THE TOPOGRAPHY OF MODERNITY

Karl Philipp Moritz and the Space of Autonomy

Elliott **Schreiber**

The Topography of Modernity

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For my mother, Mona Espy Schreiber
and in memory of my father, Eugene Joseph Schreiber

What he enjoyed most of all was to burn down a city built out of little paper houses and afterwards contemplate the remaining heap of ashes with solemn gravity and melancholy.

Indeed, when a house actually did burn down one night in the city where his parents lived, he felt, despite his terror, a kind of secret wish that it might be a long time before the fire was extinguished.

This wish was not at all based on schadenfreude, but arose from an obscure premonition of great changes, emigrations, and revolutions, in which all things would assume a very different shape and the previous uniformity would end.

Das allergrößte Vergnügen machte es ihm, wenn er eine aus kleinen papiernen Häusern erbauete Stadt verbrennen, und dann nachher mit feierlichem Ernst und Wehmut den zurückgebliebenen Aschenhaufen betrachten konnte.

Ja als in der Stadt, wo seine Eltern wohnten, einmal wirklich in der Nacht ein Haus abbrannte, so empfand er bei allem Schreck eine Art von geheimem Wunsche, daß das Feuer nicht sobald gelöscht werden möchte.

Dieser Wunsch hatte nichts weniger als Schadenfreude zum Grunde, sondern entstand aus einer dunklen Ahndung von großen Veränderungen, Auswanderungen und Revolutionen, wo alle Dinge eine ganz andre Gestalt bekommen, und die bisherige Einförmigkeit aufhören würde.

—Karl Philipp Moritz, *Anton Reiser*

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The Topography of Modernity

Introduction

Shifting Perspectives

In 1785, the journal *Berlinische Monatschrift* published a short essay that revolutionized aesthetic theory. The work of art, it contends, comprises a whole that is absolutely complete in itself. That is to say, in contrast to the mechanical arts, works of fine art serve no external purpose; rather, each is guided solely by an inner purposiveness. Five years before Immanuel Kant's Third Critique, then, this succinct essay posits the first radical concept of aesthetic autonomy.

The author of this essay, Karl Philipp Moritz, was at the time a twenty-eight-year-old writer, editor, and teacher living in Berlin. By the time of his death eight years later, he had produced a highly innovative and eclectic body of work, including his best-known text, the "psychological novel" *Anton Reiser;* the novels *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie* (Andreas Hartknopf: An Allegory) and *Andreas Hartknopfs Predigerjahre* (Andreas Hartknopf's Preacher Years), revered by the romantic author Jean Paul as well as by the modernist Arno Schmidt;[1] the first journal of empirical psychology in Germany; important books on the German language, on

1. Jean Paul numbered the *Hartknopf* novels among the so-called *Schoos-Bücher* (lap-books) that he knew by heart. See Jean Paul's letter to Moritz's brother Johann Christian Conrad Moritz of October 30, 1795, in *Jean Pauls Sämtliche Werke,* 3.2:124. In a radio feature in 1956, on the occasion of the two-hundred-year anniversary of Moritz's birth, Arno Schmidt made an impassioned case for reprinting these novels, for "ingenious books are not so richly abundant in our Germany that one can frivolously allow even a single one of them to go out of print!" ("Die Schreckensmänner," 390).

prosody, and on style; a popular narrative of his travels in England; a classical mythology that is considered "the point of departure for all contemporary studies of myth";[2] and several further treatises on aesthetics, written during and after his two-year Italian journey, foremost among them the essay "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen" (On the Formative Imitation of the Beautiful). This treatise develops the concept of aesthetic autonomy introduced in the essay of 1785 and has become widely known through the lengthy excerpt included by Goethe in his *Italian Journey.* It was among the foundational texts of Weimar classicism and was pivotal for the development of early romanticism.

The classicist bent of Moritz's later writings notwithstanding, I wish to argue that his work is best regarded as presenting a seminal description of modernity. Following the social thought of Max Weber, I regard modernity as the differentiation of society into a multiplicity of "value spheres." As conceived by Weber, these spheres include religion, science, politics, economy, and art, each of which is guided by its own rationality, that is, its own "*internal and lawful autonomy.*"[3] Moritz's concept of the inner purposiveness of the artwork provides a model for understanding the autonomy of modern value spheres in general, or what he calls *menschliche Einrichtungen* (*Schriften,* 50), and what I shall refer to as institutions. Apart from the work of art and the mythological narrative, which Moritz views in similar terms, this study focuses on three institutions that figure prominently in his writings: those of education, politics, and individuality. For Moritz, each of these institutions, like the work of art, forms a whole that is complete in itself.

The image of the sphere allows Weber to visualize autonomy; Moritz conceives of *Einrichtungen*—a term that already carries a strong spatial valence[4]—in even more pronounced spatial terms. In several instances, the autonomous spaces he describes, such as the edifice of the state, are metaphorical. Frequently, though, they comprise actual, material spaces, such as the frame that isolates a picture from its environment; the natural history cabinet through which the child learns to order things in a rational manner; the public buildings and squares in which a polity assembles; or the domestic space that houses individuality. Taken together, his analyses of these and related spaces, both metaphorical and material, comprise an early topography of modernity.

This topography is distinguished by the lack of a single vantage point from which a synthesis between the various institutions can be established. It anticipates instead what Weber terms "the irreconcilability of the ultimately *possible* standpoints

2. Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol,* 163.

3. *From Max Weber,* 328 (original emphasis). Weber's term is *Eigengesetzlichkeit.* See Weber, "Zwischenbetrachtung," 541.

4. Johann Christoph Adelung's late eighteenth-century dictionary defines the verb *einrichten* as follows: "1. To arrange (*richten*) in a room. . . . 2. To set in the proper direction (*Richtung*)." The definition of *Einrichtung* given in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* points in the direction of institution: "2) *institutio, ordo:* the *einrichtung* of the house, of the business."

toward life, and hence the inability to bring their struggle to a final conclusion."[5] At different points in his work, Moritz elevates particular institutions to the status of an ultimate end. According to his aesthetic treatise of 1785, the true appreciation of a work of art requires the sacrifice of individuality.[6] A year later, however, in an untitled essay published in the inaugural issue of his journal, *Denkwürdigkeiten,* he presents the work of art not as an ultimate end, but rather as the means to the higher purpose of ennobling the human mind.[7] This same essay demands that the *individual* be regarded as a noble being constituting an autonomous whole, even at the expense of the state, which treats the individual as merely a subordinate part of its own greater whole.[8] Two years later, however, his treatise on the formative imitation of the beautiful maintains that each citizen must be useful to the state, while the state itself, as a complete whole, need not be useful to anything outside itself.[9] In short, like the figures in his novels and travel narratives, who constantly move from one place to another for the sake of acquiring a new point of view (see fig. 1), Moritz shifts vantage points throughout his work, adopting conflicting "institutional" perspectives that resist a higher synthesis.[10]

An essay that Moritz entitled "Gesichtspunkt" (Point of View, 1786) presents a concise reflection on the inevitability of this continual perspectival shift. Human beings, he argues, possess an instinctive tendency toward truth, just as spiders have an instinct to position themselves in the center of their web (*Schriften,* 10). But our tendency to move in the direction of "the right point of view" merely results in a proliferation of mutually incompatible perspectives: "There is probably no art, no science, for example, that has not been made, in someone's mind, into the purpose [*Zweck*] of everything else.—A competition can thus now arise among the various intellects on earth—in that one person always finds a better point of view from which to view things than another person" (11). Moritz's thought itself enacts this

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5. For greater accuracy, I have adapted Gerth and Mills's translation of Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber,* 152 (original emphasis). For the original German, see Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 608.

6. "In that instant, we sacrifice our individual, limited existence to a kind of higher existence" (*Schriften,* 5).

7. "We thus now have a fixed point of view to which we can relate everything—the ennobling and refining of works of fine art are only of value insofar as the human mind can be ennobled and refined by regarding these works of art" (*Schriften,* 16).

8. "The individual human being must never be regarded merely as a *useful* being, but at the same time as a *noble* one that has its unique value in itself, even if the entire edifice of the state constitution, of which he is a part, were to collapse around him" (*Schriften,* 16; original emphasis).

9. "Thus every citizen of a state must have a certain relation to the state, or be useful to the state; but the state itself, insofar as it constitutes a whole in itself, need not have any further relation to anything outside itself, and thus need not be of any further use" (*Schriften,* 71).

10. In an essay in *Die Zeit* entitled "10 Gründe, Karl Philipp Moritz zu lesen" that celebrates the contradictory currents in Moritz's work, Benedikt Erenz cleverly reads Jean Paul's characterization of Moritz as a *Grenz-Genie* (borderline genius) as meaning "a genius at border-crossing" (ein Genie der Grenzüberschreitung). Erenz's gloss applies perfectly to Moritz's constant movement between institutions.

Figure 1. Title-page engraving by Harry John Penningh in Part 3 of *Anton Reiser*. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

multiplication of points of view; again and again, he changes perspectives, positioning now one institution, now another as the central vantage point from which all others are to be regarded.

Moritz's conception of institutions reveals that they bear within themselves a further possibility of change: surprisingly, precisely as spatial constructs, they are not static, but rather are open to transformation. This is Anton Reiser's insight in the passage I have chosen as an epigraph. As a young boy, Reiser's greatest delight lies in a curious game that Moritz himself reportedly loved to play: building an entire city out of paper houses, and then setting it on fire.[11] When one night, in Reiser's hometown, a real house catches fire, he secretly wishes that the fire will

11. Johann Christian Conrad Moritz gives another detailed description of this game to Jean Paul in his letter of August 22, 1795, counting the game among his brother's "eccentricities" (*Sonderbarkeiten*). He suggests that Moritz, "like a child," continued to play this game for hours at a time, even into his adult years. See Eybisch, *Anton Reiser,* 273.

continue burning, not out of schadenfreude, but rather out of "an obscure premonition of great changes, emigrations, and revolutions, in which all things would assume a very different shape and the previous uniformity would end" (Moritz, *Werke,* 1:105).[12] For Moritz, not merely the city and the home, but all institutions are spaces that are open to radical change. To use a key term that recurs throughout his work, each comprises a *Spielraum*—a word commonly used to denote latitude or scope, and that literally means "play-space"—that can be destroyed, as well as reconstituted in different ways. Moritz is thus not only one of the earliest thinkers to articulate the autonomy of modern institutions, but also among the first to present their history as one of recurring crisis.

Moritz's institutional theory departs, in both senses of the word, from that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who conceives of modern life in terms of strict confinement within society's institutions. Early in his treatise, *Emile, or On Education* (1762), Rousseau vividly portrays this state of affairs: "All our wisdom consists in servile prejudices. All our practices are only subjection, impediment, and constraint. Civil man is born, lives and dies in slavery. At his birth he is sewed in swaddling clothes; at his death he is nailed in a coffin. So long as he keeps his human shape, he is enchained by our institutions" (42–43). The extreme spatial constraint depicted in the images of the swaddling clothes and the sealed coffin highlights the stifling confinement that, in Rousseau's view, marks institutions generally. He characterizes this confinement as absolute: it encompasses our entire wisdom, our entire practice, and spans our whole lives, from birth to death. Nevertheless, he famously posits two forms of freedom situated beyond the confines of modern society: the "natural freedom" of the state of nature, and the "civic freedom" of an ideal political state grounded in the general will of its citizenry. Rousseau envisions various routes to achieving one or both forms of freedom: revolution; an emancipatory education; and the individual's retreat into solitude.[13]

Moritz, who revered Rousseau (and particularly *Emile*), inherited from him a keen consciousness of the constraints of institutions. He makes these constraints especially tangible in his depiction of societal spaces in *Anton Reiser,* such as in his visceral description of a claustrophobic "drying room"—"the semi-subterranean hole into which one entered more by crawling than by walking" (*Werke,* 1:144)—where the twelve-year-old Anton is forced to work nights during his apprenticeship to a hatmaker. While sharpening Moritz's critical sensibility for institutional constraints, Rousseau's work also whetted Moritz's desire for what his psychological novel terms "limitless freedom" *(Werke,* 1:421). However, such unrestricted freedom

12. Throughout this study, I have drawn on the outstanding translation of *Anton Reiser* by Ritchie Robertson in my own translations of Moritz's novel, altering it where necessary for emphasis and accuracy.

13. For an illuminating discussion of these three emancipatory paths, see chapters 2 and 3 in Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau.* Starobinski argues that Rousseau privileges the retreat into solitude as a way of overcoming society's obstructions.

exists for Moritz at an infinite remove. In contrast to Rousseau's utopian thought, grounded in the Archimedean points of nature and the general will, Moritz underscores the freedom that is realizable within the bounds of society: to move between the conflicting perspectives afforded by society's institutions, and to set each of these institutions in motion by radically transforming them.

Rousseau, too, conceives of the possibility of extreme change, notoriously prognosticating in *Emile:* "We are approaching a state of crisis and the age of revolutions. . . . All that men have made, men can destroy" (194). In *Critique and Crisis,* the intellectual historian Reinhart Koselleck reads this assertion as a key expression of a powerful trajectory of Enlightenment thought that culminated in the French Revolution: the effort to abolish the boundary (as theorized by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*) between the public institution of the state and the private realm of moral principles by occupying the space of the political with a moral order (158–86). The notion of crisis implicit in Moritz's work is different; it involves a decisive transformation of institutional structures, whereby "all things would assume a very different shape," but not the dissolution of the boundaries that separate them.

If Moritz's work both draws on and reconceptualizes Rousseau's approach to institutions, it also both prefigures and challenges contemporary theories of institutions. Michel Foucault's portrayal in *Discipline and Punish* of the "disciplinary institutions" (173) that emerged in the eighteenth century—including the clinic, the factory, the military camp, the modern school, and the prison—resonates particularly strongly with Moritz's work. Like Moritz, Foucault is keenly attentive to the spatial structure of institutions, most famously in his discussion of Bentham's Panopticon. In two crucial respects, however, Moritz offers a different take on institutions. First, where Foucault's "complete and austere institutions" (231) leave no room for resistance, Moritz stresses that institutions are in fact capable of being transfigured, despite the coercive power they exercise. Secondly, where Foucault underscores the homology between seemingly disparate institutions, Moritz instead emphasizes their heterogeneity: while they are structured in similar ways, institutions are centered on different, and often conflicting, ends.

This recognition of irreconcilable heterogeneity also places Moritz's conception of institutions at variance with that of Jürgen Habermas. Following Weber, Habermas depicts modernity as a process, well under way by the end of the eighteenth century, whereby science, politics, morality, art, religion, and law each become increasingly rationalized and "institutionally differentiated."[14] However, Habermas goes well beyond Weber in further characterizing modernity as an as-yet "incomplete project" aimed at integrating these institutions with one another and with what he terms the "lifeworld," or the practice of everyday life from which they

14. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* 19.

have become estranged.[15] Modern history, as Habermas sees it, is littered with failed attempts at such a synthesis. In particular, he points to efforts—from Schiller's aesthetics to romanticism to the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century—to sublate (*aufheben*) the institution of art and thereby catalyze a reconciliation. Habermas contends, though, that these attempts at sublation have merely reified the very institution of art that they seek to overcome.[16] In developing the theory of a communicative reason that "circumscribes the universe of a common form of life," he attempts to establish a more effective way of reconciling "the diremptions of modernity," and thereby of completing what he regards as modernity's overarching project.[17]

Though Moritz's work envisions the prospect of a grand totality, it ultimately resists its gravitational pull. To be sure, the aesthetic treatises he published during and following his Italian journey (1786–88) conceive of art as an effort to transcend our confines and to encompass the most absolute of wholes, "the one, true totality" (*Schriften,* 73; das einzige, wahre Ganze). However, he simultaneously reveals that this project is bound to remain forever incomplete. The artist, he contends, can never succeed in circumscribing the sublime whole within the finite boundaries of the work of art; the most he can accomplish is to indicate, within the artwork itself, its incommensurability in relation to this absolute whole. As he asserts in *Fragmente aus dem Tagebuch eines Geistersehers* (Fragments from the Journal of a Ghost-Seer, 1787), "The great totality is not for us" (*Werke,* 1:729; Das große Ganze ist nicht für uns). In emphasizing his view of the unattainability of such a totality and the irreconcilability of modern institutions, my study shows Moritz's work to be in tension with Habermas's teleological treatment of modernity. Similarly, my study departs from a dominant current in Moritz scholarship that regards his writings on art as presenting an "aesthetic theodicy," or as offering "aesthetic solutions" to modernity's contradictions.[18]

With its recognition of the irreducible differentiation of institutions, Moritz's thought instead anticipates key features of the social theory of one of Habermas's most incisive critics, Niklas Luhmann. Luhmann conceives of modern society as a system that is comprised of a number of autonomous—or, in his preferred

15. Habermas, "Die Moderne—ein unvollendetes Projekt," 453. Habermas's essay is based on the somewhat shorter address that he delivered upon being given the Adorno Prize, which has been translated under the title "Modernity versus Postmodernity."

16. Habermas, "Die Moderne—ein unvollendetes Projekt," 457–60. See also his "Modernity versus Postmodernity," 9–11.

17. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* 324, 85.

18. See especially Saine's insightful and influential study, *Die ästhetische Theodizee.* See also Allkemper's *Ästhetische Lösungen;* the chapter on Moritz's aesthetics in Dumont's *German Ideology;* and the chapter on Moritz in Fohrmann's *Schiffbruch mit Strandrecht.* Dumont reads Moritz's "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen" as a "dramatic theodicy" that foreshadows the Hegelian project of *Aufhebung* (75). Fohrmann similarly maintains that, for Moritz, "all paradoxes that determine the problematic of modern subjectivity are now to be sublated in the beautiful" (86).

designation, "autopoeitic"—subsystems that have evolved through functional differentiation. These subsystems operate by drawing distinctions that are uniquely theirs—for instance, between what is beautiful and what is not, or between what is true and what is false. Absent from Luhmann's description of modern society is any putative "unifying perspective" from which these different ways of observing the world can be synthesized into a "final unity."[19] As a result, he contends that modern society offers "no common (correct, objective) approach to a pre-existing world."[20] This formulation recalls the perspectivism that is described by Moritz in his essay on point of view and that is brought into play throughout his work. At the same time, however, Moritz's perspectivism remains distinct from that theorized by Luhmann in that it does not entirely supersede an ontology premised on a correct approach to the world; it instead assumes a "right point of view," but one that is always beyond the horizon, perpetually deferred through every attempt to attain it.

A further significant distinction between Luhmann's and Moritz's views concerns the spatial constitution of modern institutions. According to Luhmann, social and psychic systems do not have "*material* borders in *space,*" as do biological systems; their borders are "not material artifacts, but instead are forms with two sides."[21] Moritz's work, by contrast, helps us recognize the essential role played by spatial structures in the foundation, operation, and transformation of institutions. In so doing, his writings point toward the assertion of space in the social theory of Anthony Giddens, Edward W. Soja, Derek Gregory, and many other contemporary thinkers associated with the so-called spatial turn.[22] These theorists have sought to counteract what Soja describes as the "virtual annihilation of space by time in critical social thought and discourse" in the wake of nineteenth-century historicism (*Postmodern Geographies,* 31). In carrying out this program, however, they tend to overlook contributions to the theory of societal space that antedate the twentieth century.[23] My study hopes to contribute to a greater historical consciousness within the current spatial turn by examining the work of one of the keenest

19. Luhmann, *Theories of Distinction,* 89; Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity,* 11.

20. Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity,* 10.

21. Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft,* 1:45 (original emphasis). Fritz Breithaupt's incisive reflections on modern history (or history as it has been understood since the eighteenth century) as fundamentally a history of institutions similarly conceive of "institutions as mental constructs and not material realities." Breithaupt, "Anonymous Forces of History," 159.

22. See, e.g., Giddens, *Constitution of Society;* Soja, *Postmodern Geographies;* and Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations.* The literature on the "spatial turn" is large and growing. Useful recent overviews include the volumes *Thinking Space,* ed. Crang and Thrift; and *Spatial Turn,* ed. Döring and Thielmann.

23. Thus, it is revealing that the volume *Thinking Space* groups the chapters on the spatial theories of Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Ludwig Wittgenstein under the heading "Ur-texts and starting points."

observers and theorists of modern institutional spaces as they arose already in the eighteenth century.[24]

Each of the following chapters examines Moritz's analysis of the spaces that structure a particular institution. I begin in chapter 1 with the space of the artwork, in particular the literary work of art. I argue that Moritz, in an engagement with Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther) extending over many years, advances a theory of the artwork as a self-enclosed space. He does so in response to the modern experience of time as perpetual change, as expressed in Goethe's vision of the transformative instant, or *Augenblick*. The work of art, conceived in terms of spatial closure, offers a refuge from modernity's incessant upheaval; Moritz's corresponding reading of Goethe's novel in effect freezes the transformative instant of time as the central point in the space of the novel. But his understanding of art itself transforms over time, shifting from a protoformalist aesthetics toward an aesthetics of artistic production, one that emphasizes the artist's intimation of the eternal whole of nature in the fleeting instants before the creation of the work. This sense of eternal totality, he shows, is paradoxically ephemeral and at once stimulates and defies artistic representation. What he ultimately holds to be exemplary about Goethe's novel is its attempt to draw a verbal contour around nature's sublime whole, and its simultaneous acknowledgment of the impossibility of succeeding in this task. Artistic production, as Moritz conceives it, turns out to be an open-ended process, one that cannot find closure within the boundaries of any given work of art.

In chapter 2, I turn to a space that is closely analogous to that of the work of art, namely the space of mythology as construed in Moritz's *Götterlehre oder Mythologische Dichtungen der Alten* (Doctrine of the Gods or Mythological Fictions of the Ancients). Here, too, Moritz develops an aesthetics of containment, albeit one that aims to contain not the transformative instant, but rather the chaotic imagination. I contend that Moritz's mythological theory, too, arises out of his intense engagement with Goethe's work. In particular, it constitutes a profound reflection on Goethe's turn to an aesthetics grounded in the classical virtue of calm (*Ruhe*), as embodied in Goethe's revision of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (Iphigenia in Tauris). Moritz's conception of the self-contained artwork, as articulated in his *Versuch einer deutschen Prosodie* (Attempt at a German Prosody), underlies this turn to classicism. But if Goethe already expresses skepticism about whether the classical project can be completed, Moritz's *Götterlehre* shows why: in the very act of containing itself in classical creations such as Greek mythology, or in neoclassical works such as *Iphigenie,* the imagination also paradoxically sets itself free. That is to say, in Moritz's terms, the classical work of art simultaneously comprises a

24. In the German context, two fascinating recent studies that advance such a historical consciousness within the current discourse of space in the humanities and social sciences are Tang's *Geographic Imagination of Modernity* and Purdy's *On the Ruins of Babel.*

Ruheplatz, a place where the imagination attains containment and rest, and a *Spielraum,* a space for its boundless play.

Chapters 3 and 4 move from the spaces of art and myth to those of cognition and education. I argue that Moritz's *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik* (Attempt at a Small, Practical Children's Logic) intervenes sharply in an epistemological and pedagogical tradition extending from Descartes, Locke, and Rousseau to the educational reform movement of Philanthropism. The Philanthropists advocate a method of teaching that would promote a natural order of cognitive development and liberate the child from the confines of textual and verbal authority. Moritz radically questions the possibility of this emancipatory project, showing that all cognition takes place within prefabricated spaces—whether understood metaphorically, as the space of language, or in a more literal fashion, as the space of teaching devices, such as the natural history cabinet, or of the house, where children learn how to order the objects of the surrounding world. Cognitive freedom or mobility lies not in transcending these spaces altogether; rather, it lies in the possibility that these spaces, as *Spielräume,* can be destroyed and rebuilt in alternate configurations.

Chapter 5 traces a similar dynamic at work in Moritz's analysis of political spaces in *Reisen eines Deutschen in England im Jahre 1782* (A German's Travels in England in the Year 1782) and in his political theory in the *Kinderlogik.* The *Reisen* sharply contrasts England's politics of popular participation with the exclusivity and subordination characteristic of Prussian absolutism. At the same time, though, it exposes rigid hierarchical structures that subtend representative government in England, focusing on how these structures are spatially articulated in the House of Commons. The *Kinderlogik* pushes these critical observations further, employing an extended architectural metaphor to suggest that political stratification does not simply result from limited electoral representation; rather, it is inherent in the system of representation, and constitutive of statehood as such. As with absolute cognitive freedom, Moritz does not ultimately hold absolute political freedom to be attainable. Nevertheless, he affirms the possibility of transforming the hierarchical architecture of the state, in a never-ending search for a common political space to which all members of the state have full and equal access.

Chapter 6, the final chapter, moves from the public space of the political to the private space of the self, as conceived in Moritz's *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde* (Magazine of Empirical Psychology). I argue that he develops two competing models of the self, each structured around the metaphor of pressure. The first model is that of the expressive self, whose character imprints itself on the world. The second is that of the impressionable self, which takes shape through the impressions it receives from its environment. But Moritz encounters a problem in attempting to substantiate either model: neither the expressions of the first hypothetical self nor the impressions of the second can be directly observed. Ultimately, he shows the self

to be a “black box” that, in eluding empirical observation, occasions the drafting and erasure of one theoretical model after another.

From the spaces of art and mythology to those of education, politics, and the self, Moritz’s thought is continually on the move. Though he conceives of these institutions in terms of space, they are not therefore static, but rather constantly open to change. His perspectival shifts from one institution to another, and his insight into the process of institutional transformation, are the subject of this book, and together they make Moritz one of the most modern thinkers of the eighteenth century.

PART I

The Spaces of Art and Myth

1

Toward an Aesthetics of the Sublime *Augenblick*

Moritz Reading Die Leiden des jungen Werthers

One of the hallmarks of modernity is its restless and relentless pace of change, whose origins social historians have traced to the second half of the eighteenth century.[1] Already before the seismic shifts of the French Revolution, there emerged in Germany a conception of *Neuzeit,* a time that was felt to be always radically new.[2] The pace of change was first set in this period not by a political revolution, but rather by a revolution in text production and reading.[3] "Never before has more been written and more been read," marveled Christoph Martin Wieland in 1779 (quoted in Ward, *Book Production,* 59). Decried by critics of the time as a reading addiction (*Lesesucht*) or reading rage (*Lesewut*), a new, "extensive" reading mode on the part of the burgeoning *Bildungsbürgertum,* or educated middle class, increasingly displaced the traditional practice of "intensive" reading. The latter limited itself to a canon comprising a few authoritative texts, mostly devotional in nature, that were held to embody eternal values and were read repeatedly, often ritualistically according to the cycle of the religious calendar (Schön, *Der Verlust*

1. See Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air.*
2. See Koselleck, *Futures Past,* xxiv, 253.
3. Though for a consideration of the political implications of the new literary public sphere, see Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis.* For surveys of the reading and publishing revolution in Germany, see Engelsing, "Die Perioden der Lesergeschichte"; Kiesel and Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur;* Schön, *Der Verlust der Sinnlichkeit;* and Ward, *Book Production.*

der Sinnlichkeit, 40–41). The extensive mode of reading exploded the bounds of this canon and shattered the cyclical time of repetitive reading into a series of transient instants, or *Augenblicke*.[4] That is to say, faith in an eternity that envelops the here and now was eroded not only by *what* was read in the Enlightenment, but also by *how* the escalating number of texts were read.[5]

The new practice of extensive reading both fueled and was fueled by a dramatic rise in book production. It has been estimated that of the approximately 175,000 German titles produced in the course of the eighteenth century, fully two-thirds were published after 1760 (Kiesel and Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur,* 181). The emergence of a modern book market made it possible for the first time for German authors to emancipate themselves from their traditional patrons. They were, however, now beholden to the very market that liberated them. To meet consumers' soaring demand, the swelling ranks of authors worked against the clock to churn out texts. "If England's forte is race horses," quipped Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, "then ours is race pens" (quoted in Ward, *Book Production,* 61). Acceleration became the norm both for the consumers and for the producers of the mounting quantity of texts.

While the output of religious literature for the layman dropped precipitously, there was a surge in the production of imaginative literature, in particular the novel (Ward, *Book Production,* 33, 49). No genre stimulated the new extensive reading vogue as powerfully as the sentimental novel, whose popularity reached its height in the 1770s. Daniel Purdy has suggested that sentimental novels, by arousing readers' empathy with characters' ever-changing emotional states, drew them into a cycle of desire and momentary gratification that spurred further literary consumption.[6] The flood of emotionally gripping narratives thereby "restructured the time frame within which [the] individual reader's desires were developed, satisfied, and then replaced" (Purdy, *Tyranny of Elegance,* 39).

The most famous German sentimental novel, Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther), immediately captivated and polarized the German and wider European reading public, like no other book of its day. Having appeared at the Leipzig book fair in September 1774, by the end of the following year, it had gone through no fewer than eleven German editions (most of them pirated) and ignited a fashion for all things Werther, from his epistolary style to his mode of dress to his personal mannerisms and even, most infamously, his

4. On the modern fragmentation of time into discrete moments through the reception of print media, see Engelsing, "Die Perioden der Lesergeschichte," 134–35; Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft,* 2:1001, 1008; and McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy,* 241.

5. On the imbrication of temporality and eternity in the premodern era, see Poulet, *Studies in Human Time,* 3–8.

6. Purdy, *Tyranny of Elegance,* 35.

suicide.[7] In his autobiography, Goethe attributes the astonishing success of his first novel to its timeliness: "weil es genau in die rechte Zeit traf" (because it appeared at exactly the right time).[8] Indeed, it struck like a lightning bolt into an age that was already electrified by the rage for reading sentimental literature. And it did so, arguably, because it gave precise expression to the modern sense of accelerating change that the reading revolution had helped create, particularly in its protagonist's powerful vision of the transformative *Augenblick* in his letter of August 18: "There is no moment that does not consume you and yours, no moment in which you are not, must be, a destroyer" (FA 1.8:106–8; Da ist kein Augenblik, der nicht dich verzehrte und die Deinigen um dich her, kein Augenblik, da du nicht ein Zerstöhrer bist, seyn mußt). From one moment to the next, nothing stays the same; the only constant of the modern age is perpetual change.

As Purdy has recounted, Goethe denounced the identificatory reading practices that his own novel aroused, and turned away from sentimentalism to embrace a "neo-classical aesthetics of artistic autonomy" with its "search for eternal laws of aesthetic form."[9] Credit for the first decisive articulation of this aesthetics goes to Karl Philipp Moritz, whom Goethe befriended in Italy. According to Martha Woodmansee, Moritz launched the concept of the autonomy of the artwork in an effort to distinguish true art from the works being mass-produced and consumed in his day at an unprecedented rate.[10] In short, the line of scholarship pursued by Purdy and Woodmansee portrays Goethe and Moritz as having sought refuge from the tumultuous waves of the revolution in reading and book production on the eternally peaceful shores of the autonomous artwork.

By contrast, I argue that Moritz inaugurated an aesthetics that at once seeks a vision of eternity, and hence a redemption from modernity's restless change, and yet recognizes that this eternity can be glimpsed only in the instant. He thereby makes one of the first and most consequential forays into what Bruno Hillebrand has identified as a particularly modern aesthetic sensibility, an "aesthetics of the instant" (*Ästhetik des Augenblicks*).[11] Moritz develops his aesthetics of the instant

7. See Boyle, *Goethe,* 1:175. Boyle here makes the intriguing suggestion that "*Werther* became a fashion because it was about a fashion," namely the fashion of reading. For an interesting recent discussion of *Werther-Fieber* as well as Goethe's response to it, see also Vaget, "Werther, the Undead." All translations from Goethe's works are my own. I have consulted the translations of *Werther* by Victor Lange and Burton Pike. I have also consulted the translation of Goethe's autobiography by John Oxenford.

8. Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke* [Frankfurter Ausgabe], 1.14:641. References to this edition of Goethe's works are henceforth noted with the abbreviation FA.

9. Purdy, *Tyranny of Elegance,* 47, 23. Chapter 2 of the present study discusses Goethe's turn to classicism.

10. Woodmansee, *Author, Art, and the Market,* 27. Woodmansee is not the first to read Moritz's concept of aesthetic autonomy as a refuge from the forces of the literary market. See in particular Fontius, "Der Autonomiegedanke bei Moritz."

11. Hillebrand, *Ästhetik des Augenblicks.* Hillebrand sees Goethe as formative for this modern aesthetic sensibility but completely disregards Moritz. For a sustained study of the role of the *Augenblick* in

as a reader through several stages of engagement with Goethe's *Werther.* In the first stage, Moritz's fictional alter ego, the teenage Anton Reiser, identifies intensely with Werther's description of the transformative *Augenblick* in his letter of August 18 precisely through a manner of reading that is itself transformative, that alters the very text it reads. Thus, though Anton's repeated reading of Goethe's novel would appear to represent a return to a traditional, intensive reading practice, it in fact merely underscores the impossibility of a stable, enduring text that the traditional practice presumes; the transformative moment of reading precludes exact repetition. In the second stage of his engagement with *Werther,* in a structural analysis of Goethe's novel, Moritz tries to overcome this transformative moment by sublating it within the timelessness of the autonomous artwork, or the work that is "complete in itself" (in sich selbst vollendet). He attempts this through a "perspectival" reading that regards the letter of August 18 as the central point around which Goethe's novel is formally structured, and that hence freezes the transformative *Augenblick* in space. In so doing, he negates the temporality held by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing to be the defining feature of the verbal medium; like visual art according to Lessing, literature in Moritz's new reading of Goethe's novel is conceived as fundamentally spatial. This solution to the transformative moment, however, proves only temporary: in the third and final stage of his engagement with *Werther,* Moritz shifts the center of gravity of his aesthetics away from the autonomous work of art, situating it instead in the *Augenblicken* just before its completion, and thereby calls that completion into question. He does so in a remarkable reading of Werther's letter of May 10 in his essay "Über ein Gemählde von Goethe" (On a Painting by Goethe), revealing how in the very first instants of artistic production, the artist intimates the sublime, eternal totality of nature. But it is an eternal totality whose perception the very act of artistic representation ruptures, and that is thus paradoxically transient, vanishing in the blink of an eye. Moritz's later aesthetics thus prefigures Immanuel Kant's concept of "negative representation" in the analytic of the sublime in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790). In sum, Moritz moves from a concern with the transformative moment of reception to a formalist, "perspectival" aesthetics that attempts to contain that moment within the contours of the autonomous artwork to an aesthetics of open-ended artistic production that struggles to represent the absolute totality intimated in sublime, unrepresentable *Augenblicken.*

Moritz's concept of the autonomy of the artwork, then, far from proving a stable refuge from the sea change in temporal sensibility brought about by modern textual production and reception practices, ultimately undermines the possibility of such a refuge. It thereby launches arguably the first truly modern aesthetics, at once envisioning and radically subverting the possibility of transcending the perpetually new time of the *Neuzeit* through artistic representation.

Goethe's work, see Anglet, *Der "ewige" Augenblick.* For an excellent alternative analysis of the Goethean *Augenblick,* see Rennie, *Speculating on the Moment.*

The Transformative *Augenblick* of Reception

Published in 1786, the second and third parts of Moritz's autobiographical novel, *Anton Reiser,* contain one of the most vivid accounts of the contemporary reception of sentimental literature, in particular of *Werther.* A little over a year before he lays eyes on Goethe's novel, in the summer of 1775, the teenage Anton is drawn into a reading frenzy that bears out Purdy's claim that sentimental literature restructures the time frame in which the reader's desires are aroused, gratified, and replaced. Anton's emotional upheaval during this *Lesewut* prepares the way for his identification with the character of Werther, particularly with his vision of the all-consuming *Augenblick.* This act of identification changes both Anton and the text in which he sees himself reflected; his reading of *Werther,* then, is itself a transformative moment.

Marginalized by his fellow pupils and neglected by his teachers, Anton finds an escape in reading novels and plays: "He went to a used book vendor [*Antiquarius*] and obtained one novel and one comedy after another, and began reading with a kind of fury" (Moritz, *Werke,* 1:254). The term *Antiquarius* is somewhat misleading, for he in fact supplies Anton with contemporary literature, particularly works in a sentimental vein, such as Lawrence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* and Johann Gottlieb Schummel's *Empfindsame Reisen durch Deutschland* (Sentimental Journeys through Germany) (256). Such works quickly supplant the classical regimen of texts that is the mainstay of his *Gymnasium* curriculum; he thus secretly reads a novel in class while his classmates study the Roman historian Livy (263), and exchanges his schoolbooks for contemporary works (254)—an exchange that is representative of a period that saw a sharp decline in the printing of Latin texts and an upsurge in texts written in the vernacular, particularly novels (Ward, *Book Production,* 29).

This exchange feeds into Anton's escalating cycle of debt and desire: the *Antiquarius* extends him credit to borrow his books, and to pay down this debt, Anton sells the *Antiquarius* his schoolbooks, which earns him a new line of credit with which he attempts to fill his ever-growing hunger for reading. These transactions occur at a dizzying speed; "before he knows it" Anton has read himself deeply into debt; and the book vendor resells his schoolbooks immediately, in Anton's presence, turning a sixfold profit (*Werke,* 1:254–55).

Instantaneous transformation characterizes not only the financial transactions around Anton's reading, but also his emotional investment in the sentimental reading material: "He lived and breathed in the dramatic world—he often shed tears there while reading, and entered by turns into the violent, raging passion of anger, fury, and revenge, and into the mild emotions of magnanimous forgiveness, triumphant benevolence, and overflowing compassion" (*Werke,* 1:256). Just as he exchanges one book for another, so Anton replaces one emotion with another, each one intense but ephemeral. His exchange of emotions is made possible by the literature he reads, which functions as a kind of sentimental currency.

Instantaneous financial and sentimental exchange intersect most clearly in an instance (and an instant) in which Anton unexpectedly receives money. The scene takes place in the home of the school's rector, where Anton is lodging, and where a guest gives a tip to a maid as well as to Anton, as though he were no more than another household servant: "Reiser had a strange feeling as he took the money; it was as though he had been stabbed, and the initial pain suddenly wore off—for he thought of the *bookseller,* and in that moment [*Augenblick*] everything else was forgotten—with the money he could read more than twenty books—his injured pride had made one last protest, and was now defeated" (*Werke,* 1:264; original emphasis). In the instant (*Augenblick*) in which Anton accepts the money, he exchanges it in his mind for over twenty books. This prompts a further exchange, this time one of emotions, as his injured pride is suddenly replaced by relief. The mere thought of reading, then, triggers the rapid conversion of one sentiment into another. From this moment (*Augenblick*) on, the passage continues, "Reiser paid no more heed to himself. . . . By contrast, he sympathized warmly with the fate of a Miss Sara Sampson or a Romeo and Juliet" (264–65). Any sense of selfhood thus vanishes as Anton trades in his injured pride, losing himself in the sentiments of the characters with whom he identifies.

Anton believes he finds his entire range of alternating emotions reflected in Goethe's *Werther,* which he encounters in the summer of 1775, shortly after its appearance: "Reiser believed that he recognized himself in *Werther* with all his thoughts and feelings, except for the item of love" (*Werke,* 1:336). While unable to empathize with Werther's unrequited love, he identifies all the more with his other ideas and sentiments. Of these, Moritz highlights the notion of the transient and transformative *Augenblick.* Anton sees reflected in *Werther* precisely the instantaneous transformation that he experiences in the act of reading—not least, in his own transformative act of reading *Werther.*

The first quote from *Werther* that Moritz singles out articulates succinctly the idea of radical transformation: "Here he [Anton] found a continuation of his reflections on life and existence—"*Who can say, that is, when everything flees by like the wind?*"—That was the very thought that for so long had made his own existence seem like an illusion, a dream, a deception" (*Werke,* 1:334–35; original emphasis). The question cited here is drawn from Werther's letter of August 18, quoted below in its immediate context in the first edition of Goethe's novel:

> A curtain has been drawn from before my soul, and the scene of never-ending life is transforming before me into the abyss of the eternally open grave. Can you say: That is! when everything passes, when everything rolls by like the wind, and the strength of its existence so seldom lasts, is torn away, alas, into the torrent, submerged, and dashed against rocks. There is no moment that does not consume you and yours, no moment in which you are not, must be, a destroyer. (FA 1.8:106–8)

> Es hat sich vor meiner Seele wie ein Vorhang weggezogen, und der Schauplatz des unendlichen Lebens verwandelt sich vor mir in den Abgrund des ewig offnen Grabs. Kannst du sagen: Das ist! da alles vorübergeht, da alles mit der Wetterschnelle vorüber rollt, so selten die ganze Kraft seines Daseyns ausdauert, ach in den Strom fortgerissen, untergetaucht und an Felsen zerschmettert wird. Da ist kein Augenblik, der nicht dich verzehrte und die Deinigen um dich her, kein Augenblik, da du nicht ein Zerstöhrer bist, seyn mußt.

Werther here envisions a radical transformation from never-ending life to an eternally open grave. As indicated by the adjective "open," this transformation does not end in a closed, terminal state but rather opens into perpetual change. Thus, in the very instant one exclaims the words "That is!" the referent of the pronoun "that" is already passing. The same applies to the referent of the personal pronoun in the question "Can you say: That is!" In the split second it takes you to utter this exclamation, you are transformed, for there is no instant (*Augenblik*) that would not consume you. Indeed, not only "that" and "you," but *everything* is in the process of passing.

This process of transformation is articulated stylistically through a series of transformative repetitions. Goethe thus has Werther repeat a subordinate clause, but with a twist: "when everything passes, when everything rolls by like the wind" (da alles vorübergeht, da alles mit der Wetterschnelle vorüber rollt). While the clausal structure is repeated, the verb in the first clause ("passes" [vorübergeht]) itself goes by, overtaken by a verb phrase that indicates a far quicker passing ("rolls by [vorüber rollt] like the wind"). The series of transformative repetitions continues when the exclamation "Das ist!" (That is!) is echoed and at the same time altered in the first two words of the next sentence: "*Da ist* kein Augenblick, der nicht dich verzehrte" (There is no moment that does not consume you). Next, the second part of this same sentence repeats the antecedent and relative clause structure of the first part, while reversing the meaning: "no moment in which you are not a destroyer" (kein Augenblik, da du nicht ein Zerstöhrer bist). Here, the moment in which you are the victim transforms into one in which you are the perpetrator of destruction. Finally, even the copula ("are" [bist]) at the end of this clause is repeated with a difference in the modal construction ("must be" [seyn mußt]). No repetition occurs in this letter without a simultaneous revision. The language of Werther's letter thereby enacts the very process of transformation that it depicts.

Anton identifies with the idea of perpetual transformation expressed in Werther's letter: "That was the very thought that for so long had made his own existence seem like an illusion, a dream, a deception" (*Werke,* 1:334–35). Unexpectedly, his identification with the idea of ceaseless transformation offers a potential way out of it. A complete identification would mean that the referent of the pronoun "that" (das) in the phrase "That was the very thought" does not vanish in an instant; rather, the idea expressed in Werther's question would be repeated exactly in Anton's own

thoughts. Moritz, however, casts doubt on the possibility of such an absolute identification. Thus, his narrator characterizes Anton's identification with Werther's ideas and emotions as a belief, not as a fact: "Reiser believed [*glaubte*] that he recognized himself in *Werther* with all his thoughts and feelings, except for the item of love" (336).

Furthermore, the narrator's reflections on the impact of Goethe's novel on Anton's generation suggest that this belief in the complete identity between Werther's ideas and sentiments and his own is misguided: "However, his [Anton's] too frequent re-reading of *Werther* greatly reduced his powers both of expression and of thought, for frequent repetition made him so familiar with this writer's turns of phrase and even with his thoughts that he often mistook them for his own, and even some years later, in writing essays, he had to contend with reminiscences of *Werther,* as is the case with a number of young writers who have been educated since then" (*Werke,* 1:337). Anton's repeated reading of *Werther* leads him to regard its author's turns of phrase and thoughts as his own. That is to say, as the narrator elsewhere states, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* did not simply reflect, but rather "intervened" (eingriffen) in all of Anton's ideas and emotions (334). Only after this intervention has transformed these ideas and emotions does there *seem* to be a perfect identity.[12]

Confronted with the ineluctably transformative *Augenblick,* though, Anton's repeated reading of *Werther* still seems to offer a consolation: in a world in flux, one can still repeatedly return to the text of *Werther.* In other words, one can turn from extensive to intensive, repetitive reading, the kind of reading that affirms the existence of eternally valid, authoritative texts.[13] At least of texts such as *Werther,* it would appear possible to claim, "That is!" But even the permanence of Goethe's text is called into question by the quote Moritz gives: "*Who can say, that is, when everything flees by like the wind?*" (*Werke,* 1:334; Wer kann sagen, das ist, da alles mit Wetterschnelle vorbeiflieht?). Moritz's text makes several changes to Goethe's original question, altering its wording and punctuation, and also compressing it. We have already noted the acceleration of the pace of change that occurs in the two clauses in the original letter, "when everything passes, when everything rolls by like the wind" (da alles vorübergeht, da alles mit der Wetterschnelle vorüber rollt). Moritz's quote further quickens this acceleration, substituting for these two clauses a single clause with a verb indicating even greater speed: "*when everything flees by*

12. Isabel A. White makes a similar observation: "*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* is the stated source of certain ideas which Anton Reiser supports, or, as he prefers to present the situation, Goethe's novel *reflects* thoughts which had already occurred to him" (" 'Die zu oft wiederholte Lektüre des Werthers,' " 100).

