Heine Der Narr: Towards a Universal Freiheitsliebe

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Heine der Narr: Towards a Universal Freiheitsliebe

By

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B.A., University of Colorado Denver, 2012

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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This thesis entitled: Heine der Narr: Towards a Universal Freiheitsliebe written by Justin William Harris has been approved for the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.
Abstract: This thesis will explore Heinrich Heine’s engagement with the political society of the Vormärz period of German literature and society through the perspective of Heine’s conscious construction and perception of Self. By exploring Heine’s method of political engagement, it will contemplate Heine’s self-presentation of a liminal identity as a critical method akin to that of the literary trickster archetype, arguing that Heine has taken on the role of a modernized jester [Narr]. This thesis will further contemplate how this alignment facilitated and effectuated his pursuit of political liberty, as well as his criticism of the socio-political status quo of the Restoration. Beginning with a consideration of Heine’s relation to the literary forms of poetry, irony, and satire as critical method, this thesis will develop the connection between Heine’s use of these literary traditions and his implementation of a picaresque discourse. Expanding upon this relation with consideration of the cultural values of liberty and fidelity [Freiheit und Treue] will demonstrate Heine’s self-conscious and purposeful embodiment of liminality in his experience of the Vormärz. Lastly, this thesis will convey how Heine’s embodiment of the picaresque jester lends itself to Heine’s criticism and subversion of the myth of nationalism. This thesis will focus primarily on Heine’s Vormärz Lyrik and prose to demonstrate how Heine’s satirical method and expression of Self as the jester [Narr] constitute Heine’s critical engagement with the socio-political circumstances of Restoration Europe and his reception in Germany.
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As a literary figure, Heinrich Heine resists categorization. His identity—as presented within the text of his writing and its relation to the circumstances of his life in European society—appears paradoxical and ambiguous. Ludwig Marcuse notes how Heine is not only “ein Träumer, eine Phantasierer, ein Märchenerzähler,” but also “ein Realist, ein Rationalist, ein Märchenzerstörer” (428). In his engagement with the socio-political realities of the European Restoration, Heine’s writing produces a sense of belonging, which is always accompanied by assertions and appearance of not belonging. For example, Heine produces a distance between himself and his affinity with the motifs of German Romanticism in his critical essay *Die Romantische Schule*, lending itself to Marcuse’s observation that Heine appears to be “einen ‘romantique défroqué’, einen entlaufenen Romantiker” despite the links in the chain that connect him to the Romantics [*an langer Kette festhalten*] (428). Indeed, despite Heine’s criticism of Romanticism, he “nevertheless remained indebted to the very language and style he attacked” (Hohendahl 176). It seems difficult if not impossible to study and discuss Heine without

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1 Heine quotes Börne’s eulogistic 1826 work of prose, *Denkrede auf Jean Paul*, at the beginning of *Die Harzreise* (7).
2 Adorno writes in *Die Wunde Heine*, “…dann hat Heine allein unter den berühmten Namen der deutschen Dichtung, und in aller Affinität zur Romantik, einen unverwässerten Begriff von Aufklärung bewahrt” (96).
3 Marcuse was not the first to make this observation, and indeed Heine discusses his having been called this by a Frenchman in his *Geständnisse* (SW. II 745).
4 Heine presents an interesting case study to Barthes’ proclamations in his 1967 essay “The Death of the Author.” It is impossible to read Heine’s texts without contemplating the nature of language as a social structure (Barthes 53), which is affirmed by the social origins of Heine’s publications and by their reception.
referencing or attempting to define the categorical limits of his identity and his texts, but in the attempt to do so one is also confronted with the impossibility of a satisfactory conclusion.

This difficulty in categorizing Heine according to political and aesthetic categories is a result of the liminality of his identity, produced through his ambiguous and debatable position within and outside of social structures and categorical limits. While the concept of liminality originates in anthropological studies of the transition between states of being and identity through rites of passage, the transitory nature of this state of being can also be applied anywhere previously defined borders or limits are brought into question; this, in turn, compels the observer to critically reflect on how they are to engage with the vague delineations of those boundaries (Thomassen 2). We can think of Heine as a liminal figure insofar as he and his texts exist “’betwixt and between’” aesthetic and socio-political categories (Thomassen 7), thereby forcing us to decide how to engage with that liminality.

Heine’s liminality is evinced in part by his simultaneous acceptance in and rejection from the canon of German literature and the public discourse of the Restoration. Indeed, a recurring trend of the rejection of Heine’s engagement in society is rooted in reactions to his Jewish heritage, which constitutes at times an ambiguous belonging to—and right to engage with—the socio-political structures of Restoration Europe. Heine’s discourse, which amounts to a public engagement with society, was also specifically banned from publication when not under the strict lense of the censors. Simultaneously, his texts were elevated to mass popularity, and his poetry was set to music by contemporary composers such as Richard Wagner, Franz Liszt, and Robert Schumann. His voice has since been appropriated to represent not his own experience and identity, but rather the ideological, political, and historical purposes of others: As Willi

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5 Liminality can be observed in individuals insofar as they stand outside of society—whether by choice or by ostracization—and can persist for the entirety of their lives (Thomassen 90).
Goetschel notes, the assimilation of Heine’s voice in German society is so absolute that it has become “difficult to recognize how deep the appropriation of Heine goes—even and especially with his fiercest adversaries” (*Heine and Critical Theory* 7). The study of Heine is thus greatly concerned with Heine’s engagement with socio-political traditions and institutions as well as with these constructs’ engagement with Heine—at times, we must speak of outright refusals of engagement with Heine constituted by the rejection and marginalization of him and his discourse.

How Heine has been received and engaged with—or purely rejected—in society is phenotypical of a tension and a trauma extant to the creation of the modern nation state: the question of what to do with liminal and marginal identities in society, including the presence of their voices and social grievances in social discourse. 6 As Kerstin Decker extrapolates from Heine’s commentary on society, civilization is constituted by its handling of heterodoxy: “Zivilisation – Die Möglichkeit des Umgangs des Heterogensten” (227). A society can be measured according to its attitude and behavior towards the inherently liminal heterodoxy of which it is constituted: individuals, subcultures, and other marginalized social groups.7

This societal engagement—or lack thereof—is inherently linked to a problem produced by the cultural and political currents of the Enlightenment and its effect on society, namely the Enlightenment’s potential for and tendency towards domination, homogenization, and

6 The historian Eric Hobsbawm asserts that the pressing question of the nation-state is constituted by its handling of those who do not readily fit in to the prescribed idea of the nation, including national and ethnic minorities living within its liminal political boundaries: nationalist movements are focused around “the solidarity of an imaginary ‘us’ against a symbolic ‘them’” (163), typically guided by an “insistence on ‘ethnicity’ and linguistic differences” (164) that “by definition excludes from its purview all who do not belong to its own ‘nation’, i.e. the vast majority of the human race” (168-169); this viewpoint contributes not only towards “counter-nationalism,” but also encourages a “homogenization and standardization of its inhabitants” (93) that lends itself to the “political xenophobia which found its most deplorable, but not its only, expression in anti-Semitism” (105).

7 In his book *Publics and Counterpublics*, Michael Warner argues that “a vibrant scene of public-spirited discussion is the motor of democratic culture,” implying that the greater the opportunities for engagement between opposing and differing viewpoints, the healthier that society will be (143).
exclusion. Against these tendencies, Heine’s voice has always been under threat of pure negation, but it is only through the reconciliation of the Enlightenment’s ironic potential that its idea may be realized. It is a reconciliation that is only attainable through harmonic coexistence of human beings in the face of adversity, in which “keiner mehr ausgestoßen wäre, [eine Welt] der real befreiten Menschheit” (Adorno, *Die Wunde Heine* 100). In this perspective, the question of socio-political engagement is paramount: how does one engage with oppressive socio-political conditions, and how do those conditions determine how society engages with liminality within its own constructed limits.

Rather than reject Heine as a figure inconsistent with a historically determinative narrative, perhaps the solution to the question of what to do with Heine lies in allowing his writing to tell the story of his engagement of events within a society whose own purported

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8 Adorno and Horkheimer discuss this problem of the Enlightenment’s tendency towards domination in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, noting that “Power confers increased cohesion and strength on the social whole in which it is established....this necessarily turns the whole, as a whole, and the operation of its immanent reason, into a means of enforcing the particular interest” (16).

9 *Die reine Negation*, which rejects outright a predicate’s presence within discourse, without address, incorporation, or reconciliation [Aufhebung], as developed in Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (133).

10 This potential is ironic due to its incoherence with Kant’s ruminations on the importance of the *Mündigkeit* to the Aufklärung (17).

11 This sentiment of a harmonic dissonance is echoed by subsequent movements in the production of German arts, such as in Wassily Kandinsky’s belief in a harmony of the whole amidst the idiosyncrasy of its parts, presented in *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (88, 92). Lisa Florman offers a discussion of these ideas in her book *Concerning the Spiritual and the Concrete in Kandinsky’s Art*, noting that in Kandinsky’s *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche*, “The overall harmony of a composition can...reside in a number of complexes that themselves scale the heights of contrast. These Contrasts can even have a disharmonious character; nonetheless, if correctly used they will affect the overall harmony not in a negative, but in a positive way, lifting the work to the highest level of harmonic being” (40-41). Adorno also discusses this motif in his essay “Lyric Poetry in Society,” in which he writes, “The harmony of the song is wrung from an extreme of dissonance” (225).

12 In “The Storyteller,” Walter Benjamin differentiates between the historian and the chronicler, noting that while the former concerns themselves with explaining—often in causally determinative terms—a sequence of events with an air of omniscient hindsight, the latter as the teller of the story instead removes this burden of epistemological responsibility, allowing the role of interpretation of lived experience, and therefore the tensions of individual wills in society, to come to light as instigators and drivers of events (370). The storyteller, as Benjamin suggests, instills in their craft a relationship to the material of human experience, and is obligated by their role as storyteller to “fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful, and unique way” (377). The storyteller synthesizes experience and provides counsel through their telling of the relationship between lived experience, memory, and the hope for a better future (Benjamin 372, 388).
identity depends on the presence of liminal heterodoxies. Through his engagement with Restoration society and its reaction, Heine argues for an equal right to engage in socio-political discourse.

I will develop Heine’s liminality as an essential component of his critically self-aware engagement with society as a jester. Although this thesis will rely on an understanding of the figure of the jester (Narr) as a trickster in the German picaro tradition (Schelmenroman), the literature concerning the trickster archetype is far too vast to include in a paper of this length. A working definition of the trickster is, however, necessary to the development of my argument. Bernhard Malkmus discusses the trickster as a liminal figure, “defined by their failure to be fully one thing or another” (9). As a trickster archetype, the jester [Narr] exposes and creates “liminal zones within existing hierarchies and stratifications,” producing “not inversion but deconstruction, the undermining of the system by means of revealing and subverting its logic, a dissembling that comes not from outside but from within” (Lipovetsky 31). The particular method employed by the trickster emphasizes their own liminality as an essential component of

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13 I assert that nations and national boundaries are subject to the ambiguous liminality of the sorites paradox.
14 Bjorn Thomassen asserts that the trickster “has particular affinities with liminal situations” and that their power is derived from their expression of their liminal nature (Thomassen 104).
15 Mark Lipovetsky explains that there are a number of “literary and cultural types such as the rogue, picaro, buffoon, clown, jester, thief, imposter, holy fool, etc” that may fall under the category of trickster due to a “certain set of ‘common signifiers’”(18). One quality is that of “marginality, sometimes embellished to a degree of ‘cosmic homelessness’” (Albert Camus), and ambivalence of their status and actions following from their liminality. Being stripped of social identity, both the picaro and the holy fool establish paradoxical relations with the ‘rotten’ and ‘corrupt’ world around them that include both mimicry of and alienation from the socio-cultural context through parody and transgressive performative gestures and spectacles” (19).
16 I will utilize the term “picaresque” to refer to the broad understanding of the literary trickster archetype.
17 The word “Narr” possesses the double entendre of the German “Tor” or the English “fool” or “idiot; the use of the word “fool” to refer to one whose position in society is that of the “jester,” although it sounds anachronistic to our modern parlance, is a distinction which must be preserved in my understanding of Heine as a modern Narr. I avoid translating “Narr” as “clown,” nor do I find that the word “Schelm” to be adequately synonymous, as they do not seem to fit with Heine’s own usage and ironic intent rooted in the historical and literary tradition of the jester: the etymological liminality between “idiotic fool” and “jester” is one which, I will argue, Heine preserves through his own usage of the term, insofar as he seems to adopt the public position in society of the jester’s role in reminding others of their menschlich equality through uncensored ridicule of their own foolishness. This belief is one of the cornerstones of stylistic intent as well as content of Heine’s writing, which I will develop further in the second chapter of this thesis.
their critical and subversive engagement with society; Heine’s own emphasis of liminality and his role in public society is, I will show, consciously and purposefully an adoption of the role of the *Hofnarr*, although within a post-Enlightenment discourse.

