time he writes his letter to Bovet in 1888, Meyer seems to have arrived at an understanding of this paradoxical relationship; as he made his first foray into writing novellas, however, Meyer was still very much concerned with establishing objectivity in his writing (as seen in his descriptions of the novella). This concern and attempt to navigate the question of objectivity through the concept of containment will become evident in Meyer's first novella, and contributes to the broader narrative strategy he begins to develop in *Das Amulett.*

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[45] Andreas Gailus, "Poetics of Containment: Goethe's *Conversations of German Refugees* and the Crisis of Representation," *Modern Philology* 100, No. 3 (2003): 436-474.
[46] Ibid. 444

Meyer's particular poetics of containment can be seen most clearly in his use of frame narratives, but it also plays out on the level of symbols and motifs. In *Das Amulett* it emerges, for example, in the frequent use of windows, through which key scenes are often viewed, as well as in the construction of borders more generally. For example, political and moral dangers seem to be contained by national lines. Like frame narratives, these symbolic forms of enclosure are also sites of transmission. In the discussion that follows, I will return to this concept in specific relation to the exchange of letters in *Das Amulett*, and scenes of writing more generally. I argue that Meyer thematizes the production and reception of texts in *Das Amulett* first in an attempt to work through the possibility of objectivity in his writing, and thereby the potential to represent the fundamental truths of reality for his reader, and second, to highlight the status of written works as sites of framing, or enclosure, that alternately facilitate and hinder the process of transmission.

D. Schadau as *Schreiber*: Processes of Writing

Although Meyer focuses specifically on the production and reception of documents in several scenes of *Das Amulett*, I have encountered few studies that address the significance of the written text *qua* text in this novella. This is particularly surprising, for though more than half of Meyer's novellas include frame narratives, *Das Amulett* stands out as the only work presented as an authentic historical document – or as a text at all. More specifically, while Meyer's frame narratives must necessarily be understood as written texts, the embedded narratives in his novellas are, with the exception of Schadau's account, all depicted as instances of oral narration. In contrast, framed by the translator's preface, *Das Amulett*'s second narrative frame (Schadau's

visit to the elderly Boccard) and embedded narrative (the account of the events leading up to the massacre) are presented as a sort of ideal Rankean *Urkunde*.

As already demonstrated, the translator's preface effectively posits the existence of an original source text, and establishes the significance of this original account by featuring it as the subject of the novella's opening sentence. If we recall Ranke's appeal that history be built upon "den Relationen der Augenzeugen und den echtesten, unmittelbarsten Urkunden," Schadau seems to be in an ideal position to relate the events leading up to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. He was both present as an eyewitness during the massacre, and in close contact with several of the key historical figures at the center of the tragedy. Yet Schadau's account is, of course, not unmediated (*unmittelbar*) – in fact, it is highly mediated: first, on the linguistic level as a (pseudo-)translated text, and second, on the temporal level, where the account is doubly-mediated. That is, the reader is temporally removed from the second frame, which is written in 1611, and both the reader and Schadau are removed from the time of the embedded narrative (1572).[47]

The time that has lapsed between the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre and Schadau's composition of his account has implications for his status as a reliable narrator and eyewitness, as his experiences during the relevant historical events can no longer be considered immediate. Instead, they have become memories. Having had ample time to reflect upon these memories, one might expect Schadau to express regret over the events that led to his friend's death. Shortly before he begins the embedded narrative, however, he writes, "Und doch, so sehr mich dies drückt, kann ich es nicht bereuen und müßte wohl heute im gleichen Falle wieder so handeln, wie ich es mit zwanzig Jahren tat."[48] While many scholars use this quote as evidence of

[47] Schadau refers to the events of his account as "das längst Vergangene." (*HA*, 11:61)
[48] Ibid., 8.

Schadau's ambivalence or fatalism,[49] I read it rather as an attempt at objectivity, and an enactment of containment. The past is past. By accepting that he cannot change this and drawing a clear border around the events of the massacre, Schadau actually enables communication by allowing himself to revisit and then recount what happened. And in recording his memories, Schadau must indeed re-live the past on the page; by prefacing his story with this statement, he indicates that he will try to set down events as they were – or, "wieder so [zu] handeln, wie ich es mit zwangzig Jahren tat." Schadau thus approaches the task of recording this period of his life with an attitude closer to a Rankean historian than the author of a memoir. This makes sense when we consider Schadau's role in the novella: he is not merely a narrator, but also a writer. In *Das Amulett*, Schadau's relationship to texts is determined by two forms of written communication: historical records in general (*Aufzeichnungen*), and letters in particular. Both processes involve acts of reception and production, and while Schadau maintains a primarily receptive role in the exchange of letters, he assumes a more productive role in recording historical events.

The figure of the writer-narrator is central both to my project and to several of Meyer's later novellas.[50] Schadau is unique in this cohort of writers, however, in that he is depicted purely as a *Schreiber*, with no aspirations toward *Dichtung* or *Poesie*. This ostensibly impartial approach to the writing process resonates with the desire for objectivity and aversion to embellished narrative styles that Meyer and Ranke share. Further, Schadau is not only a writer in

[49] See Ernst Feise, "Fatalismus als Grundzug von C.F. Meyers Werken," in *Xenion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1950), 180-214.

