The Human Ruin: Embodied Knowledge and Interstitial Poetics on the Cusp of Modernity

Adam Kitchen

Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (German Studies)
McGill University, Montreal

December 13, 2021

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Table of Contents

Abstract

This is a study of three ruins in human form: The Belvedere Torso, Mats Isrealsson the preserved miner of Falun, and the bog body known as Tollund Man. It contributes my original concept of human ruins to academic discourse via an archaeology of the perspective which makes the connection between human and ruin possible. I call this perspective the ruin gaze - a self-reflexive, open-ended reception found in theories of mediation circa 1800 from Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Johann Gottfried Herder, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and Friedrich Schlegel. I trace it through later writers as well, such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Walter Benjamin, along with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michel Foucault - sources which examine mediated simultaneity with life in the same way Herder did. By synthesizing their ideas, I posit the ruin gaze as a solution to the epistemological problem of understanding the living world via static mediations - a problem which has remained constant throughout the arc of modernity. To this end, I show how the perspective adapts to changing media and epistemological conditions. The human ruin is my topic in this endeavour because it demonstrates life in a double mediation which offers unique insight into the riddle of mediating life in order to understand it. My thesis contends that the body is a living medium which exists in an in-between state, and its cited sources point, each in their own way, to the notion that mediation enacts this same interstitial state in the forms of plastic arts, literature, and the photographic image. With examples for each of these, I present human ruins as sites that display the interstitial state of the modern subject and prompt a recognition of an individual's own mediated self.

Résumé

Cette thèse présente une étude de trois ruines à forme humaine: le Torse du Belvédère, Mats Isrealsson, le mineur préservé de Falun, et le corps des tourbières appelé « L'homme de Tollund ». Par l'introduction du concept de ruines humaines, cette recherche contribue au discours académique par le biais d'une archéologie de la perspective qui connecte l'humain et la ruine. Cette perspective que j'appelle le regard de la ruine représente la réception autoréflexive et ouverte qui se retrouve dans les théories de la médiation autour de 1800 chez Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Johann Gottfried Herder, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing et Friedrich Schlegel. Cette réception se retrouve également chez des auteurs ultérieurs, tels que Friedrich Nietzsche et Walter Benjamin, ainsi que Maurice Merleau-Ponty et Michel Foucault. De la même manière organique que Herder, ces auteurs examinent la simultanéité médiate de la vie. En synthétisant leurs idées, je pose le regard de la ruine comme une solution au problème épistémologique de la compréhension du monde vivant par le biais de médiations statiques, un problème qui est resté constant à travers la modernité. À cette fin, je montre comment le regard s'adapte à l'évolution des formes changeantes des médias et des conditions changeantes épistémologiques. La ruine humaine est mon topique dans cette analyse, car elle démontre la vie dans une double médiation, ce qui offre un aperçu particulier de l'énigme de la médiation de la vie de mieux la comprendre. Ma thèse soutient que le corps est un médium vivant qui existe dans un état d'entre-deux. Mes auteurs cités proposent, chacune à leur manière, l'idée que la médiation édicte cet état interstitiel sous les formes des arts plastiques, de la littérature et de l'image photographique. À l'aide d'exemples pour chacun d'entre eux, je présente les ruines humaines comme des sites médiatisés qui montrent l'état interstitiel du sujet moderne et provoquent la reconnaissance du soi médiatisé d'un individu.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

In this dissertation, I assert that ruins attune the modern subject to a specific experience of in-betweeness because they embody this condition and demonstrate its vitality. With the ideas of thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Michel Foucault, this introduction will establish the interstitial character of human knowledge post-Enlightenment and how the ruin is an apt figuration thereof. I show how the ruin became a notable feature in German literature of the period around 1800, where at the earliest stages of industrialized, mass-mediated society, the very cusp of modernity in the German context, it contributed to a unique critical perspective on the basis of what was deemed, in writings of the time, living knowledge. I have chosen this period of German literature for two reasons: One is because this is where Foucault identified the emergence of modern subjectivity in his book *The Order of Things*, a major part of which was that in the intellectual climate of the time humankind took on a new role as knowledge object for itself. Self-reflexivity and self-mediation are the key changes in this climate which bring my topic to light. The second reason, and why I have chosen German literature in particular, is because there is a distinctly poetic character to the idea of living knowledge as well as the search for it in the German Enlightenment. Literary movements such as *Empfindsamkeit*, *Sturm und Drang*, and *Romantik*, influenced the nascent modern subject by orientating its experience to an embodied viewpoint. I locate the ruin as a significant aspect of this climate because it inspired poetic, philosophical, and scientific imagination to reflect the open-endedness of subjective experience and mediation. To establish my definition of human ruins I look not only to ruin discourse but also to the fragment in contemporary aesthetics. The synthesis of the two fields is where I find the human ruin, a mix of physiological and aesthetic phenomena which my project will examine in detail.

The open-endedness of the fragment in its romantic conception is key to my topic because it reflects the same open-endedness in the modern subject's perspective. The fragment offers a particular sort of freedom in this way by which the modern subject can arrange a worldview for itself without the requirement of totality. Take for example Friedrich Schlegel's assertion that "Es gibt noch keins was in Stoff und Form fragmentarisch, zugleich ganz subjektiv und individuell, und ganz objektiv und wie ein notwendiger Teil im System aller Wissenschaften wäre."[1] The in-between perspective one reads in this statement is the specific German expression of a shift in epistemology Foucault understood as formative for modernity. As Rodolphe Gasché explains the fragment's role in this shift, it "conceives of the absolute under the form of the individual, of totality as being at the same time finite and plural. [...] The fragment thus captures, as one would say today, the event character of the system, of the interlinkage of the pieces of the whole."[2] Of specific interest for my project is that the fragment captures the elusive event character of knowledge systems in an interlinked, and as I will argue embodied way, and makes the process of subjective generation visible as it manifests from the relation between fragment and whole and their irreducible dialectic. Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy explain the interstice of the fragment so:

> Each fragment stands for itself and for that from which it is detached. Totality is the fragment itself in its completed individuality. It is thus identically the plural totality of fragments, which does not make up a whole (in, say, a mathematical mode) but replicates the whole, the fragmentary itself, in each fragment. That the totality should be present as such in each part and that the whole should be not the sum but the co-presence of the parts as the co-presence, ultimately, of the whole with itself (because the whole is also the detachment and closure of the part) is the essential necessity [*nécessité d'essence*] that devolves from the individuality of the

1   Friedrich Schlegel. "Athenäums Fragmente [77]." *Athenäums Fragmente und andere Schriften.* Berlin: Holzinger, 2013. 29. Online: http://www.zeno.org/Lesesaal/N/9781482712681?page=29

2   Rodolphe Gasché. "Foreword: Ideality in Fragmentation." *Friedrich Schlegel - Philosophical Fragments.* Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. viii.

fragment [... .] Fragments are definitions of the fragment; this is what installs the totality of the fragment as a plurality and its completion as the incompletion of its infinity.[3]

"*Work in progress* henceforth becomes the infinite truth of the work" they conclude,[4] which is a crucial affirmation for Schlegel and his *Frühromantik* cohort. Completeness in incompleteness characterizes the multi-faceted and often paradoxical dialectics of the fragment at play in German literature around 1800, where form and formlessness, completion and incompletion, part and whole, subject and object, encircle the fragment as a mode of thought and expression for a new subjectivity.

My project addresses the modern subject's relation to these dialectics with the ruin, a subset of fragment which has a remarkable intellectual charge in German literature around 1800. The co-terminology of ruin and fragment introduces some potential confusion for my study however, as their definitions are mostly interchangeable. The basic difference for my purposes is that the ruin must first exist as one thing, then become something else, the status of which as ruin points to its previous form. This particular temporal interstice is what differentiates the ruin from the fragment more generally, but no definition will easily and fully distinguish one from the other (such resolutions are not the purpose of this study anyway). So, I offer the following: Something cannot be a ruin without being a fragment in more general terms, but something can be a fragment without necessarily being a ruin. The ruin's specific character has to do with temporality and the observer's ability to discern its temporal and ontological layering, an interstice I explore via human ruins in Johann Joachim Winckelmann's description of the

---

3   Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy. *The Literary Absolute.* Translated by Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester. Albany: SUNY Press, 1988. 44.

4   Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy. *The Literary Absolute*, 48.

Belvedere Torso, Johann Peter Hebel's folktale *Unverhofftes Widersehen*, and writings on the bog body known as Tollund Man by P.V. Glob and Karin Sanders. These disparate texts align the ruin and the human body at a confluence of flux and stasis that Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Michel Foucault all understood as central to western epistemology. My contribution to this discussion is that the ruin characterizes the modern subject's encounter with itself as an object of knowledge able to conceive of its existence between permanence and impermanence - to see both sides as it were. The human ruin serves my project in precisely that role because it is both knowledge object and human body, showing conditions of life to its observer whilst at the same time lying beyond them. The human ruin is an enigma through which the modern subject comes to face to face with the dissociating tendency of its knowledge, an idea I develop through media which enact the same interstice found in the mind. The result is mediation of mediation, which as I will show stems from Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's explanation that the fragment reveals its own definition.

The fragment demonstrates a complicated relation of ontology, temporality, and reception. The early German Romantics believed for instance that the fragment best facilitated contemplation of self-sustaining dialectic relations such as subject and object, finitude and infinitude, completeness and incompleteness, because it existed between each. It was in their view a way to conceive of the whole and the individual aspect simultaneously in a reciprocal relation. Herder and Schlegel for example understood the fragment to be interstitial and that it mirrored the same characteristic in its observer, revealing this hidden interstice on its own terms. I will use Herder's proto-phenomenological perspective, early German Romanticism, and

Existentialism to discuss this interstice. In so doing I establish my concept of human ruins as a link between the living body and the fragment as well as theories of literary self-reflexivity and embodied mind that emerged in German thought around 1800. While the fragment has been discussed by various thinkers as a mode of thought and expression which aligns with the nature of human perception - freely moving as it does between states and temporalities - none have made this particular connection between it and the human body directly. I therefore broaden the discourse of the fragment through the concept of human ruins which serve as a heuristic for grounding the knowing subject in its own embodied present.

The Interstice from which Modern Subjectivity Emerges

My study originates in the observation that the mind's ability to establish constructs such as identity and historical narrative amid constant flux is enabled by a perspective abstracted from its embodied present. This dissociation became the impulse for a new perspective on mediation in German literature around 1800, where writers such as Herder and Schlegel sought modes of thought and expression which were as alive as the subject who engaged them. What emerged from this search for living knowledge was the ruin as a site of life. Looking at primary sources spanning the late seventeenth- and early-nineteenth centuries, plus later secondary sources, I contextualize this emergence of the ruin within a shift away from answer-orientated epistemology to which Isaiah Berlin attributes three general propositions[5] - i.e. that there is an answer to any question, that all answers are knowable, and that all true answers are systemically

---

5   Berlin acknowledges that his view of the Enlightenment was an oversimplification, but see Laurence Brockliss and Richie Robertson's *Berlin's Conception of the Enlightenment* (2016) for more detail on his understanding of the period. See in addition the criticism of Berlin from Zammito et al. in "Johann Gottfried Herder Revisited: The Revolution in Scholarship in the Last Quarter Century" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (October 2010). 661-684.

compatible with one another.[6] Taken together these propositions illustrate how limitless

possibility through knowledge opened up in the Age of Enlightenment, offering humankind the

chance to know and master the very methods of nature itself;[7] or at least to believe it could. In

the context of the later German Enlightenment however this limitlessness of knowledge was

recast instead as a limitlessness beyond knowledge, which constitutes a profound shift in western

thought[8] wherein the crux of my thesis lies. To this end I posit the ruin as a means to help make

sense of epistemological changes during the long nineteenth century which gave shape to

modern notions of self-reflexivity and embodied thought. None of the thinkers my project cites

provide much detail into how this dynamic affects human physicality directly though, so I do so

against the backdrop of Foucault's distinction between the *mathesis* of pre-1800 European

thought and the self-reflexivity of modernity. I address the relation of human body and ruin by

connecting them in three examples which incarnate interstitiality through their suspension

between temporalities and states of being, and furthermore offer occasion for contemplation of

embodied perception by showing the observer its own mediating gaze in process.

    The experience of existence manifests itself for the modern subject through a perceptual

apparatus that can obscure the contiguity between self and world. My understanding of this is in

large part taken from Herder, whose writings in the late eighteenth century examined

humankind's long-perceived split between material and immaterial, "zwo Weisen unsres Daseins,

die Hemisphären und Antipoden scheinen, die nur mit den Füßen eine gemeinschaftliche Erde

behrürhen; zween Pole, deren Einer anziehet, was der andre abstößt - ."[9] Herder believed that the

---

6   Isaiah Berlin. *The Roots of Romanticism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. 21-22.
7   Berlin. *The Roots of Romanticism*, 27.
8   Ibid, 2.
9   Johann Gottfried Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden, den zwo Hauptkräften der menschlichen Seele. (1775)" *Herders Sämtliche Werke*. Bd. 8. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1892. 265.

subject exists with a foot in each of these hemispheres and must navigate their apparent

parallelism with an embodied viewpoint. This informs my project by affirming embodiment

rather than making perceptual limitations a problem to overcome. There are two central themes

from Herder's works from which lead to this idea: The first is the mistrust of a perspective he

defined as "überirische Abstraktion [...] die sich aus allem, was 'Kreis unsres Denkens und

Empfindens' heißt, ich weiß nicht auf welchen Thron der Gottheit setzet, da Wortwelten schafft

und über alles Mögliche und Würkliche richtet."[10] In this, Herder is a noteworthy critic of

contemporary thought, advocating for a philosophical perspective rooted in physicality rather

than echoing Classical notions that a detached mode of observation was the best way to attain

knowledge. The second theme from Herder, which stems from the first, is an interconnectedness

of being which he defined so: "Überhaupt in der Natur ist nichts geschieden, alles fließt durch

unmerkliche Übergänge auf- und ineinander; und gewiß, was Leben in der Schöpfung ist, ist in

allen Gestalten, Formen und Kanälen nur Ein Geist, Eine Flamme."[11] His attempt to view the

parallelism of material and immaterial with an embodied perspective that unifies thought and

physiology is an affirmation of interconnectedness, for as he explains he does not believe "daß

die Natur zwischen beiden eiserne Bretter befestigt habe, weil ich die eisernen Bretter in der

Natur nirgend sehe und gewiß da am wenigsten vermuthen kann, wo die Natur so innig

vereinte."[12] In these passages one finds Herder trying to define experience in specific terms of the

physiology which enables it - emphasizing that the modern subject is a part of nature even

though it feels itself dissociated from it at the same time. He approached this problem by

maintaining that despite a seemingly-inherent parallelism, the relation of self and world could be

---

10   Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele. (1778)" *Herders Sämtliche Werke*. Bd. 8.
          Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1892. 170.
11   Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 178.
12   Ibid, 193.

understood in an embodied way through sense experience and analogy: "Siehe die ganze Natur, betrachte die große Analogie der Schöpfung. Alles fühlt sich und Seinesgleichen, Leben wallet zu Leben. Jede Saite bebt ihrem Ton, jede Fiber verwebt sich mit ihrer Gespielin [...]."[13] Humankind in his understanding does not navigate existence by abstraction into objective, disembodied observation, but rather through elusive organic experiences. The modern subject thus requires a mode of thinking rooted in this notion, which the fragment provides, emerging as it does into literary discourse at exactly the same time as the modern subject.

A shared point of departure for each of my chosen sources is the notion that existence is an intertwining of being which the modern subject experiences via its senses. "Unmittelbar vor meinem Auge hat das große Auge der Welt ein allgemeines Organ ausgebreitet," Herder wrote, "das tausend Geschöpfe in mich bringt, das tausend Wesen mit einem Kleide für mich bekleidet."[14] The modern subject finds its way through the intertwining because its senses face outward while revealing inward, as Herder explained: "Innig wissen wir außer uns nichts: ohne Sinne wäre uns das Weltgebäude ein zusammen geflochtner Knäuel dunkler Reize [...]."[15] There is thus a reciprocity to the relation of self and world which enabled Herder to maintain that nature has nowhere separated the two and that such a division only occurs as an effect of the mind. I use the term embodiment therefore to reference existence as interconnected physicality in Herder's manner, and disembodiment to its opposite - i.e. the state of dissociation in which the modern subject easily finds itself amid the demands for objectivity and comprehensiveness that its knowledge systems make of it. This latter perspective is per definition not rooted in interconnectedness but rather positioned in a space where the subject grants itself omnipotence.

13   Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 200.
14   Ibid, 187.
15   Ibid, 188.

A century after Herder, Nietzsche similarly critiqued the reliance on dissociative metaphysics by diagnosing a consciousness enclosed within self-serving illusions as a problem with which the modern subject must reckon. "[Der Mensch] stellt jetzt sein Handeln als vernünftiges Wesen unter die Herrschaft der Abstractionen,"[16] Nietzsche wrote, explaining that only in abstraction does ordering of the world become possible:

> Alles, was den Menschen gegen das Thier abhebt, hängt von dieser Fähigkeit ab, die anschaulichen Metaphern zu einem Schema zu verflüchtigen, also ein Bild in einen Begriff aufzulösen; im Bereich jener Schemata nämlich ist etwas möglich, was niemals unter den anschaulichen ersten Eindrücken gelingen möchte: eine pyramidale Ordnung nach Kasten und Graden aufzubauen, eine neue Welt von Gesetzen, Privilegien, Unterordnungen, Gränzbestimmungen zu schaffen, die nun der anderen anschaulichen Welt der ersten Eindrücke gegenübertritt, als das Festere, Allgemeinere, Bekanntere, Menschlichere und daher als das Regulirende und Imperativische."[17]

In this way humankind builds structures of knowledge and overlooks itself as their creator, which for both Nietzsche and Herder results in a move away from life as it is lived. Indeed a central claim in Nietzsche's works was that negation from life is at the very heart of the western tradition, which from Socrates through Aquinas through Descartes and Kant onwards, had distanced humankind from its senses in order to give it more complete knowledge and a higher place in the order of things.

