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Conjuring History: Lyric Cliché, Conservative Fantasy, and Traumatic Awakening in German Romanticism

Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen,
Die da träumen fort und fort,
Und die Welt hebt an zu singen,
Triffst du nur das Zauberwort.

[Song slumbering in all things
That dream forever on and on,
The world leaps into song,
If only you divine the magic word.]
—Joseph von Eichendorff, "Wünschelrute"

The ambiguity of the . . . revelation of the past does not depend so much on the vacillation of its content between the Imaginary and the Real, for it locates itself in both. Nor is it exactly error or falsehood. The point is that it presents us with the birth of Truth in the Word, and thereby brings us up against the reality of what is neither true nor false. . . . For the Truth of this revelation lies in the present Word which testifies to it in contemporary reality and which grounds it in the name of that reality. Yet in that reality, it is only the Word which bears witness to that portion of the powers of the past which has been thrust aside at each crossroads where the event has made its choice. . . . [Historical anamnesis] is not a question of reality, but of Truth, because the effect of a full Word is to reorder the past contingent events by conferring on them the

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> necessities to come, just as they are constituted by the little liberty through which the subject makes them present.
> —Jacques Lacan, *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*

Heeding the call of German Romanticism's programmatic declarations rather than that of its momentous history, readers have long construed that epoch as the very apotheosis of aesthetic autonomy or, if critical of that value, as succumbing to strictly theoretical contradictions.[1] Except for obligatory, token references to the threat of the French Revolution and the pervasive disorder of the Napoleonic era, criticism has generally proven reluctant to relate the period's artistic or theoretical output to its momentous history. Just how to configure aesthetic production and the experience of historical change has long proven elusive, if hotly debated business.[2] My aim in the following pages is to sketch and exemplify how to read literature as a critical medium for historical cognition, which is to say, to approach literature as maintaining a dialectic (rather than evasive, reactive, or otherwise secondary) relation to history. To help set the stage, we may recall Theodor Adorno's prescient warning against a historicism that deems literature generically incapable of historical cognition and, with its rich methodological armature, purports to redeem literature from its canny, if unconscious obfuscation of ideological positions. Early in his *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno thus remarks on something both profound and enigmatic that lies at the heart of all claims for aesthetic autonomy. By way of qualifying his earlier optical metaphor ("There is no aesthetic refraction without something being refracted"), Adorno observes:

> The communication of artworks with what is external to them, with the world from which they blissfully or unhappily seal themselves off, occurs through noncommunication; precisely thereby they prove themselves refracted. . . . Even the most sublime artwork takes up a determinate attitude to empirical reality by stepping outside of the constraining spell it casts, not once and for all, but rather ever and again, concretely, unconsciously polemical toward this spell at each historical moment. That artworks as windowless monads "represent" what they themselves are not can scarcely be understood except in that their own dynamic, their immanent historicity as a dialectic of nature and

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> its domination, not only is of the same essence as the dialectic external to them but resembles it without imitating it. . . . Art's double character as both autonomous and *fait social* is incessantly reproduced at the level of autonomy. It is by virtue of this relation to the empirical that artworks recuperate, neutralized, what once was literally and directly experienced in life and what was expulsed by spirit. Artworks participate in enlightenment because they do not lie: they do not feign the literalness of what speaks out of them. They are as real as answers to the puzzle externally posed to them. Their own tension is binding in relation to the tension external to them.[3]

Most salient about this passage is Adorno's claim that the artwork's recalcitrant, quasi-autistic relationship to the "tension" permeating what is "external" to it ought to be understood not as a defensive and escapist maneuver but, rather, as borne of the deeper awareness of history itself as a welter of chaotic, traumatizing forces. In forgoing the complacency of the "literal" (of language as "communication"), art draws closer to understanding history as profoundly enigmatic. Whatever history may turn out to be, it is never just "context"; nor is it a ready-to-purchase truth vis-à-vis some putative aesthetic ideology.[4] To sharpen these as yet rather abstract remarks, I propose to scrutinize the rhetorical organization of the lyric—which, following Hegel, I here posit as the exemplary form of Romantic art—to the point where it becomes legible as an affective response to a historical situation whose urgency and complexity strikes the expressive subject with belated, traumatic force. Yet doing so constitutes but a first step. For beyond approaching literary form as the symptomatic encryption of a historical tension seeking poetic release, we must also remain alert to the enabling, generative power of cultural forms. To take that crucial second step—one frequently ignored, even disparaged by Romantic historicism—is to recognize historical cognition (rather than the vaunted "evasion of history") as a salient, indeed motivating force within Romantic aesthetic production.

Meanwhile, the transition from the rhetorical analysis of a specific poetic idiom to historical cognition—or, in Kenneth Burke's nomenclature, from a grammar of symbols to a grammar of motives—amounts to but a first step in a more complex itinerary. For the dialectic of literature and history, form and function, remains in turn susceptible to, indeed demands, integration into a larger and forever evolving history of human relations. In what fol-

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lows, I approach the Romantic lyric as a dialectical form struggling to articulate its speaker's and audience's belated and hence precarious cognitive relationship to their own historical moment. Rather than striving for historical "truth" intentionally, the lyric word, untrammeled by the banal certitudes of communication and "events," divulges its historical import with a clarity at once belated, serendipitous, yet also inescapable. In just that way, Jacques Lacan situates "the birth of Truth in the Word . . . which bears witness to that portion of the powers of the past which has been thrust aside at each crossroads where the event has made its choice." In what follows, then, I argue that the Romantic lyric mediates, rather than occludes, historical consciousness. It does so out of the recognition that history can only ever be known as a moment of "depth" unexpectedly and inescapably opening up amid the surface order of waking, quotidian life. Indeed, like the symptom in post-Freudian psychoanalysis, Romanticism can only think the subject as a type of inwardness (*Innerlichkeit*) that bears nearly eponymous affinity to the spontaneity of remembrance (*Erinnerung*). In other words, Romanticism can postulate the affective depth of its subjects only by historicizing them, a process that begins, in Germany no less than in England, with a comprehensive recovery and advocacy of "ancient" folk culture.[5] The latter forms part of the late-eighteenth-century European "invention of tradition," to borrow Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's phrase, and it is dialectically related to the repudiation of sentimental literature.

Chronologically, the mobilization of folk culture as a strategic resource for an aesthetic and political "rebirth" of Germany coincides precisely with the collapse of the old Reich in 1806, and its "ground zero" is the intellectual circle of Romantics at Heidelberg. Among those preeminently associated with the Heidelberg school, Ludwig Achim von Arnim offers a prefatory account of his and Clemens Brentano's epoch-making collection of German folk poetry, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1806–8), whose intent often resembles Wordsworth's slightly earlier defense of his poetics in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800–2). In von Arnim's view, sentimentalism and the allegedly mannered forms of writing associated with a late-eighteenth-century system of literary patronage are nothing but "illness and annihilation" [*Krankheit und Vernichtung*]—a mere "imitation . . . of feeling" [*das Nachahmen . . . des Gefühls*].[6] By contrast, the "authentic tone" [*wahrer Ton*] of folk poetry is posited as a vital resource for an eventual German national community, a project that pivots on attuning a collective reading-audience

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to memories at once imperiled yet magically preserved in the archetypal form of the *Volkslied*: "Dear God! Where are the old trees under which even yesterday we found rest, the ancient signs of firm borders; what has happened, is happening to them? Almost forgotten by the people, we make painful contact with their roots" [*O mein Gott, wo sind die alten Bäume, unter denen wir noch gestern ruhten, die uralten Zeichen fester Grenzen, was ist damit geschehen, was geschieht? Fast vergessen sind sie schon unter dem Volke, schmerzlich stoßen wir uns an ihren Wurzeln*]. Not surprisingly, perhaps, this programmatic cultivation of Romantic interiority through the resurrection of once-spontaneous literary forms, of again hearing "people sing who were no singers" [*was ich von Leuten singen hörte, die nicht Sänger waren*], entails a formalization of folksong itself.[7] Thus the *Volkslied* is postulated as the spontaneous expression of a timeless naiveté—that is, of an affect impervious to time-as-difference (Hegel's *absolute Unruhe*) but, instead, supported by time as *in*difference (Bergson's *durée*).[8] Upon closer inspection, however, this postulated "naïveté" constitutes no original value but, rather, bespeaks the Romantics' will to think the lyric's (supposedly) intuitive foundations in explicit disjunction from historical time. Hence von Arnim also laments the disappearance of "ancient forests" irretrievably leveled by the economic forces of modernity. If the "ancient signs" of folk culture have been "almost forgotten," their recovery is said to pivot on the kind of archival industry, philological technique, and aesthetic reflections belatedly furnished by the editors of the *Wunderhorn* collection. In short, immediacy and spontaneity alone no longer guarantee cultural value. Conceived only ex post facto from the alienated perspective of modernity, folk culture's naïveté is here formalized and institutionalized as an "ancient" wisdom encrypted in linguistic artifacts whose integrity can no longer be produced but, instead, can be recovered only through serendipitous encounters on the order of what Proust was to name *mémoire involontaire*.[9]

In what follows, I seek to explore more closely the peculiar efficacy of the Romantic lyric as a lucid form of mediation—both by representing for its initial readers their own agonistic modernity (in thematic, topical form) and to reflect that audience for itself as a proto-national community defined by its shared cultural avocation. This the lyric effects transferentially, that is, by (unconsciously) projecting visions of social and cultural health into a hypostatized past and recovering such values through sophisticated literary forms and institutions concerned with allowing an embattled commu-

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nity to awaken to its cultural "memories." As remains to be seen, the high-Romantic lyric conceives its subjects to be uneasily perched on the threshold between a state of pure presence, consciously experienced and widely cherished as middle-class inwardness (*Innerlichkeit*), and unsolicited yet insistent fragments of recollection (*Erinnerung*) that point back to an antecedent trauma to which lyric writing and reading respond with a formal concision whose searching relation to the past we must not misconstrue as a defensive aestheticism. Approached as a richly speculative, textual strategy, Romanticism's reflexive transposition of folk culture into high lyric art—its conditional recovery of a lost organic presence through contingent moments of recollection, song into text—is anything but naïvely teleological or didactic in intent. Far from proclaiming the outright recovery and reinstatement of medieval folk culture, writers like Wordsworth in England, or von Arnim, Brentano, Joseph Görres, Friedrich Creuzer, and Joseph von Eichendorff in Germany premise their literary productivity on a moment of inspiration ("spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings . . . recollected in tranquility").[10] Inasmuch as the formulation promises the containment of subconscious turmoil within the studied, textual affect of repose, the latter remains but the printed image, and hence the trace, of a negative whose insistent claims the writer's expressive locutions sought to contain (though never disavow outright) and, in so doing, continually reproduced. This dialectic also shapes the language of high-Romantic lyricism. Here, too, we note a quasi-schizophrenic split between the quotidian and the magical, the blandly descriptive and flashes of conjury. The lyric word stands in the service of both, politics and revelation; at once a record of local-material ephemera (Wordsworth's "real language of man") and a holograph capable of unveiling the supersensible depths encrypted in history's fleeting detail; indeed, it appears the only repository for a notion of the supersensible that is not opposed to but distilled from historical experience.