[50] Consider the conflicted narrator of Brentano's *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl*, who laments the lack of an appropriate German word for his occupation, or the narrator of Tieck's embedded narrative in *Das alte Buch: und die Reise in's Blaue hinein*, who finds himself contributing to the titular old book. Writer-narrators featured in Meyer's later novellas include Dante, who narrates *Die Hochzeit des Mönches* and Poggio, the protagonist of *Plautus im Nonnenkloster*.

regard to the embedded narrative – he is a *Schreiber* by profession. When Schadau sets out for Paris, it is with hopes of fighting under the famous Admiral Coligny, under whom his father had served and died. By a stroke of good luck (or fortune), Schadau encounters Coligny's niece Gasparde, whom he later marries, and her guardian on the road to Paris. This guardian then arranges an introduction with the Admiral after they arrive in the city. This scene of introduction, and the subsequent three scenes between Schadau and the Admiral play a pivotal role in establishing the relationship between writing and history in *Das Amulett*, and inform my understanding of the development of this relationship within Meyer's broader collection of historical novellas.

When Schadau meets Gasparde and her guardian, Chatillon, on the road to Paris, Chatillon asks him to write down his name so it can be passed on to Coligny.[51] When Schadau appears at the Admiral's office several days later, he must repeat this action before being admitted: "Ich mußte meinen Namen auf ein Stück Papier schreiben, das [der Pfortner] zu seinem Herrn trug, dann wurde ich eingelassen und trat durch ein großes Vorgemach, das mit vielen Menschen gefüllt war, Kriegern und Hofleuten, die den durch ihre Reihen Gehenden mit scharfen Blicken musterten, in das kleine Arbeitszimmer des Admirals."[52] This method of identifying Schadau through a combination of his name and handwriting gestures toward the impossibility of separating Schadau from his role as *Schreiber* – a position he secures directly after this moment. Upon approaching Coligny, the Admiral inquires briefly after Schadau's proficiency in both German and French, and promptly awards him a position within his cabinet as "der Schreiber des Admirals." Within the embedded narrative, then, Schadau's identity as a

[51] In an envelope, no less: "Jetzt aber schreibt mir noch Euern Namen in diese Brieftasche. So!" (*HA*, 11:26). I still need to consider the implications of this (if any) with regard to the Schadau's relationship to letters, which is discussed in the following section.
[52] Ibid., 27.

writer is defined in relation to his position under Coligny. I contend, however, that a much stronger association between Schadau and Coligny emerges when one examines their interactions; that their relationship is not only one of a military superior and his clerk, but also a relationship between fellow writers of history.

When Schadau first enters the Admiral's study, Coligny is busy at his desk: "Er war mit Schreiben beschäftigt und winkte mir zu warten, während er einen Brief beendigte."[53] As will be seen in the following section, Schadau's primary relationship to letters in *Das Amulett* is as a recipient, rather than producer, thereof. From this first glimpse of Coligny, a similar dynamic initially seems play out in Schadau's duties as the Admiral's clerk: Coligny assumes the active role, producing documents that Schadau then receives and copies out. There are associations between Schadau and Coligny within the text, however, that suggest we read the two figures as parallels. The most striking of these associations comes during Schadau's second meeting with the Admiral, and has, to my knowledge, not been addressed in the Meyer scholarship.

When Schadau enters Coligny's office for a second time, the Admiral is once again preoccupied with a text. Rather than writing, however, Coligny is instead perusing his own records from several years earlier: "Am nächsten Morgen zur anberaumten Stunde stellte ich mich bei dem Admiral ein und fand ihn in einem abgegriffenen Taschenbuche blätternd. 'Dies sind,' begann er, 'meine *Aufzeichnungen* aus dem Jahre siebenundfünfzig, in welchem ich St. Quentin verteidigte und mich dann den Spaniern ergeben mußte.'"[54] The echo of the translator's preface here is unmistakable. By using the term *Aufzeichnungen* for the second and final time in the novella, Meyer draws a direct connection between the figures of Coligny, Schadau and the translator, and the work in which they are each engaged. As one of the most notable military

[53] Ibid., 14.
[54] Ibid., 38. Emphasis mine.

commanders in this historical moment, Coligny is portrayed here both as directing the course of history and actually recording history itself. And in Schadau he gains an attentive audience: when Coligny tasks him with writing out a clean copy of a memorandum to the Prince of Orange, Schadau notes, "Mit steigendem Interesse folgte ich dem Gange der Darstellung, die mit der größten Klarheit, wie dem Admiral eigen war, sich über die Zustände von Frankreich verbreitete."[55] It is clear that working for Coligny affords Schadau a glimpse into the current state of affairs that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Coligny is also responsible for influencing Schadau stylistically as a writer. Even years later, Schadau is compelled to praise the clarity with which Coligny writes about political events ("mit der größten Klarheit"). As a young man, Schadau idolized Coligny and his younger brother, Dandelot, above his own father.[56] Given the opportunity to work as the Admiral's clerk, Schadau then seeks to imitate the Admiral's narrative style: directly after Schadau praises the Admiral's writing, the reader is presented with the contents of Coligny's memorandum. Notably, however, there are no quotation marks surrounding this passage, nor is it set off from the rest of the text in any way. This can be contrasted with the letter from Schadau's uncle, which is later reproduced fully in the text, and set off by quotation marks. Though I wish to avoid reading too much into these markings, we can note that while it is possible Schadau would have kept his uncle's letter, and therefore be able to cite it faithfully, it is unlikely he would have access to Coligny's private letter to the Prince of Orange. It is more likely that Schadau is engaging in a similar practice to Ranke's, and instead imitating Coligny's style and tone in order to convey a sense of the historical situation. In doing so, and by writing this account in the first place,

[55] Ibid.
[56] "Unter meinen jugendlichen Bewunderungen nahm neben dem großen Admiral sein jüngerer Bruder Dandelot die erste Stelle ein." (Ibid., 15)

Schadau steps into Coligny's role as an author, rather than transcriber, of history. This also has a transformative effect upon the figure of the Admiral.