13. As Vaget points out, many in the first generation of readers of Goethe's novel treated it as a devotional text to be read repeatedly: "Among the readers of *Werther,* we find virtually all the hallmarks of the typical devotional reader's response: repeated readings, quasi-religious immersion in the text, eagerness to regard the book as a source of consolation, readiness to identify with, and to imitate, Werther" ("Werther, the Undead," 20).

[vorbeiflieht] *like the wind.*" In Moritz's own transformative repetition, then, it is impossible to say of Goethe's original text, "That is," for its reproduction and its revision coincide in the same *Augenblick.*[14]

In brief, Anton identifies with Werther's vision of the transformative *Augenblick* in the August 18 letter precisely through the transformative experience of reading. The instantaneous conversion of one emotion into another marks his reception of sentimental literature and sets the stage for this act of identification. Yet this identification does not lie in Anton's viewing this experience of continual conversion precisely mirrored in Goethe's text; rather, it lies in the reciprocal transformation of Anton by the text, which intervenes in his thoughts and emotions, and of the text by Anton—a possibility that is at the very least opened by Moritz's own permutation of the text in his quotation. In *Anton Reiser,* then, Moritz provides a vivid and complex account of how the escalating production and reception of sentimental literature in the late eighteenth century contributed to the sense of perpetual change that marks modernity.

The Timeless Perspective of the Autonomous Artwork

Moritz published the second and third parts of *Anton Reiser* that contain this account in 1786, the same year that he befriended Goethe in Rome. Following his extended sojourn in Italy, Moritz was Goethe's guest in Weimar for December 1788 and January 1789, a period that coincides with a new stage of his engagement with *Werther.* He attempts to overcome the transformative *Augenblick* through a reading of Goethe's novel as a timeless, autonomous artwork. In effect, he spatializes the *Augenblick,* fixing it firmly at the center of the novel, which he now regards as a self-contained whole. In the process, he departs from his earlier emphasis on the transformative moment of reception and in its place formulates an aesthetics that envisions the timeless structure of an artwork that is complete in itself.

To illuminate the structure of the literary work of art, Moritz adopts a concept from the domain of optics and visual art, namely perspective. A fascination with this concept runs through his entire literary career.[15] He deepened this interest while in Rome in 1788, embarking on a study of perspective as it relates to visual art, in the hope of receiving a professorship at the Academy of Arts and Mechanical Sciences in Berlin, a position that materialized the following year.[16] A letter from Caroline Herder to her husband on Christmas Day 1788 records the way he applied the concept of perspective to literary works, citing his discussion of

14. On this point, my reading differs from that of Robert Stockhammer. Stockhammer claims that Anton is "inhabited by foreign texts that he can't transform into his own" (*Leseerzählungen,* 199). By contrast, I see a reciprocal process of transformation taking place between Anton and Goethe's text.

15. On the theme of perspective in Moritz's work within the framework of Leibniz's theory of monadism, see in particular Kestenholz, *Die Sicht der Dinge.*

16. For biographical details, see Eybisch, *Anton Reiser,* 150.

Werther as a prominent example. She reports that Moritz recently visited her over coffee, and their discussion turned to Goethe's works: "He told me how through the study of perspective he had learned to search for the central point [*Mittelpunkt*] in a piece; one must search for it not at the end of a piece, but rather in the middle, just as all radii [*Radien*] depart from the central point and lose themselves in the beginning and in the end" (quoted in Moritz, *Schriften,* 345). In contemplating a literary work, the task of the reader is thus to find a central point from which the work radiates out. Her allusion to Moritz's study of perspective suggests that this task is comparable to locating the vanishing point in a visual artwork composed in central perspective, a point toward which all the orthogonal lines (those viewed as perpendicular to the plane of the picture) in the work incline. She continues by noting that Moritz pinpointed just such a *Mittelpunkt* in Goethe's novel in Werther's letter of August 18.

Caroline Herder's account of this application of the theory of perspective to literary works is supported in the biography of Moritz published by his companion and former pupil, Karl Friedrich Klischnig. Like Caroline Herder, Klischnig reports that Moritz conceived of each masterpiece as structured around a *Mittelpunkt* in which all of its parts converge, like the radii of a circle.[17] He further elaborates that Moritz viewed such a central point of a literary work as furnishing the proper "vantage point" (Gesichtspunkt) from which "the purposiveness of the whole" (die Zweckmäßigkeit des Ganzen) can alone be judged. Klischnig, too, notes that Moritz located precisely such a central point in Werther's August 18 letter, specifically citing the passage quoted by Moritz in *Anton Reiser* (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 139).

As paraphrased by both Caroline Herder and Klischnig, Moritz's theory of perspectival structure represents a further development of his groundbreaking aesthetic treatise, "Versuch einer Vereinigung aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften unter dem Begriff des *in sich selbst Vollendeten*" (An Attempt to Unify All the Fine Arts and Sciences under the Concept of *That Which Is Complete in Itself,* 1785).[18] In this short essay, Moritz posits the radical autonomy of the artwork, conceived as a totality that is entirely "complete in itself" (in sich selbst vollendet). Countering the theory proposed by Moses Mendelssohn that the purpose of art is to give pleasure, Moritz claims that the work of art is not a means to an end but is rather an end in itself, possessing an "inner purposiveness" (*Schriften,* 6; innere Zweckmäßigkeit)—a term that resonates with Klischnig's reference to "the purposiveness of the whole."

Commentators have frequently remarked that Moritz's concept of inner purposiveness anticipates Kant's famous explanation of the beautiful in the *Critique of*

17. Klischnig, *Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 139.

18. See my English translation of this essay in *PMLA* under the title "An Attempt to Unify All the Fine Arts and Sciences under the Concept of *That Which Is Complete in Itself.*"

Judgment as "purposiveness without an end" (Zweckmäßigkeit . . . ohne Zweck) while noting that a crucial difference from Kant lies in Moritz's locating inner purposiveness in the object rather than in the subject.[19] This view, however, is slightly misleading, for on the point of objectivity his essay is not entirely consistent. Early in the essay, it is the recipient who endows the work with its inner purposiveness by regarding it *as* complete in itself: "But when regarding the beautiful, I roll the end [*Zweck*] back from me into the object itself: I regard it as something that is not complete in me, but rather as something that is *complete in itself*" (*Schriften,* 3; original emphasis). In the course of the essay, though, the dynamic between recipient and artwork is reversed, such that the beauty of the artwork now attracts the recipient to itself (5). The beauty of the object, that is to say, its inner purposiveness or completion in itself, is no longer merely attributed to the object by its recipient but is instead found in the "beautiful object" itself (5).

Moritz's later remarks on the perspectivally constructed literary artwork solidify this shift toward objectivity: the recipient of the literary work, according to Caroline Herder's account, must discover an actually existing central point around which the work is structured. Klischnig's version, too, accentuates this objectivity: the work itself furnishes the proper vantage point from which it can be seen as a whole that is complete in itself. Moritz underlines this objective vantage point in an outline of his aesthetic theory that was likely written during or immediately following his two-month stay in Weimar.[20] In the final point of this outline, he contends that in order for a beautiful work of art to be seen as a whole unto itself, it is necessary to discover "in the work itself" the "vantage point" (Gesichtspunkt) from which each component of the work presents itself in a necessary relation to the whole (*Schriften,* 122).

Moritz's theory of the artwork conceived as objectively complete in itself implies the timelessness of the work of art, as Seraina Plotke observes in her commentary on Moritz's 1785 essay. This timelessness, she argues, signalizes eternity: "The artwork as 'something that is complete in itself' thus expresses eternity; or rather: eternity *manifests* itself in the artwork" ("Der ästhetische Trost," 426–27; original emphasis). With the withdrawal in the Enlightenment of a religious sense of eternity, the work of art is thus able to offer its recipient an aesthetic consolation (422). The literary work of art that is constructed perspectivally in the manner later conceived by Moritz during his stay in Weimar is all the more emphatically timeless. It replaces the wheel of time with the timeless wheel of art, whose spokes radiate out

19. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft,* 135. On the similarities and differences between Moritz's objective concept of "inner purposiveness" and Kant's subjective concept of "purposiveness without an end," see Szondi, *Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie,* 97; Costazza, *Schönheit und Nützlichkeit,* 142; Plotke, "Der ästhetische Trost," 426.

20. See "Bestimmung des Zwecks einer Theorie der schönen Künste" (Determination of the Purpose of a Theory of the Fine Arts), in Moritz, *Schriften,* 122. Moritz's original, posthumously published piece was untitled.

from a central axis. Particularly in the context of Moritz's reading of *Werther,* this timelessness of the perspectivally constructed artwork bears with it far-reaching consequences. By viewing the letter of August 18 as the central point of an artwork that is complete in itself, Moritz sublates this letter's vision of the transformative *Augenblick* within a timeless whole, thereby both literally and figuratively containing its transformative power. The instant in time that devours everything becomes frozen into the *Mittelpunkt* of the novel.

By emphasizing the spatial structure of the novel, Moritz negates the temporality of the verbal medium as posited by Lessing in his *Laokoon* (1766)*,* and thereby erases Lessing's famous distinction between visual and verbal media. According to Lessing, works in the verbal medium (or *Poesie*) are temporal in nature, comprised of "articulated sounds in time" (*Werke und Briefe,* 5.2:116). Hence, it is the medium best suited to imitating objects whose parts follow one another, that is, actions (114). Visual art (or *Mahlerei*), by contrast, consists of "figures and colors in space" and is hence best able to imitate objects whose parts exist side by side, that is, bodies (116). In his theory of the perspectivally constructed artwork, Moritz expands Lessing's definition of visual art as spatial to subsume literary works such as *Werther* and thus annuls the temporality of their medium. And he adds a further crucial twist: the space of the literary artwork does not imitate outside bodies but rather is entirely closed in on itself.

There remains a third fundamental difference between Moritz and Lessing, who each accord a different role to the *Augenblick* within the space of the artwork. Lessing complicates the clear distinction that he draws between verbal and visual art by pointing out that the latter imitates bodies existing not only in space, but also in time: "They [bodies] persist in time, and in each moment [*Augenblicke*] of their duration they can assume a different appearance or stand in a different combination" (*Werke und Briefe,* 5.2:116). While visual art cannot directly represent a body as it changes from moment to moment within what he terms "ever-changing nature" (22), it can suggest such change by selecting the most "pregnant" or suggestive moment: "Visual art can use only a single moment [*Augenblick*] of an action in its coexisting compositions and must therefore choose the one which is most pregnant and from which the preceding and succeeding actions are most easily comprehensible" (117). This pregnant moment liberates the imagination of the viewer: "But only that is fruitful which allows the imagination free play" (23). Lessing is thus crucially concerned with how the spatialized *Augenblick* of the visual artwork activates the viewer's imagination to transcend the very confines of that moment by envisioning the moments that precede or succeed it. In other words, he is interested in how the seed of the *Augenblick* embodied in a work of art bears fruit in the imagination of the viewer.

In his perspectival reading of Goethe's novel, Moritz neutralizes the fertility of that seed, viewing it as entirely static and securely contained within the shell of the literary artwork. It does not prompt the reader to transcend it, but rather to admire it in its self-contained beauty. He thus triply negates Lessing's distinction between verbal

and visual media: first, by subsuming the former within the space of the latter; second, by regarding literary space in and of itself, not as an imitation of outside bodies; and third, by recasting Lessing's pregnant *Augenblick* such that it is entirely enclosed within the bounds of the artwork. In this second stage of Moritz's engagement with *Werther,* then, the transformative *Augenblick* of reception—as conceived by Lessing, but also by Moritz himself in his description of Anton Reiser's reception of Goethe's novel—gives way to the *Gesichtspunkt* objectively inherent in the work itself.

The Sublime *Augenblicke* of Production

The second stage of Moritz's engagement with Goethe's novel accords well with the claim that the theory of the autonomous artwork arose as a reaction formation to the accelerated literary production and consumption habits of the late eighteenth century. Yet this theory was not itself static, frozen in time, and certainly not for Moritz. Rather, he went on to radically innovate it, and his continued engagement with *Werther* played a pivotal role in this development.

According to Klischnig, Moritz informed Goethe about his perspectival reading of *Werther,* and Goethe encouraged him to work out and publish his ideas (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 140). While this project never came to fruition, Moritz did publish a fascinating essay in 1792 devoted to a single letter in *Werther.* Entitled "Über ein Gemählde von Goethe" (On a Painting by Goethe), this piece illuminates the perspectival structure of Werther's second letter, that of May 10—in other words, the precise counterpart to the letter of August 18. Again, this kind of perspectival reading of a poetic work as a self-contained whole implies its timelessness. Surprisingly, however, counter to his attempt to contain the force of the transformative *Augenblick* by spatializing it as the *Gesichtspunkt* at the center of the novel, Moritz now shifts the center of gravity away from the central point of the letter's poetic picture, and toward the very first moments of its production. It is these sublime *Augenblicke,* he contends, that the poet ceaselessly seeks, but always fails, to capture. In reading the letter of May 10 as a perfect description of this process, Moritz mobilizes crucial insights of his second key aesthetic treatise on the autonomous artwork, "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen" (On the Formative Imitation of the Beautiful). In so doing, he moves from a protoformalist aesthetics of the artwork conceived as a whole that is complete in itself toward an aesthetics of production, one that emphasizes the open-ended process of creating art. Rather than culminating in a timeless refuge from the ephemeral instant, this process unfolds in an endless series of *Augenblicken.*

Moritz claims that in the letter of May 10 the poet presents a perspectivally structured poetic picture in the long middle sentence:

> When the lovely valley mists around me, and the high sun rests on the surface of the impenetrable darkness of my forest, and only isolated rays steal into the inner

> sanctuary, and I then lie in the tall grass by the falling brook, and closer to the earth I notice a thousand blades of grass; when I feel closer to my heart the teeming of the small world among the blades, the countless forms of the little worms, the little insects, and feel the presence of the Almighty who created us in his image, and the breeze of the All-Loving One which sustains us, as we float in eternal bliss; my friend, when it grows dim before my eyes, and world and sky rest completely in my soul, like the form of a beloved, then I often yearn and think, oh, if only you could breathe into the paper all that lives so fully and warmly in your soul, that it would become the mirror of your soul, as your soul is the mirror of the living God! (Quoted in Moritz, *Schriften,* 143)

After citing this sentence in full, he analyzes its component parts and displays how each part is structured around a central point. Thus, the poet first draws a circumference or contour (*Umriß*) with the image of the surrounding valley ("When the lovely valley mists around me"), then gradually descends to the blades of grass on the ground, focusing on the "smallest field of vision" (dem kleinsten Gesichtskreise des Auges), which comprises the "center" (Mittelpunkt) of the picture (143). From here, the scope of vision widens again, until it reaches the "large circumference" (großer Umriß) in the subordinate clause "when it grows dim before my eyes, and earth and sky rest completely in my soul, like the form of a beloved." Finally, Moritz claims that, in the sentence's main clause, beginning with the adverb "then," "a sensation encompassing the whole" completes (*vollendet*) the picture (143). In short, as portrayed by Moritz, the poet presents the reader with a perspectivally structured poetic picture that is entirely complete in itself. Consequently, it not only expresses a sense of being suspended in eternal bliss, but, as an autonomous artwork, itself manifests eternity.

What distinguishes this poetic picture in Moritz's eyes is not simply its paradigmatic quality as a perspectivally constructed artwork, but the way it simultaneously depicts the process of artistic representation from which it arises: "One won't easily find a work of poetry in which the representational drive [*Darstellungstrieb*] also represents itself so faithfully as in this poetic picture" (*Schriften,* 147). His analysis of this self-representation of the representational drive in the poetic picture owes much to his own earlier examination of the process of artistic production in his seminal essay on the formative imitation of the beautiful, which he published in 1788 and which, according to Goethe in his *Italian Journey,* arose out of their conversations in Rome.[21] Three years later, Moritz brings the most subversive insights of this essay to bear on his discussion of Goethe's poetic picture—that is, precisely those reflections

21. Goethe writes of Moritz's essay: "It arose out of our conversations, which Moritz used and developed in his own way" (FA 1.15:572–73). However, as Mark Boulby argues, "it would be wrong to conclude that Moritz was merely a passive vehicle for the canalisation of Goethean insights in aesthetics" (*Karl Philipp Moritz,* 164).

that undermine the possibility that an autonomous work of art can embody the end point of the process of formative imitation it describes.

It may seem paradoxical to view the autonomous artwork as being formed through imitation. After all, the traditional concept of mimesis presupposes that the work of art represents something external to itself, such as the bodies or actions that Lessing sees as the objects imitated by visual and verbal art respectively. But Moritz's concept of formative imitation departs sharply from the traditional understanding of mimesis by positing as its object neither particular objects in nature nor ideal forms, but the beautiful as such.[22] Moritz identifies this absolute beauty with nature as a whole, or "the one, true totality" (*Schriften,* 72; das einzige, wahre Ganze). The act of formative imitation of the beautiful produces an artwork that is a microcosm of this whole: "Each beautiful totality emerging from the hands of the artist who forms it is thus an impression on a small scale of the highest beauty in the great totality of nature" (73). By imitating the highest beauty in the great totality of nature, the artist produces a work that is itself a beautiful, autonomous whole, constructed according to the "same eternal laws" as the whole of nature (73).

Moritz elucidates this process of the formative imitation of the beautiful through an optical metaphor. To produce a beautiful totality, the artist's soul or mind (*Seele*) must possess a dynamic force or faculty (*thätige Kraft*) that is infinitely receptive: it thus must offer an endless number of contact points to nature, and hence be capable of collecting "the *outermost ends* of the relations of nature as a whole" (*Schriften,* 76; original emphasis). At this stage, the totality of nature is only obscurely intimated; the dynamic power collects side by side the extreme points of the rays that it emits (76). The more distinct faculties, such as the faculties of thought, imagination, and sense perception, demand that this obscure intimation of the whole of nature become perceptible to them. Toward this end, in the next phase, the dynamic faculty must now function as a kind of lens, tapering the rays emitted by the whole of nature into a focal point: "It [the dynamic faculty] must gather together into a focal point [*Brennpunkt*] all those relations of the great whole, and in them the highest beauty, as though at the ends of its rays [*Strahlen*]" (76). Finally, the work of art must then round itself out from this "focal point" and display to the more distinct faculties the perfect relations of the whole of nature within its small circumference (76).

Moritz wrote his essay on the formative imitation of the beautiful in the same period in Italy during which he engaged in his study of perspective, and the optical metaphor underlying his theory of formative imitation shares significant structural features with his theory of the perspectival construction of the artwork. In both theories, rays (*Strahlen, Radien*) are envisioned as converging in a single point

22. On Moritz's radical departure from the traditional concept of mimesis, see Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol,* 148–64.

(*Brennpunkt, Mittelpunkt*). His essay on the formative imitation of the beautiful suggests, furthermore, a causal relation between the two theories, as the process of condensing the whole of nature into a *Brennpunkt* is the precondition for creating a work of art that is oriented on all sides toward a *Mittelpunkt* (*Schriften,* 73).

Having traced this trajectory that leads via the formative imitation of the beautiful to the autonomous artwork, though, Moritz begins to undermine it. Already his repeated use of the modal verb *müssen* (must) to qualify each of his assertions about artistic production makes it possible to read them not as simple assertions, but as imperatives.[23] He shows what *must* be done to create an autonomous work of art, thereby raising the question of whether it *can* in fact be accomplished. He addresses this question of possibility shortly after describing the path that leads through the formative imitation of the beautiful to the autonomous artwork:

> The *living* concept of the formative imitation of the beautiful can only take place in the feeling of the dynamic faculty that produces it, in the first moment of production, in which the work appears suddenly in dark intimation before the soul, already complete, having advanced through all the stages of its gradual becoming; and in this moment [*Augenblick*] of its first production, it is, as it were, present before its *actual* existence, thereby giving rise to that unnameable charm that drives the creative genius to perpetual formation [*immerwährenden Bildung*]. (*Schriften,* 77; original emphasis)

There is, then, only a single point when the formative imitation of the beautiful really takes place, and hence when the totality of nature is encompassed in microcosm: the focal point into which the dynamic power concentrates this totality. And even this *Brennpunkt* is not a fixed point in space; rather, this "burning point" combusts instantly. In other words, the focal point turns out to be a single, ephemeral point in time, or *Augenblick*. This momentary *Brennpunkt* gives rise not to a timeless, autonomous artwork, but rather to the process of its "perpetual formation" (immerwährenden Bildung).

Moritz further develops this critique of his own theory of artistic production in his essay on Goethe's poetic picture. As noted, following his detailed structural analysis of the perspectival form of the poetic picture, he turns his attention to the

23. "All of the relations of that great totality that, in the dynamic faculty, are merely darkly intimated, *must* necessarily in some manner . . . become graspable; and in order to become so, the dynamic faculty in which they slumber *must* form them after itself, out of itself.—It *must* gather together into a focal point all those relations of the great whole, and in them the highest beauty, as though at the ends of its rays.—A delicate yet faithful image of the highest beauty *must* round itself out from this focal point, in accordance with the eye's range. . . . Now, because this impression of the highest beauty *must* necessarily be fixed to something, the formative faculty selects . . . some visible or audible object, or at least one that the imagination can grasp, to which it transfers the reflection of the highest beauty on a reduced scale" (Moritz, *Schriften,* 76; my emphasis).

way it depicts the process of its own production. He sees this process articulated with particular clarity in the text of the letter that precedes and follows the poetic picture proper, and that hence forms a kind of frame around it.[24] The purpose of a frame, according to a short essay entitled "Der Rahmen" (The Frame) that he published a year later, is to accentuate the autonomy of the work of art: "The picture presents something complete in itself; the frame draws a further border around that which is complete in itself" (*Schriften,* 210).[25] Moritz's discussion of the May 10 letter, however, illuminates how the border drawn by the textual frame around the poetic picture does precisely the opposite: rather than underscore its autonomy, the frame foregrounds the very impossibility of that autonomy.

As in his essay on the formative imitation of the beautiful, in his essay "Über ein Gemählde von Goethe" Moritz views a period of keen receptivity toward the totality of nature, which he here terms *Empfindung* (sensation), as a prerequisite for artistic production (*Schriften,* 146–47). This stage, he remarks, is expressed in the first part of the textual frame, in which Werther describes his sense of being "*so immersed in the feeling of tranquil existence,*" to the point where his art suffers. Nevertheless, Werther writes, although he couldn't sketch a single line, he expresses that he has never been a greater painter "than in these moments" (146; als in diesen Augenblicken). In his commentary, Moritz extrapolates a general insight about artistic production from these introductory remarks: "He will best describe nature who senses how it constitutes a whole, as it were, with himself, as he immerses himself in it and intensely feels himself interwoven with it. . . . In the moments in which such a description is to succeed, the individual self-consciousness must lose itself, as it were, in the *co-consciousness* of the great totality of nature that streams through the thinking and sensing organ" (147; original emphasis). The sensation that Moritz here describes recalls his depiction of the first phase of the process of the formative imitation of the beautiful, in which the dynamic faculty obscurely intimates the great whole of nature (76). As I have remarked, in that earlier essay Moritz describes the second phase of formative imitation of the beautiful, that of

24. The first part of the frame consists of four sentences that open the letter and precede the sentence containing the poetic picture proper: "A wonderful serenity has taken possession of my entire soul, like the sweet spring mornings which I enjoy with all my heart. I am so alone, and rejoice in my life in this place, which was created for souls like mine. I am so happy, my dear friend, *so immersed in the feeling of tranquil existence,* that my art suffers. I could not draw now, not a line, and yet I have never been a greater painter than in these moments" (Moritz, *Schriften,* 146; original emphasis). The second part of the textual frame comprises a single sentence that follows the poetic picture and closes the letter: "I run aground over this, I succumb beneath the power of the magnificence of these apparitions" (146).

25. Goethe makes a strikingly similar observation in his autobiography regarding the binding of his manuscript of *Werther:* "The manuscript that was now finished lay before me in draft form, with few corrections and alterations. It was bound at once: for the binding is to a written work about what a frame is to a picture: one can see much better if it exists in itself" (FA 1.14:639). In this manner, Goethe follows the neoclassicist version of Moritz's reading of *Werther* as an autonomous whole, and in so doing, distances himself from the identificatory manner of reading exhibited by the masses who became swept up in the *Werther-Fieber.*

the *Brennpunkt,* as a momentary phenomenon; he leaves open, however, the possibility of a continual state of the obscure intimation of the whole of nature. But in the passage above from his essay on Goethe's poetic picture, the *Brennpunkt* has vanished altogether, and the state of obscure intimation of nature's totality becomes compressed into *Augenblicke.* The process of formative imitation, then, becomes intensely accelerated in the later essay.

If the sensation of the whole of nature is momentary to begin with, Moritz sees its momentariness further accelerated by the representational drive: "Art really suffers under the plenitude of pleasure, and because it is subordinate to this pleasure, the representational drive, in order not to interrupt the pleasure for too long, as it were, strives for the easiest and most immediate expression through language: the contours transform into words; the draftsman or painter becomes a poet" (*Schriften,* 146–47). The sensation of nature's eternal totality—or what Moritz here describes as the "plenitude of pleasure"—while a prerequisite for artistic representation, also precludes that representation; hence, in the moments of receptivity toward the whole of nature, art suffers, as noted in the first part of the textual frame. Conversely, this sensation suffers through the act of representation, which interrupts it. Moritz claims that poetry here has an advantage over graphic art: the more immediate expression of language does not cause as long an interruption as does graphic representation. For this reason, the visual artist becomes a poet, and the visual contours or circumferences (*Umrisse*) transform into verbal ones. But this does not solve the dilemma that language, too, cuts short the sensation of nature's totality that the artist attempts to represent, for even if language does not interrupt this sensation for too long, how could even the swiftest verbal expression not rupture the fleeting *Augenblicke* in which this sensation is present?

A potential compensation for this dilemma presents itself not so much in the choice of a graphic or a verbal medium as in the possibility of producing, in either medium, an autonomous artwork, one that is capable of reproducing on a smaller scale the eternal totality of nature as it is momentarily sensed. It is just such a possibility that the poetic picture would seem to realize as a perspectivally constructed work of art that is complete in itself. But Moritz reveals that its completion is broken at two crucial points: at the point at which the poetic picture achieves its "charming closure" (*Schriften,* 145; reizende Vollendung); and in the second part of the textual frame, with which the letter draws to a close directly after the completion of the poetic picture.

According to Moritz, the poetic picture ends with "a sensation that encompasses the whole": "Then I often yearn and think, oh, if only you could breathe into the paper all that lives so fully and warmly in your soul, that it would become the mirror of your soul, as your soul is the mirror of the living God!" (*Schriften,* 143). But, as he also highlights, the feeling that encompasses the whole of the

poetic picture is not one of fulfillment, and hence closure, but rather of yearning: "This is the yearning to breathe immediately into the paper that which is vividly present in the soul, and which vanishes beneath the letter only too easily" (145). According to Werther, the whole of nature rests in his soul: "World and sky rest completely in my soul." As Moritz sees it, the soul that reflects this totality disappears beneath the very letters that are intended, in turn, to reflect the soul. Unable to present a microcosm of this totality, the artwork cannot itself form a complete, autonomous whole. Consequently, the *reizende Vollendung* (charming closure) embodied in the final clause of the autonomous poetic picture turns out to be a *reißende Vollendung,* a closure that ruptures the very timeless, autonomous artwork that it completes.[26]

Rather than draw a border around the poetic picture that would contain this rift and perhaps establish a greater unity, the second part of the textual frame, as Moritz reads it, even more radically subverts the completion of the poetic picture: "The true representation is hence, as it were, a *struggle* [*Ringen*] with nature, which is, however, always more powerful, and which can be brought by the human spirit neither into words nor into contours; hence the truest feature of our poet's painting: 'I run aground over this, I succumb beneath the power of the magnificence of these apparitions' " (*Schriften,* 146; original emphasis). The process of true representation is never complete, for it is impossible to draw either verbal or graphic contours (*Umrisse*) around the eternal totality of nature, which always exceeds these confines ("which is . . . always more powerful"). True representation is thus a *Ringen* in two ways: it is an attempt to draw a ring around this totality; and in so doing, it is a struggle with nature, and one that it invariably loses. The truest feature of Goethe's poetic picture hence lies in its textual frame, which shows the contour of the artwork to be a mere trace of an interminable *Ringen.*

If Moritz's depiction of the inner purposiveness of the beautiful artwork that is complete in itself resembles the notion of the "purposiveness without end" that Kant views as characteristic of the beautiful, then his discussion of the ceaseless struggle to represent the totality of nature within the contour of the artwork may be seen as comparable to Kant's treatment of the "negative representation" (negativer Darstellung) of the sublime in the *Critique of Judgment (Kritik der Urteilskraft,* 201). Kant regards the sublime as a sensation arising from the subjective play of imagination and reason (182). This play begins when the imagination is confronted

26. See, by contrast, Pickerodt, "Das 'poetische Gemählde.' " Pickerodt argues that by viewing Werther's wish as the completion *(Vollendung)* of the poetic picture, Moritz thereby eliminates the disproportion between the experience of nature and the ability to express this experience with graphic, or visual, means (1366). I maintain, on the contrary, that Moritz thereby highlights precisely the impossibility that the artwork can be commensurate with the experience.

by something in nature that overwhelms it, for instance through its vastness. But this only awakens in the subject a sense of something even greater, namely reason's idea of an "absolute totality" (172; absolute Totalität). The subject strives to represent this idea by means of the imagination, but to no avail: its representations serve only to indicate their own incommensurability with reason's idea of totality (166); they are perceived solely as negative representations of something unrepresentable (201). Once again, the principal difference from Moritz lies in his objective conception of the sublime as comprising nature in its totality. Reason's idea of totality plays no role here, as it does with Kant, but rather only the obscure, momentary intimation of an objective totality, one that the artwork is forever incapable of representing within its contours.

Moritz introduced this conception of the sublime (explicitly terming it a "Begriff des *Erhabenen*" [*Schriften,* 73; original emphasis]) in his essay on the formative imitation of the beautiful, two years before the appearance of Kant's Third Critique, and provided his most probing analysis of an instance of the sublime in his discussion of Goethe's poetic picture. The most the artist can do—and this is the true achievement, in his eyes, of Goethe's poetic picture, including its textual frame—is struggle to represent the totality of nature, and at the same time indicate its incommensurability. Indeed, as Moritz views it, Goethe manages to do both in a single stroke: to draw a contour (*Umriß*) that demolishes itself—*umreißen* in both senses of the word.

I have tried in this chapter to keep pace with Moritz in his lifelong engagement with *Werther*—as he flees the transformative *Augenblick* of reception, seeks refuge in the fixed point of view of the perspectivally constructed work of art that is complete in itself, and then undermines this completion, revealing the impossibility of circumscribing in an autonomous artwork the totality of nature as intimated in the very first, sublime *Augenblicken* of artistic production. By affording a glimpse into the impossibility of arresting and framing that instant in perpetuity, Goethe's *Werther* is "the only possible epos of our times that is still true" (die einzige noch wahre mögliche Epopee unsrer Zeiten), as Moritz described it in 1793, the year of his untimely death at age thirty-six.[27]

I have argued that the times to which Moritz here refers were filled with a sense of upheaval, brought about by a revolution in reading and text production. It is tempting to view the final stage of his reading of *Werther* as the most modern, most in touch with the pulse not only of his time, but of our own, prefiguring a fascination with the sublime instant in contemporary avant-garde art.[28] Yet this would be to isolate and hypostasize merely one moment of his reading and of his ongoing

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27. Moritz makes this claim in his essay "Der Dichter im Tempel der Natur: Ein Fragment" (The Poet in the Temple of Nature: A Fragment), in *Schriften,* 161.

28. See Jean-François Lyotard's essay on Barnett Newman, "Newman: The Instant," in *The Inhuman.*

aesthetic thought. What is, in the end, most modern about the aesthetics of the *Augenblick* that he formulates through his reading of *Werther* is its very lability, its resistance to being permanently circumscribed. Like the *Neuzeit* itself, his aesthetics proves to be perpetually new, transforming beneath the reader's gaze from one moment to the next.

2

Beyond an Aesthetics of Containment

Trajectories of the Imagination in Moritz and Goethe

Together with the sense of a new, accelerated time, the reading revolution in the eighteenth century also provoked a widespread fear among producers and consumers of texts: the fear that reading, and in particular the consumption of sentimental novels, overstimulate the imagination. Such inner turmoil, it was felt, rocked the foundations of individual well-being, and furthermore threatened society as a whole, by undermining the individual's duty to family and to work.

The tone for this criticism was set by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose own sentimental novel, *Julie, or The New Heloise* (1761), was one of the biggest best sellers of the century.[1] A year later, though, in *Emile, or On Education,* Rousseau conceived of an education that drastically restricts the role of reading, especially the reading of fiction. "The real world," he explains, "has its limits: the imaginary world is infinite. Unable to enlarge the one, let us restrict the other, for it is from the difference between the two alone that are born all pains which make us truly unhappy" (*Emile,* 81). By radically limiting the consumption of fiction, Rousseau sought to avoid agitating the faculty of the imagination, which he deemed "the most active of all" (80), reducing its circumference to the confines of the real world, and thereby ensuring personal happiness.

1. See Darnton, *Great Cat Massacre,* 242.

In an attempt to counter the threat posed by the overactive imagination, critics turned not only to a "natural" pedagogy that restricted exposure to novels, but also to the classical world of ancient Greece with its supposedly more measured literary and artistic forms. Moritz's *Götterlehre oder Mythologische Dichtungen der Alten* (Doctrine of the Gods or Mythological Fictions of the Ancients, 1791) was one of the key texts of the late eighteenth century that propagated what Simon Richter has termed a neoclassical "aesthetics of containment."[2] Just as with the attempt to contain the transformative *Augenblick,* the concept of the autonomous work of art is central to Moritz's effort to contain the chaotic imagination. This trajectory toward containment is evident particularly in his retelling of the classical theogony in the early sections of the text, which narrate the development of the ancient gods toward increasingly self-contained entities that embody Moritz's notion of "that which is complete in itself."

Much like Moritz's essays discussed in chapter 1, however, his *Götterlehre* radically unsettles his own doctrine of the autonomous artwork. As we have seen, the essays "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen" and "Über ein Gemählde von Goethe" reveal the inability of the work of art to capture the intimation of the sublime that occurs in the moment or moments just before artistic production; the attempt to fix these moments within the work of art has the opposite effect of cutting them short. Similarly, Moritz's *Götterlehre* sharply questions the ability of the Olympian gods—or, by analogy, autonomous works of art—to contain the chaotic imagination that produces them. He identifies an ineradicable paradox: even while restraining the imagination, the autonomous artwork simultaneously unleashes it. The work of art turns out to be not simply an enclosure for the imagination, but a *Spielraum* that enables its continued play.

I situate my reading of Moritz's *Götterlehre* within the larger context of the critique of the unruly imagination that was believed to have been let loose by contemporary reading practices. Ironically, Goethe's *Werther,* while functioning as a lightning rod for this critique, itself presents one of the most penetrating accounts of the pathological effects of such practices. My discussion pairs two scenes, one from the fourth part of *Anton Reiser,* which appeared the year before Moritz's *Götterlehre,* and the other from Goethe's novel. Each scene participates in the larger critical discourse of *Lesewut* (reading rage), depicting how the protagonists' chaotic imagination, under the influence of their belletristic reading, surges over what Rousseau terms the "limits" of the real world, inundating their perception of reality.

Goethe's turn to classicism during his Italian journey occurred in part as a reaction against the turbulent fantasies that *Werther* inspired in many readers. Together with Johann Joachim Winckelmann's writings on classical art, Moritz's aesthetic thought, particularly his *Versuch einer deutschen Prosodie* (Attempt at

2. See Richter, introduction, 9–16.

a German Prosody, 1786), played a crucial role in Goethe's development of a classical aesthetics of containment and its translation into practice, particularly with the composition of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (Iphigenia in Tauris, 1787). Moritz's *Götterlehre*—which he began in Italy while cultivating a close friendship with Goethe, and which includes four of Goethe's lyric poems, as well as extended excerpts from the revised *Iphigenie*—constitutes a profound reflection not only on the development of the classical imagination that produced ancient Greek mythology, but also, at the level of subtext, on Goethe's turn to classicism. In this sense, Moritz's *Götterlehre* is simultaneously a *Goethelehre* (or Goethe doctrine). As such, though, it does not content itself with idolatry but engages critically with Goethe's attempt to contain the imagination within the well-defined bounds of the autonomous work of art, as well as with Goethe's own deep-seated doubts about the attainability of this goal. In so doing, Moritz shows why the classical project, for all its effort to restrain an imagination inflamed by belletristic reading, is bound to remain forever incomplete.

Lesewut and the Chaotic Imagination in *Anton Reiser* and *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*

Anton Reiser's *Lesewut* (together with his closely related craze for the theater) begins with his visits to the antiquarian bookseller in the second part of the novel, intensifies with his reading of *Werther* in the third part, and reaches a fever pitch in the fourth. This final part relates what the narrator terms "the actual *novel of his life*" (Moritz, *Werke,* 1:286; original emphasis), which involves Anton's peregrinations as he departs from Hannover in a futile attempt to realize his dream of becoming an actor; as he then temporarily abandons this dream to study at the University of Erfurt; and as he revives it several months later, when he breaks off his studies to become an actor in an ill-fated wandering theater troupe. The narrator's reference to the fourth part of Moritz's novel as "the actual *novel of his life*" proves to be telling, as Anton time and again confuses fiction and life. Under the influence of his reading—and particularly his continued obsession with Goethe's novel—his imagination spins out of control, repeatedly losing touch with reality; Anton lives, as the narrator phrases it in the preface to the fourth part, "more in fantasies than in reality" (414).

One of the scenes that most vividly depicts the excesses of Anton's imagination comes toward the end of the fourth part, just before he breaks off his studies in Erfurt to join the Speichsche theater troupe. In this scene, after a stormy nocturnal walk, during which he identifies with the fate of Shakespeare's dispossessed King Lear (*Werke,* 1:501), Anton retreats to the attic of his lodgings. Here, he spends several weeks reading and labors to compose a poem entitled "Die Schöpfung" (The Creation). His poem, however, remains incomplete: while he is gripped by the chaos that precedes creation, according to Greek mythology as well as the book

of Genesis,[3] and to which he devotes an entire canto, the act of creation itself fails to captivate his imagination; he abandons his work after composing a mere two lines that invoke the beginning of the actual creation.

As summarized by the narrator, Anton's poem depicts chaos as a process of negation:

> A false sun rose on the horizon and announced a radiant day.—Under its deceitful influence, the bottomless [*bodenlose*] morass became covered with a crust on which flowers sprouted and fountains plashed; suddenly the opposed forces worked their way up from the depths, the storm howled from the abyss [*Abgrund*], the darkness with all its terrors broke out of its secret lair and devoured the new-born day back into a frightful grave. These forces, constantly forced back upon themselves, sought furiously to spread out on all sides, and groaned beneath the burden of resistance. The waves reared and lamented beneath the howling gust of wind. In the depths, the captive flames roared, and the earthly realm that had risen, the rock that had become grounded [*sich gründete*], sank once again with thunderous tumult into the all-devouring abyss [*Abgrund*]. (*Werke,* 1:503–4)

In the words of the narrator, Anton's evocation of chaos is comprised of "horrible contradictions" (510). All that is created is negated by "opposed forces"; thus, darkness swallows up the new-born day "into a frightful grave." Precisely because what is created is capable of being negated in this way, it is false or deceptive, as opposed to the supposedly true and enduring creation brought into being in the poem's final two lines, based on the creation myth in Genesis 1:2–3: "Over the silent waters, the voice of God the Eternal / Gently sounded, and spoke: Let there be light! and there was light" (511).

In describing the negation at work in the first canto of the poem, Moritz draws on the etymological basis of the word *chaos,* which originally referred to "any vast gulf or chasm."[4] Originally, then, chaos was a spatial concept, as Bianca Theisen has noted.[5] Moritz unearths this stratum of its meaning with the word *Abgrund* (abyss), which he employs twice in the passage just cited. This term acquires further significance through his play with the word *Grund,* or ground: "The earthly realm that had risen, the rock that had become grounded [*sich gründete*], sank once again with thunderous tumult into the all-devouring abyss [*Abgrund*]." In this *Abgrund,* then, everything that appears to be firmly grounded, such as the rock, becomes ungrounded, as it were, as the very basis for its existence is negated.

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3. This chaos is alluded to in Genesis 1:2 (NRSV): "The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep." As we will see, the ancient Greek creation story, as rendered by Moritz's *Götterlehre* along the lines of Hesiod's *Theogony,* also begins with chaos.

4. *Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed. (*OED Online*), s.v. "chaos."

5. See Theisen, "Chaos—Ordnung," 753.

The narrator does not merely describe the chaos at work in Anton's fragmentary poem. After summarizing the poem, he goes on to explain its genesis, that is, to ground (in the sense of the German *begründen:* to give a reason for something) the chaotic process of un-grounding that the poem depicts. According to the narrator, this process has its basis in Anton's imagination (*Phantasie*):

> It was with the same monstrous images that Reiser's imagination worked itself to death in the hours when his own interior was a chaos in which no ray of calm thought shone, where the forces of his soul had lost their equilibrium and his mind had darkened; where the charm of the real had vanished for him, and dream and delusion were dearer to him than order, light, and truth.
>
> And all these appearances were grounded [*gründeten sich*], as it were, in the idealism to which he was naturally inclined.... And on this bottomless shore [*bodenlosen Ufer*] he found nowhere for his foot to rest. Anxious striving and unrest pursued him at every step. (*Werke,* 1:504)

The narrator thus regards the poem's vision of chaos to be grounded in what he terms Anton's "idealism." Moritz has in mind here a particular understanding of idealism, as the entry for "Ideal" in the second volume of his *Grammatisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Grammatical Dictionary of the German Language, 1793) suggests: "The human imagination [*Einbildungskraft*] makes for itself images and representations of things that do not exist without it, but also out of things that are really found in nature, that are real entities. In the first case, this is called an ideal, because it exists not in reality, but in the human imagination."[6] The mimetic ability of Anton's imagination to make images and representations of real things has been entirely eclipsed by its creative capacity to construct images and representations of things that exist only within it. The "charm of the real" has thus vanished for him, and "order, light, and truth" have been replaced by "dream and illusion." The creative capacity of his imagination is consequently wholly unconstrained by its mimetic ability. It is bounded only by a "bottomless shore" (bodenlosen Ufer)—that is, by a shore that, un-grounded, has lost any power to contain the surge of the imagination's creative force. Without a stable ground for his imagination to rest on, Anton is pursued relentlessly by "anxious striving and unrest."

The narrator suggests several complementary explanations for Anton's chaotic or "diseased imagination" (*Werke,* 1:503). While the passage above suggests that Anton tends naturally toward "idealism," this alone does not explain his pathological imagination. There is, furthermore, a societal cause: throughout his life he is in

6. *Des H. Hofr. Moritz grammatisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, fortgesetzt vom Prediger Johann Ernst Stutz,* 2:271; quoted by Christof Wingertszahn in his commentary to *Anton Reiser,* in Moritz, *Sämtliche Werke,* 1:778–79. It is unclear whether this entry was written by Moritz or by Stutz, who edited and continued Moritz's grammatical dictionary after the latter's death in 1793.

flight from the painful reality of constraint and neglect within institutions such as church, family, work, and school. From his early childhood, and with increasing intensity in his youth, reading helps enable his escape;[7] as mentioned, apart from composing his poem, Anton's primary activity in the attic to which he takes flight is reading. Directly preceding the scene in the attic, the narrator provides a clear indication of the kind of books that engage Anton: together with his friends in Erfurt, he is immersed in sentimental or *empfindsame* literature by the likes of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (*Die Messiade* [The Messiah]), Oliver Goldsmith (*The Vicar of Wakefield*), Johann Martin Miller (*Siegwart: Eine Klostergeschichte* [Siegwart: A Monastic Tale]), and, of course, *Werther.* Goethe's novel, especially, consumes his attention, to the point that, shortly before taking to the attic, one fantasy in particular dominates his "thousands of romantic ideas," namely "that of trying, in Weimar, to become a servant to the author of *Werther's Sorrows,* under any condition whatsoever" (500). Indeed, it is the praise he receives for a letter written "entirely in the tone of Werther's letters" that spurs him to work his way through the description of chaos in the first canto of his poem (510).

