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Narcissism and Paranoia in the Age of Goethe (review)

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representations to a typology of differences in “analysis and synthesis” that distinguish Goethe’s intuitive from Schiller’s speculative way of thinking (86). In the meeting of these two minds, the author sets up a holism of complementary traits for artistic-intellectual discourse that later resonated in Wagner and Nietzsche and again in Freud and Jung. Here past dualisms are turned into new holisms driven by an urge to form. The author links Jung and Schiller in the latter’s “pioneering, or ‘prophetic’ work” (95) “On the Aesthetic Education of Humankind” (1795) that engaged Jung in the *Psychological Types* and at the same time supports the author’s thesis that concepts of “totality” and “holism” mark the contribution of Weimar classicism to analytical psychology. The connection shows Jung committed to a worldview of “social development” (97), to theoretical constructs of “introversion and extraversion” (102), to layers of “superior and inferior functions” (116) that follow from Schiller’s theory of living forms embedded in the human beings urge to art. Jung found in Schiller’s human being a body integrated by a “sensuous drive” and a “formal drive” in “reciprocal relation” and in this concept a “higher faculty than ratio—indeed, maybe a mystical one (131).

As a final touch to his project on holism in Weimar classicism, the author examines Jung’s doctrine of “personality” by standards of poetic character distinguished in Schiller’s essay “On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry” (1796). True to his stated methodology, the author locates the source of Schiller’s distinction between intuitive and speculative types of poetic character in “biographical affinities” (19) that each writer experienced in the work of the other. And others, too, found neat permutations of the reciprocal relations, for example, later cast as “conceptual pairs, such as the Apollonian and the Dionysian in Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*” (151) from 1872. But somewhere the organic base of Schiller’s holism turned mechanical and so the author tries to sort out views of the Frankfurt School of theoreticians, in particular Jürgen Habermas’s “critique of Adorno and Horkheimer’s critique of instrumental reason” (155). In the end the author asks, rhetorically I think, if Jung was “led by culture back to nature along the path of reason and freedom that Schiller describes?” (156). He suggests that Jung better than Schiller saw that “the whole being” is not just a “poetic ideal” in which all differences and deficiencies vanish, but is an ideal that can be realized. This conclusion leaves us with the paradox that Schiller believed the ideal was an ill advised path toward the real, but that he would not have disagreed with Jung that “unattainability is no argument against the ideal, for ideals are, in this sense, only the signposts, never the goal” (156). The author plans a second volume on *The Constellation of the Self* by further study of the processes of individuation but with focus on how they are threatened by “collective triumphs” that mask social order (159). Schiller’s concept of beauty and Goethe’s theory of morphology promise more on the place of holism in analytical psychology.

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Alexander Mathäs, *Narcissism and Paranoia in the Age of Goethe*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2008. 255 pp.

The author of this work, with its ambitious title, did not have a clear concept of the audience he intended to reach. There is much that smacks of a survey for undergraduates. Good are the clear, readable style, the straightforward textual analysis of fairly familiar texts, and a concern to make scholarship relevant. There are no intense jargon-driven theoretical passages. All the German quotations are

competently translated within the text. The introductory chapter includes an outline of the following eight chapters and attempts to give a guiding overview. One senses the experienced teacher who wants to make even daunting problems accessible to interested non-specialists.

While many will welcome this book for such reasons, those expecting greater profundity or even state-of-the-art discussions may put the book down with a sense of frustration. Some of the pedagogy should have been trimmed by an editor's pen, as when the authors' dates or the dates of publication of works are repeated (e.g. we get the 1797 date of *Der blonde Eckbert* on pages 37, 166, and 167; Schiller's dates are on pages 35 and 73). The historical context, however, remains a vague background. There is only fleeting reference to the French Revolution, nothing on the crises of the Holy Roman Empire, and there is no explanation of the rather antiquated use of the "age of Goethe" as a historical period. The problems with Mathäs's approach to historical problems and to the difficulties of establishing causal connections become evident early when he writes:

It is no coincidence that the narcissistic paradigm emerged during the emancipation of the German middle classes, because it expresses the bourgeois psyche's internal economy. . . . In other words, narcissism is a concept that is conditioned by the ascent of the German middle class. (17)

The problem of how the "internal economy" connects with the external economy remains vague, despite the importance of the problem for the history of capitalism. The "narcissistic paradigm" here has little to do with the reception of Ovid's highly influential version of the story or with psychoanalytic methods, which latter Mathäs eschews for their lack of historical specificity. Narcissism is baldly defined as "the creation of an idealized image of the self and the desire to merge with this image" (13). In other words, this is familiar eighteenth-century self-fashioning as depicted in a series of canonical texts by Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Moritz, Lavater, Tieck, Leisewitz, Kleist, Hoffmann, and Kafka.