Coligny's role in the French Wars of Religion, especially as the inadvertent catalyst for the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, means that he undergoes a transformation from a *writing* figure to a *written* figure – i.e. a historical figure that features prominently in later historical accounts of the massacre. Albeit fictional, the personal records that Meyer showcases constitute precisely the type of source text that Ranke relied upon. If Ranke imitates these source texts in his accounts, Meyer instead stages their very production. This occurs again, of course, in the second narrative frame, when Schadau narrates his own act of textual production. Schadau thus plays the role of the historian in the process of transforming Coligny into a "written," historical figure – it is through Schadau's own *Aufzeichnungen*, after all, that the reader encounters Coligny. Schadau's position as "der Schreiber des Admirals" may be understood, then, both as "the Admiral's clerk," and the "writer of the Admiral."

An even more complicated dynamic emerges between Coligny and Schadau when the Admiral reveals what he has found in his notes: "'Da steht unter den tapfersten meiner Leute, mit einem Kreuze bezeichnet, der Name Sadow, mir dünkt er war ein Deutscher. Sollte dieser Name mit dem Eurigen derselbe sein?' 'Kein andrer als der Name meines Vaters! Er hatte die Ehre, unter Euch zu dienen und vor Euern Augen zu fallen!'"[57] Though Schadau has already revealed this information to the reader, the documented presence of Schadau's father in the Admiral's account adds another dimension to the mirroring of Schadau and Coligny's respective *Aufzeichungen*, and reinforces the dynamic nature that characterizes Meyer's understanding of history. Though Schadau's father dies in the service of Coligny, the Admiral has ensured that his legacy as a brave soldier will live on through his historical records. Shortly before his own death,

[57] Ibid., 38.

Coligny also officiates the wedding of his niece, Gasparde, and Schadau, and thus not only preserves Schadau's past (i.e. his family heritage), but also joins and preserves both of their legacies (i.e. through future children). Though the novella ends within the embedded narrative, the reader knows how the story continues: Schadau's brief account in the novella's second frame begins with a visit to Boccard's elderly father – not for a friendly chat, but to conclude a business deal. Schadau is in negotiations to sell Boccard's father a small plot of land, and reveals that he is motivated to do so in order to fund his son's wedding. The dynamic relationship of past and present plays out on a familial level here that radiates from the narrative in both directions, as the question of transmission becomes a question of legacy.[58]

As Coligny records Schadau's father in his notes, Schadau in turn features Coligny in his own account, which gets taken up decades later by the unnamed translator. In the final step of this transformation, Schadau too becomes a written figure, contained within the translator's presentation of his tale. The *Vergegenwärtigung* of the past is then complete, as the translator takes the final step to make Schadau's *Aufzeichnungen* available, and legible, to a modern audience. In the final section of my discussion of *Das Amulett*, I turn my attention from Schadau's role as a writer, and consider a) the extent to which he can also be considered a reader, and b) what implications this has for the implied reader of Meyer's novella.

E. Interpretation in *Das Amulett*

As stated, Schadau is negotiations to sell Boccard's father a plot of land in the second frame narrative; they have been unable, however, to agree upon a price: "Der alte Herr bemühte

[58] It is worth noting that no motivation is provided for Boccard's father to purchase the land. While Schadau's familial line continues, Boccard's is presumably cut short, as no siblings are depicted or mentioned within the text. It is unclear why Boccard's father would acquire land so late in his life, when he has no living heir to whom he can leave it.

sich in langwierigem Briefwechsel um eine Preiserniedrigung."[59] Though a seemingly inconsequential remark, this line in fact contains the first reference to a key motif of the novella. As has been well documented in Meyer scholarship, letters appear at several crucial junctures in *Das Amulett*, and often have unintended und unforeseen consequences. While traditional readings of the letters focus on the concept of fate (*Schicksal*), I will consider how these scenes also complicate the exchange of information and, more generally, processes of transmission in the novella. With regard to two of the most prominent letters in the novella, Schadau ultimately fails as a recipient; that is, the impact of the information communicated in each letter is diminished, reversed, or altogether negated by Schadau's actions.

First, when he and his uncle receive a missive revealing Schadau's fencing instructor to be a criminal wanted for murder, Schadau inadvertently alerts the instructor by waving the letter in front of an open window: "Entschlossen den Übeltäter festzunehmen und der Gerechtigkeit zu überliefern, erhob ich doch unwillkürlich das Schreiben in der Weise, daß ihm das große, rote Siegel, wenn er gerade herunter lauerte, sichtbar wurde, – seinem Schicksal eine kleine Frist gebend ihn zu retten."[60] Seeing the official red seal and Schadau's distress, the fencing instructor quickly steals a horse and flees. While this letter is successfully received and read, Schadau's treatment of the letter leads to the instructor's escape rather than arrest.