Heine’s writing engages with the memory of historical and literary traditions, synthesizing them in a liminal expression of his own experience, giving thought to the rotten socio-political environment and the hope that they may be contested, as well as to the potential horrors should that hope be disappointed.\(^{18}\) This thesis will demonstrate that in Heine’s life and writing, he is ever conscious of his own liminality, as well as of the tensions extant to Restoration Europe. Through the freeing power produced within liminality, this thesis will show how Heine utilizes elements of the picaresque to criticize societal pressure for homogenization in the nineteenth century. As Barbara Babcock-Abrahams notes regarding the trickster trope, the trickster’s liminality produces the very ability of that figure to criticize the society of which they are simultaneously within and without: the trickster in literature and oral tradition is “preoccupied with those areas between categories…what is natural and what is cultural…at the center of his antinomian existence is the power derived from his ability to live interstitially, to confuse and to escape the structures of society and the order of cultural things” (148). By embracing liminality, Heine thus is aware of, if not outright sublative [*aufhebend*], of the qualities of the literary trickster in his own goals of subverting, confusing, and escaping the homogenizing structures of Restoration Europe. It is with this guise that Heine engages the socio-political conditions of the Restoration, challenging the reification of its structures and

\(^{18}\) We can bear in mind Heine’s prophetic warning from the play *Almansor*—that “dort, wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man am Ende Menschen” (SW. II 859)—and speculate upon the relationship between one’s hope for a better future—in contrast to the rotten circumstances of the present—and Ernst Bloch’s reminder of the disappointability of hope: “hope holds *eo ipso* the condition of defeat precariously within itself” (341).
language, compelling his contemporaries to struggle with being made aware of those liminalities and how they themselves will engage with them.

It is Heine’s ambiguous belonging to socio-political constructs, his fidelity to his own liminality, and the engagement of that liminality with society that the following pages will unpack through Heine’s prose and lyric writing. In evaluating Heine’s relationship to the history of the German literary tradition of poetry, ironic satire, and the picaresque, this thesis will demonstrate that Heine’s prescription for healing the ironic tension extant to the Enlightenment, which includes the reception of his own existence, is constituted by recognizing and accepting that his identity and place in history is necessarily liminal, and that it is only in the acceptance of liminality within society—between its heterodox components—that the freedom exalted by the Enlightenment can truly exist. This thesis will examine Heine’s relationship to the traditions of German literature and his adaptation of their method to his own engagement with society. In doing so, this thesis will examine Heine’s attitude concerning the concept of Freiheit as the obverse component of fidelity (Treue) while contemplating Heine’s political life and writing as an analogy for one’s love life. Finally, this thesis will consider Heine’s poetry and prose as critical engagement with the social phenomena of nationalism and patriotism.

When discussing the question of classifying Heine, Jeffrey L. Sammons suggests that perhaps the best conclusion is to admit that we don’t know, pointing to the impression that Heine seems to be “systematically blocking and misdirecting our access to the inner sanctum of the self” (“Who Did Heine Think He Was?” 2), as if he were donning masks which—although they allow the wearer to navigate the structures of society—simultaneously call attention to the margins which challenge those very structures. Heine thereby allows the liminalities of his identity to engage with the homogenizing structures of the Restoration in a subversive,
deconstructive discourse. Focusing primarily on four of Heine’s prose and poetry works of the
Vormärz, namely Die Harzreise, Englische Fragmente, Französische Zustände, and
Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen, this thesis will examine how Heine’s texts constitute an
engagement with the socio-political circumstances of Restoration Europe, how his method
produced and presented Heine as a liminal figure, and how society responded to and engaged
with the liminality of his identity and literary style.¹⁹

¹⁹ In light of the danger that presents itself in a selected reading of any author—especially Heine, since his tendency
toward subversive irony necessitates comparison of seemingly contradictory statements—I will rely upon the
occasional reference to Heine’s other texts when they clarify or expand upon my reading. These texts will include—
but will not be limited to—his Buch der Lieder and both cycles of Zeitgedichte (1830-1848; 1848-1856) as well as
upon the archival work of Heine scholars who provide useful insight from Heine’s letters.
Spectral Links to the Literary Traditions of Lyric, Satire, and the Picaresque as Critical Engagement

One’s identity can be shaped by that which one has read—the reader incorporates its language within themselves as they then engage in their own social discourse. For this reason, it is interesting to consider the forms and thoughts which Heine incorporated into his own identity and voice—a peculiar phenomenon for one as Heine, who so strongly appears to adhere to his own individuality. Jeffrey Sammons, for example, notes how “[Heine’s] identity....has the appearance of being self-created....He had plenty of traditions; his writings are full of them. But he chose among them and defined their relative weight and authority” (“Who Did Heine Think He Was?” 17). In this way, the thoughts and writings of historical scribes and philosophers may have a certain spectral effect on Heine, who had read and incorporated those discourses into his own voice. This practice appears paradoxical when one also seeks to maintain their independence [Mündigkeit] from cultural tradition. Even as an author with ties to the aesthetic category of German Romanticism, Heine nevertheless engages with that tradition while simultaneously asserting his own uniqueness and independence from its categorical forms. In doing so, Heine fosters the liminality of his literary style and challenges the reification of aesthetic form and language.

Heine does recognize his own engagement with literary and philosophical traditions. In Caput VI of Deutschland: Ein Wintemärchen, Heine discusses his sensation of being accompanied by a spirit, which he equates to Socrates’s Daimonion. He writes, “Napoleon

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20 This is similar to Barthes’ argument in Death of the Author, insofar as one’s voice is constructed by the linguistic structures of one’s society (52-53).
21 In Die Wunde Heine, Adorno describes Heine as “Heine der Individualist” (96).
22 Plato represents Socrates’ claim of having a daimonion in The Apology of Socrates (36). A formulative discussion of the daimonion is too elusive and broad for the scope of this thesis, but the concept may be tentatively understood to be the phenomenon of an inner voice—serving as one’s conscience or muse—or is perhaps relatable to the
sah einen roten Mann,/Vor jedem wicht’gen Ereignis./Sokrates hatte seinen Dämon,/Das war kein Hirnerzeugnis./Ich selbst, wenn ich am Schreibtisch saß/Des nachts, hab ich gesehen/Zuweilen einen vermummten Gast” (429). It is telling that Heine feels the presence of this influence most evidently while writing, suggesting that its presence is related to his literary thoughts and method. Although Heine indicates that this is no spirit of the past [Gespenst der Vergangenheit], his indication that it is something more than a fabrication of the mind suggests that the sensation of being accompanied by this daimonion does in fact have an empirical cause. This spirit may represent the voice of writers and thinkers who influenced Heine, an ephemeral cultural synthesis of literary motifs and thoughts given new reality through Heine’s writing. It is worth discussing these influences as we examine Heine’s critical literary method, especially where Heine connects those influences with the presence of a perceived spirit.23

Heine discusses one such appearance of a spirit in Die Harzreise. Late at night, while staying in Goslar, Heine reports the eerie sensation of being accompanied by a spirit.24 This ghost, although Heine indicates it to be the “verstorbene Doktor Saul Ascher”—a Jewish-German author—insists through Heine’s writing that he also is not to be considered a ghost of the past: Heine transcribes Ascher’s declaration, “Es ist Täuschung Ihrer Phantasie, wenn Sie mich als Gespenst zu sehen glauben” (31). Heine’s spectral nighttime visitor’s own logical refutation of the existence of ghosts hinges upon an analysis of reason through the citation of Kant’s Kritik der reinen Vernunft, ending with the logical proof [mit dem logischen Beweise] that a ghost cannot possibly exist (ibid). If not a ghost, Ascher represents the spirit of the

23 I will return to these influences frequently as I examine Heine’s relationship with concepts of German Freiheit, Treue, and Nationalism in the following chapters of this thesis.
24 It is possible that Heine is referencing Kant’s discussion of the existence of ghosts, an argument which figures into Willi Goetschel’s book Constituting Critique (93-105)
Enlightenment, namely the faculty of reason [Vernunft], and its echo in Heine’s mind: “’Das höchste Prinzip ist die Vernunft!’ sagte ich beschwichtigend zu mir selbst, als ich ins Bett stieg,” and the daimonion’s final words to Heine echo this resolute belief in the highest principle of reason (30-31).

Heine’s belief in reason as the highest principle supports his adherence to the necessity of the freedom of that reason, and it is worth examining Heine’s thoughts on the historical development of the discourse regarding free thought. Heine’s own assertion is that the development of an independent use of reason owes its genesis to Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. In Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland, Heine speaks of how Luther’s declaration—that one’s spiritual development could only occur through the independent, personal capability of reading the Bible—established individual reason as the ruling judge of all questions of religious contention:

Indem Luther den Satz aussprach, daß man seine Lehre nur durch die Bibel selber, oder durch vernünftige Gründe, widerlegen müsse, war der menschlichen Vernunft das Recht eingeräumt, die Bibel zu erklären und sie, die Vernunft, war als oberste Richter in allen religiösen Streitfragen anerkannt. Dadurch entstand in Deutschland die sogenannte Geistesfreiheit, oder, wie man sie ebenfalls nennt, die Denkfreiheit. Das Denken ward ein Recht und die Befugnisse der Vernunft wurden legitim….Die Fürsten, welche die Reformation annahmen, haben diese Denkfreiheit legitimisirt, und eine wichtige, weltwichtige Blüte derselben ist die deutsche Philosophie. (428-429)

Heine recognizes the Reformation as the catalyst for German philosophy, and believes that the philosophical and political revolutions of the Enlightenment can trace its own germination as the “letzte Konsequenz des Protestantismus,” a Revolution that centered around spiritual and rational

25 Goethe’s Götz von Berlichingen provides a literary representation of the socio-political consequences of the Reformation for those Fürste who sublated its ideas into their political choices. Götz displays his relation to the sovereignty of reason when he remarks, for example, “Bist du nicht ebenso frei, so edel geboren als einer in Teutschland, unabhängig, nur dem Kaiser untertan […] Was hast du von dem Bischof? […]Verkennt den Wert eines freien Rittersmanns, der nur abhängt von Gott, seinem Kaiser und sich selbst, verkriechst dich zum ersten Hofschranzen eines eigensinnigen neidischen Pfaffen” (23). Heine’s observation that Götz von Berlichingen is a dramatic Ritterroman, and that “diese genre liebte man damals” (Die Romantische Schule 274), points to Goethe’s own culturally-determined engagement with the history of the Reformation. It is possible that a similar interest in the Thirty Years War would have guided Heine to Grimmelshausen’s Simplicissimus Teutsch.
independence of thought that ultimately bloomed with Kant [durch Immanuel Kant zum Ausbruch kam] (Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland 439).26 The Mündigkeit that Kant holds to be the fundamental quality of Enlightened thought (Kant 17), and which is connected to Heine’s lauding of individual Vernunft, is for Heine a continuation of the spiritual discourse of the Reformation.

Alongside the spiritual origins of Vernunft, it is also possible to see the importance of Lyrik to Heine’s exercise of free thought as a component of German philosophy’s roots in the Reformation. The potential of poetry and song in asserting one’s spiritual freedom is evinced in the writings and beliefs of Martin Luther and the Pietisten. Jörg Jacobi points to Luther’s “Tischreden,” where Luther expresses his thoughts that “Die Musik ist aller Bewegung des Herzens eine Regiererin. Nichts auf Erden ist kräftiger, die Traurigen fröhlich, die Fröhlichen traurig, die Verzagten herzhaft zu machen, denn die Musik,” and that “Der schönsten und herrlichsten Gaben Gottes eine ist die Musica” (Jacobi 2). For Luther, music was a powerfully comforting force, a tool to be implemented against one’s spiritual despondency. Music was therefore a method of engaging with the circumstances of life in an effort to rectify its inherent pain and anguish.

Heine was aware of the importance of music to Protestant consolation and connects Luther’s praise of music to the Enlightenment’s philosophical revolution against societal forces that suppress the philosophical independence and freedom of individuals. Not only did Luther love music, but his emphasis on lyrical form also perpetuated these powers of song for the benefit of modern society. As Heine writes in Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland, “Luther

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26 Karl Marx comes to a similar conclusion regarding the material revolutions of Europe being rooted in the Reformation: in Contribution to Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, he writes “Germany’s revolutionary past is theoretical—it is the Reformation. Luther…overcame servitude through devotion…He shattered the faith in authority by restoring the authority of faith” (60).
liebte die Musik...und seine Lieder....die Marseiller Hymne der Reformation, hat bis auf unsere Tage seine begeisternde Kraft bewahrt” (434). The power of the Marseillaise as spiritual hymn of the French Revolution—the philosophical and material opposition to the destitute circumstances of society—is, for Heine, no different than the power of song in comforting one’s spiritual despondency.