Rather than abridging historical awareness, this basic schema—first proposed by the ballad revival of the late eighteenth century and, by 1815, fully amalgamated either with the more speculative form of the lyric or the more discursive genre of the historical novel—constitutes a powerful strategy of historical cognition in its own right. Forgoing historicism's gluttonously accumulative and naïvely leveling faith in history's material concreteness and transparency, the Romantic lyric cultivates a richly dialectical relation to historical process strikingly prescient of Walter Benjamin's

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unique rewriting of historical materialism as a type of critique bent on "the salvation of phenomena" by the "idea." For von Arnim and Brentano no less than for Benjamin, the critical reconstruction of phenomena is not aimed at a "totality" but, instead, aims to cultivate a historical fact to the point where "its innermost structure appears to be so essential as to reveal it as an origin." In order for the idea to establish a rapport between concrete phenomena and truth, it must locate within the former the unique quality of *Intentionslosigkeit* (lack of intentionality). The goal of literary-historical study, in Benjamin's words—and they could well have been Brentano's—is "not therefore one of intention and knowledge, but rather a total immersion and absorption in [truth]." Above all, "the state of being, beyond all phenomenality, to which this power belongs, is that of the name." In close proximity to Plato's ideas—which, Benjamin argues, "might be considered . . . nothing but deified words and verbal concepts"—poetic language presents its subject with the uncanny and unsuspected ("intentionless") authority of "almost forgotten" memories whose claims prove both arresting and unsettling.[11] In Brentano's and von Arnim's programmatic statements about *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, the ancient memories miraculously preserved in, and suddenly again conjured up by, the poetic word also rekindle the conflict between the collective truth of the past (the "people" [*Volk*]) and the dispersed knowledge of modern individuals (the "public").[12]

Reiterating what David Wellbery has analyzed as Goethe's and Herder's myth of "primordial orality," von Arnim conjures up the image of artless songs woven into the fabric of quotidian existence, say, of miners and chimney sweeps.[13] Only later, von Arnim notes, did he understand "that their songs had already achieved what [artificial] songs strive for in vain, namely, that one tone should resonate in many people and unite them all" [*Später sah ich den Grund ein, daß in diesen schon erfüllt, wonach jene vergebens streben, auf daß ein Ton in vielen nachhalle und alle verbinde*]. In the lucid encryption of lyric form, itself "bound" up with the objective materiality of text and book, Romanticism mediates a complex and conflict-laden historical situation, and it typically does so by staging that situation as a hermeneutic crisis provoked by the unsuspected resurgence of ancient meanings within the damaged psyche of the modern subject. If Benjamin tells us that "historical knowledge should treat of awakening . . . and nothing else," the "greater Romantic lyric" anticipates and fulfills that exigency with uncanny precision.[14]

This very enjambment of heuristic and archival matter, of a traumatic awakening triggered by the deceptively innocent memories embodied in folk culture, prompts Romantic authors such as Brentano and von Arnim (or Wordsworth in England) to characterize their literary productions as "experiments." In appealing to a deep interiority that springs from the modern subject's abrupt encounter with archaic forces slumbering within its quotidian, obliquely poetic language, Romantic writing claims for itself a strong hermeneutic role. Not surprisingly, Freud was quick to acknowledge and capitalize on the apparent correlation between the inscrutable efficacy of Romanticism's articulate forms and his own theory of the unconscious's "delayed" (*nachträglich*) efficacy. Indeed, Freud's decision to credit Romanticism with having first mapped, at the level of literary practice, those psychological substrata that he himself sought to reclaim through and for his new theoretical discipline, is little less than shrewd. Still, subsequent generations of readers have pointed out with growing precision how Romanticism—rather than being a folksy or embryonic precursor for modern psychoanalysis—developed a highly reflexive and programmatic grasp of the modern subject as the unwitting vessel of its own past.[15] This already reflexive tendency in Romantic writing—evident in the work of Novalis, Freidrich Schlegel, Brentano, and von Arnim—suggests a deep-rooted epistemological mission intrinsic to Romantic cultural production. For these writers, the poetic word was imbued with the unsettling power of projecting the past into the present regardless of the modern subject's conscious intentions or avowed beliefs. As an insistent, albeit "intentionless" function silently shaping the modern subject's conscious existence, the past functions in ways structurally cognate with a specific dynamic of the Freudian unconscious. Alluding to his first encounter with the outline of folk poetry, von Arnim conjures up the revealing image of "a firm foundation shimmering through from beneath the waves, old streets and piazzas of a submerged city" [*als ich dieses feste Fundament noch unter den Wellen, die alten Straßen und Plätze der versunkenen Stadt noch durchschimmern sah*].[16] Von Arnim's figuration of the past as a virtual agency forcing the subject to receive previously unwitnessed memory fragments joins up with Freud's conception of "trauma" whose distinctive symptomatic feature of "repetition compulsion" is said to respond to a past so catastrophic at the time of its original occurrence as to have precluded its conscious assimilation by the subject.

At first glance, my conjunction of Romantic lyricism with concepts of traumatic awakening would seem to credit the cultural matter professedly remembered with a degree of authenticity that a number of recent and highly accomplished critics have justly called into question. One recalls Susan Stewart's account of the late-eighteenth-century ballad, an example of what she names "distressed genres," and distinguished by its tendency to "rescue forms that seem to be disappearing—that is, to effect a kind of archeology of speech forms . . . [and] to place such specimen as curiosities, characterized by fragmentation and exoticism, against the contemporary."[17] More recently, Katie Trumpener has remarked on "a long history of pseudodocumentary fictions framed, in their prefaces, by pseudoeditorial authenticating devices." Thus she reads the literary archetype for this practice, James Macpherson's *Ossian* poems, as "a new way of conceiving the unevenness of character, and of textuality, as historical testimony, as an inadvertent record of historical upheavals and endurance, survivals and extinction. This model understands witnesses to history, whether human or textual, as inherently passive, mute on the subject of their sufferings." By contrast, "the broader Ossianic tradition—and the Ossian controversy itself—makes available a rather different model, in which the representatives of the old order loudly challenge the representatives of the new; their way of life may be doomed, but they will go down fighting."[18] And yet, as Trumpener's last statement affirms, the urgency and consequent capacity of such cultural memories for awakening modern subjects to their own, alienated condition, resides not in their de facto authenticity (if such could ever be authoritatively established) but, on the contrary, in the widespread endorsement of their authentic appearance. In accord with Freud's shrewd distinction between memories dating from and those relating to childhood, "authenticity" thus must be read as self-conscious fiction—a "fantasy" in Slavoj Žižek's definition—and hence an effect performatively wrought by specific literary, figural means. In other words, the archival ethos that proclaims them to be fragments of folk culture serendipitously recovered in and for the present is itself the effect wrought by an imaginative, literary writing whose fictitious nature that ethos subsequently neutralizes by the sheer gravitas of philological work on cultural "traditions" miraculously preserved or recovered (yet never actually produced). In this manner, the late-eighteenth-century archival cult of authenticity—seizing upon ballad, romance, and eventually the historical novel and what M. H. Abrams long ago christened the greater Romantic lyric as its generic lynchpins—brings

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about the larger collective fantasy of a timeless social order and, as remains to be seen, the genesis of Romantic conservatism. These genres add a crucial new dimension to such ideological dreamwork, that of an adventitious, albeit belated awakening. In these forms, aesthetic inventiveness is naturalized inasmuch as it conceives of itself, and professes itself to be, an awakening to a deeper historical truth slumbering within its thematic surfeit; thus literary topos is quietly transfigured into cultural value, and *inventio* becomes *traditio*. Consequently, the acutely "literary" quality of reconstituted fragments of (a putatively vanishing) folk culture does not threaten to expose such materials as "inauthentic." On the contrary, their "literary" presentation crucially instances and affirms their broader social value as fragments of a collective memory, something that nonliterary discourse with its different standards of authenticity and verification would be hard pressed to do.

In the high-Romantic lyric, past experience continues to determine a priori and trace a fortiori the conscious history of its subject with oblique but unrelenting tenacity. Subjected to an inscrutable, because never consciously experienced, causality, the conscious subject is obliged, in Freud's words, "to *repeat* the . . . material as a contemporary experience instead of . . . *remembering* it as something belonging to the past," and it typically does so with "unwished-for exactitude."[19] As Cathy Caruth has recently argued, Freud's theory of trauma allows us "to recognize the possibility of a history that is no longer straightforwardly referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)." The formal eloquence of literature, she points out, may itself be taken as a "parable of trauma" and, indeed, as "a parable of psychoanalytic theory itself as it listens to a voice that it cannot fully know but to which it nonetheless bears witness." Caruth's argument amounts to a new prescription for close, scrupulous reading of the literary text, and for an insistent listening to literature's characteristic tonal mix of vocal urgency and textual reticence, a dynamic of which the hybrid genre of the ballad is a particularly apt expression. I agree with Caruth that to approach the text as "an address that remains enigmatic yet demands a listening and a response" may indeed allow "*history* . . . [to] arise *where immediate understanding* may not."[20] Caruth's account unfolds Benjamin's insistent reminder that "the presentation of history [must] begin with awakening; in fact, it should treat of nothing else."[21]

Like Freud's controversial account of the traumatic origins of Judaism, the literary production of the Heidelberg Romantics (Creuzer, von Arnim,

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Brentano, and, for a brief but significant period, Eichendorff) centers on the involuntary remembrance of a catastrophe that had suddenly erased an entire, seemingly timeless economic, cultural, and spiritual order. Time and again, these writings tell of their protagonists' "traumatic departure" from some phantasmagoric order of time and place. Exodus here is realized as a narrative of progressive disillusionment that continues to point back at an instance of catastrophic *méconnaissance* in the protagonist's past—and formal concision of lyric writing furnishes a self-consciously fantasized vantage point from which "history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence."[22] To conceive the disruptive impact of a contingent memory within the structure of conscious experience in terms no less explicit than Freud's archeological metaphors is to locate poetry within a broad disciplinary and programmatic context. In the case of the Heidelberg Romantics—von Arnim, Brentano, Görres, Creuzer—the reflexive power of the poetic word establishes an implicit rapport between the contingent moment of its own production and the vast historical aura of its linguistic materials. Or, as Kevin Newmark has recently argued, poetry oscillates "between the punctual defensiveness of the consciousness that produces it and the retentive duration of the memory it serves to replace." Referring to Walter Benjamin's account of "Some Motifs in Baudelaire," Newmark proceeds to argue that at issue in the symbolist lyric is the

> fundamental question of the *historical* relationship between tradition and modernity. When the formal patterns of continuity that are presumed to have been grounded in traditional experience by the assimilation of consciousness to memory are disturbed by the truly alien experience of modernity, the coherence of subjective experience is itself displaced in unexpected ways. Consciousness and memory, whatever their relationship in some more or less mythic past, are no longer able to function as associative elements within the same system of individual and collective identity. According to this model, then, modernity would itself be structured like a historical "accident" that has at some prior moment befallen and disrupted the homogeneous structure of experience. And the traces of this accident manifest themselves whenever consciousness . . . can no longer be made compatible with memory.