Similarly, when Schadau receives a letter from his uncle toward the end of the novella, he fails to open it despite observing the irregularity of the wax seal – an irregularity that undermines the familiarity of his uncle's writing and signals that the letter was in fact sent under unusual circumstances: "Auf meinem Zimmer lag ein Brief meines Oheims im gewohnten Format, mit den wohlbekannten altmodischen Zügen überschrieben. Der rote Abdruck des Siegels mit seiner

[59] Ibid., 7.
[60] Ibid., 14.

Devise: Pèlerin et Voyageur! war diesmal unmäßig groß geraten."[61] Schadau receives the letter on the eve of the massacre, but does not open it until he and Gasparde are approaching his home at the conclusion of the novella. Here, the distorted seal is mentioned once again: "Es knisterte in meinem Wams wie Papier; ich zog den vergessenen, noch ungelegenen Brief meines Ohms heraus und erbrach das unförmliche Siegel."[62] The letter, reproduced fully in the text, reveals that his uncle was seriously ill at the time of its composition, and that he had instructed his servant to seal and send it upon his death, thus explaining the irregularity of the seal. The effect the letter might have had upon Schadau's actions if read earlier is of little importance; what is significant here is that the act of transmission, as in the case with the fencing master, is frustrated by Schadau's mishandling of the letter.

Consider once again the poetics of containment or enclosure that Meyer articulates in his 1888 letter, and which he performs across his historical novellas. With the double frame narrative of *Das Amulett*, it is clear that Meyer already placed great emphasis on form when he wrote his first novella. Looking specifically at the scenes that feature letters, this becomes even more evident: the envelopes containing the letters reveal as much as their contents, and have an even bigger impact on the story. Yet, Schadau seems to lack a fundamental grasp of their significance: he cannot 'read' the red seals in the same way as, for example, the fencing master. With this failure, Meyer seems to set up a dichotomy between Schadau's roles as writer and reader. While Schadau is a clear and proficient writer, he lacks interpretive skills. It is contingent upon the reader of Meyer's novella, then, to take this task upon herself – to look beyond the surface when Schadau cannot. Within the novella, Meyer provides at least one figure who may serve as a model for such practices of critical thinking: Boccard.

[61] Ibid., 58.
[62] Ibid., 73.

Schadau's tendency to view the world in black and white (with little room for the significance of red seals) can be seen most clearly in his rigid adherence to Calvinist beliefs. Meyer provides a more thoughtful figure, however, in Boccard. Though Boccard is a staunch Catholic, his religious beliefs do not prevent him from befriending, protecting, and ultimately dying for Schadau. In the midst of a dire cultural and political crisis, Boccard understands the need for a less dogmatic approach in order to have a chance at achieving peace. Recall that a successful realist work requires that the reader be able to establish a connection between the world of the text and her own lived reality. Though the average audience of *Das Amulett* may not be well versed in the details of the French Wars of Religion, a reader from Meyer's time would be able to identify parallels between the religious crisis depicted in the novella, and the political and cultural climate following the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War (1870). And while Schadau's fanaticism may also be familiar to Meyer's audience, Meyer does not employ the strategies of what has been termed psychological realism that would encourage the reader to identify with him.[63] Instead, the novella encourages a sympathetic reception of Boccard, who, through his selfless acts, emerges as the real hero of the novella.[64] If the events within the novella align the reader with Boccard rather than Schadau, then the reader should be encouraged to approach events of her own time in a similarly critical but compassionate style. Rather than more explicitly mapping contemporary events onto this historical time period by, for example, featuring a protagonist who voices clear criticism of an analogous crisis, Meyer requires his

[63] Authors may use characters who are perceived as "functioning in the same way we do" – i.e. whose motives and internal action resonate with the reader's – to generate the effect of realism, even if the story takes place in a world largely unfamiliar to the reader. See Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London: Routeledge, 2009), 53-56.

[64] Following Gerhard Knapp's reading, Schadau may be viewed as a figure firmly rooted in the 16th century, and thus incapable of religious tolerance, while Boccard represents a worldview that is not yet viable in his time. (Knapp, *Historische Novellistik*, 82-87)

reader to participate in the *Vergenwärtigung* of the past by performing interpretive work to identify and understand Boccard's relevance for the present.

Finally, both Schadau's dogmatic Calvinist beliefs and his inability to "read" the material signifier of the red seal are mirrored in his treatment of the novella's titular *Amulett*. The pendant first appears in the novella in the second frame, when Schadau spies it in a drawer while Boccard's father searches through his desk. Serving as a sort of *Falke*, the amulet (along with Boccard's hat, bearing the mark of the bullet that kills him) is responsible for sparking Schadau's reminiscences, leading him to write the subsequent account. In addition to motivating the narration of the embedded narrative, the function of the amulet has been viewed as evidence that a fatalist force governs Meyer's novella – the amulet protects Schadau's heart and saves his life in a duel against his rival, yet fails to protect the one who believes in its power (Boccard). I argue, however, that the amulet represents a more general undercurrent of inexplicability that runs beneath the surface of reality, and which comprises a particular characteristic of Meyer's realism.