There is something about songs and poetry that makes them a powerful tool of resistance. It is worth examining more closely the theoretical power of song and poetry as a tool utilized by Heine as a form of social criticism. Kerstin Decker asserts that “Der Welt-Widerstand ist die Wurzel aller Poesie” (75), and notes that “Allenfalls die Musik kann aussprechen, was Heine immer wieder mit Tränen, Seufzern und ganzen Nachtigallenchören sagen will. Was ihn zum modernen Dichter macht, ist: Er weiß es. Und er findet das Mittel, das nur die Sprache hat, um die gleiche Gewalt zu erzeugen wie die Musik” (83). Similarly, Adorno writes in “Lyric Poetry and Society” that “The idiosyncrasy of poetic thought, opposing the overpowering force of material things, is a form of reaction against the reification of the world” (215). I will return later to a discussion of the material forces against which Heine directed his poetic criticism, but it is worth noting that Heine draws upon the historico-philosophical discourse which concern the structures of lyric engagement with society.

In this way, the incorporation of these traditions constitutes another aspect of Heine’s daimonion. Within this structure, the inherent paradox of individual freedom is evident. It is through this structure that one realizes individual freedom exists only in the liminally transgressive manner in which the individual incorporates the spectral influences of society into

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27 Evidenced also in the first thesis of Martin Luther’s Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen: “Ein Christenmensch ist ein freier Herr über alle Dinge und niemanden Untertan. Ein Christenmensch ist ein dienstbarer Knecht aller Dinge und jedermann Untertan” (2)
their own being. Lyric poetry evinces a parallel paradox of originality: according to Adorno’s ruminations on poetry, “The specific paradox belonging to the lyric poem—this subjective, personal element transforming itself into an objective one—is bound to that specific importance [which] poetry gives to linguistic form, an importance from which the primacy of language in all literature (prose forms as well) derives” (218). Adorno reminds us that there is a mutual feedback loop between individual and society that constructs these linguistic forms:

Not only is the individual as such brought into being by society, not only are his thoughts and feelings social in nature as well: but looking at things from the other side, society exists only by virtue of its individuals, whose essence it embodies....In the lyric poem the subject negates both his naked, isolated opposition to society as well as his mere functioning within rationally organized society. (“Lyric Poetry and Society” 219)

Poetry is an aesthetic form in which the liminal freedom of the author is created, a medium in which the author exists both within and outside of the linguistic and formative structures of society—As Gunter Reus concludes, the emancipatory power and the modernity of Heine’s work “ist seine Art, sich assoziativ treiben zu lassen, ohne von Konventionen getrieben zu werden” (Reus 169). The mere act of engaging with society through lyric poetry is to challenge the reification of its language through the individual liminality of its composition.

If Poesie served as the negation of spiritual melancholy for Martin Luther, for Heine it serves also as a tool to negate his melancholy derived from socio-political realities. But the contrasting nature of poetry vis-à-vis linguistic and material structures of society—poetry’s power as a tool for negating the despondency of one’s experience of those structures—is not the only tool of language that serves this purpose, nor is it the only tool within Heine’s literary repertoire: It is also impossible to talk about Heine without discussing his use of humorous satire and irony.28 Indeed, one of the contradictory character descriptions which Decker attributes to

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28 I refer to satire as an aesthetic form intended towards an ironic depiction of reality, inciting humor or amusement as a result of the recognition that the representation contrasts with reality or what would otherwise be believed. Its critical method is constituted by the derisive amusement or laughter that it induces. There is significant discussion
Heine is that he is a “lachender Melancholiker” (9). Heine, quite ironically, laughs at the despondency which constitutes reality, and he does so through his engagement with that socio-political reality. Adorno notes that, while Heine affects a conciliation of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, Heine as a Schriftsteller writes “mit höflicher Ironie” regarding his discontent with the structures of society (“Die Wunde Heine” 96). In reading Heine, one must remember that Heine viewed himself “als öffentlicher Sprecher” (Französische Zustände 77), and his writing is therefore a civil—or, to maintain Heine’s role as a court jester—courteously [höflich] discourse with society. Indeed, to describe Heine’s engagement with political society as “civil” constitutes its own irony, necessitating a closer analysis of why his civil discourse adopts a derisive, sardonic tone rather than a polite discourse as the adjective ‘civil’ may also imply. Understanding Heine requires an understanding of the purpose of irony, satire, and Heine’s use of it to ridicule himself, others, and society.

Heine’s use of irony is perhaps a significant contributing factor in the ambiguity of his identity. To see through an ironic declaration requires, as Ernst Behler reminds us, that the observer is able to distinguish “the entire tenor of speaking including intonation, emphasis and gesture” employed by the speaker to indicate their intended meaning (48). This becomes especially difficult when ironic declarations are written in texts, requiring the reader to have an intimate familiarity with the author and their method of conveying ironic intent.

Irony is not only a tool to be utilized in discourse; it is also a perspective of reality. Behler notes that Hegel described a “‘general irony of the world’ (allgemeine Ironie der Welt),’” which Heine developed further in his Reisebilder as a feeling of an “‘irony of the world’ and

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concerning the categorical differences between humor and irony, but the formal demarcation is perhaps too complex or vague to go into in depth in this paper (the forms possess their own liminalities). For a discussion of the discourse surrounding this formal differentiation, see Ernst Behler’s discussion of Novalis’ and Jean Paul’s discourse in “The Theory of Irony in German Romanticism” (67-68).
‘God’s irony’, predicated precisely upon the lack of any reason and discernable plan in the course and eventual fate of our world” (Behler 47). Paul Fleming makes a similar remark when he declares that “Humor recognizes the insignificance of life—the brief flickering of consciousness that can be snuffed out at any moment” (21-22). He goes on to examine how this awareness affects one’s continued engagement with the material and spiritual conditions of reality. The critical form of irony—much like humor and poetry—is a response to the melancholic sense of pain and hopelessness of the world [Weltschmerz]. There is something to the observation that the funniest people often deal with the most prescient inner pain. The German Romantics were keenly aware of this duality, as is evidenced by Jean Paul’s remark that “the greatest humorists...come from a ‘melancholy people’” (Fleming 21). Humor itself is a contrary engagement, a protestation, against the melancholy-inducing transitoriness of life.

Ironic declarations themselves seem to exhibit or evince a twinge of this melancholy, which derives from dissatisfaction with the material conditions of reality—including their socio-political construction. As Behler argues, “As for irony, an essential function of humor is contrast and juxtaposition of the finite with the infinite and vice versa, or realism with idealism” (68). This contrast and juxtaposition of the finite and infinite is explained in Friedrich Schlegel’s 1829 lectures, where he said “‘Genuine irony is the irony of love. It arises from the feeling of finiteness and of one’s own limitations and the apparent contradiction of these feelings with the

Goethe’s Die Leiden des jungen Werthers—which Heine argues is more interesting due to its content rather than its style (Die Romantische Schule 274)—can also be read as a contemplation of the inherent irony of the world: “...sie will in ewiger Verbindung all das Glück antreffen, das ihr mangelt, die Vereinigung aller Freuden genieß, nach denen sie sich sehnte....Erstarrt, ohne Sinne steht sie vor einem Abgrunde, und alles ist Finsternis um sie her, keine Aussicht, kein Trost, keine Ahndung....Die Natur findet keinen Ausweg aus dem Labyrinth der verworrenen und widersprechenden Kräfte, und der Mensch muß sterben....Der harmloseste Spaziergang kostet tausend, tausend armen Würmchen das Leben....Ha! nicht die große, seltene Not der Welt, diese Fluten, die Eure Dörfer wegsäumen, diese Erdbeken, die Eure Städte verschlingen, rühren mich. Mir untergräbt das Herz die verzehrende Kraft, die im All der Natur verborgen liegt, die nichts gebildet hat....Ich sehe nichts als ein ewig verschlingendes, ewig wiederkäuendes Ungeheur” (47, 48, 51).
concept of infinity’” (Behler 46-47). Ironic statements, then, indicate on the one hand a desire for the change of specific material realities—the Romantic hope and dream of a better future; on the other, they are a Dionysian coping mechanism against the fatalistic realities of life and death:

“Pain is the basic timbre of nature, transitoriness the mark of art, and the death-wish the desire of him who encounters such experiences. At best, we can only mask and in irony disguise this ‘Weltschmerz’ through feigned laughter and gaiety” (Behler 45). This sardonic tone expressed through ironic language is one of the components of Heine’s technique which ties him to comparisons with German Romanticism. The question that concerns Heine is whether this ironic engagement with life is in fact feigned with cynical demeanor, or whether the adoption of this attitude can produce an intended effect on society.

A weighted component of Heine’s daimonion is the “Tat von [seinem] Gedanken” (Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen 430), the effect of his thoughts in society and the actions his thoughts may instigate or lead towards. We will examine Heine’s wariness with respect to the potential outcome of his thoughts later. But for discussing Heine’s engagement in a satirical discourse, it is helpful to consider Flemings assertion about the purpose of humor and literature according to his reading of Jean Paul: “The purpose of literature and especially humor is not to be content with merely swallowing the bitter pill of finitude – one will have to do that any way – but also to enjoy the fruit….For Jean Paul…The function of laughter is ‘to make visible the belonging of the Other to the life-reality that excludes it, a belonging that seriousness has no access to’” (Fleming 24). The purpose of literature and humor is, as Fleming draws from Jean

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30 Nietzsche was to echo these thoughts in his discussion of Dionysian performance in “The Birth of Tragedy,” in which he argues that it is only through “aesthetic phenomena that existence and the world are eternally justified” (52) in contrast to the felt “deficiency, privation, melancholy, pain” and indifference of life (21).

31 Mark Lipovetsky distinguishes between the cynical survivalists’ submission to overwhelming structures (52) versus the trickster’s ky nical, subversive dismantling of those structures, by which they “identify with what is most terrifying and dismantle it by doing so” (80). The question of authenticity is one which we will return to in Chapter Two.
Paul’s conclusions, to “expand life with respect to joy and pleasure, particularly given the modern subject’s experience of abandonment” (Fleming 23-24). Rather than suffer meaninglessly, without cathartic protestation, the poet and the satirist assert their Dionysian contradiction to the ironic absurdity of life.  

René Bourgeois summarizes the role of poetry, satire, and irony as the protestation and contradiction of the finitude of life when they write,  

After the apparent victory of death comes the hope of the poet, who rejects the supreme temptation of silence, and overcomes the insoluble contradiction between the ideal and the real by means of the only activity which is not futile....The recognition of this irony of the world is the impetus for opposing the reification of the material forces of reality; it frees the individual to see how they may assert themselves as the contradiction to arbitrary structures and as the comforting voice against Weitschmerz and melancholy....Through the forms and themes of Romantic irony, we grasp the truth that only poetic creation enables us to overcome the opposition between the real and the ideal. Irony, which is false naïveté and terrible lucidity, is the complement of a sensibility whose extravagant character it simultaneously declares and destroys. All ironic works bear the mark of the same ambiguity: as they are based on a sense of the game, they are difficult to take seriously....One of the most obvious paradoxes...is the inability of irony to give rise to other than marginal works...Nevertheless, the ironic work is by its very nature the most perfect expression of an art which affirms its autonomy. Often incomprehensible, sometimes despised, always suspect, the writer who risks practicing Romantic irony has at least the consolation of knowing that it is, according to [Georg] Lukács, ‘the highest freedom that can be achieved in a world without God.’ (115, 119)

It is this contradiction to material structures towards which Heine sought to shape his identity and engagement with political society. Heine himself, as Levine directs our attention, declares that it is satire, expressed through humor and irony, that is the “sole outlet still open to the honest man,” through which “honesty reveals itself in its most stirring manner” (Levine 43). Heine’s honest satire is the result of the discrepancy between the material (socio-political) conditions that he “sees and that which he would like to see,” from which stems his call to arms as a poet, his critical satire, and his hope to “bring about change” (H. Schmidt 28-29). Heine’s

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32 This compels a connection to Albert Camus’ essay The Myth of Sisyphus: Courage teaches the absurd man “to live without appeal [italics Camus’] and to get along with what he has; [his reasoning] informs him of his limits. Assured of his temporally limited freedom, of his revolt devoid of future, and of his mortal consciousness, he lives out his adventure within the span of his lifetime....Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent....The absurd man says yes and his effort will henceforth be unceasing. If there is a personal fate, there is no higher destiny, or at least there is but one which he concludes is inevitable and despicable. For the rest, he knows himself to be the master of his days....The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy” (66, 121-123).
texts are a direct engagement in the socio-political discourse of his time, in which he formulated a political opposition through satirical forms that “rückte seinen Landsleuten nicht mit Pathos, sondern mit Ironie zu Leibe” (Neuhaus 11). Heine’s engagement with Restoration society is constituted by a contrarian attitude vis-à-vis its socio-political conditions.