To the extent that it points to Anton's voracious reading habits as a primary cause of his diseased imagination, the novel's diagnosis is of a piece with the larger discourse of *Lesewut* in the late eighteenth century. Consider an essay by Moritz's fellow pedagogue and author Joachim Heinrich Campe, included in the first issue of Campe's seminal journal, *Allgemeine Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens.*[8] Published in 1785, the year in which the first part of *Anton Reiser* appeared, Campe's essay is a guide to the principles of child rearing. Heavily influenced by Rousseau's *Emile,* from whose fifth book his essay quotes at length, Campe devotes roughly ten pages to excoriating *Lesewut,* portraying it as a "modern disease of the soul" (*Allgemeine Revision,* 1:185), indeed as a "plague" or "epidemic of the soul" (171). In particular, he singles out those books that aim "to arouse the imagination [*Phantasie*] to take flight into the realm of dreams and chimeras, and to make people equally incapable of undertaking business or enjoying life. This, this is what makes reading so detrimental to the happiness of so many families, and the frightful annual swelling of the flood of books must make it ever more detrimental!" (175). Much like Rousseau in *Emile* as well as Moritz in *Anton Reiser,*

7. Already a passage early in the first part makes clear the function that reading plays throughout the novel: "Reading suddenly opened up to him a new world, the enjoyment of which afforded some compensation for the unpleasant things in his real world. When there was nothing but noise and scolding and domestic discord all around him, or he looked around in vain for a new playmate, he now hastened to his book. Thus at an early age he was forced out of the natural world of childhood into an unnatural idealistic world" (*Werke,* 1:94–95).

8. The essay is entitled "Von den Erfordernissen einer guten Erziehung von Seiten der Eltern vor und nach der Geburt des Kindes" (On the Requirements of Good Child-Rearing on the Part of Parents before and after the Birth of the Child). The first issue of Campe's *Allgemeine Revision* lists Moritz as a member of the Society of Practical Educators (Gesellschaft praktischer Erzieher), which was primarily responsible for the journal, though Moritz never published in it. See Campe, foreword to *Allgemeine Revision,* 1:xiii.

Campe blames excessive reading for provoking the imagination to flee the "real world" (179) and lose itself in the "realm of dreams and chimeras." As Campe sees it, this flight from reality brings with it severe consequences both for the individual and for society, resulting in personal unhappiness, and sabotaging the individual's work ethic and familial duty.

Herein, though, also lies a key difference between Campe's and Moritz's critiques of *Lesewut:* whereas Campe is chiefly concerned with its negative effects on society, Moritz presents it as an understandable (if also counterproductive) individual response to, and flight from, constricting social institutions. A further noteworthy difference lies in the fact that, while Campe proposes to counter *Lesewut* through a dietetics of reading that limits the consumption of books to those "which aim to foster einightenment, rectitude, and happiness" (*Allgemeine Revision,* 1:172–73), Moritz refrains in his novel from offering any such prescriptions. Nevertheless, with regard to the pathological effects of excessive reading on the imagination, Campe's essay and Moritz's novel share very similar views.

At the heart of each of their diagnoses lies the effect of sentimental literature, and of *Werther* in particular, on the reader's imagination.[9] As mentioned, the irony—one lost on Campe as well as on Anton Reiser, though surely not on Moritz—is that *Werther* is itself very much a case study of a pathological imagination. As David Wellbery argues, "Werther's avid reading has so thoroughly suffused his psychic life that he, a sentimental Don Quixote, cannot keep fiction and perception apart. Werther's 'sickness unto death' derives from his captivation with a plethora of imaginary substitutes that progressively hollow out the world around him."[10] As a prime example of the manner in which Werther, under the influence of the literature he worships, hollows out the world around him to the point of undermining his own existence, consider his penultimate letter to Wilhelm, dated December 8 in the original edition of 1774. Here, he describes the dramatic flooding of an entire valley. Looking on the scene of ongoing devastation by moonlight, he fantasizes: "Ah! With arms extended, I looked down into the yawning abyss [*Abgrund*], and cried, down! down, and I lost myself in the bliss of storming all my torments and all my suffering downwards, of rushing there like the waves.... Oh Wilhelm, how gladly I would have given up my human existence to tear through the clouds with that storm wind, to embrace the torrent" (FA 1.8:194). Werther here projects himself into the turbulent natural forces around him. Like the floodwater that surges over all borders—"the rampaging torrents" swirl "over fields and meadows and hedges and everything" (194)—so his imagination pours over the boundary dividing fantasy from reality, flooding his perception of the world around him.

9. Werther and Siegwart are the two sentimental heroes whom Campe mentions by name (*Allgemeine Revision,* 1:181).

10. Wellbery, "Pathologies of Literature," 392.

Werther's description of the flood recalls two earlier scenes that revolve around literary texts. The first of these scenes, described in his letter of June 16, builds up to Charlotte's famous invocation of Klopstock's poem "Die Frühlingsfeier" (Spring Celebration) as she and Werther stand gazing out of a window following a thunderstorm. Werther describes here an experience of immersion that foreshadows his fantasy of becoming one with the torrent in his letter of December 8: "I sank in the torrent of sensations which she, at this mention of his name, poured over me" (FA 1.8:54). His description in the December 8 letter recalls, too, the fantasies he describes in his letter of October 12 upon reading Ossian: "What a world into which that magnificent poet carries me! To wander over the heath, blown about by the storm's wind, which in the steaming mists leads the spirits of our forefathers by the feeble light of the moon" (170). Werther's reading of Klopstock and Ossian, in these two letters as in that of December 8, has indeed "so thoroughly suffused his psychic life that he... cannot keep fiction and perception apart."

The parallels between Werther's December 8 letter and Anton's poem are striking, as are the circumstances surrounding their composition. At the time in which they write these texts, the young protagonists share a keen sense of entrapment: Werther compares himself in his letter to an "incarcerated man" and "prisoner" (FA 1.8:194); likewise, right before the attic scene, the narrator describes Anton's sense of "continual pressure from outside" (*Werke,* 1:502). In part in an effort to flee their constricting circumstances, they each embark on long nocturnal walks in stormy weather, walks that directly precede the writing of Werther's letter to Wilhelm (194), and Anton's withdrawal to the attic (503). The texts they compose also closely resemble each other, both depicting tumultuous, stormy landscapes. Furthermore, Werther's December 8 letter, like Anton's poem, crucially envisions an *Abgrund,* and with it, an act of un-grounding wrought not merely by the rampaging floodwaters, but by Werther's "hollowing out" of the world around him through his turbulent fantasies. Finally, both novels suggest that their protagonists' imaginations have been set in turmoil by their belletristic reading. If the poetry of Klopstock and Ossian suffuses Werther's imagination, then *Werther* itself similarly saturates Anton's. Buffeted by what Campe refers to as a "flood of books," the shore restraining the imagination of both protagonists has collapsed, allowing their chaotic fantasies to run wild.[11]

Winckelmann's *Gedanken,* Moritz's *Prosodie,* and Goethe's Turn to Classicism

While residing in Carlsbad in the summer of 1786, just before his departure for Italy, Goethe completed a revision of *Werther* for the first volume of *Goethe's Schriften*

11. In his opening essay in the *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde,* Moritz similarly refers to "the present-day Flood of books." See Moritz, Pockels, and Maimon, *ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ oder Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde* 1.1:2.

(Goethe's Writings) issued by the publisher Göschen. One of the principal effects of this revision is a stronger barrier between the reader and the novel's protagonist, one that hinders the kind of empathetic identification with Werther that Anton Reiser experiences. Goethe accordingly reframes Werther's letter of December 8, moving it to the final section of the novel, headed "The Editor to the Reader,"[12] where he introduces it with the editor's premonitory commentary: "A few letters which he left behind, and which we wish to insert here, are the strongest documentation of his confusion, passion, restless drive and striving, and his weariness of life" (FA 1.8:211). By having the editor present the letter as a document attesting to Werther's confused and restless state of mind, Goethe achieves a distancing effect that inhibits identification with his protagonist's fantasies, arguably containing them more securely within the bounds of the text.

Goethe similarly pursued a strategy of containment with another text for *Goethe's Schriften,* namely *Iphigenie auf Tauris,* whose revision he began in Carlsbad on the same day that he completed his new version of *Werther,* and which he continued during the first four months of his sojourn in Italy.[13] His revised *Iphigenie* is the work most closely associated with his turn to classicism, and with it, to an aesthetics of containment. Moritz's aesthetic thought, together with that of Winckelmann, was pivotal for Goethe as he reworked *Iphigenie* into verse and in the process attempted to rein in the unruliness of the original prose version. As much as classical myth, albeit on an implicit level, it is Goethe's turn to classicism, and the aesthetic theories that underpin this turn, that are the subject of Moritz's *Götterlehre.*

The most prominent account of Goethe's turn to classicism is his *Italian Journey* (1816–17), in which he closely links it with his revision of *Iphigenie* into iambic pentameter.[14] In the second entry of November 1, 1786, on the day of his arrival in Rome, he famously describes experiencing a kind of rebirth, in a passage drawn verbatim from his actual letter of the same date to his Weimar friends: "Now I am here, and calm [*ruhig*], and it seems as if I am calmed [*beruhigt*] for my whole life. Because, one might say, a new life begins as soon as one sees with one's own eyes the whole that one had hitherto only known in fragments" (FA 1.15:135).[15] The defining sensation of the new life that begins with his arrival in Rome is thus calm (*ruhig, beruhigt*) in the face of a vision of wholeness. Calm also defines his description of his new version of *Iphigenie.* In the entry of January 10, 1787, comprising the letter

12. The letter in the 1787 edition is dated December 12.

13. Goethe likely began writing the prose version of *Iphigenie* in February 1779, though he had been contemplating writing the play since 1776. It was premiered by the Weimar amateur theater on April 6, 1779. For the composition history of Goethe's play, see the commentary in FA 1.5:1007–12.

14. As Dieter Borchmeyer notes, "His Italian journey . . . signals a decided turn to classicism, as the revision and completion of the dramatic works begun during his first decade in Weimar, especially the second version of *Iphigenie auf Tauris,* clearly indicate" ("What Is Classicism?" 58). Translations from the *Italian Journey* are my own. I have consulted the translation by W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer.

15. For the nearly identical passage in Goethe's letter to his Weimar friends, see FA 2.3:151.

that purportedly accompanies the finished manuscript of his play, he reports giving a reading of the verse version to a group of young artist friends: "These young men, accustomed to my earlier impassioned and impetuous work, were expecting something in the manner of *[Götz von] Berlichingen* and could not immediately adjust to the calm pace [*ruhigen Gang*]" (FA 1.15:168). Elsewhere in the *Italian Journey,* he similarly distinguishes between the prose and verse versions of the play,[16] picking up on a distinction that he had already made at the time of the play's recomposition while in Italy. Thus, in his letter to Herder of January 13, 1787—the actual letter that accompanied his manuscript—he requests that Herder show the manuscript to their colleague in Weimar, Christoph Martin Wieland, for it was he who "first wanted to direct the shaking prose into a more measured [*gemeßneren*] step" (FA 2.3:220). From impetuousness to calm pace, from shaking prose to measured step: what Goethe here describes is not merely a turn to metrical verse, but with it, to a calmer, more restrained style, one that embodies an aesthetics of containment.

Simon Richter has traced such an aesthetics to Winckelmann's classical ideal of "a noble simplicity, and a quiet grandeur" (eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Größe), through which passion (or *Leidenschaft,* with its undertone of suffering, or *Leiden*) is contained, or held in check, by the work of art.[17] In "the manifesto of eighteenth-century neo-Hellenism,"[18] *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works of Art in Painting and Sculpture, 1755), Winckelmann famously points to the Laocöon statue as the chief exemplar of the classical Greek aesthetic. As he sees it, while the Laocöon depicts a scene of intense suffering, it does so without falling victim to *parenthyrsis,* a term that he explains was used by the ancient Greeks to denote the fallacy of representing actions and stances that are "much too fiery and wild" (*Kleine Schriften,* 43). It is precisely these qualities that, according to Winckelmann, characterize the work of most modern artists (44). By contrast, great works of classical Greek art such as the Laocöon are subtended by calm and composure: "Just as the depths of the sea always remain calm however much the surface may rage, so does the expression of the figures of the Greeks reveal a great and composed soul even in the midst of passion" (43).[19] Indeed, in Wincklemann's view, the chief achievement of the Laocöon sculpture is that it explicitly depicts extreme suffering but does so in such a way that this suffering is effectively counterbalanced by Laocöon's great, calm soul: "The pain of the body and the grandeur of the soul are

16. See the entry "On the Brenner Pass, September 9. Evening," containing the following passage: "The play, in its present form, is more a sketch than a finished play. It is written in a poetic prose which occasionally falls into iambics and even resembles other syllabic meters. This greatly diminishes the effect of the play, unless it is read very well, and one knows how to artfully conceal the blemishes" (FA 1.15:25).

17. See Richter, introduction, 8–10. See also Richter, *Laocoon's Body.*

18. Richter, introduction, 9.

19. The English translation is by Richter. See *Laocoon's Body,* 44.

distributed [*ausgeteilet*] with equal strength over the entire body and are, as it were, balanced out [*abgewogen*]" (43). As Winckelmann sees it, the only way to counteract the modern proclivity toward depicting "strong passions" (44), and to restore a sense of balance to modern art, and indeed to modern life as a whole, is by imitating the ancient Greeks.[20]

Goethe openly acknowledges Winckelmann's importance for him during the time of his revision of *Iphigenie:* "And what it means to me to remember this man in this very place!" he exclaims in the entry of December 13 in the *Italian Journey* as well as in his actual letter of the same date to the Herder family.[21] Goethe's entry of January 10 goes on to credit a further aesthetic theory with enabling his revision of *Iphigenie:* "I would never have dared to translate *Iphigenie* into iambics if I had not found my guiding star in Moritz's *Prosodie*" (FA 1.15:168). The work to which Goethe here refers is Moritz's *Versuch einer deutschen Prosodie* (Attempt at a German Prosody, 1786), which develops in the specific context of poetry the concept of aesthetic autonomy that, as detailed in chapter 1, he had inaugurated a year earlier in his essay "Versuch einer Vereinigung aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften unter dem Begriff des *in sich selbst vollendeten.*" In contrast to the baroque poet Martin Opitz's *Buch von der deutschen Poeterey* (Book on German Poetry, 1624), which still held sway in the eighteenth century, Moritz's *Prosodie* posits that German meter is quantitative rather than qualitative in nature—that is, that it is based, like Greek meter, on syllabic duration rather than accentuation. But as Goethe notes in his *Italian Journey,* one of the major advances of Moritz's *Prosodie* was to argue that the syllabic length underpinning German meter, unlike classical Greek and Latin, derives not from the sounds that comprise syllables, but rather from the relative significance of each syllable. German, according to Moritz, is thus far more a "language of the understanding" (Sprache des Verstandes) than are the classical languages (*Schriften,* 179).

However, Moritz also regards sensation or sentiment (*Empfindung*) as playing a major part in German poetry: it loosens the rigid hierarchy of significance that the understanding accords to particular syllables, and equitably redistributes that significance among the other, less important syllables. In other words, sentiment counteracts the violence wrought by the understanding: "The violent striving toward the syllable containing the primary thought is transformed into a gentle, *self-sufficient* undulation. The secondary ideas, which before were mere *means* to awaken the primary idea and to make it stand out, receive in and of themselves a value, and are, so to speak, rolled back into themselves" (Moritz, *Schriften,* 183; original emphasis). The consonance of Moritz's theory of German meter with his

20. Winckelmann articulates this famous dictum near the outset of his essay: "The only way for us [moderns] to become great, or even inimitable if possible, is to imitate the ancients" (*Kleine Schriften,* 29).

21. FA 1.15:159; 2.3:187. On the impact of Winckelmann's ideas on Goethe's play, see Rehm, *Griechentum und Goethezeit,* 126–27. See also Kramer, "Winckelmann's Impact on Drama," 233–52.

concept of "that which is complete in itself" in his 1785 essay is immediately apparent. In both, Moritz portrays the work of art as suspending instrumental rationality, or means-ends relations. His *Prosodie* is particularly concerned with the manner in which poetic meter suspends the instrumental functioning of the understanding, which violently subordinates secondary ideas to primary ideas, as means to an end. As a consequence, the syllables expressing the secondary ideas tend to be kept short in the headlong rush to reach the primary ideas. When sentiment redistributes the value of the main thought, the secondary ideas take on a value in and of themselves, and the syllables expressing them are accordingly lengthened. Furthermore, the entire composition becomes an end in itself, "a gentle, *self-sufficient* undulation." For Moritz, then, the regular meter that arises in this manner makes it possible for a German poem to constitute a self-sufficient, or self-contained, work of art, just like the poetry of the ancients.

While developing the ideas of his 1785 essay, Moritz's *Prosodie* also deeply engages with Winckelmann's aesthetics. On one level, Moritz implicitly attacks Winckelmann's critique of passion, one of the key sentiments, in Moritz's view, that counteracts the violence of the understanding (*Schriften,* 186). But on another level, even while distinguishing itself in this fundamental regard from Winckelmann, Moritz's *Prosodie* adopts Winckelmann's notion that the work of art is comprised of an equilibrium of forces. For Winckelmann, these forces, in the paradigmatic Laocöon sculpture, are passion, on the one hand, and the grandeur of the soul, or wisdom (*Weisheit*), on the other. These two forces are evenly distributed (*ausgeteilt*) throughout the Laocöon and thus balance one another out. Moritz similarly theorizes that the poetic work of art brings two forces into balance: sentiment (including passion) does not simply cancel out the understanding but rather distributes (*vertheilt*) the value that the understanding accords (183). In the process, sentiment's *own* violent tendency—that is, its tendency to "rob" the value invested by the understanding in these syllables (185)—becomes satisfied. Consequently, sentiment comes to rest, treating the syllables "as a base upon which it can rest [*ruhen*]" (183). Out of this counterbalancing of understanding and sentiment arises meter, as "a gentle, *self-sufficient* undulation" (ein sanftes, *mit sich selbst genügsames* auf und nieder Wallen). This description of a gentle, wavelike motion synthesizes the dichotomy in Winckelmann's image of the calm underlying the raging surface of the sea, infusing calm into the very movement of the waves.[22]

Goethe's *Italian Journey,* in narrating his turn toward a classical aesthetics founded on the virtues of calm and composure, and away from his earlier, impetuous works such as *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Werther,*[23] establishes "the foundational

22. Adelung's dictionary defines the verb *wallen* (which is etymologically linked with *Welle* [wave]) as "moving in a wave-like form. (1) Especially regarding fluid bodies, when they have a strong inner movement that causes waves to form on the surface."

23. Goethe traveled under an assumed identity in Italy in part to avoid being identified as the author of *Werther.* See the humorous entry of April 9, 1787, in which he reveals his identity to a Maltese in

myth of Weimar Classicism" (Borchmeyer, "What Is Classicism?" 59). But even while doing so, Goethe problematizes this myth, questioning the very possibility of the completion of a classical aesthetics of containment. As the January 10 entry relates, he drastically underestimated how arduous and time-consuming the revision of *Iphigenie* would be: "I have worked myself into a stupor over it. . . . And so this work, which I had expected to finish quickly, has entertained, detained, occupied and tortured me for a full quarter of a year" (FA 1.15:168–69). Indeed, as he contends in the entry of March 16 of the same year, this project is not merely difficult but can in fact never be fully completed: "A work of this kind is never really finished; one must pronounce it finished when one has done all that is possible in the time and the circumstances" (FA 1.15:225). These sentiments, too, pick up on those recorded during the actual time of his Italian journey and stand in sharp contrast to his newfound sense of calm.[24]

But what, precisely, makes Goethe's project—the translation of *Iphigenie* into verse, and more generally, the translation of an aesthetics of containment into practice—not just difficult, but somehow impossible? Moritz's *Götterlehre,* I contend, constitutes a penetrating reflection on this question. The *Prosodie* might postulate that the contrary forces of the sentiment and the understanding balance one another out in poetic meter, that the autonomous work of poetry can, to recall a phrase from the fourth part of *Anton Reiser,* restore to these "forces of the soul their equilibrium" (*Werke,* 1:504). However, in his *Götterlehre,* Moritz reveals that one force in particular—namely the imagination—can never be entirely counterbalanced and thereby contained. He does so by developing, but also disturbing, Goethe's conception of the imagination as articulated in his poem "Meine Göttin" (My Goddess, 1781), which Moritz quotes in full at the end of his introduction as an epigraph of sorts to his *Götterlehre.*

Opposing Trajectories of the Imagination in Goethe's "Meine Göttin" and Moritz's *Götterlehre*

Moritz's travels in Italy in 1786–88 overlapped considerably with Goethe's. He befriended his idol—the man whom he reportedly referred to as "God . . . and not wholly in jest"[25]—in Rome precisely during the period when Goethe was revising *Iphigenie.* They became particularly close in the five weeks during which Goethe

Palermo, who notes with shock the transformation Goethe has undergone: "He was visibly taken aback and exclaimed: 'Then how much must have changed!' 'Oh, yes!' I replied, 'between Weimar and Palermo I have changed in many ways' " (FA 1.15:260).

24. In his letter to Herder of January 13, 1787, Goethe writes of his revision: "I have worked myself into a state of exhaustion" (FA 2.3:220). See also his entry of October 10 in his travel diary for Frau von Stein: "I am beginning to prepare for the ending. *Iphigenie* is not getting finished; but it should not lose anything in my company under this sky" (FA 2.3:115).

25. See Boyle, *Goethe,* 1:438. The source for this quotation is Johann Christian Conrad Moritz, in a letter to Jean Paul dated July 27, 1796 (Eybisch, *Anton Reiser,* 279).

helped look after the bedridden Moritz, who was recuperating from a broken arm. In the January 10 entry, Goethe reports that his conversations with Moritz, especially during this time, further enlightened him about the *Prosodie,* and it is likely that they would have discussed its application to the rewriting of *Iphigenie.*[26] By the same token, Goethe notes, in his August "Report" of the same year in the *Italian Journey,* it was in large part through their daily conversations that Moritz got the idea to write what Goethe terms "a mythology of the ancients in a purely human sense" (FA 1.15:419).[27]

Moritz acknowledges his debt to Goethe in the introduction to the *Götterlehre,* entitled "Gesichtspunkt für die mythologischen Dichtungen" (Point of View for the Mythological Fictions). The point of view, or *Gesichtspunkt,* in question is articulated in the very first sentence of the introduction, which argues that myths must be viewed as allegories neither of reason nor of history, as Enlightenment thinkers such as Winckelmann were wont to view them, but rather as constituting first and foremost an autonomous "language of the imagination" (eine Sprache der Phantasie).[28] The final sentence of the introduction announces Goethe's major role with regard to Moritz's understanding of the imagination, before going on to cite Goethe's ode "Meine Göttin" in full: "Into the domain of the imagination [*das Gebiet der Phantasie*], which we now wish to enter, we will be led by a poet who has sung its praises most truly" (*Götterlehre,* 9).[29] If Moritz's *Prosodie* served as Goethe's lodestar, guiding him through the translation of *Iphigenie* into verse, the poet Goethe would now seem to return the favor, functioning as Moritz's guide through the domain of the imagination.

As illuminated by Goethe's ode, this domain proves to be extremely ambiguous, both embodying and subverting an aesthetics of containment. The poem begins by posing a rhetorical question: "Which of the immortals / Merits the greatest praise?" (*Götterlehre,* 9).[30] The speaker of the poem responds that he awards this praise or

26. Boyle even speculates that Moritz might have given Goethe "some substantial help, during the last three weeks of the rewriting of *Iphigenia*" (*Goethe,* 1:438).

27. For a probing analysis of Goethe and Moritz's relationship, see Richter, *Laocoon's Body,* chap. 5.

28. Moritz, *Götterlehre,* 1. As Hans Joachim Schrimpf notes, Moritz is most likely specifically targeting Winckelmann's allegorical conception of myth. See Schrimpf, "Von der Allegorie zum Symbol," 382–83. Such an allegorical interpretation was widespread during the Enlightenment. See, for instance, the entry on "Mythology" in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica:* "There is no doubt but that under these fabulous representations, these sensible images, were concealed allegoric and moral meanings." Society of Gentlemen in Scotland, *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 3:359. On the Euhemerist historical interpretation of myth, see in particular chapter 3 in Manuel, *Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods.* According to Manuel, "Fundamental to most Euhemerism remained the idea that in their origins the gods had their existence on earth, that they were ordinary human beings, and that the myths were commemorations of their acts in this world" (105).

29. In translating the quotations from the *Götterlehre,* I have consulted the translation by Charles Frederick William Jaeger.

30. In translating passages from Goethe's poem, I have drawn on Michael Hamburger's translation in Christopher Middleton's edited volume, Goethe's *Selected Poems.* I have altered Hamburger's translation in places for emphasis and accuracy.

prize (*Preis*) to Jove's strangest daughter, Phantasy—that is, the imagination.[31] The poem proceeds in the first nine stanzas to portray this goddess along with several of her familial relationships: to her father; to "us," mankind, to whom Jove has "bound [her] / With celestial bonds" as faithful spouse; and to her stepmother, Wisdom. Then, in its tenth and final stanza, the poem turns away from Phantasy and toward her older sister, Hope.

The ambiguity of Goethe's conception of the imagination is particularly evident in the fourth and fifth stanzas of the poem, which present starkly contrasting visions:

> Rose-garlanded
> With her lily-stalk
> She [Phantasy] may walk valleys of flowers,
> Command the summer birds,
> And suck lightly nourishing dew
> With bee lips
> From blossoms:
>
> Or she may,
> With flying hair
> And dark glances,
> Soar in the wind
> Around cliff walls,
> And thousand-hued,
> Like morning and evening
> Always changing,
> Like moon glances,
> Appear to mortals. (*Götterlehre,* 9–12)
>
> Sie mag rosenbekränzt
> Mit dem Lilienstängel
> Blumenthäler betreten,
> Sommervögeln gebieten,
> Und leichtnährenden Thau
> Mit Bienenlippen
> Von Blüthen saugen:
>
> Oder sie mag
> Mit fliegendem Haar
> Und düsterm Blicke
> Im Winde sausen

31. Adelung's dictionary equates *Fantasie* with *Einbildungskraft. Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch,* s.v. *Fantasie.*

Um Felsenwände,
Und tausendfarbig,
Wie Morgen und Abend,
Immer wechselnd,
Wie Mondesblicke,
Den Sterblichen scheinen.

The fourth stanza begins with a choice of words that strongly signals containment: the imagination is "rose-garlanded" (rosenbekränzt). Containment is inherent in the circularity of the image of the garland or wreath, as well as in *begrenzt* (limited), the homonym of the adjective *bekränzt.* This circularity and boundedness are further echoed in the valleys of flowers into which the imagination steps, as well as in the circular form of the stanza itself, which makes up a kind of wreath, moving from roses to lilies to valleys of flowers, and concluding with the blossoms in its final line. The one possibility of breaking beyond the circular bounds of this world would appear to be the flight of the *Sommervögel* (which can refer to butterflies or, more literally if less commonly, to summer birds).[32] But even they are restrained, commanded (*gebieten*) by the imagination, and thereby restricted to a well-defined domain (the noun *Gebiet,* or domain, is inscribed in the verb *gebieten*). In sum, then, the fourth stanza's vision of the imagination perfectly encapsulates an aesthetics of containment, where what is contained is not merely something external to the imagination—such as passion and wisdom, which Winckelmann's *Gedanken* regard as offsetting one another in the Laocöon statue, or the forces of sentiment and the understanding that Moritz's *Prosodie* views as counterbalanced in German poetry—but, rather, the imagination itself.

The fifth stanza, by contrast, envisions the imagination not as contained, but rather as unrestrained, as a comparison of the nature of her movement in the fourth and fifth stanzas underscores. In the former, she *walks* into the valleys of flowers (*betreten*). While flight appears in this stanza in association with the *Sommervögel,* it is, as noted, strictly bound by the imagination; and the bee with which the imagination is compared is depicted not in flight, but rather in the act of drinking the dew collected in the blossoms. By contrast, in the fifth stanza the imagination literally takes flight: her hair is described as flying, and she herself soars with the wind. The domain of her flight is unbounded: she flies not between, but "*around* cliff walls." Just as she is not restricted to any particular place, neither is she restricted to any specific state: she is "always changing." It is this protean quality that enables her to turn so suddenly from the very image of restraint in the fourth stanza into a Fury-like being in the fifth stanza, and that likely inclines the speaker toward her "more composed" (gesetztere) older sister, Hope, in the poem's final stanza (*Götterlehre,* 12).

32. S.v. "Sommervögel" in Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch.*

The picture of the imagination that emerges in the fifth stanza of Goethe's poem corresponds in many respects with Werther's fantasy in his letter of December 8. In particular, the image of the imagination flying like a Fury in the wind ("Im Winde sausen") recalls Werther's fantasy of "rushing there like the waves" (dahin zu brausen wie die Wellen), and "tear[ing] through the clouds with that storm wind" (mit jenem Sturmwinde die Wolken zu zerreissen). However, where the novel presents Werther's fantasy as unique to a particular individual in a particular social context, the poem's concern is with fantasy or imagination in general. Its force derives partly from the fact that it questions not only whether a particularly modern, pathological imagination saturated with belletristic literature can ever be cured, but whether the imagination as such—be it modern or ancient, as implied in the classical references to Jove and the Furies—can be contained.

In the ensuing text of his *Götterlehre,* Moritz takes up this line of questioning, particularly in the two sections directly following Goethe's poem. Entitled "Die Erzeugung der Götter" (The Creation of the Gods) and "Der Götterkrieg" (The War of the Gods), these sections make up a theogony. Drawing heavily on Hesiod, they narrate the genealogy of the gods, from the most archaic divinity, Chaos; to Earth, Tartarus, and Amor; to their progeny (including, most prominently, Earth's son, Uranos); to the Titans, led by Saturn or Chronos; and finally to the Olympian gods, led by Jupiter.[33] Each of the latter two generations rises up against the preceding one: Saturn castrates his father, Uranos, who has imprisoned his children in the Tartarus, or underworld, out of fear of rebellion; and Saturn himself, who out of the same fear devours his children when they are born, is overthrown by his son, Jupiter, and is once again banished with the other Titans to the Tartarus.

Like Anton Reiser's poem, Moritz's theogony is simultaneously a creation story and one that likewise begins with chaos. Unlike Anton's poem, however, Moritz's theogony progresses far beyond this original chaos, particularly with the rise of the Olympian gods. Moritz also effects two significant reversals vis-à-vis Goethe's ode. First, he reverses Goethe's genealogy: the imagination is no longer Jupiter's daughter, but rather his creator, just as it is the creator of the entire lineage of gods. Goethe is thus quite right when, in the *Italian Journey,* he dubs Moritz's mythology a "mythology of the ancients in a purely human sense," for Moritz's chief concern is depicting the classical gods as creations of the human imagination. Moritz's second reversal regards the trajectory of the imagination in the fourth and fifth stanzas of Goethe's ode—the move from containment to unboundedness. In tracing the history of the classical imagination from an initial unbounded state to one of delimitation, Moritz's mythology becomes a case study in the possibility of the imagination's containment.

In Moritz's account, the imagination's early creations are boundless. Consider his description of Uranos: "Uranos, or the widely expansive vault of heaven, could

33. My summary necessarily simplifies the highly complex genealogy that Moritz recounts.

not be comprehended in a single image; what the imagination had conceived was still too expansive, formless, and shapeless" (*Götterlehre,* 23). Similarly, the next generation of gods, the Titans, are depicted as boundless: "Even the name 'Titans' indicates the expansiveness, the boundlessness in their nature, through which the figures that the imagination forms of them become wavering and indefinite [*schwankend und unbestimmt*]" (24).

The imagination's first creations are not simply boundless, though. They are, furthermore, chaotic. That is to say, like the abyss, or *Abgrund,* in Anton Reiser's poetic evocation of chaos, they negate anything that might possibly delimit them. Moritz notes that the ancient Greeks "still associated the realm of the Titans and the reign of Saturn, who devoured his own children, with boundlessness, chaos, and shapelessness, to which the imagination cannot bind itself" (*Götterlehre,* 24–25). Just as the abyss in Anton Reiser's poem "devoured the new-born day" (*Werke,* 1:504; verschlang den neugeborenen Tag), Saturn "devoured his own children" (seine eigenen Kinder verschlang), fearful that one of his sons would put an end to his reign. As Moritz phrases it in the first sentence of the section "Der Götterkrieg," the Titans' "wide-reaching power knows no limits and endures no restriction" (*Götterlehre,* 20). Not simply limitless, then, the Titans actively negate all limits, all restraint.

The birth of Jupiter, however, marks the beginning of a new era, one in which not only the creations of the imagination but the imagination itself is very precisely circumscribed. This is already evident in the event that makes this birth possible: in the section entitled "Die Erzeugung der Götter" Moritz relates how Jupiter's mother, Rhea, wraps a stone in swaddling clothes and gives it to Saturn, who devours it in the belief that he is eating his newborn son. This gives Rhea the opportunity to save her newborn. "Through this significant stone," comments Moritz, "the bounds [*Grenzen*] of destruction are set" (*Götterlehre,* 17-18). This "significant stone" (bedeutungsvollen Stein) thus functions as a kind of border stone, or *Grenzstein,* which defines a limit to Saturn's seemingly limitless destructive power.

In the process of formulating the story of Jupiter's birth and development, the imagination also sets bounds to itself: "The wild, roving imagination now binds itself to a certain spot of the Earth and finds on the island, where this divine child is to be raised, its first resting place [*Ruheplatz*]" (*Götterlehre,* 17). The description of "the wild, roving imagination" distinctly recalls Goethe's portrayal in the fifth stanza of his ode. Likewise, Moritz's depiction of the imagination binding itself to a particular spot recalls the ode's fourth stanza: like the valleys into which the imagination steps, an island is a self-enclosed space. However, Moritz reverses the path of the imagination as Goethe traces it in his ode, channeling the boundless imagination into this self-enclosed space. In its self-enclosure, this space mirrors that of the self-sufficient or self-contained work of art, as described in Moritz's 1785 "Versuch einer Vereinigung" as well as in his *Prosodie.* Within this space, the chaotic imagination comes to rest; for both the newborn Jupiter as well as the imagination

that creates him, this space comprises a "resting place," or *Ruheplatz*—a word that contains the key term, *Ruhe* (calm), with which Goethe defines his own rebirth in Italy, together with his new classical aesthetic.

In the next section of the *Götterlehre,* "Der Götterkrieg," Moritz sums up the course of the imagination as it progresses through the classical theogony:

> The very avoidance of the monstrous, the noble measure, through which all forms are assigned their limits, is a primary feature of the fine art of the ancients; and not without reason does the imagination revolve, even in the oldest fictions, around the idea that formlessness, shapelessness, boundlessness must first be eradicated and conquered, before things can take their proper course. (23)

> Gerade die Vermeidung des Ungeheuren, das edle Maaß, wodurch allen Bildungen ihre Grenzen vorgeschrieben wurden, ist ein Hauptzug in der schönen Kunst der Alten; und nicht umsonst drehet sich ihre Phantasie in den ältesten Dichtungen immer um die Vorstellung, daß das Unförmliche, Ungebildete, Unbegrenzte erst vertilgt und besiegt werden muß, ehe der Lauf der Dinge in sein Gleis kömmt.

In this one sentence, Moritz summarizes the progress of the imagination through the lineage of the gods, from boundlessness (*das... Unbegrenzte*) to boundedness (*Grenzen, Gleis*) and measuredness (*Maaß*). His diction here, particularly the phrase "the noble measure" (das edle Maaß) resonates with the classical aesthetics of his age, from Winckelmann's *Gedanken* ("noble simplicity" [edle Einfalt]) to his own *Prosodie* (with its concern with regular meter, or *Ebenmaß* [*Schriften,* 185]) to Wieland and Goethe—recall the phrase "a more measured step" (einen gemeßneren Schritt) from Goethe's letter to Herder of January 13, 1787.

Up to this point, Moritz's *Götterlehre* would seem to conclude that the unfettered imagination—as portrayed in Werther's letter of December 8 and Anton Reiser's incomplete poem, as well as in the fifth stanza of Goethe's ode—can indeed be contained, that this is the great achievement not only of the ancient Greeks, but also of Goethe himself in his turn to classicism. Not only does Moritz's diction dovetail with Goethe's depiction of his turn to classicism; the portrayal of the Fury-like imagination in Goethe's ode foreshadows the seminal role of the Furies in *Iphigenie,* which Moritz discusses toward the end of his *Götterlehre,* after quoting from Goethe's revised version at length (*Götterlehre,* 365–70). As Moritz describes Goethe's principal intervention in Euripides' original plot, Goethe has Apollo's oracle promise Orestes rest from the Furies who have pursued him ever since he murdered his mother, if he returns to Greece the sister who is held against her will in Tauris (*Götterlehre,* 369). Like Moritz's story of Jupiter's birth and rescue on the island of Crete, the story of Orestes on the island of Tauris in Moritz's rendition of Goethe's play thus emphasizes the attainment of rest (*Ruhe*), a goal that is also implied in the hero's name, O*rest*es (Orest in the original German). As laid out by

Moritz in his *Götterlehre,* Goethe's own development as poet, from the lyrical poem "Meine Göttin," in which the imagination is unfettered, Fury-like, to *Iphigenie,* where the hero finds rest from the Furies, thus follows the same trajectory as the genealogy of the classical gods.

The *Spielraum* of the Imagination

At the same time, however, that Moritz maps out a trajectory toward the containment of the imagination within the bounds of the clearly delineated Olympian gods, and, by analogy, within the autonomous work of art, he profoundly unsettles it. Unlike Goethe's ode, the *Götterlehre* does not merely depict the imagination breaking free of its confines. Rather, it complicates the dichotomy presented by Goethe between the bounded and the unbounded imagination. Much as his *Prosodie* synthesizes Winckelmann's poles of passion and wisdom, Moritz unites the extremes of the bounded and the unbounded imagination as envisioned by Goethe. He does so, however, not with the effect of counterbalancing these extremes, but rather with that of formulating a paradox: he reveals how the imagination sets itself free in the moment that it sets its own limits.

Consider once again the second half of the sentence in which Moritz sums up the course of the classical imagination: "and not without reason does the imagination revolve, even in the oldest fictions, around the idea that formlessness, shapelessness, boundlessness must first be eradicated and conquered, before things can take their proper course" (*Götterlehre,* 23). In the very act of eradicating (*vertilgt*) its own power to negate, to destroy all limitation—an act embodied in Jupiter's overthrow of the Titans—the imagination reasserts that power. That is to say, the boundless, chaotic force of the imagination, paradoxically, powers its attempt to bound itself.

For this reason, every step forward in the genealogy of the gods, and with it, in the progress of the classical imagination, is also a step back. Thus, in the section entitled "Der Götterkrieg," Moritz ascertains: "In the place of the Titan Helios, or the sun-god, stands the eternally young Apollo with bow and arrows. Indefinite and wavering [*Unbestimmt und schwankend*], the image of Helios shimmers through, and the imagination, in poetical works, often confuses the two with one another" (*Götterlehre,* 24). Even when replaced by the Olympian gods, the Titans are not vanquished. The fact that Helios shimmers through the figure of Apollo in an "indefinite and wavering" manner is not a sign of weakness; rather, as we have seen above, "wavering and indefinite" (schwankend und unbestimmt) are precisely the primary qualities of the Titans as the imagination conceives them. In forming the new Olympian gods, such as Apollo, the imagination has not come to rest; instead, it continues to oscillate, confusing the old gods with the new. Moritz's choice of words to indicate this confusion (*verwechselt*) once again echoes Goethe's in the fifth stanza of his ode: "Immer wechselnd" (Always changing). A key difference, though, is that, where Goethe ascribes this perpetual change to the imagination in

its unbounded state, for Moritz it equally describes the imagination even when it is apparently most restrained and at rest.[34]

In other words, the clear bounds of the domain of the Olympian gods do not simply form an enclosure around the imagination but constitute instead what Moritz, in the introduction to his *Götterlehre,* terms "even freer latitude" (desto freiern Spielraum): "so it [the imagination] prefers to draw close to the dark prehistoric world, where time and place themselves are often wavering and indefinite, and where it has a much freer latitude: Jupiter, the father of the gods and of men, is suckled on the island of Crete with the milk of a goat and is raised by the nymphs of the forest" (2–3). The "prehistoric world" (Vorwelt) constitutes a freer space for the play of the imagination, for it is still "wavering and indefinite" (schwankend und unbestimmt). Significantly, though, Moritz does not illustrate these qualities with reference to the realm of the Titans, for whom they come to serve as an epithet, but rather with regard to the seemingly well-defined, enclosed space of the island of Crete that shelters the leader of the ascendant Olympian gods. Already at its outset, then, the *Götterlehre* blurs the dichotomies between definite and indefinite, rest and activity: the clearest, most self-contained of spaces is still indefinite; the *Ruheplatz,* or resting place, that contains the imagination is simultaneously a *Spielraum,* a space for its boundless play.

This paradoxical containment of the imagination parallels in many respects the containment of the sublime *Augenblick* that Moritz evoked two years earlier in "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen." In two respects, though, the *Götterlehre* presents a very different picture. First, as compared with the 1788 treatise, it greatly expands the role of the imagination in creative production. As we have seen, the 1788 essay distinguishes the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) from the dynamic force or faculty (*thätige Kraft*) that intimates the sublime totality of nature, and groups the imagination together with the more distinct faculties of sense perception and thought (*Schriften,* 76). The *Götterlehre,* by contrast, does not mention the dynamic faculty; the trajectory from its obscure intimation of nature's totality to the more distinct work of the imagination is replaced in the *Götterlehre* by a trajectory involving the development of the imagination alone. From being merely one faculty among several involved in creative production, the imagination advances to the status of the cardinal, comprehensive creative faculty.

In advancing to this status in the *Götterlehre,* the imagination does not merely subsume the activity of the dynamic faculty—that is, the reception of the sublime totality of nature and its condensation into a focal point. Rather, its primary activity lies in negating all limitation, even while engaged in the act of delimiting itself.

34. Annette Simonis similarly accentuates the paradoxical quality of Moritz's conception of the Olympian gods: "Moritz advances especially Apollo and Athena (i.e., Minerva) to figures that symbolize the paradoxical unity of opposites, or more precisely, of things that cannot be reconciled" ("Die 'neue Mythologie' der Aufklärung," 126).

To be sure, the *Götterlehre* still retains the notion of an objective, sublime totality that the imagination imitates in its creations.[35] But Moritz shifts the emphasis onto the sublime that is inherent in the imagination itself, in its own *Abgrund*—that is, its activity of un-grounding. Consequently, if "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen" breaks with an aesthetic tradition predicated on mimesis, the *Götterlehre* goes a critical step further: it loosens the fixation on imitation even in Moritz's higher sense of the imitation of the sublime totality of nature. With this shift comes a transformation in his conception of autonomy, away from the self-enclosed work of art that presents a microcosm of nature's totality (already an impossible achievement from the perspective of the 1788 essay and of the 1792 essay, "Über ein Gemählde von Goethe"), and toward the radical autonomy of an imagination that asserts its freedom even in the act of delimiting itself.

The fourth part of *Anton Reiser,* too, depicts an imagination that breaks free of all constraints. But where Moritz's novel portrays Anton's imagination as diseased, inflamed by his reading frenzy, the *Götterlehre* reveals the imagination to be already in turmoil. This, Moritz surprisingly shows, is even the case in the supposed refuge of classical culture, as embodied in the mythology of the ancient Greeks, as well as in Goethe's neoclassical *Iphigenie.* In short, where Moritz's novel, like Goethe's *Werther,* pathologizes the chaotic imagination, the *Götterlehre,* like Goethe's ode, *de*pathologizes it.

Moritz's *Götterlehre* proved to be one of his most enduringly popular and influential texts. In his lectures entitled *The Philosophy of Art* (1802–3), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling pays it glowing tribute: "A great service was performed among the Germans, and actually for the first time anywhere, when Moritz recognized mythology in this, its poetic absoluteness."[36] As Tzvetan Todorov has argued, Schelling's own philosophy of mythology, as developed both in these lectures as well as in his later *Philosophy of Mythology* (1842), derives largely from his engagement with Moritz's work (*Theories of the Symbol,* 63). In one important respect, however, Schelling simplifies Moritz's account: he steers it away from the notion that the Olympian gods, no less than their predecessors, express the chaotic activity of the imagination, and directs it toward the idea that they represent the sublime totality of nature, or in Schelling's terms, that they symbolize the absolute. This conception of "absoluteness in limitation" (Schelling, *Philosophy of Art,* 37) is predicated on the complete elimination from the clear limits of the Olympian gods of what he terms "the formless, the dark, the monstrous" (42). Thus, according to Schelling, "Zeus takes calm possession of calm Olympus. Well-defined, clearly drawn figures take the place of all the indefinite and formless deities; the old Oceanus is

35. Thus, in his introduction, Moritz declares that "each one of these beings born of the imagination represents, in a certain respect, the whole of nature" (*Götterlehre,* 7).