Meyer's preoccupation with the fundamentally mysterious nature of reality is treated somewhat directly in characters like Schadau and Boccard, who present two religious approaches to otherwise enigmatic events, but also more subtly in moments like the market scene in *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*, where events seem to border on the fantastic.[65] As we have seen, Schadau's understanding of life's mysteries is shallow: he explains everything with the notion that it is predestined, and thus engages in little to no interpretive activity. This is evidenced by the fact that the word "amulet" does not appear once in the entire narrative of the novella: Schadau uses the word "medallion" (*Medaillon*) throughout. By using this neutral, secular term,

[65] In this scene, one of the main characters drops a ring, which then glides under several lines of soldiers on horseback, across a bridge, and finally comes to rest at the feet of the woman with whom he has fallen in love.

Schadau vacates the pendant of any protective power that has been ascribed to it, and reduces it to a meaningless object. Like the red seals, Schadau fails to consider the deeper significance that may lie therein, and thus risks remaining oblivious to the mysterious potential of reality. This mystery is reclaimed, however, on the extradiegetic level: as the reader may hold the translator responsible for the structuring Schadau's account into chapters, so too can she attribute the title of the novella to the translator. The discrepancy between Schadau's *Medaillon* and the title's *Amulett* supports this claim, and signals that the translator is engaged in interpretive work – and that the reader should do the same. As Meyer begins to develop his mode of realism in *Das Amulett*, he indicates that his novellas will not seek to explain the structure of reality, but rather to convey its mystery. Through the process of transmission via the written text, the author and reader are thus engaged in a mutual and ongoing project of understanding.

Though often dismissed as a *Lehrlingsarbeit*, Meyer's first novella contains many of the formal strategies and concerns that form the foundation of his oeuvre. Through the inclusion of contemporary historiographical techniques, Meyer explores the boundaries of objectivity and representation within the genre of the novella, and establishes a project of historical *Vergegenwärtigung* (i.e. the active retrieval of the past into the present) that pervades his collection of historical novellas. Essential to this project is the act of framing or presenting the past in such a way that it is accessible to the reader through a chain of transmission – in *Das Amulett*, for example, through the (pseudo)translator's preface and the second narrative frame. Meyer then develops this into a more general poetics of containment, which is evident both in the formal structure of the novella, as well as the thematization of processes of writing. The scenes of writing simultaneously constitute sites of containment (this is obvious in the example

of letters, but is also true for the very act of writing, which involves the distillation and containment of experience or history), and transmission.

In the final section of this chapter, I turn to three of Meyer's later works that contribute to his ongoing project of historical *Vergegenwärtigung*, and which help situate this project within a longer tradition. By examining the treatment and retrieval of history within these texts, the depiction of literature and writing processes, and, finally, their relationship to *Das Amulett*, I seek to establish precisely what is at stake in Meyer's work.

III. *Ad Fontes*: A Return to the Sources

There are two historical periods to which Meyer repeatedly returned as the inspiration for, and backdrop to, his works: first, the Reformation. That Meyer chose this period of intense upheaval for the setting of his first novella (*Das Amulett*), his longest poem (*Huttens letzte Tage* (1872)), and his first novel, over which he labored for more than a decade (*Jürg Jenatsch* (1876)), reveals the extent to which Meyer may have drawn parallels between the Reformation and his own time. The Renaissance influenced Meyer even more profoundly, however. While Meyer sought to reintroduce and make relevant the events of the Reformation to his contemporaries through his project of *Vergegenwärtigung*, this very project may be read as a direct response to one of the essential concerns of the Renaissance: the very constitution of the concept of "tradition."

Meyer's impressions of the Renaissance may be traced primarily to two sources: first, his trips to France in 1857 (where he first encountered the works of Italian artists such as Raphael and Corregio in the Louvre) and to Italy in 1858, and second, Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt's

Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien (1860).[66] Published shortly after Meyer's return from Italy, Burckhardt's book offers a comprehensive historiographical account of the period, touching on themes such as the revival of antiquity, the rise of individualism, and the changing role of religion. Well received and widely distributed, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* revolutionized the Western world's – and thereby C.F. Meyer's – understanding of the Italian Renaissance.

Meyer's fascination with the Renaissance has not gone unnoticed. In the most controversial book published on the subject, Frank F. Baumgarten coins the rather awkward term "Renaissancismus" to describe Meyer's mode of engagement with the era, arguing that Meyer's reliance on the Renaissance functions largely to conceal his own limitations as an author.[67] Rather than merely borrowing inspiration, however, I believe Meyer's invocation of Renaissance figures and topoi instead reveals an identification with, and desire to participate in, the intellectual work undertaken by thinkers of that time. Burckhardt's *Die Cultur Der Renaissance in Italien* provided Meyer with a vivid picture of these pursuits, highlighting the significant influence authors and artists had in shaping the historical moment – and its trajectory into the future. Of particular interest for Meyer was the rise of humanism, characterized by a renewed interest in classical antiquity. This renewed interest was part of a broader cultural break with medieval attitudes, and the movement toward a more secular worldview. Leading figures of

[66] Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur Der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860).

