

Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture

Goethe's Ghosts

Reading and the
Persistence of Literature

Edited by
Simon Richter and Richard Block

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²² The critic who saw this most clearly was Sigurd Burckhardt in the essay “Language as Form in Goethe’s *Prometheus* and *Pandora*,” in *The Drama of Language: Essays on Goethe and Kleist* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 16–32, esp. 27–28.

²³ The rhymed terms “Gewalt” and “Gestalt” are the focus of a profound study by Ernst Osterkamp: *Gewalt und Gestalt: Die Antike im Spätwerk Goethes* (Basel: Schwabe, 2007).

²⁴ On the importance of “presence” to Goethe’s thinking, see Pierre Hadot, *N’oublie pas de vivre: Goethe et la tradition des exercices spirituels* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008), esp. 15–86.

²⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettre à M. D’Alembert sur les spectacles*, ed. M. Fuchs (Lille: Librairie Giard, 1948).

²⁶ Hegel, Vorrede to *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Werke in 20 Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 46.

12: Effacement vs. Exposure of the Poetic Act: Philosophy and Literature as Producers of “History” (Hegel vs. Goethe)

Franz-Josef Deiters

Es wird unmöglich sein, aus dem Modernismus von Hegels Diagnose neuerer Kunst die Prognose von deren Zukunft zu tilgen, ohne seine Theorie insgesamt umzuformulieren. An ihre Leistungen kann nur der anknüpfen, der die Bedingungen erkennt, unter denen ihre Defekte zustande kamen. Und seiner Fundamente kann man sich nur bedienen, wenn man erkennt, auf welchen Grund sie gelegt sind.¹

[It will be impossible to cut away the aspect of Hegel’s forecast about the future of art from the general modernity of his diagnosis of recent art without reformulating his theory of art as a whole. Only one who knows the conditions under which its defects arose can begin this task of reformulation; one can make use of its foundations only when one understands the grounds on which the foundations were laid.²]

I.

HISTORY” IS A PARADIGM that emerges from what the conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck calls the *Sattelzeit*, the period between 1750 and 1850; in other words, the concept of history itself has a history. For although history “als Kunde, Erzählung und Wissenschaft” (in the form of tidings, storytelling and scientific inquiry), as he explains, has been “ein alter Befund europäischer Kultur” (a part of European culture since antiquity), and although “das Geschichten-Erzählen zur Geselligkeit des Menschen [gehört]” (the telling of stories is inseparably bound up with human sociability), the notion that “es in der Geschichte um ‘Geschichte selber’ geht und nicht um eine Geschichte von etwas” (what is at stake in history is “history itself,” and not the history of something or other), is “eine moderne, eine neuzeitliche Formulierung”³ (a formulation specific to the modern era).

Two agents, above all, work together to produce the new paradigm: literature and philosophy, and on the side of literature the genre of drama, in particular, plays a leading role. From Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* and Schiller's *Don Carlos* to Heiner Müller's *Germania Tod in Berlin* (to name only the German tradition), "history"—understood as a "collective singular"—is restaged again and again. At the same time there appear the great modern philosophies of history, which attempt to subsume history under a conceptual schema. In the German context, one would here have to mention Johann Gottfried Herder and (to some extent) Justus Möser as the leading figures in the second half of the eighteenth century; yet philosophical work on the concept of history doubtlessly culminates in Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Lectures on the philosophy of history).⁴

In post-Kantian idealist aesthetics, at the very latest, literature and philosophy come to rival each other as producers of "history." At this point, philosophy takes it upon itself to "adopt" art and literature, treating the image as an object upon which to lavish the philosophical "labor of the concept" and explicitly asserting the primacy of concept over image. This objectivation of the image by the concept, however, goes hand in hand with the attempt to cover up and efface the poetic act that underlies the paradigm of "history," an act that had still informed the older, premodern meaning of the concept and had been conspicuously retained and reflected in the modern literary genre of historical drama. I therefore wish to propose that the origin of the logocentric discourse of history is to be found in Hegel's philosophy of art. In the first part of my essay, I will accordingly set out to reconstruct Hegel's effacement of the poetic origin of "history" by jointly examining his aesthetics and his philosophy of history. In the second part, I will confront Hegel's logocentric approach with a reading of Goethe's historical drama *Egmont* that exposes the poetic origin of "history" and thereby offers an alternative to Hegel's logocentrism.

II.

While the assertion that history and art are systematically interconnected in Hegel's idealist philosophy of history may well be a commonplace, it is a commonplace that warrants closer inspection. Thus the Hegel scholar Klaus Vieweg contends that "Geschichte und Kunst [. . .] als zwei verschiedene 'Vereinigungspunkte' von Natur und Geist [gelten], zwei differente Werke. In ihrer Andersartigkeit sind Weltgeschichte und Kunst Sphären oder Formen des 'Scheinens des Wahren,' der 'Wahr-Scheinlichkeit'"⁵ (history and art [. . .] are considered to be two different "points of union" of nature and spirit, two different works. In their alterity, world history and art constitute spheres and forms of "truth-semblance"

or "verisimilitude"). The collective singular "history" here signifies political history or the history of states—in Hegelian terminology, the level of objective spirit. When it comes to the relationship between historical drama and the philosophy of history, in the sense outlined at the beginning of this paper, "history" is to be understood in a twofold sense. On the one hand, the concept refers to the history of objective spirit, political history; on the other, it refers to the history of the reflection of the history of objective spirit, hence the level of absolute spirit in its artistic, religious, and philosophical manifestations. With respect to the question of the relationship between philosophy of history and historical drama, what is thus at stake—and here I will again cite Klaus Vieweg—is "die Binnenstruktur der Philosophie des Geistes, speziell [. . .] die Beziehung zwischen Philosophie des objektiven Geistes—der im engeren Sinne praktischen Philosophie Hegels, die eine logische Architektur aus philosophischer Rechtslehre, Ethik, politischer Philosophie und Philosophie der Geschichte darstellt—und der Theorie des absoluten Geistes, die Philosophie der Kunst, der Religion und der Philosophie in sich schließt"⁶ (the inner structure of the philosophy of spirit, specifically the relationship between the philosophy of objective spirit—Hegel's practical philosophy in the narrower sense, comprising a logical architectonics of philosophical jurisprudence, ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of history—and the theory of absolute spirit, which encompasses the philosophy of art, the philosophy of religion, and the philosophy of philosophy). The conceptual pairing used by Hegel to determine this inner structure—that is, the relationship of world history to its different modes of reflection—is that of form and content. So far as I can see, Hegel scholarship has largely followed him in this. It therefore seems only logical that it should be applied to the relationship between the philosophy of history and the poetic genre of historical drama as well. In my opinion, however, a full picture will only be gained by adding a third concept to the mix: the concept of medium. In what follows, I will therefore attempt to explicate the relationship between the philosophy of history and historical drama in Hegel with reference to the conceptual triad of form, content, and medium. This will allow for the effacement of the poetic act that underlies the paradigm of "history" in Hegel to come to light.

III.

