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# Goethe Yearbook



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# Goethe Yearbook

Publications of the Goethe Society  
of North America

Edited by  
Adrian Daub and Elisabeth Krimmer

With Birgit Tautz,  
Book Review Editor

Volume XXI



CAMDEN HOUSE

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Additional information on the Goethe Society of North America can be found  
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First published 2014 by  
Camden House

Camden House is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Inc.  
668 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester, NY 14620, USA  
[www.camden-house.com](http://www.camden-house.com)  
and of Boydell & Brewer Limited  
P.O. Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 3DF, UK  
[www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com)

ISSN: 0734-3329  
ISBN-13: 978-1-57113-598-8  
ISBN-10: 1-57113-598-7

Set in Garamond Book and Garamond Ultra type  
and printed on acid-free paper.  
Manufactured and bound for maximum durability.  
Printed in the United States of America.

Designed and typeset by Mizpah Publishing Services Private Limited.

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## Thomas P. Saine (1941–2013)



*Tom Saine as a Yale senior in 1962. Courtesy of Gail Hart.*

### *Tom Saine and Goethe*

**T**om Saine was not only a scholar of the Goethezeit. He was, as they say, a huge fan of Goethe. He had many many books by Goethe, as well as several complete editions. Drawings and Goethe-related images adorned the walls of his study. In the late 1980s, he discovered vanity license plates and was very disappointed to learn from the DMV that someone else in California already had the GOETHE plate. So he ordered GOETHE-1 and proudly affixed it to a series of automobiles. When he bought his first motorcycle in the early

1990s, he did manage to get the GOETHE *motorcycle plate*; clearly bikers are less interested in the German classics than motorists.

GOETHE-1 figured somewhat prominently in a 2009 campus novel, *Der gestoblene Abend* by Wolfram Fleischhauer. Fleischhauer had been an international graduate student in Critical Theory at UC Irvine in the late '80s and used his experiences as a basis for the novel. A thinly disguised Ruth Angress counsels the young German protagonist on his course of study and our hero occasionally sees an elusive automobile with GOETHE-1 plates disappearing into faculty housing. Fleischhauer told us that this was based on real life: he had been surprised and intrigued to see that honored name from the German school curriculum on a car bumper in Southern California and Ruth and I petitioned Tom for an old plate, which she mailed to Fleischhauer in Germany. He has displayed it at readings.

Tom moved to Texas, to the outskirts of Dallas in 2010 and soon after he sent me a photo of his Texas license plate. Despite significant German settlement and continued presence in the Lone Star State, no one had yet laid claim to the Texas GOETHE vanity plate and Tom was able to procure this prize. One of the last pictures I have from him shows the license plate on the back of his Infiniti G37S and, reflected in the shiny bumper, triumphant Tom with his camera.

Gail Hart  
Professor of German  
University of California, Irvine



*Tom Saine's Texas license plate, 2010. Courtesy of Gail Hart.*

The sad news from Dallas of Tom Saine's death has brought back some happier memories. Tom became my colleague when he arrived at the University of California, Irvine, in 1975 as an Associate Professor. I had come to Irvine from Yale University a year earlier, fresh out of graduate school. We had barely known one another in New Haven. Tom had been an undergraduate at Yale, then a graduate student, Assistant Professor and, finally, an Associate Professor. With a young family and a demanding research agenda, he arrived in Irvine to join an expanding German Department in a university that had first opened its doors only ten years earlier. Within a year he was promoted to Full Professor and named the department's chair. His academic ambitions dovetailed perfectly with the department's press to establish a top-flight graduate program.

Tom quickly became a friend. Far more important than the Yale connection was our shared interest in the eighteenth century and in Goethe. Tom was generous in his invitations to join his family on weekends. He proudly shared volumes from his ever-expanding personal library—he was an avid collector—and he loved to talk late into the night about the intellectuals and theological radicals of the German Enlightenment. He happily introduced his friends to one another. Among the department's steady and impressive list of guest professors are several whose professional relationships with Tom had been or would be transformed into personal ones, marked by mutual intellectual regard. I am thinking particularly of Hans R. Vaget, Uwe-K. Ketelsen, Hans-Wolf Jäger, and Bengt S. Rensen, all guests in that first decade.

The Goethe Society of North America was born in this milieu, a product of heady evening conversations about the state of Germanistik, in general, and American Goethe studies, in particular. As plans for the society took shape and its initial leadership was identified, the yearbook editorship went to Tom. He was serving a term as book review editor for the *German Quarterly*, which had moved to Irvine with our colleague Ruth Klüger as its editor. He clearly savored the challenge and the expanding contacts with Germanists across North America. In person Tom could be laconic, even gruff and dismissive. But in his written communications he was capable of extraordinary prose, compelling, clear, and candid. All of this was put to good use when the Goethe Society of North America was announced at the MLA in 1979 and formally constituted in October 1980. The first *Goethe Yearbook* appeared in 1982 with Tom as its founding editor. Without Tom the GSNA would not have happened.

In the years that followed Tom continued as department chair, serving until 1987. He edited the yearbook until 1999. I have been told that he consistently wrote the best personnel documents on the UCI campus—thoughtful, persuasive, and thorough. He loved the process of editing, which he tightly controlled. He would repeatedly slow down the appearance of *Goethe Yearbook* volumes, if necessary to guarantee the quality to which he aspired. He would not be hurried under any circumstances. The yearbooks he produced were distinguished by their quality and intellectual breadth. Likewise, his scholarship on Goethe and the eighteenth century and his other contributions to the field as editor and translator became well-known and highly valued. As a colleague and a private person, Tom had his share of contradic-

tions. In many ways a solitary man, he nevertheless enjoyed the company of others. He was open to reasonable conversation, but insistently went his own way. He productively urged active campus engagement on younger colleagues to learn how the university worked, but turned his own attention elsewhere. While never completely abandoning Goethe, in his later years his writing focused ever more intently on the religious/theological conflicts of the late Enlightenment. But one commitment remained throughout his career: careful and precise attention to the historical records illuminating the social and intellectual milieu within which he did his research. With his retirement in 2005 and his subsequent move to Dallas, Tom's intellectual curiosity continued, even if the pace of his scholarship slowed as he became ill. One of his last postings on his website is a request for correspondence from other scholars interested in discussing the impact of Prussian religious reforms and the American Revolution on the availability of trained German clergy to serve immigrants in North Carolina and other colonial states. To the end, a search for *Lux et Veritas*.

Meredith Lee  
Professor Emerita of German  
University of California, Irvine

From time to time over the years I have composed memorials to colleagues who have passed on, calmly and, I hope, judiciously. But this time it is different, more poignant and sorrowful. Tom Saine was one of my oldest friends. Our relationship began some fifty years ago. When we were junior faculty members at Yale I was closer to him than to anyone else in the department or in the university. We shared our hopes and our worries, talked of private matters not appropriate for the public domain, and gave one another advice. Sometimes we had better judgment about each other than we had about ourselves. Tom's commitment to scholarship was inspirational. He had a true vocation, and I think that, among the junior faculty at that time, he was the hardest working. He was remarkable for his patience in immersing himself in materials that some of the rest of us could not have made ourselves read. I was unable to follow him into the depths of Leibniz and theodicy. I expect, though, that his affinity for eighteenth-century philosophy of religion, unintelligible to me, owed something to his personal background and upbringing.