[67] Franz Ferdinand Baumgarten, *Das Werk Conrad Ferdinand Meyers; Renaissance-Empfinden und Stilkunst* (Munich: Müller, 1920). For more on the role of the Renaissance in Meyer's writing, see Erwin Kalischer, *Conrad Ferdinand Meyer in seinem Verhältnis zur italienischen Renaissance* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1907). On the depiction and thematization of Italian artwork in Meyer's texts, see Dominik Müller, "Kunstwelt und Heimat. Die imaginären Museen Conrad Ferdinand Meyrs und Gottfried Kellers," in *Conrad Ferdinand Meyer: Die Wirklichkeit der Zeit und die Wahrheit der Kunst*. ed. Monika Ritzer (Tübingen: Francke, 2001), 221-236; Peter André Bloch, "Der Teil und das Ganze. Conrad Ferdinand Meyers Gedicht 'Der römische Brunnen' im Spiegel seiner Varianten," ibid., 269-292.

Renaissance humanism emphasized the principle of *ad fontes* (meaning "back to the sources"), to refer to their study and application of Greek and Roman classics – an approach that would have resonated with Meyer's own historiographical leanings.

Indeed, considering that one of the fundamental projects of the Renaissance involved the recovery and subsequent cultural reinvigoration and transmission of historical artifacts, the similarities between the endeavors of the Renaissance humanists and Meyer's own project of *Vergegenwärtigung* should be evident. Meyer himself draws attention to these parallels not only by referencing the Renaissance in many of his texts, but also by thematizing this very act of historical retrieval and transmission. Consider, for example, Meyer's poem "Der Marmorknabe" (1882), which is worth quoting in full here:

In der Capuletti Vigna graben
Gärtner, finden einen Marmorknaben,
Meister Simon holen sie herbei,
Der entscheide, welcher Gott es sei.

Wie den Fund man dem Gelehrten zeigte,
Der die graue Wimper forschend neigte,
Kniet' ein Kind daneben: Julia,
Die den Marmorknaben finden sah.

"Welches ist dein süßer Name, Knabe?
Steig' ans Tageslicht aus deinem Grabe!
Eine Fackel trägst du? Bist beschwingt?
Amor bist du, der die Herzen zwingt?"

Meister Simon, streng das Bild betrachtend,
Eines Kindes Worte nicht beachtend,
Spricht: "Er löscht die Fackel. Sie verloht.
Dieser schöne Jüngling ist der Tod."[68]

Based, in part, on a true instance of archaeological misidentification, Meyer uses the debate surrounding the identity of the so-called "Eros of Contocelle" as inspiration for his poem.[69]

[68] *HA*, 1:31.

Crucially, however, Meyer displaces the discovery of the statue from 1770 to the Renaissance. In doing so, the unearthing of the classical Roman statue in the poem more clearly echoes the efforts of the early humanists, and Meyer, to bring the artistic achievements of the past to light: "Steig ans Tageslicht aus deinem Grabe!"

In addition to the discovery of the statue, the poem also depicts two acts of interpretation, which together form the outlines of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Despite the young Julia's hopeful reading of the figure as Eros or "Amor," Meister Simon quickly recognizes the true identity of the youth: the poem, like the play, concludes with "Tod." The tragic deaths of Romeo and Juliet foreshadowed here bring the question of legacy, and therefore transmission, to the fore: with the deaths of two of their youngest members, the very future of the Houses of Capulet and Montague is threatened. Ultimately, the families must agree to reconcile and end the bloodshed, lest their feud results in their mutual destruction. Similarly, the Roman statue is on the brink of being lost to history forever. Though it spells death for Julia, the recovery of the figure from its "grave" reads almost like a resurrection. In the poem, the statue of the youth is enlivened once more as the object of contemplation; on the extra-diegetic level, it has also been immortalized within the poem itself. As a whole, then, Meyer's poem forms a chain of transmission, from the statue's creation in antiquity, to its unearthing and study in the Renaissance, to the undefined present of the poem's reading.

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[69] The partially-intact statue of a youth was discovered outside of Rome in 1770. With only its torso and head remaining, the statue caused a long-running debate among experts who disagreed on whether the youth was the personification of love (Eros) or death (Thanatos). Though Meyer had seen the statue himself during his 1858 trip to Italy, his sister Betsy Meyer stated in a letter to Adolf Frey that he had forgotten it, and was instead inspired by a photograph she took of statue during her own visit in 1876, and which she showed Meyer upon her return. Meyer composed "Der Marmorknabe" shortly thereafter, although it did not appear in its final form until 1882. (Ibid., 172)

A similar act of cultural retrieval is depicted in the frame narrative of Meyer's novella, *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*, published two years after "Der Marmorknabe." Set in Verona at the dawn of the Renaissance, a group of noblemen and women sit and exchange stories before a fire, when a new guest arrives: Dante Alighieri. Soon, their host Cangrande demands a tale that fits the evening's theme ("Plötzlicher Berufswechsel").[70] When asked from whence he will derive inspiration for the tale, Dante replies, "Ich entwickle meine Geschichte aus einer Grabschrift."[71] Met with confusion, Dante further explains, "Aus einer Grabschrift, die ich vor Jahren bei den Franziskanern in Padau gelesen habe. Der Stein, welcher sie trägt, lag in einem Winkel des Klostergartens, allerdings unter wildem Rosengesträuch versteckt…Ich befahl dem Prior – will sagen, ich ersuchte ihn, den fraglichen Stein in die Bibliothek zu versetzen und unter die Hut eines Greises zu stellen."[72] Dante then recounts the Latin inscription upon the gravestone, which he translates as, "Hier schlummert der Mönch Astorre neben seiner Gattin Antiope. Beide begrub Ezzelin."[73] The embedded narrative that follows relates the tragic tale of these two figures, Astorre and Antiope, as interpreted by Dante.