This call to arms produces a liminal boundary between Heine’s journalistic and fictional texts, a mixture of the poetic and the political that Gunter Reus believes to be a source of Karl Kraus’ hostile reception of Heine, but which contributed to the effective “Poesie des ironischen Zweifels und... die Mündigkeit des Einzelnen in [Heine’s] Feuilletons” (159-160). The turning to drama and poetry in Vormärz Germany could be seen as a cynical resignation to the domination of the Restoration’s political institutions. For Heine, due to his purposeful employment of critical literary tropes, the writing of poetry and ironic satire becomes more than an act for mere survival. It is instead a focused attempt to do more than cynically adapt to societal conditions while avoiding methods whose only result is further oppression and death. We will return to this concern in Chapter Two.

Heine’s mündig application of the structural forms of poetry and irony connect Heine to a third critical tradition of German literature: the picaresque genre [Schelmenroman] and the archetypal figure of the Narr. In the German literary tradition, Sebastian Brant’s Baroque publication Das Narrenschiff uses lyric poetry and the voice of the Narr to offer satirical criticism of society. The potential for criticism through lyric developed alongside the fool’s unique ability and permission to speak openly about society in a manner that allows them to transcend their servile position in society and subvert the norms thereof.  

33 In Daniel Kehlmann’s picaresque representation of the Thirty Years War, itself an adaptation of Sebastian Brants picaresque narrative, Till Eulenspiegel, the Narr, is the only person capable of speaking truthfully to the King, and the only person not of equal social standing who can get away with looking the King in the eye, establishing a relationship that affirms the royal figure’s own humanity: “Dann tat er [der König] wie geheißen und sah [dem Narr]
No discussion of the German tradition of the *Schelmenroman* is complete without a discussion of Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicissimus Teutsch*, about which Dieter Breuer notes Grimmelshausen’s stated intent of providing a book that would—through its entertaining qualities—be helpful for every one of its readers [*übersaust lustig und für jedermann nützlich zu lessen sei*] (703). Much like the impetus guiding Heine’s use of ironic satire, *Simplicissimus Teutsch* is a story that emphasizes the “verkehrt, chaotisch erfahrenen Welt” as well as the “Erfahrung der befreienden, Melancholie bannenden Macht der Phantasie, des lustvollen Benennenkönnens, des überlegenen, ironisch-satirischen Erzählens….mit der Folge der Skepsis gegenüber allen sozialen Normen und Urteilen” (Breuer 703, 716). It is a literary tradition whose liberating opposition to the reified yet frightening conditions of life seems to weigh heavily on Heine’s self-aware construction of a critical literary style.34

Heine develops the importance of Grimmelshausen’s *Schelmenroman* most evidently in his *Zeitgedichte* following the 1848 revolution. After the failed 1848 revolutions Heine appears to make more frequent allusions to the medieval costume of the Narr—which plays a pivotal role in Simplicius’ transformation into the role of the Narr—as he references the long ears of the donkey in “Guter Rat” and “König Langohr I.” (“Nachlese der Gedichte” 804). Other poems of this time period, including his “Lied der Marketenderin: Aus der Dreißigjähriger Krieg” (*ibid* 823), suggest a more focused concentration on the echoes of the Thirty Years War in his own

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34 René Bourgeois writes, “The ironic experience of history begins with the perception of the falsity of social relations where all arrangements are contrived. Masks are everywhere; politics is nothing but a vast theater” (111).
time. His poem “Simplicissimus I.,” which he directed at Georg Herwegh, confirms Heine’s sublation of Grimmelshausen’s *Narr* into his own Diamonion.

But there is another exemplar of the picaresque which we can confirm had a much earlier influence on Heine’s thinking and implementation of satirical style: Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*.\(^{35}\) In his introduction to an 1837 publication of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, Heine describes the formative relationship Cervantes’ picaresque novel had on his own identity. Heine tells us that the “Leben und Taten des scharfsinnigen Junkers Don Quixote von der Mancha, beschrieben von Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra, war das erste Buch, das ich gelesen habe, nachdem ich schon in ein verständiges Kindesalter getreten und des Buchstabenwesens einigermaßen kundig war” (554). In his reflection on the first book he had read upon reaching an age of understanding, Heine recollects the enthusiasm with which he would read *Don Quixote*. But Heine’s engagement with the picaresque extends beyond a casual or passing interest. Heine tells us that the characters, motifs, and narrative of *Don Quixote* accompanied him through life, each stage of which proffering newfound perspectives (556).

If we return to Heine’s sense of being accompanied by a daimonion that exemplifies the traditions which Heine incorporates into his own literary identity, the characteristics of the *Narr* are perhaps the most influential. Heine informs us in the same introduction that Don Quixote accompanied him, in shadow form, on all of his life travels:

...als ich zum Manne heranreifte, versöhnte ich mich schon einigermaßen mit Dulcineas unglücklichem Kämpfen, und ich fing schon an über ihn zu lachen. Der Kerl ist ein Narr, sagte ich. Doch, sonderbarer Weise, auf allen meinen Lebensfahrten verfolgten mich die Schattenbilder des dürren Ritters und seines fetten Knappen...So erinnere ich mich, als ich nach Frankreich reiste und eines Morgens im Wagen aus einem fieberhaften Halbschlummer erwachte, sah ich im Frühnebel zwei wohlbekannte Gestalten neben mir einherreiten, und die eine, an meiner rechten

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\(^{35}\) Lowry Nelson Jr.’s “Romantic Irony and Cervantes” develops the importance of Cervantes’ picaresque novel to the development of German Romantic Irony, concluding that “For all the difficulties and extravagancies of the early German Romantics, their aesthetic speculations on irony and humor, their canonization of the novel and ‘das Romantische’, and their fine advocacy of Cervantes are permanent achievements” (31).
These shadow spirits, Heine’s daimonion, are related to Heine’s literary technique and their material effect, and we know from his writing that he is aware of their presence and effect on his identity.

In our consideration of Heine’s use of irony to engage in an effective discourse with the socio-political realities of his time, it will be beneficial to examine more closely his apparently derogatory use of the term “Narr” in this instance. As Horst Grobe develops, the motif of the Narr pervades Heine’s writing, and Heine is not shy of ridiculing the foolish behavior of his contemporaries; however, it is through the ubiquitous use of this motif that Heine is able to subvert the exclusionary socio-political forces against which he struggles, enabling him to preserve his own identity and to advocate for a society in which liminal and marginal identities are not met with pure negation: “Bei aller Bedrängung gewährt das Narrenmotiv implizit die Kraft und die Freiheit, die externe und interne Zensur zu unterlaufen, seine Identität als Schriftsteller und Individuum vor sich selbst, den zeitgenossen und dem Leser zu wahren und die Vorstellung von einer besseren Zukunft wachzuhalten” (Grobe 132). The motif of the Narr is conducive to the end of subverting the homogenizing forces of censorship precisely because of the liminal characteristics of its identity and position in society as trickster, which lend itself to the development of a deconstructive critical method.

Heine purposefully emphasizes the liminality of his identity, as it is only in this liminal difference that the freedom of individuality can be maintained.36 His emphasis on the use of satire and irony as critical method is fundamental to this effort. As René Bourgeois argues,

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36 This claim is similar to Simplicius’ observation in the fifth book of Simplicissimus Teutsch, “kein Fried ohne Uneinigkeit” (545).
however, one cannot use the tools of satirical irony to criticize society without first satirizing oneself: the ironic ridicule of society requires first that one “casts doubt on [their] own image at the risk of destroying the coherence of [their] being” (Bourgeois 109-110). As Fleming notes, to ridicule society is not to lord one’s superiority over the criticized, but rather to participate in the shared absurdity and pain of the material conditions of life: ironic satire, through its consolatory humor, “does not express derision but a form of empathy or understanding, an understanding for the lack of understanding” (Fleming 46). It is, as Bourgeois elaborates,

a whole game of mirrors in which we do not know who is looking or who is looked at, and the identity of subject and object is lost. Refraction is the view of the world which utilizes a game of masks. It is the attitude of the clown who proclaims the absurdity of things. Refraction, finally, is the practice of the comedian who multiplies his characters capriciously in order to lay the foundation for a new problematic in which poetry—the supreme end of irony—will completely recover its privileges. (Bourgeois 109)

In ridiculing the foolish behavior of society, yet doing so through the medium of satire and ironic poetry, it is almost as if Heine is asking—as Goetschel concludes regarding Kant’s own critical method—“’who is the fool?’ [Wer ist der Narr?]” (Constituting Critique 95), turning one of the mirrors of refraction to his own liminal identity while encouraging others to engage in the same critical self-reflection. The effort to encourage the use of one’s faculties of reason against reified dependency and homogeneity is a tightrope which Heine walks to this day.

Heine unabashedly declares his own acceptance of the role of the Narr in society. In his Englische Fragmente, Heine relates a story about the Habsburg monarch and Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, and his Hofnarr. Captured in Tirol, the Narr finds a way into the emperor’s prison: “Da öffnete sich plötzlich die Kerkertüre, und herein trat ein verhüllter Mann, und wie dieser den Mantel zurückschlug, erkannte der Kaiser seinen treuen Kunz von der Rosen, den Hofnarren. Dieser brachte ihm Trost und Rat, und es war der Hofnarr” (427). Breaking from the narrative, Heine then relates to his readers his own identity with relation to the social structures of Restoration Europe, declaring himself the Narr whose position in society is to bring to the
sovereign—in this case the people’s democratic sovereignty—comfort and abandonment of the arbitrary material conditions of Restoration Europe which imprison them:

Oh, deutsches Vaterland! Teures deutsches Volk! Ich bin dein Kunz von der Rosen. Der Mann, dessen eigentliches Amt die Kurzweil und der dich nur belustigen sollte in guten Tagen, er dringt in deinen Kerker zur Zeit der Not….Wenn ich dich nicht befreien kann, so will ich dich wenigstens trösten, und du sollst jemanden um dir haben, der mit dir schwatzt über die bedränglichste Drangsal, und dir Mut einspricht, und dich liebhat, und dessen bester Spaß und bestes Blut zu deinen Diensten steht. Denn du, mein Volk, bist der wahre Kaiser, der wahre Herr der Lande—dein Wille ist souverän und viel legitimer als jenes purpurne Tel est notre plaisir, das sich auf ein göttliches Recht beruft….dein Wille, mein Volk, ist die alleinig rechtmäßige Quelle aller Macht. Wenn du auch in Fesseln daniederliegst, so siegt doch am Ende dein gutes Recht, es naht der Tag der Befreiung, eine neue Zeit beginnt—mein Kaiser, die Nacht ist vorüber und draußen glüht das Morgenrot. (427)

The Narr is the obverse of the Adel whom he entertains: both are the most isolated social figures of their society, and both experience the same social malaise of melancholy and isolation; through Dichtkünste, as a single exemplar of a Narr’s potential talents, they bring each other a modicum of entertainment—dare we say joy—which temporarily alleviates the melancholic distraction of Weltschmerz. Doing so introduces the potential of truly human contact with one another through moments of recognized commonality and empathy. As Bourgeois concludes regarding the jester in society, “We see clearly that the...fool does not shut himself off from the world; on the contrary, he fulfills an essential function in society, which is to enlighten the present” (Bourgeois 117). Heine saw himself clearly as this source of comfort and enlightenment for Vormärz society, utilizing the tools of poetry and satirical irony to emphasize the fundamental equality of their rights and the need for liminality in political society, a consideration of which we will now turn.
The Dichotomy of *Freiheit* and *Treu*: Love, Betrayal, and Revolution

Heine opens his *Harzreise*—following the introductory quotation of Börne’s *Denkrede auf Jean Paul*—with a poem in which he savors the material objects and experiences which bring him the joy of love, segueing into the warm feelings which that love instills in one’s heart:

Ach, wenn sie nur Herzen hätten!  
Herzen in der Brust, und Liebe,  
Warmen Liebe in dem Herzen –  
Ach, mich tötet ihr Gesinge  
von erlognen Liebesschmerzen.

Auf die Berge will ich steigen,  
Wo die frommen Hütten stehen,  
Wo die Brust sich frei erschließet,  
Und die freien Lüfte wehen. (7)

Already we see that the concepts of freedom, love, and heartbreak are bound together in Heine’s discourse. This compels us as readers of Heine to investigate how—for someone so concerned with preserving the freedom in liminal differences and enlightened self-determination—freedom can exist as a component of something which one loves: to be loyal or true [*treu*] to someone goes along with some element of interdependency, and the betrayal of that love through infidelity [*Untreue*] can result in devastating heartbreak. This curious association of two concepts that appear contradictory is inextricable from a reading of Heine’s text. Through a close reading of Heine’s texts, however, we can parse out what these concepts may have meant for Heine in his public role as *Narr*.