After he left Yale for Cincinnati, briefly, then the University of California at Irvine, we naturally had less to do with one another. But we stayed in touch, and he would repeatedly urge me to seek a position in California, not because I had given him any reason to think that I wanted to fight the brush fires while standing on the quaking earth, as I put it, but because he would have liked to have my companionship closer by. I was very touched by this.

We reunited during the 1980s when we became associated with the English-language Goethe edition, the most enduring project of the short-lived branch of the Suhrkamp / Insel Verlag in Boston, founded by Siegfried Unseld in his unhappy attempt to impose his massive self-assurance on an American context. Ignoring him as far as possible, Tom and I collaborated splendidly with one another and with our translator Robert R. Heitner on two volumes

of *Poetry and Truth*, *The Campaign in France*, and *The Siege of Mainz*, and one volume of *The Italian Journey*. The result, I believe, was pretty good. It is a little misleading that we appear on the title pages on an equal footing as editors, because Tom supplied the learning and the scholarship, while I did the donkey work. Tom had a particular interest in *Die Campagne in Frankreich*; he took on the translation of it and *Die Belagerung von Mainz* himself. He was expert on the grueling miseries of the retreat and Goethe's disgust at the enterprise and its commanders, nowhere openly expressed but legible to a careful reader like Tom. His achievements of this kind are examples of the contributions that we outlanders can make to German studies, being relatively free of the grisly complicities of the past, the traditional pieties, and nationalistic defensiveness that sometimes burden German scholars. It would be nice if they would more generously acknowledge our services in this regard.

Another example was Tom's intervention when German scholars, longing for a usable past that could stand beside the French Revolution, identified German "Jacobins." Tom, with his detailed knowledge of German intellectual history from the Enlightenment to the French Revolution and its aftermath, was skeptical about German Jacobins. He somewhat cheekily hinted that those identifying German Jacobins were replicating the McCarthyist accusations of the conservative authorities of the 1950s, though with reversed values. With his customary documented detail he showed that the most radical of the German supporters of the Reformation were Girondists at best, enthusiastic for Charlotte Corday and Adam Lux. A valuable byproduct of this inquiry was his reasoned and balanced portrayal of Georg Forster in the Twayne World Authors Series. A further intervention was his brilliant essay meticulously picking apart the concept of *Bildung* in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. It helped to impel me on my quest for the *Bildungsroman*, which led to the result that its claimed dominance in and peculiarity to German literature are a mirage. Incidentally, Tom wrote this essay in German, probably in honor of our *Doktorvater*, Heinrich Henel, in whose Festschrift it appeared. Tom had an excellent command of the language; I always envied him his skill in writing it.

In the course of time my wife, Christa, and I began to feel that, despite his intermittent ebullience and puckish sense of humor, Tom was not a very happy man. We did not have an insight into the reasons for this, but we began to worry about his welfare and his health as his fortunes seemed to decline, while I disapproved of his motorcycle, which, of course, I had no right to do. Now, inevitably, we regret that we did not pay closer attention and stand by him more regularly. But it was not until I received a message from him shortly before the end that I got a sense of how fragile his health had become. He had a richly productive life and reached the biblical span, but that does not make the loss any less painful. His memory and his achievements survive intact.

Jeffrey Sammons  
Leavenworth Professor Emeritus of  
German Language and Literature  
Yale University

“That’s all right,” in a slightly impatient drawl, is the first thing I hear when I think of Tom Saine. He was always so calm, so phlegmatic even, that it made no sense to him that others of us were excitable. It was something he seemed to know about people, and it didn’t exactly bother him, it just kept us from moving forward. My first teaching experience was in a second-year class Tom ran, and I learned that the more challenging the syllabus, the better the class; we taught “Urfaust” and “Der hessische Landbote” and the students lapped it up. And in the TA meetings he would sit and listen to the highly principled—that is highly opinionated—graduate students teaching for him, and end it with “That’s all right,” and we would finish grading our exams. He didn’t need to pretend to spare your feelings, because he always managed to communicate that he believed in you anyway.

I never heard Tom talk too much about anything. He knew a lot and one always wanted to hear more from him. It wasn’t that he didn’t have opinions. He did, and had high standards and, I think, especially preferred the highest aspirations. Yet in my experience Tom’s opinions also tended to the tolerant, open-minded, what-can-be-learned-here variety. He set a model as founding editor of the *Goethe Yearbook*, not only to his successors, but also to the rest of us who read for him. How? For me, by once responding to a report about an essay saying yes I was right about the problems, but I had missed what was interesting about the essay (which he explained) and that he was going to proceed with it. Nevertheless, Tom did not do such things lightly. He had the wisdom to keep his opinions to himself unless he thought sharing one would achieve something.

My relationship with Tom over the last forty years has been mostly wordless. It didn’t matter if we went for years without seeing each other, when we met it was no different than if we had seen each other the day before. Tom always seemed to be there. Wordless communication on the phone with Tom was a special experience. Tom’s death is a sad loss to all of us, but how much worse had we not had him to lose. He has always represented for me a rock of sanity in what was often a turbulent world, not the dangerous rock represented by Antonio, but more like Manto, who is always still there: “Ich harre, mich umkreist die Zeit.”

Jane Brown  
Joff Hanauer Distinguished Professor  
for Western Civilization Emerita  
University of Washington

What was Tom thinking? I’m sure that question was not only on my mind, but on the minds of many Goethe Society members when he selected me as the second editor of the *Goethe Yearbook* in 1999. If people knew me from Adam, it was because I’d “outed” Goethe and his age in a notorious MLA panel in the early ’90s. Not exactly a recommendation, you might have thought. But I knew who Tom was. I still think Tom’s *Ästhetische Theodizee*, which I first read as a grad student, is one of the finest books on Moritz. For an on-campus interview at the University of Maryland, I relied on Tom’s *Black Bread, White Bread* as I prepared to teach a class on “Goethe und die

Revolution." I landed the job. A few years later I needed another reference for a Humboldt. Why did I ask Tom? He scarcely knew me. But I got the Humboldt. And when I gave a paper (on Wieland and the female breast) at the Western Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference in Irvine in 1995, Tom and Gail generously offered to put me up in their home. One evening Tom and I talked for hours about the *Yearbook*. Tom edited at night. He had a system. He later wrote it up for me in glorious detail. He had a ponderous and expanding file of eighteenth-century German words in their original orthography, which he hooked up to his spell check. I inherited it. He loved the *Yearbook*. And so did I. Four years later at the MLA Irvine cash bar, he took me outside. I thought he wanted a cigarette. He did. But he also asked me if I wanted to edit the *Yearbook*. I think I know why. Take a look at the contents of volume one: the first article is by David Wellbery. There's an article by Hans Rudolf Vietgen on Goethe's "Das Tagebuch." Judith Ryan on Goethe and Henry James. An archival note from Christa Sammons. We know that all roads lead to Goethe. What Tom knew was that the *Goethe Yearbook* should be open to all travelers.