In his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Hegel characterizes his project of a "Philosophie der Geschichte" (12:20;⁷ Philosophy of History, 8⁸) as a "denkende Betrachtung derselben" (12:20; thoughtful consideration of it, 8–9). In doing so, he parries the objection that might be expected from Aristotelian quarters—namely, that such a project is a contradiction in terms to the extent that history is concerned with what

actually happened, hence the particular, whereas the object of philosophy is generality as such—by propounding the most far-reaching thesis that could be imagined in this context: Hegel claims the identity of his own project of a “philosophische Weltgeschichte” (12:11; Philosophical History of the World, 1) with “Weltgeschichte selbst” (12:11; Universal History itself, 1): that is, the actual course of history. This thesis of history’s conformability to philosophy is most famously expressed by Hegel in his breathtakingly audacious dictum: “Wer die Welt vernünftig ansieht, den sieht sie auch vernünftig an, beides ist eine Wechselbestimmung” (12:23; To him who looks upon the world rationally, the world in its turn, presents a rational aspect. The relation is mutual, 11). What is formulated in these terms is a program of reading that proceeds by measuring historical processes against the yardstick of reason. In the introduction to his lectures, Hegel explicitly concedes that “der einfache Gedanke der Vernunft” (12:20; the simple conception of Reason, 9) the idea “daß die Vernunft die Welt beherrsche” (12:20; that Reason is the Sovereign of the World, 9) constitutes the central presupposition of his philosophical narrative of history. It would therefore be appropriate to define Hegel’s philosophy of history as a story oriented toward what I will call the “reason” narrative. Moreover, in characterizing world history as progress in the “Bewußtsein der Freiheit” (12:77; consciousness of Freedom, 49)—whereby “freedom” is defined as rational determinacy or “*Beisichsein im Anderen*”⁹ (being by oneself in the other), to borrow Ralf Beuthan’s felicitous phrase—Hegel not only postulates the finality of his philosophical narrative of history, he also postulates the need to demonstrate that the standpoint from which world history can be narrated against the yardstick of reason emerges from out of that history itself. History’s conformability to reason, in other words, can only count as assured once it has proven possible to construct world history as the production of the standpoint from which history can be told against the horizon of the “reason” narrative.

IV.

This thesis has a mediological implication that bears on my attempt to situate the relationship between the philosophy of history and historical drama in Hegel. From a mediological viewpoint, the philosopher’s demand that the world be looked at rationally means nothing less than that the historical process should be ascribed the status of a medium of reason. Historical events are displaced from the level of chance occurrence, which can at most be the object of a chronology that registers events in their empirical singularity, to the level of signs that are ascribed significance against the horizon of the “reason” narrative. One could equally describe this operation as the original semiotization of the

historical, a process that underpins Hegel’s entire project, along with the project of the German Early Romantics.¹⁰ This operation of original semiotization essentially consists in a kind of reduplication of the historical process. On the one hand, real history represents a series of individual occurrences; it belongs to the realm of nature, which Hegel rejects as the untrue. On the other hand, however, this very sequence of events becomes the signifying body of the Hegelian narrative of reason. Just as Ernst H. Kantorowicz refers in his famous book to the king’s two bodies,¹¹ a bicorporality that is subsequently transferred to the empirical populace in the Enlightenment doctrine of popular sovereignty, so one can speak analogously, in the case of Hegel’s philosophy of history, of a theory of history’s two bodies, a theory underpinned precisely by the operation I have called “original semiotization.”

It is one of the advantages of Hegelian philosophy that it does not take up a naïve position in this regard, but endeavors to account for its own mediological presupposition. The philosophical narrative of world history, in Hegel, includes a story about the becoming of the mediological situation in which this narrative becomes possible. Its reflection upon this necessity is what makes Hegel’s philosophy of history so innovative for its time, and so unique to this day. This process is concluded at the moment when all the factors that disfigure the text of history and impede its readability from the standpoint of reason are excluded or filtered out of the world-process, which is now declared to be the medium of reason itself. One may therefore characterize that aspect of his historical narrative, which thematizes both the sequence of absolute spirit’s forms of appearing and the media that support this sequence, as a narrative charged with filtering out all the disfiguring factors from the text of history. It is only by explicating this process that the relationship between historical drama and the philosophy of history comes to light in Hegel; indeed, the sites of historical drama and the philosophy of history can only be determined and referred to each other against the horizon of this explication.

V.

As far as historical drama is concerned, one can first of all say that the literary genre of drama represents “die höchste Stufe der Poesie und der Kunst” (15:474;¹² the highest stage of poetry and of art generally, 2:1158¹³) in Hegel’s philosophy of art, since in drama it is no longer—as in sculpture—the extrahuman sensuous world that is transformed into the medium of absolute spirit, “sondern der lebendige Mensch selber” (15:320; but living man himself, 2:1036). The “sprechende Individuum allein” (15:320; individual speaker [. . .] alone, 2:1036), we read in the *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Lectures on aesthetics), “ist der Träger für die sinnliche Gegenwart und Wirklichkeit” (15:320; is the support for

the perceptible presence and actuality, 2:1036) of absolute spirit. Since in drama, as in all poetic forms, the speaking individual is a medium of absolute spirit, drama constitutes a central object of philosophy, understood as the historical narrative oriented to the “reason” narrative. When Hegel seeks to seize the “Grundbegriff des Schönen” (15:573; the fundamental nature of the beautiful, 2:1237)—and hence of drama—to pursue it “durch alle Stadien hindurch, die er in seiner Realisation durchläuft” (15:573; through all the stages it has gone through in the course of its realization, 2:1237) and to seize and prove it “durch das Denken” (15:573; in thought, 2:1237), this means that a philosophical history of drama must always pay heed to the mediological aspect. In order to determine the relationship between historical drama and philosophy of history, it is crucial to note that Hegel believes the possibility of “seizing” drama “in thought” as a “realization” of absolute spirit—the possibility, that is, of considering drama philosophically—to have emerged from the history of absolute spirit’s self-realization. In ancient Greece, according to the logic of this argument, this penetration of drama by thought was not yet possible, given that at this stage of the historical process, art—and drama as its most advanced form—was itself the most advanced manifestation of the progressive self-reflection of absolute spirit. For the same reason, a philosophical aesthetics could not yet come into being. In ancient Greece, art—with drama at its fore—consequently held the position occupied by philosophy in modern times. It is therefore only consequential that in the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, world history in its Greek stage is generally regarded from the viewpoint of art. Both the subjective and the objective spirit of this epoch are explicated there according to the paradigm of artistic representation. Hegel characterizes the Greek world as the age of the “schöne[n] Individualität” (12:295; Beautiful Individuality, 250). In Greece, we read at the beginning of part 2 of the *Philosophy of History*, absolute spirit appears “in der sinnlichen Gegenwart [. . .], als der verkörperte Geist und die vergeistigte Sinnlichkeit” (12:275; in the sensuous, actual world, as Incarnate Spirit and Spiritualized Sense, 233). This by no means refers exclusively to sculpture but also and above all to poetry, especially the genre of drama. In drama, the Greek spectator first contemplates man as protagonist, as the heroic subject of the historical process. In this sense, Hegel can say that “Achill [. . .], der Homerische Jüngling aus dem Trojanischen Krieg” (12:275; Achilles [. . .], the Homeric Youth of the Trojan War, 233) is the “höchste Gestalt, die der griechischen Vorstellung vorgeschwebt hat” (12:275; highest form that floated before Greek imagination, 233). Hegel believes “solche heroische Individualitäten wie die der Fürsten” (12:285; such heroic personalities as such of the princes, 241) to be “ausgezeichnet fähig, Gegenstände der dramatischen Kunst zu sein, da sie selbständig und individuell sich entschließen [. . .]; ihre Tat und ihr Untergang ist

individuell” (12:285; remarkably suited for subjects of dramatic art on this very account—that they form their resolutions [. . .]; their conduct and their ruin is individual, 241). Hegel identifies the epochal border of Attic tragedy—and hence the epochal border in the self-mediation and self-mediatization of absolute spirit—in the fact that the heroes of tragedy “ihre Entschlüsse noch nicht aus sich selbst, sondern von ihren Orakeln hernehmen” (12:306; derive their resolves not yet from themselves, but from their Oracles, 260). “Menschliche [. . .] Subjektivität nimmt noch nicht, als unendliche, die absolute Entscheidung aus sich selbst” (12:306; Human [. . .] subjectivity, recognized as infinite, has as yet, [no] absolutely decisive authority, 260). For all that Attic tragedy may put human subjectivity on show in the medium of the dramatic actor—and therein lies its world-historical significance—this subjectivity nonetheless remains determined by something external to it, by extrahuman sensuous nature. The subjectivity represented here is thus one that does not yet fully know itself. From the perspective of philosophical speculation, what Attic tragedy stages can be characterized as the original situation of history, in which man, although already an active subject, has not yet completely escaped the thrall of nature; it is the threshold situation in which nature and history are still indistinct. Greek tragedy should therefore be defined more precisely, according to the logic of Hegelian thought, as the drama of man’s natural history. To this corresponds, under the mediological aspect, the representational medium of the living human body and the human voice.