Insofar as the Romantic lyric articulates the modernity of its subject as a recurrent tension between consciousness and memory, it is bound to stage

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the intrusion of the latter as an unexpected, haunting intervention. On Newmark's definition, the lyric would be one such "place where the wholly unexpected and accidental can happen to the subject."[23] Still, the past obtrudes on consciousness not only as something that has not yet been consciously known. Rather, what Newmark refers to as "the homogeneous structure of experience"—with all its deceptive coherence and authority as socially valid knowledge—could only constitute itself because and insofar as it had not acknowledged its dialectical other: the past.

More than any other German Romantic writer, Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857) centers his lyrics on this irruption of past memories into the patterns of quotidian, conscious existence—a strategy calculated to intensify not only our perception of psychological depth as "recollection" (*Erinnerung*) but also our sense of a nontranscendable covenant between subject and history. To be sure, the past sings and "murmurs" (*rauschen*) everywhere in Eichendorff's writings. Yet the poetry also suspends that unconscious dynamic between the subject's belated awakening to a strictly negative knowledge—of one's having failed to develop a timely grasp of the past when it was still "event" [*Ereignis*]—and a mystification of that very awakening as a purely natural revelation. As we read in Eichendorff's "Liebe in der Fremde" [Love in a foreign world]: *Erinnernd rührt sich in den Bäumen / Ein heimlich Flüstern überall* [The covert whisper of memory bestirs itself / Everywhere in the trees].[24] In what follows, I explore first how the Romantic subject's traumatic awakening to its own disorienting modernity is being contained in lyric form and, in a subsequent move, how Eichendorff's distinctive affiliation of lyricism and memory relates to the emergence of Romantic conservatism (*Altkonservatismus*). Indeed, late in his career, Eichendorff came to be associated with this (often misunderstood) movement. Similarly, and at a rather early point (1806), von Arnim already remarks how the "whirlwind of innovation, the lightening-quick presumption of being able to fashion paradise on earth" [*in diesem Wirbelwind des Neuen, in diesem vermeinten urschnellen Paradiesgebären auf Erden*], of the French Revolution had virtually extinguished all folksong.[25] At least from the moment of Prussia's utter defeat, the culture of Romantic lyricism begins to edge progressively closer to the discourse of conservatism. Both languages are preoccupied with a traumatic disjunction of past and present, memory and experience.

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If the *ideologeme* of early conservatism marks the outer limits of my inquiry into the operation of traumatic affect in Romantic writing—that is, beyond its historical motif (*Erinnerung*) and its psychological effect (*Innerlichkeit*)—the evidence for these larger claims must ultimately always be found in the literary text. A reading of an early Eichendorff poem may help us develop a sharper outlook on what Karl Mannheim calls the *tensio* of thought toward "contents surviving from the past."[26] The first lyric is entitled "Vesper" [Evening meal]. Though it was included in Eichendorff's play *Ezzelin von Romano* (1828), it was first published in his 1837 collection (*Gedichte*).

Die Abendglocken klangen	The evening bells sounded
Schon durch das stille Tal,	Already through the quiet vale,
Da saßen wir zusammen	While above we sat in communion
Da droben wohl hundertmal.	Well-nigh a hundred times.
Und unten war's so stille	Down below a calm pervaded
Im Lande weit und breit,	the whole land far and wide,
Nur über uns die Linde	And only the lime tree above us
Rauscht' durch die Einsamkeit.	Rustled through this solitude.
Was gehen die Glocken heute	Why will the bells ring today
Als ob ich weinen müßt?	As if I should have to cry?
Die Glocken, die bedeuten,	The bells that tell
Daß meine Lieb gestorben ist!	Of my love which has died!
Ich wollt, ich läg begraben,	I wish I lay already entombed,
Und über mir rauschte weit	And each evening far above
Die Linde jeden Abend	The lime tree rustling would
Von der alten, schönen Zeit![27]	Speak of the dear old time!

The four stanzas break down into two halves, each marked by the concluding, archetypal image of the rustling lime tree. The overall coherence of the lyric is insured by its temporal dimension, initially brought into focus through the notion of a recursive, potentially empty event: "While above we sat in communion / Well-nigh a hundred times." In contrast with such routine sociability, the concluding image of the tree's "rustling" points to a rupture between the rhythm of the quotidian present and "the dear old time." This phrase or, rather, cliché constitutes Eichendorff's veritable poetic signature. Here, as elsewhere, it establishes the ideal of an end to all time—a

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hypothetical future kept at bay by a poetic voice wishing for its own annihilation and interment (*Ich wollt, ich läg begraben*) in the immaculate temporal order of the past. Indeed, the peal of the church bell that resonates through the ominously "quiet vale" positions the voice at the threshold between empirical perception and metaphysical intuition. Gauging the spatial depth of the valley, the faint, distant peal of church bells prefigures the concluding, funereal vision. More important, though, it exhorts the voice to specify the nature of its "loss." The local and particular dimension of affect, bereavement at the loss of a beloved (*Die Glocken, die bedeuten, / Daß meine Lieb gestorben ist*), enters only in hypothetical form. Significantly, though, the loss of *die Lieb* may refer both to a beloved and to the capacity to love. Thus the scene of evening oscillates bewilderingly between an intensification of affect (loss of the beloved) and its complete erosion (the incapacity to feel love). Twice in this short lyric, we thus have affective states bracketed by subjunctive constructions: *Als ob ich weinen müßt* and *Ich wollt, ich läg begraben*. This hypothetical notation of affect as the last bastion of authentic subjectivity—if not as the subject's de facto awakening to the knowledge of its atrophied interiority—proves truly defining of early-nineteenth-century lyric writing.

Meanwhile, the distant sonority of the bells also serves as the emblem of a specifically lyric form of attentiveness. Just as the spatial depth of the "land far and wide" [*Lande weit und breit*] is gauged only through the migration of sound, the peal of the bells also gives rise to a fundamental subjective self-awareness. We recall how, in the *Logical Investigations*, the colloquialism of attentiveness (*Aufmerksamkeit*) is suddenly introduced as the pivotal condition allowing so-called intentional acts to be promoted to objective status and hence to become accessible to an "inner perception." In short, without the (irreducible) operation of *Aufmerksamkeit*, consciousness itself would remain but a contingent signified by its own (supposedly "intentional") relation to particular "material" contents. Yet it could never arrive at a coherent representation of their quality and, consequently, could never become conscious of itself as a cognitive agency.[28] This same sense of "attentiveness"—a belated calling-away of the subject from its mundane "contents" and so awakening it to its inscrutable historical situatedness—is enacted in Eichendorff's lyrics. Time and again, the subject is subtly extricated from its precarious absorption in the mythical coherence of appearances, beliefs, and objectives. Rather than merely symbolizing a vague "mood" or outright

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mystical state of affect, Eichendorff's spatial and aural figurations always point toward a rupture in the fabric of human time. Far from indulging in the myth of a purely affective, timeless interiority, a poem like "Vesper" effectively encodes—in the image of the bell tolling—the imminent passing of that self-enclosed dream world. If a desire for total immersion in this imagistic world takes us into the poem, the lyric's excessive accommodation of that desire—a kind of hypersimulation to be explored in further detail—effectively compels us to awaken to its status as a text-based fantasy.[29] If Eichendorff's characteristic choice of the subjunctive has already qualified affect as dangerously mesmerizing and wholly self-privileging, the subtle yet insistent call for the subject to awaken centers on a symbol of death.

To be sure, we may be tempted to frame the entire lyric within an opposition between the empty, repetitive time of social existence (*Da saßen wir zusammen / Da droben wohl hundertmal*) and an absolution from all temporality marked by the bells' distant sonority. Yet to proceed in this manner is to ignore that a phrase as overtly clichéd as "the dear old time" has been carefully framed in a subjunctive syntax, thereby alerting us to interpretive pitfalls that lurk beneath clichés encountered in lyric writing. To escape from empirical, social time is to express a desire for transcendence that can only take the textual form of a paradox: to escape to a state of being that could only be realized as nonbeing. Thus the epistemological collision of two worlds characteristic of all traumatic awakening finds objective, lyric expression in an interference between image and grammar, between the banal certitude of the poetic cliché and the prevarication of the subjunctive. Indeed, even the lyric image resonates with such tension by alternately ensnaring its readers in inauthentic clichés or consigning them to the epistemological vagaries of an anxious and disorienting modernity where experience and memory are no longer aligned. And the suspicion that Eichendorff's poetry might be little more than an array of clichés skillfully deployed dates back a long way,[30] something echoed by Adorno's remark that "when one first hears many of Eichendorff's lines . . . they sound like quotations, quotations learned by heart from God's primer." Richard Alewyn expands on this point by offering a short catalogue of what Adorno had called the "stage-prop quality of the linguistic elements" in Eichendorff's poetry.[31] For Alewyn, these lyrics

> operate altogether in the external world of visible and audible things, which is one of the reasons why they appear so 'slight.' At the same

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> time, Eichendorff is certainly no 'realist.' His poetry contributes little to our knowledge of some straightforward reality. It has often been remarked with how narrow a segment of life and world he seems to content himself. With even greater annoyance—though scarcely attuned to the true scope of the matter—readers have responded to the fact that the same motifs recur in endless repetition. Forever we have forests rustling [*rauschen*], nightingales singing, fountains murmuring, rivers shimmering. Time and again, light reflexes and harmonies from summits, from down below, or from among the treetops waft over to us or enter through the window. All this is pushed to the point of formulaic rigor.[32]

Alewyn's characterization is at once accurate and, as he himself concedes, in need of further reflection. For the presence of images as overtly schematic as Eichendorff's confounds the plausible attitude of an "empathetic reception" (reading as "empathetic practice," which Wilhelm Dilthey was later to elaborate as the aesthetics of *Einfühlung*) by alerting the audience to the lyric's citation-like quality. To do so is to press, within the form of the lyric itself, the question of literariness—of what shall count as "literary value" and the purposes to which it appears so obliquely committed. As it turns out, this very question, "Does a specific poem belong to the order of invention or citation?" correlates with the subject's epistemological condition: Can it grasp (*begreifen*) experience by means of autonomous categories of rationality, or is it at the mercy of an "almost forgotten" past, at once unfathomable and inescapable? Clichés disconcert because of their conspicuous enjambment of form and cognition. They no longer communicate referentially but, instead, appear bent on dismantling the audience's faith in stable referential connections between affect and form, interiority and expression, pathos and its communicability. The cliché stages the subject's troubled awakening to those depths of its language that are not "expressive." Beneath its placid, seemingly unruffled rapport with inherited rhetorical models, the cliché unmasks (allegorizes) an earlier period's excessive faith in linguistic mastery over the contingent world of perception and intuitions. It is Romantic allegory *sensu strictu*—that is, a language reflecting its historically overdetermined and materially exhausted artifactual constitution. Hence, its baroque mournfulness, so powerfully at work throughout Eichendorff's lyric oeuvre, resides in its imperceptible ability to estrange us

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from any residual faith in a (supposedly inalienable) affective rapport (*Einfühlung*) between self and world. By disarticulating the myth of a language wholly self-sufficient and untrammeled by any contingencies of perception, the poetic cliché effectively subverts the mimetic principle on which its over-confident surface representations continue to be predicated.