Simon Richter  
Professor of German  
University of Pennsylvania

Some of my fondest memories of Tom Saine come from the distant winter and spring terms of 1979, when he was the chair of the German department at the University of California at Irvine, and I was a visiting professor from Smith College. I recall with particular fondness his and Ute's comfortable house in Santa Ana, where our two young families would get together for convivial evenings and lively, gossipy conversations. To this visitor from New England, Southern California was indeed the proverbial "Land, wo die Zitronen blühen." Sure enough, there was a lemon tree in the Saines' garden, unprepossessing in demeanor but amazingly productive, so much so that a couple of lemons would often end up in our pockets as we were leaving the premises.

At that time, my conversations with Tom would more often than not turn to Goethe and Goethe scholarship. By then we had known each other for some ten years, our friendship having first been triggered by my request for information pertaining to Karl Philipp Moritz, the subject of his Yale dissertation, and the subject of a chapter in my own Columbia dissertation on Goethe and dilettantism. At Irvine, we both were working on Goethe, writing essays and reviewing books. More importantly, we were making plans for the foundation of a new Goethe Society, working closely with two co-conspirators, Merry Lee and Ted Bahr: we were a very purposeful gang of four and the Ur-members of a society that had yet to be incorporated.

The chief if not the sole purpose of such a society, as I recall Tom's way of putting the matter, was to provide a proper forum for American Goethe scholarship. This meant bringing out a new yearbook, for we were in agreement that in the 1960s and '70s the venerable *Goethe Jahrbuch* published by the Weimar Goethe-Gesellschaft, was an all too predictable, stodgy, and boring affair. And it is indeed difficult to imagine that the articles that appeared

in the first volume of our *Goethe Yearbook* would have been accepted by the powers-that-were in Weimar. Thanks largely to Tom's vision, persistence, and experience—he was serving then as Associate Editor of the *German Quarterly*—the *Goethe Yearbook* became from the start the distinctive voice of American Goethe scholarship. It still is. Tom was the obvious candidate for founding editor, and he guided the *Goethe Yearbook* through ten volumes before passing the torch to Simon Richter. I was happy to serve for a time as the Review Editor before handing off the baton to Jane Brown, who graciously took over this important and onerous but enjoyable task. To our dismay, we soon discovered that there already existed an American Goethe Society. Although that organization was well-nigh defunct—as far as we could tell, it had never had any scholarly aspirations—we could not avail ourselves of its name, which is why the newly founded society came to be called the Goethe Society of North America. This gave us an added incentive to make sure, in time, that Canadian scholars were properly represented both as members and leaders in the GSNA.

Faced with the awkward shape of those four letters, we needed an artist to design for the society a striking logo. Elliot Offner, the well-known sculptor and typographer who was Printer to the College at Smith, graciously designed the logo that still adorns the volumes of our *Yearbook*. For a time it looked as though Suhrkamp would publish the new venture. Siegfried Unseld, the charismatic head of Suhrkamp, agreed at first to include the *Goethe Yearbook* in his grandiose plans for “Suhrkamp Publishers New York,” but he soon had to back out. The *Goethe Yearbook* eventually found its home with Camden House, founded by James Hardin, a friend of Tom's. Suhrkamp did make a brief appearance on American soil, its most lasting achievement being the publication in twelve volumes of Goethe's Collected Works in English. Tom co-edited, with Jeffrey Sammons, and annotated three volumes of that invaluable set, containing *Poetry and Truth*; *Campaign in France, 1792*; *Siege of Mainz*; and *Italian Journey*.

Goethe was by no means the only focus of Tom's work, but during the most fertile years of his career, Goethe remained his central area of interest. In Goethe scholarship Tom's voice—the voice of a sober, probing, and enormously knowledgeable mind—was distinctive. If American Goethe scholarship, on account of the *Goethe Yearbook* and the activities of the Goethe Society of North America, may be said to have attained a certain international pre-eminence, it is in no small measure thanks to the vision and energy of Tom Saine.

Hans Rudolf Vaegt  
Helen & Laura Shedd Professor  
Emeritus of German Studies  
Smith College

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DAVID E. WELLBERY

## On the Logic of Change in Goethe's Work

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FROM A PLENARY LECTURE delivered to a conference entitled "Metamorphoses: Goethe and Change" one might well have expected something new: a transformation of our views about Goethe.<sup>1</sup> I hope it won't seem like ingratitude toward the organizers if I disappoint this expectation and, rather than trying to be innovative, take up one of the oldest questions to have animated the study of Goethe. It is the question posed by Friedrich Schlegel in that section of his *Gespräch über die Poesie* (*Discourse on Poetry*) entitled *Versuch über den verschiedenen Stil in Goethes früheren und späteren Werken* (*Essay on the Varying Styles in Goethe's Early and Later Works*). Of course, when the *Gespräch* appeared in the third volume of the *Athenäum*, the question Schlegel raised was very much a new kind of question. For he was not interested in applying traditional concepts of style to Goethe's work, in assessing Goethe's range or virtuosity, or in assigning works to categories that could be applied comparatively to other authors. Rather, Schlegel was after what he calls *Erkenntnis*, and the object of that *Erkenntnis* was not to be something describable with predicates like high or low, humble or grand, florid or plain. Rather, Schlegel's self-declared project was "den Dichter selbst zu verstehen" ("to understand the poet himself"), and that is to say: "die Geschichte seines Geistes . . . zu ergründen" ("to discover the history of his spirit").<sup>2</sup> In 1800, this was a new object of knowledge: the logic of development that exhibits itself across the diachronic distribution of a writer's works. It is not accidental that this object emerged into view and became the focus of attention and investigation with regard to Goethe's literary career. Could Schlegel have written in the same way, say, about Wieland? The negative answer, I assume, is self-evident. And the inference I draw from this is that, with Goethe, the very nature of change, as it becomes intelligible across an author's career, changed. It became something, perhaps the primary something, to be, as Schlegel put it, *understood*.

In what follows I want to place myself in the tradition that flows from Schlegel's brief essay. My essay attempts to work out something like the logic of change immanent in the development of Goethe's works. The project—and this too is continuous with Schlegel's thinking—locates the level at which change is registered fairly deeply within the works' structural complexion. I call this level of analysis the formative process of the work. Finally, like Schlegel, and like Georg Simmel, who later made a similar, although much more broadly based attempt of this kind,<sup>3</sup> I shall distinguish three epochs,

three periods, if you will. For reasons that are perhaps not accidental, that number seems to be the most attractive result for anyone taking on a task of this sort.