VI.

In Hegel’s narrative, the goal of putting man’s unconditional, self-knowing subjectivity on show is first realized by dramatic poetry in its Romantic phase, stamped by the inwardization tendencies of the Christian religion. In Romantic historical drama, according to this conception, the individual acts solely from his inner resolve and is no longer motivated by any external factor. He thereby offers an image of freedom as the principle of world history. Hegel sees in this the

Hauptberuf der Dichtkunst, wenn sie ihrem Stoffe nach den Boden der Geschichtsschreibung betritt. Sie hat in diesem Falle den innersten Kern und Sinn einer Begebenheit, Handlung, eines nationalen Charakters, einer hervorragenden historischen Individualität herauszufinden, die umherspielenden Zufälligkeiten aber und gleichgültigen Beiwerke des Geschehens, die nur relativen Umstände und Charakterzüge abzustreifen und dafür solche an die Stelle zu setzen, durch welche die innere Substanz der Sache klar heraussehen kann, so daß dieselbe in dieser umgewandelten Außengestalt so

sehr ihr gemäÙes Dasein findet, daÙ sich nur erst das an und für sich Vernünftige in seiner ihm an und für sich entsprechenden Wirklichkeit entwickelt und offenbar macht. (15:266–67)

[task [. . .] to which poetry is chiefly called if in its material it treads on the ground of historical description. In this case it has to search out the inmost kernel and meaning of an event, an action, a national character, a prominent historical individual, but it has to strip away the accidents that play their part around them, and the indifferent accessories of what happened, the purely relative circumstances and traits of character, and put in their place things through which the inner substance of the thing at issue can clearly shine, so that this substance finds its adequate existence in this transformed external form to such an extent that only now is the absolutely rational developed and made manifest in an actuality absolutely in correspondence with itself. (2:993–94)]

This transformation in Romantic art of the historically active individual into a manifestation of absolute spirit once again has a mediological presupposition. For Hegel thematizes the radical change that Christianity (in its Lutheran end-stage) signifies for poetry in general, and for dramatic poetry in particular, under a mediological aspect as well. Only with the invention of the printing press does dramatic poetry go so far in “der negativen Behandlung ihres sinnlichen Elementes” (15:235; its negative treatment of its sensuous material, 2:968) that it degrades its “Entgegengesetzte[s]” (15:235; opposite.), sensuous nature, to the status of a “bedeutungslose[s] Zeichen” (15:235; meaningless sign, 2:968), whereas in Greek tragedy, (extrahuman) sensuous nature was still invested with meaning as the world-historical agent responsible for bringing about the hero’s downfall. One could say that, for Hegel, the letter is the objective embodiment of absolute spirit; it represents the most general and abstract sensuousness, reduced to the function of a signifying body and cleansed of the infirmities to which the human body is prone. “Denn gedruckte oder geschriebene Buchstaben,” Hegel writes, “sind freilich auch noch äußerlich vorhanden, jedoch nur gleichgültige Zeichen für Laute und Wörter” (15:320; For printed or written letters, it is true, are also existent externally, but they are only arbitrary signs for sounds and words, 2:1036). As a technique that allows sensuous nature to be largely excluded from the representation of the spirit, letterpress printing is thus declared to be the media-technological presupposition of Romantic art, which “nicht mehr” (15:16; no longer, 2:796) conveys “die reale, sondern eine bloÙ *vorgestellte* und für die innere Anschauung, Vorstellung und Empfindung gestaltete Äußerlichkeit” (15:16; *real* objectivity but only a purely intellectual one, one formed and shaped for inner contemplation, ideas, and feelings, 2:796).

VII.

Yet according to the logic of Hegelian philosophy, precisely this media-technological shift from orality to scripturality, objectified in the technique of letterpress printing, spells the dire end of art and poetry in general, and historical drama in particular, as adequate manifestations of absolute spirit. For even though sensuous nature may be invalidated on the level of the medium, reduced to what Hegel calls the “meaningless” function of representing the spiritual, it nonetheless returns in full force on the level of form. Hegel demands of poetry, and thus of historical drama, that it “ab[.]streife[.]” (15:267; strip away, 2:994) “die umherspielenden Zufälligkeiten [. . .] und gleichgültigen Beiwerke” (15:267; the accidents that play their part around them, and the different accessories of what happened, 2:994) and put “dafür solche an die Stelle [. . .], durch welche die innere Substanz der Sache klar heraus scheinen kann” (15:267; in their place things through which the inner substance of the thing at issue can clearly shine, 2:994). Yet he denies Romantic poetry precisely this capacity to represent the matter itself, world history, since he sees imagined sensuousness—that is, individual expression—splitting off in such poetry from the spirituality it is supposed to represent. Hegel distinguishes between an “*eigentliche*[n]” (15:279; imitative or literal, 2:1003) and an “*uneigentliche*[n]” (15:279; non-imitative or metaphorical, 2:1003) mode of depiction, and this latter kind introduces a further difference. According to this distinction, whereas

das eigentliche Bild [. . .] nur die Sache in der ihr zugehörigen Realität dar[.]stellt, [verweilt] der uneigentliche Ausdruck dagegen [. . .] nicht unmittelbar bei dem Gegenstande selbst, sondern geht zur Schilderung eines anderen, zweiten über, durch welchen uns die Bedeutung des ersten klar und anschaulich werden soll. Metaphern, Bilder, Gleichnisse usf. gehören zu dieser Weise der poetischen Vorstellung. Hier wird dem Inhalte, um den es zu tun ist, noch eine davon verschiedene Hülle hinzugefügt, welche teils nur als Schmuck dient, teils auch zur näheren Erklärung nicht vollständig kann genutzt werden, da sie nur nach einer bestimmten Seite hin zu jenem ersten Inhalt gehört (15:279)

[the imitative or literal picture presents only the thing in the reality that belongs to it, [. . .] the non-imitative or metaphorical expression does not linger directly with the object itself but proceeds to the description of a second different one through which the meaning of the first is to become clear and perceptible to us. Metaphors, images, similes, etc., belong to this sort of poetical expression. In these cases the subject-matter in question has added to it a veil different from it which sometimes serves only as a decoration but sometimes cannot

be used altogether as a clearer explanation of it because it is appropriate to only one of its aspects. (2:1003–4)]

In Hegel's view, the subjectivity realized in Romantic poetry, the poetic imagination, seals itself off in the individuality of poetic expressions and becomes baseless, as it were: "Ihr ist es dann nicht darum zu tun, sich nur die Sache bestimmt und anschaulich vorzustellen; im Gegenteil, der metaphorische Gebrauch dieser weiter abliegenden Erscheinungen wird für sich selber Zweck" (15:280; Consequently this poetry has nothing to do with merely presenting something definitely and visibly, for on the contrary the metaphorical use of these far-removed phenomena becomes in it an end on its own account, 2:1004). Hegel's construction of world history may be characterized in mediological terms as a progressive exclusion of sensuousness from the representational process with the goal of distilling an ever-purer representation of reason; that is why the autonomy accorded the sensuous element in Romantic art at the level of form, when compared with the stage in the self-reflection of absolute spirit attained with writing, must appear as deficient and even retrograde. Hegel accordingly describes "das Metaphorische und Bildliche" (15:280; what is metaphorical and figurative, 2:1005) as "überhaupt relativ immer undeutlich und unrichtig" (15:280; always relatively unclear and inaccurate, 2:1005). The result, he writes, is

daß nun die prosaischen Kommentatoren der Poeten viel zu tun haben, ehe es ihnen gelingt, durch ihre verständigen Analysen Bild und Bedeutung zu trennen, aus der lebendigen Gestalt den abstrakten Inhalt herauszuziehen und dadurch dem prosaischen Bewußtsein das Verständnis poetischer Vorstellungsweisen eröffnen zu können (15:281)