We will have further occasion to consider whether this unsettling proximity of poetry to outright citation or cliché may indeed constitute the underlying aesthetic and ideological signature of European writing during the era of the Regency in Britain and the *Restauration* in Germany. For the time being, it remains imperative to listen to the peculiar idiom of Eichendorff's lyrics and so close in on their construction of a specific affective economy. At first, the voice that constitutes itself so unmistakably in these poems seems to relate to a curiously nonspecific past with an attitude of deep nostalgic longing. Yet as one slows down the reading of this poetry, a peculiar reversal of cause and effect, image and referent, affect and expression can be found to occur. Rather than presenting itself as the timeless and unimpeachable source of writing, affect here seems to emerge as an epiphenomenon of eerily familiar stylistic patterns. Indeed, Eichendorff's lyrics seem bent on rehearsing for us what Paul de Man had long ago described as moments of interference between the referential or expressive function of language and its performative ability to conjure being in the form of textual simulacra.[33] Almost imperceptibly, the lyric's official faith in a symbolic coincidence of word and referent begins to shift and decompose because techniques mobilized for the representation of affect work, in effect, too well. That is, the poetic cliché hastens the demise of the mimetic principle, for it lays bare how that principle works to begin with. Here we see *in actu* what Adorno meant when he said that the artwork is "not only of the same essence as the dialectic external to [it] but . . . resembles it without imitating it."[34] Thus the excessive "fit" of word and referent in Eichendorff's lyrics disrupts the reader's initial assumption that to read is to enter a domain of quasi-sensory perception. Asked to witness the operation of *Vorstellung*, we effectively become aware of mimesis as an effect of hypersimulation. If "mimesis [is] the presentation of an ideal reality" [*Darstellung eines ideell Wirklichen*], David Wellbery argues, then the "simulacrum [asserts] the reality of the presentation" itself [*Wirklichkeit der Darstellung*]. Thus Eichendorff's lyrics ought to be approached not as "mood-based [*Stimmungslyrik*] in any conventional sense but as thematizations

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of the lyric medium." Wellbery convincingly locates Eichendorff's poems "perched on the threshold between two worlds," that of an unconscious, dreamlike immersion in the principle of mimesis and that of an awakening to the medial character of the lyric image as simulacrum—its reflexive detachment from all faith in mimetic and expressive technique.[35]

Yet rather than extending this observation into a more sweeping conception of literary language and its supposedly intrinsic aporias, as Paul de Man proposed it some twenty years ago, my aim here is somewhat broader in scope. To begin with, moments of rhetorical instability ought to be grasped—albeit with a caution that befits all speculative proceedings—as symptomatic condensations of a larger historical tension. Indeed, it is only on the basis of a deeper affinity between formal-aesthetic and historical processes that we can begin to grasp Romanticism as a specific phase in the historical evolution of affect—not as an autonomous fact—but as the object of aesthetic creativity and, thereupon, interpretive-disciplinary attention. Above all, we find the period conceding interiority to its post-Enlightenment subjects only in supplemental form. Rather than collapsing inwardness into a purely imaginary order—a quasi-maternal and allegedly unimpeachable source of pure affect—post-Waterloo Romanticism stages the inwardness of its subjects as a progressive awakening to the insoluble dilemma of their traumatic history. A strictly literary-historical narrative could identify Eichendorff's lyrics as the second stage in an epistemological crisis, first apparent in the way that Goethe's lyrics struggle to name and thus affirm an absolute source and origin for all expressive and creative acts. Indeed, for quite some time readers have been remarking on the Romantic lyric's formal-rhetorical antagonisms, such as its subject's deeply personal investment in affective experiences (melancholy, indolence, longing, dejection, etc.) that seem oddly generic and are rendered in curiously mannered images, or the paradox of escapist desires not concealed but curiously accented in lyric speech. Such tensions, it may be said, prove not so much symptomatic of the Romantic lyric as they are constitutive of it. That is, far from being mere rhetorical accidents randomly vitiating the expressive agenda of a given poem, these tensions are rehearsed by the text and for an audience whose longing for a state of pure inwardness the text is calculated to qualify rather than indulge.

For as Eichendorff repeatedly stresses, the social and cultural crisis of the central European aristocracy and gentry around 1815—its atrophied histori-

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cal mission and legitimacy—stemmed from their failure to heed the urgent call of the past. Given the historical failure of the gentry and, especially, the aristocracy, the sudden defeat of regionally differentiated cultural, political, and economic practices, first by Napoleon and then (at least partially) by Karl Freiherr vom Stein's and Karl August von Hardenberg's ambitious reforms, seemed just retribution. And yet, characterized above all by a pervasive loss of history, modernity seems the very antithesis of an *altkonservativ* order, even as the latter breaks with the often crudely Machiavellian politics of post-Napoleonic *Reaktion*, such as the Viennese aristocracy or the East Prussian landed nobility (*Junker*). Any "ideal loyalty" has been displaced by "monetary forces" (*Die Stelle der idealen Treue wurde sofort von der materiellen Geldkraft eingenommen*).[36] Eichendorff thus feels caught between a phantasmagorical past whose resources and once-legitimate order had been squandered long before by the upper echelons of society, and a modernity similarly largely shaped by the basest craving for economic and political ascendancy among anonymous, competitive individuals. The resulting sense of historical abjection is acutely felt in "On a Stronghold" [*Auf einer Burg*], a poem memorably set to music by Robert Schumann in 1840.

Eingeschlafen auf der Lauer	Gone to sleep while keeping watch
Oben ist der alte Ritter;	Sits up there the ancient knight;
Drüber gehen Regenschauer,	Over yonder rain is falling,
Und der Wald rauscht durch das Gitter.	And woods rustle through the trellis.

Eingewachsen Bart und Haare,	Inward grown his beard and hair,
Und versteinert Brust und Krause,	Turned to stone his breast and ruffle,
Sitzt er viele hundert Jahre	He sits for many hundred years
Oben in der stillen Klause.	Aloft in the noiseless cell.

Draußen ist es still und friedlich,	Outside it is still and peaceful,
Alle sind ins Tal gezogen,	All have moved into the vale,
Waldesvögel einsam singen	Little woodbirds sing all forlorn
In den leeren Fensterbogen.	In the empty window arches.

Eine Hochzeit fährt da unten	Far below a wedding glides along
Auf dem Rhein im Sonnenscheine,	Bathed by sunlight on the Rhine;
Musikanten spielen munter,	Musicians play oh so gaily,
Und die schöne Braut die weinet.[37]	And the lovely bride is weeping.

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With its ironic opening (*Eingeschlafen auf der Lauer*), the lyric swiftly establishes its overarching focus on the inexorable and inscrutable nature of historical change. The calcified feudal body of the knight who fell asleep on his watch furnishes us with a schoolbook example of Romantic allegory. Rendered wholly impersonal, even generic by the passage of time and by the advent of change for which his faltering vigilance was no match, the once individual knight has been utterly transformed by the fluctuations of historical time. To the speaker's archeological gaze, *der alte Ritter* is no longer the representative of a coherent social formation. Indeed, it is only now that he is conceived in fully calcified and involuntarily statuesque form that the knight successfully embodies a feudal order whose historical mission, it seems, can be articulated only from the vanishing point of the postrevolutionary lyric. "Inward grown" and "turned to stone" [*Eingewachsen . . . und versteinert*], the feudal body illustrates what de Man has called the "rediscovery of an allegorical tradition beyond the sensualistic analogism of the eighteenth century." For the lyric allows us to grasp the knight's representative character only as something accidental and, perhaps, serendipitous. As de Man continues, "the prevalence of allegory always corresponds to the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny. This unveiling takes place in a subject that has sought refuge against the impact of time in a natural world to which, in truth, it bears no resemblance." The ability of the feudal body to represent its authentic "destiny" thus requires its estrangement, its vivid (almost tactile) transfiguration from a flesh-and-blood individual into an accidental monument. As de Man further notes, "the meaning" of allegory can "consist only in the *repetition* . . . of a previous sign with which it can never coincide."[38] Hence the knight's two bodies—the "real" and evidently deluded individual and his accidental preservation in etiolated, statuesque form—reflect the ultimate ineluctability of historical time, a fact that can be illustrated only by means of a visible discontinuity between two embodied states. In the third stanza, this fundamental evacuation of determinate (human) meaning from the passage of historical time is captured in the empty windows occupied only by the natural, asemantic chatter of birds.

Yet how does the voice of Eichendorff's lyric modernity position itself vis-à-vis this disconcerting conception of historical change as inherently unknowable and hence uncontestable by any individual or community, however intently vigilant (*Lauer*) these may have been? What does it mean

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to grasp history only a posteriori, as a failure to “see in time” and, more specifically here, as the traumatic demise of a social order that cannot be reconstituted but only mourned wherever we happen upon its stony debris? Pivoting around the conspicuous muteness of their principal catalyst—with the *versteinert* knight holding the same function as the admonitory “heap of unhewn stone” in Wordsworth’s “Michael” or Keats’s Saturn, “quiet as a stone,” Eichendorff’s lyrics at once precipitate the Romantic subject’s traumatic recognition of its irremediable historical estrangement even as they formally attenuate that “shock” in a faintly aestheticized scene of “mourning.”[39] Thus the location where the feudal order met its unanticipated demise has been evacuated—*Alle sind ins Tal gezogen*—and now figures as the objective site of the modern subject’s belated and insistently mournful recollections (*Erinnerung*).