Heine presents himself through his poetry as a poet deeply concerned with the phenomenon of love in human relationships. It is no wonder, as Kerstin Decker notes, “daß die Heine-Forschung sich schwer tut mit der Liebesökonomie des Dichters” (Decker 105). Alongside his poetic contemplation of loving relationships, however, Heine was also keenly aware of—perhaps from personal experience—the potential fickleness of one’s amorous proclamations and the betrayal of that connection: “Er muß Falschheit erfahren haben, Verrat”
(Decker 92). The binary experience of love and betrayal is not limited to purely romantic interests but can be observed in all social relationships in which expectations of interdependent association exist. As Decker indicates, Heine wrote in a letter dated 14th April, 1822 to Christian Sethe that his dreams are haunted by images of his so-called friends, permeating his waking hours with a persistent sense of distrust, suspicion [Mißtrauen], and a feeling that he is the object of their ridicule (Decker 92). These themes of love, trust, and the betrayal of that trustingly given fidelity figure strongly into Heine’s prose and poetic works.

Heine garnered his fame through the theme of love in his poetry, and with each new heartbreak his readers could see themselves in the mirror of Heine’s poesie (Decker 84). This universal sense of betrayal is developed in Heine’s Buch der Lieder:

Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen,
Die hat einen andern erwählt;
Der andre liebt eine andre,
Und hat sich mit dieser vermählt.

Das Mädchen heiratet aus Ärger
Den ersten besten Mann,
Der ihr in den Weg gelaufen;
Der Jüngling ist übel dran.

Es ist eine alte Geschichte,
Doch bleibt sie immer neu;
Und wem sie just passieret,
Dem bricht das Herz entzwei.

(116). 37

Heine’s persistent use of love as a poetic theme leads toward a curious negative reception of his work, which contributes to Heine’s contested identity. One of the harshest criticisms leveled at Heine is that the sentiments he contemplates in his writing do not reflect a true understanding of the concept. The criticism asserts that Heine does not bear the full weight of real experience, as if he could only imagine how one experiences such sentiments. Heine’s work

37 This is one of Heine’s poems that Robert Schumann set to music in his 1840 cycle [Zyklus] of songs, Dichterliebe.
would then be a dilettantish fabrication of the sentiment. One might contemplate, for a hypothetical example, whether Heine’s poetry is naught but a “salutary lie,” insofar as Heine could be accused of “deliberately and cynically writing what he knows to be nonsense but what he also knows his public will eagerly accept” (Prawer 18). It is an accusation that diminishes Heine to naught but an opportunist who simply commodifies experience—if there were an experience at all.

One such accusation was made by Heine’s contemporary and fellow Schriftsteller Christian Dietrich Grabbe. There is a real power of destruction in Grabbe’s attack on Heine, which might not extend beyond its anti-Semitic elements: “’Heine ist ein magerer, kleiner, häßlicher Jude, der nie Weiber genossen hat, sich deshalb alles einbildet’” (qtd. In Decker 88). It is a powerfully absurd accusation regarding Heine’s personal and private affairs, in which it feels uncouth to pry—save for the fact that, if true, it would destroy the critical potential of Heine’s ironic discourse: without the truth of the feeling, Heine’s discourse would be a cynical resignation, rather than a hopeful irony. Thus Prawer contemplates how, “For all his protestations in Französische Maler, Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie and in the poems of Verschiedene Heine could never rid himself of a curiously puritanical streak which made him distrust sexual relations and which made women at once attractive and horrifying to him” (48). Heine himself tried desperately to keep the realities of his personal life private—which he certainly has the right to do—and the facets of his “unrequited love...for his cousins is almost entirely a creation of literary historians;” however, as Sammons elaborates in defense of Heine’s right, he did in fact provide us “with a lattice of hints making it clear that something happened” (Sammons, Heinrich Heine 43). Every human being—especially by the time they reach the age Heine was as he composed his love poetry—can understand the sentiments of love.
The claim that Heine can’t speak about love because we have sparse evidence of his private affairs in this matter amounts to denying his very humanity.  

The discussion of Heine’s sentimentality is also intriguing due to its comparability to his political experience. It seems possible to draw an analogy of Heine’s love life to his political experience. Prawer observes for example that, although there are no overtly political poems in *Neuer Frühling*, the reader will sense this analogous intent:

...while speaking of love and of nature, while endeavouring (vainly!) to create his wish-dream world, the poet is straining away to other fields of thought, interest and activity. Why else should a simple love-poem like Neuer Frühling 11 (‘Es drängt die Not, es läuten die Glocken...’) begin and end with images of conspiracy and revolution; or why should Neuer Frühling 24...[tell], ostensibly, of the embrace of two lovers—but it speaks no less, for those who have ears to hear, of the fate of the smaller nations of Europe when their interest conflicted with those of the giants of the Holy Alliance. (21-22)

There is something to the double association of the Romantic movement’s heartfelt passions and political sentiments. Heine himself seems unable to disconnect the symbolism of romance with socio-political struggle. In his prosaic notes concerning the *Gemädeausstellung in Paris 1831*, Heine describes French Romantic artist Eugene Delacroix’ *Liberty Leading the People* [*La Liberté Guidant le Peuple*]: “… diese Figur erinnert mich...an jene Schnellläuferinnen der Liebe oder Schnelliebende, die des Abends auf den Boulevards umherschwärmen; ich gestehe, daß der kleine Schornsteincupido, der, mit einer Pistole in jeder Hand, neben dieser Gassenvenus steht, vielleicht nicht allein von Ruß beschmutzt ist ” (17).

Together, the Venus of the streets and the youthful Cupid—with pistols instead of bow—lead the tempest of the impassioned people; but it is a fickle passion, as short-lived, and perhaps equally as rash, as evening trysts on the boulevards or a night at the brothel. Heine is as passionate for

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38 Poetry is a tool most capable of conveying one’s humanity. As seen also in Elizabeth Weber’s book *Kill Boxes*, where authorities in Guantanamo Bay feel they must censor the poetry of their prisoners because they fear the “shock of recognition that might occur here through the invocation of compassion, and in the realization of a shared vulnerability of the flesh” and somehow only thereby make the performance of torture unacceptable (24)
*Freiheit* as the next man, but there is a hesitation produced out of Heine’s observation of his contemporaries who pursue it. To discuss this hesitation, it is necessary to look closely at what the concept of *Freiheit* meant for Heine.

Just as Heine traces the philosophical *Freiheit* of the Enlightenment to the spiritual *Freiheit* of the Reformation, so too does he find the desire for socio-political freedom to be one of the repercussions of Luther’s Ninety-five Theses. In *Englische Fragmente*, Heine confirms his belief in the deep spiritual connection between the Reformation and the philosophical and political yearnings for freedom felt by him and his contemporaries. The spiritual ties to the philosophical-political yearning develops in Heine as a strong, beloved belief, as important to one’s spiritual well-being as any religion: “Alle Kraft der Menschenbrust wird jetzt zu Freiheitsliebe und die Freiheit ist vielleicht die Religion der neuen Zeit, und es ist wieder eine Religion, die nicht den Reichen gepredigt wurde, sondern den Armen, und sie hat ebenfalls ihre Evangelisten, ihre Martyrer und ihrer Ischariots!” (361). Heine recognizes that, just as the Reformation was only possible through the struggle between its faithful martyrs and its betrayers, so too would the material realization of the institutions of *Freiheit* undergo a struggle manifested by the tension between its true believers and its apostates.

While the Reformation gave *Geistes- und Denkfreiheit* to the people, so too did it plant the necessarily symbiotic seeds of social equality. If our intent is to remain devoted to the cause of freedom, we must also consider the betrayal of the social equality of that freedom. Heine writes in *Englische Fragmente* that in the time of the Reformation, the struggle for longed-for freedoms were of a shared, common, spiritual manner, and these freedoms were seen not as a constructed [*erworben*] right, but rather as a natural [*ursprünglich*] right shared by all rational beings:
Erst zur Zeit der Reformation wurde der Kampf von allgemeiner und geistiger Art, und die Freiheit wurde verlangt, nicht als ein hergebrachtes sondern als ein ursprüngliches, nicht als ein erworbenes sondern als ein angeborenes Recht. Da wurden nicht mehr alte Pergamente, sondern Prinzipien vorgebracht; und der Bauer in Deutschland und der Puritaner in England beriefen sich auf das Evangelium, dessen Aussprüche damals an Vernunft Statt galten, ja noch höher galten, nämlich als eine geoffenbarte Vernunft Gottes. Da stand deutlich ausgesprochen: daß die Menschen von gleich edler Geburt sind, daß hochmütiges Besserdünken verdammt werden muß, daß der Reichtum eine Sünde ist, und daß auch die Armen berufen sind zum Genusse, in dem schönen Garten Gottes, des gemeinsamen Vaters. (Englische Fragmente 419-420)

In the religion of Freiheit, all people are born equal, and those whose fidelity to Freiheitsliebe is abandoned through the haughty assertion of superiority must be ridiculed for their betrayal.

Indeed, the religion of Freiheitsliebe “erneut das alte Recht:/Alle Menschen, gleichgeboren,/Sind ein adliches Geschlecht” (Die Harzreise 36).

Heine sees how the spiritual roots of Freiheit and Gleichheit, as rationally self-evident rights of man, bloomed out of the universal faculty of reason into the French Revolution. But within this history, Heine also foresaw the process that would be necessary for Freiheitsliebe to become more than a pharisaic belief. He describes this observation and its phenotypical representation in the French Revolution in Englische Fragmente:

…jener Welt-epoche, wo die Lehre der Freiheit und Gleichheit so siegreich emporstieg aus jener allgemeinen Erkenntnisquelle, die wir Vernunft nennen, und die, als eine unaufhörliche Offenbarung, welche sich in jedem Menschenhaupte wiederholt und ein Wissen begründet, noch weit vorzüglicher sein muß, als jene überlieferte Offenbarung, die sich nur in wenigen Auserlesenen bekundet, und von der großen Menge nur geglaubt werden kann. Diese letztgenannte Offenbarung, die selbst aristokratischer Natur ist, vermochte nie die Privilegienherrschaft, das bevorrechtete Kastenwesen, so sicher zu bekämpfen, wie es die Vernunft, die demokratischer Natur ist, jetzt bekämpft. Die Revolutionsgeschichte ist die Kriegsgeschichte dieses Kampfes, woran wir alle mehr oder minder teilgenommen… (422).

Heine’s Freiheitsliebe grows out of his fidelity to enlightened Mündigkeit as well as his fervent belief in the inherent equality of all humanity, both of which stem from the belief in natural rights sowed by the Reformation. But alongside the inherent faculty of reason, Heine also saw the perils. Heine observed the activities of his fellow citizens and concluded that, as a religion,

39 Heine may be referencing the Deutscher Bauernkrieg, the events and figures of which influenced Goethe’s Götz von Berlichingen.
*Freiheitsliebe* had a curious practice. The love of freedom manifested itself, Heine remarked, only in select individuals; the majority of people he observed merely believed in it. Out of this observation of dependent pedantry, Heine saw the dialectic struggle of revolutionary history.

In his indication that the French Revolution was the political result of the burgeoning religion of *Freiheit*, we also see Heine’s belief that this freedom cannot exist if it is not accompanied by the other ideological call-to-arms of the French Revolution, which Heine observes was not being developed as an essential component of freedom by his contemporaries: *Égalité*. Heine’s love for the sea becomes a metaphor for the enmeshed dependency of *Freiheitsliebe* with equality: “[…Heine] ist dem Meer dankbar für seine Gleichgültigkeit gegen Rang, Titel und Konfession. Das Meer ist wie er selber in seinen besten Stunden: grenzenlos” (Decker 139). The free exercise of reason for Heine, in its development towards socio-political freedom, depends on the social equality of engagement amongst all people, regardless of the reified categories of society. It is worthwhile to examine the necessity of *égalité* for *liberté* as Heine saw it.

Heine’s relationship to freedom and equality is especially poignant in the recollection of his Jewish heritage. As marginalized the chimney-sweep in Delacroix’ painting may have been, Heine comes from a cultural tradition yet more marginalized: up until Napoleon’s occupation of Düsseldorf and the institution of the *code civil*, Jews were not granted equal status in society. Before Napoleon, Jewish communities were yet relegated to the ghetto. Decker remarks that nobody described the consciousness of the reality of the Jewish communities’ equality in society—as a debt to Napoleon and the French Revolution—better than Heine, who was fortunate to have grown up knowing a civil freedom in which he was permitted to engage in society as an equal: “Sein Herkunftskokon ist durchlässig....Und er begegnet anderen
Durchlässigkeit, sogar katholischen Durchlässigkeit. Er darf den Dingen nah sein und fern bleiben zugleich. Das, nichts anderes, ist Freiheit” (34). But Heine knew also that freedom through equality was not guaranteed by society, as the Restoration was pervaded by clamoring voices that were eager, “die Juden zurückzusperren ins Ghetto” (Decker 76). It is a wariness and fear of the betrayal of the necessary ideals of a free society that Heine was ever conscious of. Its threat may have compelled Heine’s hesitation to support democratic revolution.