36. Schelling, *Philosophy of Art,* 49. I have slightly amended Douglas W. Stott's translation for emphasis and accuracy.

replaced by Neptune, Tartarus by Pluto, the Titan Helios by the eternally youthful Apollo. Even the oldest of all the gods, Eros, who in the oldest poetry is allowed to exist simultaneously with Chaos, is born anew as the son of Venus and Mars and as a well-defined, enduring form" (38). Though this passage is clearly modeled on a passage (cited above) in Moritz's *Götterlehre,* it also marks a profound departure. As in Moritz's theogony, the Olympian gods take the place of the Titans, who are similarly described by Schelling as indefinite. Indeed, Schelling repeats nearly verbatim Moritz's prime example: "In the place of the Titan Helios, or the sun-god, stands the eternally young Apollo with bow and arrows (*Götterlehre,* 24). Erased, though, from Schelling's account is Moritz's crucial qualification that the image of Helios shimmers through that of Apollo, "indefinite and wavering," and that the imagination often confuses the two. Instead, Schelling substitutes an account of how the god Eros is reborn in the Olympian reign as "a well-defined, enduring form," a rebirth that also signals a decisive break with the era of Chaos, with which the original Eros was coeval. That is to say, Schelling's text enacts, with respect to Moritz's, what it describes the Olympian gods doing vis-à-vis the Titans: it replaces indefiniteness and wavering with definiteness and calm ("calm possession").

Moritz's notion of the interconnection between the contrary forces of the Titanic and the Olympian finds greater resonance in Hölderlin's theory of the interaction between the opposing forces of the aorgic and the organic, and in Nietzsche's theory of the interplay between the Dionysian and the Apollonian.[37] What remains unique to Moritz's *Götterlehre,* though, is the fundamentally paradoxical nature of this interconnection. Even while helping to found a classical aesthetics of containment, Moritz reveals why it can never be brought to completion: in the very act of containing itself, the imagination most forcefully expresses its chaotic power, forever exceeding its own bounds.[38]

While underscoring its transgressive force, however, Moritz does not portray the imagination as all-powerful. Rather, what he maintains in his *Götterlehre* with respect to the "higher powers" (höheren Mächte)—that is, the ancient gods—applies equally to the faculties or "forces of the soul" (*Werke,* 1:504; Kräfte der Seele) such as the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) and the intellect (*Denkkraft*): none is omnipotent, but rather "power rose up against power, power triumphed over power, and the defeated party itself remained great even in its fall" (*Götterlehre,* 24). To be sure, Moritz regards the force of the imagination as formidable, capable, as we have seen, of completely obscuring for Anton "the ray of calm thought" (*Werke,* 1:504). However, in his introduction to the *Götterlehre,* Moritz emphasizes that the bright

37. On the similarity between Moritz's ideas and those of Hölderlin and Nietzsche, see Schrimpf, "Die Sprache der Phantasie," 182. See also Costazza, *Genie und tragische Kunst,* 391.

38. Richter makes a similar claim regarding Weimar classicism as a whole: "The desire that lurks behind the Classical project is gargantuan, excessive, and, as such, thoroughly unclassical." He does not, however, refer to Moritz in this regard as arguably the key theorist of the impossibility of this project. See Richter, introduction, 6.

light of thought is just as capable of harming the imagination, which therefore flees to "the dark prehistoric world" (2). Juxtaposed in this manner, these passages from *Anton Reiser* and from the *Götterlehre* invite comparison with Max Weber's "polytheistic" description of modern life—that is, his vision of the "irreconcilable conflict" between "the gods of the various orders and values," such as science (*Wissenschaft*) and art.[39] "According to our ultimate standpoint," Weber contends, "the one is the devil and the other the God, and the individual has to decide which is God for him and which is the devil."[40] In his introduction to the *Götterlehre,* Moritz, like Goethe in "Meine Göttin," assumes a standpoint or vantage point that deifies the imagination in this Weberian sense. Yet this standpoint is far from being Moritz's "ultimate" one. Rather, his writing proves to be distinctively modern precisely in the manner in which it moves between multiple, conflicting standpoints. Part 2 of this study accordingly shifts perspectives, probing Moritz's reflections on "*thinking man*" (der denkende Mensch),[41] and on the attempt in the Enlightenment by philosophers and educators to both theorize and realize the sovereignty of the intellect.

39. Weber, "Science as Vocation," in *From Max Weber,* 147, 149. For the German original, see "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 603–4.

40. Weber, "Science as Vocation," 148; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 604.

41. Moritz, *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik,* in *Werke,* 2:140 (original emphasis).

PART II

The Spaces of Cognition and Education

3

Laying the Foundation for Independent Thought

Enlightenment Epistemology and Pedagogy

In 1778, when Moritz completed his studies at the University of Wittenberg, a pedagogical reform movement was sweeping through Germany. Founded by Johann Bernhard Basedow and drawing on a long line of Enlightenment thought, the Philanthropist movement promoted a method of education that fostered the natural order of children's cognitive development. The Philanthropists attacked the traditional primary-school education for violating this order by emphasizing verbal cognition, without first stimulating children's sense perception and activating their powers of analytic reasoning. Without this foundation, they argued, verbal cognition remains empty, consisting solely of the rote memorization of words. They deemed such a purely verbal education wholly impractical for those children who were not on an academic track. And because this education contradicted the natural order of cognitive development, they charged that it had to be coerced. By contrast, the Philanthropist educational model, in adhering to this order, would lead not to the superficial knowledge of words, but rather to the substantial knowledge of things; would thereby prepare children not merely for scholarly work, but for any occupation; and would not be imposed by force but would instead stimulate the free exercise of children's own cognitive abilities.

Basedow popularized the principles of this new pedagogy in his best-selling *Elementarwerk,* an encyclopedic textbook for primary-school children.[1] Completed in 1774, it laid the groundwork for the model school he established that same year in Dessau, the Philanthropin. Enrollment in the school quickly grew, and its progress was eagerly tracked by leading German intellectuals. Immanuel Kant, writing in 1776, made an appeal for the public's financial support of Basedow's school, about which he raved: "Never before has a more worthy demand been made of the human race, and never before has such a great benefit been offered so selflessly, and one that will continue to spread" (*Werke,* 2:463). Its greatest value, he claimed a year later, lay not simply in educating students according to a natural method, but also in training new teachers to use this method, teachers who could then spread an educational revolution throughout the land (465–66).

Even before completing his university studies, Moritz became one of many aspiring or established teachers to make the pilgrimage to Dessau. Though his encounter with Basedow proved disappointing, he continued to pursue a teaching career (first in Potsdam, then in Berlin) that was oriented by Philanthropist principles. Indeed, the author and Philanthropist Joachim Heinrich Campe lists "Professor Moritz in Berlin" as among the founding members of his Gesellschaft praktischer Erzieher (Society of Practical Educators) in the first issue of his *Allgemeine Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens,* which also featured the essay by Campe discussed in chapter 2.[2]

However, at the end of his eight-year career as a schoolteacher, Moritz formulated an incisive critique of Philanthropism and of the tenets of Enlightenment epistemology in which it is grounded. Chapter 4 probes this critique along with the consequences that Moritz draws for the cultivation of independent thought, a goal that he shares with the Philanthropists. The present chapter sets the stage through a discussion of the origin and development of Philanthropism, situating this pedagogical project within a line of antiauthoritarian epistemological and pedagogical thought reaching back to René Descartes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These thinkers advocate methods of cognition intended to free the knowing subject from textual and verbal authority, and promote the capacity for independent reasoning. For all three thinkers, such reasoning involves constructing a rational order. Basedow attempts to translate these methods into pedagogical practice through the use of one teaching aid in particular: the *Naturalienkabinett,* or natural history cabinet.

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1. The complete title is *Elementarwerk: Ein geordneter Vorrath aller nöthigen Erkenntniß; Zum Unterrichte der Jugend, von Anfang, bis ins academische Alter, zur Belehrung der Eltern, Schullehrer und Hofmeister, zum Nutzen eines jeden Lesers, die Erkenntniß zu vervollkommnen* (Elementary Treatise: An Ordered Storehouse of All Necessary Knowledge; For the Instruction of Youth, from the Beginning until the Academic Age, for the Edification of Parents, Schoolteachers, and Tutors, for the Use of Every Reader to Complete His Knowledge). For a useful introduction to Basedow's *Elementarwerk,* see Stach, "Das Basedowsche *Elementarwerk.*"

2. *Allgemeine Revision,* 1: xiii.

The Philanthropist pedagogues writing in Basedow's wake clearly build on his work but shift the emphasis toward the child's independent activity. Thus, according to the teachers and authors Christian Gotthilf Salzmann and Johann Stuve, the child should not merely observe the order of a preassembled natural history cabinet but should assume the more active and independent role of collector, organizer, and explicator. As a result, their educational models present themselves as even less coercive than Basedow's.

Each of the authors discussed below, from Descartes to Stuve, deploys a spatial analogy to explain the functioning of independent thought, or conceives of an actual space that enables the capacity for such thought to develop. Examining these spaces allows us to trace salient continuities as well as seminal turning points in the pursuit of the twin goals of autonomous thinking and noncoercive teaching during the Enlightenment.

From Antiauthoritarian Epistemologies to Noncoercive Pedagogies of the Enlightenment

Basedow's pedagogy emerges from an antiauthoritarian tradition of Enlightenment epistemology that encompasses the two leading lines of cognitive theory before Kant, rationalism and empiricism. The rationalist Descartes and the empiricists Locke and Rousseau differ sharply on the question of the origin of ideas—specifically, whether ideas are innate to reason or arise from sense perception. But these thinkers share the view that attaining clear and certain knowledge entails liberating oneself from textual or verbal authority, and thinking in an independent manner. For all three, this involves organizing one's ideas into a rational order. In the process, language should not command thought but rather should serve as its faithful instrument.

Descartes's first publication, the *Discourse on Method* (1637), narrates his journey toward intellectual independence. "I have been nourished on letters [*lettres*] since my childhood," he writes at the outset of the text, "and because I was convinced that by means of them one could acquire a clear and assured knowledge of everything that is useful in life, I had a tremendous desire to master them."[3] Yet upon completing his secondary education "at one of the most renowned schools of Europe," he finds himself confounded by doubt (*Discourse on Method,* 3). In particular, he realizes that philosophy, the discipline that he claims underlies the sciences, comprises so many contradictory opinions that "one could not have built anything solid upon such unstable foundations" (5). As a result, he resolves to search for secure knowledge not in texts, but in "the great book of the world" (5). And when this mode of experiential learning also proves unreliable, he turns

3. Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 3.

inward, pursuing the goal of clear and assured knowledge by examining his own mind (5).

Descartes claims to have discovered the method for achieving certainty on a now legendary winter's day in Germany. As he relates in his account in the *Discourse,* "I remained for an entire day shut up by myself in a stove-heated room, where I was completely free to converse with myself about my thoughts" (6–7). In this isolation, thrown back on his own reason, he has an intellectual breakthrough: the idea "that there is often not so much perfection in works composed of many pieces and made by the hands of various master craftsmen [*divers maîtres*] as there is in those works on which but a single individual has worked" (7). He cites the layout of ancient cities as an example:

> Thus those ancient cities that were once mere villages and in the course of time have become large towns are usually so poorly laid out, compared to those well-ordered places [*ces places régulières*] that an engineer traces out on a vacant plain as it suits his fancy, that even though, upon considering each building one by one in the former sort, one often finds as much, if not more, art than one finds in those of the latter sort, still, upon seeing how the buildings are arranged—here a large one, there a small one—and how they make the streets crooked and uneven, one would say that it is chance rather than the will of some men using reason that has arranged them thus. (7)

In old cities that have developed according to chance over the course of history, disorder prevails in the haphazard arrangement of the buildings: "here a large one, there a small one." Descartes's depiction of this disorderly juxtaposition recalls his critique of *lettres,* and in particular of philosophy, as an assemblage of conflicting opinions, an association that is further heightened by the shared imagery of construction: "such unstable foundations" in the case of philosophy, "so poorly laid out" in the case of cities. In each case, the cause for disorder is the interference of too many masters (*divers maîtres*) working at cross-purposes.

His reflections on urban planning not only harken back to his critique of his education in letters; they also pave the way for the discovery of the method whereby he fully emancipates his reason from textual authority. He considers the fact that urban planning on the part of an individual engineer gives rise to well-ordered places or city squares (*ces places régulières*). Likewise, the revolutionary method of thought that he discovers on that same winter's day hinges on the individual thinker's construction of order. He thus resolves, in the third of the four rules for thinking that he advances, "to conduct my thoughts in an orderly fashion, by commencing with those objects that are simplest and easiest to know, in order to ascend little by little, as by degrees, to the knowledge of the most composite things, and by supposing an order even among those things that do not naturally precede one

another" (*Discourse on Method,* 11).[4] He thereby inaugurates a method of cognition that produces a tabular structure of knowledge, as Michel Foucault argues in *The Order of Things:* working in a Cartesian manner, by carefully comparing one's mental representations of things, and advancing from the simplest to the most composite, one gradually distributes them across a "tabulated space" (53, 75). The orderly, gridlike city envisioned by Descartes is a precise analogy for such a tabulated space. The analogy works on another level, too: for knowledge to be certain, one must engineer this space oneself, rather than yield to the authority of various masters.

The Cartesian method consequently implies "a fundamental opposition to authority," as the philosopher Charles Taylor noted.[5] More precisely, it implies a fundamental opposition to the authority of the written word. In the *Discourse,* Descartes tells the story of how he came to emancipate his reason from its subservience to *lettres.* He attempts to seal this intellectual liberation by placing language as a whole in the service of thought. The value of words, he argues in the penultimate section of the text, lies in their "testifying to the fact that they [people] are thinking about what they are saying" (*Discourse on Method,* 32). Language thereby serves as "an instrument for the free expression of thought," as Noam Chomsky observes with regard to the *Discourse.*[6] In short, Descartes's narrative depicts his intellectual voyage from his early enthrallment with the authority of letters, to his radical doubts concerning the knowledge thereby gained, to his foundational discovery of "the method for conducting one's reason well" (1), and finally to his relegation of language to the position of faithful witness to the judgments of authoritative reason.

Ironically, the breadth and depth of Descartes's impact on European thought can best be measured by the degree to which he influenced the epistemological theory of one of his most trenchant critics, the empiricist philosopher John Locke. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Locke assails Descartes's doctrine of innate ideas. He does so, however, by appropriating Descrartes's critique of his education in letters, and turning it back on its author. Locke declares that it was advantageous

> to those who affected to be Masters and Teachers, to make this the Principle of *Principles,* That Principles must not be questioned: For having once established this Tenet, That there are innate Principles, it put their Followers upon a necessity of receiving

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4. In the *Regulae,* Descartes goes so far as to identify this activity as encompassing his entire method: "The whole method consists entirely in the ordering and arranging of the objects on which we must concentrate our mind's eye if we are to discover some truth. We shall be following this method exactly if we first reduce complicated and obscure propositions step by step to simpler ones, and then, starting with the intuition of the simplest ones of all, try to ascend through the same steps to a knowledge of all the rest" (*Philosophical Writings,* 20).

5. Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* 167.

6. Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics,* 13.

> some Doctrines as such; which was to take them off from the use of their own Reason and Judgment, and put them upon believing and taking them upon trust, without farther examination.... Nor is it a small power it gives one Man over another, to have the Authority to be the Dictator of Principles, and Teacher of unquestionable Truths. (*Essay,* 101–2; original emphasis)

As a "Dictator of Principles" that, because they are postulated as innate, demand universal acceptance, Descartes, in Locke's view, becomes one of the "Masters" who deprive their followers of the independent "use of their own Reason." That is to say, he attacks Descartes by reinforcing the antiauthoritarian Cartesian tenet that posits that one achieves clear and assured knowledge not by taking an authority at his word, but by exercising one's own reason; in Locke's own words, "*Men must think and know for themselves*" (100; original emphasis).

Despite its empirical basis, Locke's theory of how to best think and know for oneself is similarly indebted to Descartes. According to Locke, "Nature in its ordinary method" progresses via the acts of discrimination, comparison, and combination from "simple ideas" to "complex ones" (*Essay,* 161). Thus, though radically diverging from Descartes with regard to how ideas originate, he posits a natural cognitive method that parallels the Cartesian method of advancing from the ideas of things that are "simplest and easiest to understand" to those that are "most composite." Descartes's method, as noted above, works by "supposing an order"; similarly, the method detailed by Locke involves establishing "the Number and Order of those Simple *Ideas,* that are the Ingredients of any Complex ones" (363; original emphasis). Furthermore, like Descartes, Locke compares this method to material construction: the mind "exerts several acts of its own, whereby out of its simple *Ideas,* as the Materials and Foundations of the rest, the other [complex ideas] are framed" (163).[7] Finally, also like Descartes, for whom, as Chomsky puts it, language serves as "an instrument for the free expression of thought," Locke similarly instrumentalizes language, conceiving of words as "the Instruments whereby Men communicate their Conceptions, and express to one another those Thoughts and Imaginations, they have within their own Breasts" (407).

In contrast to Descartes, however, Locke spells out what it is that enables words to function so well as the instruments of thought: their arbitrary character, or the "voluntary Imposition, whereby such a Word is made arbitrarily the Mark of such an *Idea*"(*Essay,* 405; original emphasis). As Foucault has argued, this view of the arbitrary, conventional nature of language was widespread throughout the Enlightenment or "Classical Age." According to this view, natural signs were held to be "strictly limited, rigid, inconvenient, and impossible for the mind to master" (*Order of Things,* 61). As arbitrary signs, however, words can more easily serve as "marks of identity and difference" (58). By employing these arbitrary signs as

7. Taylor draws attention to the analogy of material construction (*Sources of the Self,* 165–67).

"tools of analysis" in this manner (58), one draws up the table of identities and differences (73).

But by virtue of this same arbitrary character, words also bear an inherent danger: they become nonsense if disconnected from the ideas they signify. This can occur

> because Words are many of them learn'd, before the *Ideas* are known for which they stand: Therefore some, not only Children, but Men, speak several Words, no otherwise than Parrots do, only because they have learn'd them, and have been accustomed to those sounds. But so far as Words are of Use and Signification, so far is there a constant connexion between the Sound and the *Idea;* and a Designation, that the one stand for the other: without which Application of them, they are nothing but so much insignificant Noise. (Locke, *Essay,* 408; original emphasis)

Because the connection between words and the ideas they represent is not natural, but arbitrary, the one can be detached from the other. One can thus acquire and use words without comprehending the ideas they designate. Learning words in childhood in this way leads to their nonsensical repetition, or parroting, in adulthood.

Consequently, in his pedagogical treatise, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), which he published four years after the *Essay,* Locke accords to book learning the last priority, terming it "the least part" of a child's education, though the part "that alone . . . is thought on when people talk of education" (112). He continues with a searing critique of the traditional primary education in the classical languages: "When I consider what ado is made about a little Latin and Greek, how many years are spent in it, and what a noise and business it makes to no purpose, I can hardly forbear thinking that the parents of children still live in fear of the schoolmaster's rod, which they look on as the only instrument of education, as [they do] a language or two to be its whole business" (112–13). Locke's critique of the traditional education in Latin and Greek is three-pronged. First, such an education makes only "a noise and business," a point that echoes his claim in the *Essay* that words learned without a prior understanding of ideas amount to "nothing but so much insignificant Noise." Second, his charge that this noise is made "to no purpose" also indicates the impracticality of learning Latin and Greek for those children who are on track to enter a trade or business, a critique that he expands a few sections later in the text.[8] Finally, he deplores the forceful means used to instill a knowledge of the classical languages, embodied in "the schoolmaster's rod," for "such a sort of *slavish discipline* makes a *slavish temper*" (*Some*

8. "Could it be believed, unless we had everywhere amongst us examples of it, that a child should be forced to learn the rudiments of a language which he is never to use in the course of life that he is designed to and neglect all the while the writing a good hand and casting accounts, which are of great advantage in all conditions of life and to most trades indispensably necessary?" (*Some Thoughts,* 121).

Thoughts, 34; original emphasis). Locke's pedagogy, then, attempts to translate into practice the antiauthoritarian bent of his *Essay.*

In *Emile, or On Education* (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau builds on the epistemological and pedagogical innovations of Descartes and Locke. Like Locke, he envisions a "natural and free education" that follows the "natural progress" of the cognitive faculties (*Emile,* 101). For Rousseau, as for Locke, all knowledge begins with sense perception, out of which arises "*sensual* or *childish* reason," which involves "forming simple ideas by the conjunction of several sensations" (158; original emphasis). As children approach adolescence, they develop the capacity for "*intellectual* or *human reason,*" which consists in comparing and conjoining simple ideas to form complex ones (157–58; original emphasis). Rousseau's epistemology thus recapitulates Lockean empiricism as well as the Cartesian method of proceeding gradually from simple to complex ideas.

Rousseau similarly recapitulates both thinkers' antiauthoritarian critique of book learning. He, too, holds that book learning leads to intellectual servility: "Since everything which enters into the human understanding comes there through the senses, man's first reason is a reason of the senses; this sensual reason serves as the basis for intellectual reason. Our first masters of philosophy are our feet, our hands, our eyes. To substitute books for all that is not to teach us to reason. It is to teach us to use the reason of others. It is to teach us to believe much and never to know anything" (*Emile,* 125). By following the course of his natural cognitive development, from sensual reason to intellectual reason, the child remains his own master. Book learning upends this natural progression, beginning the process of learning not at its natural point of departure (sense perception) but rather at its end point (written communication). Rather than stimulating the child's reason, this deprives him of intellectual autonomy; subjected only to "the reason of others," his own sensual and intellectual reason remains stunted.

Furthermore, like Locke, Rousseau contends that an education based on book learning, running counter to the natural course of cognitive development, can be carried out only under "perpetual constraint" (*Emile,* 92): "Even if I were to suppose this education reasonable in its object, how can one without indignation see poor unfortunates submitted to an unbearable yoke and condemned to continual labor like galley slaves, without any assurance that so many efforts will ever be useful to them? The age of gaiety passes amidst tears, punishments, threats, and slavery" (79). For Rousseau, then, an education consisting in book learning can take place only under conditions of enslavement. Exacerbating this loss of freedom and joy in childhood, there is not even the security of knowing that such an education will prove to be useful in adulthood.

While the main thrust of Rousseau's critique, like that of Descartes and Locke, is directed against book learning, he also subjects an important aspect of Locke's pedagogy to criticism. In his educational treatise, Locke advises parents and teachers to refrain as much as possible from punishing children, and rather

to use "a gentle persuasion in reasoning" (*Some Thoughts,* 57). Rousseau regards this advice as central to Locke's project: "To reason with children was Locke's great maxim" (*Emile,* 89). He follows Locke in condemning the punishment of children: "Inflict no kind of punishment on him [Emile], for he does not know what it is to be at fault" (92). By the same token, though, he also criticizes Locke's advice, arguing that to reason with children necessarily entails the use of words (and particularly of moral concepts) whose meaning children cannot yet grasp. "This," he charges, "is to begin with the end, to want to make the product the instrument. If children understood reason, they would not need to be raised" (89). Like book learning, such premature reasoning is counterproductive for children, for it merely "accustoms them to show off with words" and thereby undermines their ability to reason on their own (89).

Rousseau claims to offer the model for an education that achieves precisely this goal of intellectual autonomy. He articulates the first principle of this education near the opening of his text: "What must be done is to prevent anything from being done" (*Emile,* 41). Accordingly, the primary task of the educator, particularly in children's preadolescent years, is to give them the space in which to develop naturally, not merely outside the constraints of an academic education structured around book learning, but outside *all* forms of social constraint. For Rousseau, this translates into an education that is carried out in the country rather than in cities ("the abyss of the human species" [59]), and that furthermermore takes place largely outdoors—literally outside all institutional strictures. Such an education in nature should begin even before a child has mastered walking: "Instead of letting him stagnate in the stale air of a room, let him be taken daily to the middle of a field. There let him run and frisk about; let him fall a hundred times a day. So much the better. That way he will learn how to get up sooner. The well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds" (78). Whereas indoors, the young child merely stagnates, outdoors, he is physically active, increasingly independent, and happy. Rousseau underscores that a child's growing independence is at once physical and mental: "Look at a cat entering a room [*une chambre*] for the first time. He inspects, he looks around, he sniffs, he does not relax for a moment, he trusts nothing before he has examined everything, come to know everything. This is just what is done by a child who is beginning to walk and entering, so to speak, in the room of the world [*l'espace du monde*]" (125). Given the space in which to develop naturally—again, a space that Rousseau associates with the outdoors[9]—the child beginning to walk relies on his own senses and judgment. In other words, through "a sort of experimental physics relative to his own preservation," the young child develops sensual reason (125).

9. Directly before the passage just quoted, Rousseau contrasts the "stupidity . . . of a child always raised indoors" with the intelligence of children who have the freedom to play outdoors (*Emile,* 124–25).

On the basis of sensual reason, the child cultivates intellectual reason. For the early adolescent, Rousseau envisions a kind of practical geography as the principal way of exercising this more advanced reason. This involves the child's learning to orient himself in the natural world through geographical and cosmographical markers. In so doing, "the goal is not that he know exactly the topography of the region, but that he know the means of learning about it. It is of little importance that he have maps in his head, provided that he is able to get a good conception of what they represent, and that he has a distinct idea of the art which serves to draw them. See the difference there already is between your pupils' knowledge and mine's ignorance! They know maps, and he makes them" (*Emile,* 171). In short, like Descartes and Locke, Rousseau emphasizes the independent production of knowledge rather than dependence on others' representations of the world. But where Descartes and Locke refer to the act of construction merely as an analogy for this independent manner of producing knowledge, Rousseau conceives an actual spatial practice—Emile's orientation in the natural world, culminating in "the faithful representation of his ideas" (160) in the maps he makes—that develops intellectual autonomy.

Basedow's Noncoercive Pedagogy of the Natural History Cabinet

Locke's and Rousseau's treatises on education were crucial role models for Basedow and remained so for the Philanthropists as a whole.[10] Locke's influence in particular is immediately apparent in Basedow's *Vorstellung an Menschenfreunde* (Presentation to Philanthropists, 1768), in which he delivers a sharp attack on existing schools and lays out his plan for a primer for human understanding, or *Elementarbuch der menschlichen Erkenntnis.* In the first chapter of his *Vorstellung,* he expresses his disgust at the manner in which schools promote verbal cognition to the detriment of any real knowledge:

> An astonishing abundance of disgusting verbal cognition [*Verbalerkenntnis*] without reality! An order among the school subjects and studies, determined without considering either the differences in the children's future lifestyles, or the possibilities afforded by the progressive expansion [*fortschreitenden Anbau*] of human reason. Why are all public schools *Latin Schools,* or at least call themselves such! Of what help to the future carpenter or mason is his vocabulary book, his Latin grammar, his Latin catechism! His storehouse of Latin sentences![11]

10. On the influence of Locke's treatise on Basedow, see Overhoff, *Die Frühgeschichte des Philanthropismus,* 83–85, 119–20. Rousseau exercised a comparable influence. Indeed, Ulrich Hermann has described the Philanthropist movement as "Rousseau in Germany." See Hermann, *Aufklärung und Erziehung,* 99.

11. Basedow, *Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften,* 26 (original emphasis).

Like Locke, Basedow disparages education that consists merely in building a storehouse of Latin expressions apart from the reality they signify. He notes that this divorce of verbal cognition from the cognition of reality defeats the "progressive expansion" (forschreitenden Anbau) of human understanding, an expression that echoes Descartes's and Locke's imagery of material construction.[12] Furthermore, like Locke, he claims that such a traditional grammar-school education bears adverse practical consequences for those students on a vocational track.

Basedow amplifies this Lockean critique two years later, at the outset of his *Methodenbuch* (Book of Methods, 1770):[13] "Knowledge that is useful to society [*gemeinnützige Erkenntniß*] throughout one's life and in all stations is all too neglected and, to the detriment of the understanding and the will, the less useful *verbal cognition* [*Worterkenntniß*] is advanced in such a way that it necessarily causes great displeasure and employs coercive means [*Zwangsmittel*], and denigrates men's souls."[14] Basedow's critique extends beyond Latin instruction to the priority placed on verbal cognition as a whole. As seen above, Locke regards the traditional instruction of Latin and Greek as coercively imposed. Basedow, like Rousseau, pushes Locke's critique a step further, showing coercion to be a prerequisite for instilling *any* verbal cognition prematurely—that is, before the development of the child's knowledge of the reality that words signify.

Basedow does not merely criticize the traditional primary-school education; he also drafts an alternative to it that promotes what he sees as "the natural order of cognition."[15] His vision of this natural order rests on three principles that derive from the epistemologies of Descartes, Locke, and Rousseau: the Lockean and Rousseauian tenet that knowledge originates in sense perception; the principle, ultimately traceable to Descartes, that clear and assured knowledge is best attained by constructing a rational order out of one's ideas; and the principle, common to all three thinkers, that words should mirror rather than dictate ideas.

First, Basedow assumes, with Locke and Rousseau, that understanding begins with sense perception.[16] Hence the importance he assigns to instruction via realia, supplemented by the copperplate engravings of his primer, the *Elementarwerk*. Such realia and illustrations, he claims in his *Vorschlag und Nachricht von bevorstehender Verbesserung des Schulwesens* (Recommendation and News of the Pending Improvement of the School System, 1770), make possible an instructional method that proceeds "to teach the youth far less through words and through hearing, but

12. As Adelung's dictionary notes, *Anbau* commonly refers both to farming and to the establishment of a settlement such as a village or town. According to Adelung, the verb *anbauen* can refer to the activity of farming, of settling, or of adding an extension onto a building.

13. The full title is *Das Methodenbuch für Väter und Mütter der Familien und Völker* (The Book of Methods for Fathers and Mothers of Families and Peoples).

14. Basedow, *Ausgewählte Schriften,* 17 (original emphasis).

15. Basedow, *Ausgewählte Schriften,* 18.

16. Basedow, *Elementarwerk,* 1:164.

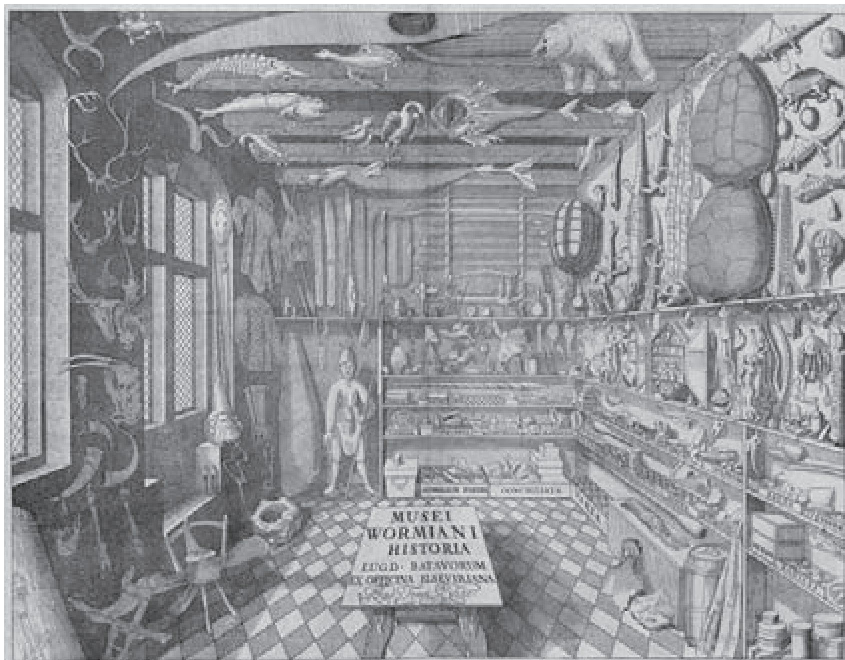

Figure 2. Frontispiece in the museum catalog of Ole Worm. The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

rather far more through actions and through sight than has been customary up to now."[17]

Second, Basedow's concept of a natural order of cognition as developed in his *Methodenbuch* postulates, in accordance with the Cartesian method, that true understanding proceeds via an "elementary order that progresses from easier to more difficult things."[18] This concept of an elementary order of cognition underlies Basedow's recommendation that realia be organized within a *Schulcabinett,* an encyclopedic collection of natural specimens and man-made artifacts.[19] He modeled his *Schulcabinett* on the natural history cabinets that were extremely popular with both professional and amateur collectors in the eighteenth century. These had developed out of the cabinets of curiosity (*Wunderkabinetten, Wunderkammern*) of the previous century, in which exotic objects (both natural and man-made) were displayed in "seemingly bizarre juxtapositions" (see fig. 2).[20] With the advent of Cartesian thought, these collections of curiosities became increasingly "trained by

17. Quoted in Stach, "Das Naturalienkabinett," 24.
18. Basedow, *Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften,* 113.
19. Stach, "Das Naturalienkabinett," 24.
20. Livingstone, *Putting Science in Its Place,* 30.

Figure 3. Engraving in Johann Bernhard Basedow's *Elementarwerk*, pl. 48. The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

discipline and method."[21] By the mid-eighteenth century, order was viewed as integral to what was now termed a *Naturalienkabinett* or *Naturalienkammer.* As Johann Heinrich Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon* claims, "In such compartments and chambers a certain order must be observed."[22] Order is similarly integral to the *Schulcabinett* as envisioned by Basedow. He thus calls for "a well-stocked and *ordered* cabinet of naturalia, artworks, models, machines, and corporeal as well as drawn or painted representations of remarkable things."[23]

As this list shows, Basedow accords to illustrations a prominent place among the objects to be organized within the *Schulcabinett* (see fig. 3). His *Elementarwerk* includes a volume of copperplate engravings that Daniel Chodowiecki, the most prominent German illustrator of the day, prepared according to his detailed

21. Beekman, introduction, cix.

22. See Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon,* s.v. *Naturalien=Kammern, Naturalien=Cabineter.*

23. Quoted in Stach, "Naturalienkabinett," 24 (my emphasis). For a detailed discussion of the rise of the natural history cabinet and its influence on Philanthropist pedagogy, see Anke te Heesen, *World in a Box.* While wide-ranging, her study centers on Johann Siegmund Stoy's *Bilder-Akademie für die Jugend* (1780–84), a pictorial encyclopedia for children that was heavily influenced by Basedow's *Elementarwerk*.

instructions.[24] These engravings comprise more than an appendix to Basedow's primer; they are integral to the text, and referenced throughout.[25] They illuminate the principle of elementary order that underpins both his *Elementarwerk* and the *Schulcabinett.*

Consider, for example, the first field of the first copperplate discussed in the volume on natural history (see fig. 4). This field is further divided into halves, each of which visually analyzes a particular insect: the top one a honeybee, the bottom one a silkworm. On the table in the foreground of the upper half of the field, a cell from a honeycomb, the larva of a honeybee, and a fully grown honeybee are arranged side by side. Similarly, the sheet in the foreground of the lower half depicts the life cycle of the silkworm: larva, caterpillar, cocoon, and moth. On a very basic level, then, befitting the first stages of the elementary order of cognition, these illustrations analyze the insects into the steps of their life cycles. Furthermore, in accordance with the practical bent that Basedow, like Locke and Rousseau, gives to education, the background of each subfield shows the use that people make of each insect: the production of honey and silk. Thus, the various instruments necessary for producing silk are displayed on the table in the lower half of the field, beside which stand two female workers, one of whom is depicted spinning silk from cocoons. What Roland Barthes has written of the famous plates of Jean le Rond d'Alembert and Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) applies equally well to the plates of Basedow's encyclopedic *Elementarwerk:* "The image analyzes, first enumerating the scattered elements of the object or of the operation and flinging them as on a table before the reader's eyes, then recomposing them. . . . The Encyclopedic mounting is based on reason: it descends into analysis as deeply as is necessary in order to '*perceive the elements without confusion*' (according to another phrase of Diderot's, precisely apropos of the drawings)" (Barthes, "Plates of the *Encyclopedia,*" 228–29). The tables of illustrations in Basedow's *Elementarwerk,* like the *Schulcabinett* they complement, are similarly "based on reason"—to be exact, on the Cartesian method for rational thought that supposes a tabular order.

Basedow regards the well-ordered *Schulcabinett,* including the collection of illustrations it contains, as forming the groundwork both for the study of natural history and for the acquisition of language. The language teacher, he claims, "needs only a natural history cabinet, neatly organized for children, and cheap imitations of all sensory things or also of images and copperplate engravings," which he uses to instruct "by displaying the items and their parts."[26] Words are thus acquired

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24. On the life, work, and significance of Chodowiecki, see Schmitt, "Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki."

25. Stach perfectly describes the role of the engravings within the text: "The *Elementarwerk* documents a didactically ordered representational terrain, and indicates how it is to be imparted: it provides a curricular model through its constant reference to the copperplates" ("Das Basedowsche Elementarwerk," 479).

26. Basedow, *Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften,* 48.

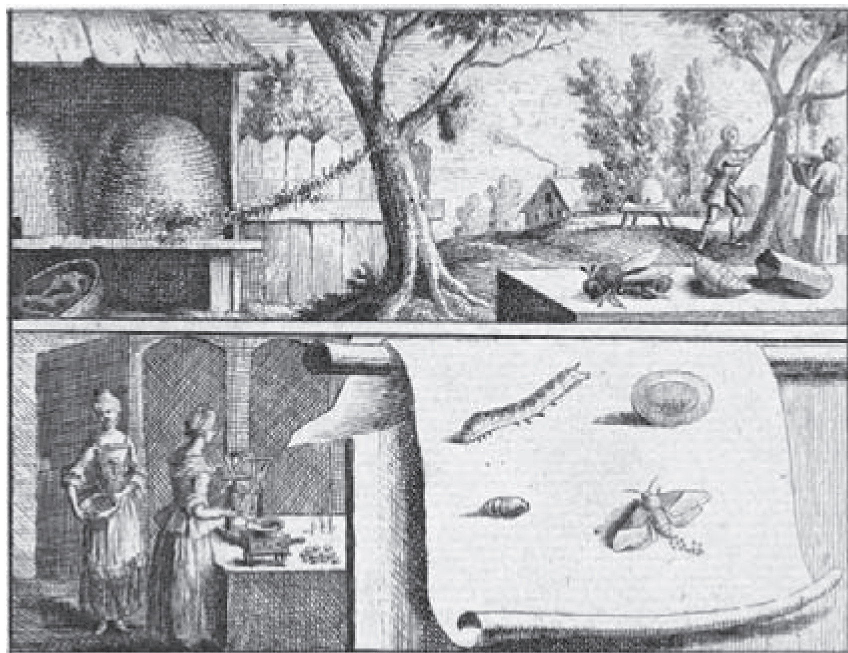

Figure 4. Engraving in Basedow's *Elementarwerk*, pl. 8. The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

as labels for the objects compartmentalized in the natural history cabinet. Like Descartes, Locke, and Rousseau, Basedow thereby reduces words to the status of faithful signifiers of the things that reason analyzes.

In sum, then, Basedow advocates a pedagogy based on a natural order of cognition that begins with sense perception, that follows an elementary order of thought from the simplest to the most composite, and that culminates in the acquisition of words. By adhering to this natural order, the instructor eliminates the need for coercion that arises when the order is undermined and verbal cognition is given first priority. In the natural history cabinet, Basedow discovers the perfect educational tool for promoting this order of cognition, and thus for realizing an alternative to the coercive pedagogical practices that, in his view, dominate the German schools of his day.

Learning to Think outside the Box

Basedow's noncoercive pedagogy initiated the pedagogical reform movement of Philanthropism, among whose most important theorists was the teacher and author Johann Stuve. The basic principles of Basedow's educational program inform

Stuve's treatise "Über die Notwendigkeit, Kindern frühzeitig zu anschauender und lebendiger Erkenntnis zu verhelfen" (On the Necessity of Helping Children Develop Sensual and Vivid Cognition at an Early Age, 1788), which appeared in the tenth volume of Campe's *Allgemeine Revision,* whose ninth volume consisted of a translation of Locke's treatise on education, and whose twelfth through fifteenth volumes contained a translation of Rousseau's *Emile.* Echoing Basedow, Rousseau, and Locke before him, Stuve decries the "despotic discipline" (despotische Zucht) of the typical schoolmaster, urging educators to adopt an instructional method that is free of coercion: "Everywhere it is an eternal, basic truth that the more non-coercive your whole technique for handling and raising children is, the wiser and more felicitous it is in all regards" ("Über die Notwendigkeit," 219–20). Like Basedow, Rousseau, and Locke, Stuve associates this coercion with an education that consists in "a shallow, empty knowledge of words" (209). Stuve, too, advocates that the teacher instead observe "a certain natural order" (226) in his instruction, one that begins with sensual cognition and that proceeds from simple to composite things (224). And in this connection, like Basedow, Stuve stresses the importance of the *Schulcabinett*—or what he refers to as "a collection of all sorts of natural and man-made objects" (238). He notes "how much depends on things being observed in a certain order, for a certain purpose; how important it is that one compares several things of one kind or species with each other and sees them simultaneously, side by side; and how necessary it is that children are given some form of oral explanation and clarification when they observe the objects" (239).

Up to this point, Stuve's program closely resembles Basedow's. Both educators view the *Schulcabinett* as essential in enabling students to progress along the natural order of cognition. But Stuve also recognizes an element of constraint within Basedow's very attempt to circumvent coercive instruction, a criticism that is implicit in his alternative to Basedow's *Schulcabinett:*

> One can prompt children to gather and group these things themselves, and thereby give them an occupation as pleasurable as it is useful.
>
> An hour per day—or, if one finds that too much, a half hour daily of the usual instruction time—could be set aside for the purpose of presenting these things and describing their characteristics and their uses, and in the process exercising the children's attentiveness, their ability to differentiate and to compare, their powers of reflection and thought, and their ability to present their ideas correctly and clearly. ("Über die Notwendigkeit," 239)

This seemingly modest proposal in fact offers a significant corrective to Basedow's pedagogy. Basedow assigns to the teacher the task of assembling the *Schulcabinett,* arranging its component parts in an orderly fashion from simplest to most complex, and naming and explaining them to the students. His *Elementarbuch,* subtitled *Ein geordneter Vorrat aller nöthigen Erkenntniß* (An Ordered Storehouse of

All Necessary Knowledge), models these activities for the teacher. Stuve, by contrast, transfers these activities from the teacher to the student. In other words, "one must be more intent upon physically engaging the child's mind, stimulating its own independent activity [*Selbsttätigkeit*] and giving it latitude [*Spielraum*], than upon actually instructing it and imposing on it a storehouse [*Vorrat*] of ideas and knowledge" ("Über die Notwendigkeit," 234). Stuve, then, underscores the Cartesian, Lockean, and Rousseauian tenet that true cognition requires that one engineer rational order oneself, and not merely adhere to the dictates of others.

Stuve depicts forays into the outdoors as ideal for developing this independent activity. He thereby follows in the footsteps of Rousseau, as well as in those of his fellow Philanthropist Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, whose multivolume *Reisen der Salzmannischen Zöglinge* (Travels of Salzmann's Pupils, 1784–93) describes not only his visits with pupils to famous natural history cabinets, but also their excursions into nature. Here, in the freedom of the outdoors—"outside under an open sky" (draussen unter freyem Himmel)—they examine each plant and animal themselves, learn to classify them according to their properties, similarities, and their differences with other things, and finally learn to name them (Salzmann, *Reisen,* 2:99). Through such accounts, Salzmann hopes to encourage the young reader to break the leading string, or *Gängelband,* by which his understanding is bound by books, and "to proceed on his own, and to observe everything around him with his own eyes, and to judge everything himself" (2).[27]

Stuve similarly views the outdoors as a space that fosters independence. He contrasts a young boy who has spent considerable time in "fields and gardens" with a boy who has been largely confined "in the narrow, musty children's room," and imagines the following scenario: "Bring both boys to a field sometime and you will see how the one hops and jumps, recognizes everything or else asks questions about everything that he does not recognize, takes pleasure in the brave horse, the powerful bull and the speedy stag, etc. The other one walks around as if stunned and astonished, clings to the dress of his caregiver, trembles before everything that moves, is attentive to nothing and differentiates nothing" ("Über die Notwendigkeit," 210). Like Rousseau's Emile, the boy whom Stuve describes as having spent time in open spaces is active, resourceful, and observant (distinguishing horse from bull from buck), while the boy who has been raised indoors is timid, dependent, and inattentive. These outdoor spaces, then, constitute precisely the kind of *Spielraum* in which a child can develop independent activity. On the one hand, they comprise a space free of books, of words that the child repeats without knowing their real meaning. To this extent they resemble the space of Basedow's *Schulcabinett.* But they also constitute a realm that is distinct from his ready-made *Schulcabinett,* a

27. Anke te Heesen emphasizes the manner in which Salzmann attempted to actively engage students in the learning process: "On these excursions pupils were encouraged to start a collection, and their active participation was deemed more highly than previously" (*World in a Box,* 177).

space in which the child can assemble such a collection himself, and arrange it into a rational order.