The last stanza features that quintessential Romantic image, a wedding ceremony observed from afar, and it projects continuity for a now modern society that is buoyantly committed to its quotidian rituals and pursuits, though also arrested by inexplicable flashes of grief that occur without warning. Thus the image of a bride basking in the distant sunlight “far below” is momentarily disrupted by the unsettling acuity of the speaker’s vision as he captures her apparent state of mourning: *Und die schöne Braut die weinet*. Far from a recuperation of modernity, the wedding yields tears that portend (at the level of affect) a knowledge already available in statuesque form in the castle above: the logic of historical time as an inexorable and nonteleological progression of betrayal, sudden change, and *méconnaissance*.[40] This indictment of his own times as trivializing and vulgarizing poetry by forcibly conjoining it with politics would appear the very hallmark of a staunch Catholic conservative. Indeed, a casual reading of the section entitled “Geistliche Gedichte” in Eichendorff’s 1837 collection of his lyrics would seem to exemplify “the familiar romantic finale,” as Nietzsche had put it, the “break, breakdown, return and collapse before an old faith, before *the* old god.”[41]

* * *

The remainder of this essay, however, is less concerned with proving or disproving this popular (if also facile) position than with probing its epistemological assumptions and aesthetic consequences. What is the nature of Romantic conservatism, a term first coined by Chateaubriand’s journal

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Le Conservateur in 1818 and soon popular throughout central Europe? Is it merely an antimodern reaction formation, a transparently regressive form of behavior—or of writing? Already this ambivalent suspension of conservatism between a purely affective, unselfconscious disposition and a distinctive rhetorical practice, however, hints at the existence of a critical problem. For the apparent eagerness of contemporary criticism in the humanities to uncover and brand certain thought-formations or strategies of writing as "conservative"—and in so doing presume that it has also discredited them—leaves the actual nature of conservatism unexamined and thus undecided. Is the recursive temporal structure of *Erinnerung* as it resonates in many of Eichendorff's titles ("Erinnerung," "Rückblick," "Letzte Heimkehr," "Vergebner Ärger," "Verlorne Liebe," "Trennung," "Abschied," etc.) merely an expression of a nostalgic longing, a desire for something as implausible as an outright reversal of historical time? Against this hypothesis speak Eichendorff's self-conscious and explicitly hypothetical acts of lyric introspection. Particularly the highly reflexive formalization of interiority as a holograph of spontaneous memory (*Erinnerung*), historically conditioned anxiety, and utopian, para-religious longing strongly militates against interpreting conservatism as a case of naïve and unqualified nostalgia. Nor, it would seem, is the phenomenon of Romantic conservatism fully captured by Hegel's speculative thesis of the bureaucratic nation-state as a world-historical force that has preserved and contained the past in institutional form. For the Protestant "can-do" spirit of Hegel's historical inventory-taking appears ultimately geared toward enhancing the authority of the Prussian nation-state, and as such seems notably impatient with the mythical or Catholic figurations of Joseph Görres or the later work of Friedrich Schlegel. What, then, are we to understand as the ideological place of Romantic conservatism, and how are its affective, rhetorical, and cognitive spheres to be demarcated from one another?

In what may seem counterintuitive and startling, I propose to understand Romantic conservatism in close proximity to postmodernism. Doing so means, first of all, to discriminate sharply between the ideational character of Romantic conservatism and its practical, quotidian counterpart—the politics of reaction. Standing in sharp and self-conscious antithesis to the politics of the *Reaktion*, Romantic conservatism seeks less to indulge the antimodern prejudices that are undoubtedly part of it than to articulate an organic vision that combines diverse elements of a precapitalist and even a preschismatic social formation. Hence, Romantic *Altkonservatismus* must be distinguished from the period's established politics of restoration and reaction. For conservatism encompasses prima facie an aesthetic, and often stridently anticapitalist, program.[42] At the same time, it appears less to be directed toward some future utopia than to stress the persistence of History in a holistic sense. While the past is ultimately irretrievable in any objective sense, it proves nonetheless inescapable. That is, Romantic conservatism does not actually seek to implement its peculiar cultural vision of an implicitly Catholic and genially stratified, precapitalist society. It does not purport to reverse the flow of historical time. Rather, the past is conjured up—in the medial form of a Platonic allegory—as a system of values conceivable only from the shadowy (because irreducibly rhetorical) perspective of the modern, abject individual. Rather than capturing incidental empirical matter, *Erinnerung* amounts to a self-conscious "fantasy." Fully aware of its terminal confinement in the cave of modernity, conservative thought embraces history and tradition as something mesmerizing—not despite but because of the fact that they have been irretrievably lost and that, indeed, they had never been consciously experienced to begin with.[43] As Slavoj Žižek notes, "The psychoanalytic notion of fantasy cannot be reduced to that of a fantasy scenario which obfuscates the true horror of a situation." If fantasy "conceals" the "horror of the Real," it also, and "at the same time . . . creates what it purports to conceal, its 'repressed' point of reference."[44] Furthermore, if we are to accept Žižek's definition of "fantasy [as] the primordial form of *narrative*, which serves to occult some original deadlock," Romantic conservatism can certainly be interpreted as a narrative of just this kind. For it is above all a bourgeois, not a feudal phenomenon.[45] As the successor of a feudal age that alternately missed or squandered its historical opportunities, the proto-bourgeois subjects of the modern, bureaucratic, and capitalist nation-state continue to be haunted by the revolutionary trauma to which, in effect, they owe their very existence. Forever distraught over the loss of a simpler and happier past, the "sadder and wiser" ideology of Romantic conservatism could only consolidate itself in dialectical relation to the very modernity whose cultural and social ramifications it continues to deplore. Speaking of conservatism as a "historical-dynamic structural complex," Karl Mannheim has elaborated the curious emergence of this ideology. Rather than falling back on realist or "nominalist" models, according to which conservatism was either received as an already finished (quasi-"metaphysical") construct or was generated by supposedly autonomous individuals, Mannheim interprets conservatism as a fundamentally dynamic type of "retroaction." In this view, conservatism is intimately "bound up with the actual existence and destinies of human groups and appearing as their product." Having achieved its conceptual integrity only "in relation to [a] particular course of experience," the "stylistic design" of conservative thought is necessarily something "historically embedded." Like Freud's concept of "retroaction" (*Nachträglichkeit*), Romantic "conservatism" thus involves a partial compensation for, and a partial reenactment of a pervasive traumatic disruption for which the French Revolution, Napoleon's radical reorganization of the central European landscape, and the economic and ideological depression of the post-Waterloo era constitute successive phases. As evidenced by the persistence of figural and textual metaphors in its formulation, early-nineteenth-century *Altkonservatismus* can be understood as responding to its historically specific experience of modernity by developing a nearly self-conscious ideological fantasy. Insofar as its intellectual program unfolds in synchrony with such historical disruptions, conservative thought "may well be nothing more than [its] conceptual effect." The distinctive characteristic of conservatism, meanwhile, lies in the fact that here "past and trauma are treated as if they were one and the same (factical)."[46] Seen as the development of a "traditionalism [that has] become self-reflective," Romantic conservatism bespeaks its proponents' awareness of their "authentically temporal destiny" (de Man's phrase).[47] Like a more mature embodiment of Friedrich Schlegel's concept of irony, the conservative knows that his is an irremediable allegorical condition, one in which the certainty of temporal change can no longer be absorbed by the ingenuity of any politics, liberal, nationalist, or reactionary.[48] Indeed, with its logic of "retroaction" (*Nachträglichkeit*) Romantic conservatism appears strikingly prescient of at least one criterion repeatedly invoked to define postmodernism: that of a fundamentally "posthistorical" era. Moreover, though arguably at a more intuitive level, Romantic conservatism also seems to know of a profound (if ultimately ineluctable) relation between the languages of theory and fantasy, politics and aesthetics. Hence, as Fredric Jameson points out, it looks "for breaks, for events rather than new holds, for the telltale instant after which it is no longer the same, . . . for shifts and irrevocable changes in the *representation* of things and why they change." It only "clocks the varia-

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tions themselves, and knows only too well that the contents are just more images." As Jameson elaborates later on:

> Cultural production is . . . driven back inside a mental space which is no longer that of the old monadic subject but rather that of some degraded collective "objective spirit": it can no longer gaze directly on some putative real world, at some reconstruction of a past history which was once itself a present; rather, as in Plato's cave, it must trace our mental images of that past upon its confining walls. . . . It is a realism that is meant to derive from the shock of grasping that confinement and slowly becoming aware of a new and original historical situation in which we are condemned to seek History by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach.[49]

As we have already seen, Eichendorff's oeuvre is shot through with "pop images" or clichés simulating an irrecuperable history and articulating conservatism as a strictly virtual, aesthetic fantasy. To be sure, it is tempting to read Eichendorff's political prose—specifically his late treatise on the *Folgen von der Aufhebung der Landeshoheit Bischöfe und der Klöster in Deutschland*—as straightforward conservative propaganda. What else could be meant by his patriotic *laudatio* to the "German tendency, one of more profoundly inward character, that venerates its own while respecting everything sacred and showing consideration for all tradition" [*die deutsche Richtung, tiefsinniger nach innen gekehrt, und sich selber ehrend achtet . . . alles Heilige, berücksichtigt alles Herkömmliche*]?[50] And what would better exemplify the "mythical transcendence" that Karl Mannheim identifies as a salient characteristic of Romantic conservatism than the following passage in which Eichendorff juxtaposes post-Waterloo European politics with its "well-adjusted palaces that impress on us a certain ennobling feeling of order and security" to the inchoate political landscape of Restoration Germany.[51] The latter resembles

> *eine fröhliche Aussicht vom Berge ins Freie, schroffe Felsen, Ströme, Wälder und Saaten in buntem Gemisch bis in die unermessene blaue Ferne hinaus, wo Himmel und Erde einander rätselfhaft berühren, jede einzelne Erscheinung . . . als ein Ganzes für sich bestehend, jeder Bach und Strom seine eigene Bahn zum ewigen Meere suchend, alle zusammen doch in einem Farbenton jene blühende Tiefe bildend, welche, wenn sie auch das blöde Auge*

> *mit ihrem Reichtum verwirrt, das Herz mit einem unvergänglichen Naturgefühl wunderbar erhebt und erlabt.*
>
> a lovely view from the mountain[s] into the boundless space, precipitous cliffs, rivers, a colorful mish-mash of forests and states, out into the immeasurable cerulean distance, where heaven and earth mysteriously touch, every single appearance . . . as a whole for itself, every stream and river searching for its own path to the eternal ocean, and yet all together building in a colorful tone the blossoming profundity, which, though it may confound the naked eye with its opulence, wonderfully exalts and refreshes the heart with an imperishable feeling of nature.[52]

Because of its overtly clichéd presentation (*Darstellung*), Eichendorff's passage does not so much indulge in aesthetic mythmaking as it rehearses for us that very process. For what better way to exemplify the mythical structure of conservatism and draw attention to the metaphysical desire underlying the entire passage than with a citation of German Romanticism's archétext or (if a pun be permitted) architect: Novalis. Surely, the reference to "the immeasurable cerulean distance, where heaven and earth miraculously touch" [*die unermessene blaue Ferne hinaus, wo Himmel und Erde einander rätselfhaft berühren*] constitutes a pointed reference to *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, the text that, for a generation, defined Romantic longing. Particularly with reference to Novalis's romance, where the phrase *blaue Ferne* recurs no less than four times, such citation is a distinctly self-conscious form of repetition, and Eichendorff's specular notation not only reenacts the impossible nostalgia of early Romanticism: it also recalls the widely quoted image in one of his best-known poems, "Mondnacht": "It was as though heaven had / Quietly kissed the earth" [*Es war, als hätt der Himmel / Die Erde still geküßt*.] Suspended between its own, inscrutable affective origins and an expressive language that proves overtly allusive of an earlier text, Eichendorff's "old-germanic" (*altgermanisch*) political community constitutes an exemplary instance of Freudian "retroaction" (*Nachträglichkeit*). It renders an ideological fantasy in an overtly allegorical (that is, self-consciously textual) form. Not surprisingly, Eichendorff's essay proceeds to demur the hegemony of the "understanding" (*Verstand*) in Protestant culture, advocating instead the liberation of "fantasy" (*Phantasie*) from the constraints of "stale sentimentalism or outright political madness."[53] In