My point of departure is a conceptual and textual nexus that brings to the fore both theoretical reflection (i.e., Goethe's own efforts to articulate his experience of art) and poetic (in the main, lyric) production. The point of entry into this nexus may seem counterintuitive. It is Karl Philipp Moritz's brief, pioneering treatise of 1788, *Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen* (On the Creative Imitation of the Beautiful). Goethe's keen interest in and advocacy of this text are abundantly attested. In 1789, he published a review or announcement that precisely summarizes the treatise's central line of argument (FA 1.18:256–60). According to the retrospective account given in the *Zweiten römischen Aufenthalt*, which also includes a sizable excerpt, the treatise emerged out of conversations—"Unterhaltungen"—between himself and Moritz and thus allows one to see "was für Gedanken sich in jener Zeit vor uns auftraten, welche späterhin entwickelt, geprüft, angewendet und verbreitet mit der Denkweise des Jahrhunderts glücklich genug zusammentrafen" (FA 1.15.1:572–73; what ideas appeared before us during this time, which, once developed, tested, applied, and disseminated, coincided with the general thinking of the century). In addition, the contribution to the first volume of *Heften zur Morphologie* (Contributions on Morphology) entitled "Einwirkung der neueren Philosophie" (The Influence of Recent Philosophy) mentions the discussions with Moritz in Rome "über Kunst und ihre theoretischen Forderungen" (about art and its theoretical demands) as well as "die kleine Druckschrift" (that little pamphlet), which bears witness to "unserer fruchtbaren Dunkelheit" (FA 1.24:442; our [i.e., his and Moritz's] fruitful obscurity). However one might want to divide up responsibility for the ideas contained in the treatise, it is clear that Goethe himself sensed a deep affinity between his own thoughts about art and the theses argued for in Moritz's text. That he was justified in doing so will emerge shortly.

First, however, I want to call to mind Moritz's central line of argument, in which the question of artistic production is elaborated within a framework that can only be described as metaphysical or cosmological. The crucial steps in his reasoning can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The single instance and thus the only possible paradigm of beauty conceived as a wholeness complete unto itself and self-sufficient is the interconnection of all things: the all-encompassing unity of nature. For particular objects stand within and derive their sense or being from relational networks and thus refer to something else, something outside, beyond, or in addition to themselves, and are, therefore, not complete unto themselves.
- 2) Due to the limitations—the finitude—of human beings, the comprehensive unity of nature is accessible neither to immediate perception nor to imaginative evocation nor to rational understanding. In other words, that wholeness cannot be brought before the mind or represented as an object of cognition.

- 3) There is, however, an anthropological exception to this rule of inaccessibility and that is the genius. At the deepest level of its being, which Moritz calls the "Tatkraft," the genius entertains a communication with the totality of nature and thus *grasps* (the crucial verb here is *fassen*) that totality in the form of an obscure (i.e., unconscious, nonthematic) intimation, or *Abnung*.
- 4) Thus, there arises in the genius a metaphysically conditioned disquiet—a lack and a desire—that can only be stilled if the genius formatively produces out of itself (this, of course, is the idea of *bildende Nachabmung*) the infinitely manifold network of relationships that constitutes the encompassing totality of nature. The object or product produced in this way is what one might think of as a concentrate—a kind of condensation, a gathering—of the whole of nature and therefore a faithful image of beauty as that which is complete unto itself.
- 5) This formative process is characterized by an element of contingency insofar as the totality of natural relations must, if it is to be objectified, adhere to some finite object, which the artist's formative power selects according to his own individual, hence contingent, preferences.
- 6) Finally, the "satisfaction" or "stilling" of the genius's internal disquiet can be understood as resulting from an internal act of renunciation, in which artistic subjectivity relinquishes its claim to grasp—*fassen*—directly the whole of nature or to merge with it or in some sense to become that wholeness. This moment of renunciation coincides with the objectification of the artistic subjectivity in the work, a process that might be described as one of externalization and depersonalization. The first-personal desire for immediate seizure or apprehension (*fassen*) is transformed in the achievement of the artwork into formal closure or comprehension (*umfassen*).<sup>4</sup>

Such is the basic schema of Moritz's argument. To my mind the expansive scholarship on Moritz's *Über die bildende Nachabmung* has not sufficiently taken into account the intricate interlacements between the argument summarized here and the thought and writing of the young Goethe. The pathos of seizure, which characterizes the genius's relationship to nature, is a crucial motivational element, for example, in the early version of *Faust* ("Wo fass ich dich unendliche Natur!," FA 1.7.1:472, l. 102) and in the poem "Ganymed" ("Daß ich dich fassen möchte / In diesem Arm!," FA 1.1:205). One of the designations Moritz employs for the encompassing totality of nature—"allumströmende Natur" (Moritz 23)—alludes to the mythic figure of Okeanos, the all-encircling paternal river, which in "Mahomets Gesang" is the object or goal of the genius's aspiration. A particularly telling feature in Moritz's text is the metaphor he employs to characterize what I referred to as the concentrate or condensation of natural totality within the circumscribed work. Of the genius's *Tatkraft* that has transformed itself into *Bildungskraft* he writes: "Sie muß alle jenen Verhältnisse des großen Ganzen, und in ihnen

das höchste Schöne, wie an den Spitzen seiner Strahlen, in einen Brennpunkt fassen" (Moritz 24; [This force] has to lay hold of all relations of the great whole and gather the highest, most beautiful element in each of them, as though grasping the endpoints of its rays in its focus). Few, I think, will find it an unreasonable conjecture to see in this a reformulation of the boldly speculative assertion put forth in the introduction to the miscellany of 1775 *Aus Goethes Briefftasche*: "Jede Form, auch die gefühlteste, hat etwas Unwahres, allein sie ist ein für allemal das Glas, wodurch wir die heiligen Strahlen der verbreiteten Natur an das Herz der Menschen zum Feuerblick sammeln" (FA 1.18:174; Every form, even the most deeply felt, has something untrue about it; it is after all the prism by which we gather the holy rays of outspread nature to man's heart into a gaze of fire). Finally, in the notion of a depersonalization and objectification of first-personal desire in the externality of the circumscribed work, we can see, I believe, a rather brilliant conceptualization of the internal process that unfolds across the poem "Ich saug an meiner Nabelschnur" (later "Auf dem See") that Goethe composed during his Swiss sojourn of 1775. Especially revealing in this regard is the fact that Moritz understands the objectification of the "egoic" drive within the work as a kind of artistic mirroring in which nature reflects itself within itself. Consider the following excerpt:

[S]chuf die Natur doch mittelbar den Widerschein durch Wesen in denen sich ihr Bild so lebhaft abdrückte, dass es sich ihr selber in ihre eigene Schöpfung wieder entgegenwarf.—Und so brachte sie, durch diesen verdoppelten Widerschein sich in sich selber spiegelnd, über ihrer Realität schwebend und gauckelnd, ein Blendwerk hervor, das für ein sterbliches Auge noch reizender, als sie selber ist. (Moritz 20)<sup>5</sup>

[Nature created a mediating reflection through creatures upon which her image was so vividly impressed that [through them] nature opposed her own creation to herself.—And so, mirroring herself through this double reflection, floating above her own reality and creating illusions, she conjured phantasmagoria even more beautiful to the mortal eye than she is herself.]