A shared aim of Herder and Nietzsche's critiques of western philosophical tradition was to reveal that while the modern subject can know anything it desires and use immutable laws to explain, define, and master, it does so from a space of its own creation. Nietzsche's philosophical

---

16   Friedrich Nietzsche. *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne.* Edited by Giorgio Colli & Mazzino Montinari. Digitale kritische Ausgabe. Online: http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/WL-1
17   Nietzsche. *Über Wahrheit und Lüge...* Digitale kritische Ausgabe.

project treated this as a self-serving and self-deceiving perspective, intending to knock humankind out of its presumed superiority through admitting that the laws upon which it bases its understandings of the world refer ultimately more to themselves than anything they objectively explain. Life as it is lived in Nietzsche's understanding defies objectification and standardization from without,[18] yet in order to make sense of an otherwise incomprehensible reality the mind must spin structures of knowledge for itself, as a spider does its webs in his analogy.[19] The issue he notes however is that the spider creates from nature, while the human mind does not. The modern subject is in this way led to disembodiment by its orientation toward objectivity and metaphysics - which is to say that its knowledge is what gives it its unique power and prominence in its world but the structures of that knowledge are more fragile than they may seem. Nietzsche and Herder both counteract this by arguing that the security which knowledge imparts is, in essence, premised on a trick of the mind that allows one to construct comprehensible narratives out of incomprehensible flux. The modern subject thus knows it is part of the living world but seemingly cannot inhabit it fully on account of its knowing - precisely the sort of problem the mind passes over in favour of comprehensible worldview, but one which clarifies the limitations of perception and knowledge. Both Nietzsche and Herder warned that by losing sight of these limitations one places oneself over and above the natural world, where one is no longer accountable to anything but one's own mind.

One finds this idea in Sartre too, who wrote nearly a century after Nietzsche that humankind can only order existence by surpassing it.[20] Sartre's examination of the

---

18   Nietzsche. *Über Wahrheit und Lüge...* Digitale kritische Ausgabe.
19   Ibid.
20   Jean-Paul Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992. 51.

disembodiment dilemma distinguishes between being in-itself and for-itself, with the for-itself

resulting from a nihilation of being that makes an individual known to itself.[21] He wrote

furthermore that the "perpetual reprieve"[22] in which the modern subject finds itself is necessary

for the establishment of identity and narratives but like Herder and Nietzsche he too warned of

the disembodiment and dissociation involved, emphasizing that knowledge must be rooted in

physicality lest it trick itself into pure abstraction.[23] Sartre's terms read as more modern than

Nietzsche and Herder's (drawing as he did on early/mid twentieth-century psychology and

philosophy) but he handled the very same questions of embodied perspective with the same

intent. He writes for instance that consciousness does not coincide with itself in a full

equivalence,[24] and as a result the for-itself must exist as a constant abstraction. Sartre thus

characterizes the self as a reflexive entity[25] - as presence to itself, which allows the subject to

escape its immediate, unknowing presence while still positing itself as a sort of unity.[26] This

presence of self to itself has, according to Sartre, "often been taken for a plenitude of existence,

and a strong prejudice prevalent among philosophers causes them to attribute to consciousness

the highest rank of being."[27] As noted above with Herder and Nietzsche though, the tendency to

consider consciousness a higher, more truthful plane fosters dissociation from the

interconnectedness of life. Sartre encapsulates their mutual point so: There is simply no such

thing as pure knowledge,[28] no deferral point for humankind beyond its own capacity. "A pure

knowledge in fact would be a knowledge without a point of view; therefore a knowledge of the

---

21   Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*, 786.
22   Ibid, 787.
23   Ibid, 407.
24   Ibid, 120.
25   Ibid,123.
26   Ibid, 124.
27   Ibid.
28   Ibid, 407.

world but on principal located outside the world."[29] The modern subject indeed navigates a

parallelism of material and immaterial, for it is not as Sartre points out, a *causa sui.*[30] Or, as

Herder put it: "Soll meine Seele aus sich entwickeln, was sie gar aus sich selbst nicht hat, so

wirds ein Thurm an die Wolken ohne Grund, eine ewige *petitio principii.*"[31] This term from

Classical logic marks arguments that assume the truth of their conclusions from the outset and

create a fallacious loop in which the surety of human knowledge is unquestioned so that its

constructs stand strong - a pattern which replicates while staying unseen thus reinforcing a

circularity of self-derived knowledge. It is worth dwelling on the nuance of this a moment in

order to reflect on humankind's unique position, for as Sartre explains, the body "...is co-

extensive with the world, spread across all things, and at the same time it is condensed into this

single point which all things indicate and which I am, without being able to know it."[32] The

primary interstice for my project can be discerned in the condition that the modern subject knows

it is a part of the world, yet its knowing causes it to abstract itself from the world.

What emerges from these collected passages is the dilemma of self-reflexivity, which for

Sartre makes the modern subject a "being of distances" in as much as it comprehends things by

abstracting itself from them and can only then see those things, and consequently itself, from

across a gap it cannot traverse.[33] Maurice Merleau-Ponty examined this dilemma more or less

concurrently with Sartre, but used a different lens. Whereas Sartre concerns himself largely with

the ontological and ethical implications of the modern subject's embodiment - i.e. that it must

remain rooted in the world lest it become dissociated from it - Merleau-Ponty examines the

---

29   Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*, 407.
30   Ibid, 789.
31   Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1775)," 261.
32   Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*, 420.
33   Ibid.

workings of perception in detail to show how they characterize modern subjectivity. His theory

premises as a foundational concept for instance that the presence of any object to the human

perceptual apparatus entails its possible absence - i.e. that it can disappear from the field of

vision, "[o]therwise it would be true like an idea and not present like a thing," he explains.[34] This

cannot be said of the body however[35] for the body must be present in the world in order to exist,

it cannot truly be an object for itself. Merleau-Ponty refers to the body therefore as a medium and

not an object.[36] Addressing the paradoxical dialectic of presence and absence associated with this

he writes: "I am present here and now, and present elsewhere and always, and also absent from

here and now, and absent from every place and from every time." He explained further that

"[t]his ambiguity is not some imperfection of consciousness or existence, but the definition of

them."[37] Drawing attention to the limitations of knowledge and the tendency to extend beyond

them, he points out a fundamental misunderstanding in this regard: "[C]onsciousness, which is

taken to be the seat of clear thinking, is on the contrary the very abode of ambiguity."[38] By

establishing limitation of the perceptual apparatus as a critical feature thereof it is possible to

posit an interstice at the very core of human experience, built into the means by which the

modern subject perceives every facet of existence. For Herder, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Merleau-

Ponty, there is a danger of losing sight of the limits because knowledge structures created from a

disembodied perspective are enticing in their comprehensibility and security. Merleau-Ponty

explains in this regard that while body and consciousness are not mutually limiting they are kept

parallel by functions of the mind. Although this would seem to ultimately reinforce the dualism

---

34   Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *The Phenomenology of Perception.* Translated by Colin Smith. New York: Routledge, 2002. 103.
35   Merleau-Ponty. *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 104.
36   Ibid, 120.
37   Ibid, 387.
38   Ibid.

of mind and body, it does not lead to disembodiment and dissociation when physicality is maintained as the basis of experience. Merleau-Ponty offers some historical context in this respect by explaining that with the scientific revolution "the experience of the body degenerated into a 'representation' of the body; it was not a phenomenon but a fact of the psyche."[39] He stresses that the body's schema is open though, that it must be understood as physicality intertwined with the physicality of all other things.[40]

My project relates this framework of ideas to certain texts in the German literary landscape around 1800 in which one finds an embodied viewpoint for knowledge and a search for living representations. As introduced above, the fragment serves as my project's key to interpreting this because it incarnates the modern subject's in-between perspective as well as the process of mediation by which the modern subject comes to understand itself and the world. Merleau-Ponty's explanation of how the act of perception brings a world together for the perceiver guides my understanding of how the ruin, perception, and mediation are interrelated: "Now, though perception brings together our sensory experiences into a single world, it does not do so in the way scientific colligation gathers together objects or phenomena, but in the way that binocular vision grasps one sole object."[41] I extrapolate the interstitial nature of the *Frühromantik* fragment relative to Merleau-Ponty's ideas from Schlegel's *Athenäums Fragmente*, in which he wrote for instance that it is "gleich tödlich für den Geist, ein System zu haben, und keins zu haben. Er wird sich also wohl entschließen müssen, beides zu verbinden."[42] The fragment can in this regard be both complete and incomplete at once, it can present a system

---

39   Merleau-Ponty. *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 108.
40   Ibid, 271.
41   Ibid, 268.
42   Schlegel, "Athenäums Fragmente [53]." *Athenäums Fragmente und andere Schriften.* 26.

while also pointing beyond it, thus Schlegel explained that it is always "[...] im Werden; ja das ist ihr eigentliches wesen, daß sie ewig nur werden, nie vollendet sein kann. Sie kann durch keine Theorie erschöpft werden, und nur eine divinatorische Kritik dürfte es wagen, ihr ideal charakteriseieren zu wollen. Sie allein ist unendlich, wie sie allein frei ist [...]."[43] Schlegel and his fellow Jena Romantics chose the fragment as the ideal form of expression for their literary theory around 1800 because it was singularly able to express the open-ended, infinite facet of human experience while remaining anchored to the living world. Of this interstitial potential he wrote that the fragment hovers between the portrayed and the portrayer,[44] and that "[a]uch in der Poesie mag wohl alles Ganze halb, und alles Halbe doch eigentlich ganz sein." He articulates here the reciprocity of every whole being a part and every part being a whole,[45] and emphasizes how the fragment shows its limits yet points beyond them. The emergence of the fragment as a new mode of thought and writing in the late eighteenth century is crucial to contemporary understandings of self-reflexive subjectivity. This epistemological shift, as Foucault explained in *The Order of Things*, transitions between the Classical age, which he dates from the mid-seventeenth century, and the modern age, beginning roughly with the nineteenth. The harmonious order of things set out by the Classical age - its coherence between theories of representation and language, for instance - was, in Foucault's summary, changed by humankind becoming *visible* to itself in this era. He explains that this change required a new paradigm of self image and self-knowledge,[46] which is why he locates the emergence of modern thought around 1800, whereafter self-reflexivity is a central aspect of philosophy and aesthetics.[47] My project focuses specifically on German literature of this period for its poetic engagement with self-reflexivity, and how a new

---

43   Schlegel, "Athenäums Fragmente [116]." *Athenäums Fragmente und andere Schriften*, 34.
44   Ibid.
45   Schlegel, "Kritische Fragmente [14]." *Athenäums Fragmente und andere Schriften*, 5.
46   Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*. Translator uncredited. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. xxiii.
47   Foucault. *The Order of Things*, 308.

appreciation of ruins and analogy arises as a result.

      What Foucault calls the polyvalency of analogy[48] is in my interpretation comparable to what Schlegel meant with the freedom of the fragment, in that neither is bound to any single answer or definition. Analogy, like the fragment, can bear multiple meanings at once and is an adaptable mode of knowledge. For this reason each of the writers I cite here saw analogy as a means of understanding the self according to its specific capacity to do so. My sources also point out however that analogy became in the modern age a less reliable mode of knowledge, replaced by objective truths of the scientific method. Living knowledge thus serves my project as not only a demonstration of interstitiality but also a means to demonstrate and affirm analogy. Using the framework established above I put forth that the modern subject's perception instills a rift in its perceptual process and does not allow it to readily recognize this rift. The human ruin is a means to do just that, caught as it is between life and death, presence and absence. It is a strange double whose manifold-mediation is like and yet unlike the observer's, but the human ruin is not simply a metaphorical representation of interstitiality. Key to this is the ruin's effect of revealing things otherwise unseen - i.e. its unique capacity to disclose lapses in world-construction where varied layers have simultaneous presence. Winckelmann's encounter with the Belvedere Torso, the miner Mats Isrealsson who was buried alive and suspended in time, and Tollund Man, the iron-age archaeological marvel whose unearthed body was intimately documented over a thousand years after his demise - each of these show an overlapping of states and temporalities whereby the observer sees itself and its own alterity - as an object of knowledge, present yet removed from life.

---

48   Foucault. *The Order of Things*, 22.

Odin's Eye and the Well of Wisdom

As a prelude to my topic, I now present a poetic figure who exemplifies it and reveals that it is, in fact, not just a modern phenomenon. My project discusses interstitial perspective as a defining characteristic of modern subjectivity, but there is a noteworthy ancient analogy in Norse literature which helps illuminate my project's engagement with this modern problem. In the *Eddas* one reads that Odin - the god of inspiration, magic, wisdom, death, poetry, and masking - was continually driven to seek knowledge that was not meant for him. This pursuit is marked in my reading by his most identifiable physical trait: One missing eye. The story behind this trait concerns a well that contained the wisdom of all things and Mimir,[49] its keeper, who told Odin he could drink from the well if he offered one of his eyes in return. To gain the prized wisdom Odin offered his eye as a pledge and it remained thereafter in the well - a wonderful metaphor representing the split nature of human perception and knowledge. By sacrificing one aspect of sight to gain an enhanced perspective Odin was able to see and understand much more than others,[50] a power which granted him his primary status in the Norse cosmology. Upon closer reading under a lens of my project's sources this figure from the poetic worldview of the ancient North can be understood to share characteristics with the modern subject. Odin was after all the knowing god of the Norse pantheon whose knowledge drove him to seek more and more knowledge, in the process putting him more and more at odds with his world.

As the Eddas tell, Odin could look into all the worlds of the Norse universe[51] and

---

49   John Lindow, in his *Norse Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. 230-2), points out that there has long been confusion regarding who and what Mimir is, but that his name can be etymologically associated with memory.

50   Snorri Sturluson. "Gylfaginning." *Edda.* Translated by Anthony Faulkes. Everyman: London, 2004. 13.

51   Found in the introduction to *Grimnir's Sayings. Poetic Edda*. Translated by Carolyne Larrington. Oxford: New York, 1996. 51.

understand everything he saw.[52] He is described at different times sitting upon a high seat from

which he could see out over all there was to see.[53] Though this seat is meant to be an actual

feature of Odin's hall it can be understood a bit more figuratively as the seat of his power, and

although other characters make use of it from time to time in the literature none matched Odin's

power of sight from this perch. Gabriel Turville-Petre points out that because sight was so

precious to Odin's search for wisdom he was made to sacrifice an aspect of it in order to gain

more,[54] an act which offers an important point of reference for the circumstance of the modern

subject whose every fibre is connected innately to the world it inhabits but whose knowledge can

often put it at odds with this fact. To further explore this idea, I consult Paul C. Bauschatz's

interpretation of *Mímisbrunnr*, the location of Odin's wager. It is often translated into English as

Mimir's well, the Old Norse word *brunnr* (whose cognates still appear in modern Germanic

languages)[55] can encompass other, naturally-occurring, flowing water sources such as springs.[56]

This distinction may initially seem negligible but that is because some of its nuance is obscured

in English translations, where the idea of Mimir's well elicits more often than not the image of a

construct in which water (or wisdom, as per the metaphor) is simply stored. When viewed

instead as a flowing wellspring it elicits the image of a more dynamic, organic source apposite to

the grand metaphor of the Norse cosmogony: the World Tree, Yggdrasil. In the Prose Edda for

example is written that the norns - the three sisters who govern fate in Norse mythology - "take

water from [Mimir's] well each day and with it the mud that lies round the well and pour it up

---

52   Sturluson. "Gylfaginning," 13.
53   The seat, *Hliðskjálf*, is described in "Gylfaginning," 20. See also Lindow, 176.
54   E.O.G. Turville-Petre. *Myth and Religion of the North: The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964. 63.
55   Icelandic: brunnur, Swedish: brunn, Norwegian Bokmål: brønn / Nynorsk: brunn, Danish: brønd, German: Brunnen
56   Paul C. Bauschatz. *The Well and the Tree: World and Time in Early Germanic Culture.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982. 16-17.

over the ash so that its branches may not rot or decay."[57] The well's nourishing water contains in

Bauschatz's interpretation the wisdom of past generations, marking for him a distinction between

the realm of the tree as the physical here-and-now present and the well as the ephemeral there-

and-then realm of memory and wisdom.[58] This spatio-temporal distinction is further incorporated

in the literature by the names of the norns: *Urðr*, *Verðandi*, and *Skuld*, which are derived from

verb forms with clear modern cognates, as Jesse Byock explains[59] that "define what we normally

think of as the total range of verbal action: Urth reflects actions made manifest [while] Verthandi

clearly reflects the actually occurring process of all that Urth eventually expresses. [...] As

actions move from Verthandi to Urth, they move from 'becoming' to 'become'."[60] Skuld on the

other hand, Byock continues, "seems to make reference to actions felt as somehow obliged or

known to occur; that is, the necessity of their 'becoming'."[61]

My intention with including these details is to emphasize that Norse mythology's

characterization of wisdom is fluid, owing at least in part to the fact that the cultures which

fostered these myths did not posses a written tradition like their later counterparts, thus their

understanding of the division between life mediated and life lived could conceivably have been

quite different. The notion of ancient Germanic epistemology being more fluid, constantly

---

57   Sturluson. *Edda*, 19. Note Turville-Petre (279) and Bauschatz (122) both point out that the tree has three wellsprings according to the Eddas, of which Mimir's is only one. As Bauschatz explains regarding the source literature however: The three wells are not clearly distinguished from one another, and thus because "[...] each one separately reproduces the same basic relationship with the tree," they can be understood as aspects of one source from which the world tree grows and is sustained." (22)

58   Bauschatz. *The Well and the Tree,* 123.

59   As Byock explains in his notes (15.2) to the Prologue of the Prose Edda (Byock, trans. Penguin, 2006): *Urðr* and *Verðandi* "are names derived from the verb *verða*, meaning 'to become'. They may also be related to the helping verb 'must'. The name *Skuld* is problematic, with numerous possibilities. It may derive from the verbform *skal*, which corresponds to the English 'shall', conveying the idea of necessity or responsibility [... but] may also mean 'obligation', 'debt', 'fault' or blame. Together the names of these norns imply 'to become', 'to have to', and 'to be absolutely required to', and may also signify 'past', 'present' and 'future'."