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the modality of lyric form—the smaller-scale image of an agonistic modernity inhabited by the writer and his projected audience—fantasy simulates original creation as involuntary recollection. As Adorno puts it, "Through fantasy, as recollection, genius continuously restores original creation—not as the creator of its reality but by the reintegration of its given elements in an image. . . . Through recollection, fantasy transforms the traces of the collapse of a sinful creation into a sign of hope for one that is whole and without sin and whose image it forms out of ruins." In his early attempt at formulating an aesthetic theory, Adorno stresses the miniature-character of the aesthetic vis-à-vis creation itself ("Fantasy imitates creation through miniaturization"), a speculative thesis borne out by Romantic lyric writing in particular. Moreover, the discrepancy in scale between the magnitude of a ruined creation and its "reintegration" in a dialectical, rather than Platonic, "domain of the image" (*Bilderreich*) stands in strict correlation with temporal discontinuity. Adorno quotes Kierkegaard: "Art consists in producing an enjoyment which never actually becomes present, but always has an element of the past in it, so that it is present in the past. This has already been expressed in the word: posthumous [*nachgelassen*]."[54]

Given its twofold sense as *nachgelassen*—that is, as self-consciously "posthumous" at the level of both form (creation as simulation) and historical time—Eichendorff's conservatism proves *nachträglich* in a more complex sense even than Freud's own usage of that term.[55] For a conservative aesthetic—taking the term in its strong, reflexive sense—represents its disaffected subjects not merely as "belated," since doing so would assume a basic continuity between history and the present, between the plenitude of times past and the conscious impoverishment of the here-and-now. A reflection of this kind would still be, in essence, a type of (epistemological and political) *Reaktion* and thus would bear all the customary traits of a delusional formation. True to the rich semantics of *Nachträglichkeit*, however, Eichendorff's stress on conservatism's "retroactive" or allegorical status (also a motive for his late project of translating Calderón) takes history to be by definition a missed experience.[56] As such, it can be recovered only through the (truly necessary) fantasy of a specular, mythical "depth" (*jene blühende Tiefe*). Like Proust's *mémoire involontaire*, the insights of conservative thought appear legitimate and authoritative only if their serendipitous occurrence is construed as a sign of (metaphysical) providence. Yet, as our last reading will show, Eichendorff's writings typically do not take that leap.

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The final text by Eichendorff to be considered here, and unquestionably one of his most distinctive and memorable lyrics, is entitled "Mondnacht." In its "humble irrationality" this poem exemplifies the challenge of Eichendorff and, more generally, of the deeply engrained mystical strain in Romantic writing for a contemporary audience.

Es war, als hätt der Himmel	It was as though heaven had
Die Erde still geküßt,	Quietly kissed the earth,
Daß sie im Blütenschimmer	That amidst shimmering blossoms
Von ihm nun träumen müßt.	She must now dream of him.
Die Luft ging durch die Felder,	The air passed over the fields,
Die Ähren wogten sacht,	Grain stalks gently yielded,
Es rauschten leis die Wälder,	The forests rustled softly,
So sternklar war die Nacht.	So translucent was the starlit night.
Und meine Seele spannte	And my soul widely
Weit ihre Flügel aus,	Extended its wings,
Flog durch die stillen Lande,	Passed over the silent lands,
Als flöge sie nach Haus.[57]	As though it was bound for home.

One must, above all, overcome one's "lazy unwillingness to muster up the energetic receptivity the poem requires."[58] How, then, are we to read a lyric that whose imagery is carefully poised at the threshold between naïvely empirical mimesis and a self-conscious textuality reminiscent of baroque *topoi*. At a strictly formal level, such oscillation between mystical longing and allegorical distance can be located in the poem's conditional syntax—sustained from the very opening ("*Es war, als hätt* . . .") through the last line ("*Als flöge sie* . . ."). Taken as a whole, the vision of "Mondnacht" appears decidedly qualified, a fantasy attenuated by *allegoresis* rather than a desire condensed into symbolism. Thus the opening image of the *Brautkuss* whereby heaven and earth are reconciled—far from overcoming the split between fecund perceptions and transcendent truths—only widens it.[59] For the image of reconciliation proves itself a purely literary device, a baroque topos (archetype, commonplace, or perhaps cliché?). Likewise, the subsequent construction of an analogy between cornfields and treetops animated by a breeze and the soul spreading its figural wings for flight never allows us to forget that we are witnessing a rhetorical operation. Weary of any mimetic commerce with such overworked terms as history or nature, and governed

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by “the ruling Baroque metaphor of life as a dream,” the poem “strip[s] the allegorical world book down to a few root words, its radical lexemes.”[60] And yet, Eichendorff in this poem anticipates Walter Benjamin’s remarks about the “contemplative calm” of earlier, baroque allegory. Indeed, it is tempting to read “Mondnacht” strictly as an expression of baroque Stoicism—in the vein of the *Nulla in mundo pax sincera* so memorably set to music by Vivaldi (RV 630). Still, such a reading must take care not to reduce Stoic and allegorical language to a mere commonplace or cliché. On the contrary, the allegorical topos of the *Brautkuss* explores what Benjamin refers to as “the chasm between pictorial being and significance [*bildlichem Sein und Bedeuten*] where we find nothing of the flouting indifference that characterizes the deceptively similar intention of the sign.”[61] Hence, the poem’s capacity to hint at the elusive metaphysical kinship between perception and knowledge pivots on qualifying its own voice as intrinsically unreal and chimerical. Yet such qualities do not betoken indifference, even less an evasion of the sublime discontinuities of history. Far from it, a surreal imagery reveals the poem’s reflexive self-awareness as irremediably textual (allegorical). Recognizing both the impossibility of transcending or “knowing” history, the lyric holds in an equilibrium the two dominant conceptual strains of German Romanticism: mysticism and historicism. It does so by placing the lyric voices—taken as both a spiritual and an intellectual agency—in an overtly phantasmagoric relation to the temporal forces of history. The latter can be encountered only by chance, not by design. Because the “knowledge” of history can come only in the form of an involuntary (and belated) memory act (*mémoire involontaire* or *Erinnerung*), one can easily be deceived by the poem’s seemingly incidental, naturalistic images. Yet the insistently conditional syntax and the persistence of allegorical topoi prevent any mimetic conflation of imagery with perception and, consequently, any reading of the overall poem as a symbolic revelation.

In Eichendorff no less than in Blake or Wordsworth, revelation does not mark the end of temporal knowledge but, instead, signals the emergence of a deeper, quasi-Stoic form of historical awareness: that of a traumatic belatedness.[62] Like the interiority of a subject traumatized by the apparent and definitive collapse of history as a stable field of reference, “the meaning constituted by the allegorical sign can . . . consist only in the *repetition* of a previous sign with which it can never coincide.”[63] Hence, Eichendorff’s deceptively simple opening (“*Es war, als hätt der Himmel / Die Erde*

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still geküßt") dwells on the inscrutability of an affective state (*Stimmung*) that, from the very start, is presented as incommensurable with any empirical perception. Heaven and earth embrace only in the virtual domain of an expressly conditional syntax. Such a union is further qualified as a fantasy of, rather than desire for, affective fulfillment inasmuch as the lyric captures it as a received literary topos. Because its utopian character can no longer be denied, the paradise of inwardness can be properly expressed only in a terminally self-alienated literary language. The Romantic traumatized voice rediscovers itself in and as a baroque topos; lyric utterance finds itself transmuted into the involuntary memory of a purely literary citation.[64]

Yet if the self-demystification of allegorical topoi risks the outright demotion of nature and history (through the image) to mere clichés, the vestige of this operation—that is, the figural world of lyric writing—still exhibits traces of the totality whose disappearance it confirms. In his remarkable account of shifting conceptions of figural language, Erich Auerbach notes that "beside the opposition between *figura* and fulfillment or truth, there appears another, between *figura* and *historia*. *Historia* or *littera* is the literal sense or the event related; *figura* is the same literal meaning or event in reference to the fulfillment cloaked in it, and this fulfillment itself is *veritas*, so that *figura* becomes a middle term between *littera-historia* and *veritas*." Presaging the French symbolists, Eichendorff's radical figural enjambment of such terms as heaven and earth, soul and wings ("*Und meine Seele spannte / Weit ihre Flügel aus*") unfolds with just enough self-conscious literariness and artificiality as to keep the magical pretensions of Christian symbolism at bay. Whereas "the symbol must possess magic power, . . . *figura*, on the other hand, must always be historical," Auerbach notes, for "it is a product of late cultures, far more indirect, complex, and charged with [literary] history. Indeed, seen from this point of view, it has something vastly old about it: a great culture had to reach its culmination and indeed show signs of old age, before an interpretive tradition could produced something on the order of figural prophecy."[65]

We now can articulate the complex affinity between the formal-literary character of Eichendorff's poetry and the fantasy-structure of Romantic conservatism, when approached as a matter of ideation rather than quotidian politics. Both view the *punctum* of perception and the self-identity of a "feeling" as shot through with a temporal dimension, a past whose significance for the present and the future proves irresistible, if also incalculable. Notwithstanding its naturalist veneer, Eichendorff's image of a

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breeze sweeping over cornstalks and treetops, as well as its analogue of the soul (in Greek, *Pneuma* [breath, wind, soul]) spreading its wings for flight reveals, upon closer inspection, an acutely temporal dimension. Suspended (in Auerbach's phrase) between *littera-historia* and *veritas,* Eichendorff's mystical *figurae* of natural and spiritual animation harbor intimations of unrest, of potentially cataclysmic historical change. A passage in Eichendorff's historical prose restates the mystical tranquility of "Mondnacht" almost verbatim, though now the explosive historical forces seething just below the surface (or beyond the horizon) of Romantic nature writing are impossible to ignore:

> *Dazwischen tönte vom Hofe herüber immerfort der Lärm der Sperlinge, die sich in der Linde tummelten, das Gollern der Truthähne, der einförmige Takt der Drescher und all jene wunderliche Musik des ländlichen Stillebens, die den Landbürtigen in der Fremde, wie das Alphorn den Schweizer* oft unversehens in Heimweh versenkt. *In den Tälern unten aber* schlugen die Kornfelder leise Wellen *überall eine fast unheimlich schwüle Gewitterstille, und niemand merkte oder beachtete es, daß das Wetter von Westen bereits aufstieg und einzelne Blitze schon über dem dunklen Waldeskranze prophetisch hin und her zuckten*."