This is—providing one abstracts from Moritz's convoluted formulation—the thought poetically rendered in the delicately balanced trochaic-dactylic rhythms of the final stanza of Goethe's "Ich saug an meiner Nabelschnur":

Auf der Welle blinken  
Tausend schwebende Sterne  
Liebe Nebel trinken  
Rings die türmende Ferne  
Morgenwind umflügelt  
Die beschattete Bucht  
Und im See bespiegelt  
Sich die reifende Frucht (FA 1.1:169)

[Over the ripples twinkling  
Star on hovering star,  
Soft mists drink the circled

Towering world afar;  
 Dawn wind fans the shaded  
 Inlet with its wing,  
 And in the water mirrored  
 The fruit is ripening.<sup>6]</sup>

In view of the textual filiations documented here, I want to urge an interpretation of Moritz's treatise, at least at one level of its semantics, as a theoretical reflection on the poetological implications of texts by Goethe and of the experiences that enter into those texts. From the perspective of the treatise those texts emerge as variant elaborations of the problem of artistic subjectivity. That problem is interpreted as the desire for immediate seizure of—or identification with—the totality of nature. In Moritz's words, "[D]as Organ wünscht, sich nach allen Seiten bis ins Unendliche fortzusetzen. Es will das umgebende Ganze nicht nur in sich spiegeln, sondern so weit es kann, selbst dies umgebende Ganze seyn" (Moritz 34; The organ wishes to continue itself in all directions to infinity. Not only does it want to reflect in itself the Whole that is around it, but it also wants to, as much as is possible, be that Whole). A solution to the problem is found in the figure of the *Brennpunkt* as an individually inflected condensation of natural totality. In and through the formation of such an artistic focal point, the unique and paradigmatic instance of formal completeness, namely the encompassing totality of nature, is replicated or reflected within the domain of the finite. On the subjective side, the emphatically first-personal desire for unmediated appropriation submerges itself in the impersonal objectivity of the work's formal closure, from which, however, the completeness of the whole redounds. The identity of subject and absolute, one might say, achieves a mediated realization in the work.

As I said, the point of starting with Moritz's treatise is that it takes us into a textual and conceptual nexus with regard to which the large topic of my essay—the logic of change in Goethe's work—begins to come into view. We find ourselves *medias in res*. First of all, as I have indicated, *Über die bildende Nachahmung* looks back toward and draws much of its theoretical fecundity from Goethe's writing of the 1770s. Second, formulated as they were in Italy in the late 1780s, and especially in view of their emphasis on formal closure, these thoughts may be considered as a prelude to Goethe's fully developed classicism. Indeed, Moritz's treatise must be considered as one of the founding documents of classical aesthetic doctrine in the German tradition. Finally, I will suggest, although I realize that this point will seem implausible at the moment, that we can see in *Über die bildende Nachahmung* configurations of concept and image that will be developed in what I would like to call Goethe's postclassical phase. Very much like Schlegel and Simmel before me, then, I find it appealing to parse Goethe's poetic and theoretical development according to a three-step schema. Let us say: preclassical, classical, and postclassical. The advantage of starting out from Moritz's text is that it allows us to chart that development with regard to a set of core themes that are related to one another not just sequentially but also genetically by virtue of a network of borrowings and allusions among them. The logic of change in Goethe's work can be best perceived where it unfolds as a process

of reworking, or rewriting, and where, therefore, the formula *Gestaltung-Umgestaltung* quite literally applies.

Let us start, then, by looking chronologically back from *Über die bildende Nachahmung* to one of the texts by Goethe that I said was alluded to therein, namely to “Mahomets Gesang.” The specific link is between the term Moritz employs for the encompassing totality of nature, namely *allumströmende Natur*, and the figure of the embracing world river Okeanos that appears in these lines from “Mahomets Gesang” spoken by the brother streams to the great genius river:

Bruder, nimm die Brüder mit!  
Mit zu deinem Alten Vater  
Zu dem ewgen Ozean  
Der mit weitverbreiten Armen  
Unsrer wartet  
Die sich ach vergebens öffnen  
Seine Sehrenden zu fassen (FA 1.1:194)

[Brother, take your brothers with you,  
With you to your ancient father,  
To the everlasting ocean,  
Who with open arms awaits us,  
Arms which, ah, open in vain  
To clasp us who are craving for him. (Goethe, *Poems* 25)]

Of course, the poem concludes with the promise, at least, of the fulfillment of this yearning:

Und so trägt er seine Brüder  
Seine Schätze seine Kinder  
Dem erwartenden Erzeuger  
Freudebrausend an das Herz. (FA 1.1:195)

[So he bears his brothers, bears  
His treasures and his children surging  
In a wave of joy tumultuous  
To their waiting father's heart. (Goethe, *Poems* 27)]

Needless to say, it is not my intention to develop an interpretation of this great, early poem of Goethe's, which I cite here merely in order to highlight the connection to the problem conceptually set forth in *Über die bildende Nachahmung*. And the point should also be made that, on the level of the poem's figuration, the successful completion of what Moritz's treatise accounts for as the internal project of genius, namely the becoming-one with the encompassing unity of nature, is adumbrated in the poem's closing words. But that should not surprise us. In fact, Goethe's texts of the early seventies exhibit a kind of pulse beat between the enthusiastic affirmation of such achieved unity and the despair-tinged acknowledgment that such achievement is not possible, or at least not lastingly possible. This manic-depressive oscillation is perhaps most familiar to us from *Werther*, where

it invades and cannibalizes the sentimental love plot inherited from the eighteenth-century epistolary novel. But it is even present within “Mahomets Gesang,” in the contrast between the yearning brother rivers and the great genius river who would return them all to the infinite, divine—but crucially *natural*—instance from which they originated.

The point is not, however, interpretive, since I take such issues to be essentially settled at least as far as “Mahomets Gesang” is concerned. My interest rather lies in the question as to whether, given the link between *Über die bildende Nachahmung* and Goethe’s early work, we can derive from its categories something like an account of Goethe’s early poetics that will be useful to us in unfolding the overriding logic of change that works itself out across Goethe’s career. Can we speak here, in other words, of a formative process of a certain type, with a recognizable structure or dynamic that manifests itself across a number of Goethe’s early texts, especially those we regard as aesthetically most accomplished? To formulate the matter another way: what is the formative process that emerges out of the pathos of first-person appropriation in the sense elaborated above? With “Mahomets Gesang” in view, one might suggest a twofold reply to this question: circularity and specularity. On the one hand, that is to say, the texts are set up as a return to the origin, as a folding back on themselves, as an account of their own emergence. This is the great invention of “Mayfest”: a song about song sung from the source of song. And once one has this structural feature in view, one can see, on the other hand, how specularity enters into the picture. The processual circularity of the internal poetic process comes to mirror the external circularity of the natural process. Indeed, in this mirroring the distinction between internal and external loses its pertinence. Goethe develops what might be termed an absolute metaphorical structure: a structure in which the distinction between vehicle and tenor is no longer possible, in which there is no “outside” to which the language refers, literally or metaphorically, but rather in which tenor and vehicle exchange places, each metaphorically designating the other. “Mayfest,” for example, rests on a closed semantic circuit among the three domains of nature, love, and song, each the metaphorical interpretation of the other, and a variant of that structure is likewise realized in “Mahomets Gesang.” So what we have, at least in the ideal cases, is an emergent equivalence between subjective cognitive and affective processes and objective, encompassing processes. The intramundane position flows into the circumambient condition. And this process goes hand in hand with and, indeed, is animated by a sense of incipience or emergence. This is the structural moment of self-origination. The appropriation of the origin, the affirmation of self-origination, is likewise the appropriation of divinity. We can observe how this dynamic plays itself out in several variants: in the vigorously active, masculine variants of, say, the “Prometheus” hymn or, for that matter, of “Mahomets Gesang”; or in the passive, erotically ambiguous variants of *Werther* or “Ganymed.” Importantly, there is here the possibility of failure: “Wandlers Sturmlied” would be one example of such; *Werther*, of course, another. Such failure is linked to two factors: on the one hand, to the aspect of transgression, be it mythical or moral or, as in the case of *Faust*, both at once; and, on the other hand, to finitude, to a relation to otherness, to temporal