60   Bauschatz. *The Well and the Tree*, 14.

61   Ibid.

shifting and cycling rather than built up into an immutable structure is something my project directly connects to Herder's philosophy and early Romantic theory. Bauschatz states in this regard that "...we might suggest fluidity, nurture, circumscribing yet partial containment, accumulation, and an evolving 'past' as the most clearly central elements in the Norse myth [of the well and tree]."[62] As he explains further: "A free, active movement (but one that is structured and organized [...]) produces a universal generation not only 'fluid' and 'sustaining' but growing. [...] The figure of the well and tree is sustaining not simply of its own structure, but in the process of growing *into* itself; it is in a constant state of self-enlarging transformation."[63] In my reading, a recognizable signature of the period around 1800 in German literature can be found in these statements, namely that free movement and constant transformation are key characteristics of the mind at work. Indeed the notion of an organic, poetic epistemology was at the core of writings by influential German thinkers such as Herder, Schlegel, and Nietzsche; but while Odin, the god of poetry and wisdom was reinvigorated as a figure in certain poetic repertoires of their time, none of these writers availed themselves of the metaphor of the eye in the wellspring. I have chosen to use it here because it not only fits with an aesthetic current that was developing in the ideas and tastes of their time, but because it is moreover such a striking metaphor for their common assessment of the modern subject's cognitive condition: Split between here and there, now and then.

It is worth asking at this point though, what drove Odin to seek ever more and more knowledge? Heather O'Donoghue's answer is that he was always checking on his own death, which he knew would come with the doom of the gods.[64] Through his deeds he came to know

---

62 Bauschatz. *The Well and the Tree*, 27.
63 Ibid.
64 Heather O'Donoghue. *From Asgard to Valhalla: The Remarkable Story of the Norse Myths.* Oxford: Oxford

when and how he and his fellow deities would perish and that nothing he did could change their fate. This awareness of one's finitude is a key characteristic of modernity according to Foucault, who explained that the modern subject becomes aware of infinity through its own finitude, and vice-versa.[65] It is foundational to modern understandings of self, according to Foucault, that "finitude is always designated on the basis of man as a concrete being and on the basis of the empirical forms that can be assigned to his existence... ."[66] In this view, Odin is a finite being who sought every bit of knowledge he could in the hopes that he might push back against the awareness of his finitude. He reached across boundaries and bent things to his will in order to gain knowledge that would have otherwise remained inaccessible, but in the end his search always brought him to the same point: That no matter how much he was able to master through his all-encompassing knowledge he could not escape expiration. His eye is key to this in my understanding, for it marks the lengths to which he strove, the straddling of boundaries that at once both enlightened him and pointed out his inherent limitations. His missing eye did not mean that he was partially blinded for he gained an enhanced perceptive ability from his wager, but yet at the same time it did result in a blindspot because it allowed him to see too much. This myth depicts in my reading the problem of life lived versus life understood as it occurred to ancient Germanic peoples and I present it here to establish an organic, embodied worldview as a frame for the study to follow. It is therefore worth noting that ancient Germanic worldviews (what has been salvaged of them anyway) became relevant to German literature in the period around 1800 as an alternative to contemporary European thought. It is in this period that the modern subject took shape with a view to ancient sources, primarily Greek ones owing to Winckelmann's influence but also, as I will show, Germanic pagan sources which contained an appealing

---

University Press, 2014. 32-3.
65   Foucault. *The Order of Things,* 314-5.
66   Ibid, 318.

worldview for thinkers like Herder. In these sources the modern subject finds a means to delve

into its interstitial circumstance, an ancient voice that speaks to the underlying riddle of modern

thought and systems of knowledge. This worldview as I have presented it here clarifies an

imperative for the points I cover throughout the following pages: That one must choose to either

acknowledge one's limits as part of knowledge or treat them as problems to be overcome with

knowledge.

Chapter I: The Belvedere Torso - Interstitial Forms

Preface on the Ruin around 1800

Denis Diderot characterized a poetics of ruins when he wrote in his *Salon of 1767* that they prompt a "...retreat into ourselves; we contemplate the ravages of time, and in our imagination we scatter the rubble of the very buildings in which we live over the ground; in that moment solitude and silence prevail around us, we are the sole survivors of an entire nation that is no more."[67] "The ideas ruins evoke in me are grand," he continues. "Everything comes to nothing, everything perishes, everything passes, only the world remains, only time endures [...] I walk between two eternities."[68] The notion of walking between two eternities echoes throughout German literature around 1800, the awareness of such an interstice is a signature of the era - an awareness that distinguishes the modern subject from its predecessors.[69] Diderot's reception of ruins indicate that the subject must define itself against eternities it cannot completely grasp, which instills a gap between its embodied presence and its imagination. Moreover he articulates a particular character of longing which accompanies the ruin as an aesthetic experience through every example offered by my project. This longing plays into the way ruins indicate things and their apparent opposites in the same moment, their fascinating and irreducible riddle of interstitiality. Friedrich Schlegel wrote of this that humanity "hat es richtig gefühlt, daß es ihr ewiger, notwendiger Charakter sei, die unauflöslichen Widersprüche, die unbegreiflichen Rätsel in sich zu vereinigen, welche aus der Zusammensetzung des unendlich Entgegengesetzten entspringen."[70] This sets the tone for my investigation of how the modern subject is defined by a rift which it can discern but cannot cross. It is a puzzle which consists in the subject's awareness

---

67   Denis Diderot. "The Salon of 1767." *Diderot on Art II.* Edited and Translated by John Goodman. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. 196.
68   Diderot. "The Salon of 1767," 198.
69   See my introduction, which establishes Foucault's designation of modernity.
70   Ibid.

that it is part of its world yet simultaneously removed - its gift of reason thereby dissociating it from its embodied reality. When one looks into how this experience was articulated around 1800 in German literature, the ruin is a recurring feature. To understand why I focus on the interstitial longing Diderot articulated and the particular alienation which haunts the modern subject, stemming from the fact in Sartre's terms that it cannot coincide entirely with itself.[71] The modern subject senses itself split between self-generated perceptions and given experience and my project maintains this interstice is a distinctive trait of German literature around 1800, where the ruin is associated with embodied experience and living knowledge.

Albrecht Koschorke describes a dilemma characteristic of the era when he writes: "Einerseits sind die Imaginationen abhängig von dem, was empirisch wahrnehmbar ist. [...] Andererseits aber steht die Einbildungskraft zur sinnlichen Wahrnehmung nicht nur in einem Verhältnis der Abhängigkeit, sondern auch der Opposition."[72] With this he points to how a longing arises in the mind for an ineffable and ultimately unreachable *more*, which amounts to a displacement, or an alienation, from embodied circumstance and a compensation of the mind to resolve it. For my project's purposes the awareness of temporality and finitude fosters a mix of reality and imagination, alienation and longing, in which the ruin is an object of affinity to the subject seeking to understand itself and its world coterminously. Koschorke writes of the imagination that "[i]nsofern sie es ermöglicht, Abwesendes als Anwesendes zu imaginieren, tritt sie in Konkurrenz zu den menschlichen Sinnesorganen."[73] This is crucial for my study because, as will be discussed, the subject navigates the gap it senses between it and other things primarily

---

71   Sartre. *Being and Nothingness,* 120.
72   Albrecht Koschorke. *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr: Mediologie des 18. Jahrhunderts.* München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999. 275-6.
73   Koschorke. *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr*, 276.

via imagination - itself an element of physiology in Herder's view. Koschorke elaborates that "dieses Vermögen zu illusionieren macht die Einbildungskraft in den Überlegungen des 18. Jahrhunderts zum maßgeblichen ästhetischen Organ."[74] "[Ein] Organ für das Abwesende."[75] The term organ is particularly weighted in context of the era, where the study of physiology became a crucial aspect of a shift away from mechanistic understandings of the natural world and metaphysics in philosophy. As Leif Weatherby explains "organs would take over the function of mediators between body and soul [...and] would come in Romantic discourse to define being as such."[76] New understandings of the vital organs and the interconnectedness of the body's systems came to the fore in late eighteenth-century scientific and philosophical discourse, which played out in the German literary context in the works of *Empfindsamkeit* writers whose fascination with the inner worlds of physiology and emotions would then provide significant inspiration for *Sturm und Drang* and *Frühromantik.* My project picks up slightly before the widespread use of these terms though, with works from Winckelmann and Herder that were published in a climate where understandings of human experience were just beginning to be changed by studies of the organs which enabled it.

Weatherby points out that the word organ "...did not carry the fullness of its modern meaning in the seventeenth century [...where] it meant something more like 'tool' or 'device.'"[77] This understanding was prevalent in theories that were handed down from Descartes and the Classical tradition, but as Wellbery explains, later eighteenth-century understandings of organs considered them the very sources of vitality and humanity. And so when Koschorke terms the

---

74   Koschorke. *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr*, 276.
75   Ibid, 273.
76   Leif Weatherby. *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ: German Romanticism between Leibniz and Marx.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. 2.
77   Weatherby. *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ*, 4.

imagination an organ for discerning and invoking the absent he indicates how German literature

around 1800 incorporates contemporary theories of physiology alongside aesthetics. His further

characterization of absence helps explain the ruin's unique effect on the imagination in this

regard:

> Abwesenheit aber, die fundamentale kommunikative Kategorie, läßt sich durch Dualismen vom
> Typ materiell/immateriell, real/irreal, Objekt/Subjekt nicht fassen. Das Abwesende, gedacht als
> Voraussetzung und spezifischer Effekt von Zeichenfunktionen, gehört beiden Seiten des
> Oppositionsrasters an. Es eröffnet einen Daseinsbereich, der weder im herkömmlichen Sinn
> materialistisch noch psychologistisch umgrenzt werden kann. Es ist mehr als eine bloß inaktive
> Faktizität, insofern es eigene Regeln der Repräsentation und Verknüpfung erstellt und sich nicht
> einfach in die Ebene des positiv Gegebenen "zurückklappen" läßt. Es ist andererseits auch mehr
> als eine bloß subjektive Hinzufügung zu dem, was positivistisch der Fall ist. Man kann keine
> Wirklichkeit außerhalb von Zeichenrelationen, und das heißt von dynamischen Gefällelagen
> zwischen Abwesenheit und Präsenz, Zeichen und Vergegenwärtigung denken.[78]

The ruin is, in my reading, a perfect riddle of presence and absence because it, to use

Koschorke's definition of absence above, exists between states and temporalities -

simultaneously present and absent. It is, much like the modern subject, neither/nor, both/and. The

space it occupies therefore corresponds to no one side of any dialectic, rather encompassing both

sides along with the observer in a dynamic representation and reception. In short the ruin frees

the observing self from the framework of its thought, if only for a moment, and enables it to join

its surroundings via an embodied self-reflexive gaze. Consider the discussion of literary

fragments in my introduction where Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy stated that fragments are

definitions of the fragment,[79] and where Rodolphe Gasché explained that the fragment captures

---

78   Koschorke. *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr*, 271.
79   Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy. *The Literary Absolute*, 44.

the event character of a system and the interlinkage of its various pieces.[80] These describe the same approach I have to ruins, which is essentially as Thomas MacFarland explains, that "the fragment is the phenomenology of human awareness."[81]

A point of differentiation before going further: I use the terms fragment and ruin throughout, but with the distinction that ruins appeal specifically to the observer's present by invoking a sense of longing and loss through temporal dislocation - i.e. of change to circumstance, of familiar things falling into ruin - whereas the fragment appeals more generally to the notion of incompleteness or open-endedness. Robert Ginsberg states that the unique character of a ruin is defined in large part by functions which become ironic when seen in ruin.[82] A ruin is no longer what it once was, it no longer serves the same function it once had, so its condition breaks the spell of the ordinary and prompts a "...pause that refreshes our sensibility, because it clears us of causes. No need to stop, and none to go on. We might as well dwell suspended between steps."[83] More than simply a pause though, Ginsberg notes that ruins impart an interstitial perspective which enables the observer to see the ordinary as extraordinary.[84] This enriching incongruity to use Ginsberg's term[85] is key to understanding the relation of the ruin to human experience because the ruin prompts the observer into a frame of mind where the familiar can be unfamiliar and the organizing mind can reflect on an otherwise unseen facet of itself at work. With this I contrast two terms pertinent to literary discourse around 1800 which frame my topic: *Lehrgebäude*[86] as the product of a desire to build up and secure knowledge, and ruins

---

80 Gasché. "Foreword..." *Friedrich Schlegel - Philosophical Fragments*, viii.
81 Thomas McFarland. *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. 3.
82 Robert Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins.* New York: Rodopi, 2004. 51.
83 Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, 44.
84 Ibid, 47.
85 Ibid, 51.
86 Literally "knowledge structure." Often used to describe didactic systems with a dogmatic connotation.

which show that even the loftiest of such structures can never be permanent and that all things must expire and transform. These terms are not presented here in clear opposition to one another, but rather as an integral dialectic pair which helps illuminate the issues of self-reflexivity and mediation in German aesthetic theory and philosophy of the late Enlightenment.

Ruins are works of life, writes Ginsberg,[87] which is how I relate them to Herder's organic interconnectedness and Schlegel's fragments continually in-process. I assert that ruins evoke living knowledge as a counterpoint to *Lehrgebäude* constructed by more systematic Enlightenment era thinkers.[88] Conceptually, my project sees the *Lehrgebäude* as an edifice of knowledge that intends to make permanent, whereas the ruin is a process already underway and never permanent. Given their reciprocal relation however one could conceivably argue the inverse, stating instead that the *Lehrgebäude* is a process of continual building whereas the ruin is dead and finished. Perhaps even more appropriately for my project, one could state that both are living processes in their own way. To be clear, though: My project's understanding of *Lehrgebäude* and ruins is based on Herder's study of Winckelmann in his *Kritische Wälder*, as Winckelmann uses the term to describe his own work and Herder critiques it from a living knowledge perspective. By making the *Lehrgebäude* and the ruin into a dialectic pair I mean to show how the notion of living knowledge emerged in the period around 1800, and how the ruin was used as a literary device by authors grappling with the notion that, in MacFarland's summary, the "logic of incompleteness is thus ultimately the logic of infinity."[89] Hartmut Böhme defines the ruin in this respect as a particular experience of temporality in view of infinity,

87   Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, 157.
88   Elizabeth Wanning Harries makes this point using the works of Christoph Martin Wieland in *The Unfinished Manner* (1994). 59-61.
89   McFarland. *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin*, 28.

whence for my project comes its poetic effect:

> "Die Ästhetik der Ruine ist dabei eine besondere Weise der Erfahrbarkeit von Zeit: Der Blick, der ein Trümmerfeld zu einer Ruinenlandschaft synthetisiert, ist der festgehaltene Augenblick zwischen einer unvergangenen Vergangenheit und einer schon gegenwärtigen Zukunft. Die Ruine dimensioniert sich in allen drei Modi der Zeit, genauer: nicht die Ruine, sondern der reflexive Blick, in welchem sich die Ruine als ästhetischer Gegenstand bildet. Dieser Blick tendiert zur Schrift, zur Archivierung und Umschreibung der enigmatischen Bilderschrift der Ruinen ins Buch der Geschichte."[90]

The temporality of the ruin is crucial to its effect for Böhme and Diderot, as the longing involved is rooted in the suspension between eternities of past and future. Böhme characterizes these as a past not yet passed and a future already present, writing that ruin reception spans in effect all three modes of time. The eye of the observer passes through these modes of time and imbues the ruin with the characteristics Diderot described - the ruin then reflects the observer's gaze back at it. As I will show, a human body fallen to ruin deepens this effect, for the observer must regard it as both a ruin and a life still somehow in process - a person who does not return the observer's gaze, but reflects it.

As Böhme and Diderot explain, the aesthetics of ruins are bound up with the experience of linear temporality and their poetic effect consists in their situatedness within time but also their potential to be outside it. In this way the ruin unveils the modern subject's experience of itself as a being that can discern infinity but cannot grasp it, demonstrating its layered ontology. As Ginsberg states, the curious irony of a ruin's layered ontology can make it more touching in light of the grander sentiments such as Diderot described.[91] Thus when the grander sentiment of a

---

90   Hartmut Böhme. "Die Ästhetik der Ruinen." *Der Schein des Schönen.* Göttingen: Steidl, 1989. 287-304. 287.
91   Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, 51.

human - its unity of accomplishments, beliefs, and contexts - is gone, what remains is the humble form of an individual who like any other walks between two eternities but a brief while. In this respect the human ruin offers the modern subject an affirmation of itself as simultaneously the engineer of its worldview and a mote carried by a current it cannot control. This chapter's discussion of Winckelmann and Herder in context of their era looks at the literary climate in which living knowledge emerges from the relation of ruins and *Lehrgebäude*. I establish here my concept of the human ruin by reading Winckelmann's interaction with the Belvedere Torso together with Herder's proto-phenomenological enquiry into embodied thought, uncovering how both approached an interstitial mode of reception.

The Belvedere Torso[92]

92   Image source: Jean-Pol Grandmont (Creative Commons).
       https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:0_Torse_du_Belv%C3%A9d%C3%A8re_-
       _Museo_Pio_Clementino.JPG

Winckelmann Envisions the Belvedere Torso

"[E]s ist nicht genug, zu sagen, daß etwas schön ist: man soll auch wissen, in welchem Grade und warum es schön sei,"[93] Johann Joachim Winckelmann wrote in "Beschreibung des Torso im Belvedere zu Rom," a 1759 essay about a statue that could barely be classified as such anymore given the extent of its disrepair. A statement like this is not unexpected from Winckelmann, who is widely regarded as a progenitor of modern art history, archaeology, and the neoclassical aesthetics associated with the later Enlightenment era. His choice of subject here is noteworthy however when one considers that Winckelmann's legacy in western thought has come to consist primarily of his praise for the *edle Einfalt und stille Größe* of monumental ancient Greek sculptures. While his writings cannot be reduced to simply this one sentiment, they do evince a thinker whose worldview was anchored in the rational harmoniousness epitomized by Classical art. His short essay about the Belvedere Torso details the beauty he saw in the remains of a destroyed ancient Greek sculpture, and when compared with his larger oeuvre this text stands out on account of the way it disrupts his overarching aesthetic theory. The importance of the ruin to German literary theory around 1800 consists in precisely such acts of disruption, but rather than simply repeat narratives of early Romanticism developing in opposition to what had come before it my reading will show how Winckelmann's *Beschreibung des Torso* in actuality finds him performing the fragment as an aesthetic object - moreover performing the ruin as an interstitial form. He does so from his own theoretical viewpoint however, thus I present *Beschreibung des Torso* here as a brief but intriguing divergence in which one can read Winckelmann against himself, describing the dissonance of a preliminary encounter with the ruin and the poetic longing it instilled in him.