[that prosaic commentators on poetry have a lot of trouble before they succeed by their intellectual analyses in separating meaning and image, extracting the abstract content from the living shape, and thereby disclosing to the prosaic consciousness an understanding of the poetic way of putting thing (2:1005)]

For Hegel, the emergence of philology as a hermeneutic discipline and the concurrent emergence of philosophical aesthetics, which occurs even as the sensuous element takes on a life of its own in Romantic art, represents a corrective and an attempt at objectivation, so to speak. Philology and philosophical aesthetics both seek to relate the poetic work of art—historical drama, in our case—to the same stage in the self-reflection of absolute spirit from which it simultaneously disqualifies itself through the individuality of its poetic expression. Whence the following paradox: historical drama calls for philosophical commentary at the very moment when it succeeds for the first time in demonstrating freedom as the

principle of history, the moment when, emancipating itself at the level of content from Attic tragedy's indebtedness to natural history, it becomes the drama of world history. At the same time, however, this means that historical drama dissolves as a manifestation appropriate to absolute spirit, in so far as "der Zweck aller Kunst" (15:572; the goal of all art, 2:1236) "die durch den Geist hervorgebrachte Identität" (15:572; identity, produced by the spirit, 2:1236) only appears at the moment of its "Selbsterstörung" (15:573; self-destruction, 2:1236). The philosophical interpretation of historical drama—one could speak here of allegoresis—salvages the idea of history in historical drama from its concealment under a self-sufficient metaphorical layer, so redeeming historical drama for the present, whereas the poetic form of historical drama is consigned to the past of the philosophy of history.¹⁴ In mediological terms, one could say that the shift from orality to scripturality, from voice to letter, as the greatest possible degree to which the sensuous element can be excluded from the self-reflection process of spirit, is first accomplished at the level of form by the philosophical concept. As the form appropriate to the medium of the letter, the concept is accorded a status strictly denied the image in the horizon of Hegel's logocentric thought.

The reduction of the isolated historical event to the function of a signifying body for the Hegelian philosophy of history has far-reaching consequences. For this reduction effaces the poetic act that also underlies the identity-philosophical story of world history. The philosopher of identity attempts to eliminate every trace of particularity from his historical narrative by claiming the insignificance of the sign-bearer and by representing the philosophical narrative as a self-steering spiral of reflection that ascends via the dialectic of form and content. By means of this reflective movement, spirit is able to transcend the finitude of objective spirit and thereby produce from within itself the standpoint from which a story of world history oriented toward the reason-narrative can appear as justified.

VIII.

Modern historical drama, on the other hand, does not permit such a spiritual ascent—that is to say, the reduction of isolated historical events to the function of a meaningless signifying body—in so far as it makes the poetic act, and hence the semiotization of the isolated historical event or individual, the object of the representation. It thereby foregrounds the premodern, storytelling dimension of the term "history." In this sense, Goethe's *Egmont* (1788)—which I have in mind here as paradigmatic for the genre of historical drama—takes for its object of representation the very process by which the historical figure of Count Egmont is semiotized—that is, the poetic elevation of this figure into the protagonist of a historical narrative.

Goethe's *Egmont* is a drama that depicts a historical event on stage.¹⁵ The play centers around the revolt of the Netherlands against Spanish rule and the process behind the formation of the Dutch nation. In *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Truth and fiction relating to my life), Goethe notes: "Nachdem ich im 'Götz von Berlichingen' das Symbol einer bedeutenden Weltepoche nach meiner Art abgespiegelt hatte, sah ich mich nach einem ähnlichen Wendepunkt der Staatengeschichte sorgfältig um. Der Aufstand der Niederlande gewann meine Aufmerksamkeit" (HA 10:170; Following the reflection, made in my specific manner, on the symbol of a significant world epoch in *Götz von Berlichingen*, I looked carefully for a similar turning point in political history. The revolt of the Netherlands attracted my attention). Yet Friedrich Schiller's criticism of Goethe's second historical drama, published in the *Jenaische[n] Allgemeine[n] Litteraturzeitung*, already indicates that the play is not confined to being a dramatic revelation of a turning point in political history. Schiller, the author of the historical drama *Don Carlos* as well as of the essay *Geschichte des Abfalls der Vereinigten Niederlande von der spanischen Regierung* (The history of the revolt of the Netherlands), deems Goethe's choice of Egmont, the titular character of the historical drama, completely unintelligible. Unlike William of Orange, who is nobilitated in Schiller's essay to a "Bürger der Welt" (citizen of the world), Egmont "ist nie mehr als ein Fläminger gewesen" (has never been more than a Fleming),¹⁶ thus, not a world-historical subject who partakes in the teleologically directed occurrences of the moralization of the human race: "In der Geschichte ist Egmont kein großer Charakter, er ist es auch in dem Trauerspiele nicht" (In history Egmont is not a significant character, neither is he one in the tragedy). "Hier," Schiller notes, "ist er ein wohlwollender, heiterer und offener Mensch, [. . .] ein fröhliches Weltkind";¹⁷ (Here he is a well-meaning, jovial and open person, [. . .] a cheerful worldling).

The fact that Goethe chooses Egmont as the titular character of a historical drama indicates that something far more complex than just a simple representation of what could be described with Hegel as objective history is at stake here. Hegel's notion would perhaps have found a more adequate personification in William of Orange. Thereby to clarify the question of what is at stake in *Egmont*, the final scene is of particular importance, a scene that Schiller merely recognizes as a questionable "Salto mortale in eine Opernwelt";¹⁸ (*salto mortale* into an opera world). In this final scene Egmont is elevated to a symbolic figure or, as Jane K. Brown has it, allegory,¹⁹ in whose image the Dutch people unify and rise against the Spanish foreign powers. Egmont's dream, in which Clara "ihm andeutet, daß sein Tod den Provinzen die Freiheit verschaffen werde" (HA 4:453; indicate[s] to him that his death will bring freedom to the provinces, 113)²⁰ is underpinned by the "Siegesymphonie" (HA

4:454; symphony expressive of victory, 114) with whose chime the curtains fall. Intertwined in this dramatic representation of a turning point in political history is the representation of the process that transforms Egmont into a symbol of the Dutch fight for freedom. Goethe's play is concerned with the confirmation of history as a represented event, as well as the way in which this representation is formed, or, in other words, how the relationship between political history and its modes of representation can be determined.

IX.

Upon the symbolization of the title figure, as described above, all occurrences in the play are aligned. Thus, in the first scene of the first act, "Armbrustschießen" (Shooting the crossbow), an image of the absent Egmont is conceived. Already in the first sequences it is the aura of the title figure that allows the representatives of the various provinces of the Netherlands to unify for the first time. Upon his victory, Buyck, the Hollandish crossbow champion, wants to treat his fellow shooters: "Ein König nährt seine Leute; und so, auf des Königs Rechnung, Wein her!" (HA 4:371; A king supports and feeds his people; so, wine!, 10). Contrary to Buyck's invitation, however, Jetter, citing the Brussels convention, raises an objection. Therewith an obvious divide between the individual provinces becomes apparent. In this instance only Ruysum's recourse to Egmont positions him in a way that allows him to reconcile the disagreement: referring to Buyck, he says "Laßt ihn! doch ohne Präjudiz! Das ist auch seines Herren Art, splendid zu sein und es laufen zu lassen, wo es gedeiht" (HA 4:371-72; Let him do as he likes! Under protest, of course! 'Tis his master's way to be magnificent, and to have things done in a first-rate style, 10). In Egmont's name, a sense of unification among the disparate crowd emerges. Egmont's aura, which develops in the conversation, is thus not reliant on the grandeur of an absolute "other," which effectively confronts the simple folk with an insurmountable feeling of strangeness and aloofness. Such a fundamental sense of alienation is better associated with the Spanish king, of whom it is said: "Er ließ sich nicht sehen, da er hier war, als in Prunk und königlichem Staate" (HA 4:372; When he was here he never showed except in pomp and royal state, 11). Contrastingly, of Egmont it is said:

Warum ist alle Welt dem Grafen Egmont so hold? Warum trügen wir ihn alle auf den Händen? Weil man ihm ansieht, daß er uns wohlwill; weil ihm die Fröhlichkeit, das freie Leben, die gute Meinung aus den Augen sieht; weil er nichts besitzt, das er dem Dürftigen nicht mitteilte, auch dem, der's nicht bedarf! (HA 4:372)

[Why is every one so fond of Count Egmont? why would we all carry him on our hands? Why, because only look at him and you see he likes us; good fellowship, kindness, are in his eye; because he has nothing he wouldn't share with a needy man, ay, and with a man who needs it not. Long live Count Egmont! (11)]

The image of carrying Egmont in their hands expresses the nature of Egmont's aura: from within their ranks the Dutch transform one of their own into a symbolic figure. With the transformation of Egmont into a symbolic figure, who, due to Ruysum and Buyck's witness accounts is elevated to the legend of the "Überwinder bei St. Quintin" (HA 4:372; Conqueror of St. Quintin, 12) and "Helden von Gravelingen" (HA 4:372; Hero of Gravelines, 12) the play, thus, deals with the representation of an act of the symbolic self-formation of the Dutch nation *in statu nascendi*. This act of symbolic self-formation can be specifically described as an operation of the metonymic shift: this is to say, one individual from the masses is attributed, by the very masses themselves, the function to represent them. Through this act the mass becomes a collective. In *Egmont*, the symbolic level of the collective can be observed as an act of the collective's self-representation of its pragmatic life-contexts; the narrative is based on experience in order to once again inspire the action of the collective. If Goethe is attempting to represent on stage a "turning point of the political history," this historical event does not only produce the material of his drama. In such turning points, he observes, above all, a prefigured dialectical relationship between historical events and their symbolic representation. At their turning point, historical events urge, according to their implications, the masses to take it upon themselves to transform events into images and thereby, through this very medium, once again become mobile and orientated. The symbolic formation of a historical collective follows with a dialectical nexus that resonates between content and form, the historical event in a measured form purges itself from within, and this indeed implies the meaningfulness of historical events. In this instance Goethe's view of representation comes very close to Hegel's narrative of reason. Goethe therewith claims that the status of the past is a focal point for a historical collective, through which this very action is guided by their self produced images of their past. Elsewhere, he speaks very much of the past as "der Zeiten Bildersaal" (WA 1.2:224; picture gallery of past-times). Goethe conceptualizes history as a synchronous image space that ultimately serves the collective, like individuals, as a medial space for identity construction.

This diagnosis of the play's inherent reflection on the relationship between objective history and the form of its representation as a process of metonymic displacement is confirmed *ex negativo* in the second scene of the first act, "Palast der Regentin" (Palace of the regent). In this scene

the Spanish regent, Margaret of Parma enters into a conversation with her advisor Machiavel about an encounter she had had with Egmont: "Ich kann es gestehen, daß mir Egmont heute einen recht innerlichen tiefen Verdruß erregte" (HA 4:380; I must own, then, that Egmont this very day has deeply annoyed and irritated me, 20). Following questioning by her counterpart she names the reason: "Durch sein gewöhnliches [Betragen], durch Gleichgültigkeit und Leichtsinn" (HA 4:380; By his ordinary manner—his usual indifference and levity of conduct, 20) the Dutchman had uncomfortably provoked her. The image substantiates itself further in Machiavell's retort: "Egmont [geht] einen freien Schritt, als wenn die Welt ihm gehörte. [. . .] Die Augen des Volks sind alle nach ihm gerichtet, und die Herzen hängen an ihm" (HA 4:381; Egmont [. . .] steps forth freely as though he were master of the whole world. [. . .] The eyes of the people are all centered on him, and in their hearts they adore him, 22). Margaret replies:

Seine Gesellschaften, Gastmahle und Gelage haben den Adel mehr verbunden und verknüpft als die gefährlichsten heimlichen Zusammenkünfte. Mit seinen Gesundheiten haben die Gäste einen dauernden Rausch, einen nie sich verziehenden Schwindel geschöpft. Wie oft setzt er durch seine Scherzreden die Gemüter des Volks in Bewegung (HA 4:381)

[His social gatherings, banquets, and suppers, have done more to unite and cement the nobles together, than the most dangerous secret associations. In listening to his toasts his guests have imbibed a permanent frenzy, a giddiness of brain that does not pass away. How often have his quips stirred the feeling of the people. (22)]

What worries the Spanish regent even more than William of Orange's conspiratorial plots is Egmont's aura. Margaret realizes that Egmont presents the threat of a radical change to the symbolic order, which in itself could potentially end the Spanish rule of the Netherlands. This is because the symbols of the Spanish rulers remain alien to the lives and times of the Dutch nation. As is evidenced in this scene, the relationship of objective history to the form of its representation, therefore, is not arbitrary but rather dialectical and, in this sense, dialectics are seminal to the historical process.

X.

A third aspect of the symbolic formation of the Dutch people in the image of Egmont is finally represented. This is apparent in the third scene of the first act, "Bürgerhaus" (Citizen's house) where Egmont's image is once again conceptualized. The symbolization process transforms and can be viewed in quite a different light compared to the previous scenes.²¹

During the course of the scene Clara informs her mother: "Gestern, denkt, gingen von seinen Leuten vorbei und sangen Lobliedchen auf ihn. Wenigstens war sein Name in den Liedern!" (HA 4:386; Yesterday, only think, some of his people passed by here, singing songs in his honour. At all events, his name I heard in the song, 29). Furthermore, Egmont's transfiguration by the people is reflected in Clara's words about the woodcut, which she only recently encountered:

Es war die Schlacht bei Gravelingen, und ich finde oben im Bilde den Buchstaben C. und suche unten in der Beschreibung C. Steht da: "Graf Egmont, dem das Pferd unter dem Leibe totgeschossen wird." Mich überließ—und hernach muß ich lachen über den holzgeschnitzten Egmont, der so groß war als der Turm von Gravelingen gleich dabei und die englischen Schiffe an der Seite.—Wenn ich mich manchmal erinnere, wie ich mir sonst eine Schlacht vorgesellt, und was ich mir als Mädchen für ein Bild vom Grafen Egmont machte, wenn sie von ihm erzählten, und von allen Grafen und Fürsten—und wie mir's jetzt ist! (HA 4:387)

[It was the battle of Gravelines, and I found in the picture the letter C, and looked at the description beneath of it. There it was—"Count Egmont, and his horse shot under him." I felt a shudder, but afterwards couldn't help smiling at the figure of Egmont in the woodcut; he was as tall as the tower of Gravelines hard by and the English ships at the side. Sometimes, when I recollect my early notions of a battle, and what sort of a picture as a girl I drew of Count Egmont, when they used to talk of him, and of all the other counts and princes—and then think of me now! (29)]

Through the manner in which Clara describes her reaction to the formation of the Dutch national consciousness in the image of Egmont, a discrepancy between Egmont's symbolic status on the one hand and Clara's own experience of the living individual Egmont on the other can be observed. Against the background of their affectionate intimacy, Clara views Egmont's symbolic distinction as being grotesque. For Clara, Egmont appears torn up inside: namely, the result of the conflict between national symbolic figure on the one hand, and the living trusted person on the other. One can also refer to a hiatus, which resonates between Egmont's two bodies; a conflict between his living body and the dignity of a signifying body. Commencing from the third scene of Goethe's play, the focus of the dramatic representation shifts from a reflection of the formative aspect of the form-content relationship of the Dutch collective identity *in statu nascendi*, as occurred in the first two scenes, toward a reflection of the medial status of the Egmont figure that, through metonymic displacement, has been transformed to the level of the image.