Dante's retrieval of the gravestone, like the statue in "Der Marmorknabe," reads like an act of resurrection. Forgotten in the corner of a graveyard, soon to be obscured entirely by the encroaching rosebushes, the names of Astorre and Antiope are in danger of being lost to time. Dante lifts (or rather, orders someone else to lift) the stone out of the graveyard, however, and has it transferred to a library. This act transforms the gravestone into an object of study, and raises the status of the inscription upon it to that of text proper. Though the story Dante ultimately narrates should be understood as fictional, the main characters (Astorre and Antiope)

[70] Ibid., 12: 7-98.
[71] Ibid., 11.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.

and their relationship to each other (a former monk and his eventual wife) are rooted within the novella's historical past, as evidenced by the inscription. Dante also incorporates the third figure mentioned in the inscription, Ezzelin (an actual historical figure), as the story's villainous tyrant, thus further grounding the tale.

In developing the rest of the story, Dante employs a clever narrative strategy to grab the attention of those listening – namely, bestowing the names and characteristics of certain audience members upon the figures of the embedded narrative. In doing so, Dante forces his audience to reflect more earnestly upon its historical conditions and characters, and how these may be relevant to their own situations. Dante heightens their interest by interrupting his narration of the embedded narrative to elaborate on certain points, answer their questions, and, at one point, even involve them in a revision he makes to the story.[74] This is a more overt strategy than Meyer's approach to his novellas, yet both seek to reinvigorate past events for contemporary audiences. Within the context of Meyer's oeuvre, then, Dante may be read as carrying out a similar project of *Vergegenwärtigung* as the author himself. Within the novella, the act of retrieving the gravestone from the cemetery mirrors Dante's own act of narration, insofar as both ensure that the legacy of Astorre and Antiope will be not forgotten. Finally, the retrieval of the gravestone mirrors more generally the "retrieval" of classical works of art during the Renaissance, and their reintroduction into the cultural consciousness.

To close this chapter, I would like to briefly turn to another of Meyer's novellas, *Plautus im Nonnenkloster* (1881), which shares similar themes and formal concerns with the two texts just discussed, as well as *Das Amulett*. While *Das Amulett* is the first text in which Meyer uses

[74] "'Ich streiche die Narren Ezzelins,' unterbrach sich Dante mit einer griffelhaltenden Gebärde, als schriebe er seine Fabel, statt sie zu sprechen, wie er tat. 'Der Zug ist unwahr, oder dann log Ascanio. Es ist durchaus undenkbar, daß ein so ernster und ursprünglich edler Geist wie Ezzelin Narren gefüttert und sich an ihrem Blödsinn ergötzt habe.'" (Ibid., 35)

the Reformation as his setting, *Plautus* is the first novella in which he explores the themes and concerns of the Renaissance. Originally published in an 1881 volume of the German periodical *Deutsche Rundschau* under the title *Das Brigittchen von Trogen*, the novella first appeared in its present, revised form as *Plautus im Nonnenkloster* in 1882. The comedic tale consists of two diegetic levels, both set during the Italian Renaissance. In the frame narrative, a group of "gebildeter Florentiner" are gathered at the house of Cosimo de Medici.[75] Amongst this group of friends sits Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), one of the most highly regarded humanists of his time, known primarily for his dedication to relocating lost manuscripts and his own scholarly essays.

In addition to these well-respected writings, however, Poggio also penned a collection of humorous (and quite scandalous) tales titled *Liber Facetiarum* (or *Facetiae*), of which Medici is particularly fond.[76] Having read this collection many times, Medici begs Poggio to tell him a new tale in the same style. Poggio agrees, and begins narrating the story that comprises the metanarrative of this novella. In this story, Poggio tells of a journey he makes to Constance with his employer, who takes part in an ecumenical council there. In his free time, Poggio travels to a nearby convent, hoping to locate the lost manuscript of a series of comedies by Plautus, which is rumored to be in the area.[77] While at the convent, Poggio discovers that the Abbess has been tricking young women into becoming nuns by means of a false miracle. Poggio uses this knowledge both to blackmail the Abbess into giving him the Plautus manuscript, and to save a young woman from joining the convent under false pretenses. The embedded narrative thus

[75] Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464) was well known for his substantial monetary support of culture and the arts in Florence during his lifetime.
[76] *Liber Facetiarum* was actually first published in 1470 – eleven years after Poggio's death – making it impossible that Medici would have seen the collection. It is plausible, however, that Medici, as a close friend of Poggio, might have read these tales before their publication.
[77] Titus Maccius Plautus (254-284 BC) was a Roman comic playwright.

concludes happily: the young woman, free of her obligation to the church, marries her beloved, and Poggio returns to Italy with his precious manuscript. It is the less-than-happy circumstances of the frame narrative itself, however, that I find particularly compelling.