---

93   Johann Joachim Winckelmann. "Beschreibung des Torso im Belvedere zu Rom." *J. J. Winckelmanns kleine Schriften und Briefe (Band 1): Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums.* Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1925. 165-172. 165.

Although the Belvedere Torso is damaged almost beyond recognition, Winckelmann writes that even in its current state it is an object whose beauty can astound if one knows how to see it. "Der erste Anblick wird dir vielleicht nichts als einen verunstalteten Stein entdecken," he begins. "[V]ermagst du aber in die Geheimnisse der Kunst einzudringen," he continues, "so wirst du ein Wunder derselben erblicken, wenn du dieses Werk mit einem ruhigen Auge betrachtest."[94] Describing this *ruhiges Auge* he writes further that "so fang[t]en sich an in meinen Gedanken die übrigen mangelhaften Glieder zu bilden: Es sammelt sich ein Ausfluß aus dem Gegenwärtigen und wirkt gleichsam eine plötzliche Ergänzung."[95] In the *Wunder* that appears to him he finds a perspective which enables him to see past the sculpture's ruined form to its eternal beauty, the recognition of which he characterizes so: "Diese vorzügliche und edle Form einer so vollkommenen Natur ist gleichsam in die Unsterblichkeit eingehüllt, und die Gestalt ist bloß wie ein Gefäß derselben; ein höherer Geist scheint den Raum der sterblichen Teile eingenommen und sich an die Stelle derselben ausgebreitet zu haben."[96] In this statement one sees a mixing of present and eternal, material and imaginary at work as the torso ruin melds with a composite image constructed in the mind's eye. This image and the observer's role in crafting it are central aspects of the text but, interestingly, Winckelmann passes over them in order to focus instead on the agency of art:

Die Kunst weint zugleich mit mir, denn das Werk, welches sie den größten Erfindungen des Witzes und Nachdenkens entgegensetzen und durch welches sie noch jetzt ihr Haupt wie in ihren goldenen Zeiten zu der größten Höhe menschlicher Achtung erheben könnte, dieses Werk, welches vielleicht das letzte ist, an welches sie ihre äußersten Kräfte gewendet hat, muß sie halb vernichtet und grausam gemißhandelt sehen. Wem wird hier nicht der Verlust so vieler hundert anderer Meisterstücke derselben zu Gemüte geführt! Aber die Kunst, welche uns weiter

---

94   Winckelmann. "Beschreibung des Torso...," 167.
95   Ibid, 170.
96   Ibid, 171.

unterrichten will, ruft uns von diesen traurigen Überlegungen zurück und zeigt uns, wie viel noch aus dem Übriggebliebenen zu lernen ist und mit was für einem Auge es der Künstler ansehen müsse.[97]

Art has much to offer through the Belvedere Torso, he writes, if the observer can tap into its mystery. The question is however: At what point does Winckelmann's creative reception of the ruin become the object he sees? There is no distinct line given by the text, as it conflates the agencies of the observer and art.

      I chose the Belvedere Torso as the first ruin to study because it corresponds clearly to the contemporary discourse of ruins and fragments, and thus gives my project an aesthetic vocabulary to use. It is a ruin body in only the most literal definition - it is the shape of a ruined human body but was never living flesh. In this way I wanted an aesthetic ruin to contrast with the two human ruin examples, as Winckelmann intends his essay to teach a specific type of aestheticising gaze that enables the observer to see the beauty of the Belvedere Torso - a ruined work of art. He states that neither he nor art want to see the Belvedere Torso in its current state and that art shows him how to remedy this situation through a mode of observation which allows the object and his mental image of it to overlap - transforming the Belvedere Torso from a ruin on a pedestal into an example of Classical perfection. With this perspective Winckelmann creates an image of the statue as he wants to see it, overlaying what he sees in his mind's eye upon the object before him - a layering of states and temporalities which is made possible by the statue's fragmentary condition. That is why this particular text is so compelling as a starting point for a discussion of the ruin and living knowledge, for while the ruin's open-endedness would become

---

[97]   Winckelmann. "Beschreibung des Torso...," 172.

closely associated with a literary self-reflexive turn in the period around 1800, Winckelmann was somewhat ahead of the curve here and does not discuss it directly in this respect. He demonstrates the effect but does not delve into how nor why the ruined statue brings him to the limits of his aesthetic schema. Instead he defers to art in order to explain the encounter, establishing art as an authority outside of his sensual experience. The result is a brief moment wherein Winckelmann engages an object which forces him to supplement his aesthetic theory with a new type of creative-receptive gaze.

It should be emphasized here that 21st century readers may encounter difficulty in reading Winckelmann the way he wrote, reading him instead through a lens of later ideas. My project ultimately cannot avoid this either because to let Winckelmann speak for himself in this particular case is to let him stay notably silent on my topic. To explain: Winckelmann's aesthetic theory was guided, generally, by a desire for wholeness which marks the tension between his role as an active creator and passive observer in this text. These roles lead him to treat the ruin as both a point of emergence into the mystery of art as well as an aesthetic problem to be solved, and in the end the mystery of art was the only way he was able to describe the ruin's effect within his theoretical apparatus. His attempt to overcome the statue's condition uses mystery as a means to assert some degree of aesthetic sensibility and control - albeit indirectly. To address the prominence of art as a guiding force in this text and understand how it stabilizes his perspective, one needs to remember that Winckelmann's purpose here was to show what art had to teach its observer: Namely that the artworks of the ancient Greeks could teach the modern world the beauty of harmony. From this one gathers that the fragment was by its nature a problem to be solved. By focusing on the *höherer Geist* Winckelmann was able to overcome the *Raum der*

sterblichen Teile and resolve the problem of the ruined Belvedere Torso - in the process enacting

a Pygmalion-like metamorphosis according to Inka Mülder-Bach, whose reading of the torso text

stresses the way Winckelmann revives the statue body but then loses sight of the real object. So

enamoured is he of its imagined form that, like Pygmalion with his beloved Galatea,

Winckelmann transforms the ruined Belvedere Torso with his creative will into a vividly

beautiful, whole human body. When his encounter with the torso is understood in terms of active

reception, Winckelmann can indeed be seen as a Pygmalion-like figure for he is able to give life

to an otherwise lifeless body. *Beschreibung des Torso...* is however a text "der ebenfalls in einer

täuschenden Metamorphose kulminiert," Mülder-Bach states.[98] "Indem Auge und Verstand,

Anschauung und mythologisches Wissen in ein illusionserzeugendes Wechselspiel treten,

vervollständigt sich der Torso nicht nur, er verwandelt sich: Aus dem ungeformten Stein des

ersten Anblicks scheint weichliche zarte Materie und aus dieser ein lebendiger, geistbegabter

Organismus zu werden."[99] The narrative of the text can ultimately be understood as one of

discovery and transformation: The ruin body is revived and the observer is enlightened by the

mysteries of art. Upon closer reading the observer sets itself and the imagined body inside an

illusion without acknowledging it.

Mülder-Bach notes that because the statue's actual form was not the foremost focus of his

gaze, "Winckelmann [kann] die Illusion positiv besetzen und die Beschreibung in Absicht des

Ideals in einer täuschenden Metamorphose kulminieren lassen, in der für einen flüchtigen

Augenblick der Versöhnung der historische Abstand und die ontologische Differenz zwischen

---

98   Inka Mülder-Bach. *Im Zeichen Pygmalions: Das Modell der Statue und die Entdeckung der Darstellung im 18. Jahrhundert.* München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998. 21.

99   Mülder-Bach. *Im Zeichen Pygmalions*, 21.

Werk und Betrachter aufgehoben scheinen."[100] There is a moment in this text, Mülder-Bach

claims, when the ontological difference between work and viewer appears effaced. It is here in

my reading where Winckelmann reconstructs the statue as he wants to see it - in the process

however never fully affirming the torso's fragmentary condition in and of itself. He treats it

rather as merely the vessel for a higher, eternal beauty that the full sculpture must have once

displayed. His *ruhiges Auge*, though a direct appeal to physiology in a way, ultimately serves as

a path to a disembodied solution. Through his creative reception he is able to envision the height

of human artistic accomplishment in even those most meagre remains, but the eternal beauty of

which he writes - that which art wants him to behold - becomes present to him because of a

blindspot that goes unacknowledged lest the entire illusion it creates be interrupted.

Winckelmann doesn't dwell on this blindspot nor the illusory nature of the statue's reconstruction

because the illusion suffices, however his choice of the phrase *die Geheimnisse der Kunst*

einzudringen when describing the transformation is telling; in particular the verb, for when

translated as encroaching or penetrating into the mysteries of art it indicates a sort of

transgression into an otherwise hidden or inaccessible space. Only if the viewer is able to

penetrate into the mysteries of art, Winckelmann indicates, will the true beauty of the torso

become evident. Until that the ruined sculpture is but a sad reminder of what it could have been.

The *Geheimnisse der Kunst* in this sense are the mysteries of Winckelmann's own perception and

cognition from which arise a self-reflection otherwise unseen: The observing, creating subject in

the process of its creative action. Winckelmann's decision to take himself out of the picture

marks his position relative to changes in aesthetic and literary theory leading up to 1800 though,

for while he does enact a new perspective, he stays largely silent about it because at the time he

---

100 Mülder-Bach. *Im Zeichen Pygmalions*, 25.

wrote his description of the Belvedere Torso there was not yet any widespread discourse which affirmed the fragment as an aesthetic form aligned with self-reflexive experience. He signals to the fragment in this sense nonetheless, preparing the way for my topic.

I contend that in *Beschreibung des Torso* one finds Winckelmann approaching the dilemma of self-reflexivity as it pertains to the self as knowledge object for itself. I note furthermore that it is the sculpture's ruin status specifically which brings him to this point because it requires an extra step to observe it both as it is and as it could be. Winckelmann's encounter with this ruin in human form (not a body but a mediation of one nonetheless) offers a preliminary example of what I term the ruin gaze,[101] arising from the dissonance between what the object is and what it could be. In other words Winckelmann's deferral to the mysteries of art over his own creative reception opens an interstitial perspective in which the *Lehrgebäude* and ruin dialectic becomes apparent. It shows furthermore how his effacement of his own agency leads to a viewpoint whose authority is built on its distance from embodied experience. Such disconnection leads to secure, objective knowledge but because it requires an Archimedean point its physical anchor is lost in favour of a disembodied authority. The trick of the mind at work must be overlooked in order to maintain the surety of knowledge, a conclusion to which I come via Herder's critique of Winckelmann in his *Kritische Wälder*, which proceed with this notion at its core. For Herder the deferral to metaphysics means that the subject removes itself from the flow of life and places itself in its own disembodied mind. Herder used the fragment as a device in his writings to affirm his view of embodied thought whereas in comparison the fragment did

---

101 The term is attributable to Svetlana Boym before myself, but because she does not provide a detailed definition for it I interpret it here to fit my own purposes. For her original use of the term: http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/r/ruinophilia/ruinophilia-appreciation-of-ruins-svetlana-boym.html

not reflect Winckelmann's experience back to him, the harmonious image he desired did. This is to say that while for Herder impermanence was an affirmation of existence, it was not so for Winckelmann. One can see in this comparison how the ruin challenges viewpoints which cannot reconcile open-ended multiplicities - precisely why Herder used it to critique systematic thought. And so while Winckelmann did not reach the same conclusions about open-endedness as some of those whom he influenced, his grappling with it did set out crucial points for later writers on communion with art, self-reflexivity, and affirmation of the subjective creative force.

Enlivening the Ruin in Response to the *Lehrgebäude*

A current of change was working its way into German literary discourse at the dawn of the nineteenth century whereby the Classical tradition - characterized by the tempered rationality and desire for harmonious wholeness Winckelmann so admired in the ancient Greeks - would be challenged by notions of an unknowable absolute and the impossibility of harmonious wholeness. Integral to this challenge was Herder, whose influence would be taken up by a succession of thinkers through the nineteenth- and twentieth centuries for whom impermanence, the work-in-progress, became the expression of subjective experience itself. Herder himself wrote in fragments from time-to-time, finding in them an alternative means of thought and expression to the *Lehrgebäude* erected throughout the Enlightenment landscape. In so doing he made the open-endedness which Winckelmann elided the centre of a literary method that would find widespread use through the next two centuries and beyond. The Belvedere Torso essay shows Winckelmann's proximity to these ideas but also his distance from them: He wrestled with the ruin as an aesthetic form before it had come to represent any new theoretical approach, and though intrigued by it he treated it as a problem to be omitted in favour of a comprehensible

totality. The interpreter of beauty in Winckelmann's view must understand beauty properly, i.e. in the calm and harmonious manner of the ancient Greeks - or at least in accordance with the image of the ancient Greeks he had constructed. This mirroring of ancient Greek intellectualism speaks not just to contemporary European intellectual indebtedness to the Classical tradition but also to the specific climate of the German Enlightenment, for Winckelmann held the ancient Greeks up to his age as a standard to emulate. One thing to note about this is that media representations were what Winckelmann built his theory on because by all accounts he never visited Greece and had in fact never actually *seen* a number of the works which he so praised (though he had seen the Belvedere Torso in Rome).[102] Relying on illustrations, descriptions, and copies of ancient Greek artworks was not a hindrance however as the image in his mind's eye stood foremost - a point which re-emphasizes that for Winckelmann's perspective limitations in the perception/comprehension process must be concealed so that the mind can attain its goals. The resulting blindspot is why Herder treated metaphysical abstraction as a deceptive illusion of a comprehensible world, of a right answer for every question - that particular Enlightenment optimism which held that principles of reason would reveal the truths behind even the most impenetrable mysteries of existence.

Herder and Winckelmann's point of dispute here shall be the *Lehrgebäude* as a system of established, prescriptive knowledge. Specifically I look at Herder's critique of Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, which was conceived to be the most comprehensive history of art in the ancient world that had ever been written in Europe - a *Lehrgebäude* in its author's own definition. Herder believed that *Lehrgebäude* and systematic thinking served an important

---

102   Brad Prager. "Interior and Exterior: G.E. Lessing's *Laocoon* as a prelude to Romanticism." *Aesthetic Vision and German Romanticism: Writing Images.* Rochester: Camden House, 2007. 1-40. 19.

role for education, which was the intended purpose of Winckelmann's history. Herder viewed

Winckelmann's attempt to craft a comprehensive history differently though, for as M. Kay

Flavell notes, where most historians were stymied by lack of tangible historical records

Winckelmann was led by his passion headlong into attempting the first complete European

overview of ancient Greek art.[103] This may help explain why many were so inspired by him:

Winckelmann was reacting to an earlier era of even more systematic thought with a mix of

imaginative passion and studious method. In this regard Henry Hatfield calls him both a proto-

romantic and a proto-classicist,[104] which speaks to the shifting climate of the day and how writers

such as Winckelmann and Herder were writing between the lines, as it were, of secular

humanism and theological study, aesthetics and historiography, rationalism and empiricism,

German and European. In this last distinction one finds that Winckelmann's longing for a new

cultural outlook was a particularly German one, to which many of those who came after him

(Herder included) felt an affinity. "Winckelmann fell in love with classical Greece because it was

the antidote and alternative to the repressive ethics, politics, and religion of his age," explains

Frederick C. Beiser.[105] Explaining further the effect his works had in the German context, he

continues:

> Thanks to Winckelmann, the Greeks became the standard of criticism for every aspect of the
> modern age. Writing for an age that had grown weary and wary of Christian dogma and
> enlightened absolutism, Winckelmann reminded the younger generation of the ancient
> alternatives: the humanism and republicanism of ancient Greece and Rome. So the young read a
> powerfully subversive message into Winckelmann's texts: that we can achieve full humanity only
> if we become like the Greeks. Hence imitation of the Greeks became not only an aesthetic, but a

---

103 M. Kay Flavell. "Winckelmann and the German Enlightenment: On the Recovery and Uses of the Past." *The Modern Language Review.* Vol. 74, No. 1 (Jan., 1979). 79-96. 82-3.
104 Henry Hatfield. "Winckelmann: The Romantic Element." *Germanic Review.* 28, 4; Dec 1953. 282-289. 282.
105 Frederick C. Beiser. *Diotima's Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 163.

political, religious, and ethical imperative. In this respect, Schiller, Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Friedrich Schlegel, and the young Hegel were all *die Kinder Winckelmanns.*[106]

In the absence of a distinct, cohesive cultural basis of their own German thinkers after Winckelmann leveraged critique against contemporary European norms by adopting the image of the ancient Greeks to assert a new German national character into intellectualism of the time (dominated largely by England and France). Hatfield uses the term aesthetic paganism to help articulate this connection that some German writers were seeking with their pre-Christian past. He situates the emergence of aesthetic paganism within a broader rejection of contemporary worldviews found in the German Enlightenment - Winckelmann's seminal contribution being his image of the ancient Greeks as a remedy for the modern European. To echo points about illusion from above, both Hatfield and Flavell refer to Winckelmann as a myth-maker who fell deeply into his own myth-making and the longing for perfection of beauty such as he found in the ancient Greeks. The wholeness and perfection of this beauty remained beyond his grasp, as it did for his successors, and thus an important facet of contemporary literary discourse was striving for the ineffable - which would become a hallmark of *Sturm und Drang* and Romanticism and the literary movements they in turn inspired.