The Restoration itself was implemented as a pure negation of any trace of the French Revolution, which included the traces of the Enlightenment. The connection of the two societal events is a curious example of Metternich and Heine being in agreement. Hubert Wolf discusses how, for the reactionary powers in Prussia and Austria, “Die Französische Revolution war im Zeichen der Aufklärung angetreten und hatte unter der Guillotine, in der Diktatur der Jakobiner und in Kriegen geendet, die das alte Europa in seinen Fundamenten erschütterten.” Among the reactionary powers, the French Revolution was seen as the “Beweis für die Verderblichkeit der Aufklärung und jener Werte, für die sie stand.“ As a result, “Alles, was die Aufklärung bekämpft hatte, war seit 1815 automatisch richtig; namentlich die katholische Kirche mit ihren Ansichten und Strukturen sah sich durch das Scheitern der ‘Moderne’ in der Revolution bestätigt.” Additionally, since the Enlightenment stood for the freedom of belief, knowledge, and thought, “‘roch diese nach Schwefel’ und mußte verboten werden. Gleiches galt für Menschenrechte, Volkssouveränität, Gewaltenteilung....” (Wolf 21).

Not even the freie Mündigkeit of the Enlightenment was guaranteed. The Restoration meant also the institution of censorship with the 1819 Karlsbader Beschlüsse. As Katy Heady discusses, it was during this period of the European Restoration that “the issue of press controls occupied the most prominent place on the political agenda,” coinciding with “the fact that this
demonstration of state autocracy was pitted against the aspirations of a rapidly emerging public sphere, in an age characterized by sharp increases in literacy, book production, and political organization” (9-10). Walter Hinck reminds us that the decrees also constituted a retraction of social rights, including the social equality of Jews: Heine’s engagement with comrades at the University of Bonn through the student fraternity “Allgemeinheit,” which had established itself on the “Grundsatz der ‘Freiheit und Gleichheit aller’ und schließt deshalb jüdische Studenten nicht aus,” was an exception to the trend of the nineteenth century, which saw fraternities bowing to anti-Semitic Ressentiment (Hinck 20-21). The Restoration can be seen as a limitation on the extent to which individuals and groups were permitted to engage in the public discourse of those socio-political institutions, and was largely targeted against dissenting voices and communities who did not readily align with the homogenizing forces of the Restoration’s socio-political hegemony.

Just as the Carlsbad Decrees were being implemented, Heine was leaving Gymnasium; His entry into academic life coincided with the effective elimination of the equality of social maneuverability of Jewish individuals (Decker 55). Metternich’s conceptualization of Freiheit emphasized the necessity of demolishing all traces of the French Revolution in Europe, as he did not believe “daß Menschen oder Nationen Talent haben, frei zu sein. Allein unter dem Feudalismus kann der Mensch Mensch sein. Alles kommt darauf an, die Menschen vor der Freiheit zu bewahren. Also vor sich selbst” (ibid). Heine might have agreed that the people of Europe were not yet ready for further steps in the institutionalization of democratic freedom, but neither did he think that the freedoms already implemented should be recanted.

Heine’s wariness of democratic devolution of power comes out of his observations that Treue contributed to pharisaic belief in Freiheitsliebe, potentiating its betrayal due to
In Die Harzreise, Heine praises—ironically—the ubiquity of German fidelity: “Innig rührt es mich jedesmal, wenn ich sehe, wie sich dieses Gefühl der Untertanstreue in seinen einfachen Naturlauten ausspricht. Es ist ein so schönes Gefühl! Und es ist ein so wahrhaft deutsches Gefühl! Andere Völker mögen gewandter sein, und witziger und ergötzlicher, aber keines ist so treu, wie das treue deutsche Volk” (21). The danger in fidelity lies therein, to whom or towards which ideals one devotes themselves, and how this fidelity is rewarded. But it is also out of fidelity to the people, and the Freiheitsliebe that does not recant the importance of social equality, out of which true democratic freedom exists.

This emphasis on democratic fidelity is evident in Heine’s discussion of Louis Philippe, the so-called citizen king of the July Monarchy. In Louis Philippe, there was the hope that the son of the self-appointed Philip d’Égalité would remain true to the social equality of the people. Heine writes in Französische Zustände his hopeful fidelity to the ideals embodied by Louis Philippe, noting that Louis Philippe himself had “von seiner frühesten Jugend an bis jetzt die Worte Freiheit und Gleichheit im Munde geführt, und sich, in Opposition gegen die eigene Sippschaft, als einen Repräsentanten der Demokratie dargegeben” (132). In Louis Philippe Heine saw a monarch who would remain true to the social equality of the people’s freedom “wie eine wiedergefundene Geliebte; er stand auf dem Balkone des Palais Royal und schlug mit der Hand den Takt zu der Marseillaise, die unten das Volk jubelte; und er war ganz der Sohn der Gleichheit, fils d’Égalite, der Soldat tricolore der Freiheit” (ibid). The shared fidelity between king and people, the preservation of the social equality and Freiheitsliebe Heine hoped for, however, was betrayed. With noticeable disappointment, Heine writes,

Ludwig Philipp mußte...auf das Vertrauen des Volkes den Thron stützen, den er dem Vertrauen des Volkes verdankte....Ludwig Philipp mußte erfüllen, was sein ganzes Leben symbolisch versprochen hatte. Wie einst in der Schweiz, mußte er wieder...öffentlich erklären: ‘Seht diese hübschen Länder, die Menschen darin sind alle frei, sind alle gleich, und wenn ihr Kleinen das nicht im Gedächtnisse behaltet, bekommt ihr die Rute.’ Ja, Ludwig Philipp mußte an die Spitze
der europäischen Freiheit treten, die Interessen derselben mit seinen eigenen verschmelzen, sich selbst und die Freiheit identifizieren, und wie einer seiner Vorgänger ein kühnes ‘L’État c’est moi’ aussprach, so mußte er mit noch größerem Selbstbewußtsein ausrufen: ‘La Liberté, c’est moi!’ Er hat es nicht getan. (Französische Zustände 134)

In his discussion of to whom one devotes themselves, especially with regards to their possession of socio-political power, Heine develops his fear that unmündige Treue inhibits the development and preservation of liberty and equality, noting that “Die praktischere Frage ist nicht, ob [Ludwig Philipp] das Recht hat, den Thron zu besteigen, sondern ob er die Kraft dazu hat, ob seine Partei dieser Kraft vertrauen darf…” (Französischen Zustände, 136-137). In Nachtrag 1833, he reminds his readers that “im Menschen wohne immer ein geheimes Gelüste nach absoluter Herrschaft” (Nachtrag 1833, 60). The uncritical fidelity of the bonded fool is misused by those in power, who seek to subordinate others under their own hegemony. Heine reiterated his frustration with his foolish contemporaries in his forward to Französische Zustände: “Die Toren, sie sind noch eifersüchtig aufeinander, und während jedes klare Auge einsieht, daß sie am Ende von Österreich und Preußen mediatisiert werden, ist all ihr Sinnen und Trachten nur darauf gerichtet, wie man dem Nachbar ein Stück seines Ländchens abgewinnt” (71). Heine begs his contemporaries to share in his Mitleid for those whose freedom is taken away as a result of their own jealousy, indifference, and blind fidelity to powers bent on nothing but the manipulation and usurpation of their subjects’ sovereignty.

Through Untertanstreue, Heine sees the potentiated betrayal of fidelity to Freiheitsliebe, which depends on an accompanying social equality. According to the principles of the Enlightenment, the liberals of Heine’s time believed that freedom could not be accepted as a mere gift of the aristocracy; they rallied around the rhetorical claim that freedom was an inalienable right, which was “zur politischen Forderung erhoben” (Ziegler 109). It is in this sense of Treue that the Germans, fighting for their sovereignty against Napoleon, simultaneously sent
their own freedom to its grave. Although hoping for increased liberty after emancipation, the German *Freiheitskriege* were betrayed by their aristocratic masters. Heine discusses the feeling of German liberals and democrats in the *Vorrede zu den Französischen Zuständen*:

Damals, während ihr euch ausruht von dem Kampfe für eure Fürsten, und die Brüder begrubet, die in diesem Kampfe gefallen, und euch einander die treuen Wunden verbandet, und lächelnd euer Blut noch rinnen saht aus der vollen Brust, die so voll Freude und Vertrauen war, so voll Freude wegen der Rettung der geliebten Fürsten, so voll Vertrauen auf die menschlich heiligsten Gefühle der Dankbarkeit: damals, dort unten zu Wien, in den alten Werkstätten der Aristokrazie, schmiedete man die Bundesakte! Sonderbar! Eben der Fürst, der seinem Volke am meisten Dank schuldig war, der deshalb seinem Volke eine repräsentative Verfassung, eine volkstümliche Konstitution, wie andere freie Völker sie besitzen, in jener Zeit der Not versprochen hat: dieser Fürst hat jetzt jene anderen deutschen Fürsten, die sich verpflichtet gehalten, ihren Untertanen eine freie Verfassung zu erteilen, ebenfalls zu Wortbruch und Treulosigkeit zu verführen gewußt, und er stützt sich jetzt auf die Wiener Bundesakte, um die kaum emporgeblühten deutschen Konstitutionen zu vernichten, er, welcher, ohne zu erröten das Wort ‘Konstitution’ nicht einmal aussprechen dürfte! Ich rede von Sr. Majestät, Friedrich Wilhelm, dritten des Namens, König von Preußen. (77)

The German people, in their *treue Freiheitsliebe*, placed their trust and loyalty in aristocrats who promised to preserve their inalienable rights. When their own goals of domination were achieved, the aristocracy betrayed the sovereign *Freiheitsliebe* of the people, reneging on their promises and forcing their subjects back into submission. It is a betrayal which Heine reports merely indicated to every vigilant person, “daß das deutsche Volk, als es für seine Fürsten Gut und Blut geopfert und den versprochenen Lohn der Dankbarkeit empfangen sollte, aufs heilloseste getäuscht worden…daß man, statt der zugelobten Magna Charta der Freiheit, uns nur eine verbriefte Knechtschaft ausgefertigt hat” (“Vorrede zu den Französischen Zuständen” 76-77).

Heine also indicated his belief that Metternich’s opposition to social freedoms and rights instituted by Napoleon was not a result of Metternich’s personal belief, but rather his simple, *unmündige Treue*. If the French Revolution and *Freiheitsliebe* was an outcome of the spiritual revolution of the Reformation, then the Restoration is the outcome of the feudal, imperial counter-reformation. As Heine wrote in his “Vorrede zu den Französischen Zuständen,”

Heine describes the reaction to his publication of *Französische Zustände* as the most wounding betrayal of German *Freiheitsliebe* that he had experienced—up to that point.

Sammons reports in his biography on Heine how “Metternich’s factotum Gentz became jumpy at the militant tone of the ‘villainous adventurer Heine’” and called for a cessation of Heine’s politically thematic reporting (181). But this interpretation of *Französische Zustände* was not even typical among Heine’s contemporaries. When Campe republished the series of articles in 1833, Heine included the forward, in which he felt the need “to meet radical criticisms that he had betrayed the progressive cause” and in which he was to offer “much praise for his own purity and fidelity” (*ibid*). Heine’s vitriolic response emphasizes his outrage at the rejection and alteration of his voice. Heine also seems to suggest that if the government’s intent were really to forfend revolution, they would not have prevented him from writing his observations, but rather should have maintained their faith in “knechtische Unterwürfigkeit” (“Vorrede zu den Französischen Zuständen” 71).

Even Heine himself was not immune to the potential betrayal of *Freiheitsliebe*. The *Platen Controversie* provides a contradictory instance of Heine’s own commitment to *Freiheitsliebe*. Heine’s public attack on Platen’s closeted homosexuality in *Die Bader von Lucca* may have been a reaction to Platen’s “threats and anti-Semitic utterances” that culminated in the publication of *The Romantic Oedipus*, in which Heine’s Jewishness figures in a starkly negative light: Sammons describes the tragic irony of the scandal, noting that
In fact, there was much in Platen that made him a potential ally of Heine; their democratic instincts coupled with an aristocratic view of the poetic calling and the perpetually frustrated hope that the poetic and royal principles might be united in modern society bear a strong resemblance. [Heine’s] fierce attack on Platen... is centered on a devastating criticism of the poetry, against which he takes a rather Romantic stance, accusing it of rhetorical rigidity, acrobatic virtuosity, and lack of nature and true feeling—some of which objections were often made to Heine’s own verse. (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 144-145).