The line of epistemological and pedagogical thought that extends from Descartes to Locke to Rousseau, Basedow, Salzmann, and Stuve is held together by the common principle that people can and should learn to think for themselves, as well as by a common critique of an education grounded in book learning. But this anti-authoritarian bent also leads most of these thinkers to criticize their predecessors in this lineage for not going far enough to promote independent thinking. As noted above, Locke thus explicitly attacks Descartes for being a "Dictator of Principles" (*Essay,* 102); Rousseau, in turn, critiques Locke for proposing that educators reason with children, before the latter have developed the capacity to reason; and Salzmann and Stuve implicitly distance themselves from Basedow for not providing children sufficient latitude to exercise their own cognitive faculties. Salzmann and Stuve thus attempt to break out of the confines of a pedagogy structured around the *Schulcabinett* and propose instead a pedagogy that encourages teaching children to think, as it were, outside the box.

4

Thinking inside the Box

Moritz contra Philanthropism

In 1785, toward the end of his career as a schoolteacher and the year before his departure for Italy, Moritz published a two-tiered critique of Philanthropism.[1] To begin with, his novel *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie* extends the line of antiauthoritarian critique examined in chapter 3, applying it to the Philanthropist movement as a whole. In so doing, his novel targets not the Philanthropist principle of noncoercive education as such, but rather the hypocritical manner in which Philanthropists propagate this principle and translate it into practice.

While acute, this critique is limited, leaving open the possibility that teachers of good faith could actually translate Philanthropist educational theory into practice. But in the same year that *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie* appeared, Moritz advanced a far more probing critique, though one that has hitherto gone unnoticed. His *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik* (Attempt at a Small, Practical Children's Logic) intervenes at the epistemological foundation of Philanthropist pedagogy, questioning the very existence of a natural order of cognition. From its incipience in childhood, Moritz shows, human cognition necessarily takes place within the parameters of prefabricated analytic spaces such as the *Naturalienkabinett.*

1. Though the date 1786 appears on the title page of both *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie* and *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik,* scholars have dated their publication to the previous year. See the commentary by Heide Hollmer and Albert Meier in Moritz, *Werke,* 1:1114 and 2:1080.

Such spaces constitute the condition of possibility of cognition. Teachers cannot help but discipline children to think within their confines; the Philanthropist promise of a natural education free of coercion is illusory. We can only learn to think *inside* the box.

Moritz's critique of Philanthropism at once supports and complicates Michel Foucault's well-known claim in *Discipline and Punish* that just as corporal punishment was being restricted in institutions such as prisons and schools during the Enlightenment, more subtle disciplinary measures were being introduced. "In the first instance," Foucault argues, "discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (*Discipline and Punish,* 141). He shows how French educational institutions in the eighteenth century organized the classroom into just such an "analytical space" (143) supervised by the teacher. Moritz's *Kinderlogik,* however, suggests a different disciplinary regime in late eighteenth-century Germany. Here, discipline consists less in organizing children into *tableaux vivants,* and more in instructing them to organize the world around them into such tables—to internalize the compartments of the natural history cabinet, as it were, under the illusion that they are creating this order themselves through independent analytic reasoning. Though it promotes itself as a noncoercive pedagogy, Moritz reveals Philanthropism to be all the more subtly disciplinary than the educational institutions described by Foucault.

In short, Moritz interrupts the narrative of the natural progress of cognition that Philanthropism unfolds, in accordance with Cartesian, Lockean, and Rousseauian epistemological principles, showing that learning can take place only within the confines of preconstructed analytic spaces. This does not, to be sure, keep the intellect from longing for liberation from these confines; as Moritz notes toward the end of the *Kinderlogik,* it desires free latitude, or *freien Spielraum* (*Werke,* 2:170). But such an emancipation of the mind ultimately constitutes for Moritz an aspiration rather than an attainable reality. What remains is a far more limited *Spielraum,* though one that offers a liberating potential of its own: the potential that the structures enclosing the intellect can, like houses of cards, be destroyed in the course of history and rebuilt in alternative configurations. We may not be able to think outside the confines of analytic spaces, but at least these spaces can be broken down and reassembled to structure thought in different ways.

Moritz's Critique of Philanthropist Practice in *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie*

Like Christian Gotthilf Salzmann and Johann Stuve, Moritz was a member of the younger generation captivated by Johann Bernhard Basedow's reforms. He interrupted his studies at the University of Wittenberg in the spring of 1778 to make a pilgrimage to the Philanthropin in Dessau, where he hoped to secure a teaching position. According to Karl Friedrich Klischnig, Basedow welcomed him with

open arms and promised him a teaching position (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 28–29). However, Moritz left Dessau several weeks later deeply disappointed by Basedow. Shortly after his departure, he nevertheless went on to pursue a successful eight-year teaching career in Berlin that was heavily influenced by Philanthropist principles.[2] During this period, he also established close relations with key figures in the Philanthropist movement—for instance, the writers and educators Joachim Heinrich Campe and Carl Friedrich Bahrdt.[3] As several commentators have pointed out, his kinship with Philanthropist pedagogy is evinced in his first book publication, *Unterhaltungen mit meinen Schülern* (Conversations with My Pupils, 1780).[4]

However, five years later, in *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie,* he takes sharp aim at Philanthropism, explicitly exposing an underlying hypocrisy in its practice. The book begins with Hartknopf, an itinerant iron smith and preacher, being pushed by a stranger into a ditch on a dark night while wandering toward his hometown of Gellenhausen. The man who pushes him is a teacher named Hagebuck, an alumnus of Basedow's Philanthropin, who together with his fellow alumnus Küster has recently founded his own Philanthropist school in Gellenhausen. As these two educational reformers see it, before their arrival, the town's school had been ruled by a harsh and pedantic discipline that they have completely eliminated: "There was much to clear away—here, the old drudgery still ruled in the school—here, the cane and the rod still governed—here vocabulary words were still memorized——But how quickly did all of this change completely! and it was as though the cane and rod were blown away!" (Moritz, *Werke,* 1:533).

However, Hagebuck's violent acts toward Hartknopf and others belie his noncoercive pedagogy. This is evident not merely in the novel's opening scene, but even more blatantly in one that parodies the Philanthropist practice of liberating children from the confines of the classroom through experiential learning in the outdoors.[5] The scene opens at daybreak with Hartknopf sitting on a hill directly beneath Gellenhausen's gallows together with Elias, his former teacher and the rector emeritus of the town's Latin school. Their conversation

2. Moritz began his career as a teacher at the lower school of the Gymnasium zum grauen Kloster and was quickly promoted to Konrektor. In 1782, he was promoted to cosupervising Konrektor at the Cöllnischen Schule. In 1784, he accepted the position of Außerordentlicher Professor in the upper division of the Gymnasium zum grauen Kloster. On Moritz's teaching career, see the biographical studies by Eybisch, Boulby, Meier, and Winkler.

3. In 1781, Campe offered Moritz a position at his school in Hamburg (Eybisch, *Anton Reiser,* 102). Moritz spent several months in Halle with Bahrdt (117).

4. See Eybisch, *Anton Reiser,* 85–86; Boulby, *Karl Philipp Moritz,* 62; Meier, *Karl Philipp Moritz,* 36 and 68.

5. More specifically, this scene may be read as a parody of Moritz's own description of this practice in a section of the *Unterhaltungen* entitled "Von der Liebe zu Gott: Bei einem Spaziergange im Frühlinge" (Concerning the Love of God: During a Walk in the Spring). See *Werke,* 2:67–80.

is interrupted by Hagebuck, who leads his pupils up the hill to show them the majesty of sunrise:

> Hagebuck had his pupils arrange themselves around him in a circle, and he showed them, from this height, all the majesty of the world—then he stood before them, and delivered an address to the whole globe, which he urged to willingly accept the light that was being so charitably set on high for its sake, and to let go of the night of prejudice—hereupon he addressed, from the mountain, the city of Gellenhausen, saying that it ought not disregard its true well-being and resist the charitable influence of the universally spreading enlightenment—then he addressed the Gellenhausen youth, saying that they should properly sense this sublime performance of the rising sun. (*Werke,* 1:557–58)

Hagebuck thus enacts the Philanthropist principle that learning should begin in a natural manner, through sense perception. Yet the natural act of sense perception in this scene is by no means uncoerced. Hagebuck makes a paradoxical demand: he urges *(aufforderte)* that the Earth "*willingly*" (willig) accept the light of the sun, and by analogy, that the town of Gellenhausen accept the positive influence of the Enlightenment. And when his plan encounters resistance, Hagebuck's rhetorical coercion turns into physical violence: a mist rises and blocks the sunlight, and Hagebuck reacts by kicking (and thereby killing) an old, lame poodle that approaches him (558).

That Hagebuck's violence lies not merely in his physical actions, but in the force of his words themselves, becomes particularly evident in his interactions with his colleague Küster: "When Hagebuck dictated, Küster's quill captured his words like the words of a saint, and brought them with trembling hand to paper, so that not even a single syllable would get lost— . . . He was Hagebuck's faithful echo—when Hagebuck dictated, he would write and read his words back to him; when Hagebuck ranted against the cane and the rod, Küster would rave against rote memorization and vocabulary words" (*Werke,* 1:536). The irony is that precisely in attacking the prevailing coercive pedagogy grounded in verbal cognition, Hagebuck exerts his authority over Küster, casting him into an entirely subordinate, passive role as faithful echo to his torrent of words. Moritz makes clear that this is not a role that comes naturally to Küster, who, before his education at the Philanthropin, was fired from his position as a sexton precisely because of his insubordination toward his pastor (532).[6] While the pastor, who tries explicitly to enforce

6. "Because of his tumultuous character, however, he was dismissed from his position, for he did not want to conform to the customary order of things by walking behind his pastor, but rather wanted to walk beside him, and to regard his pastor as his friend and colleague—he thought they would act upon their era together in brotherly union and fight against the old prejudice.—The Herr Pastor, however, was not amused, and forbade himself such familiarity with his subordinate" (*Werke,* 1:532).

Küster's subordination, fails to bring him into line, Hagebuck succeeds precisely by dictating to Küster a pedagogical doctrine of noncoercion. Hagebuck thus exerts his authority as a dictator in every sense of the word.

Moritz likely based his portrait of Hagebuck on his encounter with Basedow in Dessau seven years earlier, at the beginning of his teaching career. In his biography, Klischnig describes how, in his first encounter with Moritz, Basedow had praised his Philanthropin for turning out "independent people, educated without pedantic force" (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 28). Yet Klischnig accounts for Moritz's relatively quick departure from Dessau by pointing to "the suppression of the mind [*Geistesunterdrückung*] and tyranny with which this truly great man [Basedow] handled his subordinates" (35). Basedow's tyranny toward Moritz and other subordinates, according to Klischnig, expressed itself especially in his endless lectures: "Often late into the night, he [Moritz] had to listen to his speeches and his own eulogies, without being able so much as to produce a single word. . . . It was probably natural that he became, as a result, ever more disheartened, and finally no longer ventured to speak a single word in Basedow's presence, so that the latter began to take him for an imbecile" (35–36). With *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie,* Moritz finally gets a word in edgewise. But it would be a mistake to view Hagebuck merely as a stand-in for Basedow.[7] Though Hagebuck shares many of Basedow's characteristics, Moritz emphasizes that Hagebuck is a product of Basedow's Philanthropin, a member of the generation of Philanthropists who, like Moritz himself, became infatuated with Basedow and his pedagogical reform movement. In the character of Hagebuck, he satirizes Philanthropism as a whole.

While acute, Moritz's satirical critique of Philanthropism in this novel goes only so far, in essence showing up what the narrator terms Hagebuck's "hypocrisy and dissimulation" (*Werke,* 1:535). It leaves open the possibility that Philanthropists of good faith could indeed practice the noncoercive educational approach that they preach, and that they could promote their program in a less authoritarian manner. By comparison, Moritz's second critique of Philanthropism, in his *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik,* intervenes at the epistemological foundation of this movement's pedagogy.

Moritz's Critique of Philanthropist Epistemology in *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik*

Like Basedow's *Elementarwerk,* Moritz's *Kinderlogik* is a children's primer organized around a series of copperplates engraved by Daniel Chodowiecki. It opens with a frame story that features a young tutor who, in a Philanthropist vein, advances a noncoercive teaching method. Indeed, his name, Stahlmann, may well

7. Compare Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf's claim, in her afterword to the *Andreas Hartknopf* novels, that the character of Hagebuck is a portrait of Basedow (258).

allude to Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, with whose work Moritz was familiar.[8] As described by Salzmann in his *Reisen der Salzmannischen Zöglinge,* and as later advocated by Johann Stuve in his theoretical treatise, Stahlmann sets his pupil the task of collecting and classifying objects, including both botanical specimens and the objects represented in the copperplates. In its overall format, then, and specifically through its frame story, Moritz's text would clearly seem to ally itself with the Philanthropist project.

But an unmistakable irony can also be discerned in the name that Moritz gives to the boy's tutor. The name Stahlmann connotes a steely discipline that contrasts sharply with the "pleasant and playful manner" of his instruction (Moritz, *Werke,* 2:85).[9] Indeed, although there is no indication that Stahlmann, in contrast to Hagebuck, is anything but sincere in his attempt to practice a pedagogy that is free of force, Moritz reveals that he nevertheless encloses his pupil within a strict analytic framework, an "iron cage" (stahlhartes Gehäuse), to borrow Max Weber's well-known metaphor.[10] Weber uses this expression to depict the highly rationalized economic order that determines modern life "with overwhelming force" (*Die protestantische Ethik,* 188). It proves to be an equally apt metaphor for the spaces within which Stahlmann's pupil becomes disciplined to think rationally.[11]

The frame story of the *Kinderlogik* opens with a description of the disorder suffered by this pupil, a fourteen-year-old boy named Fritz: "Fritz was a disorganized [*unordentlicher*] boy. When he undressed in the evening, he tossed one shoe under the oven, and placed the other shoe under his bed. One garter was in his jacket pocket, and the other one hung beneath the mirror. His jacket and vest lay above and his hat lay below" (*Werke,* 2:82). Fritz, then, does not suffer from any particular disorder, but from disorder as such. He separates sets of things that normally are placed together (his shoes), inverts the common order of sets ("His jacket and vest lay above and his hat lay below"), and creates unorthodox sets (placing his garter in his jacket pocket). Because of his disorder, he wakes up in the morning unable to find where he placed things the evening before, and sets off to school "wild and discontented," seldom arriving on time (82).

8. In his essay "Das menschliche Elend" (Human Misery), published in his *Denkwürdigkeiten* (1786), Moritz discusses Salzmann's novel *Carl von Carlsberg* (*Werke,* 2:34).

9. On the Philanthropists' promotion of playful instruction, see Overhoff, "...aber mit Lust!" For an alternative reading of the name Stahlmann, see Krupp, "Autonomy and Development," 190.

10. Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik,* 188. The translation "iron cage" is by Talcott Parsons. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells have rendered Weber's original phrase more accurately, if less memorably, as "shell as hard as steel."

11. See Polster, "Childhood, Autonomy, and Social Order." While building on Polster's claim that the *Kinderlogik* represents an "offense against Philanthropist theory" (233), my reading contests his assertion that the character of Stahlmann serves not a disciplinary function but "is provided merely to point the way to the internal principles of order" (238). If this were the case, Moritz's text would precisely exemplify, rather than offend against, a principal tenet of Philanthropist pedagogy. Instead, Moritz mobilizes this character to precisely the opposite end: to show that, even while Stahlmann attempts to promote his pupil's independent thinking, he cannot help but ensure that his pupil internalizes an established order.

The frame story presents two opposing pedagogical strategies for curing Fritz of his disorder. The first, initially pursued by Fritz's parents, consists in the exercise of authority through the threat of force and is completely ineffective: "His mother scolded, his father threatened, but it was all for naught" (*Werke,* 2:83). Fritz's newly hired tutor, on the other hand, uses a different strategy. Like the Philanthropists, Stahlmann takes a noncoercive approach, one that appeals to the child's own powers of sense perception and reason. As Arnim Henry Polster observes, "He seeks to engage Fritz's mind rather than compel it" ("Childhood, Autonomy, and Social Order," 239). Unlike Fritz's parents, he does not command that Fritz obey a given regime of order, but rather instructs him in the art of order, or "the great art of *classifying* and *ordering,* of *comparing* and *differentiating,* upon which the whole happiness of *rational* man is based" (*Werke,* 2:85; original emphasis). Stahlmann, then, teaches Fritz to think for himself according to a method closely resembling the Cartesian method, which also operates on the principle of "comparison by means of order," as Foucault has shown (*Order of Things,* 53).

Stahlmann's approach to teaching Fritz this art of order is deceptively simple: "From that moment on, Stahlmann began his lessons with Fritz by letting him *place together what belonged together,* and *separate what did not belong together*" (*Werke,* 2:83; original emphasis). This approach appears to bear fruit, strengthening Fritz's self-reliance. As a result, his clothes seem to arrange themselves on their own (*von selbst*), just as Fritz himself now gets up early of his own accord: "His father threatened, his mother scolded no more, Fritz got up earlier on his own [*von selber*]" (84).

The difference between the pedagogy practiced by Fritz's parents, on the one hand, and by his tutor, on the other, crystallizes around a particular object, namely a natural history cabinet. Given his marked progress toward order, his parents wish to reward him with a complete natural history collection (*Werke,* 2:84). Stahlmann, though, forbids their presenting Fritz with a preassembled *Naturalienkabinet;* rather, he charges his pupil with assembling a collection on his own (84). Like Salzmann and Stuve, Stahlmann thus emphasizes not conformity to a rational order, but rather the independent constitution of such an order, insisting "that Fritz must himself [*sich selbst*] gradually assemble a natural history cabinet in order to learn, in this manner, *to place together what belongs together,* and *to order what is confused*" (84; original emphasis). As recommended by Stuve, this active learning process involves forays with his tutor into the outdoors, to a field where they collect botanical specimens (84). In Stuve's terms, then, Stahlmann seeks to give Fritz the requisite *Spielraum* in which to cultivate his independent activity, or *Selbsttätigkeit* ("Über die Notwendigkeit," 234).

Stahlmann similarly sees the *Kinderlogik*'s seven copperplates as a kind of field on which Fritz can practice the art of order. These plates appear to group objects in a wholly arbitrary manner: "These small copper plates depicted all kinds of objects that were completely different from one another and that one glimpsed here close together despite their great differences" (*Werke,* 2:85). But the plates' arbitrary

juxtaposition of different objects is precisely the reason why Stahlmann finds them to be of pedagogical value: they present an occasion for Fritz to exercise his sense perception and his reason so as to arrange the randomly grouped representations into a well-ordered collection.

In appropriating the copperplates as teaching aids in this manner, Stahlmann redefines their educational purpose. As a cursory glance reveals, they were originally designed for a completely different end, namely as illustrations for a children's Latin primer.[12] According to Klischnig, when this primer sold poorly, the publisher removed the expensive engravings from the remaining copies and commissioned from Moritz a new children's book to recycle them (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 166). Six of the seven plates arrange the objects they represent according to linguistic categories: plates I–IV according to grammatical gender, plates V and VI according to singular and plural, while plate VII likely illustrated transitivity and intransitivity. Midway through the *Kinderlogik,* Moritz explicitly addresses the copperplates' original purpose: "Thus, when teaching Latin, one seeks especially to impress [*recht einzuschärfen*] the difference between masculine and feminine nouns—And this was also one of the aims of these copperplates" (*Werke,* 2:133). The copperplates, then, originally functioned to impress or, literally, "sharpen in" linguistic distinctions. In keeping with Philanthropist principles, Stahlmann transforms their instructional use. Rather than using them to engrave linguistic distinctions in Fritz's mind, he attempts to employ them in a noncoercive way to teach Fritz to rely on his sense perception and reason in order to draw his own rational distinctions between those things that belong together, and those that do not.

The main body of the *Kinderlogik* opens with an analysis of the first copperplate, which demonstrates how Fritz applies Stahlmann's art of order (see fig. 5). He draws a series of elementary distinctions: between animate and inanimate, between human and animal, and between art and nature. But while seeming to showcase this method of independent perception and thought, Moritz questions it in a subtle, but incisive way. Indeed, the distinctions that Fritz appears to make independently are already inscribed in the world through a variety of instruments, and re-inscribed in the copperplate. The natural progress of cognition that Stahlmann's method promotes thus proves to be caught in a vicious circle: the order that reason apparently first supposes (recall Descartes's method of "supposing an order") turns out to be already instrumentally *pre*supposed.[13]

12. Heide Hollmer and Albert Meier identify this primer as Johann Michael Friedrich Schulze's *Elementarbuch der lateinischen Sprache* (Berlin, 1779). See their commentary in Moritz, *Werke,* 2:1079.

13. Albert Meier has pointed out how later sections of the *Kinderlogik* expose a circularity inherent in the operation of formal logic. (See Meier, "Sprachphilosophie in religionskritischer Absicht," 264.) He suggests that Fritz, by practicing the art of order promoted by Stahlmann, avoids such a circle, progressing instead on a path of cognition that begins with sense perception and proceeds toward ever greater rationality (255–56, 262). But as I hope to show, already Fritz's first, elementary application of the art of order operates within a vicious circle. For an excellent analysis of Moritz's critique of the circularity of syllogistic logic, see also Krupp, "Autonomy and Development," 193–98.

Figure 5. First copperplate in the *Kinderlogik*. Princeton University Library.

In his analysis of the first copperplate, Fritz begins by distinguishing between animate and inanimate. Referring to the plate's images of the farmer, the writer, and the fisherman, Moritz walks the reader through the process of reasoning that leads Fritz to draw this first distinction:

> The farmer acts upon the horses and drives them, the horses act upon the plow, and pull it, the plow acts upon the earth, and dissects [*zerschneidet*] it.
>
> The hand of the man acts upon the quill and guides it, the quill acts upon the paper and paints it with letters.
>
> The hand of the fisher sinks the net in, and the net catches the fish up [*faßt die Fische auf*]—
>
> Thus the action of the animate upon the inanimate and of this in turn upon the animate is reproduced.
>
> Fritz must, therefore, first draw a great line [*großen Strich*] between
>
> *animate* and *inanimate*
>
> Everything that he has until now seen in the world, and will see in the future, he must bring under one of these denominations—He can, therefore, appropriately [*füglich*] divide the world into the *animate* and the *inanimate world*—(*Werke,* 2:87)

At first glance, Fritz might appear to arrive at this primary distinction by resorting solely to his own independent powers of perception and reason. In fact, however, Moritz's description suggests that the "great line" (großen Strich) that he draws between animate and inanimate has already been drawn. The activities of farming, writing, and fishing as described here each entail the act of drawing a line with a particular instrument. Thus, farming "dissects" (zerschneidet) the earth with a plow, thereby drawing furrows: "To push the plow into the earth in order to draw furrows" (92). Writing similarly produces lines of text by drawing letters on paper with a quill. While the passage does not explicitly mention such lines in the context of fishing, they are nonetheless made visible in the engraving to which it refers (the water streaming down in straight lines from the net), as well as suggested typographically by the long dash (or *Gedankenstrich*) that concludes the sentence "The hand of the fisher sinks the net in, and the net catches the fish up—." Plowing, writing, and fishing all comprehend the world (*auffassen* in its figurative sense) by drawing lines, making *Striche.*

Conspicuously absent from this passage is the one remaining human activity depicted in the first copperplate, namely reading. But it, too, is silently present, both in the act that the reader of the *Kinderlogik* is engaged in, as well as in Fritz's unconscious act of "reading" the lines made in the copperplate illustrations by the farmer's plow, the writer's quill, and the fisherman's net. When Fritz draws a line between animate and inanimate, then, he does so not by employing an independent, rational method of perception and thought, but rather by redrawing lines that have already been inscribed in the world by a variety of instruments, and engraved by the stencil

in the copperplate. The art of order that Fritz learns from Stahlmann disregards the linguistic distinctions around which the copperplates are organized, focusing attention instead on the objects represented, in order to distinguish between them on a rational basis. In so doing, though, it merely deflects Fritz's attention away from one set of signs (those constituting language) and onto another set (the lines comprising the engravings) that becomes "sharpened" into his mind.

Furthermore, the art of order that Fritz learns does not entirely succeed in circumventing language. Language is not merely present in the lines written by the man and read by the boy; it is also present in the categories, "*animate* and *inanimate,*" that help determine the manner in which Fritz classifies everything he has seen, and everything he has yet to see: "Everything that he has until now seen in the world, and will see in the future, he must bring under one of these denominations—." These denominations serve as established rubrics that make it possible for Fritz to draw a distinction between things. As Moritz argues in "Auch eine Hypothese über die Schöpfungsgeschichte Mosis" (Yet Another Hypothesis Concerning Moses's Creation Story, 1784), an essay on language published the year before the *Kinderlogik,* "*Differentiating* and *naming* appear, therefore, to be indivisibly connected with one another" (*Werke,* 2:192; original emphasis).

Words, then, comprise another key instrument, or *Werkzeug,* for thought, as Moritz remarks in his *Deutsche Sprachlehre für die Damen* (13; German Doctrine of Language for Women, 1782). But it is not an instrument that functions in the manner conceived by Descartes, Locke, Rousseau, or the Philanthropists—that is, as a means of representing distinctions made independently by reason. Rather, it is an instrument that helps make reason's distinctions possible in the first place. "But what would all objects outside us be," asks Moritz, "without the thoughts within us? And what, in turn, would all thoughts be without the words through which we differentiate them?" (*Deutsche Sprachlehre,* 15). The instrument of words enables us to distinguish between thoughts, and thereby arrange them into order.[14]

Like the reading boy depicted in the first copperplate, Fritz's cognition thus does not culminate in the application of signs to rationally ordered concepts but instead begins with signs, both verbal ("denominations") and visual (the lines engraved in the copperplates). Moritz's description of Fritz's analysis consequently intervenes in the Philanthropist doctrine of the natural progression of cognition. Fritz learns not by advancing from sense perception to rational organization to designation, but rather by participating in a circular process that begins with signs that establish the very order that rational thought seems first to suppose. Moritz portrays this process as coercive: Fritz *must* draw a great line; likewise, he *must* arrange everything he sees, and everything he has yet to see, under a particular denomination. Having

14. Moritz thus certainly does not view language as "the product of the natural categorizing activity of human reason," as Ludwig M. Eichinger maintains in "Grammatik als Ordnungsprinzip," 52. For a brief but balanced overview of Moritz's reflections on language, see Knobloch, "Karl Philipp Moritz als Grammatiker."

thereby been made compliant (or *fügsam*), he now *can* divide the world "appropriately" (füglich).

The second analysis described in the *Kinderlogik* is similarly deduced via a form of circular reasoning and displays even more pointedly the coercion inherent therein. It draws a line between rational and irrational, human and animal. Moritz returns here to the illustration that depicts plowing:

> The horse walks forward and pulls the plow, because it is driven by the whip.
>
> The farmer, however, is not driven forward by anything behind him; he is driven solely by his thoughts, which are in him—
>
> The earth must first be cut open by the plow, if it is to receive the seeds that are strewn in it and yield fruit.
>
> "If I did not cut the earth open now, it would not yield fruit for me, and I would not be able to satisfy my hunger in the future."
>
> This is the *inner thought* that drives the farmer to arduously push the plow into the earth with the one hand, while he drives the horses forward with the whip in his other hand—that is how far he thinks into the *future,* while the horses feel merely the *present* coercion, and fear the *present* pain that they would have had to endure from the whip if they did not walk forward.
>
> There is thus a great difference in the animate world between
>
> *rational* and *irrational*
>
> between
>
> *human* and *animal* (*Werke,* 2:88; original emphasis)

The distinction between rational and irrational, human and animal, seems to derive from the observation that the farmer, unlike the horses, is capable of independent thought, or what Raimund Bezold, in his reading of this passage, terms "the auto-causality [*Selbstursächlichkeit*] and freedom of thought" (*Popularphilosophie und Erfahrungsseelenkunde,* 24). This capacity for independent reasoning is the basis for his progress: his own internal thought guides him to think ahead, and to move the horses and the plow forward. The horses, by contrast, are motivated to move forward not by voluntary reflection about the future, but rather by the sensation of "*present* coercion" and the fear of "*present* pain."

Moritz's description, however, simultaneously undermines the basis of this distinction between farmer and horse. On the one hand, his description questions the purported independence of the farmer's thinking. The farmer's internal thought ("If I did not cut the earth open now . . . ") merely reformulates the claim that precedes it: "The earth must first be cut open by the plow." That is, his supposedly independent thought follows a prior line of reasoning. By the same token, Moritz's description also questions the horses' apparent inability to consider the future: they move forward precisely because they anticipate the pain that would be caused if they were lashed by the whip. In this respect, they are not so different from the farmer himself, who anticipates the possibility of hunger if he does not plow the earth.

Given these apparent similarities between farmer and horse, how is the distinction between rational and irrational, human and animal, made? Just as the plow incises the first distinction (animate—inanimate), so the whip draws the second. Like the plow, the quill, and the net, this instrument also draws lines, as suggested by the *Gedankenstrich* drawn after the clause "while he drives the horses forward with the whip in his other hand—." The whip's lashes mark the horse as animal, as irrational. The analysis described in the *Kinderlogik* follows this prior distinction. Like the farmer himself, it follows a line of reasoning that has already been established. It thereby, once again, participates in a vicious circle: the distinction it apparently makes on a rational basis is already inscribed in the horse's body. Reason is not the first to draw the distinction between human and animal, rational and irrational; rather, its analysis is itself contingent on the whip's prior analytic act.

Moritz's description of the third principal distinction drawn by Fritz, between nature and art (or *Kunst,* understood not simply in aesthetic terms, but as the sum process and product of human activity), similarly reveals the circular structure of human progress. The *Kinderlogik* relates how, in the animal world, everything remains as it was disposed by nature: the bees have been building their cells for centuries, just as the swallows have been building their nests, and continue to build them, "without regressing or progressing in their art" (*Werke,* 2:89). Humanity appears to be different. Not satisfied with the perfection of nature, man has built his own new creation within the old:

> The perfection of nature thus did not satisfy man; he wanted to make it even more perfect, and to produce afresh, so to speak, a new creation within creation.
>
> And in this he is successful, and from this an abundance of things have arisen in the world that nature would never have produced for itself, such as houses, clocks, mills, statues, paintings, etc.
>
> All these things, it is said, were produced not by nature, but by man's industry, or his *art.*
>
> Once again, therefore, Fritz had to draw a great line: between
>
> *nature* and *art*
>
> for everything that he sees before him can always be brought under one of these two denominations—(89–90; original emphasis)

As opposed to the activity of animals, which consists in repetition, human art would seem to involve continual perfection. Yet, as with Fritz's previous distinctions, Moritz's text also undermines the rational basis for this one. Indeed, it documents how Fritz arrives at his analysis not through independent reasoning, but rather by repeating hearsay: "All these things, it is said, were produced not by nature, but by man's industry, or his *art.*" On this basis, he "had to" (mußte) draw a great line between nature and art.

Fritz's act of repetition is not a personal failing that could be remedied by practicing more rigorously independent thinking. Rather, Moritz shows this repetition

to be built into the very structure of art, as evident in the prime example he gives, namely the construction of houses: "People force the forest with the axe to yield for them both housing and heat, in that they use felled tree-trunks to build houses, which they then heat with other tree-trunks" (*Werke,* 2:89). Like the plow, the axe is another sharp, steel instrument that severs things. It thereby produces the component parts of the house, which incorporates in its structure the sum of the distinctions made by the axe. The house, in turn, requires that we continue cutting down trees, continue making the same incisions in the world around us to keep the house warm. Through the axe, we force the forest into giving us shelter; and in doing so, we construct for ourselves a space that compels the repetition of our manner of analyzing the world. In other words, we thereby construct an "iron cage" or *stahlhartes Gehäuse* that determines the way in which we comprehend the world.

Stahlmann might seem to offer a way out of this coercive structure. As noted above, he refuses to allow Fritz's learning to be confined within a preassembled natural history cabinet but takes him out into the field, encouraging him to practice the art of order independently. The *Kinderlogik* refers to this art—that one place together what belongs together, and separate what does not—as "the whole secret" (das ganze Geheimnis) of Stahlmann's pedagogy (*Werke,* 2:83). However, the frame story suggests that Stahlmann's method bears within it a further secret, one that belies the noncoercive principle of his instruction. Consider the two parallel passages that Moritz positions immediately before the discussion of the natural history cabinet, the first concerning the arrangement of reading and writing instruments, and the second concerning that of botanical specimens:

> He [Fritz] came to school on time. For his Latin grammar book was no longer in his boot, his notebook no longer lay in his bed, and his quills no longer lay on the stovetop; rather, the grammar book, quills, and notebook had, as things that belong together, their place in Fritz's small desk, where they also belonged. . . .
>
> If they [Fritz and Stahlmann] went for a walk in the field, they searched for all kinds of herbs and plants, which they took with them back home, and selected those that were similar to each other out of the confused pile and lay them together, until everything finally had its assigned place. (84)

In both instances, confusion is resolved into order. And in each instance, the act of ordering occurs in a precise spatial framework: in the desk and in the house, respectively. It is within these spatial structures that each of the reading and writing articles, or each of the botanical specimens, is assigned its proper place (*seinen angewiesenen Platz*). To the extent, then, that things belong to such a spatial framework, they belong together as an ordered set. These spaces constitute the condition of possibility for the art of order. In other words, rationally determined relations of belonging do not precede and guide the order in which we place things; rather, prefabricated spatial frameworks first establish those rational relations of belonging.

The second of these instances in particular intimates that Stahlmann's art of order, the secret of his instructional success, bears within it a further secret, or *Geheimnis.* That secret is the *Heim,* the home or house that functions as the space that makes possible the activity of ordering, and that is positioned centrally in the fourth copperplate (see fig. 6). In his discussion of this copperplate, Moritz describes the house as a "well-ordered whole" divided into compartments that are in turn subdivided: "The house is divided, through the door, into two identical halves, and each half has its own further subdivisions—" (*Werke,* 2:112). Stahlmann can with good reason dispense with a prefabricated natural history cabinet, because the structure of the house already embodies an analytic space in which the constitution of order can take place; in short, the house already functions as a kind of natural history cabinet.[15] To order nature within this analytic space means, literally, to domesticate it (from the Latin *domus*); as Moritz states near the end of his text, "He [man] makes himself in his four walls into a master of the surrounding nature" (171). And by domesticating nature, we domesticate ourselves: it is thus that Fritz is transformed from a wild child ("wild and discontented" [82]) into "an orderly boy," one who behaves "more rationally and better" (83).

Like Fritz's house, the copperplates of the *Kinderlogik,* too, form a *stahlhartes Gehäuse.* As we have seen, from Stahlmann's perspective, these copperplates—like the field where he and Fritz collect botanical specimens—present an ideal site to practice the art of order. The objects represented therein have yet to be organized according to a rational method; befitting their original function as illustrations for a Latin primer, they have been grouped according to linguistic distinctions alone. They thus present an opportunity for Fritz to exercise his own faculties of perception and reason to draw distinctions, and thereby to arrange the objects in a rational order. But the order he seems to rationally suppose has already been presupposed; the distinctions he draws retrace the lines etched into the copperplates by Chodowiecki's stencil, which in turn reinscribe lines already drawn by a number of other instruments. These distinctions also reinforce those that are inscribed in language through a series of binary denominations: "*animate* and *inanimate,*" "*rational* and *irrational,*" and "*nature* and *art.*" In attempting to circumvent the merely linguistic distinctions underlying the copperplates, Stahlmann and Fritz inadvertently fall back on distinctions drawn in language. What Moritz terms "the edifice of language" (*Werke,* 2:133; [den] Bau der Sprache) comprises a further *stahlhartes Gehäuse* that structures Fritz's thought.[16] In sum, then, the *Kinderlogik* illuminates three analytic spaces within which Fritz learns to draw distinctions: the house, the copperplates, and the edifice of language.

15. For a rich description of the house as a "materialized system of classification," see Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice,* 76.

16. In his *Deutsche Sprachlehre für die Damen,* he similarly refers to "das Gebäude unsrer Sprache" (8).

Figure 6. Fourth copperplate in the *Kinderlogik*. Princeton University Library.

My reading of Moritz's *Kinderlogik* both supports and complicates Foucault's argument in *Discipline and Punish.* Foucault claims that the eighteenth century marked a shift away from the public spectacle of corporal punishment and toward a more subtle regime of discipline that exacted "uninterrupted, constant coercion" on the body (*Discipline and Punish,* 137). He argues that, first and foremost, this new regime of discipline exerted itself spatially, distributing individuals across a tabular space: "The first of the great operations of discipline is . . . the constitution of '*tableaux vivants*', which transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities" (148). Together with military camps, hospitals, factories, and prisons, elementary and secondary schools play a crucial role in Foucault's account of the establishment of disciplinary space. According to Foucault, the French educator Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, thus envisaged the classroom as "a single great table, with many different entries, under the scrupulously 'classificatory' eye of the master" (147).[17] The kind of disciplinary space exposed by Moritz differs from that described by Foucault in that it is not a great tableau in which the child is arranged, like an object; rather, it is a tableau in which the child arranges the objects of the world around him. The child accomplishes this under the illusion that he is relying on his own independent cognitive faculties, when in fact he is internalizing a predetermined system of classification. In this manner, he unwittingly participates in disciplining, or domesticating, his own mind. The *Kinderlogik* thereby reveals the operation of a more concealed, and hence potentially more powerful, disciplinary space than that detailed by Foucault in the French context.

Prospects for the Emancipation of the Intellect in the *Kinderlogik* and *Anton Reiser*

Like *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie,* the *Kinderlogik* brings to light the coerciveness that underlies a pedagogical reform movement whose express mission is to liberate children's cognitive faculties from external force. Moritz's novel focuses on the contradiction between Philanthropist theory and practice; its target is hypocrisy, not the emancipatory potential of Philanthropist pedagogy as such. His primer's critique, I have argued, is more penetrating: it questions the very possibility of liberating the mind from instrumentally fabricated analytic spaces. These spaces function as templates that enable the mind to draw distinctions, but they also function as "iron cages" that lock it into these distinctions. Consequently, Fritz

17. Foucault quotes from La Salle's *Conduite des écoles chrétiennes* (1720): "In every class there will be places assigned for all the pupils of all the lessons, so that all those attending the same lesson will always occupy the same place. Pupils attending the highest lessons will be placed in the benches closest to the wall, followed by the others according to the order of the lessons moving towards the middle of the classroom. . . . Each of the pupils will have his place assigned to him and none of them will leave it or change it except on the order or with the consent of the school inspector" (147).

not only *can* divide the world according to the very first distinction he makes in the *Kinderlogik;* he *must* use this distinction to classify everything he has ever seen in the world, and everything he has yet to see (*Werke,* 2:87).

Yet, according to Moritz, the mind's enclosure within the confines of analytic spaces does not keep it from desiring freedom. Toward the end of the text, he asserts, "*a force desires free scope*" (*Werke,* 2:170 [original emphasis]; *eine Kraft will freien Spielraum haben*). The sentence immediately following this claim makes it clear that the force in question is that of the intellect, or *Denkkraft,* and goes on to suggest that the intellect will one day in fact attain the unrestricted *Spielraum* that it desires:

> Through man's playing in this manner, building houses of cards that are blown over by a breath, and founding kingdoms and republics that time destroys—
>
> *benevolent nature thus almost playfully gets him to achieve her ultimate purposes of ennobling and forming his mind, which exercises its intellect in all of these great and small games so that it can someday take a higher flight*—(*Werke,* 2:170–71; original emphasis)

Moritz here envisions the mind, or *Geist,* attaining *freien Spielraum* through a higher flight—perhaps an allusion to the eagle depicted in the fourth copperplate, whose wings extend beyond the confines of the copperplate's grid, as though it were flying free of it (see fig. 6). Despite his critique of Philanthropism, does Moritz not thereby reaffirm its primary goal, the emancipation of the mind from constraint?

Yet there are crucial differences between how Moritz and the Philanthropists conceive of this emancipation. As noted in the previous chapter, Stuve holds that the principal task of educators is to provide pupils with *Spielraum* for the independent activity of their minds. Stuve presents this as an achievable goal and suggests that educators begin by releasing children from the confines of indoor spaces and allowing them the freedom to play outdoors, in what he fittingly calls *der freien Luft* ("Über die Notwendigkeit," 210).[18] While Moritz, too, conceives of the mind's emancipation, his conception contrasts with Stuve's in three significant ways. First, he depicts not human educators, but rather nature as ultimately responsible for preparing the mind for its eventual liberation. Second, he does not depict this liberation as pertaining to the individual child. Instead, it is *man* (*der Mensch*) who is the subject of his reflections, raising the possibility that the mind's flight will occur not ontogenetically, in the course of the individual's development, but rather phylogenetically, in the course of the development of humankind as a whole. Third, he views the mind's higher flight not as imminent but instead situates it sometime in the future (*dereinst*). In sum, Moritz regards this goal as removed from the purview

18. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the idiomatic counterpart to this German expression is "the open air." Literally, it means "the free air."

of pedagogy, potentially beyond the reach of the individual learner, and positioned at an unknown point in the future.

He also qualifies this higher flight in one further, decisive way. In the very next sentence of the text, he observes: "Through this whole book, the ideas have been placed in motion in manifold ways, merely to be placed in motion—what this thereby [*dadurch*] occasions in the mind is: *a play of ideas*—" (*Werke,* 2:171). Among the ideas set in motion merely for the sake of being set in motion is the idea of the higher flight of the mind. Specifically, it has been set in motion through this book, the *Kinderlogik;* it is only in a mediated fashion, through this book (*dadurch*), that the play of ideas can also take place in the mind. Philanthropist pedagogy, we recall, inherited from Locke, Descartes, and Rousseau the goal of liberating the mind from book learning. For Moritz, by contrast, the very idea of such a liberation is made possible through a book. Paradoxically, books are necessary to be able to conceive of the possibility of freeing ourselves from them.

Moritz underscores this paradox in a text published a year after the *Kinderlogik,* namely part 3 of *Anton Reiser* (1786). At age sixteen—two years Fritz's senior—Anton engages in a summer of solitary philosophical study. However, the "bliss of thought" (*Werke,* 1:300) that Anton thereby tastes for the first time is interrupted by the sudden recognition of the limits of thought:

> Yet even then, after losing himself in reflection for a while, he would often feel as though he had suddenly run into something that *hemmed* him *in,* and obstructed his view, like a wall made of boards or an impenetrable ceiling—he would then feel as though he had been thinking nothing—but *words*—
>
> Here he ran up against the impenetrable partition which divides human thinking from the thinking of higher beings, against the necessity of language, without which the human intellect can develop no momentum of its own—and which, so to speak, is only an artificial makeshift through which [*wodurch*] something similar to the actual, *pure* thought is produced, which we may perhaps eventually [*dereinst*] attain.—
>
> Language seemed to stand in his way while he was thinking, and yet he could not think without language.—(301; original emphasis)

Anton perceives his thought to be enclosed in language, whose confines he experiences as being like a wooden wall or an impenetrable ceiling. As with Fritz, the edifice of language at once enables and constrains his thought: it seems to stand in his way, and yet he can't think without it. Anton's predicament, the narrator comments, is a universally human one: paradoxically, without the artificial makeshift of language, human thought would have no momentum of its own. The narrator goes on to develop his observations a step further beyond Anton's. While Anton regards the edifice of language as closing off his view, the narrator opens up a prospect that gives the reader a glimpse beyond the walls of this edifice, of a realm of higher beings capable of "actual, *pure* thought." He furthermore claims that we might

one day (*dereinst*) move beyond the edifice of language to attain this pure thought. However, pure thought is conceivable only in a mediated fashion through language (*wodurch*). Indeed, the narrator's reflections at this point highlight the fact that his own claim regarding the potential of attaining pure thought is itself expressed through language, through the novel's text. Just as the passage toward the end of the *Kinderlogik* suggests that books are necessary to conceive of the mind's liberation from books, so this passage in *Anton Reiser* shows language to be indispensable in conceiving of the mind's liberation from language.[19]

Put in a more general way, the mind can conceive of a *freien Spielraum* only from within the parameters of limited *Spielräume*—"within the small compass of a book" (*Werke,* 2:105), for instance, or within the edifice of language. Moritz visualizes such spaces in the passage toward the end of the *Kinderlogik* as "houses of cards that are blown over by a breath," fragile structures that are limited in both extent and duration. While the mind may never be able to move entirely beyond the limits of such *Spielräume,* these very limits bear within themselves the potential for a kind of intellectual mobility that breaks, however momentarily, the circularity of thought discussed above. They suggest that the "iron cage" that encloses the intellect is not, after all, as impenetrable as it appears to be. As Moritz notes early in the *Kinderlogik,* "But strike the plow and the table and chair into pieces, and nothing remains except stone and iron" (92). Even the most durable of human instruments and constructs, then, can be broken apart. Their destruction opens the way for the movement of the mind beyond the circularity in which it finds itself as it thinks in the confines of any given analytic space. Indeed, having destroyed the spaces that confine the intellect, we can move on to devise new instruments with which to build new spaces, just as houses of cards can be demolished and reconstructed in new configurations. We thereby exercise our intellect, in order that it might one day, through a higher flight, transcend the spaces that enclose it. As it is only within such spaces that this emancipation can be conceived, the history of the human mind would take place as a perpetual "forming" (Bildung): the building up, tearing down, and building up once more of limited *Spielräume,* in pursuit of a *freien Spielraum,* a boundless latitude for the intellect that forever recedes into the distance.