My comparison between Winckelmann and Herder here centres on one primary distinction: The former's theoretical perspective did not account for limitations, opting instead to gloss over them in favour of harmony. The latter however affirmed these limitations as a vital element of his work and placed the self in a constantly-shifting process of subjective comprehension to which no underlying system could be applied. Flux is a core aspect of Herder's

---

106 Beiser. *Diotima's Children*, 162.

thought, which Katherine Harloe's characterizes as contrapuntal.[107] Thus for my dialectic where

the *Lehrgebäude* represents permanence and surety, the ruin represents flux and interpretation.

Herder's use of organic analogies and Germanic folklore to critique the attitudes of his time is

therefore an act of affirming the dissonances that Winckelmann's theory tried to resolve:

Whereas Winckelmann sought the unattainable with the goal of solving it, Herder let the

unattainable stay as it was.[108] And so while both the *Lehrgebäude* and the ruin are in their own

respective ways abstractions - forming a pair in which one requires the other for definition -

Herder believed the latter suits the limitations and messy paradoxes of human circumstance

whereas the former defers to an external viewpoint deceptively enabled by the mind. Of Herder

and the *Lehrgebäude*, Katherine Harloe states that he "concedes that such a structure may be

appropriate to Winckelmann's primary audience of 'students of art' nevertheless; a reader in

search of history must approach this Gebäude with caution."[109] Herder's interaction with

Winckelmann's *Lehrgebäude* is then, to quote Harloe "a paradoxical, twofold emphasis on both

the incompatibility of history and system and the impossibility of writing a history that avoids

any elements of the latter."[110] "This nuanced evaluation," she continues, "commending

Winckelmann as well as criticizing him—is characteristic of the two-sided response to the

Geschichte Herder developed in the period up to 1768."[111] Herder's reading of Winckelmann is

indeed best described as contrapuntal, pointing out as it does both the flaws and the strengths.

This allows him, according to Harloe, to affirm in the work that which Winckelmann himself

never fully did:

---

107 Katherine Harloe. *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity: History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumswissenschaft.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
108 See my introduction for how flux is the connection between Herder's thought and what I view as the embodied nature of ancient Germanic worldview found in the Eddas.
109 Harloe. *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity*, 225.
110 Ibid, 234.
111 Ibid, 242.

Herder was not ready to attribute Winckelmann's faults to failings in education or character, but rather accepted them for what, by Winckelmann's own lights, they were: a means of trying to achieve a holistic understanding in the face of the fragmentary picture of the ancient world provided by the ancient remains. [...] This insight made Winckelmann's mistakes, and his achievements, of more than biographical interest to Herder. For he saw the *Geschichte* as exemplifying the potential for both understanding and error that is inherent in the situation of all human interpreters.[112]

Their respective positions toward *Lehrgebäude* may prompt one to set Herder and Winckelmann up as opposites, but I wish to emphasize the points of continuity between them. Herder was, after all, a great admirer of Winckelmann's writings, despite his criticisms.

Herder's Search for Living Knowledge

Herder's relationship to the thought of his mentors, peers, and predecessors[113] can be gleaned from his challenge to what is perhaps the Enlightenment's best-known tenet: "Seit Descartes das Denken zu seinem ganzen zweifelnden Ich machte, welche Systeme sind aufkommen, Eins unnatürlicher als das Andre. Er hing die Seele in der Zirbeldrüse auf, und ließ sie denken; wie nun aber den Körper bewegen?"[114] This challenge to one of the cornerstone proclamations in the western tradition was Herder's attempt to affirm an intrinsic interconnectedness of thought and physiology, and it defines his search for living knowledge. Articulating the fundamental problem he saw with metaphysics in this respect, Herder wrote in *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele* (1778):

---

112   Harloe. *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity*, 243.
113   As a student Herder was a disciple of Immanuel Kant and Johann Georg Hamann, from whose differing philosophical viewpoints he developed his own. He was a contemporary of Winckelmann but evidently never met him.
114   Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1775)," 267.

So ordnet die Metaphysik - warlich einen Sonnenplan voll Mannigfaltigkeit und Einheit! Denkende Natur, innere Anschauung der Vollkommenheit und Ausspannung unsrer Kräfte, dieser Vollkommenheit näher zu kommen, sie immer mehr in unsrer Selbst zu verwandeln, ist Erstes und Letztes. Das Eine in Allem zeigt sie vortrefflich; aber auch so unterscheidend das Jede in Jedem? Die Harmonie unsrer Kräfte vortrefflich; aber auch so gründlich ihre Disharmonien, Widersprüche und Mängel?[115]

In my reading Winckelmann's reception of the Belvedere Torso exemplifies what Herder terms a metaphysical perspective, as it separates the observing subject from its embodied present and starts a sequence of separations through which the world is ordered and made comprehensible. The issue for Herder is that nothing in nature can truly be separated in this way.[116] Thus explanations which stem from this detached perspective, while enticing in their clarity, contain within them a deceptive element because they are based in a mode of perception that allows the mind to envision things as it wants from outside the flow of life. Herder described this perspective as "ein heuchlerisches Hirngespinst, das der Metaphysiker Menschliche Seele nennet, in die düstern Glanz seiner Abstraktionen kleidet; das sich aber nur bei seiner Zauberlampe zeiget,"[117] which restates his point from above about how metaphysics orders the world for the observing, creating subject. A disembodied perspective does not allow the inconsistencies and limitations of the perceptual apparatus to be guiding characteristics thereof, hiding them instead within harmony. Deferring to metaphysics means that the modern subject's longing to know is sated by understandings which come from an authority outside organic sense experience, negating the imperfections of perception. For Herder however these imperfections

---

115 Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1775)," 265.
116 "Überhaupt ist in der Natur nichts geschieden, alles fließt durch unmerkliche Übergänge auf- und ineinander; und gewiß, was Leben in der Schöpfung ist, ist in allen Gestalten, Formen und Kanälen nur Ein Geist, Eine Flamme." Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 178.
117 Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 267.

were necessary - indeed they were integral to knowledge - and answers gained from metaphysics are not the product of a living knowledge because they do not come from nor speak to life as it is lived. Thinking back now to Winckelmann's encounter with the torso one can see how Herder's critique applies in that the ruin was transformed in Winckelmann's understanding through the mysteries of art, not his own subjective reception.

This difference between Herder and Winckelmann reflects the shift underway in German intellectualism of their time, specifically the emergence of a new hermeneutic approach in literary and aesthetic theory. David E. Wellbery explains that with Herder's influence in particular "[t]he very being of language and art begins to shift: no longer means for conveying mental representations, they become expressions of an antecedent subjectivity. We can take Herder's work to mark the commencement of a transformation in the way language and other cultural objects are experienced and conceptualized, a profound revolution in the way culture thinks of itself."[118] His understanding of how the subject weaves together its worldview from disparate sources using analogy, and the subject's self-alienation through metaphysics, were crucial for subsequent generations of nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers who prized embodied subjective experience.[119] Michael N. Forster summarizes Herder's method and influence in this regard:

> Herder is largely hostile towards systematicity in philosophy (a fact reflected both in explicit remarks and in many of his titles: Fragments..., Ideas..., etc.) [...and] is very skeptical that such systematic designs can be made to work (as opposed to creating, through illicit means, an illusion that they do). Second, he believes that such system building leads to a premature closure of inquiry,

---

118 David E. Wellbery. *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. 238
119 Berlin. *The Roots of Romanticism,* 67.

and in particular to a disregarding or distorting of new empirical evidence. [...] Herder's well-grounded hostility to this type of systematicity established an important counter tradition in German philosophy (which subsequently included, for example, Friedrich Schlegel, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein).[120]

To characterize his method one can look to a primary claim of Herder's from *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele*, where he posited thought as part of an embodied continuum. There exist bonds between each organ and each stimulus, he writes, and so everything must flow into everything else:

> Alle groben Sinne, Fasern und Reize können nur in sich empfinden, der Gegenstand muß hinzu kommen, sie berühren und mit ihnen gewissermaße selbst Eins werden. Hier wird schon dem Erkennen außer uns Weg gebahnet. Unser Ohr hört über Meilen hin: der Lichstrahl wird Stab, mit dem wir bis zum Sirius hinauf reichen. Unmittelbar vor meinem Auge hat das große Auge der Welt ein allgemeines Organ ausgebreitet, das tausend Geschöpfe in mich bringt, das tausend Wesen mit einem Kleide für mich bekleidet, Um mein Ohr fließet ein Meer von Wellen, das seine Hand ausgoß, damit eine Welt von Gegenständen in mich bringe, die mir sonst ewig ein dunkles stilles Todtengrab bleiben müste.[121]

The great eye of the world, as Herder calls it in this passage, is analogous to that of the individual subject because they function the same way - i.e. the bonds between all things, while not visible, can be intuited, as evidenced by the very fact that one is able to intuit. This embodiment of thought and experience is how Herder avoids giving a higher value to the mind, basing all mental activity as he does in physiology. The senses direct stimuli to the imagination which then decode themselves reciprocally he states, but one might ask does this notion of embodiment actually encompass more than the individual body? Is it simply another trick of the

---

120 Michael N. Forster. *Johann Gottfried von Herder - Philosophical Writings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Introduction, ix-x.
121 Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 187.

mind? In Herder's understanding, no:

> Wenn also aus unsern Sinnen in die Einbildungskraft, oder wie wir dies Meer innerer Sinnlichkeit nennen wollen, Alles zusammenfleußt und darauf unsre Gedanken, Empfindungen und Triebe schwimmen und wallen: hat die Natur abermals nichts gewebet, das sie einige, das sie leite? Allerdings, und dies ist das Nervengebäude. Zarte Silberbande, dadurch der Schöpfer die innere und äußere Welt, und in uns Herz und Kopf, Denken und Wollen, Sinne und alle Glieder knüpfet.[122]

There is a discernible interconnectedness for Herder in that the nerve structure functions as a medium for the entirety of human experience - fibres which connect self and world. Thus rather than dividing thought and sensation, mind and body, illusion and reality, Herder considers them a continuum. Nature itself, he says, does not establish divisions but rather displays an infinite multiplicity. Expounding on this, he writes:

> Wollen wir nun der Erfahrung folgen, so sehen wir, die Seele spinnet, weiß, erkennet nichts aus sich, sondern was ihr von innen und außen ihr Weltall zuströmt, und der Finger Gottes zuwincket. Aus dem Platonischen Reiche der Vorwelt kommt ihr nichts wieder: sie hat sich auch selbst nicht auf den Platz gesetzt, wo sie stehet; weiß selbst nicht, wie sie dahin kam? Aber das weiß sie, oder sollte sie es wissen, daß sie nur das erkenne, was dieser Platz ihr zeige, daß es mit dem aus sich selbst schöpfenden Spiegel des Universum, mit dem unendlichen Auffluge ihrer positiven Kraft in allmächtiger Selbstheit nichts sei.[123]

Ultimately there is no mirror from which the self can draw out of itself - i.e. no *causa sui* that emanates solely from the isolated mind. Humankind did not set itself in the place it finds itself, Herder states, yet it must define itself in that place by creating knowledge. And so while Herder's thought confirms that abstractions are necessary to knowledge, it keeps the limitations of

---

122 Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 190.
123 Ibid, 194.

knowledge in view so that the knowing subject can avoid the *causa sui* of the *Lehrgebäude*. In order to bring philosophy back down to earth as he wanted[124] it was imperative to make physiology the basis for all experience - even the metaphysical. There can be no true demonstration of life solely from out of the mind itself, he wrote,[125] thus he was suspicious of metaphysical solutions to overcome the inherent limitations of the mind: "Mich kümmert die überirdische Abstraktion sehr wenig, die sich aus allem, was 'Kreis unsres Denkens und Empfindens' heißt, ich weiß nicht auf welchen Thron der Gottheit setzt, da Wortwelten schafft und über alles Mögliche und Würkliche richtet. Was wir wissen, wissen wir nur aus Analogie... ."[126] The crux of Herder's critique and the shift he helped bring about in philosophy is perhaps clearest in this statement, for the instinct of the *Lehrgebäude* removes one from the present, embodied moment to place the mind on the level of a deity, where it rules over a realm it creates from itself.

In Herder's *Kritische Wälder* one finds a critique of Winckelmann's approach to art history that tries to balance the demand for objective knowledge with the reality of living knowledge. He wrote of the historiographer's task: "Selbst eine Geschichte der Gedanken, der Wissenschaft, der Kunst eines Volks, und vieler Völker, ist, so einfach der Gegenstand sein möge, immer eine Geschichte von Begebenheiten, Handlungen, Veränderungen: und wenn also Ein Geschichtschreiber, so muß auch jeder alsdenn ein Lehrgebäude in seiner Art liefern können."[127] What one historian can do, so can others in their own way, and thus Herder's

---

124 Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 207.
125 Ibid, 234. Extrapolated from the following:
    "Ist Seele das, was auch der Name sagt, das nehmlich, was uns beseelt, Urgrund und Summe unsrer Gedanken, Empfindungen und Kräfte: so ist von ihrer Unsterblichkeit aus ihr selbst keine Demonstration möglich."
126 Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1778)," 170.
127 Herder. "Alteres Kritisches Wäldchen." *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Literatur 1767-1781*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993. 11.

insistence that *Lehrgebäude* are not as monolithic as they intend to be. He explained their appeal

and ultimately their necessity though when he wrote that "[w]enn die Geschichte in ihrem

einfachsten Sinne, nichts als eine Beschreibung einer Begebenheit, einer Produktion wäre, so ist

die erste Anfoderung, daß die Beschreibung *ganz* sei, die Sache erschöpfe, sie uns von allen

Seiten zeige." The requirement of a historical account is, as Herder explains, that it see all

aspects. "Schon der Annalist, der Memoirschreiber wird zu dieser Vollständigkeit verbunden,

und so also im einzelnen Verstande zu einem „Lehrgebäude" verpflichtet. Im einzelnen

Verstande freilich."[128] Herder's critique shows, in my reading, both aspects of the

Lehrgebäude/ruin dialectic. When limited perceptual knowledge is viewed as a problem the

Lehrgebäude offers a solution because it transforms longing into the power to build and

command knowledge. An affirmation of limitations is however another solution, which attempts

to reconcile the longing with embodied, living knowledge:

> Jede Begebenheit, jedes Factum in der Welt ist auf seine Art *ein Ganzes*, ein Ganzes, das zum
> Unterricht dargestellt werden kann: was ist also eine solche helle Darstellung, eine vollständige
> Beschreibung darüber zum Unterricht anderer als ein historisches Lehrgebäude. Jede Begebenheit,
> jedes Factum in der Welt hat seine Gründe und Ursachen, die sein Wesen gleichsam erzeugten; es
> hat auch Folgen seines Wesens, und eine Beschreibung dessen, was anders, als ein historisches
> Lehrgebäude? Jede Begebenheit endlich ist bloß ein Glied einer Kette, sie ist in den
> Zusammentreffen der Weltdinge durch Anziehung und Rückstoß würksam - ein Plan dieses
> Zusammenhanges, dieses Weltsystems von Würkungen - er nicht ein historisches Lehrgebäude?
> Ein Geschichtschreiber von dem Umfange nicht ein Philosoph? ein pragmatischer Systematikus?[129]

The notion that the mind is unable to capture reality in an objective, systematic fashion and must

employ analogies and illusions challenges the belief prevalent in Herder's time that humankind

---

128 Herder. *Alteres Kritisches Wäldchen*, 12.
129 Ibid, 11.

could uncover the truth of all things through reason. Herder made an important point about such illusory constructs in saying that they are

> [g]nug für uns einseitig sehende Menschen: aber nicht gnug für seine vielseitige Sache; und wie weniger gnug für das *innere* derselben, für die Ursachen ihrer Entstehung, für den Zustand des Wesens! Hier hört das historische Sehen auf, und das Weissagen gehet an. Da ich Ursache als Ursache und Würkung als Würkung nie sehen; sondern immer schließen, mutmaßen, erraten muß: da in dieser Schlußkunst nichts als die Ähnlichkeit der Fälle meine Zeugin, und also mein Scharfsinn, oder mein Witz, diese Ähnlichkeit zwischen einander, diese Folge durch einander zu finden, mein einziger Gewährsmann der Wahrheit ist: da dieser Gewährsmann aber nichts als *mein* Witz, folglich ein trüglicher Zeuge, und ein Prophet der Wahrheit vielleicht nur *für mich*, und einige meiner Brüder sein kann. [...] Stellet zween Zuschauer mit einerlei Sehrohr an eine Stelle, und sie werden so ziemlich einerlei sehen; aber über das Gesehene urteilen, schließen, mutmaßen - nicht mehr so völlig Einerlei. Jener sucht die Ursachen der Begebenheit wer weiß, wo? und wie anders? und da und so anders findet er sie auch - Jener und dieser, jedweder nach der Lage seines Kopfs, nach dem Hausrecht seines Scharfsinns und Witzes.[130]

The aim of the metaphysician as Herder pictured him, arranging the figures cast by his magic lamp to explain reality, is characterized in this passage as an illusion that is good enough for a one-sided perspective but not enough for the manifold nature of things in actuality. The truths of metaphysics are thus in Herder's view deceptive, leading to security of knowledge via deferral - that is by transferring the subject's intellect to a higher authority and thereby avoiding its inherent limitations. Put another way this amounts to analogy without acknowledgment that it is analogy. In this regard Herder posed a challenge to his reader to not ignore the manifold possibilities in favour of one correct answer to any question, as no such answer exists in a subjectively-defined world. Where historical seeing ends, he wrote in the above passage, prophecy begins - which emphasizes again that the historian requires an objectivity that human subjectivity does not

---

130 Herder. *Alteres Kritisches Wäldchen*, 13.

facilitate, thus histories are constructed and read with individual, differing perspectives. The manifold nature of something such as history precludes one authoritative account, but yet the approach to history has always been to record it from such a perspective. Once histories are constructed they then stand as *Lehrgebäude* to be consulted, and so Herder asks: "Wie weit kann die Laune eines Kopfes gehen, auch in der Geschichte seine Lieblingsaussichten, und Lieblingsursachen zu suchen? Wie viel kann die Laune dazu beitragen, in dem, was ich suchte, auch das zu finden, was ich finden wollte und je mehr, desto besser zu finden?"[131] The instinct of the *Lehrgebäude* is made to bear its own weight fully in this critique, as Herder reveals it to be precisely the guesswork and analogy it seems to oppose, just given the authority to transcend those designations.