Heine is no god, and every person makes mistakes. The tragic misunderstanding between these two potential allies for social equality emphasizes the stark reality that every enlightened person possesses the potential of exerting one’s will towards homogeneous domination. As expertly Heine otherwise may turn the mirror of irony upon himself, in this case he failed to do so. Every Narr must work towards the self-improvement necessary to bring about a truly free society.

Through his observations, Heine was wary of devolving power to anyone in whom he did not observe an actual manifestation of Freiheitsliebe. His criticism of the pharisaic faith of his contemporaries and the betrayal of the people and their Freiheitsliebe spurred him to declare, “Denn Gott ist vernünftig und sieht ein, daß die republikanische Regierungsform sehr unpassend, unerpfändiglich und unerquicklich ist für das alte Europa. Und auch ich habe diese Einsicht” (“Nachtrag 1833” 62). Heine saw a society of hegemons, pandering to the longing for freedom without incorporating the tenets of equality, thereby pursuing only their own freedom and desires of domination in fidelity to the hegemonic systems of old Europe: “Was die Deutschen betrifft, so bedürfen sie weder der Freiheit noch der Gleichheit” (*Englische Fragmenten* 364). Heine was not about to advocate or support an institution that would ultimately betray his Freiheitsliebe through a rejection of social equality. We can imagine Heine, while he writes that Germany is not ready for a democracy, remembering Swift’s satirical representation of the “most ingenious architect, who had contrived a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof, and
working downward to the foundation; which he justified to me, by the like practice of those two prudent insects, the bee and the spider” (Swift 292).\(^{40}\)

A potent reminder of Heine’s contemporaries’ credulous belief in *Freiheitsliebe* was the French Revolution itself, and Heine was ever conscious of the atrocities inherent to revolution. Sammons indicates—in his biography on Heine—that Heine did not believe the people were ready for democratic revolution because he “ascribed the Terror of the first French Revolution to the ignorance of the common people, cut off from the exchange of mature political ideas by censorship” (152). Similarly, Decker indicates from one of Heine’s 1830 letters to Ludolf Wienberg that Heine was wary of the threat to his own life should a political revolution break out in Germany: “’Bricht nun gar in Deutschland die Revolution aus, so bin ich nicht der letzte Kopf, der fällt.’ Revolution, das weiß er, ist ein anderes Wort für abgeschlagene Köpfe” (211). It was not hard for Heine to see that anti-Semitism would “be among the popular passions released by revolution and that he himself was as likely to be a victim as a beneficiary of it” (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 153-154). Heine confirms this wariness in *Die Harzreise*: “Es waren Bilder aus dem Befreiungskriege, worauf treu dargestellt stand, wie wir alle Helden waren, dann auch Hinrichtungsszenen aus der Revolutionszeit, Ludwig XVI. auf der Guillotine, und ähnliche Kopfabschneidereien, die man gar nicht ansehen kann, ohne Gott zu danken, daß man ruhig im Bette liegt, und guten Kaffee trinkt und den Kopf noch so recht komfortabel auf den Schultern sitzen hat” (14).

Heine’s observations about society hindered his willingness to advocate for political revolution: “Er ist nie der Kämpfer, für den man ihn hält. Er ist kein Revolutionär. Aber er verteidigt lebenslang, was er einmal besaß” (Decker 34). Just as Grabbe criticized Heine for

\(^{40}\) Heine references his knowledge of Swift’s satirical novel, which possesses picaresque elements, in *Englische Fragmente* (380-381).
speaking too much about matters of love without knowing the true weight of its reality, so too could one criticize Heine’s revolutionary idealism on account of his lack of revolutionary credentials in the traditional sense of the use of force. In fact, Heine employs his satirical voice to criticize his contemporaries who more actively pursued the realization of democratic institutions. One individual towards whom Heine often directs his criticism is Georg Herwegh, whose active involvement in demonstrations and efforts to affect political change coincide with his own composition of *Tendenzlyrik*. One might argue that Herwegh bears the burden of revolutionary change more honestly than Heine—indeed Herwegh was to become an active participant in the Badischer Revolution in 1848 along with Friedrich Hecker. Yet in 1841, Heine composed the poem “An Georg Herwegh”:

Herwegh, du eiserne Lerche,
Mit klirrendem Jubel steigst du empor
Zum heiligen Sonnenlichte!
Ward wirklich der Winter zunichte?
Steht wirklich Deutschland im Frühlingsflor?

Herwegh, du eiserne Lerche,
Weil du so himmelhoch dich schwingst,
Hast du die Erde aus dem Gesichte
Verloren—Nur in deinem Gedichte
Lebt jener Lenz, den du besingst.
(Zeitgedichte 763)

Heine expresses his skepticism whether Germany was truly approaching the spring of democratic freedom: he is too aware of the foolish incapacity of his contemporaries to produce a democratic society without betraying the *Freiheitsliebe* of its heterodox elements. Heine encourages Herwegh to continue composing, as he does not believe that the poetic Spring towards which they strive has a place in Restoration Europe, at least not yet.

Nevertheless, as Sammons argues, “…the combative revolutionary persona is a very real component of who [Heine] thought he was” (“Who Did Heine Think He Was?” 14). The awareness that he himself would be one of the first victims of a revolution cannot be the primary
reason why Heine advocates against revolution—he is no cynic who seeks merely to survive, and his preponderance for dueling shows that he has no fear of death. Sammons notes in his biography on Heine,

While duels are a feature of the lives of a number of major European writers of the nineteenth century, Heine’s recurrent involvement in them is still an odd item in his character, for generally he was an upholder of rational and civilized values....It is reported that Heine already had had [by the time he was expelled from University in Göttingen] a saber duel in Bonn, to avenge an anti-Semitic remark....Since he was also by nature touchy and easily angered, the duel was a device for asserting himself when he felt himself excessively ill-used, and threatening duels at times became an element of his public strategy. (Sammons, Heinrich Heine 73-74).

It is not his own death which Heine fears—he is, after all, an epicurean (Marcuse; Decker). Heine’s irony of the world is the nothingness that comes after death, but Heine knows that if one advocates revolution before the people are capable of reconciling the social question of equality, his will not be the only head to fall to the guillotine; an epicurean cannot live without friends. Heine’s wary attitude concerning revolution has resulted in a debate whether Heine was an advocate of social revolution in place of political revolution. Nor is this debate limited to Heine. It is telling that after the publication of Georg Büchner’s Der Hessische Landbote, which consists of an address of socio-political grievances, its co-author Ludwig Weidig and Büchner’s friend Karl Minnigerode were imprisoned, interrogated, and tortured (Smith 4). Büchner subsequently abandoned the revolutionary Feuilleton, composing dramas such as Danton’s Tod

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41 Tim O’Keefe discusses the epicurean attitude about death and friendship (108-109).
42 Raphael Hörmann develops how, in the Vormärz period, various German and English authors began to exhibit a paradigm shift, in which political revolution was discounted in favor of social revolution in order to advocate for an actual solution to the social question. Hörmann denies Heine’s belonging to this tradition (157).
instead. One can read Heine’s wariness of political revolution as a confirmation of a similar consciousness.

What frightened the Metternichian forces of the aristocracy—as well as that of subsequent generations of hegemonies that exploit, oppress, and destroy heterodoxies—is that Heine’s voice was just one of many who believed what he said. That is Heine’s revolutionary potential: the uncontrollable *Tat von seinem Gedanken*, and he is naught but the *Tambourmajor* (Prawer 94-96). He is the *Narr der Gleichheit* who exposes the foolishness of his contemporaries through his own, in hope to prevent *Freiheitsverrat wegen Treue*.