Despite his thoroughgoing critique of Philanthropist theory and practice, Moritz nevertheless keeps in his sights its principal goal, the liberation of the mind from coercion. In conceiving of the mind's higher flight, he underscores an aspiration that runs through the entire line of epistemological and pedagogical thought we traced in the previous chapter, from Descartes to the Philanthropist thinkers. But insofar as he reveals the conditions of possibility for conceiving of the mind's

19. To the best of my knowledge, Thomas Saine was the first scholar to discuss this passage from *Anton Reiser* in relation to the epistemological skepticism of the *Kinderlogik*. See Saine, *Ästhetische Theodizee,* 46–47. For a discussion of this passage as foreshadowing Nietzsche's reflections on language, see Simonis, "Sprache und Denken."

emancipation to lie within the very analytic spaces that these thinkers wish to overcome, Moritz shows this aspiration to be perpetually beyond their reach. Indeed, in purporting to promote this liberation, Philanthropist pedagogy effectively disguises its reliance on these spaces and thus helps ensure their perpetuation. Moritz, by contrast, exposes how indispensable they are for thought. But he further exposes the potential for change that inheres in them: as *Spielräume,* they can be broken down and reassembled in variations that have the potential to shape thought in radically different ways.

PART III

The Spaces of the Political and the Individual

5

Raising (and Razing) the Common House

Moritz and the Ideology of Commonality

In addition to an epistemological and pedagogical critique, the *Kinderlogik* also mounts a keen political critique. In his discussion of the fifth and sixth copperplates, Moritz returns to the figure of the house but employs it in a new manner, as a metaphor for the state. He uses it to distinguish between two opposing forms of government: "Let us think of the house as the institution [*Einrichtung*] of a state, insofar as it depends on either a single one of its members or all of them—here we have the difference between *Monarchy* and *Republic*" (*Werke,* 2:165). The difference between the two state institutions, it would seem, could not be clearer: in contrast to a monarchy, a republic hinges not on a solitary individual; rather, the political space of a republican house is common to all of its members.

Moritz's *Kinderlogik* appeared two years after the American Revolution and the founding of an independent American state, events that aroused considerable sympathy in Germany for republican ideals. According to Horst Dippel, "For large circles in Germany after 1783 the idea of a republic had generally lost its negative and derogatory flavor, not because the idea of republicanism had been adequately expounded in the meantime, but because in America there had been born a new state based on liberty."[1] Giving voice to these republican sympathies, the April 1783 issue of the monthly journal *Berlinische Monatschrift* carried an anonymous

1. Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution,* 171.

ode, "Die Freiheit Amerika's" (America's Freedom), whose central stanza goes so far as to envision a Europe that, like the thirteen former colonies, is free of aristocracy and united as "a happy democratic state" (ein glücklicher Volksstaat).[2]

Moritz, too, was captivated by the new American republic. Part 4 of *Anton Reiser* describes the deep impression made on his autobiographical protagonist, as a student in Erfurt, by the "fiery sympathy" pervading another ode to "the Americans who have become free," a poem that the narrator judges "worthy of inclusion in an anthology of the Germans' best poetry" (*Werke,* 1:486).[3] Very likely in part because of its association with freedom, Moritz longed to travel to America. According to Karl Friedrich Klischnig, during his time as a schoolteacher in Berlin, Moritz fantasized about setting sail for America, and when he abruptly departed Berlin for Italy in 1786, rumor had it that he had indeed left for America (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 60, 118). On his deathbed, Moritz reportedly again expressed the wish to travel there: "Indeed, a trip to America, he felt, would be very interesting; what wouldn't he be able to recount when he returned?"[4]

While Moritz found America alluring, commentators have traced his theoretical sketch of the republic in the *Kinderlogik* back to his encounter with *British* political life. Though this may seem curious, given that America's struggle for independence obviously pitted it precisely against Britain, no less a revolutionary than Thomas Paine, writing in *Common Sense,* regarded the British House of Commons as embodying "the new republican materials" (*Political Writings,* 6).[5] Furthermore, German Freemasons in the 1780s (Moritz joined the Berlin lodge St. Johannis-Loge zur Beständigkeit in 1779) tended to look primarily to Great Britain rather than to America as a model republic.[6] Moritz's *Reisen eines Deutschen in England im Jahre 1782* (Travels of a German in England in the Year 1782, published in 1783), the epistolary travel narrative that constituted his major literary breakthrough, records his particular fascination with the House of Commons, his visit to which he terms his "most important" experience in London (*Werke,* 2:275). Underscoring the significance that he attributed to this experience, the excerpt of the *Reisen* that he published under the title "Ein Brief aus London" (A Letter from London) in the *Berlinische Monatschrift,* in the issue just before that

2. The poem is signed J. F. H—l, leading some commentators to speculate that it was penned by the Erfurt professor Johann Friedrich Herel. It is reprinted in Hermand, *Von deutscher Republik,* 1:41–45.

3. The narrator attributes the ode to a Dr. Sauer, who has been identified as the medical doctor Johann Benjamin Christoph Sauer, whom Moritz likely knew while he was a student in Erfurt. The ode has not been found. See the commentary by Christof Wingertszahn to *Anton Reiser* in Moritz, *Sämtliche Werke,* 1:1051–53.

4. Letter from Johann Christian Conrad Moritz to Jean Paul, August 1, 1795, in Eybisch, *Anton Reiser,* 268.

5. Moritz was likely familiar with Paine's views through Gebhard Friedrich August Wendeborn's *Beyträge zur Kenntniß Grosbritanniens vom Jahr 1779* (Contributions from the Year 1779 toward a Knowledge of Great Britain), which cites an extended passage from *Common Sense* on British government, including "the new republican materials" (84). I discuss Wendeborn's book below.

6. See Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment,* 150–51.

containing the anonymous ode to America's freedom, consists primarily of his vivid description of his visit to Parliament, and of a parliamentary election that he witnessed. Peter Rau thus contends with good reason that English parliamentarianism as depicted in the *Reisen* serves as "the real model" for Moritz's portrayal of the republic two years later.[7] Similarly, Jonathan Hess argues that Moritz's impressions of England's "enthusiastic *political* community of participatory public discourse" deeply influenced his political theory.[8] Both scholars emphasize that Moritz, in the *Reisen* as well as in his political theory, launches a critique of monarchy—specifically, of Prussian absolute monarchy—from the vantage point of the participatory political community he observed in England.[9]

While the present chapter confirms the connection that these scholars draw between the *Reisen* and the *Kinderlogik,* it complicates their assessment of Moritz's depiction of republicanism. To be sure, Moritz does indeed find an emancipatory potential in the common political spaces that he associates with the republic. But he shows that these same spaces also continually cover unequal power divides beneath the mere appearance of commonality. Like his pedagogical critique, then, his political critique is double-edged, targeting not only an overtly authoritarian system, but also the power structures that underlie seemingly emancipatory spaces.

My discussion begins by examining Moritz's depiction in the *Reisen* of the political spaces within which "the whole English nation" is supposedly represented (*Werke,* 2:276). Though commonality is inscribed in its name, Moritz illuminates how the spatial organization of the House of Commons supports hierarchical distinctions between members of Parliament, as well as between members and the people they represent. Similarly, the parliamentary election he observes occurs in an inclusive public space in which everyone assembled takes part in the proceedings, but which simultaneously partitions the crowd into a minority that possesses suffrage, and a majority that does not. The appearance of a common polity generated in these spaces proves to be illusory.

Nevertheless, the limits of commonality as delineated in the *Reisen* are not intractable but can be expanded through the reform of Parliament. The *Kinderlogik* goes a step further in its critique of republican government. Developing Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's reflections in *Ernst und Falk: Gespräche für Freimäurer* (Ernst and Falk: Dialogues for Freemasons, 1778/80), Moritz contends that states—and political institutions more generally—are inherently hierarchical. This holds even for his model of a republican state, whose government functions through a combination of electoral representation and direct participation by all in political

7. Rau, *Identitätserinnerung und ästhetische Rekonstruktionen,* 316–17.

8. Hess, *Reconstituting the Body Politic,* 122 (original emphasis).

9. More accurately, Hess's incisive study draws a connection between Moritz's "Letter from London" and his essay "Einheit—Mehrheit—Menschliche Kraft" (Unity—Majority—Human Force), which was published in 1786 in Moritz's journal *Denkwürdigkeiten,* and which is largely identical to the section on political theory in the *Kinderlogik.* See Moritz, *Schriften,* 28–31.

deliberation. While conceived as a democratic alternative to monarchical leadership, the power of representative leadership likewise stratifies the state, even the common deliberative space. Electoral representation proves to be intrinsically problematic.

In shedding light on this aporia, Moritz anticipates Hannah Arendt's critique of representative government in her study *On Revolution.* But Moritz's political thought also provides a vantage point from which to question Arendt's depiction of the process of "common deliberation" that, in her view, gave rise in America to the first modern republican state. Like Arendt, Jürgen Habermas finds in the eighteenth century a model (however imperfectly realized) for an inclusive and egalitarian public sphere. Though Moritz is among the thinkers of this period who most clearly articulates the ideal of a common political space, his conception of the inherent hierarchy of political institutions challenges Habermas's assumption that the public sphere is capable of progressively realizing its ideal form.

Rigid though the stratified structures analyzed in the *Reisen* and the *Kinderlogik* may be, Moritz does not present them as permanent; the state, in his view, turns out to be far from static. As with the spaces of art, mythology, and education, he glimpses in the state the potential for transformation. At the same time, though, he suggests that a common political space will remain perpetually elusive, and that the claim to commonality cannot but function ideologically to conceal unequal divisions of power.

(Un)common Spaces in *Reisen eines Deutschen in England im Jahre 1782*

Already in the opening passage of the *Reisen,* Moritz cautions the reader to be wary of idealizing currents in his portrayal of England. He describes the vista upon his arrival on the Thames, between the riverbanks of the country that he has longed to visit for years, but to which he has "traveled only in my reveries": "The sun breaks through the clouds, and gilds with its light [*Schein*] alternately the bushes and meadows on the distant shore. Two masts rise up from the depths with their tips: fearsome warning signs! We sail close past the sandbank where so many unfortunate ones found their graves" (*Werke,* 2:251).[10] In describing his approach to the land of his dreams, Moritz offsets the gilded shore in the distance with an observation of warning signs. His words here themselves function as warning signs, alerting the reader to approach his text with caution, and not to become so enraptured with the beautiful appearance (*Schein*) of what he is about to describe as to fail to take note of underlying dangers. The text's opening passage thus introduces what Heide Hollmer, in her discussion of the *Reisen,* aptly terms

10. In translating passages from Moritz's *Reisen,* I have consulted, and in places drawn on, the anonymous 1795 translation "by a lady," *Travels, Chiefly on Foot, through Several Parts of England in 1782; Described in Letters to a Friend.*

Moritz's "play with counterpoint," noting that "exaggeration is always followed by disillusionment."[11]

Moritz brings this contrapuntal play to bear with particular acuity on his depiction of English political life. English politics, as he sees it, revolves around the House of Commons, whose legislative power is symbolized by "a large gilded scepter" (*Werke,* 2:277) that brings to mind the gilded shore in his book's opening passage. On the one hand, his text displays great enthusiasm for the lower house of Parliament as a common political space. On the other, however, he exposes the limits of this space, which divides people in multiple ways along lines of political power. It succeeds in doing so, he shows, by creating the appearance of commonality.

In generating this appearance of commonality, the House of Commons closely resembles two other public spaces that feature prominently in his narrative. In his letters of June 9 and June 13, directly before his account of his visit to Parliament, he relates his visit to the pleasure gardens of Vauxhall and Ranelagh on the outskirts of London. Though social rather than political spaces, each of them, like the House of Commons, comprises a common space; but this very commonality belies their exclusiveness, their restricted access to members of the lower classes.

Vauxhall and Ranelagh were the most popular destinations for short outings for Londoners in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[12] The pleasure gardens at Vauxhall, south of the Thames, were established in the 1660s and underwent a transformation in the early eighteenth century into "a landscape of commodified consumption" (Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity,* 122). For an entrance fee of one shilling, both male and female visitors could stroll the gardens, listen to concerts, admire fine art, and enjoy a variety of other entertainments; for an additional fee, they could also order food and drink. The gardens at Vauxhall attracted about a thousand visitors per night during the season from May to August; on special occasions, such as the rehearsal of Handel's fireworks music in 1749, the gardens were packed with as many as 12,000 guests. Vauxhall inspired imitations in cities such as Berlin, Dublin, and Paris. In London, Ranelagh was its main competitor, opening in Chelsea in 1742.

Moritz depicts social life in Vauxhall and Ranelagh as revolving within and around circular buildings. From his vantage point as an observer in the gallery of the Rotunda in Ranelagh, he contemplates the diverse composition of the crowd below: "I now went up into the gallery and seated myself in one of the boxes, where, like an earnest spectator, I looked down on the crowd continually revolving in a circle; and I saw stars and ribbons of orders, French coiffures and dignified wigs, elders and youths, the nobility and the simple middle class, all crossing paths with each other in the motley swarm" (*Werke,* 2:274). The Rotunda at

11. Hollmer, "Nachwort," 188.

12. On the history and significance of Vauxhall and Ranelagh in eighteenth-century London, see Rudé, *Hannoverian London,* 73–74; Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity,* 116–57.

Ranelagh is thus a site where social circulation becomes possible, where the aristocracy and the simple middle class intersect, "all crossing paths with each other." In this "motley swarm" (bunten Gewimmel) or "densest throng" (273; dicksten Gedränge), members of different social classes are "pressed" (gedrängt) together. Similarly, a diverse crowd of people congregates on the paths of Vauxhall's gardens, which "are always crowded [*gedrängt*] full of people from the most diverse classes" (269). Both Vauxhall and Ranelagh, then, are places that draw people of widely different social backgrounds together into a common space.

Common ground in both a literal and a figurative sense is reinforced in the Rotunda at Vauxhall, which is decorated with busts of English "national authors" who are admired by all: "Here, too, one finds the busts of the foremost English authors placed round the sides. Thus a Briton meets again his *Shakespeare, Locke, Milton,* and *Dryden* even in the places of public leisure, and pays respect to their memory. Even the common people [*Volk*] become acquainted with these names, and pronounce them with reverence" (*Werke,* 2:270; original emphasis). Moritz attributes this common reverence for the English national authors to the availability of cheap editions of their works, citing by name a series entitled the "Entertaining Museum" or "Complete Circulating Library" (271). Through such inexpensive editions, he claims, books in England "circulate more widely among the people" than in Germany (271). This closes the social divide: "This elevates the lower classes and brings them closer to the higher ones. There is almost no subject in the typical conversations in the higher classes, about which the lower ones cannot also converse" (270–71). In England, then, through the circulation of people in the places of public amusement, complemented by the circulation of affordable books on the publishing market, members of widely different social classes find common ground.[13]

Moritz, however, punctuates his account of his visit to these public pleasure gardens, and Ranelagh in particular, with observations that bring to light their underlying exclusivity. Having paid the half-crown entrance fee at Ranelagh, he steps, to his surprise, "into a rather unsightly, poorly illuminated garden" (*Werke,* 2:272). This unsightly garden contrasts sharply with the Rotunda into which he eventually finds his way: "But what a sight, as I stepped out of the darkness of the garden into a round building illuminated by many hundreds of

13. Moritz's encounter with the mass circulation of print in England likely helped inspire his attempt, in his programmatic essay "Ideal einer vollkommenen Zeitung" (Ideal of a Perfect Newspaper, 1784), to reimagine the *Vossische Zeitung* as a *Blatt für das Volk* (paper for the people) whose readership would comprise both the upper echelons and the lowest rungs of society: "Of all the things that are printed, a *public newspaper* or a *people's paper,* viewed from the right perspective, is perhaps by far the most important. It is the mouth through which the people are preached to, and through which the voice of truth can penetrate not only the palaces of the great, but also the huts of the lowly" (*Werke,* 2:860–61). Moritz edited the *Vossische Zeitung* from September 1784 until the summer of 1785. On Moritz's groundbreaking vision for the newspaper, see Martens, "Die Geburt des Journalisten"; Winkler, "Karl Philipp Moritz."

lamps, which in splendor and beauty surpassed every comparable building I had seen before!" (273). This contrast between illuminated interior and poorly lit exterior is replicated within the Rotunda itself: "An Englishman who joined me [on the gallery] pointed out at my request the princes and lords with enormous stars, with which they eclipsed the remaining, more unsightly crowd" (274). The unsightliness of the dark garden, then, finds a correspondence in the unsightliness of the crowd; the glow of the Rotunda's lamps is mirrored in that of the status symbols worn by the nobility. Even though the "simple middle class" gains entry to Ranelagh, it remains overshadowed; social hierarchy continues to divide this common ground.

Moritz's text illuminates an even deeper social division at Ranelagh and Vauxhall. At the beginning of his letter of June 13, he notes that, having lost his way, he was guided to Ranelagh by a carter, or *Karrenschieber* (*Werke,* 2:272), a member of what the historian George Rudé has described as the growing "mass of unskilled and semi-skilled" wage earners in Hannoverian London (*Hannoverian London,* 83). Moritz's mention of the carter outside Ranelagh's walls makes noticeable the exclusion of this class from his description of the crowd circulating within the Rotunda. To be sure, he remarks, even "the poorest families undertake the expense, at least once a year, of traveling to Ranelagh" (*Werke,* 2:275). But the combined expenses associated with a visit to Ranelagh—the price of the trip, the half-crown entrance fee, as well as the expense of Ranelagh's fashion etiquette[14]—help explain why the frequency of their visits would be so limited. Though its entrance fee is not as high, Moritz notes that an evening spent at Vauxhall is typically even more expensive than Ranelagh: "Incidentally, the expense at Ranelagh is not as great as at Vauxhall, if you consider the refreshments; for anyone who wishes to dine at Vauxhall, which most do, can easily pay a half guinea for a very meager meal" (275). In short, while Moritz portrays both pleasure gardens as constituting a common space for people of diverse classes, their expense simultaneously limits the circulation of the lowest among the middle and upper classes.

Moritz's account of his visit to the House of Commons follows directly on the heels of his description of Ranelagh in his letter of June 13. His trip to England came at a time when "the great bulk of the 'lower orders' were strictly excluded from the political community," but also when the question of more equal political representation was being raised by radicals such as John Wilkes, who in 1776, as member of Parliament for Middlesex, "became the first Member to propose to the House that the franchise should be extended to embrace 'the meanest mechanic, the poorest peasant and day labourer'" (Rudé, *Hannoverian London,* 183, 172). Moritz would likely have been well apprised of at least one important aspect of the debate concerning political representation, through Gebhard Friedrich August Wendeborn's

14. "None from the lower classes go there who do not dress in their best finery, trying to look like high society; at least, I saw no one in the entire crowd who was not wearing silk stockings" (275).

Beyträge zur Kenntniß Grosbritanniens vom Jahr 1779 (Contributions from the Year 1779 toward a Knowledge of Great Britain, 1780), a book that he highly recommends to the reader.[15] Moritz met with Wendeborn, a German pastor living in London, and delivered a sermon in his church. In his extensive analysis of the British political system, Wendeborn takes up one of the key grievances of the radicals, namely the overrepresentation in the House of Commons of "insignificant places" that generally belong to the nobility or to the wealthy (*Beyträge,* 91). In light of the overrepresentation of these so-called rotten boroughs, he views the claim that Parliament represents the entire nation to be hugely exaggerated: "People always boast that the whole nation is supposed be represented in Parliament, and this happens to such a small degree, that I am certain that not even half the nation is represented" (90).

Though he was very likely familiar with Wendeborn's critical assessment of parliamentary representation, the first impression that Moritz conveys of the lower house of Parliament is not one of exclusiveness, but rather one of commonality. He reports of his first visit: "And now I saw for the first time, in a rather unsightly building, closely resembling a chapel, the whole English nation assembled in its representatives" (*Werke,* 2:276). At least at first sight, the House of Commons appears to be comprehensive in its representation of the English nation. Furthermore, Moritz notes that a diverse audience made up of people of all classes and of both sexes is present to observe the proceedings from the visitors' gallery: "Among these spectators, there are people of all classes; ladies are also frequently among them" (281). Not only does the lower house of Parliament appear to represent the entire nation, but it also seems to welcome supervision by the people it represents.

Moritz underscores the commonality of the lower house of Parliament through an array of details. First, by referring to the interior of Westminster Hall as "unsightly," he implicitly contrasts it with the "majesty and splendor" of the Rotunda in Ranelagh that he describes a few pages earlier, and suggests a less exclusive space. And unlike the nobility at Ranelagh, the representatives bear no marks of distinction that set them apart either from one another or from the people they represent: "The Members of Parliament in the House of Commons have nothing distinctive in their dress; they enter in coats, and with boots and spurs." Their connection with the outside world is further enhanced by the fact that they are "constantly coming in and out" (*Werke,* 2:277).

Inside the House of Commons, the representatives appear to occupy an inclusive space within which each can participate equally in the political process. While the benches of the members of Parliament are elevated one above the other, this arrangement is not designed to divide them hierarchically, but rather, "so that whoever

15. "Nothing that is noteworthy in and around London, and more generally, in the constitution of the country, will escape the attention of the traveler who always has this book at hand" (*Werke,* 2:265).

is speaking can always see over those sitting before him" (*Werke,* 2:277). Rather than set up hierarchical divisions between the members, the seating arrangement functions instead to remove hindrances. The Speaker is the one figure who is set apart from the rest, seated on an elevated chair of his own (276). Yet even he appears less to direct the proceedings from above than to function as a common point of address: "Speaking happens without any ceremony. One simply stands up in one's place, takes off one's hat, [and] turns to the Speaker, to whom all the speeches are addressed" (277). During public addresses, any member of Parliament, and not merely the orator, may make himself heard:

> If one speaks poorly, or if what one says does not sufficiently interest the majority, so much noise and laughter can be heard that the speaker can hardly hear his own word. . . .
>
> As soon as one speaks well and purposefully, the utmost silence reigns, and one after another make their approval known by calling out, "Hear him! Hear him!" which is often exclaimed by the whole House at once. In this manner, so much noise is made that the speaker is often interrupted through precisely this "Hear him!" Nevertheless, this calling out is always a great encouragement, and I have often observed that a speaker who began with some timidity or coolness, in the end is so fired up that he speaks in a torrent of eloquence. (278)

As Alison E. Martin remarks, the public speaking that Moritz here describes is "by no means a monologic undertaking," but rather an inclusive act of "communicative reciprocity."[16] While poor speeches in the House of Commons elicit vocal criticism, good and purposeful ones generate approbation from "the whole House." In short, the lower house of Parliament is a common space by virtue of its inclusivity, its reciprocity, and its potential for consensus.

While Moritz's depiction of the House of Commons emphasizes its commonality, it also counterposes observations that place this commonality in sharper relief. He thus takes note of "the most distinguished Members of Parliament, such as Fox, Burke, Rigby, etc." (*Werke,* 2:278). Here, as at Ranelagh, Moritz observes from the visitors' gallery the hierarchical division of an apparently common space. The members' ranking has a spatial correspondence; accordingly, Charles James Fox, a representative from Westminster and the British foreign minister, "had his seat to the right of the Speaker, not far from the table on which the gilded scepter lies" (279). Fox's seat is in fact situated so close to this table that during a speech he delivers "he could reach it with his hand, and give it a hearty whack, as the emotion of his speech required" (279). This speech elicits unanimous applause: "I can't begin to describe the fire and captivating eloquence with which he spoke, and how the Speaker from his chair ceaselessly nodded approval from beneath his solemn wig,

16. See Martin, *Moving Scenes,* 16–17.

and all cried out, 'Hear him! Hear him!' and 'Speak yet!' when it seemed as if he wanted to stop speaking; and how in this way he continued to speak for nearly two consecutive hours" (279). Everyone joins in the common acclamation of Fox's address. While Moritz attributes its universal resonance to Fox's passion and eloquence, his description also suggests that these qualities are enhanced by his prominence within the hierarchy of the House, which situates him in greater proximity to the symbols of the House's legislative power.[17]

Moritz draws attention not only to the hierarchical division between the representatives, but also to the divide between the representatives and the people at large. On his first visit to Parliament, he is turned away by a guard who tells him that he must be accompanied by a member of Parliament in order to gain entrance to the visitors' gallery (*Werke,* 2:276). It is only after bribing the guard with a half crown, the same price he paid for admission to Ranelagh, that he is allowed in (276). He further highlights the exclusivity of the House of Commons when he remarks that several shorthand writers sitting nearby in the gallery attempted "in a somewhat secretive manner" to copy down the speeches so that they could be printed in the evening papers (281). One thus has to bribe one's way into the House of Commons and smuggle out information regarding its proceedings in order to share it with the public. As Habermas has noted in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* "Parliament possessed an effective instrument that guaranteed it secrecy of proceedings in a privilege dating from the time of its confrontation with the Crown" (61). In keeping with this secrecy of parliamentary proceedings, Moritz and his fellow spectators in the gallery are ordered to withdraw during voting, during which time they are locked in a room, and then readmitted only once the votes have been cast (*Werke,* 2:281). Even for those observers who can afford the price of admission, then, the House of Commons proves to be a space of limited access.

It is in the next section of the text that Moritz most sharply brings to light both the apparent commonality of English political space as well as its underlying exclusiveness. This section, headed "Eine Parlamentswahl" (A Parliamentary Election), similarly describes a voting process, albeit not in the context of a legislative session, but rather in that of the election of a member of Parliament. Unlike the voting that occurs within the House of Commons, the election takes place in the open, in a marketplace, where all are free to attend:

> The election occurred in Covent Garden, a large open-air market-place. Just before the entrance of a church, which is also called St. Paul's but is not to be confused with the cathedral, a scaffold was built for the electors, who sat in red cloaks

17. In this connection, Pierre Bourdieu has argued that it is in large part the "social position of the speaker," and not merely his or her inherent charisma or the illocutionary force of his or her pronouncements, that endow his or her pronouncements with their power (*Language & Symbolic Power,* 109).

> and with white rods on benches built atop one another: at the very top was a chair for the President: but everything was just nailed together out of wood and boards. Toward the front of the scaffold, where the benches ended, mats were laid, and here stood those who spoke to the people [*Volk*]. In the area before the scaffold an immense crowd of people (largely of the lowest class) was assembled. The speakers bowed very deeply before this crowd, and constantly addressed them with the title 'Gentlemen!' Sir Cecil Wray had to step forward and promise these gentlemen in word and in gesture to fulfill his duties most faithfully as their representative in Parliament. (*Werke,* 2:282–83)

Moritz incorporates into this passage a number of details reminiscent of his description of the House of Commons. To begin with, he establishes an architectural link: the church in the background recalls the interior of Westminster Hall, which he compares to a chapel. Like the representatives' benches in Parliament, the electors' benches are "built atop one another." There is also a strong rhetorical connection between the two spaces: the speakers on the scaffold or hustings (*Gerüst*) address the crowd as "gentlemen," the same form of address with which the representatives address one another in the House of Commons: "The Members of Parliament from the Lower House honor each other with this title" (280). It is as though, in this public square, the House of Commons has expanded into a far more inclusive space, in which even the lowest class of society (*der niedrigste Pöbel*) is made welcome, not merely as spectators, but as active participants in the political process.

The crowd gathered before the hustings responds in kind: "The moment he [Cecil Wray] began to speak, the whole crowd became as quiet as the raging sea after a storm has passed, and everyone shouted like in Parliament: 'Hear him! Hear him!' and as soon as he had stopped speaking, a universal 'Hurrah' sounded from every mouth, and everyone waved his hat above his head, and even the dirtiest coalheaver waved his cap" (*Werke,* 2:283). In reenacting the speaker-audience relation in the House of Commons, both Cecil Wray, the candidate for Parliament, and the crowd, down to "the dirtiest coal-heaver," assert their commonality. Moritz becomes swept up in the enthusiasm of the crowd, contrasting it with the Prussian capital: "Oh, dear friend, when you see here how the humblest carter participates in what's happening, how the smallest children already chime in with the spirit of the people, in short, how everyone makes his feeling known that he, too, is a human being and an Englishman, as good as his king and his minister—you feel yourself very differently affected than when you watch the soldiers drilling in Berlin" (283). It is this passage in particular that has led Jonathan Hess to describe Moritz's vision of English politics as one of "an enthusiastic *political* community of participatory public discourse" (*Reconstituting the Body Politic,* 122; original emphasis). Moritz, however, shows such a discourse to operate at the level of ideology, for the very scaffold on

which the parliamentary election takes place in the public square serves at once as a site not only of participation, but also of exclusion from the political process.

This exclusion occurs in two ways. First, it entails shutting out Wray's opponent, Admiral Hood, from the parliamentary race. In his aforementioned speech in the House of Commons, which meets with general applause, Fox defends himself against the accusation that, in his capacity as minister, he had opposed Hood's candidacy; he claims, instead, "that he had opposed his candidacy not in his capacity as minister, but only as a private person" (*Werke,* 2:279). Yet Moritz's portrait of Fox casts doubt on his credibility: "Politics glistens in his eyes. 'Mr. Fox is cunning like a fox,' I have often heard it said" (280). Ironically, Moritz reports that on the day of the election, he had to choose between witnessing either a public hanging or the election, and opting for the latter, merely heard in the distance the death knell (282). While this execution can be taken at face value, it can also be read as an allusion to what has happened to Hood: he has been politically "executed" even before the election actually begins. Moritz informs his readers that Hood's supporters "had withdrawn of their own volition, for they saw that their intention would not succeed" (282). In light of the representatives' order to the spectators in the House of Commons to "withdraw" while the vote on the floor is being taken, the purported freedom with which Hood's supporters step back can be viewed skeptically. From this perspective, the scaffold on which the hangings occur blurs together with the scaffold where the election takes place.

This reading of the hustings as the scene of a political execution is lent further support when compared with a passage from the third part of *Anton Reiser* (1786). This scene, too, is centered around a public scaffold of sorts, namely a theater stage. It describes the preparation of a group of schoolboys for a theatrical performance, to the exclusion of the stagestruck Reiser. Their schoolmasters have given them full autonomy over the production:

> The [students'] spirit thus became republican—various forces could develop—cunning and deceit were employed, and cabals were formed, just as in the election of a member of Parliament—because for public events of this sort . . . the votes were properly collected, and someone was thereby elected leader of the procession or to some other public duty.—
>
> Thus, just when he least expected it, Reiser saw himself once again shut out from something to which his heart was more attached than ever, and for which he had already endured so much.—(*Werke,* 1:381)

The stage, then, proves here to be a site of exclusion, like the electoral stage (*Bühne*) set up in Covent Garden (2:283). Moritz explicitly compares the "cunning and deceit" used to exclude Anton from the theatrical performance to that used during the election of a member of Parliament. Particularly with this passage from *Anton Reiser* in mind, the consensus surrounding the candidacy of Cecil

Wray appears in a new light as decidedly prefabricated: through the machinations alluded to by Moritz with regard to Fox, the electors have been deprived of an alternative to Wray.

Moritz shows, moreover, that not only Hood, but the majority of the people crowding the hustings are excluded from the electoral process. "And even if this is merely a sleight of hand [*Gaukelspiel*]," he comments on the spectacle, "such a chimera can nevertheless uplift the heart and the mind" (*Werke,* 2:283). He thus unveils the electoral process as illusory. On the one hand, in contrast to the display of drilling soldiers in Berlin, this illusion ("sleight of hand," "chimera") uplifts the mind or spirit (*Geist*). Even the lowliest carter thereby "chimes in with the spirit of the people" (in den Geist des Volks mit einstimmen). But while the lowest classes may lend their voice in support of this common spirit, this very act conceals the fact that, as part of the disenfranchised, they have no actual voice or vote (*Stimme*) in the outcome of the election. Moritz thus reveals how the ideology of English commonality, as propagated from the hustings, conceals the unequal division of political power between the electors seated on the stage and the crowd cheering below.

In short, like the social spaces of the pleasure gardens, the seemingly common political spaces explored by Moritz in the *Reisen* in fact draw hierarchical distinctions between the very people they bring together. Thus, the most prominent representatives are positioned in immediate proximity to the symbols of parliamentary power; the House of Commons partitions the representatives from the people they represent, limiting access to those who can afford entry, segregating the observers in the gallery from the representatives in the chamber, and sequestering the observers during voting; and the electoral scaffold excludes political challengers and divides the electors from the mass of people who are disenfranchised. These observations, and not merely Moritz's enthusiasm for the participatory quality of representative government, very likely provided the framework for his theory of the republic two years later in the *Kinderlogik*.

However, just as the *Kinderlogik* extends the reach of the pedagogical critique offered in *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie,* so, too, does it deepen the political critique presented in the *Reisen*. One can readily conceive of reforms that would increase access to parliamentary proceedings, and widen the limited scope of electoral representation, thereby producing a House of Commons that could more fairly be said to embody "the whole English nation." Indeed, as Habermas chronicles, numerous such reforms came to pass in the ensuing decades, such as allotting a permanent space for journalists in the visitors' gallery (in 1803), and significantly expanding the political franchise (through the Reform Bill of 1832).[18]

18. Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* 82. However, as Charles Tilly notes, the Reform Bill of 1832 extended the franchise only to middle-class men, to the continued exclusion of women and of working-class men. See Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain,* 8.

The political critique that Moritz advances in the *Kinderlogik,* by contrast, is of a different order, pointing to the constitutive limits of the institution of the state, including the republican state. This fundamental political critique also carries repercussions for the public sphere of civil society that Habermas regards as the driving force behind parliamentary reform in Great Britain beginning in the eighteenth century.

The Hierarchical Architecture of the State in the *Kinderlogik*

Moritz's political theory in the *Kinderlogik* focuses on the institution of the state, or *Einrichtung eines Staats* (*Werke,* 2:165), in two senses: the process by which the state is instituted, and the state as an institution. Indeed, for Moritz, the one meaning is inseparable from the other: the process by which the state is instituted already comprises the process by which it functions as an institution. He uses the metaphor of the construction of a building, or *Errichtung eines Gebäudes* (162), as a model for understanding the *Einrichtung eines Staats* in this double sense. Any construction project, he observes, is made possible by a division of labor that separates intellectual from corporeal power, master-builder from specialized workers. He holds this hierarchical division to be the decisive feature of the monarchical state. In his account of the founding of the republic, he attempts to conceptualize a state that radically narrows this division, to the point where it vanishes within a common political space open to all.

He prefaces his remarks on the state by considering the "unification of a number of human forces toward one goal [*Zweck*]," which he regards as the basis of all human society (*Werke,* 2:162). Any such purposive unification, he claims, generates both good and evil (162). On the one hand, by combining forces, people can accomplish "astonishing things": "*cities—armies—state constitutions—dams to hold back the sea—Egyptian pyramids—underground canals—warships—shafts—mines—manufactories* and *factories*" (160; original emphasis). By comparison, the accomplishments of the solitary individual are meager: "the *individual* human being—with bed and cover for himself, and for his needs: water to drink, and roots and herbs for nourishment" (160; original emphasis). The contrast between "man in *society*" (160; original emphasis) and the solitary individual emerges even more pointedly in the version of these reflections that Moritz published in 1786 in his journal *Denkwürdigkeiten,* where he substitutes the word *Hütte* (hut) for *Hülle* (cover), thereby laying particular emphasis on the vast difference between their architectural achievements (*Schriften,* 28). As we will see, for Moritz, the construction of buildings functions as a paradigmatic example of the activities that require people to unify forces toward a particular end.

Unifying forces not only produces "astonishing things"; it also generates evil, for the individual necessarily becomes subordinated to a greater whole and is no longer regarded as a whole unto himself: "Evil comes about principally because

the individual is neglected and forgotten too much, no longer seen as a whole unto himself, but as a subordinated part of a greater whole. The individual too often has to be *merely* hand and foot, whereas by nature he should also be a head and have the freedom and opportunity to think about himself and relations in the world" (*Werke,* 2:162; original emphasis).[19] As we noted in chapter 4, toward the end of the *Kinderlogik* Moritz projects into the distant future nature's aim of liberating the human intellect. Similarly, in the above passage he maintains that, in accordance with the determination of nature, the individual should "have the freedom and opportunity to think." But participation in human society requires that the individual renounce his claim to intellectual freedom, to forming a whole made up of both body and mind. This observation, though, does not lead Moritz to reject societal life. Rather, he underscores the fact that without the renunciation of individual totality, an even greater renunciation would have to be made: "This *renunciation* [of the individual person] is above all necessary for the unification of human forces—and none of the great work of humanity would have come about without it" (163; original emphasis). Without subordinating ourselves to greater wholes, then, and therefore renouncing the freedom to think for ourselves and to control our bodies as we please, we would have to renounce humanity's great accomplishments.

In renouncing this freedom to think and act autonomously, the individual integrates himself into a greater totality that achieves its ends through a division of labor. Moritz returns to the theme of architecture, illustrating this greater totality with the example of a group of people who join forces to construct a building:

> When a number of human forces are unified toward a single goal, the bodily movements of a number of people are given *a specific direction* through the guiding thoughts of a single person. They must not veer from this direction if what they wish to produce is to come about—
>
> Those who, for example, have been designated to convey materials for the construction of a building, must *always* convey materials, and should not let it occur to them to give their active force any other direction, because otherwise the whole thing would fall into disarray—
>
> The conveyers of the materials must, therefore, *renounce* any other voluntary use of their active forces *until the building is complete*—(*Werke,* 2:162; original emphasis)

The construction of the building requires that each worker's movements be channeled in a specific direction (*Richtung*). Thus, those responsible for conveying materials on a construction site must limit their movements to this single operation.

19. I have drawn on Jonathan Hess's translations of several passages from Moritz's political theory, including this passage.

This division of labor in turn rests on a division of human forces into mental and corporeal, or *Geistes- und Körperkräfte* (164), whereby the intellectual force is consolidated in a single person, the "master-builder" (163; Baumeister), who ensures that the multitude of distinct movements is ultimately aimed in a single direction, the *Er-richtung* (erection) of the building.

The process of constructing a building exemplifies for Moritz the division of labor inherent in any project in which human forces are unified toward a specific end. He thereby underscores the central paradox articulated by Lessing in *Ernst und Falk:* "'Well, yes,' Ernst exclaims, 'people can only be unified through division! Only through ceaseless division can their unity be maintained! That's how it is. It can't be otherwise'" (Lessing, *Werke,* 10:31). As Reinhart Koselleck argues in *Critique and Crisis,* Lessing here portrays the divisions that subtend societal unity as "ontological facts" (89). For Moritz, as for Lessing, people can be unified only through division.[20] Like Lessing, Moritz is principally concerned with how this unity through division takes place in the state. Even the best of states, according to Falk, inevitably erects "dividing walls" between its members and those of other states, as well as between its own members (Lessing, *Werke,* 10:30). Falk specifies two sorts of internal divisions that he regards as inevitable. The first concerns political power: even if all members of a state were to participate in the legislative process, they still would not be able to have an equal share—"Thus they cannot, in fact, have equal shares, at the very least not equally direct shares. There will be, therefore, more distinguished members and lowlier ones" (30–31). The second division concerns wealth: even if all property was initially evenly distributed among members of a state, differences in the way they used it would soon give rise to "richer and poorer members" (31). Neither on the political nor on the social level can the state ensure complete equality; unequal political and social status is inseparable from statehood.

Falk views it as the mission of the *Freimäurer* (Freemasons) to work against these *Scheidemauern* (dividing walls). They do so not with the aim of completely eliminating them—an impossible task, given that it is only through divisions that people can unite. Rather, their goal is to narrow them as much as possible, or "to draw together as tightly as possible the divisions through which people become estranged from one another" (Lessing, *Werke,* 10:34). Moritz's political theory similarly recognizes the inevitability of the partition walls of the state while at the same time, like Ernst and Falk, working to narrow them. Himself a Freemason, Moritz does so while employing the metaphor of construction that, as

20. Though he never explicitly refers to *Ernst und Falk,* Moritz was very likely familiar with Lessing's text. Michael Voges has identified salient allusions to *Ernst und Falk* in Moritz's Harknopf novels, the first of which was published the same year as the *Kinderlogik* (1785); see Voges, *Aufklärung und Geheimnis,* 494, 508. For an excellent discussion of Lessing's political philosophy and Koselleck's analysis, see Wilms, "Universal Spirit of Conflict."

Lessing highlights in the final dialogue, is implicit in the name and symbols of Freemasonry (63–65).[21]

Moritz first analyzes the institution of monarchy, which he regards as hinging on an absolute division between master-builder and workers. The master-builder of the monarchical house does not merely determine the ultimate goal of the workers' movements; he keeps this goal secret from them:

> Now, it is curious that one part of humanity has succeeded in mobilizing the other toward a goal about which the latter does not have any conception—
>
> As, for example, toward the construction of a building, which the master-builder, but not the conveyer of the materials, has thought up—
>
> The conveyer of the building materials works, therefore, toward a goal *that exists not in his head, but in the head of another person*—
>
> The conveyer renounces his intellect for a while, and becomes merely hand and foot—
>
> He now moves in this manner, without concerning himself any further with *why* he is doing so—(Moritz, *Werke,* 2:163; original emphasis)

The worker remains unaware of the ultimate goal of his movement, namely the construction of a strictly hierarchical political space, the monarchy; this aim exists in the head of the master-builder alone. Though Moritz does not explicitly state why the master-builder would conceal this goal from the workers, one can surmise that to divulge it would be to risk resistance on the part of individuals who might willingly estrange themselves from their intellect temporarily ("for a while"), until the completion of the construction project, but not on a permanent basis.

But how is it, Moritz wonders, that the individual comes to renounce his intellect, however temporarily, and to move his body in accordance with another's wishes, without knowing to what ultimate end? He traces this renunciation back to an act of extortion and deception on the part of the master-builder and his cohorts, or "the more cunning and deceitful portion of human beings" (*Werke,* 2:164). They find a way to "tear away" (zu entreißen und abzuschneiden) from the individual his means of satisfying his body's needs, and restore them to him only on the condition that he in turn "sever" (zerreißt) the bond between his mind and body, and that he thus allow the direction of each of his movements to be prescribed by another's thoughts, like a soldier at the command of a superior (164).

21. As mentioned, Moritz became a Freemason in 1779 (Eybisch, *Anton Reiser,* 95). According to Klischnig, though initially enthusiastic about Freemasonry, Moritz came to fear that his hopes for the order would remain mere "wishful thinking," and his enthusiasm apparently cooled completely under Goethe's influence during his Italian journey (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser,* 45). Freemasonry nevertheless remained a central concern, as indicated by the titles of two works that frame Moritz's literary career: *Beiträge zur Philosophie des Lebens aus dem Tagebuch eines Freimaurers* (Contributions to the Philosophy of Life from the Journal of a Freemason, 1780) and *Die große Loge oder der Freimaurer mit Wage und Senkblei* (The Grand Lodge or the Freemason with Scales and Plumb Line, 1793).

The master-builder thereby succeeds in foisting on the individual a secondary goal that at once accomplishes and conceals his ultimate aim: "The goal that is *cunningly* foisted upon his [the conveyor's] intellect is that he must do this because otherwise he would not be able to satisfy his corporeal needs, still his hunger, and cover his body" (163–64; original emphasis). The key word here is "foisted" (untergeschoben). In a figurative sense, according to the definition of *unterschieben* in Johann Christoph Adelung's dictionary, "one foists something if one puts something fake or false in the place of the real and true, if one inserts it under the appearance of truth." In Moritz's scenario, the master-builder substitutes one goal—the satisfaction of the workers' bodily needs—for the true goal of their labor—the institution of the monarchy. He thereby ensures that the worker renounces his mind's control over his own body, and that he obediently works toward the true goal, without ever being aware of it. Through this act, then, the master-builder conceals from the worker the fact that he is dividing himself from his intellect not temporarily, for the duration of the construction project, but in order to construct a state in which he is forced permanently to resign his mind's control over his own body. In other words, he conceals from the worker the fact that the process of instituting the monarchical state itself comprises the principle according to which it functions as an institution.