Winckelmann's attempt to compile a comprehensive history of art in the classical world utilizes the same instinct as his reconstruction of the Belvedere Torso. He found the qualities he so admired in the ancient Greeks by constructing images to supplement the fragmentary remnants of their artworks - many of which he had never seen in person. Herder valourized his work for incorporating so much imagination, but at the same time pointed out that what Winckelmann wrote cannot be considered as comprehensive as he intended. Therein lies the appeal and the deception of the *Lehrgebäude*. For Winckelmann it was a lofty goal undertaken in the intellectual spirit of the ancients who inspired him, Herder's critique argued however that this goal is a metaphysician's dream. For him the *Lehrgebäude* instinct gives rise to a deceptive illusion of power that humankind cannot truly ever possess. Herder ultimately posited in this regard a solution which takes into account the limitations of reason and makes those limitations

---

131   Herder. *Alteres Kritisches Wäldchen*, 14.

formative to human experience - an affirmation that reflects the *vielseitig* quality of reality to the *einseitig-sehende* subject. This living knowledge expresses how something can be both subjective and a *Lehrgebäude*, for the frame of mind it opens enables this juxtaposition and does not demand the dissonance be resolved.

Ruins of a Literary Elsewhere

I have focused my discussion of Winckelmann and Herder thus far on the *Lehrgebäude*/ruin dynamic and how their respective theories handled it. I will expand the dynamic now through a look at their critiques of contemporary society, highlighting specifically the resonance of the ruin with aesthetic paganism. Herder's 1773 essay "Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker" offers significant insight into the poetry of ruins in literary tastes of its time. The essay discusses the poems that Scottish author James Macpherson published in 1760 entitled *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland* - a collection which gained a substantial German readership in translation where, according to Joep Leersen, it "played a formative role in the subsequent sensibility cult, in the celebration of 'primitive genius', in the burgeoning 'Nordic' aesthetics of the sublime, and thus in the very formation of Romanticism."[132] Indeed the Ossian poems were at the heart of a unique confluence of literary ideas and nationalistic tastes to which their German readers were being attuned through various sources. Macpherson's claim that he had discovered a long-lost Celtic epic spoke to a certain desire to reach back into pre-Christian European history to find Germanic cultural traditions on par with the Classical. German writers such as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and Herder, who were trying to establish a new German literary voice, found deep inspiration in

---

132 Joep Leersen. "Ossian and the Rise of Literary Historicism." *The Reception of Ossian in Europe.* Edited by Howard Gaskill. New York: Thoemmes, 2004. 109-125. 109.

Macpherson's text and Leersen points to this as the beginning of a new literary historicism, the eventual result of which was an

> [...] enormous 'boom' of national epics suddenly hitting the European literary scene — be it in the form of bona fide editions, of deliberate forgeries, or of newly composed poetical texts (epic poems, historical novels, or historical plays). It is a literary pursuit that spills over from the realm of literature into the adjoining fields of philology, folk-song/folktale-collecting and historiography and shares with all of these fields, precisely, the historicist impulse: to bring the past to life and to comprehend it, not in terms of its timeless or allegorical relevance, but thanks to the colourful and exotic allure of its uniqueness and differentness from the present.[133]

"Thus, in a curiously inverted way," Leersen continues, "Macpherson's rash attempt to extrapolate epic poems from his ancient fragments was to prove programmatic for the vogue which was to sweep Europe for the next century: to elucidate the origin of nations by collecting their folk-songs and retrieving their foundational epics."[134] Herder would become crucial to this trend in the German context, exploring folklore and language as key components of cultural history and national identity - a pursuit to which even the most prominent of all German folklorists, the Brothers Grimm, owe their work directly. Macpherson's specific influence thereabouts was the part he played in introducing a taste for fragments as vital and dynamic rather than relics of dead civilizations to be studied. His Ossian poems were in effect (though not in reality) ruins of a lost past and they fostered a longing for a literary elsewhere which Herder used to critique contemporary culture.

Herder's *Briefwechsel über Ossian* speaks indirectly to how Winckelmann's poeticizing of the ancient world set a tone for many German writers who came after him; namely the desire

---

133 Leersen. "Ossian and the Rise of Literary Historicism,"120.
134 Ibid, 122.

to find inspiration for the present in the remnants of the past. At the same time it speaks directly

to Herder's interest in ancient Germanic worldviews and how they informed his philosophical

points. Worth noting in this regard is that because of its fragmented historical record Germanic

paganism can be characterized as a ruin, which Heather O'Donoghue contextualizes so: A

sparsity of original sources[135] combined with the development of modern Germanic languages

away from the Old Norse the few extant primary sources were written in, along with the

prolonged isolation and economic hardships suffered by Iceland - once the archive and

production centre of Norse literary culture - meant that Norse literature was not especially

prominent on the world stage by the time of the Enlightenment.[136] During the latter half of the

nineteenth century however renewed interest in it had been sparked[137] by literary investigation

into the roots of Germanic cultures, a phenomenon which O'Donoghue explains as a particular

response in the Scandinavian context to broader European critique of its "supposed cultural

backwardness."[138] This rediscovery of cultural histories is attributable in large part to Herder,

who in the German context - also criticized for its supposed cultural backwardness at this time -

had called for exploration of folk cultures in order to find the essence of present national

identities. A crucial literary catalyst in this regard (as O'Donoghue points out) was Macpherson's

Ossian,[139] which had a remarkable impact in the German-speaking world. Rudolf Tombo points

out that rising cultural patriotism led to Ossian finding an enthusiastic German readership, and

certain German poets came to see him as a sort of ancient forefather.[140] Principal among these

---

135 i.e.: Snorri Sturluson's Prose Edda, the anonymous Sagas of the Icelanders, and the anonymous Codex Regius
(which contained the bulk of what now constitutes the Poetic Edda). All of these are dated roughly to the
thirteenth century but are presumed to contain material passed on from earlier ages.
136 O'Donoghue. *From Asgard to Valhalla*, 103-6.
137 Ibid, 106-7.
138 Ibid. In particular here O'Donoghue notes Paul-Henri Mallet, a Swiss scholar commissioned by the Danish
crown in the mid-eighteenth century to compose a history of early Denmark. His work was largely based on
the Eddas and was read in translations throughout Europe at the time.
139 Ibid, 110.
140 Rudolf Tombo. *Ossian in Germany: Bibliography, General Survey, Ossian's Influence upon Klopstock and the*

was Klopstock, whose fascination with the Ossian texts had to do not only with the qualities of

the verse but with the fact that he wanted to present Macpherson's ancient poet as a German.[141]

As Sandro Jung explains, "Ossian, for Klopstock, was of equal if not higher value than the best

compositions of Ancient Greece."[142] This was in no small part because of the text's usefulness for

staking a national character to German literature of the time, Jung explains further: "[T]he

absence of a comparable German work that could be appropriated by Klopstock's patriotism

made him all the more susceptible to the tales of Ossian which he identified, without much

scholarly difficulty, with the German(ic) heritage."[143] Moreover, "[t]he national and cultural link

that Klopstock created with Ossianic compositions as practically German enabled him to reject

the classical Hellenism that, by then, was exerting a prominent influence on the literature and

architecture of the mid-century,"[144] Jung goes on to state. Tombo explains the "conceptions that

existed at the time as to the genetic relation of peoples and languages were rather hazy, to say the

least,"[145] thus Klopstock was able to consider the ancient Celts and ancient Germans essentially

one and the same. "We are not to suppose, however, that Klopstock alone occupied this position.

Far from it,"[146] continues Tombo, pointing to the fact, as O'Donoghue does, that there was a

notable muddling of ancient cultures caused by Macpherson's text itself, likely stemming in part

from the fact that he included verses about Viking-age Norse characters.[147] Indeed part of

Ossian's wide appeal in the late eighteenth century was that despite his stated Celtic origin,

various other northern European cultures could claim him as pertinent to their own narratives

---

Bards. Columbia University Germanic Studies, no. 2, vol. 1. New York: Columbia University, 1901. 83-86.
141 Tombo. *Ossian in Germany*, 83.
142 Sandro Jung. "The Reception and Reworking of Ossian in Klopstock's Hermanns Schlacht." *The Reception of Ossian in Europe.* Edited by Howard Gaskill. New York: Thoemmes, 2004. 143-155. 155.
143 Jung, "The Reception and Reworking of Ossian...," 143.
144 Ibid, 155.
145 Tombo. *Ossian in Germany*, 86.
146 Ibid.
147 O'Donoghue. *From Asgard to Valhalla,* 111. For examples and further, see: www.rc.umd.edu/editions/norse/HTML/Macpherson.html

through historical relation - "Ossian and the characters of Norse mythology went hand in hand," Tombo explains.[148]

The world of Macpherson's ancient poetry seems to have been an irresistible one for philosophers, critics, and poets looking outside of the intellectual paradigm of their age to ancient northern European cultures for inspiration and, as O'Donoghue notes, it created a certain contemporary "craze for poetry and plays on Old Norse themes [the most popular] by a long way - were Odin and Valhalla, because it was here that the literary taste for horror, blood, battle, and awesome incident could be satisfied."[149] "In both literature and the visual arts," she continues, speaking of the broader European context, "the fashion for Norse subjects in the late eighteenth century invigorated and was invigorated by parallel developments - revolutions, one might say - in aesthetic taste and sensibility. The thrill of the weird and the warlike, for terrors of the imagination and awesome shocks to the senses, made for an extravagant reaction to classical restraint, and Norse themes were the perfect vehicle."[150] As Knut Ljøgodt explains it: "The Norse myths were rediscovered in the late 18th century and subsequently became popular sources of inspiration for art and literature, in particular in the Scandinavian countries. This was closely connected with the political thinking of the period, and in particular with the ideals of national cultures and identities."[151] "However," he points out, "once introduced, the Norse myths started to develop a life of their own in art and literature. One of the alluring aspects of these themes was the fact that they did not have an established iconography and thus were open to interpretation

---

148   Tombo. *Ossian in Germany*, 87.
149   O'Donoghue. *From Asgard to Valhalla*, 118.
150   Ibid, 123.
151   Knut Ljøgodt. "Northern Gods in Marble: The Romantic Rediscovery of Norse Mythology." Romantik, 1 Vol. 1. Tromsø Aarhus University Press, 2012. 141-165. 161.

and even poetic license."[152] He adds to this point by stating that the poetic works of eighteenth century English writers like Thomas Gray, Germans such as Klopstock and Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, or Adam Oehlenschläger in the Danish context, who all used figures from and even structures of Old Norse poetry in contemporary verse, would likely have appealed to general audiences more than studious translations of the fragmentary original source material.[153] Thus as much as the renewed interest in Norse literature during the late eighteenth century did have to do with nationalistic interests, it was also entwined with new facets of the literary imagination, ultimately pointing to the fact that Norse literature was a product of a mysterious and enticing world far removed from the Enlightenment-age European societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What's more as Herder pointed out, and entirely fitting for my project's aims, is that Norse literature survives largely in the form of poetry and thus lent itself well to his era's poetic engagement with interstitial experience.

Two assessments of Norse literature Herder made, both later in his career, directly address the literary imagination as a force for cultural development: A dialogue from 1796 entitled *Iduna oder der Apfel der Verjüngung*, and a short essay from his final work *Adrastea* (1801-03) entitled *Zutritt der nordischen Mythologie zur neueren Dichtkunst*. In *Iduna* he speaks through the two characters Alfred and Frey, as they discuss the relevance Norse mythology has for Germans around 1800.[154] Herder reveals an important aspect of the contemporary intellectual climate in this text when he writes that the Germans owe too much to the ancient Greeks to truly take on the ancient Norse myths as foundational to their culture and view of themselves, before

---

152 Ljøgodt. "Northern Gods in Marble...," 161.
153 Ibid.
154 Herder. *Iduna oder der Apfel der Verjüngung. Die Horen.* 1796, Stück 1. Online text, Friedrich Schiller Archiv: http://www.friedrich-schiller-archiv.de/die-horen/die-horen-1796-stueck-1/i-iduna-oder-apfel-verjuengung/

ending with a series of confirmations[155] in which the two characters proclaim that Greek

mythology should not be set aside in favour of the Norse on account of its comparative rawness.

This is the same position Herder presents in *Zutritt*, which shows in closer detail that he knew the

source material and had significant appreciation for it - he furthermore knew the field of study

and the major players in his time. As in *Idun*, he emphasizes the superiority of the Greek

mythology, while articulating a sort of north/south polarity to which Germans of his time were

particularly subject:

> Wie die Sache liege, ist ziemlich klar. So wenig die Griechen ihre Mythen für Isländer und
> Deutsche erfunden oder angewandt haben, so wenig wäre die Edda für sie gewesen. Bei uns,
> die wir in der Mitte stehn, ist die Frage: was wir aus der und jener Sagenlehre zu machen
> verstehn, wie wir sie zu gebrauchen vermögen. Nur in der Anwendung findet jede Sage ihren
> Werth; und da die nordische Mythologie unsrer Sprache näher oder gar einheimisch ist, da die
> Helden, von denen sie redet, Brüder unsrer Vorfahren, und die Thaten, ja das Klima derselben
> selbst, unserm Genius verwandt sind, so kommt es nur darauf an, wem die nordische Iduna
> ihren Apfel schenke.[156]

He then elaborates however:

> Von Seiten der Sprache verdient das Studium dieser Sprachschätze alle Empfehlung; uns
> Deutschen enthalten sie eine alte Schwestersprache. Und obgleich seit Leibniz das ganze
> Jahrhundert hinab es an einzelnen Gelehrten nicht gefehlt hat, die dies Studium, einen Abriß
> des Nationalwissens, trieben, so wird das angetretene Jahrhundert auch noch zu suchen, zu

---

155 F. Vorausgesetzt also, daß Du die griechische Mythologie nicht herabsetzen, nicht kränken willst?
  A. Auf keine Weise; ich halte sie für die gebildetste der Welt.
  F. Vorausgesetzt, daß Du die Regel des griechischen Geschmacks in Kunst und Dichtkunst nicht verkennst?
  A. Ich weiß, was wir ihr zu verdanken haben. Bildende Kunst und eine Philosophie der Künste war unter dem
  nordischen Himmel nie zu Hause.
  F. Vorausgesetzt also, daß Du keinen barbarischen, nordischen Ungeschmack, weder in Tönen noch sonst in
  Worten und Werken aufzubringen Lust hast?
  A. Ich habe schon bezeugt, daß ich Rohes roh aufgetragen nirgendher wünsche.
156 Herder. "Zutritt der nordischen Mythologie zur neueren Dichtkunst." *Adrastea.* Projekt Gutenberg Ebook:
  https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/herder/adrastea/chap063.html

finden, zu erörtern, zu wünschen, zu hoffen haben. Hoffe man nur, was wir nothwendig uns selbst geben müssen, nicht aus Island! Gespielt ist gnug mit dieser Mythologie; zum Ernste![157]

In Herder's words late-eighteenth century Germans stood somewhere between the ancient Greeks and the ancient Germanic tribes, shaped by both but not fully connected to either. He thereby situated German aesthetics between past and present, between poetic mystery and scholarly enlightenment. Perhaps most interesting of all though, as noted above, is that the poetic (and fragmentary) nature of Norse mythology relative to the climate of his own time was not lost on Herder: "Uebrigens ist, Alles zusammengenommen, die Darstellung der nordischen Fabellehre, da sie selbst ein Gedicht ist, so abgeschmackt nicht, vielmehr ganz zeitmäßig, eine Reise nach Weisheit und Belehrung über die damals wichtigsten Fragen, die mit dem Untergange der Götter endet."[158]

Indeed when contextualizing Herder's thoughts on Norse mythology 'timely' is a prominent word, for as Rainer Kipper explains: "In der Verbindung von Ossianismus und Skandinavismus trat der bislang wenig beachtete Norden nun erstmals deutlich in das deutsche Bewusstsein."[159] The Eddas were being read more widely in this period than they had been for some time, and the relative freshness of the images therein fit alongside intellectual interests of the day - i.e. Ossian and the search for German national identity. Ultimately however, despite its potential to inspire the literary imagination and cultural critique, the content and worldview of these poems would prove in many ways too strange in a time so influenced by Classical epistemology and aesthetics, as Kipper continues:

---

157 Herder. "Zutritt der nordischen Mythologie...," Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Rainer Kipper. *Der Germanenmythos im Deutschen Kaiserreich: Formen und Funktionen historischer Selbsttematisierung.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002. 51.