> Intermittently, from across the farmstead there wafted the noise of starlings frolicking in the trees, the gobbling of turkeys, the monotonous rhythm of the harvesters, and all the magical sonority of rural, peaceful life that, like the Alpine horns for the Swiss, leaves the traveler unexpectedly *submerged in a state of profound longing* [*Heimweh*]. Down below in the valleys *the cornfields pulsated quietly*, an ominously humid atmosphere presaged thunderstorms, and nobody noticed or took heed that heavy weather was on the rise in the West and some initial lightening was already prophetically flashing above the bluff of trees in the distance.[66]

Like its historical and ideological kin, the language of *Altkonservatismus*, Eichendorff's oeuvre derives its stylistic charisma and literary authority from one central and recurrent figural operation. It is that of presenting the symbolic-mystical and the allegoric-historical, Revelation and History, in a state of conditional suspension. Are we to read the breeze that momentarily animates the cornfield expectantly (as a symbol of incipient revelation) or anxiously (as a scene of unpremeditated and unfathomable, traumatic

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memory)? In the end, truth (*veritas*) is not so much captured by awakening to it as in the continuous rhetorical enactment of such awakening itself. *Figura*, in Eichendorff, is a condition—not merely a technique—to which the (poetic) form of the voice gives the indispensable (if necessarily textual) substance. We note how the prose text introduces both the "prophetic" (*prophetisch*) and the "nostalgic" (*Heimweh*) as affective qualities at once unpremeditated and inescapable (*unversehens*). With revolutionary terrors having cast all of European culture and politics in a permanently surreal light, the music of repose (*Musik des ländlichen Stillebens*) is not mimetically there. Rather, like von Arnim's "ancient signs of firm boundaries" [*uralten Zeichen fester Grenzen*], such an idyll manifests, in appropriately allegorical form, how the Romantic subject has been permanently cut adrift from its imagined affective and political moorings. Inasmuch as this estrangement also entails a traumatic awakening to History as the nontranscendable horizon of European culture, the oblique volatility of the lyric image mediates such awakening in particularly apt form. Perched on the fluid continuum that includes topos, cliché, and revelation, Eichendorff's images serve both as the cause and the medium for this awakening. Far more articulately and honestly than his prosaic conservative fellow writers, his poetry enacts Coleridge's programmatic characterization of poetry as "a rationalized dream dealing [about?] to manifold Forms our own Feelings, that never perhaps were attached by us to our own personal selves."[67]

Notes

1 Even within the contemporary critical landscape and its often vociferous political disagreements, this basic paradigm of a purely "theoretical" accounting for Romanticism and the consequent reaffirmation of theory as untrammeled by the rough-and-tumble world of material politics holds true. Thus Manfred Frank's *Einführung in die Frühromantische Ästhetik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989) maintains a strictly text-immanent, exegetical perspective on aesthetic theory. More oddly yet, Hans-Georg Gadamer's famous pronouncement concerning the "historicity of all understanding" in the second part of *Truth and Method* (trans. John Cummings [New York: Continuum, 1975]) confines its own application of that insight to the late-nineteenth-century writers (Dilthey, Yorck, Ranke) who had first formulated it, while leaving previous aesthetic theory (Kant, Schiller, Schlegel) untouched by historical considerations simply because these writers had declared such matter to be incommensurate with aesthetic cognition. Other instances of preemptive identification with the aesthetic as a purely theoretical, not historical event—even, or perhaps especially, where the critic dissents from Idealist and Romantic aesthetics on logical, conceptual grounds—include Ernst Behler, *German Romantic Literary Theory*

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988); and Azade Seyhan, *Representation and Its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

2 For a discussion of problems intrinsic to contemporary Romantic Historicism, see James Chandler, *England in 1819* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 3–93; Steven Cole, "Evading Politics: The Poverty of Historicizing Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 34.1 (1995): 29–49; Alan Liu, "Local Transcendence: Cultural Criticism, Postmodernism, and the Romanticism of Detail," *Representations* 32 (1990): 75–113; and my own "Reading beyond Redemption," in *Lessons of Romanticism*, ed. Thomas Pfau and Robert F. Gleckner (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

3 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 5.

4 Terry Eagleton, whose book title I am echoing here, largely reconstitutes Adorno's insights in the lesser key of individual case-studies (Kant, Schiller, Schopenhauer, etc.). See his opening assertion that "the mystery of the aesthetic object is that each of its sensuous parts, while appearing wholly autonomous, incarnates the 'law' of totality." See also his subsequent remarks on the split personality of the aesthetic as both, an "emancipatory force" and as "internalized repression." *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 25, 28.

5 For a discussion of English folk culture as the product of various literary and philological strategies dedicated to its "recovery," see Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), specifically the essays by Trevor-Roper and Prys Morgan.

6 The remarks are found in von Arnim's important postscript, entitled "Von Volksliedern," to *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which he and Clemens Brentano first published in 1806. See volume 6 (ed. Heinz Rölleke) of Brentano, *Werke*, ed. Jürgen Behrens, Wolfgang Frühwald (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), 407.

7 Ibid., 409; my translation.

8 On the concept of time, see Manfred Frank, *Zeitbewußtsein* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1990).

9 As Walter Benjamin first noted, Proust's concept is itself an expression of the historical forces of modernity with its characteristic dispersion of economic causality and its erosion of conscious agency. For in this new psychological dynamic, the contingent and the personal converge without advance warning: "Man's inner concerns do not have their issueless private character by nature. They do so only when he is increasingly unable to assimilate the data of the world around him by experience." Such "atrophy of experience," Benjamin argues, accounts for the replacement of "older narration by information, of information by sensation." *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 158–59. Knowledge has now ceased to operate through direct lines of oral narrative transmission. Instead, it is realized through the affective simulacra of memory, such as sympathy, nostalgia, and similarly oblique forms of "sensation." As a result of this development, Benjamin argues, knowledge has become a matter of contingency, of flashes of awareness triggered seemingly at random. What Proust calls

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mémoire involontaire is thus "part of the inventory of the individual who is isolated in many ways." When taken "in the strict sense of the word," Proust notes, "experience" names the moment when "certain contents of the individual past combine with material of the collective past" (ibid.). Not surprisingly, Benjamin extends his reflections on Proust's notion of an "involuntary memory" into a discussion of Freud's theory of trauma (ibid., 160–63). Benjamin reinforces the point, noting that "experience is indeed a matter of tradition, in collective existence as well as private life." However, as such it depends less on "facts firmly anchored in memory than [on] a convergence in memory of accumulated and frequently unconscious data" (ibid., 157).

10 William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797–1800*, ed. James Butler and Sharon Green (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 756.

11 Walter Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 1998), 47, 36. In "convolute" N of *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin reiterates and sharpens his conception of historical knowledge. For not only does "the historical index of . . . images" locate them in "a particular time; it says, above all, that they attain to legibility only at a particular time." The time of historical knowledge, *Jetztzeit*, is a moment of sheer serendipity: "Each 'now' is the now of a particular recognizability. In it, truth is charged to the bursting point with time. (This point of explosion, and nothing else, is the death of *intentio*, which thus coincides with the birth of authentic historical time, the time of truth.)" (*Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999], 463).

12 In England, Wordsworth's sharp discrimination between the "people" and the "public" in his 1800 and 1815 prefaces echoes Burke's earlier antithesis and is shortly afterward taken up by William Hazlitt. See his "What Is the People?" in *Selected Writings of William Hazlitt*, ed. Duncan Wu (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), 4:241–60. The absence of firm geopolitical boundaries in Germany, at least until 1815 and, in many ways, until 1871, may account for the, if anything, more urgent symbolic struggle over the idea of a cohesive national polity and its shared cultural endowment. For a detailed account of dialectic between German culture and politics between 1815 and 1840, see James Sheehan, *German History, 1770–1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Thomas Nipperdey, *German History from Napoleon to Bismarck, 1800–1866*, trans. Michael Nolan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

13 See David Wellbery, *The Specular Moment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 187–284.

14 Von Arnim, "Von Volksliedern," 409. On the "strong" hermeneutic role of Romantic texts, see Tilottama Rajan, *The Supplement of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 15–100; on Schleiermacher's foundational arguments in this regard, see my "Immediacy and the Text: Friedrich Schleiermacher's Theory of Style and Interpretation," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51.1 (1990): 51–73.

15 For more on Romanticism's mediation, see, for example, Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Geoffrey Hartman, "The Poetics of Prophecy," in *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); and Rainer Nägele, *Reading after Freud: Essays on Goethe, Hölderlin, Habermas, Nietzsche, Brecht, Celan, and Freud* (New York: Columbia University Press,

1987). See below the comments by Fredric Jameson cited in note 49; Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 464.

16 Von Arnim, "Von Volksliedern," 410–11.

17 Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 103. Building on Stewart's thesis, I have argued elsewhere how the redefinition of literature as an unwitting archeology of cultural meanings contributes to the formation of a new type of middle-class readership that embraces the reading process as a collaborative extension of the Romantic paradigm of authorship as a socially responsible remembering; see Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 208–46.

18 Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 111, 117.

19 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1953–74), 18:7–66.

20 Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 11, 9.

21 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 464.

22 Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 15, 18.

23 Kevin Newmark, "Traumatic Poetry: Charles Baudelaire and the Shock of Laughter," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 238–39.

24 Joseph von Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Gerhart Baumann, 4 vols. (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1958), 1:72.

25 Von Arnim, "Von Volksliedern," 408.

26 Karl Mannheim, *Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. David Kettler and Volker Meja (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 100.

27 Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe*, 1:250.

28 See Husserl, *Logical Investigations* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980), vol. 2, sec. 22, vol. 5, sec. 19.

29 Oskar Seidlin notes that the quintessentially "transfixed" (*verzaubert*) disposition of the subject in Eichendorff "ought indeed to be understood in its proper sense: the state of hypnotic fixation on oneself, an immersion in one's own interiority, a dreaming imprisonment and brooding. . . . What Eichendorff's landscape requires . . . is a sudden act of awakening, a quick rending of the oppressive veil; and precisely that will happen time and again in Eichendorff's work." Seidlin links this feature of rupture (*An-Bruch*) to a preoccupation with time. "Through the medium of a visible landscape Eichendorff time and again mediates temporal perspectives" [*Durch das Medium sichtbarer Landschaft vermittelt Eichendorff immer wieder die Perspektiven der Zeit*]. Seidlin, "Eichendorffs Symbolische Landschaft," in *Eichendorff Heute*, ed. Paul Stöcklein (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche, 1966), 237–38, 236. Similarly, James Rolleston notes how "Eichendorff's images are deliberately unstable, oscillating ceaselessly between an almost naïve claim to contingent immediacy and an erosion of that claim through a skeptical interpretive narrative" (*Narratives of Ecstasy* [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987], 39).

30 See Reinhard H. Thum, "Cliché and Stereotype," *Philological Quarterly* 62.4 (1983): 435–57, and some of the early, largely dismissive accounts of Eichendorff cited in that essay

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(Richarda Huch, Gisela Jahn, René Wehrli). A more astute interpretation of the prevalent *literarhistorische Klischeevorstellungen* and *formelhafte Sprachelemente* in Eichendorff's oeuvre can be found in Klaus Dieter Krabiel, *Tradition und Bewegung: Zum sprachlichen Verfahren Eichendorffs* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973), 45–47.

31 Theodor Adorno, *Notes to Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 1:57, 70.

32 Richard Alewyn, "Ein Wort über Eichendorff," in Stöcklein, *Eichendorff Heute*, 7–18; my translation. A similar, albeit much earlier discussion of this oddly formulaic yet elusive style can be found in a review of Eichendorff's 1835 novel, *Dichter und ihre Gesellen*, by the contemporary, left-oriented playwright Karl Gutzkow. See his *Schriften* (Frankfurt: Zwietansendeins, 1998), 2:863–68.

33 See Paul de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric," in *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 3–19.

34 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 5.