What is being staged here, so to speak, is the status of the symbolic level as a distinct relation to the real spheres. The representation of this difference—namely, the difference evident between the symbolic sphere and the real—will be constructed and solidified in various ways in the following scenes as a tense relationship between Egmont's two bodies. This tension will be exposed, most importantly, by relying on the fact that as long as Egmont lives, the Dutch people expect him to appear as a messianic instance, instead of recognizing their own capacity to act as a capable collective in his image. In this sense, in a conversation about the drastically intensified oppression and the flight of the Dutch princes upon Alva's arrival at the beginning of the fourth act, Soest remarks: "Graf Egmont ist noch da" (HA 4:417; Count Egmont is still here, 68) and Jetter replies: "Gott sei Dank! Stärken ihn alle Heiligen, daß er sein Bestes tut; der ist allein was vermögend" (HA 4:417; Thank God for that! Now may all the saints strengthen him to do his very utmost! He is the only man who can do us any good, 68). The apparent hiatus, based on Clara's perspective in the first act, between Egmont's two bodies will remain uncertain and vague (with consequences for the symbolic formation of the Dutch nation) so long as Egmont lives; namely, as long as the real and the symbolic spheres are not distinctly disseminated. Only upon Egmont's death can he become a medium for the formation of the Dutch people, that is to say, this is only possible following his final departure from the sphere of the real and thereby only live on in the national narrative, that is only as an image.

Acts 2 to 4 expose the inability of the Dutch to exercise a collective identity as a result of the lack of distinction between the spheres of the real and the symbolic, therewith the final scene stages the dissemination of these spheres as a condition for the symbolic formation of the Dutch nation. At the beginning, Silva relays the proclamation of the death sentence imposed on Egmont by the Spanish governor, the Duke of Alva. After Silva leaves the prison, only Alva's son Ferdinand remains in the dungeon with the convict. Uncertain about the reason of Ferdinand's presence, Egmont relays his opinion of Alva's actions and motives for imposing his death sentence: "mich hat der Eingebildete beneidet" (HA 4:446; long has the haughty man envied me, 105). Alva, the "Ruhmsüchtige" (HA 4:446; ambitious man, 105), envies Egmont's renown among the Dutch people, his aura, which Alva was made well aware of years before when Egmont defeated him in a duel: "Ich überwand ihn; seine Kugel irrte, die meine traf; ein lauter Freudenschrei der Meinigen durchbrach die Luft" (HA 4:447; I had the best of it: his ball missed; mine hit the mark; a shout of joy from my friends rent the air, 105). Egmont not only views his death sentence as a means to eliminate him as a political opponent, however, but also to destroy his aura. This is because Alva, similar to Margaret previously, recognizes Egmont's aura

as a source capable of strengthening the Dutch resistance against the Spanish rule. This motive is all the more difficult as Egmont's aura even captivates Alva's own son, Ferdinand, as Goethe allows him to confess:

Dein Name war's, der mir in meiner ersten Jugend gleich einem Stern des Himmels entgegenleuchtete. Wie oft hab ich nach dir gehorcht, gefragt! Des Kindes Hoffnung ist der Jüngling, des Jünglings der Mann. So bist du vor mir her geschritten; immer vor, und ohne Neid sah ich dich vor, und schritt dir nach, und fort und fort. Nun hofft ich endlich dich zu sehen, und sah dich, und mein Herz flog dir entgegen. Dich hatt ich mir bestimmt, und wählte dich aufs neue, da ich dich sah. (HA 4:448–49)

[It was your name which in the early days of my youth shone before me like a star of heaven. How often have I inquired and asked after you! The child's ideal is the youth, the youth's ideal is the man. Thus, you were always in advance of me, and I saw you without envy in front of me, and constantly stepped after you. At last I hoped to see you; I did see you, and my heart flew towards you. I fixed on you as my model, and when once I saw you, I chose you once again. (107–8)]

Through the young Spaniard's confession it becomes apparent that, in principle, Alva has already failed in his desired revenge: contrary to what he hopes, Ferdinand's encounter with the chained and convicted Egmont has in no way diminished Egmont's aura and dignity for Ferdinand. Egmont helps Ferdinand to overcome his desperation, which is derived from the fact that he must witness the model of his own self-conception, humiliated and even killed by his own father. Egmont does this by offering himself to the young man as his idol: "War dir mein Leben ein Spiegel, in welchem du dich gerne betrachtetest, so sei es auch mein Tod" (HA 4:450; If my life was a mirror, where you saw yourself reflected so gladly, so also let my death be, 110). However, in this scene Egmont remains among the living, and as a living individual he too is afforded a medium in order to be certain of himself. Ferdinand's confession offers him such a medium at first: "Durch ihn bin ich der Sorgen los und der Schmerzen, der Furcht und jedes ängstlichen Gefühls" (HA 4:452; Through him I am now quit of care and sorrow, fear, and every anxious thought, 112). From a mediological point of view, it is of crucial importance to note that it is not the reflection in Alva's son's confession that affords Egmont the final self-confidence that he needs to confront the executioner in a dignified and composed manner. That which is introduced through Egmont's encounter with the young Spaniard locates an increased ability in his dream vision, in which the sleeping Clara appears. In contrast to Ferdinand the young lady no longer exists among the living

as she did in the preceding scene, as nature called from her "ihren letzten Zoll" (HA 4:452; her last tribute, 112). It is the deceased Clara, not the living Ferdinand, who becomes the medium for Egmont's final self-assurance. This determination to serve his beloved as a medium, in the case of the female figure, is already signified through her spoken name: "Clara." However, it is only upon her death that, for Egmont, she gains the clarity of a mirror, in which he is finally able to clarify his identity:

Die Freiheit in himmlischem Gewande, von einer Klarheit umflossen, ruht auf einer Wolke. Sie hat die Züge von Klärchen und neigt sich gegen den schlafenden Helden. Sie drückt eine bedauernde Empfindung aus, sie scheint ihn zu beklagen. Bald faßt sie sich, und mit aufmunternder Gebärde zeigt sie ihm das Bündel Pfeile, dann den Stab mit dem Hute. Sie heißt ihn froh sein, und indem sie ihm andeutet, daß sein Tod den Provinzen die Freiheit verschaffen werde, erkennt sie ihn als Sieger und reicht ihm einen Lorbeerkranz. (HA 4:453)

[Freedom, draped like an angel, with a halo, rests upon a cloud. Her features are like CLARA'S, and she bends towards the sleeping hero. Her expression is sad, she seems to pity him. She soon recovers herself, and with animated gesture shows him the bundle of arrows, then the staff and cap. She bids him be of good cheer, and whilst indicating to him that his death will bring freedom to the provinces, she acknowledges him as a conqueror, and holds out to him a laurel crown. (12–13)]

Being adorned by his deceased beloved and therewith being declared a symbolic figure of the Dutch freedom fight, it is the anticipation of his own mirror function that serves as a haven for his identity construction. This, however, only happens following his role of having served Clara as a medium during her death scene, in order to make the meaningfulness of her death clear to her. Her medial function for Egmont is the entelechy of her existence. Egmont, on his behalf, can fulfill this reflective function for Clara only when she, following her failed attempts to free him, anticipates his death in her despairing imagination:

Die Tyrannei ermordet in der Nacht den Herrlichen! vor allen Augen verborgen fließt sein Blut. Ängstlich im Schlafe liegt das betäubte Volk und träumt von Rettung, träumt ihres ohnmächtigen Wunsches Erfüllung; indes, unwillig über uns, sein Geist die Welt verläßt. Er ist dahin! (HA 4:441)

[Tyranny will murder the noble one in the night time! His blood flows unseen by all human eyes. The bewildered people lie in anxious slumber, dreaming of deliverance, dreaming of the fulfillment

of the impotent hopes, whilst his spirit, indignant with us, forsakes
the world. He is dead! (99)]

In the final scene of Goethe's historical drama, an escalation consequently occurs in the reflection process: instead of presenting a reality outside of themselves, the mediums reflect one another. This leads to the medium (as such) returning to the center of the representation. The final scene of *Egmont* is not merely interested in the dramatic representation of the historical occurrences of the Dutch revolution; neither is it only concerned with the representation of the symbolic formation of the Dutch nation in the image of Egmont. Of greater significance in the final scene is that Goethe's historical drama becomes a representation of the medium itself—it is concerned with the representation of a distinctive symbolic sphere and its function for the formation of a historical collective. What displeases the young Schiller as a "*salto mortale* into an opera world" is that it allows itself to consequently be read as a self-representation of drama as a medium of history, indeed as a self-representation of the medium of the historical drama.