So entstand das Bild einer in ihrer Exotik zwar reizvollen, aber doch düsteren, noch nicht vom christlichen Glauben versittlichten Welt. Die Haltung gegenüber dem Germanischen war somit ambivalent, und wenn der Germanenmythos in der Aufklärungsepoche auch neue Impulse erhielt, lag seine Popularität aufgrund des weiterhin problematischen Kulturdefizits doch deutlich hinter dem von Winckelmann propagierten Griechenmythos, dem alternativen 'nationalen Identitätsmythos' der Deutschen.[160]

Although the ancient Greeks were the cultural image of choice for German thinkers of his time, Herder's interest in ancient Norse myths provides important context for the climate in which he worked and how Norse literature did indeed become mixed up in something of a fad for ancient poetry and images after Macpherson - reaching an eventual dead-end with Richard Wagner's re-interpretations of the source material in the late nineteenth century. From the other direction, Robert W. Rix explains the Scandinavian context and the cross-pollination so: "At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Scandinavian cultural life had begun to free itself from the previously dominant French influence which had permeated intellectual circles. Increasingly, Scandinavian philosophers and artists sought inspiration from Germany, which was awash with new ideas. Thus, the channeling of romantic tendencies was almost a matter of course."[161]

German philosophy, literature, and scientific discourse were being transformed around 1800 by examination of humankind's relation to the natural world and the inner workings of the body. Herder synthesized these interests into a philosophy which connected the subject to all things by a thread of limitlessness beyond knowledge that carried on into the literary manifesto of the Jena Romantics, whose understanding of the fragment as a form of thought and expression

---

160 Kipper. *Der Germanenmythos im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, 53.
161 Robert W. Rix. "Introduction: Romanticism in Scandinavia." *European Romantic Review*, 26:4. 2015. 395-400. 395.

colours my project's definition of ruins. Leersen explains the relation for my purposes when he writes that fragments before Ossian were often

> presented as works of *learning* rather than works of art or delectation; as antiquarian investigations, aimed primarily at elucidating the past, the life and letters of older generations. [...] Thus, collections like Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760) [...] occupy an ambiguous position [...] between cultural fields we nowadays would distinguish as being either History or Literature, and they are, as such, rare and early instances of a thematization of the historicity of the literary text.[162]

Macpherson's Ossian poems were deliberately designed as literary ruins to infuse them with an imaginative literary-historical dimension as well as a certain mystery and aesthetic authenticity. Returning to Winckelmann's description of the Belvedere Torso now, recall that he too was taken with the ruin's mystery and authenticity but was not particularly concerned with it as an object in-itself because it merely pointed the way to the *höherer Geist* of the full work. Herder on the other hand was drawn to the Ossian poems for their form and content, as each reinforced the other. He even explains in the *Briefwechsel* that after reading the poems he wished to travel to Scotland and see the setting for himself: "Da will ich die Gesänge eines lebenden Volks lebendig hören, sie in alle der Würkung sehen, die sie machen, die Örter sehen, die allenthaben in den Gedichten leben, die Reste dieser alten Welt in ihren Sitten studieren!"[163] Herder seems to have been quite caught up in the spell the Ossian texts cast on their time - i.e. that the spirit of earlier, wilder cultures of northern Europe could be invoked from fragments of their histories, and the wisdom gathered in this literary elsewhere could be used to critique the contemporary European world with its increased dogmatism, alienation, and industrialisation. And in a way reminiscent

---

162 Rix. "Introduction: Romanticism in Scandinavia...," 111.
163 Herder. "Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker." *Von deutscher Art und Kunst.* Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1973. 455.

of Winckelmann, Herder had never seen the landscapes nor encountered the peoples of whom he

was so enamoured and similarly based his theory on media representations. He was initially not

even concerned with the substantial evidence amassed by his time that the Ossian poems were

forgeries which Macpherson had written himself.[164] Like Winckelmann in this regard, Herder too

was not held back by a lack of actual experience because the image he held in his mind was what

affected him. Writing of the qualities he attributed to his idealised Celts, Herder claims: "Sie

wissen aus Reisebeschreibungen, wie stark und fest sich immer die Wilden ausdrücken. Immer

die Sache, die sie sagen wollen, sinnlich, klar, lebendig anschauend [...] ."[165] Notable is his use of

the adjective *lebendig* throughout the *Briefwechsel* to characterize the art of what he calls "wild

cultures," as this can can be construed as an alternative to contemporary *Lehgebäude* of aesthetic

theory. For example:

> Alle Gesänge solcher wilden Völker weben um daseiende Gegenstände, Handlungen,
> Begebenheiten, um eine lebendige Welt! Wie reich und vielfach sind da nun Umstände,
> gegenwärtige Züge, Teilvorfälle! Und alle hat das Auge gesehen! [...] Es ist kein anderer
> Zusammenhang unter den Teilen des Gesanges, als unter den Bäumen und Gebüschen im Walde,
> unter den Felsen und Grotten in der Einöde, als unter den Szenen der Begebenheit selbst.[166]

The living world as he terms it can be understood as Herder's ideal balance, wherein existence

and representations are not set far apart from one another - the representations fit together like

the aspects of the natural world which gives rise to them. "Selbst einen allgemein Satz, eine

abgezogene Wahrheit kann ein lebendiges Volk im Liede, im Gesange, nicht anders als so

lebendig, und kühn behandeln," Herder claimed, while "es weiß von der Lehrart und dem Gange

---

164 For more, see: Kristine Louise Haugen. "Ossian and the Invention of Textual History" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Apr., 1998). 309-327.

165 Herder. "Briefwechsel...," 472.

166 Ibid, 486.

eines dogmatischen Locus nicht, und es schläft gewiß ein, wenn es denselben geführt werden soll."[167] One can glean from his attraction to ancient Germanic worldview the desire to leave behind the *Lehrgebäude* in favour of less dogmatic forms of expression and knowledge.

What Herder saw in Macpherson's poetry, as well as in the Norse Eddas, and even in the ancient Greeks, was an ideal reality for his philosophy: A living world with a natural unity of its components. One may wonder though, with his consistent emphasis on unity, why exactly is open-endedness so central to Herder's thought? It is via living knowledge that one arrives at this point, for it is incomplete but always points beyond itself to larger collectivities, complete in its incompleteness. For Herder the fragment therefore exemplifies living knowledge because it points the subject to life rather than alienation. Herder's interest in Ossian, Norse mythology, and German folk culture, according to John H. Zammito[168] and Martin Schütze, are indicative of the direction in which his thought was focused throughout his career, explaining that because his point of view was so markedly different from the commonly-held principles of his day few of Herder's peers truly grasped what he was trying to do.[169] One must take care to not attribute too much to him in this respect though, for he was still very much a thinker of his time. Indeed for everything written here about his interest in the pagan North, Herder in the end orbits closer to Winckelmann than to future generations which would find inspiration in his thought. "On the whole, the strength of Herder's paganism is less than overwhelming," claims Hatfield,[170] then explaining:

---

167 Herder. "Briefwechsel...," 488.
168 John H. Zammito, et al. "Johann Gottfried Herder Revisited: The Revolution in Scholarship in the Last Quarter Century." *Journal of the History of Ideas.* Vol. 71, No. 4 (October 2010), pp. 661-684.
169 Martin Schütze. "Johann Gottfried Herder August 25, 1744 - December 18, 1803: His Significance in the History of Thought." *Monatshefte für Deutschen Unterricht*, Vol. 36, No. 6 (Oct., 1944), pp. 257-287. 258.
170 Henry Hatfield. *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature: From Winckelmann to the Death of Goethe.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964. 53.

Something of an aesthetic man himself, he was still more an ethical one. Sensitive to some, at least, of the charms of paganism, he clung to the position of enlightened Christianity. [...] His main contribution to aesthetic paganism, while in a sense involuntary, was a vast one: more than any other man of his generation he called attention to the importance and the appeal of myth. In the majority of cases, the myths exploited by the great German writers who followed him were pagan ones.[171]

Though some of his most significant contributions to the history of Western thought may be involuntary, Herder's interest in ancient Germanic thought was decidedly a way to look for ideas which had been abandoned in his time. His fascination with Ossian, though it verged on exoticism, was, according to Eugene E. Reed, "[...] that 'Ossian', the savage bard, is seen best to represent the creative process in the measure that his psychology is an integral unity."[172] Expounding on this, Reed adds:

Man functions as an integral unity, his reason cannot be exercised without also exercising his imagination; his understanding cannot function without engaging his reason; and none of these can function without a corresponding functioning of the brain and nervous system. It is thus a mistake that so many literary historians accuse Herder of emphasizing emotion over reason. Herder merely questions the validity of the compartmented faculties, particularly as the creative process is concerned.[173]

One sees here how living knowledge intends to reveal interconnectedness via reciprocity of subject and world. Its power is analogy and manifold representation, thus its close connection to the fragment. The philosophical shift Herder helped bring about is rooted in these ideas, as by seeking to reconcile some of the dissociation in the Western tradition his conception of the

---

171 Hatfield. *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature*, 60.
172 Eugene E. Reed. "Herder, Primitivism and the Age of Poetry."The Modern Language Review, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Oct., 1965), pp. 553-567. 559.
173 Reed. "Herder...", 559.

human being became, in Schütze's estimation, "the categorical opposite of the rationalistic conception of mind."[174] Though 'categorical opposite' is not entirely accurate, Herder's ideas certainly prepare the way for the Jena Romantics, as well as phenomenology and existentialism further along the line. Hatfield reiterates however that Herder is, in the end, more a precursor of things to come than the voice of a new generation. It is nevertheless possible to trace his influence through writers like Friedrich Schlegel, Nietzsche,[175] and onward, who carried on his ideas of living systems of knowledge.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored an aesthetic discourse of ruin reception using Winckelmann's reconstruction of the Belvedere Torso and Herder's organic philosophy. From these my project discerns a dynamic which can be characterized by the terms *Lehrgebäude* and living knowledge. Herder's critique of Winckelmann maintained that the *Lehrgebäude* can too easily negate the living world via the blindspot that enables its construction, thus the pre-eminence humankind assigns itself must be called into question. Living knowledge, on the other hand, encourages the subject to reach out across the gap it senses between itself and its world by reciprocating openness. With this idea I establish a relation between human and ruin that highlights their mutual traits, upon which the following chapters will elaborate via examples of human ruins. But rather than conclude this chapter with a binary distinction between ruin and *Lehrgebäude*, I return to Schlegel's statement that: "Es ist gleich tödlich für den Geist, ein System zu haben, und keins zu haben. Er wird sich also wohl entschließen müssen, beides zu verbinden."[176] The modern subject exists in an interstice between an objectively-given and a subjectively-formed

---

174 Schütze. "Johann Gottfried Herder...," 273.
175 Hatfield. *Aesthetic Paganism,* 51.
176 Schlegel, *Athenäums Fragmente* [53]. 26

world, and what Herder's living knowledge offers in this respect is the means to reach out across

the seemingly uncrossable gap by pointing toward life. It will be my contention in the next two

chapters that human ruins help illuminate this notion by bringing observers literally face to face

with it. To this end I will expand the points established in this chapter with discussions of two

preserved human bodies, focusing on how those encounters follow a similar pattern to

Winckelmann's encounter with The Belvedere Torso.

Chapter II: Mats Isrealsson - Interstitial Narratives

<u>The Human Ruin</u>

My reading of Winckelmann's *Beschreibung des Torso im Belvedere zu Rom* discerned a gaze that aligns mediation and self-reflexivity with the ruin. The first chapter of my study detailed the relevance of this gaze to German literature around 1800 by showing how it materialized in Winckelmann's aesthetic theory and the terms he used to understand it. It then focused on how this ruin gaze fits into Herder's philosophy, i.e. how he understood the human body at a confluence of flux and stasis inherent to western epistemology. This second chapter now builds on the discussion by introducing a once-living human body as a ruin, which as both aesthetic object and human form, offers a means through which the reprieve of self-reflection can be further examined. This is because Mats Isrealsson, the preserved miner of Falun who became a poetic trope in German literature of the nineteenth century, undergoes a manifold mediation that suspends him between life and death. By distinguishing between a ruined statue and the preserved body of a man who inspired a literary trope this chapter will expand my concept of the human ruin. A living person fallen to ruin, as I will show, gives unique insight into the ruin gaze established in my previous chapter because the observer encounters life itself in mediation. The preserved miner is simultaneously present and absent for the reader, and the recognition of his humanity deepens the effect Winckelmann experienced with the Belvedere Torso. Moreover because the preserved miner is such a well-documented figure of nineteenth century German literature - i.e. the man who inspired the topos lived first then became a mediation of himself that persisted across a century of different literary adaptations - he brings the interstitial perspective I discussed in my first chapter to a point where the observing self can catch clearer sight of itself in its own mediating gaze.

This chapter covers the first of two once-living ruin bodies, Mats Isrealsson, whose death and preservation in the copper mine at Falun became a folktale that inspired a number of prominent German writers nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The next chapter will cover Tollund Man, one of the best-documented and best-preserved of the so-called bog bodies. These two are similar not only circumstantially but also because they found comparable cultural recognition and artistic legacy, albeit a century apart and in different media. Despite the similarity in terms of their preservation, presentation, and reception, the comparison has never before been made as I present it here. To bring them into relation with the discourse of ruins around 1800 I begin with the strange case of the miner Mats, killed and buried in a collapse, then unearthed over forty years later looking largely unchanged since the day he went missing. The encounter with his preserved body was documented in contemporary news then taken up into a literary topos that flourished in nineteenth century German poetry, prose, and drama. From this topos I extrapolate the relevance of the human ruin to the larger discourse of German literature around 1800 - namely that it enacts the same mediation as literature and can be understood as an embodiment of the reader's own interstitial experience. My focus shall be primarily on Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert's *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* and Johann Peter Hebel's *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen*, the two texts which established the preserved miner as an enduring literary figure. These texts help emphasize that it was no coincidence the Falun miner became a popular literary trope when and where he did, and one finds in them the clearest means of tracing the story's popularity relative to the changing German intellectual climate around 1800. By following the story from its beginnings as a scientific curiosity through its adaptation as a sentimental poetic motif I tie it into the contemporary discourse of living knowledge. I thus present the Falun miner as a ruin that captured the scientific, literary, and popular imaginations

of the period around 1800 and highlighted the dilemma of existing in constant flux but understanding largely through static representations. *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* in particular encapsulates this dilemma with a poignant telling of the miner's tale that juxtaposes his physical preservation with the fact that the world had moved on and his fiancée had grown old with her memories of him. The interplay of presence and absence in their reunion premises the story on a sense of the impossible, which is part of the ruin's unique capacity to bring about a lapse in world-construction and allow varied layers of time and experience simultaneous presence.

My contention is that the preserved miner serves as a link between theories of literary self-reflexivity and embodied knowledge that emerged in German thought around 1800. Even now, more than three hundred years after he was pulled up from the mine, re-introduced into the world of the living, then re-buried again, he is a vital symbol of humanity's interstitial relation to permanence and impermanence, and helps discern the intrinsic connection between the human body and the fragment in Herder's terms. The facet of this which will prove most important here is mediation, for the written accounts of his story have ultimately preserved Mats Isrealsson longer than the minerals in which his body lay. In this, I argue, his story reveals the effect of its medium using the medium itself. Indeed the Falun story cannot be discussed without discussing media representations at the same time, as the two are entwined from the very start. The connection of mediation and life that defines the miner's tale emphasizes how human ruins can be a means to contemplate the ontology and temporality of ruins from the living body's interstitial perspective. With the preserved miner as my second example, I now look at what happens when life recognizes life in mediation.

Illustration accompanying the story in *Schatzkästlein des rheinischen Hausfreundes* (1811).[177]

Illustration showing the body's condition ca. 1722.[178]

---

177 Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Unverhofftes_wiedersehen.jpg
178 Image source: James St. John (Creative Commons).
     https://www.flickr.com/photos/jsjgeology/15547075265/in/album-72157648376544779/

<u>The Miner from Falun</u>

The literary topos of the preserved miner consists of texts by a number of well-known German authors of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, notable among which are: A section of Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert's *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* (1808), Achim von Arnim's poem "Des ersten Bergmanns ewige Jugend" from his novel *Armut, Reichtum, Schuld und Buße der Gräfin Dolores* (1810), Johann Peter Hebel's story *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* (1811), E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Die Bergwerke zu Falun* (1819), Richard Wagner's adaptation of Hoffmann's text (drafted as a libretto in 1842 and planned as a full opera but never completed), Hugo von Hoffmansthal's drama *Das Bergwerk zu Falun* (first published only in 1946 but written and performed in 1901), and Georg Trakl's poems "An den Knaben Elis" published in *Gedichte* (1913) and "Elis" from *Sebastian im Traum* (1915). There are still more texts which can be considered part of the topos, but rather than undertake a detailed survey[179] I focus here on the first documentation of the preserved miner and his earliest, most influential, appearances in German literature. In 1720 the Danish newspaper *Nye Tidender om Lærde Sager* and its companion French paper *Extrait des Nouvelles* published the curious story of a man unearthed from the Falun copper mine during excavation of an older, collapsed section. Upon inspection of the body and its accoutrements, it was determined that the man had lain buried and preserved for decades in vitriol, giving the appearance as though he had died only just recently. According to the newspaper reports the unearthed miner was soon identified by people who had been close to him, including his former fiancée, and his body would be turned over to the medical college in Stockholm for further study.[180] Contemporary interests in anatomy and

---

179 For studies that plot out the topos in more detail, see for example Eicher (1996), Küchler-Williams (2000), and Selbmann (2000).

180 Summarized from the original: *Nye Tidender om Lærde Sager*, No. 29, July 1720 - reprinted in Georg Friedmann's *Die Bearbeitungen der Geschichte von dem Bergmann von Fahlun.* Berlin: Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, 1887. 9.

geology meant that the preserved miner was studied by prominent scientists such as Adam Leyel, who published an academic account of his discovery and condition two years after as part of a discussion of vitriol's preservative properties in *Acta litteraria Sveciæ Upsaliae Publicata* (1:1722).[181] Leyel noted that despite damage sustained in the collapse (the man's legs and the back of his head were crushed), the conditions in which he lay preserved his face and torso such that those who had known him were immediately able to identify him as Mats Isrealsson, whom they presumed had been killed in 1670. Scientific interest in the case kept growing over the years, eventually even attracting the attention of Carl Linnaeus, but during this time Mats was also displayed for the public at the Falun mine until his eventual burial recorded in *Stockholms Posttidninger* as December 21st, 1749.[182] Shortly thereafter, according to both Georg Friedmann and Bo G. Jansson, various other major European newspapers ran stories of the burial and spread Mats' notoriety even further. Jansson states in fact that he was quite possibly the best internationally-known Swede at that time, and arguably even the best-known prior to the nineteenth century,[183] a remarkable point that demonstrates how established he had become in popular culture as well as intellectual discourse of the period.