limitations, to failing powers. Again, the first *Faust* version, where the manic-depressive oscillation I referred to above is so clearly present, constitutes only the most obvious example. It is, of course, just the possibility of failure that generates narrative-dramatic plot formation. If all were specularity and circularity, there wouldn't be very much to say. Finally, I shall merely note that the dynamic described here works itself out in the poetological or aesthetic texts as well: most fully, perhaps, in the *Sulzer* review, in the "Shakespeare" speech, and in "Von deutscher Baukunst." Thus, in the last-mentioned text we find the entire complex of motifs, including a melancholy sense of failure and finitude, brought together in a hymnic discourse whose deep structure could be shown to be homologous to that of "Mahomets Gesang." Here are three excerpts with inserted commentary from an ecstatic passage in which, however, every element has its place:

Jemehr sich die Seele erhebt zum Gefühl der Verhältnisse, die allein schön und von Ewigkeit sind . . . ; [This is, of course, the internalization of the encompassing totality of nature.] jemehr diese Schönheit in das Wesen des Geistes eindringt, dass sie mit ihm entstanden zu sein scheint, dass ihm nichts genügt als sie, dass er nichts aus sich wirkt als sie, [Here we have the structural moment of self-origination.] desto glücklicher ist der Künstler, desto herrlicher ist er, desto tiefebeugter stehen wir da und beten an den Gesalbten Gottes [Here, finally, the transition from self-origination to self-divinization is achieved.]. (FA 1.18:117)

[The more the soul develops a feeling for proportion, which alone is beautiful and eternal . . . ; the more deeply this beauty penetrates the mind so that both seem to have originated as one and the mind can be satisfied with nothing but beauty and produces nothing but beauty—then the more fortunate is the artist, the more glorious is he, and the deeper we bow before him and worship God's anointed one.<sup>7</sup>]

The pressing methodological question is whether we can step back and view from a distance this entire complex in such a way as to discern its developmental potential. My suggestion in this regard is that we attempt to do this by thinking of the network of thought and image I have evoked here as expressive of, as the remarkably bold and remarkably coherent articulation of, a certain experience of subjectivity. The formative process exemplified in the examples I have cited is the coming-to-itself of subjectivity considered in its negativity as the source of all experiential content. Hegel, whom I'm following here, although I think one could also develop alternative terminologies, refers to this structural moment of subjectivity as "der reinen Reflexion des Ich in sich, in welcher jede Beschränkung, jeder durch die Natur, die Bedürfnisse, Begierden oder Triebe unmittelbar vorhandene oder, wodurch es sei, gegebene und bestimmte Inhalt aufgelöst ist"<sup>8</sup> (the "I's pure reflection into itself, in which every limitation, every content, whether present immediately through nature, through needs, desires, and drives, or given and determined in some other way, is dissolved<sup>9</sup>). And in another formulation Hegel writes: "Der Mensch ist das reine Denken seiner selbst, und nur denkend ist der Mensch diese Kraft, sich Allgemeinheit zu geben, das heißt alle Besonderheit, alle Bestimmtheit zu verlöschen" (Hegel, *Grundlinien* 51;

The human being is pure thinking of himself, and only in thinking is he this power to give himself universality, that is, to extinguish all particularity, all determinacy, Hegel, *Elements* 38). As I say, one can choose other metalanguages, but the advantage of Hegel's by my lights is that it brings out the *negativity* intrinsic to this experience of subjectivity, the capacity to *dissolve* particularity and objectivity within its own element—one might say, its liquefying aspect. Indeed, it is exactly through such a negation of exteriority and definiteness of content that the experience of subjectivity I am trying to bring into view is achieved. It is freedom that achieves self-articulation here, but a freedom confirmed in and through the essentially negative movement of *Auflösung* and *Verlöschung*. Consider now what I take to be a passage of astonishing phenomenological insight from a letter to Fritz Jacobi from August 21, 1774: "Sieh lieber, was doch alles schreibens anfang und Ende ist die Reproduktion der Welt um mich, durch die innre Welt die alles packt, verbindet, neuschafft, knetet und in eigner Form, Manier, wieder hinstellt, das bleibt Geheimniss Gott sey Danck, das ich auch nicht offenbaren will den Gaffern u. Schwätzern" (FA 2.1:389; How all writing begins and ends with the reproduction of the world around me, through the inner world, which seizes hold of everything, connects it, forms it anew, kneads it, and puts it forth in its own form and manner, that [question] remains a secret, thank god, and I won't reveal it to the gawkers and tattlers). This passage—and again I want to stress that the Hegelian terminology is not compulsory—registers the negative relationship of self-conscious life to its positive contents, whatever these may be, its capacity to take them up and refashion them, transform them, bring them forth anew. It is, we might say, the experience of the act-dependence of intentional contents, hence the experience both of universality and of negativity. For all these contents, whatever they might be, are contents of *this* subjectivity, which takes them as such, shapes them as such, and in doing so *experiences itself*, circles back on itself, finds its own origin in the experience of such plasticity. I take it that this experience is not Goethe's alone—indeed, that its expression (politically, philosophically, amorously) is a signature feature of the age. To demonstrate this point, however, would take me much too far afield, especially since there are further aspects of such negative subjectivity that need to be brought out: namely its instability and its dependency. These characteristics derive from its negativity, a point that Hegel—and this is one of the principal reasons I recur to him here—accentuates:

Nur indem er etwas zerstört, hat dieser negative Wille das Gefühl seines Daseins; er meint wohl etwa irgendeinen positiven Zustand zu wollen, z.B. den Zustand allgemeiner Gleichheit oder allgemeinen religiösen Lebens, aber er will in der Tat nicht die positive Wirklichkeit desselben, denn diese führt sogleich irgendeine Ordnung, eine Besonderung sowohl von Einrichtungen als von Individuen herbei; die Besonderung und objective Bestimmung ist es aber, aus deren Vernichtung dieser negativen Freiheit ihr Bewußtsein hervorgeht. (Hegel, *Grundlinien* 50)