Unlike Hegel, whose work on the concept of history declares the signifying body (as the other of the concept) as meaningless—and thereby excludes it from the self-reflection of the historical process—Goethe's historical drama stages the trialectics of content, form, and medium, meaning that the consciousness of image is seminal to the symbolic formation of the historical process. Goethe's above-cited comparison of the past as "time's picture gallery" is thus meant to be taken literally. Unlike Hegel's work on the *concept* of history, Goethe's work on the *image* of history does not skim over the level of the medium itself. Thereby, Goethe's poetic strategy in *Egmont* corresponds with Jacques Derrida's claim that: "Ou bien l'écriture n'a jamais été un simple 'supplément,' ou bien il est urgent de construire une nouvelle logique du 'supplément'"²² (either writing was never a simple "supplement," or it is urgently necessary to construct a new logic of the "supplement."²³) In doing so, Goethe's *Egmont* not only clearly demonstrates the difference between the two bodies of history, it also makes visible the poetic operation of semiotization as an intrinsically meaningful act from which the second body—the signifying body—emerges. This means that the hierarchization of image and concept attempted by Hegel's historical narrative, driven by the reduction of the historical individual to a supposedly meaningless function as a signifying body, collapses in itself, since the production of the absolute standpoint from which the succession of historical events can be narrated, as world history, against the yardstick of reason, now appears as a progressive exclusion of the historical individual. It can be said that Hegel, in this respect, is haunted by Goethe's ghost.

—Translated by Robert Savage and Erik Beyersdorf

Notes

For translating this text from German into English, I am grateful to Robert Savage and Erik Beyersdorf. Robert Savage translated the Hegel part, Erik Beyersdorf the part on Goethe. All translations from cited works are by the translators unless otherwise noted.

¹ Dieter Henrich, "Kunst und Kunstphilosophie der Gegenwart (Überlegungen mit Rücksicht auf Hegel)," in *Immanente Ästhetik: Ästhetische Reflexion: Lyrik als Paradigma der Moderne: Kolloquium Köln 1964. Vorlagen und Verhandlungen (=Poetik und Hermeneutik II)*, ed. Wolfgang Iser (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1966), 17.

² Dieter Henrich, "Art and Philosophy of Art Today: Reflections with Reference to Hegel," in *New Perspectives in German Literary Criticism: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Richard E. Amacher and Victor Lange, trans. David Henry Wilson et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 116.

³ All quotes from Reinhart Koselleck, "Geschichte, Historie," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Klett, 1975), 593–94.

⁴ Regarding the formation of Hegel's concept of world history, see Ralf Beuthan, "Formen der Geschichte—Geschichte der Formen: Zum Gedächtnis des Jenaer Hegel," in *Geschichtlichkeit der Vernunft beim Jenaer Hegel*, ed. Ralf Beuthan (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006), 109–10.

⁵ Klaus Vieweg, *Skepsis und Freiheit: Hegel über den Skeptizismus zwischen Philosophie und Literatur* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2007), 259.

⁶ Vieweg, *Skepsis und Freiheit*, 258.

⁷ Unless otherwise stated, Hegel's philosophy of history is quoted from *Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), and is cited parenthetically by volume and page number.

⁸ Unless otherwise stated, the English translation is quoted from *On the Philosophy of History*, translated from third German edition by J. Sibree (London: G. Bohn, 1857).

⁹ Beuthan, "Formen der Geschichte—Geschichte der Formen," 105.

¹⁰ Regarding the concepts of semiotization of the real in German early romanticism see Franz-Josef Deiters, *Auf dem Schauplatz des "Volkes": Strategien der Selbstzuschreibung intellektueller Identität von Herder bis Büchner und darüber hinaus* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2006), 68–71.

¹¹ See Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

¹² Unless otherwise stated, Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* are quoted from *Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), and are cited parenthetically by volume and page number.

¹³ The English translation is quoted from *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975).

¹⁴ Hegel's famous thesis of the end of art has provoked very different readings, two of which shall be quoted here to mark out the controversy in Hegel scholarship. Rüdiger Bubner, on the one hand, has stated apodictically: "Wenn Hegel der Kunst ein Fortleben zugestanden hat, so nur als permanentem Biedermeier" (Rüdiger Bubner, *Ästhetische Erfahrung* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989], 47; If Hegel conceded art a continued existence then only in the mode of a permanent Biedermeier). Klaus Vieweg's reading, on the other hand, is diametrically opposed: "Ende der Kunst impliziert in keiner Weise den Untergang oder die Todesanzeige der Kunst, im Gegenteil: es handelt sich um *den Anfang der Entfaltung freier Kunst—in ihrer Freiheit ist die schöne Kunst erst wahrhafte Kunst*" (Vieweg, *Skepsis und Freiheit*, 284; End of art does not connote in any way the demise or the announcement of death of art, on the contrary: what is involved here is *the beginning of the development of an independent art—"only in its independence the beautiful art becomes true art"*). Both Bubner and Vieweg refer to Henrich (see Henrich, "Art and Philosophy of Art Today"), Vieweg takes up Henrich in a productively updating way, whereas Bubner opts for a rather polemical attitude. Yet, none of the opponents would take into consideration the aspect of mediality.

¹⁵ Jane K. Brown has argued that in Goethe's *Egmont*, history only serves as a point of departure while the central theme of the play is the transformation of Rousseau's concept of subjectivity into a Romantic concept of the subject. See: Jane K. Brown, "Egmonts Dämon: Die Erfindung des Subjekts," in *Ironie und Subjektivität. Aufsätze zu Goethe* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), 16, 32. For readings of *Egmont* as a historical drama, see especially Jürgen Schröder, "Poetische Erlösung der Geschichte. Goethes *Egmont*," in *Geschichte als Schauspiel*, ed. Walter Hinck (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 101–15; and Friedrich Sengle, *Das historische Drama in Deutschland: Geschichte eines literarischen Mythos* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974), 46–48; also see Franz-Josef Deiters, "'Du bist nur Bild': Die Selbstbegründung des Geschichtsdramas in Goethes *Egmont*," in *Geschichtserfahrung im Spiegel der Literatur: Festschrift für Jürgen Schröder zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Cornelia Blasberg and Franz-Josef Deiters (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2000), 65–88. This earlier essay has served as a basis for the reflections on Goethe's play in the present essay.

¹⁶ Friedrich Schiller, "Geschichte des Abfalls der Vereinigten Niederlande von der spanischen Regierung," in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert, vol. 4 (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1959, reprinted 1993), 97.

¹⁷ Friedrich Schiller, "Über *Egmont*," in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert, vol. 5 (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1959, reprinted 1993), 934.

¹⁸ Schiller, "Über *Egmont*," 942.

¹⁹ See Jane K. Brown, *The Persistence of Allegory. Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 204–5.

²⁰ Unless otherwise stated, the English translation of the play is quoted from *Egmont. A Tragedy*, trans. Arthur Duke Coleridge (London: Chapman & Hall, 1868).

²¹ Also see Jane K. Brown who argues convincingly that with the shift from the scene "Palast der Regentin" to the scene "Bürgerhaus," Goethe's drama shifts from the concept of the political to the sentimental tragedy (Jane K. Brown, "Egmonts Dämon," 18–19).

²² Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 17.

²³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 7.

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Contributors

HELLMUT AMMERLAHN, professor emeritus at the University of Washington, specializes in German literature, aesthetics, and intellectual history from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century and also in Western comparative literature. His scholarship focuses on elucidating complex structural and symbolic/allegorical interrelationships in Goethe's works. Recent publications deal with Goethe's theories of perception and cognition and his representation of human creativity. They include monographs on Goethe's artist drama *Torquato Tasso* (1990) as well as on his *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (2003), analyzed in the context of Goethe's literary, critical, scientific, and biographical writings.

BENJAMIN BENNETT is Kenan Professor of German and comparative literature at the University of Virginia. His specialties include Goethe, European literature of the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, and the history and theory of the dramatic theater. His most recent books, *Goethe as Woman* (2001), *All Theater Is Revolutionary Theater* (2005), *The Dark Side of Literacy* (2008), and *Aesthetics as Secular Millennialism* (2013), deal with the relation between literature and politics.

RICHARD BLOCK is an associate professor of Germanics and an affiliate of the programs in Jewish Studies, European Studies, and Theory and Criticism at the University of Washington. He is the author of *The Spell of Goethe: Vacation, Magic and the Attraction of Goethe* (Wayne State University Press, 2006). He is currently finishing a manuscript entitled "Echoes of a Queer Messianic: From Frankenstein to Brokeback Mountain." Other writings include essays on Schelling, Kleist, Nietzsche, Trakl, Benjamin, Althusser, and Twombly.

DIETER BORCHMEYER is professor emeritus of German at the Universität Heidelberg and president of the Bavarian Academy of the Arts. He has published widely on literature of the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries and on music theater, including monographs on Goethe, Schiller, Mozart, Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, and Thomas Mann. *Drama and the World of Richard Wagner* appeared with Princeton University Press in 2003.

FRANZ-JOSEF DEITERS is associate professor of German at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, and a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. His research areas range across the history of German literature and culture from the eighteenth century to the present, the field of literary theory, especially the theory of authorship and the theory and history of drama and theatre, as well as the intersections of literature and philosophy. Present research projects include the mediology of theatre, the theory of authorship, and the narratives of work in German literature and culture.

RICHARD T. GRAY is the Byron W. and Alice L. Lockwood Professor in the Humanities at the University of Washington. He is the author of *Money Matters: Economics and the German Cultural Imagination, 1770–1850* (2008); *A Franz Kafka Encyclopedia*, with Ruth V. Gross, Rolf Goebel, and Clayton Koelb (2005); *About Face: German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz* (2004); *Stations of the Divided Subject: Contestation and Ideological Legitimation in German Bourgeois Literature, 1770–1912* (1995); and *Constructive Destruction: Kafka's Aphorisms; Literary Tradition and Literary Transformation* (1987).

MARTHA B. HELFER is professor of German and chair of the Department of Germanic, Russian, and East European Languages and Literatures at Rutgers University. Her publications include *The Word Unheard: Legacies of Anti-Semitism in German Literature and Culture*; *The Retreat of Representation: The Concept of "Darstellung" in German Critical Discourse*; *Rereading Romanticism* (ed.); *Commitment and Compassion: Essays on Georg Büchner* (co-edited with Patrick Fortmann); *Nexus: Essays on German Jewish Studies* (co-edited with William Collins Donahue); and essays on Romanticism, Droste-Hülshoff, and gender studies.

MEREDITH LEE is professor emerita of German and former dean of undergraduate education at the University of California, Irvine. She has served as president of the Goethe Society of North America and as a board member of the international Goethe Gesellschaft in Weimar. Her research focuses on Goethe, German poetry, and the relationship of music and German literature.

CLARK MUENZER has taught in the Department of German at the University of Pittsburgh since 1979. He is the current president of the Goethe Society of North America (elected 2012). In addition to a monograph on Goethe's novels, a series of recent articles examines the intersection of Goethe's literary, scientific, and aesthetic works with philosophy. A book-length project entitled "Chaotic Metaphysics" is nearing completion. It draws on the conceptual language of Goethe's scientific and

poetic works to investigate exemplary thought-objects of the Goethean imagination as part of a transformational ontology that re-constructs the world, or the "what of being," in terms of its "ways of becoming."

ANDREW PIPER is associate professor of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and associate member of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill University. His work focuses on the intersection of literary and bibliographic communication from the eighteenth century to the present. He is the author of *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times* (Chicago, 2012) and is currently working on a project that explores the intersections of autobiography, the life sciences, and a book called "Writing Life."

SIMON RICHTER is professor of German at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Laocoon's Body and the Aesthetics of Pain* (1992), *Missing the Breast: Gender, Fantasy and the Body in the German Enlightenment* (2006), and *Women, Pleasure, Film: What Lolas Want* (2013). He is past editor of the *Goethe Yearbook* and past president of the Goethe Society of North America.

JÜRGEN SCHRÖDER is professor emeritus of German literature at the Universität Tübingen. He has written on Georg Büchner, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Gottfried Benn, Ödön von Horváth, and on historical dramas (1994). He is the author of *Deutschland als Gedicht* (2000) and co-editor of *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (2006).

PETER J. SCHWARTZ is associate professor of German at Boston University. He is the author of *After Jena: Goethe's "Elective Affinities" and the End of the Old Regime* (Bucknell University Press, 2010) and of articles on Goethe and his age, Georg Büchner, Aby M. Warburg, and Michael Haneke. He is currently preparing a complete translation of André Jolles's *Einfache Formen* and writing on, among other subjects, early Chinese Communist currency and Soviet silent film.

PATRICIA ANNE SIMPSON is professor of German studies at Montana State University. She has published widely on German Classicism, Romanticism, and Idealist philosophy, and also on issues of contemporary culture and literature. Her books include *The Erotics of War in German Romanticism* (2006), *Cultures of Violence in the New German Street* (2012), and the forthcoming *Re-imagining the European Family: Cultures of Immigration* (2013). Simpson is co-editor of *The Enlightened Eye: Goethe and Visual Culture* (2007), *Enlightened War: German Theories and Cultures of Warfare from Frederick the Great to Clausewitz*

(2011), and the forthcoming *Religion, Reason, and Culture in the Age of Goethe* (2013). Her current project focuses on theories and practices of play (1750–1938).

ROBERT DEAM TOBIN holds the Henry J. Leir Chair in Foreign Languages and Cultures at Clark University (Worcester, Massachusetts). He is the author of *Warm Brothers: Queer Theory and the Age of Goethe* (2000) and *Doctor's Orders: Goethe and Enlightenment Thought* (2001). With Ivan Raykoff, he co-edited *A Song for Europe: Popular Music and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest* (2007). In 2011, he edited "Global Freud," a special issue of *Psychoanalysis and History*. In the summer semester of 2013, he was the Fulbright Freud Visiting Scholar of Psychoanalysis at the Sigmund Freud Museum and the University of Vienna.

DAVID E. WELLBERY is the LeRoy T. and Margaret Deffenbaugh Carlson University Professor in Germanic Studies, Comparative Literature, and the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. His research interests bear on the German-language literary and philosophical traditions from 1750 to the present.

SABINE WILKE is professor of Germanics at the University of Washington. Her research interests include modern German literature and culture, intellectual history and theory, and cultural and visual studies. She has written books and articles on body constructions in modern German literature and culture, German unification, the history of German film and theater, contemporary German authors and filmmakers including Christa Wolf, Heiner Müller, Botho Strauss, Ingeborg Bachmann, Elfriede Jelinek, Monika Treut, and others. Most recently, Wilke was involved in a larger project about German colonialism and postcoloniality and the question of comparative colonialisms, especially how Germany related differently to Africa and the South Pacific. With assistance from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Wilke is now directing a transatlantic research network on the environmental humanities and is working on a new project on environmental criticism.

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