35 David Wellbery, "Verzauberung: Das Simulakrum in der romantischen Lyrik," in *Mimesis und Simulation*, ed Andreas Kablitz and Gerhard Neumann (Freiburg: Rombach, 1998), 452, 460, 458; my translations.

36 Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe*, 1:899.

37 Ibid., 64. See also Eichendorff's closely related poem "Der Geist," in ibid., 143.

38 Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 205–7.

39 Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 100. For Benjamin, sculpted stones are the material reflex (*Sinnbild*) of cultural matter recognized to be afflicted by the inexorable passage of historical time. Like John Ruskin before him, Benjamin interprets sculpted stone as the unwitting expressive disclosure of a melancholic state; see *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 154–55.

40 Robert Schumann appears to have had a keen understanding of this dynamic when setting this lyric to music. For Adorno, Schumann's setting of the poem "is distinguished by its bold dissonances . . . which result from the collision of the melodic line and the chorale-like ties in the accompaniment, which moves step-wise; it is as though the modernity of this harmonization were an attempt to protect the poem from aging" (Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, 77).

41 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), 11.

42 As Karl Mannheim argues, the common assumption that a critique of capitalism originated only with the proletarian socialist movement ought to be revised. "There are many indications that this criticism was initiated by the 'right-wing opposition' " to which such anticapitalist tendencies were an integral part of its larger "experiential reaction against Enlightenment thinking." Mannheim, *Conservatism*, 67, 65. See also Alfred Riemen, "Die reaktionären Revolutionäre? Oder Romantischer Antikapitalismus," *Aurora: Jahrbuch der Eichendorff Gesellschaft* 33 (1973): 77–86.

43 The memorable and much-quoted opening of Eichendorff's *Der Adel und die Revolution* bears recalling here: "*Sehr alte Leute wissen sich wohl noch einigermaßen der sogenannten guten alten Zeit zu erinnern. Sie war aber eigentlich weder gut noch alt, sondern nur noch*

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eine Karikatur des alten Guten. Das Schwert war zum Galanteriedegen, der Helm zur Zipfelperücke, aus dem Burgherrn ein pensionierter Husarenoberst geworden, der auf seinem öden Landsitz, von welchem seine Vorfahren einst die vorüberziehenden Kaufleute gebrandschatzt hatten, nun seinerseits von den Industriellen belagert und immer enger eingeschlossen wurde. Es war mit einem Wort die mürb und müde gewordene Ritterzeit, die sich puderte, um den bedeutenden Schimmel der Haare zu verkleiden; einem alten Gecken vergleichbar, der noch immer selbstzufrieden die Schönen umtänzelt, und nicht begreifen kann und höchst empfindlich darüber ist, daß ihn die Welt nicht mehr für jung halten will" [Only people of very advanced age can still recall the so-called dear old time. In fact, that time was neither dear nor old; rather, it was merely a caricature of old nobility. The sword had become a gallant's foil, the helmet had turned into a powdered wig, the lord of the manor had become a retired colonel of the hussars who now found himself besieged and encircled by industrialists on the very estate from whence in former times his ancestors had plundered and torched merchants passing through. In so many words, the age in question was that of an enfeebled and fatigued chivalry, now generously powdered so as to cover its rot. It could be compared to an aged lecher who continues to dance with young, beautiful people and is unable to comprehend, indeed, waxes indignant, that the world no longer considers him young] (Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe*, 1:898; my translation).

44 Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (New York: Verso, 1997), 7.

45 As Helga Grebing has argued, conservatism is a bourgeois phenomenon, not a feudal one: "Conservatism originates not as an ahistorical, retrospective form of opposition to bourgeois society. Rather, it emerges from the ideological needs of that society insofar as it furnishes bourgeois society with a strategy to counteract those emancipatory characteristics that are at once intrinsic to it and appear to imply the bourgeoisie's ongoing transformation in the future. The historical moment for this genesis of conservatism is thus the transition from an old, dissolving mode of production toward a new, capitalist one. As regards both, its mode of origination and its further development, conservatism can thus not be understood as legitimating precapitalist, feudal modes of production *per se*." Helga Grebing, *Aktuelle Theorien über Faschismus und Konservatismus*: *Eine Kritik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1974), 26–27; my translation.

46 Angelika Rauch, "Post-Traumatic Hermeneutics: Melancholia in the Wake of Trauma," *diacritics* (Winter 1998): 111–20; quotations from 113.

47 Mannheim, *Conservatism*, 88.

48 It bears remembering that Friedrich Schlegel himself emerged as one of the preeminent conservatives of the later Romantic period. His conversion to Catholicism and subsequent ascent as a major intellectual presence in Vienna—where he also promoted Eichendorff's literary fortunes—follow a familiar trajectory of conversion and the gradual formulation of an antimodern metaphysics.

49 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), ix, 25.

50 Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe*, 4:1155; my translation.

51 Mannheim, *Conservatism*, 56.

52 Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe*, 4:1155–56; my translation.

53 Ibid., 4:1160; my translation. Consistent with Eichendorff's self-consciously deployed notion of "fantasy," J. G. A. Pocock remarks that "a tradition," which, "in its simplest form,

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may be thought of as an indefinite series of repetitions of an action," does not so much require an original reference-point as the fiction of one: "It may well be that it is the assumption, rather than the factual information, of previous performance that is operative; each action provides the grounds for assuming that it had a predecessor." Later in the same essay, Pocock persuasively distinguishes between tradition as "stress[ing] either the continuity of the process of transmission, or the creative and charismatic origin of what is transmitted. The two are conceptually distinct, . . . but they are dialectically related, and are often—perhaps normally—found together within the same tradition. A distinction may be drawn between traditions which conserve highly specific and significant images of the creative actions with which they began and of which they are in some way the continuation, and traditions which depict themselves as sheer continuity of usage or transmission and conserve little or no account of their beginnings" (*Politics, Language, and Time* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971], 237, 244).

54 Theodor Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 139). See also the German text, Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche, 1998), 2:197–98. Adorno's phrase "*Die Kunst ist, einen Genuß hervorzubringen*" fuses a definition and a colloquialism: "Art consists in producing an enjoyment" and "The trick is to produce an enjoyment."

55 For Freud's usage of *Nachträglichkeit*, see especially his 1918 case history of the Wolf-Man ("From the History of an Infantile Neurosis") where, in a long footnote, Freud comments how "the patient under analysis, at an age of over twenty-five years, was lending words to the impressions and impulses of his fourth year which he would never have found at that time." Freud, *Three Case Histories* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 231–32n. While such delayed eloquence may "seem comic and incredible," Freud defends his patient's substitution of his "present ego into the situation which is so long past" as "legitimate" (*mit Recht*). It is simply a case of "deferred action" (Strachey's translation of *Nachträglichkeit*). Freud's unusual eagerness to justify a moment of substitution that, in point of fact, eclipses no less than "three [intervening] periods of time" [*Zeitphasen*], reflects his professional objective of translating preverbal affect into intelligible propositions. Inasmuch as psychoanalysis renders all preconscious suffering intelligible, medical "cure," and methodological self-legitimation go hand in hand. Not surprisingly, most of Freud's key-concepts—such as repression, the unconscious, displacement, and indeed *Nachträglichkeit*—effectively presuppose the entire terminological edifice of psychoanalysis to be in place already. In ways that cannot be taken up in full detail here, *Nachträglichkeit* thus constitutes not only a key concept of the unconscious as a "missed" or previously "unclaimed" experience. It also reveals that, within the architectonics of Freudian thought, any key concept is by definition always in(tro)duced "retroactively," part of an intellectual economy in which dissent and falsification are preempted by the on the grounds of an anterior agency (the unconscious) that can only be caught in its necessarily belated effects, but never *in actu*.

56 See Slavoj Žižek's characterization of history as the "supreme example of [the] paradoxical coincidence of emergence and loss. . . . On the one hand, pre-capitalist societies allegedly

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do not yet know history proper; they are 'circular,' 'closed,' caught in a repetitive movement predetermined by tradition—so history must emerge *afterwards*, with the decay of 'closed' organic societies. On the other hand, the opposite cliché tells us that capitalism itself is no longer historical; it is rootless, with no tradition of its own, and therefore parasitical on previous traditions, a universal order which (like modern science) can thrive everywhere" (*Plague of Fantasies*, 13). Here as elsewhere, however, Žižek's precariously generalizing tone leaves it unclear what authority these ostensibly "clichéd" positions hold within his account.

57 Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe*, 1:286; my translation.

58 Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, 57.

59 Gerald Gillespie briefly cites a poem by Friedrich von Logau (1605–55), eminent and prolific author of countless epigrammatic, aphoristic, and sententious poems, among them his *Two-hundred Rhymed German Proverbs* (1638) and his magnum opus, the *Three-thousand German Epigrams* [*Deutscher Sinn-Getichte Drey Tausend*] (1654). Logau's "May" ["Der Mai"], centers on the image of the nuptial kiss wedding earth to heaven: "*Dieser Monat ist ein Kuß, den der Himmel gibt der Erde, / Daß sie, jetzund seine Braut, künftig eine Mutter werde*" [This month is a kiss that heaven places on earth's forehead / That she may become his bride now and a mother in the future]. Cited in Gillespie, "Hieroglyphics of Finality in Eichendorff's Lyrics," *German Life and Letters* 42.3 (1989): 203–18; quotation from 209. Eichendorff's work corroborates Paul de Man's contention that "truly modern poetry" requires an "imagery that is both symbol and allegory, that represents objects in nature but is actually taken from purely literary sources" (*Blindness and Insight*, 171).

60 Gillespie, "Hieroglyphics of Finality," 209, 204.

61 Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 144; my translation.

62 Echoing Adorno's apprehension of readers complacent enough to construe Eichendorff's allegorical landscape as imbued with metaphysical consolation, de Man cautions against the desire to "understand the relationship between mimesis and allegory as a genetic process, forcing into a pattern of continuity what that which is, by definition, the negation of all continuity" (*Blindness and Insight*, 185–86).

63 Ibid., 207.

64 Walther Killy notes how, in the age of baroque literature, "literary practice transmutes the topical principle of *inventio* for arguments into an inventory of fixed turns of phrase. Cognitive principles are transformed into verbal cues" [*In der literarischen Praxis wird aus dem topischen Auffindungsprinzip für Argumente häufig eine Sammlung von feststehenden Redewendungen, allgemeinen Erwägungen, traditionellen Behauptungen, berühmten Aussprüchen usw. Aus dem Denkprinzip wird das Stichwort*] (Walther Killy, *Literaturlexikon*, 15 vols. [Gütersloh: Mohn, 1988–93], 14:436). Ernst Robert Curtius, notwithstanding his formidable erudition in medieval and early modern rhetorical convention, often appears uncertain about whether a given topos ought to be approached as a moral commonplace, rhetorical cliché, or as the expression of archetypal, and enduring (substantive) contents. See Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), chap. 5, secs. 2, 3, 6.

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65 Erich Auerbach, "Figura," trans. Ralph Manheim, in Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 47, 57.

66 Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe,* 1:903; translation mine, emphases mine.

67 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Notebooks*, vol., 2, ed. Kathleen Coburn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), entry 2086.

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