My analysis of *Plautus im Nonnenkloster* focuses on the conditions under which Poggio narrates the novella's *Binnengeschichte*. Though Medici does beg Poggio to tell the group a new tale, he is not motivated by his love of humorous stories alone; rather, Medici seeks to cheer Poggio in the wake of a family scandal, and distract him from his sorrows:[78] one of Poggio's sons has recently committed an act, "die nahe an Raub und Diebstahl grenzte," thereby inflicting both shame and debt upon his father. Poggio, aware of the shadow his gloomy mood is casting upon the group, agrees to share an unpublished comical tale that was not included in his famous collection. After he has concluded his story of the manuscript and convent, Poggio announces that this *Facezia inedita* is not the only gift he will bestow upon Medici that day – Poggio also gives his friend the Plautus codex, which he had originally intended to bequeath Medici in his will. After his son's recent deceit, however, Poggio worries about the fate of the manuscript if left in his sons' hands: "Doch – seufzte Poggio melancholisch – wer weiß, ob meine Söhne meinen letzten Willen ehren würden?"[79] Poggio's uncertainty here, I argue, is crucial to our understanding of Meyer's novella, for this moment retroactively clarifies, on the final page of the text, the primary concern of the novella: transmission.

Poggio's disclosure of his concerns at this late moment demands a revised interpretation of the earlier embedded narrative. This narrative strategy reflects Meyer's own practices as an author of historical novellas, which simultaneously offer new insights to past events while also speaking to concerns about the present and future. Let us consider again the conditions of the

[78] "'Erzählend und schlürfend' – [Cosmus] deutete auf den Becher – 'wirst du dein Leid vergessen!'" (*HA*, 11:133).
[79] Ibid., 163

frame narrative: unlike *Das Amulett*, Meyer does not account for the frame in this novella. Rather than relying on historiographical methods by presenting the novella as a source text, Meyer instead utilizes classical generic techniques of the novella, and focuses on the production and reception of the embedded narrative. Meyer even explicitly draws attention to the question of genre as Poggio begins the embedded narrative: "'Meine Facetie,' parodierte Poggio die den italienischen Novellen gewöhnlich voranstehende breite Inhaltsangabe, 'handelt von zweit Kreuzen…"[80] Meyer's overt engagement with the literary tradition of the novella (a genre that first rose to popularity during the Renaissance, via Boccaccio's *Decameron*) contributes to the overall project of the *Vergegenwärtigung* of the past that functions as a governing principle in the novella. The premise of the embedded narrative is, after all, Poggio's attempt to locate a text believed to be lost to history, while the embedded narrative itself constitutes an unpublished tale of Poggio's own. Medici's success in convincing Poggio to relate this story, and Poggio's triumphant retrieval of the Plautus codex thus echo the translator's project in *Das Amulett*, the unearthing of the statue in "Der Marmorknabe," and Dante's recovery of the gravestone in *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*, all of which bring a lost cultural artifact to light.

The nature of the artifact and the conditions of its recovery differ, of course, across these four texts: in *Plautus*, for example, the Plautus codex is not at risk of being lost to history; rather, it is first actively concealed by a malicious nun, who has no concept of its cultural significance, and then in potential danger of being withheld by Poggio's wayward son instead of being given to Medici after Poggio's death. And while *Das Amulett* and *Plautus* both focus on the (re)-discovery of written works, "Der Marmorknabe" and *Die Hochzeit* each depict the retrieval of concrete objects. Yet, the treatment of the objects in the latter two texts is distinctly literary: as discussed earlier, Dante effectively treats the gravestone in *Die Hochzeit* as a text, first by

[80] Ibid., 135

removing it from the cemetery and placing it in a library, and then by developing its brief inscription into the tale of the embedded narrative. And while Dante's extended "reading" of the inscription may be an instance of oral narration, Meyer signals that it too has a literary quality: "'Ich streiche die Narren Ezzelins,' unterbrach sich Dante mit einer griffelhaltenden Gebärde, als schriebe er seine Fabel, statt sie zu sprechen, wie er tat..."[81] Meyer takes a somewhat different approach in "Der Marmorknabe": rather than treating the statue as a text, Meyer instead drops it into literary history by setting the poem in "der Capuletti Vigna," and placing the recognizable figure of Julia at the site of its excavation.

These four works, though but a small sample of Meyer's larger oeuvre, reflect the extent of Meyer's concern with the status of the written text, and its role in the process of cultural transmission. It should be no surprise that Meyer returned to the figures of the Renaissance so frequently, for their project was also a distinctly literary one. Consider, for example, that Renaissance humanism was understood at the time not as an ideological movement, but rather as a "body of literary knowledge and linguistic skill based on the 'revival of good letters,' which was a revival of a late-antique philology and grammar."[82] For the early humanists and Meyer, the recovery and reinvigoration of historical texts is about more than simply saving these works from being forgotten; rather, their projects strive to form a connection between the past and the present, and through this connection, establish cultural tradition. The constitution of tradition lies at the heart of Meyer's work, and unites the various modes of transmission encountered in this chapter: the recovery and study of lost texts and objects, the historical project of *Vergegenwärtigung*, the use of (pseudo)translation, and even the question of legacy, as seen in the familial dynamics of Schadau and Poggio in their respective novellas. Read in this light,

[81] Ibid., 35
[82] Peter Partner, *Renaissance Rome, Portrait of a Society 1500–1559* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 14–15.

Meyer's works, particularly his collection of historical novellas, unite the concerns of poetic realism (the limits of representation, objectivity) with a deeper cultural concern about the constitution of tradition, and the continued transmission of cultural and intellectual knowledge to future generations.

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