If there is a center to the book, it might well be the appropriation of Torquato Tasso and of Goethe's play for an argument that says virtually nothing about religion. It would have been good to refer to a work such as Elizabeth Bellamy's *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History* (1992) to get some sense of the sophisticated theological and psychological problems represented by Tasso and explored by Goethe.

Four of the nine chapters have recently appeared elsewhere, but what is convincing as an article does not always work as a chapter, since the availability of more space means that questions do not simply vanish. Chapter four on "Mapping the German Body: Gender, Race and Nation in Sturm und Drang Drama" is vitiated by the quirky effort to make a post-colonial argument on the basis that something called "the German body" was available for "literary colonization" (103). Just how Lavater's physiognomy "can be viewed as an attempt to define the borders of the male bourgeois subject" (110) is a puzzle. Surely the center of such a discussion would have to be J. M. R. Lenz, a writer strangely absent throughout. His invisibility takes the excitement out of the next chapter on male desire; the tutor's self-castration is one of the most spectacular moments of the disciplining of masculine desire in German drama and would have been a good case for study.

Since Mathäs invokes desire and its gender, he cannot expect us to ignore his exclusion of women writers and their texts. Granted, women appear as figures in texts where they cannot be marginalized, as in *Der blonde Eckbert*, but overall they are as unimportant in the book as Echo was to Narcissus. Only near the end are we told forthrightly that the study is concerned with the “male bourgeois psyche” (209). Women, it would seem, have no selves in this version of literary history, neither as persons nor as writers nor as characters. Tellingly, when he does touch on feminine narcissism, Mathäs relies on a politically blinkered passage from Freud (159–60) and then exonerates him for his sexism with a convoluted passive: “He only echoed gender politics that had been in the making since the birth of the bourgeois subject” (160). That claim occludes the politics whereby males sought to convert their actual paranoia into the control and domination of women.

The concluding chapter on “Narcissism and Cloning” ends up re-reading Kafka’s *Das Urteil* as an indication of how the themes continue from the eighteenth century into the present. In its brevity, it really cannot do justice to the ethical concerns posed by cloning today or to the sophistication of discussions from current philosophy of science and of technology.

I am sorry to be so negative about missed opportunities. The history of affects in the eighteenth century is drawing more and more attention, and in that project this work will doubtless find its readers.

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Andreas Gailus, *Passions of the Sign. Revolution and Language in Kant, Goethe, and Kleist*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 222pp.

Gailus’s book is aptly published as part of the “Parallax” series of the Johns Hopkins University Press, which addresses re-visions of culture and society. Subjects of re-vision, in the double sense of a second look and a transformation of the topics under investigation, for Gailus are the French Revolution and its impact upon the German cultural elite, here represented by the philosopher Kant and the producers of novellas, Goethe and Kleist. Under re-vision is not only the established, traditional view “at work in classicist aesthetics (Schiller), idealist philosophy (Hegel), and the modern novel (Goethe), which all relied on teleologically structured, and thus progressivist, models” (23) of history for the absorption of a radical rupture, a historical caesura, and an absolutely new event whose appearance requires a complete transformation of cultural life and its symbolic order, but also the need for a reassessment of the relationship between revolutionary event and language, between politics and poetics around 1800.

Tracing the re-visions of this relationship in impressive close readings of Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties*, Goethe’s *Conversations of German Refugees*, and Kleist’s novella *Michael Kohlhaas (From an Old Chronicle)*, Gailus stresses the insertion and conversion of the revolutionary, historical event into the language of these texts, which defy the discursive phantasms of the idealist, organicist strategies of an integration and diffusion of the caesura into the textual and cultural fabric by precisely exposing them to the disruptive and traumatic blow of the revolutionary event. This event, here manifested in and by the French Revolution, is not an object of historiography, but rather a non-structural occurrence, i.e. the emergence of the absolutely new, inherently meaningless, contingent, violent, and groundless foundation on which cultural, political, psychic, and