In constructing the republican house, by contrast, all the builders are not only aware of the goal of their labor but, furthermore, participate in determining this goal: "It would be altogether different if, for example, a society of people enters into a union with one another, and each one wishes to inhabit a large house together with all the others, a house that could never be produced through the forces of one person alone— . . . Here the goal is common to *all—all* members have a stake in the completion of the house" (*Werke,* 2:164; original emphasis). The goal of this society is "common to *all*" (*allen* . . . gemeinschaftlich) in two respects: it is determined not by a single person independently of all others, but rather by all; and this goal consists in a common space, a "large house" to be cohabited by everyone, and within which everyone can participate in setting common goals. As in the case of the monarchy, the process according to which the republican institution functions is already inherent in the process by which it is instituted; the common space, understood metaphorically, that each member of this society wishes to establish, is already implied in the act of their determining this space as their common goal.

Moritz's republican model, though, while it includes all members within the common space where goals are determined, still does not entirely collapse the division between master-builder and worker: "This number of people *elect* one among them, and voluntarily allow his thoughts to extend their arm in a certain direction, and lift their feet in a certain direction— . . . He *thinks,* indeed, for everyone, but he thinks *for them* only the way to reach the goal, not the goal itself" (*Werke,* 2:164; original emphasis). A division between master-builder and workers still inheres in the institution of the republic but differs substantially from the division of labor

by which the monarchy is instituted and run. To begin with, the master-builder does not usurp power through extortion and deception but instead is granted power through an electoral process. In addition, while he has unlimited latitude in deciding how common goals are to be met, his power does not extend to determining these goals. Moritz erects a wall, so to speak, between the common space where goals are decided by all and a hierarchical space of administration where a master-builder defines the means to achieve these ends. Hierarchy may indeed be an inevitable feature of all government; but at least, Moritz proposes, the power of the master-builder can be contained, and a common space established where each individual member of the state has an equal share of political power. He thereby attempts to reconcile each individual's claim to comprising a totality made up of both mind and body with what he regards as the necessary subordination of the individual's intellect within the totality of the state.

But while it is clear that Moritz advances the model of the republic as an emancipatory alternative to the monarchical state, he simultaneously reveals that the power delegated to the elected leader cannot be effectively contained within its proper limits: "If he conceived of the goal himself, he was compelled *to first give a speech to the others,* through which he first had to transplant his goal into their *heads,* before he could even think about making use of the arms and feet of a single person to attain his ultimate goal" (*Werke,* 2:164; original emphasis). Like any member of the society founding the republic, or any member of the republican state itself, the elected leader is included within the common space where goals are set. He has not only the right to propose goals, but the obligation to make known to the other members any goal that he wishes to pursue. In making public a proposed goal, he "transplants" (verpflanzen) it into their minds; this *Baumeister* (master-builder), then, is also a kind of *Bauer* (farmer). Moritz claims that, unlike the act of foisting that takes place in the construction of the monarchy, this act of transplanting is free of violent division: "Here no violence transpires, no robbery of natural liberty, no tearing apart of the connection between thoughts and movement" (164). However, his choice of the verb *verpflanzen,* which he repeats twice in the subsequent paragraphs, recalls the act of planting described early in the *Kinderlogik,* where the earth is cut open by the farmer's plow: "The earth must first be cut open by the plow, if it is to receive the seeds that are strewn in it and yield fruit" (88). Moritz's distinctive choice of the verb *verpflanzen,* reminiscent as it is of the violence that he associates with planting, signals that the public oration by an elected leader is not so free of violence after all. The power of the elected leader does not dissipate when he crosses over from the hierarchical space of administration into the common space of goal setting. It does, however, disappear from view, hidden as it is within the apparent commonality of this space. Like the act of foisting on the part of the autocratic master-builder, that of transplanting by the elected master-builder involves concealment. In this case, though, what is concealed is not the ultimate goal conceived by the master-builder, which, through

his public speech, becomes common knowledge; rather, it is his uncommon power, garnered through election, to transplant ideas into others' minds.

Moritz's conception of the abiding asymmetry in relations between the elected leader and the electorate points toward Arendt's critique of political representation in *On Revolution.* She deems representation to be "one of the crucial and most troublesome issues of modern politics ever since the revolutions," beginning with the American Revolution, which she nevertheless judges the most successful revolution in modern history (*On Revolution,* 239). What she finds most troublesome is the manner in which representation shuts out the people from the public space of political deliberation, allocating this space to their representatives alone (241). In so doing, representation opens a rift that cannot be closed, for "even if there is communication between representative and voter . . . this communication is never between equals but between those who aspire to govern and those who consent to be governed" (281). Though Moritz's model of the republic envisions a space within which all members, and not merely the elected leader, "aspire to govern," like Arendt he conceives of a hierarchy of power between representative and voter that communication does not diminish. On the contrary, communication serves as the means by which the representative exerts power by transplanting ideas into the minds of others.[22]

In one significant regard, Moritz's critique of the republic goes further than Arendt's. While Arendt laments the absence of a common political space within representative democracies, she locates such a space in the revolution that gave rise to the system of representative government in America. According to her account, the American Revolution "did not break out but was made by men in common deliberation and on the strength of mutual pledges. The principle which came to light in those fateful years when the foundations [of the republic] were laid—not by the strength of one architect but by the combined power of the many—was the interconnected principle of mutual promise and common deliberation" (*On Revolution,* 215). Like Moritz, Arendt employs the metaphor of construction to describe the creation of a republican state, likewise stressing that this construction occurred "not by the strength of one architect but by the combined power of the many." In her view, however, the process of "common deliberation" that characterized the revolutionary period undercut itself by producing a constitution that "itself provided a public space only for the representatives of the people, and not for the people themselves" (241). According to Arendt, then, the tragedy of the American Revolution, and of all revolutions thereafter, was its inability to preserve its innovation, a common political space, within a "lasting institution" (234). In this disjuncture between the

22. For further incisive reflections on the asymmetry of power between representative and voter, and how this asymmetry structures communication between the two, see Pierre Bourdieu's *Language & Symbolic Power,* particularly the chapters "Authorized Language: The Social Conditions for the Effectiveness of Ritual Discourse" (107–16) and "Delegation and Political Fetishism" (203–19). On the complementarity between Arendt's and Bourdieu's views on the interrelation between communication and power, see Topper, "Arendt and Bourdieu."

act of instituting and the resulting institution, she ascertains a "seemingly inevitable flaw in the structure of the republic" (235).[23]

Moritz regards the structural flaw in the republic as lying deeper—indeed, at its very foundation. He does not perceive a disjuncture between the process and the state of institution, for he views the latter as implicit in the former. Where Arendt identifies an emancipatory political space in the town halls where "common deliberation" took place during the founding of the American republic, Moritz's theoretical account portrays such a space as eluding the republic even in its origin. Just as there is no space within the republican institution that is excluded from political hierarchy, so there is no space in its history that is free from stratification.

Moritz's political theory similarly stands in tension with Habermas's conception of the public sphere, a conception that owes much to Arendt's understanding of public space.[24] According to Habermas's well-known account in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* a political public sphere arose in the eighteenth century to challenge the secrecy and exclusivity of the absolutist state (7–9). It took shape, in his view, in the new spaces of bourgeois society—such as coffeehouses, *salons,* and *Tischgesellschaften*—as well as in the closely affiliated world of letters (51). In direct contrast to the absolutist state, according to Habermas, the public sphere grounded itself in the principles of parity and inclusivity (36–37). To be sure, he underscores that it contradicted these principles in practice, largely limiting access to its domain to wealthy and educated men. The claim to inclusiveness and equality thus served an ideological purpose, masking actual exclusivity and inequality (87). However, he argues that this claim was "simultaneously more than mere ideology" (88), for it constituted "an institutionalized promise" (145)—that is, a normative ideal that society could measure itself against and strive to realize. In remarks made on the occasion of the translation of *The Structural Transformation* into English, Habermas further contends that the rational-critical discourse of the public sphere operates according to a "self-corrective process" by which it can overcome its own "hierarchies, asymmetries, overpowerings," and progress toward its ideal form.[25]

Moritz's conception of such "hierarchies, asymmetries, overpowerings" as constitutive of political space runs counter to Habermas's theory of the public sphere, which instead tends to depict them as "accidental trappings," as Nancy Fraser has

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23. At the end of her book, Arendt attempts to remedy this flaw by proposing a model of government along the lines of the ward system conceived by Thomas Jefferson, a model that she hopes can expand the scope of public participation in government, though she also acknowledges its elitist limits (*On Revolution,* 279–85). For a critique of Arendt's controversial proposal that counterposes to its elitist tendencies Arendt's egalitarian insistence on the ever-present possibility of collectively founding a new political order, see Brunkhorst, "Equality and Elitism in Arendt."

24. On "the magnitude of his [Habermas's] intellectual debt to her [Arendt]," as well as on his interventions in her conception of public space, see Benhabib, *Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt,* especially 199–203. See also the essay by Benhabib, "Models of Public Space."

25. See "Concluding Remarks," in Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* 476. *The Structural Transformation* first appeared in Germany in 1962, a year before Arendt's *On Revolution;* the English translation of Habermas's book first appeared in 1989.

noted.[26] Habermas may situate the public sphere within the domain of civil society, and hence outside the power dynamics of the state. According to Moritz's political theory, though, this status would still not exempt it from the paradox that *any* "unification of a number of human forces toward one goal" rests on an unequal division of power. This paradox remains even when the goal around which people coalesce is the establishment of an inclusive and egalitarian space. While Moritz is explicitly concerned with how this paradox applies to the republican state, the general terms in which he formulates it also invite its application to the Republic of Letters—that is, the public sphere of print culture with which Habermas is primarily concerned and in which the *Kinderlogik* itself participates.[27] Establishing an alternative to the hierarchy of the monarchical state necessarily involves founding an institution that is itself hierarchical, however common it may aim to be.

Political Space as *Spielraum*

While the *Kinderlogik* portrays stratification as inherent in political institutions, it continues to express a yearning for a space that is "common to *all*" (*Werke,* 2:164; original emphasis). In other words, Moritz's political thought is driven both by a desire for a common political space as well as by a keen awareness that this space is utopian, that it constitutes a "no-place" that can never be entirely realized. He discovers a degree of hope in a further quality that he regards as inherent in political institutions, namely their capacity for radical transformation. Their hierarchical architecture (in both a literal and a figurative sense) can be razed, clearing the way for a structure that is potentially more inclusive and equal, even if it is ultimately incapable of fully establishing commonality.

Moritz hints at this potential for transformation in an allusion at the outset of the section of the *Kinderlogik* on political theory. Shortly before enumerating the "astonishing things" (such as "*cities—armies—state constitutions*") that can be accomplished by combining human forces to a particular end, he references the scene depicted in the first engraving of the fifth copperplate: "Pious Aeneas carries his old father on his back out of the flames of Troy" (*Werke,* 2:158; see fig. 7). Moritz uses this reference to illustrate the limited strength of a person acting on his own, in contrast to the greater strength of multiple people acting in concert. Ironically, however, his example suggests not the enduring strength, but rather the vulnerability of one of the prime accomplishments of unified action, namely the city: the engraving depicts

26. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 116.

27. Earlier in the *Kinderlogik,* Moritz evokes the Republic of Letters in his discussion of the book: "Through books, people's minds can now converse and instruct one another across any distance; indeed, through books even the dead can be asked for their opinion" (*Werke,* 2:105–6). On the discrepancy between the self-conception of the Republic of Letters "as Europe's first egalitarian society," on the one hand, and "the grubby reality of its intellectual and professional practices," see Grafton, "Sketch Map of a Lost Continent."

Figure 7. First field of the fifth copperplate in the *Kinderlogik*. Princeton University Library.

Aeneas and his father, Anchises, surrounded by the burning ruins of Troy following its siege. The allusion to the legend of Aeneas furthermore points to the fact that Troy's destruction makes possible the founding of a new *polis,* namely Rome. As stable as political institutions such as the city-state may seem, they are thus capable of being thoroughly transformed through both destruction and reconstruction.

Moritz returns to the potential of political institutions to be destroyed and founded anew in a passage near the end of the *Kinderlogik* examined closely in chapter 4. Recall his contention in this passage that the intellect desires "*free scope*" (*Werke,* 2:170; freien Spielraum). We have seen how, in his view, the monarchy denies its subjects intellectual freedom. While the republic, by contrast, creates a public space for all members to deliberate political ideas, their intellectual agency is constrained by the power of the elected leader; indeed, to the extent that this leader transplants ideas into their minds, the people function not as the producers, but as the passive recipients of political ideas. Moritz stresses, though, that neither the

monarchy nor the republic is a permanent construct, contending that man plays "in this manner, building houses of cards that are blown over by a breath, and founding kingdoms and republics that time destroys" (170). Enduring as they may appear to be, both forms of the state, like the city-state of Troy, can be leveled. Their collapse opens the way for the intellect to participate in the founding of new states, in search of a political space that gives it unlimited latitude.

The *Reisen* similarly foregrounds the potential for the architecture of the state to be razed and rebuilt in different configurations. Moritz's reference to the "flames of Troy" resonates with a passage early in the *Reisen* in which he describes his first view of London. As in the *Kinderlogik,* he here alerts the reader to the potential for change within the *polis:* "It [London] first appeared in a thick fog. St. Paul's rose like a mountain above the enormous mass of smaller buildings. The Monument, a towering round column erected in memory of the Great Fire of London, made, due to its height and seeming slenderness, a very unusual and singular sight" (*Werke,* 2:254). Like the two sunken masts that Moritz had glimpsed rising from the water as his ship approached land, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Monument tower above the city. Both structures were built in the wake of the Great Fire of 1666, an event that Moritz notes was commemorated by the Monument. Like the two masts, these structures function in the text as "warning signs," recalling not merely the past destruction, but also the continued vulnerability of the city; at the same time, they themselves embody the potential for a new city, a new *polis* to rise from the ashes.

These warning signs assume a particular urgency in light of the massive civil unrest that shook London two years to the day before Moritz's arrival, and which he describes as "even now, always the second or third topic . . . that typical conversations turn to" (*Werke,* 2:262). June 2, 1780, marked the onset of the Gordon Riots, famously depicted by Charles Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841). "At their height," George Rudé has written, "on the night of 7 June 1780, London appeared to onlookers to be a sea of flames."[28] The most ostensible motivation of the rioters was anti-Catholic sentiment, crystallized around opposition to the Catholic Relief Bill, whose repeal had been demanded by Lord George Gordon, the president of the Protestant Association, in a mass petition presented to Parliament on June 2. But Rudé has argued that "behind the [rioters'] slogan of 'No Popery' and other outward forms of religious fanaticism there lay a deeper social purpose: a groping desire to settle accounts with the rich, if only for a day, and to achieve some rough kind of social justice" (*Paris and London,* 289). This "'levelling' instinct" expressed itself during the riots in the destruction of the homes of wealthy Londoners—primarily those of Catholics, but also of Protestants (*Paris and London,* 31, 289).[29] In his letter of July 14 in the *Reisen,* Moritz draws particular attention to this targeting of

28. Rudé, *Paris and London,* 268.

29. The rioters, according to Charles Tilly, "were remarkably selective in their work: they attacked buildings rather than persons, and selected the buildings with care. . . . In quelling the attackers, in contrast, troops used lethal force: 275 people died in the repression" (*Popular Contention,* 161).

houses, relating an episode from a firsthand account by a woman he meets during his travels: "What particularly struck me was how a man across from her house was so furious that he stood on the wall of a house that was already half burnt down, and still, with his own hands, tried to tear out the stones that the fire had left standing, until he was shot, and fell backwards into the flames" (*Werke,* 2:166). Though Moritz does not explicitly address the motivation of the rioters, his description is suggestive of their attempt to reshape the social landscape through the leveling of houses.

Moritz himself witnesses an act of leveling in London, one that acquires greater significance against the background of the Gordon Riots. If the latter were motivated in part by a desire to establish greater social equality, the act of leveling that Moritz observes appears aimed at breaking down spatial barriers that inhibit political equality. It occurs in Covent Garden directly after the parliamentary election has taken place:

> When it was all over, the mischievousness of the English mob [*der Mutwille des Englischen Pöbels*] showed itself in the highest degree. Within a few minutes the whole wooden scaffold with benches and chairs was demolished, and the mats covering it were torn into a thousand long strips, with which the mob formed a circle in which nobles and commoners were caught, along with anything that came in the way, and in this manner the people [*Volk*] marched in triumph through the streets. (*Werke,* 2:284)

The people thus destroy the electoral scaffold, and with it the hierarchy that it supports, leveling the distinction between high and low, between the electors and representatives on the scaffold and people on the ground. After demolishing the scaffold, they reshape it into a space whose circularity recalls the Rotundas at Vauxhall and Ranelagh but is distinguished from them by its inclusivity, which subsumes "anything that came in the way." However temporarily, then, it would seem that the crowd of people gathered in Covent Garden triumphs in establishing a common political space.

But even this inclusive circular space is not free from division. Moritz's description differentiates between the people who form the circumference of the circle and those who are caught or imprisoned (*gefangen*) within. A significant power differential thus inheres even in this most inclusive of spaces. Moritz's portrayal of this moment of triumph, then, continues the contrapuntal play of his travel narrative, at once conjuring up the prospect of a common space, and punctuating this commonality with an observation that calls it into question. As Helmut Peitsch has noted, Moritz's depiction of political upheaval in the *Reisen* is characterized by "a marked ambivalence" ("Die Entdeckung der 'Hauptstadt der Welt,'" 149). But this ambivalence is due not to the "limits of the author's democratic politics" (149), as Peitsch asserts, but rather to the limits of commonality that Moritz repeatedly observes in the *Reisen.*

Despite the *Kinderlogik*'s contention that such limiting structures inevitably define political communities, I have argued that Moritz simultaneously emphasizes the possibility that these structures can be thoroughly transformed. Perhaps his most powerful evocation of this possibility can be found in the first part of *Anton Reiser,* published in the same year as the *Kinderlogik* (1785), in the passage I have chosen as this book's epigraph, and which describes his protagonist's "obscure premonition of great changes, emigrations, and revolutions, in which all things would assume a very different shape and the previous uniformity would end" (*Werke,* 1:105). Anton's premonition is triggered by his witnessing a house burn down in his hometown, an incident that brings to mind Moritz's references to conflagrations in the *Reisen* (the Great Fire of London, the house burning down during the Gordon Riots), as well as his allusion to "the flames of Troy" in the *Kinderlogik*. A further connection to the *Kinderlogik* lies in the fact that Moritz relates the story of the burning home apropos a game in which the young Anton delights: constructing an entire city out of paper and then setting it on fire. This game closely resembles the metaphor that Moritz uses near the close of the *Kinderlogik* to describe the construction and destruction of political institutions such as the monarchy and the republic, namely "building houses of cards that are blown over by a breath." Neither the *Reisen* nor the *Kinderlogik* depicts political institutions that embody an entirely common space. But their descriptions of the construction, collapse, and reconstitution of political edifices function much like the burning house in *Anton Reiser,* offering an "obscure premonition of great changes" that may one day give rise to more inclusive and egalitarian institutions, even if complete commonality will always remain a utopian aspiration.

Particularly in the *Reisen,* Moritz also affirms the possibility of another kind of change: that of crossing beyond the bounds of the political into other realms. Consequently, he decides to leave London, which he terms "that large prison," for the English countryside, and thus to leave behind the confines of the *polis* for the supposed "paradise" of nature, which he roams on foot as a solitary wanderer (*Werke,* 2:310).[30] Though we will not pursue him there, we will follow him out of the public space of the political and into the private space of the individual, in a project that came to fruition in the year after his return to Berlin from England and engaged him for the next ten years: the *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde.*[31]

30. However, Moritz's travels on foot in the English countryside in fact turn out to be just as disillusioning in many respects as his experiences in London, as he continually meets with mistrust, derision, and exclusion, "for anyone who made such a long trip on foot was taken for a beggar or a scoundrel" (*Werke,* 2:114). Even in the country, then, he encounters the severe strictures of social hierarchy.

31. In *Karl Philipp Moritz,* 74–75, Alexander Košenina intriguingly contends that Moritz's *Reisen*—with its acute attention to seemingly minor details—hones a key observational technique that he employs in his psychological investigations in the *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde* and in *Anton Reiser.* Where Košenina regards Moritz's use of this technique as directing attention away from the political (77), I argue that, on the contrary, in the *Reisen* it focuses attention precisely on those less ostensible political structures that give the lie to the appearance of commonality.

6

Pressing Matters

Moritz's Models of the Self in the Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde

Although it seems counterintuitive, social historians have argued that the bourgeois public sphere in the eighteenth century arises out of the private domain. According to Jürgen Habermas's genealogy in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* the public sphere in its first, apolitical form is born in the world of letters in a "process of self-enlightenment of private people focusing on the genuine experiences of their novel privateness" (29).[1] Through this public process of self-enlightenment, selfhood (or subjectivity) assumes institutional form,[2] while the bourgeois public sphere establishes itself alongside the two hitherto dominant public arenas: that of representative publicness, manifested in the strict code of noble conduct that surrounds the aristocracy with an aura of authority (7–9); and that of the absolutist state (11). Grounded in the self-confidence gained through the discussion of private experiences, and equipped with the media in which this discussion transpired, a second, more politically geared bourgeois public sphere subsequently asserts itself in the eighteenth century (51).

1. Reinhart Koselleck makes a similar claim in *Critique and Crisis*: "The private and public domains are not mutually exclusive; as a matter of fact, the public realm arises from the private one" (56). Throughout this chapter, I continue to cite from the English translation of Habermas's book by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence, amending it where necessary for emphasis and accuracy.

2. In this chapter, I use the terms *self, subject,* and *ego* (Ich) interchangeably.

By Habermas's account, the birth of the bourgeois public sphere coincides with that of psychology as "a specifically bourgeois science" dedicated to the enlightenment of the self (*Structural Transformation,* 29). This chapter examines writings central to the first journal of psychology in Germany in the light of Habermas's history of the private origins of "the bourgeois public sphere" (1).[3] With his journal of empirical psychology, the *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde* (1783–93),[4] Moritz set out to collect the "observations and experiences" of a diverse array of individuals ("Aussichten," 88). His stated aim was to eventually induce a complete human psychology, "a universal mirror . . . in which the human race could regard itself" (90). It has been persuasively shown that Moritz indefinitely defers this goal of a universal psychology and instead pursues a psychology centered around individuality.[5] While I agree with this assessment, I argue that already Moritz's earliest essays in the framework of the *Magazin* betray his doubt as to whether the individual self can be empirically known, a concern that only intensifies during his tenure as editor.[6] In contrast to Habermas's portrayal of the rise of the bourgeois public sphere, and with it the discipline of psychology, Moritz problematizes the notion that the privacy of the self can be genuinely experienced. The self, according to Moritz, is private even to oneself. He initiates *Erfahrungsseelenkunde,* then, not with reference to "the genuine experiences" of privacy, but rather in puzzlement over their very absence.

Though he problematizes the idea of a private self that can be empirically known, Moritz does not forgo the attempt to conceive of such a self. Specifically, he articulates two paradigms of an ego that, while not directly perceptible, can be inferred through its representations: a paradigm of the self as primarily expressive, and one of the self as primarily impressionable. These paradigms are informed,

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3. Regarding the status of the *Magazin* as the first journal of psychology in Germany, see Bennholdt-Thomsen and Guzzoni, afterword, 8; and Meier, *Karl Philipp Moritz,* 104.

4. Full title: *ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ oder Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde als ein Lesebuch für Gelehrte und Ungelehrte* (*ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ* or Magazine of Empirical Psychology as a Reading Book for Scholars and Nonscholars), 10 vols. (3 issues per volume). References will be made to the volume, issue, and page number of relevant passages from the *Magazin*.

5. See Frickmann, "'Jeder Mensch'"; Bezold, *Popularphilosophie und Erfahrungsseelenkunde*. Frickmann contends that Moritz's "concentration on the individual implies . . . a conscious renunciation of authoritative normativity" (391). Bezold claims that for Moritz a general psychology becomes a heuristic tool used to recognize the particular individual, thereby reversing the means-end relation between the individual and the general: "The altered line of sight consequently modifies the scientific ideal: classification is replaced with the description of the particular case in its individual, singular imprint and its unmistakeable history, a description that, to be sure, presupposes and lays claim to general 'points of view'" (176). On Moritz's attention to the "particular case," see furthermore Gailus, "Case of Individuality." According to Gailus, it is Moritz's "casuistic approach to the writing of the soul—his willingness, that is, to consider cases that are not yet exemplary cases of something—that opens up the conceptual space for a new notion of the individual: the individual, understood not as a member of a species but as a self shaped by a particular life-history" (79).

6. Moritz edited volumes 1–4 and 7.3–8, Carl Friedrich Pockels edited volumes 5–7.2, and Salomon Maimon edited the final two volumes (9 and 10).

respectively, by innatist psychological models that view the self as pre-given, and by neo-Lockean theories that see the self as a product of impressions from its environment.[7] As my terms "expressive" and "impressionable" imply, Moritz's models are structured in opposite ways around pressure: the first likens the self to a press, the second associates it with an imprinted text. As opposite as they are, both models thus construe a self that is legible, and hence particularly suitable for discussion in the public sphere of what Moritz calls the "reading world" ("Aussichten," 89). At the same time, neither presents the self as immediately perceptible. Rather, each envisages it being accessible through a medium of representation: in the one case, it can be perceived through its expressions; in the other, through the memories of its formative impressions.

If the hope for an empirical psychology lies in these representational media, therein also lies its aporia, for Moritz sees these representations as continually subject to a displacement (*Verstellung*) whereby the self becomes concealed (*verstellt*) to the observer. I argue that because of this impasse, Moritz does not commit himself to either model of the self but instead oscillates between them. Furthermore, I claim that this dilemma gives rise to a third, implicit model of the ego, paradoxically a model of a model-resistant self, albeit a self that, precisely because of its elusive and enigmatic quality, invites continued speculation and efforts at empirical observation in the public forum of the *Magazin*.

In showing the self to be hermetic, Moritz departs from the concept of subjectivity that, according to Habermas, had become firmly established by the end of the eighteenth century, namely that of the publicly oriented subject. A brief discussion of Habermas's account of a subjectivity that is "oriented toward an audience" will provide a preliminary context within and against which to consider Moritz's models of the self.

Habermas's Thesis of Publicly Oriented Subjectivity

According to Habermas, the genuine experiences of privacy discussed in the public sphere flow "from the wellspring of a specific subjectivity. The latter had its home, literally, in the sphere of the patriarchal conjugal family" (*Structural Transformation,* 43). Taking the term "home" literally indeed, he examines the spatial reorganization of the typical eighteenth-century bourgeois home for what it reveals about the structure of the conjugal family and of the publicly oriented subjectivity characteristic of its members. He notes three architectural trends of the time that

7. For a detailed study of the conflicting psychological traditions in which Moritz stands, see the informative study by Bezold, *Popularphilosophie und Erfahrungsseelenkunde*, as well as Schings's introduction to *Melancholie und Aufklärung*. On the theoretical tensions within Moritz's conception of psychology, see also Frickmann, "'Jeder Mensch'"; Kershner, *Karl Philipp Moritz;* Müller, *Die kranke Seele*. For a lucid account of the debate between innatist and environmentalist psychologies in the *Magazin*, see the dissertation by Krupp.

reflect the constitution of this subjectivity. The first trend is the proliferation of separate, uniquely designed rooms for each individual family member, resulting in the solitarization of each person within the home (45). At the same time, the intimate space of the living room comes into vogue as a site where, in the self-understanding of the time, these individual family members gather to form a voluntary community of love (45). Finally, the salon comes into fashion as the space designated within the bourgeois home for larger social gatherings in which private individuals meet as a public (45).

How do these three spheres located under the same roof—the spheres of the unique subject, of the conjugal family, and of society—interrelate? Subjectivity, Habermas states, "as the innermost court of the private, was always already oriented to an audience" (*Structural Transformation,* 49). It is not just the case that subjectivity *can* orient itself toward the public, but that it is *always already* oriented toward the public; this orientation is constitutive of it. In this relation of subject to public, the family assumes an intermediary role, located distinctly within the private sphere, yet bearing within it the seed of the public sphere.[8] The latter comes about when private individuals orient themselves toward it to discuss their private experiences. By the same token, Habermas maintains that private people secure (*versichern*) their subjectivity as such in the process of communication in the public sphere (54). Thus, private and public realms are strictly complementary (45).

Habermas sees the letter as the principal medium in which this complementarity plays itself out.[9] Letters become means of articulating one's subjectivity not only within the intimate sphere of family and close friends, but in the literary public sphere; indeed, as Habermas notes, many private correspondences are written with the intention of being published (*Structural Transformation,* 49). In the eighteenth century, correspondence about private experience thereby gives rise to the literary public sphere and to "the typical genre and authentic literary achievement of that century," namely the bourgeois psychological novel, which takes off with the novel in letters (49). At the same time, according to Habermas, through the writing and reading of letters and novels, subjectivity becomes defined as an institution that structures private experience, an institution he sees as firmly established by century's end: "The late eighteenth century moved pleasurably and securely [*mit Sicherheit*] in a terrain of subjectivity that was barely explored at the beginning of the century" (50). Habermas's thesis that the bourgeois public sphere in the late eighteenth century is founded on a secure notion of subjectivity finds support in an idiom he quotes in discussing the

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8. "The sphere of the public arose in the broader strata of the bourgeoisie as an expansion and at the same time completion of the intimate sphere of the conjugal family" (50).

9. For a richer account of the letter as the medium through which the private and the public shape one another, see Koschorke, *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr,* especially chap. 3, "Substitutionen 2."

genre of the letter: "In the jargon of the time, which owed so much to Gellert, the letter was considered an 'imprint [*Abdruck*] of the soul'" (113). Underlying this metaphor is a conception of the soul as capable of producing imprints of itself: the soul as a kind of press. This simple idea has a number of implications. First, such a soul is inherently oriented toward an audience that reads its imprints. Furthermore, in its ability to produce imprints of itself over time, each recognizable as unique to it, the soul is perceived as static, as set. Finally, the imprints made by the soul are themselves reproducible through actual printing presses, thereby extending the sphere of familial intimacy to encompass a wide literary sphere. This concept of the inherent reproducibility of the personal letter comes to light in another idiom cited by Habermas: "An idiomatic expression current at the time described the well-composed letter as 'pretty enough to print'" (49). In short, then, these idioms cited by Habermas suggest that the subject was popularly conceived among the bourgeoisie as that which is capable of producing imprints of itself in print. The bourgeois public sphere could rest securely on the conception of the self as "fit to print" (51), and hence capable of making itself legible to the reading public. Viewed in this manner, the self is by nature expressive.[10]

As we will see, Moritz calls into question precisely this notion of a self that is "fit to print." The field of subjectivity on which he founds his *Magazin* is not a secure, but rather a secret terrain. It is this secrecy, though, that makes the self such an alluring field for exploration.

The Expressive Self Disguised

> Trembling, I step toward carrying out an undertaking whose importance and usefulness is daily more apparent to me, but whose great difficulties I also perceive ever more clearly.—What a field into which my unsure steps venture; what untrodden paths, what darkness, what a labyrinth!
>
> *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde* 1.1:1

With these words, Moritz inaugurates the *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde* in 1783. He thus embarks on a journey into the terrain of psychology not with

10. Charles Taylor, in *Sources of the Self,* uses the term "expressivism" to describe a similar paradigm of the self as the one discussed here (374). According to Taylor, the expressivist model of the self that becomes established toward the end of the eighteenth century views "originality as a vocation" (376). The principal metaphor Taylor sees as underpinning this model is that of the "inner voice" of nature (374), which "cannot be fully known outside of and prior to our articulation/definition of it" (376). The same can be said of the self viewed as an inner press, which becomes manifest only in its imprints. Both metaphors point toward an original self that is expressive in nature.

self-assurance, or *Sicherheit,* but rather trembling, with insecure steps. To be sure, in comparing himself to an explorer setting out into uncharted territory, he employs a well-worn rhetorical strategy to distinguish the *Magazin* from what he refers to as "the present-day Flood of books" (*Magazin* 1.1:2); his articulation of insecurity may be seen as merely highlighting the novelty of his project in an effort to attract public interest.[11] Nevertheless, this does not preclude our taking his stated insecurity seriously and attempting to ascertain the great difficulties that, at the very outset of his enterprise, he claims to see ever more clearly. Indeed, already in his first program for a prospective *Magazin,* "Aussichten zu einer Experimentalseelenlehre" (Prospects for an Experimental Psychology, 1782),[12] Moritz identifies these difficulties as the interrelated social conventions of courtesy, imitation, and agreement, conventions that he visualizes with the metaphor of the curtain (*Vorhang*). The fabric of these conventions constitutes an "external constraint" (96), repressing what Moritz, in the first of his hypotheses concerning the self, conjectures to be the essence of selfhood, namely expressiveness. As a result, the task of the *Menschenbeobachter* (observer of people or observer of man) involves penetrating the textile of social convention so as to bring to light the expressive text of the self.

Moritz formulates the model of the expressive self near the opening of "Aussichten," where he simultaneously describes the primary obstacle encountered by the empirical psychologist: "That the imprint of the soul is wiped away so early from a person's face, that his tone and his countenances lose early on their blessed correspondence with thought and perception; this is what inhibits the gaze of the observer; this is the fruit of opulence and refinement, of memorized bows, smiling glances, and artificial turns of phrase in the most insignificant expressions of courtesy" (87). In referring to "the imprint [*Gepräge*] of the soul," Moritz suggests a model of the expressive self in line with the popular model cited by Habermas in his discussion of the genre of the letter. In this connection, it is worth noting that Moritz was an exponent of the letter as a principal medium for self-expression. The following year, 1783, witnessed not only the publication of the first volume of the *Magazin,* but also of Moritz's *Anleitung zum Briefschreiben* (Introduction to Letter Writing), in which he extols the value of the letter as "a faithful imprint [*Abdruck*] of the unique turn in one's thoughts."[13] The letter consequently allows for correspondence in the double sense

11. As Gailus notes, "No stranger to rhetoric, Moritz did his part to accentuate the momentous novelty of his journal" ("Case of Individuality," 79).

12. He thereafter changed the name of the discipline from *Experimentalseelenlehre* to *Erfahrungsseelenkunde* for reasons that are often discussed in the literature on the *Magazin* and need not concern us here.

13. *Sämtliche Werke,* 9:10. I am grateful to Christof Wingertszahn, one of the editors of the critical edition of Moritz's works, for making available to me a copy of the text before its publication in the critical edition. For a further consideration of Moritz's *Anleitung* in the context of eighteenth-century theories of the letter, see chap. 2 of Kershner's study.

of an exchange between two people and of a correspondence (*Übereinstimmung*) between the soul and its imprint. Moritz accordingly proposes setting aside space in the *Magazin* for "letters about affairs of the heart written in the most confidential tone" ("Aussichten," 89). One's heart, or innermost self, may not be directly perceptible, but it can be faithfully represented in the epistolary medium.[14]

Moritz, however, while presenting this optimistic prospect for empirical psychology, also questions it. Unlike Habermas, he sketches a picture of conflict in which the courteous conventions of representative publicness retain the upper hand over self-expression: the soul's impression is early on "wiped away" (verwischt), displaced by "the most insignificant expressions of courtesy"; the self is thereby rendered illegible.

In his critique of courtesy, Moritz stands in a German literary tradition of bourgeois self-legitimation that Norbert Elias has traced back to the first half of the eighteenth century. According to Elias's well-known account in *The Civilizing Process,* the bourgeois intelligentsia in Germany during this period, excluded from political activity, asserts itself in the cultural arena, namely "in the inner enrichment, the intellectual formation [*Bildung*] of the individual, primarily through the medium of books, in the personality" (24). In cultivating what it imagines as the inner realm of the personality, this intelligentsia sets itself in opposition to what it perceives as "the external and superficial manners to be found in the courts" (11). Elias sees one of the clearest articulations of this dichotomy in Goethe's *Werther* (18), a text that, as we have seen, had an enormous impact on Moritz.

While Elias, attentive to the specific social conditions in eighteenth-century Germany, emphasizes the particularity of the critique of courtesy to the German bourgeois intelligentsia, it has been shown that similar discourses emerged in France (around *politesse*) and in Britain (around politeness and courtesy) as early as the seventeenth century.[15] Moritz's acute concern with the pervasiveness of

14. One of the most influential promoters of the letter as the medium of the heart in the eighteenth century, Samuel Richardson, erroneously traced the etymology of the word *correspondence* back to the Latin word for "heart" *(cor)*: "I loved familiar-letter-writing... above all the species of writing: it was writing from the heart..., as the very word *cor-respondence* implied. Not the heart only; the soul was in it." Quoted from Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* in Wolfgang G. Müller, "Der Brief als Spiegel," 157.

15. Lawrence E. Klein shows that already in the seventeenth century members of the French aristocracy distanced themselves from courtly *politesse,* in which "subservience was enacted" so as "to maximize personal profit," and developed their own noncourtly *politesse* that "emphasized equality, reciprocity and freedom as parameters of truly polite interaction" ("Politeness," 95–97). Klein argues that this noncourtly, aristocratic ideal of politeness was adopted and transformed in Britain into a less exclusive and more politically minded "civic politeness" that understood itself, in Shaftesbury's words, as opposed to "Court-greatness and Politeness" (quoted in Klein, 90); and this civic politeness was in turn exported back to France (101). An excellent example of this discourse on politeness—and one with which Moritz was very likely familiar—may be found in Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768), in which the narrator draws a sharp distinction between the "polish'd nation" of France and "the *politesse du coeur,* which inclines men more to humane actions, than courteous ones" (Sterne, *Works and Life,* 3:302).

courtesy, though likely embedded in the German context described by Elias, shares a special affinity with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's critique of *politesse.* In "Aussichten," Moritz mentions Rousseau's *Confessions,* the first six books of which were published in 1782, as a specific example of the type of "truthful descriptions of one's life, or observations about oneself" that he proposes to publish in the prospective *Magazin* (89). Rousseau's autobiography famously opens with his proclamation of the unprecedentedness of his enterprise and moves next to assert the author's own uniqueness: "I may be no better, but at least I am different. Whether Nature did well or ill in breaking the mould in which she formed me, is a question which can only be resolved after the reading of my book" (*Confessions,* 17).[16] Rousseau attributes his singularity, then, to his having been formed by Nature in a unique mold. This metaphor ironically recalls its very different use in his *First Discourse* (1750) to represent the effect of social conventions—including *politesse*—on the realm of mind or *esprit:* "Today, when subtler inquiries and a more refined taste have reduced the Art of pleasing to principles, a vile and deceiving uniformity reigns in our morals, and all minds [*tout les esprits*] seem [*semblent*] to have been cast in the same mold: constantly politeness [*politesse*] demands, propriety commands; constantly one follows custom, never one's own genius" (*First and Second Discourses,* 6). Despite Rousseau's bleak vision of "polished peoples" (peuples policés) subjected to the reign of uniformity ("this perpetual constraint" [114]), all is not quite as it appears: in modifying his description with the verb "seem" (semblent), Rousseau leaves room for the hope that the mold of *politesse* does not truly abolish the differences among *les esprits,* that the uniformity may be not only deceitful but deceptive. Consequently, he can still express the wish "How sweet it would be to live among us if the outward countenance were always the image of the heart's dispositions" (5). This strict division between interior and exterior allows him to preserve individual uniqueness intact below the surface. While it may no longer be the case that "differences in conduct conveyed differences of character at first glance" (6), these underlying differences in character still subsist. As Jean Starobinski writes, Rousseau is "the poet of enduring essences" for whom "evil is produced by history and society without altering the essence of the individual" (*Jean-Jacques Rousseau,* 18, 20).[17] A "uniform and deceitful veil of politeness" (Rousseau, *First and Second Discourses,* 6) conceals individual differences without dissolving them within a single mold.

This topos of concealment figures in heavily Rousseauian imagery in Moritz's "Aussichten":

16. References are to the translation by J. M. Cohen, which I have slightly modified for emphasis and accuracy.

17. For a useful survey of the concept of *Verstellung* (dissimulation, disguise, concealment) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including a thorough discussion of Rousseau, see Geitner, *Sprache der Verstellung*.

> The child learns to stammer empty thank-yous and best-wishes, without feeling anything; he learns to disguise himself [*sich verstellen*] before he even knows what disguising is, and that disguising is a vice; he learns to thank his father with a kiss to the hand and his Creator with folded hands, in a uniform, empty tone of courtesy; and while he still babbles, the words have already become contrived and are no longer a natural expression of sentiment. Gradually, a dense curtain is thereby woven which, in the end, even the gaze of the shaping observer [*des bildenden Beobachters*] and of the observing shaper [*des beobachtenden Bilders*] of the heart cannot penetrate. (87–88)

The picture Moritz presents in this passage is one of total self-disguise occurring already in the child's preverbal stage. "Natural expression" (natürlicher Ausdruck) is displaced by an impenetrable curtain of courtesy that recalls Rousseau's description of the uniform and perfidious veil of *politesse.* Already toward the beginning of his first programmatic essay for the *Magazin,* then, Moritz sounds a distinct note of skepticism about the possibility of observing the self through true self-representation.

According to Moritz, the early acquisition of a gestural and verbal language of courtesy inaugurates a whole way of life based on disguise, multiplying the "many obstacles" confronted by the empirical psychologist ("Aussichten," 95). One of the primary obstacles to psychological observation is "addiction to imitation": "one casts off one's original character bit by bit, and stitches together another out of tatters torn from here and there" (95). One's original imprint, or character,[18] thus becomes displaced by a patchwork imitation reminiscent of the fabric of concealment in the curtain metaphor. Imitation of this sort, he continues, appears to come about "because a great attribute [*Eigenschaft*] of humanity, each person's pride in his own individual existence [*sein eignes individuelles Dasein*], has become so rare. People press their imprints upon each other, and in so doing, each loses his own [*sein eignes*]" (95–96). In the repetition of the word *eigen,* Moritz points to three elements that originally belong to humans: one's own individual existence (which in the next sentence he also refers to as "sein *eigen*thümliches Dasein"), one's pride with regard to this existence (described as "eine große *Eigen*schaft"), and one's own ("sein *eignes*") imprint (my emphasis). With the extinguishing of pride in one's own individual existence—perhaps as a result of its being smothered behind the curtain of courtesy—one's possession of a unique imprint is endangered: one relinquishes it, impressing it instead on others, while one is impressed on by them in turn. The erasure of pride thus brings out a danger already latent in the very expressiveness of the expressive self, namely that the self's expressions may displace

18. On the similarity of the terms *Charakter* and *Gepräge*, see Adelung's dictionary. Both *Charakter* and *Gepräge* originally refer to signs: Adelung defines the former as literally "[a] figure made on paper, ore, stone, etc.," deriving from the Greek word for "engraving"; and the latter he describes as "the image or sign imprinted on a coin." At the figurative level, Adelung uses the designation "distinguishing feature" to define both. I take the two terms in Moritz's usage in "Aussichten" to be synonymous.

those of other selves, and vice versa. The end result is a society of individuals who become increasingly indistinguishable to the observer.[19]

Moritz notes a further hindrance to the observation of the self, one closely related to imitation: the cultivation of agreement, whereby "[one] completely disavows one's beliefs and attitudes, in order to be able to agree with the beliefs and attitudes of another" ("Aussichten," 95). Curiously, he claims that this unanimity is fueled by selfishness, or "self-complacency, for we are doubly pleased with ourselves when at the same time we believe we are pleasing another" (95). Selfishness, as Moritz defines it, is the opposite of pride in one's individual existence, consisting instead in the pleasure taken in believing oneself liked by others, at the cost of one's completely denying one's true opinions and views; it involves not the expression, but the repression of the self. Moritz sees the society of his day paradoxically grounded in a selfish competition among its members to appear in courteous conformity with others. The *Menschenbeobachter,* then, to gain insight into underlying uniqueness, must first penetrate "the curtain of self-contentment or of self-ingratiation" (95).[20]

In short, the dynamic Moritz sees as proper to the self consists in a form of pressure, namely expression; however, the self is also obscured by a kind of pressure, the repression (or "external constraint") occurring when the fabric of courteous convention is superimposed on it. Given the density and ubiquitousness of the curtain woven of courtesy, imitation, and agreement, how can empirical psychology ever fulfill its mission of observing the self? Mortiz offers two related strategies in "Aussichten," but not without punctuating both with doubt.

The Self between *Verstellung* and *Vorstellung*

Both strategies Moritz considers in response to the dilemma of the concealed self involve a shift in perspective, a revaluation of forms of repression: a reappraisal, in the one instance, of those apparently insignificant expressions that seem to overlay the expressive self; in the other instance, of the suppression whereby an individual who does not conform to social conventions becomes marginalized. However, as presented by Moritz, these perspectives contain problems that undermine their ability to recuperate the original expressiveness of the self, and that thereby call into question the very paradigm of the expressive self.