In this light, Heine’s 1823 poem “Ich hab im Traum geweinet” takes on a more politically poignant intent than its appearance as a mere nightmare about heartbreak and abandonment:

```
Ich hab im Traum geweinet,
Mir träumte du lägest im Grab.
Ich wachte auf und die Träne
Floß noch von der Wange herab.

Ich hab im Traum geweinet,
Mir träumt’ du verließest mich.
Ich wachte auf, und ich weinte
Noch lange bitterlich.

Ich hab im Traum geweinet,
Mir träumte du bliebest mir gut.
Ich wachte auf, und noch immer
Strömt meine Tränenflut.

(Buch der Lieder 123).
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This poem’s sequential juxtaposition with the more optimistic love poem “Allnächtlich im Traume seh ich dich” provides an ambiguous irony that, if truly intended by Heine, he must have committed to with revelry.\(^{43, 44}\) As a politically aware poem, it appears more a nightmare

\(^{43}\) Sammons reminds us in his biography on Heine that Heine continued to edit the *Buch der Lieder* with each publication until 1844 (which is now the standard edition), and purposefully placed poems together which had originally had “nothing to do with one another, yet in their new sequence yield a kind of poeticized auto-biography” (125).

\(^{44}\) Schumann adapted both of these songs in *Dichterliebe*. 
about the death of his friends and comrades than a heartbroken lamentation.\textsuperscript{45} The indication of having dreamt that the addressee of this poem remained true to the narrator in the final stanza implies a third reading, as lamentation of the betrayal of \textit{Freiheitsliebe} by his contemporaries.

\textsuperscript{45} This interpretation makes this poem interesting to compare to the devastation felt by Marius—of Alain Boublil’s and Claude-Michel Schönbergs’ musical adaptation of Victor Hugo’s \textit{Les Misérables}\textemdashfollowing the failed June Rebellion. Marius’ devastation is the consuming weight of the absence of his friends’ voices: “De la table sous la fenêtre/Habités d’un fol espoir/Des enfants ont pris les armes/Je les entends encore/Ces mots brûlants qu’ils ont chantés/Furent leurs dernières volontés/Sur la barricade déserte, à l’aube/Oh! Mes amis, pardonnez-moi/D’être là, de vivre encore/Il est des deuils que l’on garde/Quand tous les chagrins sont morts/Et je vois passer vos ombres/Et je pleure nos joies perdues/Seul devant ces tables vides/Que vous ne reverrez plus.’”
Heine’s Abandonment of Formalism, Nationalism, and Homogeneity

Within his particular choice to utilize satirical humor as critical method, we can see a component of his style which threatened the homogenizing forces of German politics and language. Jeffrey Chase develops how in German, there is an etymological difference between *Humor* and *Witz*. He indicates that “the word *Witz* designated groups subordinate to the mainstream” (6). That Heine would feel particularly singled out and rejected by society for his writing not because of its content, but because of its style (SW. I 33) is an indication that his “Jewish mode of discourse” (Chase 7) was simply unwelcome in certain sections of German society. However, the Barthesian construction of language and popularity of Heine’s writing amongst readers and composers indicates his belonging to a community that may also have supported his call for *Freiheitsliebe*.

Heine’s use of the German language also likely played a role in his negative reception. Even Adorno’s essay *Die Wunde Heine* reacts negatively to Heine’s language, describing it as an assimilatory, unsuccessful identity which Adorno attributes to Heine’s mother’s own weak control of the German language (98). Sammons refutes this claim, arguing that, although we do not have any way to “know with certainty what language was spoken in Heine’s childhood home,” his childhood language would have been no more different than the regional dialects of Eichendorff and Hölderlin; even if it were a German dialect with Jewish “coloration” (“Who Did Heine Think He Was?” 3-4). The presence of a minor accent or dialectical pronunciation would, however, have become a target for those who desire linguistic homogeny.

There is certainly an element of anti-intellectualism and anti-cosmopolitanism to the critique of Heine’s language and style. His texts are heavily flavored with Latin and French, which would have immediately become a target for linguistic nationalists. These idiolects, as
liminally transgressive linguistic constructions, would have been precisely the heterodoxy of
which Heine advocated celebration, and explains why Heine reacted so vigorously when censors
altered his texts. Willi Goetschel similarly argues in favor of a celebration of these linguistic
heterodoxies, noting that we can ally ourselves with the motives of social equality by rejecting
“philology’s obsession with singular origin and exclusionary boundaries of national
literatures...[and the] imperative of naturalization and homogenous constructions of language and
culture” (“Displaced Philology” 30). Goetschel elaborates upon this opposition to the pure
negation of heterodox constructions in *Heine and Critical Theory*:

The liberating force of Heine’s song of freedom received its thrust from the openly attuned
attention to Jewish and many other sources that inform his open vision of modernity....Its
forthright assertion of the multiplicity of linguistic origins exposed the repressive character of the
nationalist agenda and its imagined linguistic homogeneity that sought to erase the diversity of its
multiple linguistic treasures and cultural sources. (8).

Within these linguistic and stylistic oppositions, we see the homogenizing cultural forces
that Heine held to be the most detrimental to the pursuit of social freedom. These forces were the
developing concepts of nationalism and patriotism, to which his contemporaries seemed most
faithful, yet in which resided the darkest potential for the betrayal of *Freiheitsliebe* through their
homogenizing compulsions. Indeed, the advent of the modern nation state is inherently a
question of community and inclusion. Prominent in the discourse of German nationalists of the
*Vormärz* was the question of whether the new German state would be *groß* or *klein*, pivoting
around the question of inclusion of national minorities. The German democratic movements of
the nineteenth century were themselves infiltrated by politicians, philosophers, and writers who,
alongside their desire for a democratic state, brought along anti-Semitic sentiments. As Götz Aly
points out, it is important in the discussion of the early German movements for democratic
liberty to also contemplate the presence in the debate of those individuals, “die zwar als
Reformer und Vorkämpfer freiheitlicher Ideen berechtigtes Ansehen verdienen, aber als
Judengegner, ja Judenhasser hervortraten….darunter nicht wenige schwarz-rot-goldene Demokraten” (9).

Heine used the tools of satire and lyric to criticize the potential for domination inherent to the nationalistic dialogue of his contemporaries, and he did so by referencing the history and literary tradition of Germany. In this way, Heine hoped to subvert the potential horrors of socio-political domination he foresaw as an outcome of the revolutionary participation of his contemporaries who, despite their democratic credentials, did not also incorporate a belief in equal treatment of liminal figures. Heine’s subversive hope forewarned of the horrors of the Third Reich whose reality, although not guaranteed by the development of German history, is foreshadowed in Heine’s fears and the societal wound developing in the exclusionary and oppressive practices of Vormärz institutions and the democratic reaction. It is likely that Heine kept Grimmelshausen’s Simplicissimus Teutsch in mind as he penned his own fears of political and societal domination. Grimmelshausen’s character Jupiter’s comments seem to almost predict the rise of the Third Reich, and it is this prediction towards which Heine directs his vitriolic irony. As such, it is worth first quoting Jupiter in full:

Ich werde Teutschland höher segnen mit allem Uberfluß/ als das glückseelige Arabia, Mesopotamiam, und die Gegend umb Damasco; die Griechische Sprach werde ich alsdenn verschwören/und nur Teutsch reden/ und mit einem Wort mich so gut Teutsch erzeigen/daß ich ihnen auch endlich/ wie vor diesem den Römern/ die Beherrschung über die gantze Welt zukommen lassen werde. (Grimmelshausen 258)

With only a cursory glance, Heine appears to echo Jupiter’s declaration that Germany will come to dominate the world. In his forward to Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen, Heine

46 It is interesting to think about how—in Roman Mythology—Jupiter is the son of Saturn, and how this relationship is adapted in German literature. The motif of Saturn eating his children out of fear of losing power was compared to Robespierre and the Reign of Terror, as in Georg Büchner’s Dantons Tod (32). This reality of the Revolution is a terror Heine lamented—for example in Englische Fragmente (423-424)—and feared as the potential outcome of his own thinking. This provides another interpretation of Heine’s Doppelgänger who would dutifully carry out all of that which Heine thought (Deutschland; Ein Wintermärchen 430): Heine wanted neither to become a new Robespierre nor to become the pariah of such an outcome.
declares, “ja, nicht bloß Elsaß und Lothringen, sondern ganz Frankreich wird uns alsdann
zu fallen, ganz Europa, die ganze Welt—die ganze Welt wird deutsch werden!” (415). One can
almost hear Heine’s satirical subversion through ironic quotation of such an imperial sentiment.
By considering this statement in connection with Heine’s belief in freie Vernunft, it seems that
Heine does not intend this statement as a declaration of German superiority or right to
domination of the lands of the Earth.

We may be able to say more about this by comparing this line of thinking to Heine’s
1840 poem “Deutschland,” in which Heine foretells the consequences of advocating for
dominating homogenization:

Ja, du wirst einst wie Siegfried sein
Und töten den häßlichen Drachen,  
Heisa! Wie freudig vom Himmel herab
Wird deine Frau Amme lachen!

Du wirst ihn töten, und seinen Hort,  
Die Reichskleinodien, besitzen.  
Heisa! Wie wird auf deinem Haupt
Die goldne Krone blitzen. (Zeitgedichte 762).

By equating Germany’s potential to the legendary hero Siegfried, Heine prophesizes the tragic
consequences if Germany marches towards a future of earthly domination, just as the legends of
Siegfried foretell the tyranny of—as well as the tragic misfortune that will befall—those who
possess the dragon’s horde, the treasure of the Rhine.

Heine recognizes that he is vilified in society due to his contemporaries’ foolish fidelity
to the same “knechtische Spielerei” (Deutschland: Ein Wintemärchen 414) that duplicitously
utilized the rhetoric of freedom to subjugate even them, demonstrating their lack of democratic
merit. The repugnant reports, Heine writes, that attack him as a traitor, calling his writing and its
political affinity as “’französische Revolutionslehren’” and “’französische Partei in
Deutschland’” demonstrate to Heine these fools’ fidelity to everything that was unacceptable
amongst the German population should they be granted democratic power. Specifically, Heine contests the socio-political currents of “Nationalhaß, religiösen und politischen Aberglauben, und Dummheit überhaupt” (“Vorrede zur Vorrede zu den Französischen Zuständen” 65-66). In opposition to these homogenizing forces, Heine impels his contemporaries to observe how “der Nationalhaß nur ein Mittel ist, eine Nation durch die andere zu knechten” (ibid). For this reason, Heine bids his readers, if they truly love Freiheit, to recognize that there are only two parties: the one which seeks to usurp all the freedoms of its citizens, and the other which, in the name of reason, vindicates the inalienable rights of humanity [Menschenrechte]. The latter party, Heine declares, is called Democracy, and ought to be called the heavenly party [die himmlische Partie], “…denn jene Erklärung der Menschenrechte, worauf unsere ganze Staatswissenschaft basiert ist, stammt nicht aus Frankreich, wo sie freilich am glorreichsten proklamiert worden, nicht einmal aus Amerika, woher sie Lafayette geholt hat, sondern sie stammt aus dem Himmel, dem ewigen Vaterland der Vernunft” (“Vorrede zur Vorrede zu den Französischen Zuständen” 65-66).

Heine’s engagement of the political history of democratic institutions through reference to the French and American Revolutions and Lafayette constitutes in itself a warning against the reification of those structures and their prominent figures, noting that true freedom stems only from the free and equal use of reason.

Heine affirms his paramount belief in the ideals of freedom and right of humanity in contrast to the potential of material and ideological domination again in his forward to Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen, where he addresses the accusations of treachery and betrayal directed towards him for criticizing nationalism’s pursuit of domination:

The domination, or hegemony, which Heine believes will one day be achieved is a hegemony that seeks not to dominate material and ideological freedoms through exclusion and national homogeny, but rather the hegemony of an ideal which seeks the reconciliation and mutual recognition and respect of differences. It is a hegemony of utopian ideals that can only occur if all lands of the Earth support universal democracy, the origin of which Heine appraisingly attributes to German philosophy:

Man schläft sehr gut und träumt auch gut
In unseren Federbetten.
Hier fühlt die deutsche Seele sich frei
Von allen Erdenketten.

Sie fühlt sich frei und schwingt sich empor
Zu den höchsten Himmelsräumen.
O deutsche Seele, wie stolz ist dein Flug
In deinen nächtlichen Träumen!

……………………………………

Franzosen und Russen gehört das Land,
Das Meer gehört den Briten,
Wir aber besitzen im Luftreich des Traums
Die Herrschaft unbestritten.

Hier üben wir die Hegemonie,
Hier sind wir unzerstückerk;
Die anderen Völker haben sich
Auf platter Erde entwickelt.
(Deutschland: Ein Winternmärchen, 431).
It is the hegemony of this ideal, when it does not result in the oppressive exclusions of the rights of man, but rather that reconciles differences and grievances universally, that constitutes Heine’s *Freiheitsliebe*.

Heine’s satirical criticism of nationalism’s potential to subvert this ideal becomes evident through Heine’s juxtaposition of historical and contemporary realities of sentimental German nationalism. Heine recognizes the importance of the Germanic tribes’ defeat of the Roman legionnaires in the Teutoburger Wald, as it ensured the freedom of the Germanic people:

> Das ist der Teutoburger Wald  
> Den Tacitus beschrieben,  
> Das ist der klassische Morast,  
> Wo Varus steckengeblieben.

> Hier schlug ihn der Cheruskerfürst,  
> Der Hermann, der edle Recke;  
> Die deutsche Nationalität  
> Die siegte in diesem Drecke.

> Wenn Hermann nicht die Schlacht gewann,  
> Mit seinem blonden Horden,  
> So gäb es deutsche Freiheit nicht mehr,  
> Wir wären römisch geworden!

> In unserem Vaterland herrschten jetzt  
> Nur römische Sprache und Sitten,  
> Vestalen gäb es in München sogar,  
> Die Schwaben hießen Quiriten!

> [.................................]

> Gottlob! Der Hermann gewann die Schlacht,  
> Die Römer wurden vertrieben,  
> Varus mit seinen Legionen erlag,  
> Und wir sind Deutsche geblieben!  
> (*Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* 439-440)

Had this battle not been won, Heine imagines the German people having lost their relative freedom through incorporation and assimilation in the Roman Empire. It would have been a loss of the unique differences which constitute liberty for Heine, a loss which he warns the German
people were—yet again—at risk of experiencing through the nationalistic endeavor to form the German state. He feared the process of unification would devolve into a bloody negation of whichever undesirables the new state determined unfit for presence in social discourse, the negation through censorship warping into a reiteration of the Reign of Terror. Heine’s observations in Deutschland: Ein Wintemärchen speak poignantly to the material as well as spiritual forces of homogenization implemented by his contemporaries’ pursuit of German unity:

Ein Passagier, der neben mir stand, bemerkte mir, ich hätte jetzt vor mir den preußischen Zollverein, Die große Douanenkette.

“Der Zollverein”—bemerkte er—
“Wird unser Volksstum begründen,
Er wird das zersplitterte Vaterland Zu einem Ganzen verbinden.

Er gibt die äußere Einheit uns,
Die sogennant materielle;
Die geistige Einheit gibt uns die Zensur,
Die wahrhaft ideelle—

Sie gibt die innere Einheit uns,
Die Einheit im Denken und Sinnen;
Ein einiges Deutschland tut uns not,
Einig nach außen und innen.”

(Deutschland: Ein Wintemärchen 420)

Just as a defeat at the Teutoburger Forest would have spelled the loss of freedom for the Germanic people, so too did Heine fear that the national project of his contemporaries would, through the nationalistic necessitation of the unity of material and ideological identity, destroy the freedoms of liminality inherent to a mündige Freiheitsliebe: the liberty of a society that, like the sea, makes no demands of homogeneity, but rather embraces one’s heterodoxies. Heine laments that the betrayal of freedom perpetrated by these homogenizing forces results in a shriveling of the heart and a hatred of foreigners, in opposition to that which is the most holy and supreme disposition of the spirit [Gesinnung], “nämlich gegen jene Humanität, gegen jene allgemeine Menschen-Verbrüderung, gegen jenen Kosmopolitismus, dem unsere großen Geister,
Lessing, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, Jean Paul, dem all Gebildeten in Deutschland immer gehuldigt haben” (Die Romantische Schule, 280). The tragedy of his modern perspective compels empathetic “Thränen von den Wangen herab” zu fließen.
Conclusion: Heine der Freie Narr

Perhaps one of the components of Heine’s talents that most focused Heine’s enemies’ animosity towards him is their recognition of the Barthesian truth: that although Heine utilized his own voice, the potential structure of his voice was—and continues to be—influenced by the myriad voices constituting society, many of whom were deeply moved by Heine’s thought and writing. If the religion of Freiheit has its martyrs and ischariots both, Heine is one of its societal martyrs, a pariah, a scapegoat upon whom Restoration institutions as well as the hegemonic forces of nationalism direct their contested sovereignty—and dominating sense of superiority—in an effort to preserve their own positions in power. Theirs was an opposition to liminal heterodoxy, and it was an obfuscating and dominating negation of the rationally determined Menschenrechte which continue to constitute society. Were we able to converse with Heine, he’d demand we honestly evaluate our progress, and the fidelity of our own contemporaries’ to that Freiheitsliebe.

Heine the jester recognized his own liminality, his existence as a figure both within and without the arbitrary categorical limits of national Germany. His goal was to be the comforting and enlightening entertainer for a turbulent time, hoping all the while that his poetry might have some positive influence upon his contemporaries’ ability to reflect more critically upon their own complicity in the system of domination that makes a fool of all its subjects. Without equality of discursive and societal engagement and the liminal freedom produced through that equality, the hope for a universal and authentic Freiheitsliebe would ever be disappointed by unmündige Treue to another’s homogenizing sovereignty.
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