[Only in destroying something does this negative will possess the feeling of its own existence. It may well believe that it wills some positive condition,

for instance the condition of universal equality or universal religious life, but it does not in fact will the positive actuality of this condition, for this at once gives rise to some kind of order, a particularization both of institutions and of individuals; but it is precisely through the annihilation of particularity and of objective determination that the self-consciousness of this negative freedom arises. (Hegel, *Elements* 38)]

The necessity to dissolve positive reality in order to attain to the consciousness of freedom makes that freedom dependent on the very order to which it stands in the relationship of negativity. This can lead to what Hegel, in the same context, refers to as a “*Furie des Zerstörens*” (Hegel, *Grundlinien* 50; fury of destruction, Hegel, *Elements* 38), a formulation that applies well, I think, to Faust. Be that as it may, the overall situation of such negatively free subjectivity is clearly an unstable one, and that is to say: one that calls for some sort of stabilization in the external world, for substantive content, for regularity. This is the platform from which, I want to claim, we can make our transition to the classical phase. My suggestion is to think the logic of transition as a movement of problem solving, but one that moves from dialectical position to counterposition.

Recall that the task is not to explain *everything*. I am looking at formative processes and their interrelationships and not endeavoring to account for a cultural formation of such enormous complexity and such manifold historical determinants as classicism. The case I want to make, in its simplest form, can be brought out by calling Moritz’s argument to mind once again. Unmediated, first-personal appropriation is described in *Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen* as something to be overcome, and this is achieved through a certain depersonalization and objectification. My suggestion was that the conceptualization of this process draws on textual experiments such as the poem “Auf dem See,” but the broader and perhaps more controversial point is that just such an overcoming of first-personal appropriation, just such a depersonalization and objectification, is at the core of what I am calling the formative process of classicism. The further claim I want to make is that this transformation of the formative process is a response to and a solution for the problematic situation of negative subjectivity: its instability and dependency, its frantic oscillation, its “*Furie des Zerstörens*.”

In approaching the classical formative process, we might begin by noting that it is initiated quite early, in the late seventies, in poems such as “Gesang der Geister über den Wassern” and “Grenzen der Menschheit,” poems that are particularly telling because they transform the use of the aqueous metaphor of “Mahomets Gesang” to mark, precisely, a distance between the human and the divine. With this shift comes a realignment of the metaphorical structure, with tenor and vehicle no longer blending into one another. We note as well the emergence of a universal (i.e., no longer first-personal) voice. If we take a quick glance at the second of the two poems just mentioned, “Grenzen der Menschheit,” the most striking feature that emerges into view is its insistence on distinction and delimitation. The title announces as much; then the fourth stanza turns to the crucial question “Was unterscheidet / Götter von

Menschen?" (What distinguishes / gods from men?), with a revealing line break after *unterscheidet*; and finally the concluding stanza begins with the lines "Ein kleiner Ring / Begrenzt unser Leben" (FA 1.1:332–33; A small ring / delimits our life). Even if we abstract from the content of these verses, from their theme of finitude, we can still see (e.g., in the numerical structure and topical deployment of the stanzas) that the crucial operation here is one of circumscription: the drawing of a border and the acknowledgment of the constraining force of borders. We are moving from the first-personal pathos of *fassen wollen* to the formal closure of *umfassen*, to recall once again the terms of Moritz's treatise. And this, I want to argue, is the crucial step toward the classical formative process. My claim is that the classical is the distinct and that distinction is perfect continence. Let me try to say what I take this to mean.

First, I want to stress a point with regard to which my position diverges, not perhaps from the entirety of the secondary literature, but certainly from a sizable swath of it. We are dealing here essentially with formative processes, with Goethe's thinking about artistic form and with his own poetic practice. And in this context it seems to me misguided to suggest a *substantive* continuity between art and nature. They are comparable, deeply comparable, to be sure, but they occupy different ontological regions. A *paralipomenon* to the *Propyläen*-Introduction poses the issue this way: "Die Naturschönheit ist den Gesetzen der Notwendigkeit unterworfen, die Kunstschönheit den Gesetzen des höchst gebildeten menschlichen Geistes; jene erscheinen uns gleichsam gebunden, diese gleichsam frei" (Natural beauty is subject to the laws of necessity, artistic beauty to the laws of the most highly formed human spirit; the former appear to us as though bound, the latter appear to us as free). And in the same context we read: "Die Kunst ist konstitutiv.—Der Künstler bestimmt die Schönheit, er nimmt sie nicht an" (FA 1.18:476; Art is constitutive.—The artist determines beauty, rather than [just] accepting it). So our starting point is itself a distinction: that between nature, on the one hand, and *Geist* or *Freiheit*, on the other. We have not left the domain of freedom disclosed in the structural moment of the preclassical, but that freedom has altered its character. Above all, it has become allied with *Gesetz*, with the law. It gives itself its law. It obeys self-given laws. This is its distinction, indeed its self-distinction, from nature. The space of the classical is post-Kantian through and through.

However, I am not so much concerned with intellectual filiations here as with formative processes, and to grasp what is essential in that respect we can pick up once again the concept of distinction or delimitation that has been our red thread thus far. Delimitation is the thought of kinds or types. Types are forms of lawlike exfoliation, and such exfoliation is the explication—the bringing to revelation—of the type. So here we have the law, as in the laws of nature or art spoken of in the previous quotation, and this affords us insight into the normative force of the act of distinction or delimitation. But we also have—and this is the second, equally crucial aspect of the classical formative process—the interplay between the abstract type and its concrete realization. The type must enter into visibility, must show itself. In this sense, exfoliation is the complete exhibition of what is implied

in the type. This is its perfection, its *Vollkommenheit*, the point, one might say, at which the manifestation meets its own internal standard or actualizes its own idea. The notion of perfection, then, as it is relevant to the formative process of the classical, is kindred to the notion of perfection we employ when we speak of a perfect circle. A perfect circle is such that *all* the determinants of the concept of circle, and *only* the determinants of that concept, are represented or realized in the circle at hand. The absence of extraneous determinants in the realization is its purity. And now we have come full circle ourselves, for purity is an artifact of distinction and delimitation. Purity and perfection—*Reinheit* and *Vollkommenheit*—are the norms of the formative process of classicism.

This brings us to the concept of the exemplary instance. The classical is the typical, not in the sense of the average, but in the sense of perfection, which is achieved in the exemplary instance. To identify a type—or, we might say, capitalizing, to identify an Idea—is to see the path it takes from its abstract normative formulation to its realization. It is to see the Idea *in* the exemplary instance but also—and this is the same thing—to see *the becoming* of the exemplary instance as the process of realization of the Idea. To apprehend the Idea in the exemplary instance, then, is to apprehend an ideal (as opposed to empirical) genesis. We may take as a fictional example of this the scene on Olympus in Goethe's "Achilleis" fragment, a work that itself was intended to proceed from the apprehension of the Idea of Homeric epic. In that scene, the palace of the gods has been built by Hephaistos, but it exists, since Hephaistos is a god and his works, therefore, are eternal, in the timeless realm of the Idea in its pure normativity. We could say, as Hephaistos in fact does, that the palace as he built it corresponds exactly to the just measure in the mind of Zeus. But such, as it were, Platonic perfection is haunted by a deficiency. To the Horae, the goddesses of natural time, Hephaistos concedes:

Doch alles ist leblos!  
 Euch allein ist gegeben, den Charitinnen und euch nur,  
 Über das tote Gebild des Lebens Reize zu streuen. (FA 1.8:887)

[But all is lifeless!  
 You alone, Muses, only you are granted the power  
 To seed charms across the dead form of life.]