As one way out of the dilemma posed by the veiled self, Moritz calls on the observer to regard the "artificial turns of phrase in the most insignificant expressions of courtesy" ("Aussichten," 87) as only *apparently* insignificant. The task

19. Moritz sees the addiction to imitation further aggravated by books, particularly novels and plays that present ideal types (*Ideale*). Literature thereby exacerbates the already considerable dilemma of the observer: "How hard it is for the observer to seek out again, in all that has come into the character [of the observed subject] through reading books and plays, what is his own [*das Eigne*] and original!" ("Aussichten," 96). Ideal types in print, then, have a way of imprinting themselves on the reader's own original character.

20. "den Vorhang der Selbstgefälligkeit oder Gefälligmachung seiner selbst bei andern."

of the *Menschenbeobachter*—or the practitioner of what Moritz classifies as *Seelenzeichenkunde* (semiology of the soul)—is to develop an "*attentiveness to the seemingly small*" (93; original emphasis) that allows one to make an inference about another's soul:

> From the secret history of his own thoughts, he would have to learn, through [attention to] countenance, language, and action, to draw conclusions about the souls of others. No turn of phrase [*Wendung im Ausdruck*]... could seem to him insignificant, or elude his attention: for sometimes [*zuweilen*] such oft-repeated and seemingly insignificant expressions in speech are a faithful image of the quickness or slowness, continuity or discontinuity, order or disorder, in their thought and action. (93)

Andreas Gailus has noted that Moritz here develops "a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Ricoeur) that enables one to infer from the deceptive surface to the hidden secret," thereby prefiguring the "reading of clues" practiced by Sigmund Freud and Arthur Conan Doyle ("Case of Individuality," 84). However, Moritz in fact also problematizes such a hermeneutics. In modifying his statement with the adverb "sometimes" (zuweilen), he inserts into his argument one of the "small, unnoticed splinters" that Gailus sees as the object of Moritz's hermeneutics (84).[21] Only *sometimes,* then, can frequently repeated, apparently insignificant expressions in fact provide "a faithful image" of another's soul. But how is one to distinguish these times from those others that reveal no such picture? How is one to distinguish what is truly insignificant from what is only apparently insignificant? The hole pricked by this adverb easily widens into a hermeneutic abyss,[22] into the "immeasurable leap from the surface of the body to the interior of the soul" that the scientist and writer Georg Christoph Lichtenberg—whom Moritz references in "Aussichten" as a role model for his project of empirical psychology—had discerned, in his scathing critique of physiognomy four years earlier.[23]

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21. The expression "small, unnoticed splinters" (kleine unbemerkte Splitter) comes from Moritz's "Vorschlag zu einem Magazin einer Erfahrungs-Seelenkunde" (Proposal for a Magazine of Empirical Psychology), a slightly modified version of "Aussichten" published in the *Deutsches Museum*. Moritz here points out how minute physical and, by implication, psychological injuries can develop into dangerous diseases (*Werke,* 1:793).

22. Attentiveness to Moritz's choice of adverbs is warranted not only by his call in "Aussichten" for "attentiveness to the seemingly small," but also by his essay "Sprache in psychologischer Rücksicht" (Language from a Psychological Perspective) in *Magazin* 1.3:122–28. In this essay on adverbs, Moritz draws attention to even the smallest words, asserting: "*In the smallest words of the language there often reside the most sublime concepts*" (125; original emphasis).

23. See Lichtenberg, "Über Physiognomik" (On Physiognomy). "Pathognomik" (pathognomy), Lichtenberg's positive alternative to physiognomy, involving the study not of fixed facial signs but of "a nonarbitrary language of gestures" (278), closely anticipates Moritz's *Seelenzeichenkunde*. But even in his discussion of pathognomy, Lichtenberg (again anticipating Moritz) cautions against attempting to leap across the immeasurable semiotic gap separating visible signs from their referents. In the same paragraph in which he mentions Lichtenberg, Moritz admittedly also cites Lavater as a role model for *Experimentalseelenlehre* ("Aussichten," 90–91). I view this scope of reference, encompassing both the founder of physiognomy as well as one of its greatest critics, as emblematic of the theoretical tensions permeating Moritz's project.

Moritz furthermore introduces a precondition for pursuing this kind of reading of clues: "Thus the *Menschenbeobachter* must depart from himself" ("Aussichten," 93; So müßte der Menschenbeobachter von sich selber ausgehen); only then *might* it be possible, through careful attention to apparently insignificant expressions, to infer anything about others' souls. However, in a society in which people have so thoroughly concealed themselves, how is such self-observation possible? Once again, Moritz considers a change in perspective as a response to this problem.

The perspective Moritz invests with hope is that of the social outcast. A society based on selfish competition to conform not only entails that individuals repress their uniqueness; despite all appearances of unanimity and uniformity, it moreover entails that an individual may in the process become "suppressed [*unterdrückt*] by other people or by his own fate" ("Aussichten," 94). While exercising throughout his writings an emphatic critique of societal suppression, Moritz also recognizes in such suppression a potential value for empirical psychology, for those who are excluded by society are forced inward toward self-discovery. According to Moritz, this movement inward is coupled with a movement upward, as one's pride in one's own individual existence rises; from this elevated vantage point, the concealment (*Verstellung*) of the self gives way to a true representation (*Vorstellung*) of the self.

Though Moritz, as will be shown, outlines in "Aussichten" the intricacies involved in this change in perspective, he does not explain who precisely is subject to societal suppression, and one must look elsewhere in his writings for an answer. One need not look far: two answers can be found in a key scene in part 3 (1786) of *Anton Reiser,* the "psychological novel" he conceived in the context of *Erfahrungsseelenkunde* and excerpts of which he published in the *Magazin.* He shows in this scene that those who cannot afford the proper accessories of life in polite society are suppressed in it; in addition, he reveals how those who lack selfish competitiveness to conform are excised from the social body. The scene in question takes place during the "usual public examination" (*Werke,* 1:318). School, university, and theater function for Reiser as a form of "ersatz publicity" (Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* 14).[24] For the bourgeoisie, and even more so for someone from the lower rungs of society like Reiser, these institutions provide the only stage on which one has a chance to partake of the aura of representative publicity from which the middle class was traditionally excluded. As the narrator repeatedly remarks,[25] Reiser desires to stand "in rank and file" (in Reihe und Glied) with his classmates, part of a uniform and uniformly privileged group. Being part of such a publicly visible group of students entails participating in the courteous conventions associated with ritual events such as torchlight processions and public examinations. However, despite his presence at the public exam, "where he too appeared," Reiser does not

24. Habermas uses this term (*Öffentlichkeitsersatz* in the original German) in his excursus on *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* to describe the function of theater and *Bildung* for the bourgeoisie.

25. See in particular *Werke,* 1:253–54, 258, 297, and 470.

really see himself as appearing at all in the eyes of his judges: "But how much his spirits sank when he compared himself with the rest and saw that he was the very worst dressed *of all*—he sat there as though lost; no attention whatsoever was paid to him—he was asked not a single question" (*Werke,* 1:318; original emphasis). This scene reveals that the possibility of assuming a position in the uniform body of polite society is based at least in part on whether one has the financial resources to appear in the appropriate attire; those lacking the necessary resources are neglected. In a very literal sense, the fabric of courtesy must meet exacting standards.

Within the same scene, Moritz presents an alternative view of suppression, one that, while distinct from economically based exclusion, complements it. Aware that he is ignored, Reiser has left the public exam while it is in progress, and on his walk outside Hannover reflects on this other form of *Verdrängung:*

> It occurred to him that from childhood on being pushed aside [*verdrängt*] had been his destiny—when he wanted to see anything that required him to push himself into a crowd [*sich hinzuzudrängen*], everyone else was always bolder than he was, and pushed him aside [*drängte sich ihm vor*]—he thought that eventually a gap would appear, where he could join the *row* [of spectators] without having to push aside [*hinwegzudrängen*] anyone in front of him—but there never was such a gap—and he withdrew and watched the crowd [*Gedränge*] from a distance, standing all by himself.—(*Werke,* 1:320; original emphasis)

As Mark Boulby has noted, Moritz creates in this passage a powerful scenario of suppression by playing with various cognates of the verb *drängen* (to press, to push) (*Karl Philipp Moritz,* 44).[26] Reiser here wishes to join a single row (*Reihe*) of spectators; his initial object is thus not to distinguish himself from others, but to blend in with a uniform group. He is kept from joining this group not because of any financial handicap, but because he lacks competitiveness, a readiness to push others out of his way (*jemanden vor sich hinwegzudrängen*); instead, everyone else pushes in front of him (*drängte sich ihm vor*). Rather than pushing, Reiser ends up pulling himself back and looking on from a distance at the crowd (*Gedränge*).

Why would Moritz find, as claimed above, in the very people his society marginalizes, the hope that the concealed self may yet be discovered? The scene of suppression that Reiser recalls on his walk outside Hannover offers a clue: "His pride, which rose up, vanquished his initial irritation—being unable to join the

26. This passage, as Boulby also has remarked, prefigures a scene later in the same part of the novel (and which we discussed in the previous chapter in its political context) in which Reiser is excluded on the basis of selfish competition from participating in a school play. With regard to the students' competitiveness, the narrator comments: "Anyone who did not thrust himself forward forcibly [*wer sich nicht mit Gewalt hinzudrängte*] was not summoned.— . . . The mutual competition, this thrusting others aside and being thrust aside in turn [*dies Verdrängen und verdrängt werden*], was such a faithful image of human life on a small scale that in it Reiser saw a kind of foreshadowing of all his future experiences" (*Werke*, 1:380–81).

crowd, he was forced back into himself [*drängte ihn in sich selbst zurück*]—and this refined and elevated his thoughts and feelings" (*Werke,* 1:320). In this sentence, Moritz continues to play with the word *drängen,* as Reiser recalls how his exclusion from the crowd of spectators pressed him (*drängte ihn*) back into himself. Accompanying this movement inward is a movement upward: his pride in himself, the sensation that Moritz in "Aussichten" claims to be the victim of a uniform culture of concealment, now rises ("rose up," "elevated"). The narrator takes note of a similar upsurge when Reiser leaves the scene of the public examination: "He felt unusual strength in his soul to rise above everything that suppressed him [*darnieder drückte*]" (319). Suppression thus instigates for Reiser not only a movement inward, but a simultaneous movement upward as his pride soars.

This second, upward movement affords Reiser a further change in his perspective on himself. He not only returns into himself but also reaches a standpoint above himself. Again with regard to Reiser's walk outside Hannover, the narrator informs us: "It was this solitary walk that raised Reiser's sense of self, extended his outlook, and gave him a vivid representation of his own true, isolated existence, which for a while was no longer tied to any relationships, but persisted in itself and for itself" (*Werke,* 1:320). The three effects of Reiser's solitary walk that Moritz lists in this sentence may be viewed as causally linked: the solitary walk raises Reiser's "sense of self" (Selbstgefühl), allowing for the widening of his "outlook" (Gesichtskreis), which in turn makes it possible for him to perceive "his own true, isolated existence." Reiser, then, experiences that "pride in his own individual existence" that Moritz discusses in "Aussichten," a pride that elevates him above himself and thereby makes him visible to himself. With a change of perspective of this sort, the "*Ver*stellung" (concealment) of the self can become an "anschauliche *Vor*stellung" (vivid representation) of the same. The obscured self becomes transparent through a true representation of itself.

The exclusion of the individual from the social body, then, instigates the two, interrelated movements of penetration into oneself and elevation above oneself. This bidirectional movement in *Anton Reiser* is prefigured in "Aussichten" in two prominent injunctions to the *Menschenbeobachter:* "*in* seine eigene wirkliche Welt immer tiefer *ein*zudringen suchen" (94; my emphasis; to seek to push ever deeper *into* his own real world), and "*von* sich selber *aus*gehen" (94; my emphasis; to begin with, or to depart *from,* oneself). Moritz's combination of these two movements is reminiscent of another self-observer, namely Augustine. Charles Taylor, in *Sources of the Self,* paraphrases Augustine: "By going inward, I am drawn upward" (134). For Augustine, being drawn upward naturally means being drawn to God, an association that Moritz, too, retains, in an oft-cited passage from "Aussichten":

> But what should one do, if one is suppressed by other people or by one's own fate, and cannot go any further? . . . What could be better and more noble, than to place

> oneself high above this earth, and above oneself, as it were, as though one were a being separate from oneself [*als ob er ein anders von sich selber verschiednes Wesen wäre*], one who, in a higher region, smiles at all these things—and in this way, to smile at one's own complaints and grievances—to regard all that as a stage play—what bliss, what an elevation to the all-encompassing creator of the universe! (94)

Moritz states here, as he does four years later in the scene in *Anton Reiser,* that a new perspective awaits those who are societally suppressed, an elevated, indeed transcendent vantage point above the world and above oneself. A self that is split between original depth and artificial surface thus discovers itself in effecting a further division, viewing itself as though it were a being separate from itself, indeed as though it were a spectator beholding itself on a stage. In this *anschaulicher Vorstellung* (in all senses of the term *Vorstellung,* including the sense of a theatrical performance) one is simultaneously actor and spectator.

However, Moritz sees the very division from oneself that restores hope in *Erfahrungsseelenkunde* as inherently problematic. Already in "Aussichten," he recognizes the risk that, in the act of self-observation, one has too much self-interest to objectively perceive oneself: "One cannot well avoid the thought that one is attaching too great a significance to one's own person, in wishing to be the object of these observations" (93). This early skepticism does not vanish; indeed, it finds its fullest articulation nine years later, in 1791, in an essay included in the eighth volume of the *Magazin* and entitled "Ueber Selbsttäuschung" (On Self-Deception) that opens with the assertion "In human nature there is certainly no more inexplicable phenomenon than the possibility of deceiving oneself, as though one were a being separate from oneself, with a two-fold interest" (*Magazin* 8.3:32). The clause in the subjunctive—"as though one were a being separate from oneself" (als ob man ein von sich selbst verschiedenes Wesen wäre)—repeats almost word for word the one cited above from "Aussichten." In the essay of 1791, however, self-division as the basis for self-observation is portrayed as extremely problematic, for it is also the condition of possibility for self-deception. In contrast to "Aussichten," "Ueber Selbsttäuschung" employs the metaphor of the theater as a figure for self-disguise. Moritz voices his concern "that man is also capable of playing a role for himself" (*Magazin* 8.3:33). In this theatrical *Vorstellung,* then, the risk of *Verstellung* is not overcome but rather remains immanent.[27] In attempting to peer through the curtain of courteous convention by distancing oneself from oneself, one lets fall yet another curtain.

27. As Bezold argues, "The self-observer doubles himself and is his own public. Through the back door, the problem of concealment once again re-enters self-observation: most likely, one play-acts for oneself" (*Popularphilosophie und Erfahrungsseelenkunde,* 161). Bennholdt-Thomsen and Guzzoni also note that Moritz "increasingly doubted the worth of self-observation for the investigation of the psyche, in so far as he exposed it as 'self-deception'" (Afterword, 25).

Neither the change in perspective in the direction of a hermeneutics of suspicion, nor the perspectival shift deriving from societal suppression, guarantees the empirical psychologist sure insight into the self. From neither vantage point is true representation of the self distinguishable from deceptive appearance. Given this dilemma, how could the model of an underlying expressive self ever allow for substantiation through empirical observation? While Moritz never explicitly questions his model of the expressive self in this manner, he does so implicitly by oscillating between it and another model that we could characterize as one of the impressionable self. This wavering suggests the hypothetical status of the theory of the expressive self, its status as speculation that no amount of spectatorship in the theater of the self can definitively confirm.

The Impressionable Self

Despite the unverifiability of the model of the expressive self, Moritz does not entirely abandon it. He does, however, draw into consideration a radically different paradigm of the self, one that is structured around a diametrically opposite form of pressure, and that appears to bypass the complications arising from the first model. How might a model of a self that is primarily impressionable offer empirical psychology a way out of the dilemma of a subject that is unobservable because devoid of faithful representations?

From the standpoint of a neo-Lockean model of the impressionable self, there would exist no original self to be concealed; the whole problem of the concealment of a true ego through the conventions of courtesy loses its significance. August Wilhelm Schlegel, in his *Allgemeine Übersicht des gegenwärtigen Zustandes der deutschen Literatur* (General Overview of the Present State of German Literature, 1802), sums up such a viewpoint when he attacks Locke, "who undertook to show how everything, through sense impressions, is gradually inscribed onto the blank slate (really onto the blank nothingness) of the mind" (quoted in Schings, *Melancholie und Aufklärung,* 39). The paradigm critiqued by Schlegel is that of an ego conceived purely as a *tabula rasa;* in this model, there is literally nothing ("blank nothingness") to be concealed.

Moritz, however, never takes his model of the impressionable self to quite this extreme. Rather, he locates the self's formative period in the earliest years of childhood; the impressions received by the child serve as a foundation for his or her later ideas and thereby ground a unique, coherent self. If the model of the expressive self is structured around the metaphor of a press, the model of the impressionable self construes the self to be a text composed of its earliest sensual impressions. Like the inner press of the expressive self, these foundational impressions cannot be directly observed by the empirical psychologist. However, Moritz argues that they can be perceived through the representational medium of memory. The task of the *Menschenbeobachter* becomes one of tracking down the memories of these earliest impressions, as he states in "Aussichten":

> Whoever wants to develop into a real *Menschenbeobachter* must depart from himself: first, he must sketch the history of his own heart from his earliest childhood as faithfully as possible; be attentive to memories of the earliest years of childhood, and regard nothing as insignificant that has ever made an especially strong impression on him, so that its memory continues to press itself between the rest of his thoughts. In the process, he must not wish to seek out the traces of his genius, or what already existed within him, in the earliest events of his life or in his childhood actions. (92)

Moritz here turns away from a model of an expressive self and toward that of a self whose earliest impressions play an especially significant role. He thus recommends that one not attempt to recover the expressions made by a pre-given self—"the traces of his genius, or what already existed within him"—but rather that one direct one's attention to everything that left a marked impression early in one's life. This task would appear to be well within the reach of an empirical psychology, given that these impressions are represented in the medium of memory, and that the memory of one's formative impressions remains tangible, continuing to press (*sich . . . drängt*) between one's other thoughts.

Moritz explores this line of argumentation in an essay published in 1783 in the first issue of the *Magazin,* "Erinnerungen aus den frühesten Jahren der Kindheit" (Memories from the Earliest Years of Childhood), but he does so with greater skepticism.[28] On the one hand, he poses the hypothesis that childhood impressions, having become fixed in the soul, form a foundation on which one's other ideas are grounded, or basic threads around which the fabric of all other ideas are woven. However, he shows that the representations through which these impressions can be perceived, one's earliest memories, display a perpetual displacement, thereby eluding observation and calling into question his own hypothesis that the self has a stable foundation in its earliest impressions. As a result, the model of the impressionable self appears in as problematic a light as that of the expressive self. The *Magazin* may constitute, as Anke Bennholdt-Thomsen and Alfredo Guzzoni argue, "a medium of communication for the bourgeoisie . . . , who—in public—begin to remember, who aspire to make their experiences more certain" (Afterword, 42). But already in the first issue of the *Magazin,* Moritz questions whether such experiences (at least one's earliest, formative ones) can be securely captured by memories that are constantly displaced.

In the first paragraph of the essay, Moritz introduces his hypothesis concerning the foundation of one's self in one's earliest childhood impressions: "The very first impressions that we receive in our earliest childhood are certainly not so insignificant that they do not deserve to be especially noticed. These impressions form, as it were, the foundation of all others; they mix themselves often unnoticeably among

28. On the topic of memory in Moritz's other works, see especially Berndt, *Anamnesis,* as well as the dissertation by Krupp.

the rest of our ideas, and give them a direction that they would otherwise perhaps not have taken" (*Magazin* 1.1:65). Already in this opening paragraph, Moritz presents his hypothesis in terms that waver between certainty and doubt. He highlights his certainty of the importance of one's earliest impressions (they are "certainly not so insignificant" [gewiß nicht so unwichtig]) but tempers this certainty somewhat when he writes that they constitute a "foundation" (Grundlage) only in a manner of speaking, "as it were" (gewissermaßen). His certainty is further dampened when he notes that one's earliest childhood impressions provide one's other ideas with a direction that they "perhaps" would otherwise not have taken. While the tentativeness of Moritz's phrasing does not negate his model, it does accentuate its hypothetical status. Furthermore, Moritz's assertion that those impressions deserving of being noticed (*bemerkt*) are in fact unnoticeable (*unmerklich*) casts doubt on the verifiability of his hypothesis.

Moritz mentions this unnoticeability again when he introduces a second metaphor to explicate his theory of the origins of the self: "Might not, perhaps, our very childhood ideas be the fine unnoticeable ribbon that ties our present state to that of our past, if that which now makes up our *I* already existed once before in other circumstances?" (*Magazin* 1.1:66). One's childhood ideas may perhaps function as a ribbon binding our present with our past state, thereby holding the self together, but this ribbon is a fine one and remains "unnoticeable." In addition, Moritz again further stresses the tentativeness of his hypothesis with the adverb "perhaps," as well as by formulating his hypothesis as a question in the subjunctive mood.

He uses the same techniques to articulate the tentative nature of his hypothesis later in the text, where he modifies the metaphor of the ribbon into one of threads and texture: *"Several peoples' memories from the earliest years of childhood, placed side by side, would perhaps demonstrate how the ideas—first of the color, then of the shape, then of the relative size of objects—gradually become fixed in the soul. And couldn't one in this way perhaps retrace the secret path by which the wonderful fabric of our thoughts arose, and in time, discover their first basic threads?"* (*Magazin* 1.1:68–69; original emphasis). The textile metaphor of early childhood ideas as "basic threads" (Grundfäden) continues to convey their fundamental nature as conceived in the earlier architectural metaphor of "foundation" (Grundlage); both metaphors suggest a basis to the self. The textile (*Gewebe*) woven around these basic threads brings to mind a further association, namely textuality, thereby intimating the legibility of the self. But how are the characters, or impressions, of this text to be perceived? The verb "retrace" (nachspüren) suggests that the impressions or traces (*Spuren*) left in the soul can be rediscovered through one's earliest childhood memories.

The tentativeness with which Mortiz poses his hypothesis of the impressionable self is especially warranted in light of the earliest memories of his own childhood, which he discusses in the essay, memories he portrays not as immediately observable, but rather as constantly displaced. The theme of displacement is most clearly

articulated in an event Moritz twice mentions, once toward the beginning of the piece, and once toward the end: "In my third year, my mother moved with me away from my native city, which I have never since seen again" (*Magazin* 1.1:66; see also 69). This moment of separation from his native city, Moritz notes, marks a schism in his memory, separating impressions he can recall more distinctly (impressions subsequent to his departure) from those that are less clear (impressions of his native city) (69–70). If later, distinctly recollected impressions are hypothesized as grounded in earlier ones, the question presents itself as to whether the memories of these earlier, indistinctly recollected impressions can be retraced. What Moritz finds, however, is that his initial displacement from the locus of his early childhood cannot be reversed: his memories of his earliest impressions are not immediately accessible, but rather mediated through other memories; they are labile; they elude his gaze, which is deflected to the periphery of the things recollected; and they are shrouded in darkness.

To begin with, Moritz's earliest memories are displaced by other, mediating memories: "The previous part of my life appears to me as if *torn-off.* Only with much effort can I tie it to my actual existence, and the memories of this part of my life seem to me to be only memories of memories" (*Magazin* 1.1:69–70; original emphasis). The fabric of his self, then, far from being securely held together by the ribbons or basic threads of his earliest ideas, seems torn. Moritz maintains that it is possible to reestablish, through memory, a connection with the early part of his life, but not without great effort, and only in a mediated fashion: not through the basic memories of his earliest childhood, but rather via memories of memories. His original memories are always at a remove. These memories, then, which he refers to as "jener wirklichen Vorstellungen" (65–66; those real representations), are always subject to *Verstellungen* (displacements). Thus, a variation on the hermeneutic problem that Moritz confronted when operating with the paradigm of the expressive self (the indistinguishability of true *Vorstellungen* and deceptive *Verstellungen*) emerges from the attempt to verify the model of the impressionable self—that is, the very model that appeared to offer a way around this dilemma. Moritz's attention to memory displacement anticipates by over a century Freud's "discovery" of the process whereby a "screen memory" serves at once to cover and to convey another memory, particularly one deriving from early childhood.[29]

Moritz's memories of sensual impressions are displaced in another manner as well: they elude his retrospective gaze, which can capture only the periphery of things he tries to remember. Of a garden across from his house in which he often went walking with his brothers, he notes: "I cannot remember anything about this garden, apart from the green grapevines on the sides" (*Magazin* 1.1:68). He thus

29. See Freud, "Screen Memories." On the connections as well as tensions between Moritz's and Freud's understanding of memories (especially traumatic memories) of early childhood, see Fritz Breithaupt's penetrating analysis in "Invention of Trauma in German Romanticism."

recollects not the garden itself, but its ornamental borders. Similarly, when he lists a number of objects in his native city that made "a special impression" on him, his gaze is deflected to the side: "A deep, dark room at our neighbor's, whom we sometimes visited in the evening. The small ships that sailed on the Weser, and where I saw some women sitting on the edge. A well not far from our house, whose image has always floated in my memory in a completely unique way, such that even now, in this instant, I feel as though I were gazing wistfully into a dark distance" (66). The first impression of his hometown that Moritz documents is not of his own home, but rather of his neighbor's, and the well that he recalls is also described as being "not far from our house." His memory captures marginal impressions of what is located "on the edge," while his home keeps slipping into the background, continually displaced.[30]

A further kind of displacement in the passage just quoted can be found in images of instability. The verb *schweben* (to float) was commonly associated with memories in the eighteenth century (as it is today), and hence Moritz's use of it in connection with the memory of the well might not appear particularly noteworthy. However, he draws special attention to this verb by modifying it with the phrase "in a completely unique way" (auf eine ganz eigne Art). Johann Christoph Adelung's dictionary associates *schweben* with "the soft and gentle movement of a thing in a fluid body." The two bodies of water in the passage (the well itself, but particularly the river) accentuate the fluid movement implied by the term. Like his brothers, who, in his memory of fleeing his native city, walk beside the carriage, and "who, to my wonderment, I saw sometimes appearing, sometimes disappearing again" (*Magazin* 1.1:69), Moritz's memories themselves are unstable; they can be "extinguished" (65; erloschen), "wiped away" (68; verwischt). To this extent, the medium of memory, in his model of the impressionable self, resembles that of the expressions in his paradigm of the expressive self, which are also "wiped away so early" ("Aussichten," 87; so früh verwischt). But where these expressions are wiped away by something external (the insignificant expressions of courtesy), Moritz suggests that the memories of one's earliest years are inherently labile. Both the impressions he remembers, as well as the memories themselves, have, in the words of Adelung, "no particularly visible mooring"; they are in flux, perpetually displaced.

Moritz furthermore describes both what he remembers and his memories themselves as lost in darkness. The same sequence of memories of his native city that he lists in the extended quotation above begins and ends in darkness: it begins with "a deep, dark room" and eventually moves to another dark and deep chamber (the nearby well), and then concludes by suggesting that the act of remembering is itself

30. In strikingly similar terms, Freud describes how "the inessential components of an experience stand in for the essential.... It is a case of displacement along the plane of association by contiguity" ("Screen Memories," 7).

an act of “gazing wistfully into a dark distance” (*Magazin* 1.1:66). Moritz develops this notion in the next paragraph of his essay, in which he discusses how “a small, trivial thing” can trigger a vague memory: “It was something that I only vaguely grasped, that must have had some dark, distant similarity to my present state, without my being able to elucidate it” (67). What one remembers in this manner seems to bear a resemblance to one’s present state, but this resemblance remains obscure and distant. The recollection of the earliest memories of childhood can transpire, as it were, only through a glass darkly.

Moritz condenses the theme of displacement in this essay into a single image of *Verstellung,* namely the familiar image of the curtain: “When the ideas of childhood awaken in me, it is often as though I were able to look back over the short span of my existence, and as if I were close to lifting a curtain that hangs before my eyes” (*Magazin* 1.1:65). The text(ile) of the self is not made legible through the medium of memory but rather is obscured by the fabric of memory’s curtain. With regard to a similar passage in Moritz’s 1786 “Revision” (Review) on the first three volumes of the *Magazin,* a passage about memory also prominently featuring the motif of the curtain (*Magazin* 4.3:4), Andreas Gailus comments: “Lurking behind the curtain is nothing less than the ultimate blind-spot of self-observation: the mystery, inscrutable yet irresistible, of the self’s origin” (“Case of Individuality,” 98). This apt remark applies equally well to the passage about the curtain in “Erinnerungen aus den frühesten Jahren der Kindheit.” Even when the ideas of childhood awaken in him—or “that which . . . , in the whole world, is *closest* [*am allernächsten*] to us,” as he refers to them in his 1786 “Revision” (*Magazin* 4.3:8; original emphasis)—Moritz remains only close (*nahe dabei*) to lifting the curtain to his memory. What is most proximate to us can only be approximated.

The Black Box of the Self

We have seen that *Verstellung* in the form of displacement and concealment interferes with the empirical verifiability of both the model of the expressive self and that of the impressionable self. Unable to confirm one model or the other, Moritz oscillates between them, both in the early and later writings he publishes in the context of the *Magazin.* Thus, the third installment of the 1786 “Revision” concludes with Moritz—a renowned melancholiac—inquiring into the origin of his melancholy temperament, and presenting two alternative scenarios: “Now the question arises: *did the frequent unpleasant impressions from childhood bring about the mind’s melancholy temperament, or did the mind’s melancholy temperament, having already been in existence, bring about these unpleasant impressions?*” (*Magazin* 4.3:15; original emphasis). The opposing theories of the self that Moritz presents in this question constitute a variation on the theoretical dichotomy discussed thus far, whereby the model of the self as creator of expressions is modified into that of a self that creates impressions. What remains constant is Moritz’s willingness to address his own

uncertainty—he explicitly states that he remains "unsure" (16) about which model is accurate—and to leave his question open for others to attempt to solve.[31]

The dilemma faced by the empirical psychologist, according to Moritz, is that the representations that grant insight into the self—the "faithful image" of self-expression, the "real representations" of memory—are always already displaced, *verstellt;* the self, hypothesized as inherently legible, never comes to press. The predicament of the *Menschenbeobachter* thus resembles that of the observer in one of his earliest memories, related in "Erinnerungen aus den frühesten Jahren der Kindheit," the memory "of a *black* cabinet, which stood in the hall of one of the neighboring houses, and appeared to me so uncannily large, that I believed that people must necessarily dwell within it" (*Magazin* 1.1:67; original emphasis). The black cabinet spied by the young Moritz is described with the adverb *ungeheuer* (uncannily), a word whose root is etymologically related to *heim* (home)—hence its synonym, *unheimlich.* It is, literally, the very "un-homeliness" of the size of the cabinet that curiously makes the young observer speculate that it must of necessity be inhabited. I, in turn, would like to speculate that it is precisely the resistance that Moritz encounters, when attempting to peer into the self, that generates his continued speculation and attempts at empirical observation in the *Magazin.* Ultimately, for Moritz the self is "the as yet empty Cabinet," but not in the manner Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* regards the mind, which he views as gradually being furnished with ideas deriving from sensual impressions (55). Rather, for Moritz the self is an empty cabinet to the extent that it is unknown, and he furnishes it in the sense that he drafts hypothetical models of what it may contain. He presents the self as a black box that both resists and compels investigation, that simultaneously eludes us and invites us to imagine what lives within.

Confronted with this black box, Moritz is wary of hypostasizing any psychological system: "All the anxious working toward a firm system must, however, be completely avoided, and at first, everything must be only an approximate sketch in which many lines can still be wiped away, even if the whole thing should thereby acquire a completely different shape."[32] Each theoretical draft with which Moritz fills the yet empty cabinet of the self remains just that, "an approximate sketch." A self whose representations are continuously "wiped away" (verwischt) allows only models that can be similarly wiped away, perpetually displaced by other models.

In stressing this theoretical uncertainty underlying Moritz's *Erfahrungsseelenkunde,* my account departs sharply from Habermas's narrative of the founding of

31. Bennholdt-Thomsen and Guzzoni view this willingness to question one's theoretical position as characteristic of most contributions to the *Magazin,* which are "accompanied by commentaries and/or annotations . . . that have a questioning and question-provoking character" (Afterword, 42). As a result, the *Magazin* is characterized by a particularly high degree of "interaction between authors and readers" (12). Moritz, I would add, models the willingness to question one's theoretical assumptions.

32. "Grundlinien zu einem ohngefähren Entwurf in Rücksicht auf die Seelenkrankheitskunde," *Magazin* 1.1:32.

the discipline of psychology accompanying the rise of the public sphere in the eighteenth century. To be sure, the public project of the *Magazin* does indeed issue from an obsessive preoccupation with the private realm. To this extent, my study confirms one of Habermas's strongest claims, namely that the bourgeois public sphere is born out of the spirit of the private. Habermas, however, sees the public discussion of subjectivity as deriving from genuine experiences of the private self, pinpointing their exact location in the bourgeois home. I, by contrast, conclude that the first German journal of psychology, during the period in which it is founded and edited by Moritz, is driven by the very hermeticism of the self. Genuine experiences of the self are just what Moritz is unable to ascertain. Far from derailing his enterprise of empirical psychology, though, this resistance of the self to observation lends it its urgency: precisely in its radical privacy, its retreat from the empiricist's gaze, the self becomes a pressing public matter.

Conclusion

Moritz's Inner-Worldly Critique of Modernity

The topographical projects of the Enlightenment tend to totalize. This tendency characterizes, for instance, the work of one the most renowned German geographers of the second half of the eighteenth century, Anton Friedrich Büsching, the director of the Gymnasium zum Grauen Kloster in Berlin where Moritz was a teacher until 1786. By the time of his death in 1793 (the same year as Moritz's), he had completed eleven volumes of his *Neue Erdbeschreibung* (New Description of the Earth, 1754–92). Though it barely advances beyond a description of the European continent, its ambitions are global in reach: Büsching aspires to nothing less than a comprehensive survey of both the natural and the political geographies of the known world.[1] To do so, he not only undertakes an exhaustive review of the extant geographical literature but, even more significantly, mobilizes a vast network of correspondents, many of whose reports he makes available in the twenty-two volumes of his *Magazin für die neue Historie und Geographie* (Magazine for the New History and Geography, 1767–88).[2] Büsching's ambitious project is representative of the practice of Enlightenment geography more generally, which

1. Büsching makes this clear in the preface to the first edition of the first volume (1754): "My aim with this work is to deliver a description of the known world that is as correct and useful as possible, by means and according to the criteria of the best resources available" (*Neue Erdbeschreibung,* 2).

2. Büsching describes this procedure in the preface to the sixth edition of the first volume (1770) of his *Neue Erdbeschreibung* (iii–vi).

was oriented toward the ideal of "a universal geographical archive" that would "form a coherent whole" from all the individual descriptions of the world.[3] Each volume of his *Magazin* features a title-page engraving that suggests a vision of just such an archive (see fig. 8). Composed in central perspective, such that a spacious aisle lined with massive, symmetrical bookshelves appears to extend toward the viewer, this engraving presents just a portion of the envisioned archive. However, one senses that if, like the two gentlemen conversing near the center of the picture's foreground, one were to traverse this rigorously ordered space, one could eventually attain an overview of the whole.

The totalizing imperative of the Enlightenment is nowhere more evident than in what Robert Darnton has called its "supreme text" (*Great Cat Massacre,* 191), the *Encyclopédie, Ou Dictionnaire Raisonné Des Sciences, Des Arts Et Des Métiers* (Encyclopaedia, or Classified Dictionary of Sciences, Arts, and Trades, 1751–72), edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert and encompassing seventeen volumes of text and eleven volumes of plates. The guiding metaphor for this project is the *mappemond,* or world map. As described by d'Alembert in his *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot* (1751), the encyclopedic project "consists of collecting knowledge into the smallest area possible and of placing the philosopher at a vantage point, so to speak, high above this vast labyrinth, whence he can perceive the

Figure 8. Title-page engraving in Anton Friedrich Büsching's *Magazin für die neue Historie und Geographie*. University of Chicago Library, Special Collections Research Center.

3. Edney, "Reconsidering Enlightenment Geography," 171.

principal sciences and the arts simultaneously.... It is a kind of world map which is to show the principal countries, their position and their mutual dependence, the road that leads directly from one to the other" (47). The *Encyclopédie,* then, offers a unifying perspective from which the interconnections among the various branches of knowledge become apparent. The tree of knowledge with which d'Alembert and Diderot preface their encyclopedia maps out these interconnections so that they are available at a glance.

However, as Darnton has noted, "epistemological *Angst*" permeates this comprehensive encyclopedic project (*Great Cat Massacre,* 195). It finds expression in the *Preliminary Discourse* immediately following d'Alembert's evocation of the *mappemonde:*

> But, as in the case of the general maps of the globe we inhabit, objects will be near or far and will have different appearances according to the vantage point at which the eye is placed by the geographer constructing the map, likewise the form of the encyclopedic tree will depend on the vantage point one assumes in viewing the universe of letters. Thus one can create as many different systems of human knowledge as there are world maps having different projections, and each one of these systems might even have some particular advantage possessed by none of the others. (48)

D'Alembert thus fundamentally questions the possibility of attaining a synoptic vantage point from which the unity of all arts and sciences becomes apparent. To be sure, like the geographer, one can still construct a *mappemonde,* but not from a transcendent perspective. Rather, it can be drafted only from one of countless vantage points, or systems of knowledge, *within* the world. As a result, d'Alembert concedes that the grand project of the *Encyclopédie* to chart the entirety of knowledge "remains of necessity somewhat arbitrary" (49).

Moritz's topography of modernity arises out of this perspectivist countertendency of the Enlightenment. In stark contrast to Büsching, and more emphatically than d'Alembert, he questions the human ability to attain a comprehensive, unifying vantage point. Rather, he assumes a multiplicity of different perspectives, each centered in a different institution. Within this topography, the institution of art stands out for two reasons. First, it is in relation to art that Moritz most fully elaborates the concept of autonomy, or "that which is complete in itself," the concept that for him guides his understanding of institutions in general. Second, the process of creating art, according to the theory expounded in "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen," involves intuiting absolute totality, or "the one, true totality" (*Schriften,* 73). But, as we have seen, Moritz regards this intuition to be cut short by the very works of art that attempt to capture it. Art thus compounds, rather than overcomes, the modern state of social differentiation. That is to say, each effort to enclose the sublime whole within the contours of the work of art merely adds to the complexity of the modern world.

In addition to the closely related institutions of art and mythology, I have examined three other, more disparate institutions: education, the state, and the self. Despite their differences, Moritz depicts each of these in strongly spatial terms, at times underscoring their spatial constitution, at times using spatial imagery in a more metaphorical manner. In each case, he regards the space of the institution not as static, but as a *Spielraum,* a space that is capable of radical transformation. Thus, a literary work can at once draw and demolish its verbal contour; the world of classical mythology can serve at one and the same time as a resting place that contains the imagination and as a space for its boundless play; spaces of cognition can be destroyed and rebuilt, like houses of cards; a public political space can be razed and reconstituted in a new form. The "black box" of the self is a *Spielraum* in a slightly different sense: it is not the (metaphorical) space itself that is at play here, but rather its furnishings—that is, the competing theories of the self that are projected into it, each displacing the other.

All of these instances involve a crisis that transforms the institution but does not ultimately destroy it. Thus, the very impossibility of ever representing absolute totality through a work of art merely stimulates further artistic production, "continual formation" (*Schriften,* 77); or the failure to empirically substantiate a particular model of the self elicits further theories of selfhood that call for further empirical observation. Paradoxically, then, it is precisely through crisis that institutions perpetuate themselves. Crisis leads not to the negation of modernity, but to its renewal. Moritz's understanding of crisis thus departs sharply from that of Rousseau, who in *Emile* famously prognosticates the approach of "a state of crisis and the age of revolutions" (194). As Reinhart Koselleck has argued, underlying Rousseau's prediction of an impending crisis is his damning critique of both the state and civil society from an absolute moral standpoint. Rousseau, in Koselleck's analysis (*Critique and Crisis,* 158–71), turns out to be merely the most openly hostile exemplar of a line of moral critique that extends back to the origins of the Enlightenment and that, with the French Revolution, assumes an explicitly political form.

Moritz's notion of crisis similarly stands in tension with that of Hegel. As Jürgen Habermas observes, Hegel sees modernity in terms of "the crisis of the diremption of life itself" (*Philosophical Discourse,* 21). In his so-called *Differenzschrift* of 1801, Hegel argues that such diremption (*Entzweiung*) derives from the understanding (*Verstand*), which produces dichotomies, including that between itself and religious faith.[4] As a result, the "all-embracing coherence" once provided by religion has been lost (Hegel, *Difference,* 92). The task of philosophy lies in establishing such coherence on a higher level through the power of reason (*Vernunft*).

4. Hegel, *Difference,* 90. Though Hegel does not reference it specifically, the *Encyclopédie* can be viewed as a prime instance of such diremption: even as its tree of knowledge attempts to offer a unifying perspective, it does so only by supplanting an earlier tree (that of Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopedia*) that privileged theology with one that instead privileges philosophy (Darnton, *Great Cat Massacre,* 197–201).

As envisioned by Hegel, establishing such a rational coherence involves a further crisis, though this time one that opens the way out of the divisions imposed by the understanding:

> Reason reaches the Absolute only in stepping out of this manifold of parts. The more stable and splendid the edifice of the intellect is, the more restless becomes the striving of the life that is caught up in it as a part to get out of it, and raise itself to freedom. When life as Reason steps away into the distance, the totality of limitations is at the same time nullified, and connected with the Absolute in this nullification, and hence conceived and posited as mere appearance. The split between the Absolute and the totality of limitations vanishes. (*Difference,* 89–90)

Hegel here portrays the "edifice of the intellect" (Gebäude des Verstandes) as "stable and splendid," but also to the same degree, as rigid and confining. This edifice is not, however, impermeable or permanent: reason can liberate itself from its bounds, stepping "into the distance," and can thereby nullify it. In other words, the oppositions fixed in place by the understanding can be suspended through what Habermas, in his analysis of Hegel, terms "the reconciling power" of reason (*Philosophical Discourse,* 22).

Hegel's yearning to reconcile modernity's diremptions animates Habermas's own thought. To be sure, Habermas parts decisively with what he critiques as Hegel's subject-centered model of reason. Nevertheless, his own model of communicative reason, conceived as "a noncoercively unifying, consensus-building force" (*Philosophical Discourse,* 315), continues the Hegelian project of attempting to resolve the divisions wrought in the Enlightenment. Indeed, his recent efforts at engaging Catholic theologians in dialogue speak to his ongoing desire for building a consensus that is more than a mere "unstable compromise between irreconcilable elements" ("Awareness of What Is Missing," 16).[5]

Like Rousseau, Hegel, and Habermas, Moritz is acutely aware of the divisions between the institutions that comprise modernity, as well as of each institution's inherent constraints. Like these thinkers, he longs to break out of the confines of institutional "edifices," and to attain what he calls "limitless freedom" (*Werke,* 1:421). In sharp contrast to these thinkers, however, he regards this absolute freedom as beyond our reach; there is, ultimately, no way of escaping the institutions that we construct and inhabit, and in so doing of occupying a standpoint from which their fundamental differences can be reconciled.

5. This dialogue also exemplifies the limitations of Habermas's model of communicative reason. As one of Habermas's interlocutors, Norbert Brieskorn, observes, "Reason addresses demands to the religious communities (there is no mention of demands from the opposite direction)" ("On the Attempt to Recall a Relationship," 32). In sum, as Stanley Fish notes in his Opinionator blog in the *New York Times,* "The borrowings and one-way concessions Habermas urges seem insufficient to effect a true and fruitful rapprochment [between secular reason and religion]."

What further distinguishes Moritz's perspective on modernity from Rousseau's, Hegel's, and Habermas's is his capacity for envisioning multiple institutional spaces not merely in terms of the limitations they impose, but also in terms of the potential for the freedom of movement they offer. Regarded synchronically, this is the potential to move between conflicting institutional viewpoints—for instance, from the space of the imagination to that of the intellect, or from the political to the private sphere. Seen diachronically, it is the potential to dismantle institutions, but also to reassemble their pieces in a radically new way, without therefore nullifying them.

To the extent, then, that Moritz's description of modernity is also a critique of modernity, it is not one that offers a stable vantage point above and beyond the modern world it describes. Rather, it is a critique that takes place immanently, within both the limits and the latitude of its institutions—that is to say, within their *Spielraum.* At a time when God, reason, morality, and nature are invoked with what seems increasing frequency and ardor as absolute standpoints from which to critique society, Moritz's work continues to offer a powerful alternative, an emphatically inner-worldly orientation to the complex and shifting landscape of modernity.

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