The point is the same as that formulated in Goethe's critique of Plotinus: "Allein wir verkürzen uns . . . , wenn wir das Formende und die Form selbst in eine vor unsern äußern und innern Sinn verschwindende Einheit zurückdrängen" (FA 1.10:750; However, we sell ourselves short . . . When we reduce the formative and the form itself into some unity that recedes from our external and internal perception). As generative principle, as law of exfoliation, the Idea makes sense only in its vital productivity. In a boldly speculative but nonetheless perfectly accurate definition, Goethe calls the Idea the unity of simultaneity and successivity (FA 1.24:449). Such unity is what the intuition of ideal genesis grasps. This complex thought is the foundation of Goethe's classical theory of art.

We can see this most clearly, I think, in the “Laokoon” essay, the importance of which is signaled by the fact that Goethe positioned it immediately following the programmatic introduction to the *Propyläen*. The task here is to disclose the Idea of art in the exemplary instance, where it appears in its perfection and purity. One can easily mistake Goethe’s description for a straightforward account of what is represented: father, sons, snakes, the moment of the bite, and its effect on Laokoon’s body. But the point of the essay is rather to show how all these contentual selections are generated out of and realize a single Idea—that of pathetic beauty; that is, to reconstruct the ideal genesis of the sculpture from its constitutive law. “Die Kunst ist konstitutiv.” The *Laokoon* essay allows us to see what that trenchant formulation means. It means that the Idea of Art is realized in the systematic totality of its sub-Ideas: in the generic types such as the Idea of pathetic beauty and in its available medial substrates—in this case, of course, sculpture. And it means further that this sub-Idea of pathetic beauty in sculpture—this generative type—comes to manifestation in the concrete work just insofar as that work has its ideal genesis from the Idea and fully articulates that Idea across all its internal *Abstufungen*, which is to say: in its systematic totality. The work is the revelation of its law. This all sounds terribly abstract, of course, but in fact the demonstration is pointed and specific. Pathetic beauty is that expressive form that emerges out of the abrupt transition from activity to passivity, from striving to suffering. From this and from the constraints imposed by the medium of sculpture everything flows: the selection of the moment of the bite, the arrangement of the figures, the kind and degree of entanglement by the snakes. Hegel placed a kindred thought at the heart of his *Lectures on Aesthetics* when he wrote: “Deshalb bleibt die äußere Form und Gestalt nicht von dem äußeren Stoff getrennt oder demselben mechanisch aufgedrückt, sondern sie erscheint als die der Realität ihrem Begriff nach innewohnende und sich herausgestaltende Form”<sup>10</sup> (Consequently the external form and shape does not remain separate from the external material, nor is it stamped on it mechanically for some other purposes; it appears as the form immanent in the reality and corresponding with the nature of that reality, the form giving itself an outward shape<sup>11</sup>). Not only does that sentence describe what Goethe showed in the “Laokoon” essay, but it—Hegel’s sentence—would have been impossible, could not have been written, without Goethe’s having shown that.

How does this sketch of the classical formative process fit into the overriding story I’m laboring to make plausible here? The thought was that, in its first, preclassical manifestation, the formative process appears as a negative freedom that comes to experience its self-origination by virtue of its abstraction from, its dissolution of, any positive content. But this is an inherently unstable position. Classicism responds to this instability by developing a notion of artistic freedom that rests on the self-legislation, hence on the immanent lawfulness, of the artistic process. Freedom is preserved—these laws do not come from some external authority—but preserved in such a way that it realizes itself in objective forms. And in these forms the subject finds itself not as a “Furie des Zerstörens” but as a lawfully unfolding process. The form of this self-finding is intuition, *Anschauung*, conceived not

as occasional empirical perception but, in the terms of the crucial 1793 essay "Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt," as an "Erfahrung . . . von einer höhern Art" (FA 1.25:34; experience . . . of a higher kind). In the terms of the text from which we took our point of departure, Moritz's *Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen*, such intuition marks the renunciation of the first-personal appropriative drive and the externalization of the subject in the formally circumscribed object. One might say that renunciation, certainly a core component of classical ethical conceptions, is the price paid for the attainment of a stabilized experience of freedom as law. Art thus becomes the objectification of freedom and the vehicle of its intuitive self-apprehension. An aphorism or, better, a *Bemerkung*, notation, or observation that applies both to Goethe's scientific views and to his aesthetic views captures the symmetry and reflexivity involved in this core thought: "Es ist etwas Unbekanntes Gesetzliches im Object, welches dem Unbekannten Gesetzlichem im Subject entspricht" (FA 1.13:269; there is something unknown but lawlike in the object, which corresponds to something unknown but lawlike in the subject).

As I turn now to what I am calling the postclassical, I want to stress once again the limitations of my inquiry: not merely that I am concentrating here exclusively on the question of form, on what I have called formative processes, but also that I am really more concerned with moments of transition rather than with the entire expanse of Goethe's productivity. For the purposes of this essay, then, the concept of the postclassical merely refers to a phase that I mark out as extending, roughly, from 1805 to, let us say, 1810. It is here that I see a new problem being articulated, a problem for which I have no other name than the helpless one of the postclassical.

Perhaps, though, that term is not altogether helpless. In his brilliant book *Gewalt und Gestalt: Die Antike im Spätwerk Goethes*, Ernst Osterkamp soundly rejects the "Ideologem von der gegenklassischen Wandlung Goethes" (ideologeme of Goethe's anticlassical transformation) and emphasizes instead the "intransigenten Klassizismus des späten Goethe" (intransigent classicism of the late Goethe).<sup>12</sup> Commitment to the normative significance of classical antiquity remains, however expansive his art-historical and literary-historical interests became, the conceptual and experiential center of Goethe's thinking about art. This seems to me true. But one can hold this position and nonetheless recognize that the classical norm is recontextualized and that this recontextualization actually generates new formative processes.

An important document of this shift and thus a kind of threshold text is, in my view, the Winckelmann essay of 1805. Here there can be no question but that the classical ideal of artistic form and of its human significance is maintained. Winckelmann's goal in his late writings, Goethe avers, was to convey "das vollendete Herrliche, die Idee, woraus diese Gestalt entsprang, das Gefühl, das in ihm beim Schauen erregt ward" (FA 1.19:203; the utter perfection of a work, the idea which gave birth to its artistic form, the feeling its presence aroused in him, Goethe, *Essays* 116), a formulation in which one would be justified in finding a compressed version of the classical concept of form elaborated in the post-Italian decade. At the same time, however, the Winckelmann essay allows processes or forces other than the perfect