Mats' point of entry into German literature around 1800 was Schubert's *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* (1808), a book which detailed various unusual phenomena and ideas found at the fringes of contemporary science. Schubert's interest in its so-called night side topics came from a scientific perspective but also from a sort of mysticism characteristic of his time and place which differentiated his writing from the more standard matter-of-fact scientific

---

181   Reprinted in Friedmann, *Die Bearbeitungen der Geschichte von dem Bergmann von Fahlun.* 12.
182   Ibid, 15.
183   Bo G. Jansson. *Fet-Mats: Den förstenade Gruvdrängen i Sakprosa och som Inspirationskälla till Dikt och Konst från 1719 till 2010*. Falun: Högskolan Dalarna, 2010. 7.

works of Leyel or Linnaeus for example. In this way *Ansichten...* represents a phase of the

German Enlightenment where natural scientists were seeking to understand the world in more

humanist terms than their predecessors, and so when Schubert presented the story of Mats he did

so with a focus not only on biology but also the lives, emotions, and mystery involved. He

included it in a chapter entitled *Die organische Welt* while discussing the fossil record and traces

of life found in the preserved remains of earlier epochs, using Mats (though unnamed) as an

example of how human bodies can, under certain conditions, be preserved longer than their

normal decomposition period should allow. Schubert's description would prove seminal not so

much for its attention to the scientific details however, but rather for how it poeticized the

miner's fate - specifically the moment in which his aged fiancée sees him once more.[184] Here,

writes John Hamilton, "[u]nembarrassed by tearful sentimentality, Schubert underscores the

distinction between the bridegroom's cold stiffness and the bride's warm love, between the

senescence of the living and the perpetual youth of the dead. The surprising recognition scene

constitutes an intimate moment where the animate and the inanimate meet."[185] The poetic twist of

the preserved miner's tale, indeed the entire topos which it inspired in German literature, can be

traced back to Schubert's description of the reunion moment, where his sentimental

embellishment made the story just as much about a longing to arrest time as the preservative

chemical effects of vitriol on the human body.

Versions of the story that follow Schubert's all render a distinct temporal lapse between

the miner and the world that continued on without him while he was gone. His re-introduction

---

184 Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert. *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft.* Arnoldische Buchhandlung: Dresden, 1808. 214-5.

185 John T. Hamilton. "'Kirschrot funkelnder Almandin': The Petrification of Love, Knowledge, and Memory in the Legend of Falun." *Colloquia Germanica. Themenheft: Material World – Novelistic Matters of the Nineteenth Century.* (47.3). 11.

into the living world as an incongruity is what brings the reader to the same ruin gaze found in

Winckelmann's encounter with the Belvedere Torso - a compound eye able to hold overlapping

timelines and states in relation to one another through which the subject can intuit its own

functions of mediation and comprehension in process. Reflecting on Winckelmann's description

of the Belvedere Torso one finds an interstitial perspective that Winckelmann himself did not

fully pursue, favouring instead deferral to art as an objective authority. In this case it enables the

reader to see the miner suspended outside of linear time but still hold him in relation to the

passage of time - a dislocation that juxtaposes the temporalities of reader, fianceé, and miner in a

dynamic of presence and absence. Hamilton writes of the reunion moment: "In this timeless

point of time, the fifty-year story of unbroken devotion collapses into a single moment and the

reader is thereby invited to glimpse at the hyperreality of things sub specie aeternitatis."[186] The

single moment he refers to here is an interstice from which it is possible to account for mediation

and temporality as they unfold and frame experience. The ruin breaks the spell of a mediated

worldview so that the functions of mind which construct that worldview are brought out from

behind the curtain of cognition that usually hides them. It is an effect that finds itself at home in

poetry because the frame of mind in which poetry puts the reader is akin to that of the ruin - i.e.

both allow familiar aspects of life to be seen in different light, for the usual to become unusual.

Consider for instance the following lines from Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen as a

summation: "Man sieht nun aus bemoosten Trümmern / Eine wunderseltsame Zukunft

schimmern / Und was vordem alltäglich war / Scheint jetzo fremd und wunderbar."[187] The ruin

breaks down even the most foundational features of a worldview and lets the subject re-interpret

these features freely. As Ginsberg explained this above, the ruin teaches "the art of attending to

---

186 Hamilton. "'Kirschrot funkelnder Almandin'...," 11-12.
187 Novalis. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen.* Stuttgart: Reclams Universal Bibliothek, 2008. 156.

the foundations of Being that lie beneath the accepted world."[188] In my reading this amounts to

an intensified focus whereby details and connections are illuminated in hyper-aware observation.

This heightened observation is what enables one to envision a moment from the perspective of

eternity, as Hamilton writes. This shared characteristic of ruins and poetry is why in the context

of German literature around 1800 one finds the ruin recurring as a living expression, or, an

attempt at mediated simultaneity with life. The irony that mediation ultimately highlights

however is that the mediating, knowing self cannot coincide fully with itself.[189] For the early

German Romantics this was not necessarily a problem, as they understood poetry to be a

mediation true to life in Herder's terms - a process that unfolds and evolves continually as does

its readers, thus pointing to both a longing for completeness and incompleteness, for the past and

for the future. Consider again the lines from Novalis: My contention is that the preserved miner

plays a significant but somewhat under-explored role in the literary discourse of the ruin because

his paradoxical suspension between presence and absence literally embodies the interstitiality

with which German poets and literary theorists were occupied around 1800.

     Friedmann points out that Schubert had only read of the preserved miner and had never

actually seen the body for himself as Mats was by 1808 long buried.[190] This is worth noting

because even as an ephemeral curiosity, a mix of scientific marvel and folktale passed on from

the previous century, Mats sparked Schubert's imagination. He would do the same for

generations of readers through his appearance in *Ansichten...*, which became, as Christiane

Küchler-Williams notes, one of the most-cited examples of science combined with literature

---

188 Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, 47.
189 See my introduction for discussion of this notion in Sartre's terms.
190 Friedmann. *Die Bearbeitungen der Geschichte von dem Bergmann von Fahlun*, 18.

outside of Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften* published the following year.[191] My project asserts that

Mats' story was ideally-suited for literary adaptation around 1800, as contemporary literary

discourse was deeply occupied with themes of mediation and self-reflection. Küchler-Williams

contextualizes Schubert's text in terms of contemporary literary tastes by pointing out that "[d]as

Interesse verschob sich dabei von der chemischen Reaktion der Konservierung auf die

literarischen Charaktere und das tragische Potential der Geschichte."[192] Again, the story's appeal

for German literature around 1800 had to do with both scientific interest in human physiology as

well as literary interest in the human experience (i.e. the tragedy) of the case. Addressing the

story relative to the later phase of the German Enlightenment and the sensibilities which came to

define the long nineteenth century in German literature, Friedmann explains: "Es ist begreiflich,

dass die Geschichte von dem Bergmann zu Fahlun, nachdem sie eine mit so rührenden Zügen

ausgestattete Gestalt angenommen hatte und nachdem diese von Schubert in so wirksamer Weise

hervorgehoben worden waren, auf die Dichter eine starke Anziehungskraft ausübte."[193] Part of

the story's widespread popularity certainly stems from the fact that Schubert made it a tale of

love, which it was not in the earlier newspaper and scientific accounts, writing:

> ...und niemand hätte die noch unveränderten Gesichtszüge des verunglückten Jünglings erkannt,
> niemand die Zeit, seit welcher er in dem Schachte gelegen, gewußt, da die Bergchronicken so
> wie die Volkssagen bey der Menge der Unglücksfälle in Ungewißheit waren, hätte nicht das
> Andenken der ehemals geliebten Züge eine alte treue Liebe bewahrt. Denn als um den kaum
> hervorgezogenen Leichnam, das Volk, die unbekannten jugendlichen Gesichtszüge betrachtend
> steht, da kömmt an Krücken und mit grauem Haar ein altes Mütterchen, mit Thränen über den
> geliebten Toden, der ihr verlobter Bräutigam gewesen, hinsinkend, die Stunde segnend, da ihr
> noch an den Pforten des Grabes ein solches Wiedersehen gegönnt war, und das Volk sahe mit

---

191 Christiane Küchler-Williams. "Was konservierte den Bergmann zu Falun – Kupfer- oder Eisenvitriol? Eine
    chemische Fußnote zu den Variationen des 'Bergwerks zu Falun.'" *Athenäum* 10. 191-197. 191.
192 Küchler-Williams. "Was konservierte den Bergmann zu Falun...," 191-2.
193 Friedmann. *Die Bearbeitungen der Geschichte von dem Bergmann von Fahlun*, 18.

Verwunderung die Wiedervereinigung dieses seltnen Paares, davon das Eine, im Tode und in tiefer Gruft das jugendliche Aussehen, das Andre, bey dem Verwelken und Veralten des Leibes die jugendliche Liebe, treu und unverändert erhalten hatte, und wie bey der 50jährigen Silberhochzeit der noch jugendliche Bräutigam starr und kalt, die alte und graue Braut voll warmer Liebe gefunden wurden.[194]

The word choices here display the sentimental poeticization of the pair's reunion moment, including for example: *Jüngling* and *alte treue Liebe,* as well as *jugendlichen Gesichtszüge* and *ein altes Mütterchen mit Thränen.* They present an idealized, fairy tale-esque depiction which Schubert set in an equally idealized description of the townsfolk gathering around to see the reunion of the two *...treu und unverändert erhalten [...] wie bey der 50jährigen Silberhochzeit.* These embellishments furthermore change the tone of the story, as the *warme Liebe* described by Schubert is nowhere to be found in the earlier scientific and news reports. There the fiancée was not the only person to have identified the miner, it was never insinuated that she had waited her whole life to see him again, and the medical college gave her money to turn the body over to them (after which it was put on display for the public).

German literary adaptations of the tale throughout the next century would follow Schubert's lead by maintaining the sentimental tone of the reunion,[195] the dynamic of memory and time stressing the disparity in age and appearance between the miner and the fiancée: He is still young despite being dead and already buried once, while she still lives but is nearly withered away. This interplay makes the reunion into a profound moment wherein the miner's physical persistence intensifies the idea that the fiancée lived the rest of her life with her memories of him only to unexpectedly see him (or at least his preserved form) once more before she herself died.

---

194 Schubert. *Ansichten von der Nachseite der Naturwissenschaft*, 215.
195 Friedmann (17-19) and Jansson (59) both state this.

The poetic spark of the story which passed from version to version is found in this moment, and as Hamilton explains

> [...] the "legend of Falun" circulated across Northern Europe, fascinating audiences with its unusual tale of victory over time, both by means of the cadaver's petrification and by means of the fiancée's undying memory. Yet, the coincidence of the woman's untarnished fidelity and the man's physical preservation underground barely concealed a fundamental ambiguity. On the one hand, the touching story of love was emblematic of a kind of human persistence—one grounded in emotional commitment—that could defy mortal mutability. On the other hand, the unbroken connection between the two lovers invariably implied the troubling continuity or frightening proximity of animate life and inanimate nature, which threatened to override core distinctions between the living and the non-living, between the warmth of the heart and the frigidity of stone.[196]

The Falun legend is on one hand a story of how love can win out over time and death, thus its appropriate endurance over three centuries. On the other hand though it shows the opposite, and Hamilton points to a fundamental ambiguity in this regard. "By collocating the power of loving memory and the durability of the soulless human frame," he writes, "the legend of Falun would therefore occasion an uncomfortable reassessment of the comforting division between the realm of the human and the realm of things."[197] My reading attributes this reassessment to the ruin, which blurs distinctions between animate and inanimate, life and decay. To this end one might even consider both the miner and the fiancée to be ruins, for as the miner has transformed into something else that points to his prior life, so has the fiancée. She has decayed where he has not, but she lives while he does not. He looks just as she remembers but he cannot remember her, leaving her alone. There is certainly a sense of longing that permeates the story in Schubert's telling, as the fiancée has grown old waiting to see her beloved one more time. Her aged

---

196 Hamilton. "'Kirschrot funkelnder Almandin'...," 10.
197 Ibid, 10.

appearance points to her lost youth, while his preserved body points to the future they never had together. They are both dislodged from the flow of time after his disappearance - his life frozen in place at the moment of his death, and, in a more figurative way, her life also frozen since the day of his accident waiting for him to come home. His ruin body is the site where they join each other again, and the moment of their reunion is the poetic kernel found in each re-telling of the tale. One may ask at this point why I have only focused on Schubert and Hebel's versions of this story. What of E.T.A. Hoffmann's widely-read *Die Bergwerke zu Falun*, for example? Indeed Hoffmann's version of the story, published in his *Serapionsbrüder* (1819), is a popular version of the tale which shaped the topos significantly, but one which pulls away from the human ruin as I discuss it. Hoffmann's protagonist Elis Fröbohm is buried in the mine and unearthed perfectly preserved fifty years later. The reunion moment then plays out as it does in Schubert and Hebel, save for one crucial detail: The miner's body crumbles to dust almost right away. His elderly beloved, Ulla, embraces him and dies. Hoffman then describes: "Man bemerkte, daß der Körper des Unglücklichen, der fälschlicherweise für versteinert gehalten, in Staub zu zerfallen begann."[198] The reunion's layering depends on the human ruin as an interstitial site where tenses and states overlap. When Hoffmann's miner turns to dust, this site is lost. What's more, Hoffmann specifies that his body was 'mistakenly' believed to be petrified, which does not fit with the definition of a human ruin I have established here.

Mats the miner was suspended in time by the chemicals in which his body lay but literature would end up preserving him longer, an idea which speaks to the time and conditions of his popularity because by the late-eighteenth century the mass-production and mass reading of

---

[198] E.T.A. Hoffmann. "Die Bergwerke zu Falun." *Die Serapionsbrüder.* Projekt Gutenberg E-Text. Online: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/etahoff/serapion/serap232.html

books in the German context had reached an intensity that was famously characterized as a

Lesewut by Enlightenment pedagogue Joachim Heinrich Campe.[199] Literature became the

principal cultural medium of the day and took a prominent role in the lives of its consumers. The

story of Mats Isrealsson spread across Europe and was kept in the public mind for decades on

account of literary culture, and even though his name disappeared through subsequent retellings,

his preservation was prolonged through the written word. The preserved miner and his fiancée

are both given life yet kept from it by the literary topos they inspired, which brings me to the

point that Falun story can be read as a story about literary mediation. Key to this is that the

preserved miner comes to the page pre-mediated. Mats Isrealsson occupied a peculiar status after

his death, having been preserved by chemicals deep in the earth and then written into an

enduring literary trope. This amounts in my reading[200] to a compound mediation that focuses the

ruin gaze on the ambiguity of literary temporality and literary presence - i.e. the text's ability to

make him present emphasizes his absence at the same time. The simultaneity of the reunion

moment thus consists of an absence that is as critical to the story's effect as its corresponding

presence: The miner is apparently unchanged from the day he died but is no longer the man from

the beginning of the story. It is memory and narrative that hold his identity in place and keep him

present, which is ultimately why the story lends itself so particularly well to discussing what can

be called the deathly aspect of mediation. Countless thinkers - Herder, Nietzsche, and Böhme are

just three who factor prominently in my project - have elaborated upon the tendency to remove

things from life in order to represent and understand them, and how this is a fundamental aspect

of creating art. In my reading the miner's preservation enacts the same process as literary

---

199 See Dominick Von König, "Lesesucht und Lesewut." *Buch und Leser: Vorträge des ersten Jahrestreffens des wolfenbüttler Arbeitskreises für Geschichte des Buchwesens.* Edited by Herbert G. Göpfert. Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1975. 89-113.

200 Influenced by Karin Sanders, whose work will factor prominently into chapter 3.

mediation, which is to say that the man is preserved both in the story and by the story. The encounter with him therefore illustrates the reader's own suspension in the way Winckelmann's encounter with the Belvedere torso did. Unlike the Belvedere Torso though, Mats' life (even in what little trace remains) accompanies his preservation such that his story presents him as both presence and absence of humanity. In this way he not only exemplifies the characteristics of the ruin but also the human experience thereof. He moreover embodies the connection between human experience, literature, and the ruin because his story enacts their connection and can be read as the experience of the characters within but also the experience of the reader reading it. The narrative of Mats that was taken up into German literature around 1800 therefore gives a unique glimpse into how stories are made and how the process of mediation functions relative to important contemporary questions of self-reflexivity and poetic expression.

Mediating Life and Death

To examine the mediation aspect of the Falun topos in more detail I now look at Hebel's version of the story, *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen*, published in his *Schatzkästlein des rheinischen Hausfreundes* (1811). If Schubert was Mats' point of entry into German literature Hebel is the one responsible for making him into an enduring literary figure via this short text, cited as a supreme model of the narrative art by both Walter Benjamin and Franz Kafka. My reading of *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* focuses specifically on how it disrupts temporality by setting up the story of the miner (unnamed again here) and his fiancée as young lovers looking forward to their future which is abruptly and tragically cut off when he disappears one day after an accident in the mine. In one paragraph Hebel then juxtaposes the fate of the couple with events that transpire elsewhere in the world during the time until the miner is unearthed (between 1755 and 1809 in

his telling):

Unterdessen wurde die Stadt Lissabon in Portugal durch ein Erdbeben zerstört, und der Siebenjährige Krieg ging vorüber, und Kaiser Franz der Erste starb, und der Jesuitenorden wurde aufgehoben und Polen geteilt, und die Kaiserin Maria Theresia starb, und der Struensee wurde hingerichtet, Amerika wurde frei, und die vereinigte französische und spanische Macht konnte Gibraltar nicht erobern. Die Türken schlossen den General Stein in der Veteraner Höhle in Ungarn ein, und der Kaiser Joseph starb auch. Der König Gustav von Schweden eroberte russisch Finnland, und die französische Revolution und der lange Krieg fing an, und der Kaiser Leopold der Zweite ging auch ins Grab. Napoleon eroberte Preussen, und die Engländer bombardierten Kopenhagen, und die Ackerleute säeten und schnitten. Der Müller mahlte, und die Schmiede hämmerten, und die Bergleute gruben nach den Metalladern in ihrer unterirdischen Werkstatt.[201]

In these lines the lives of the couple are set in relation to countless others for whom the passage of time brought death, in effect putting these two individuals on hold while the rest of the world moves on. Moreover in this excerpt geopolitical events are set in relation to ongoing, everyday events. Cities are destroyed, important world leaders perish, and countries are divided. All the while the daily routines of the workers continue on. By putting the nameless labourers alongside the names of important world leaders Hebel illustrates that what both have in common is ultimately death, whether on the scale of huge battles and world-changing events, or on the individual, interpersonal scale.

Walter Benjamin's assessment of the story in his essay *Der Erzähler* notes that death is the storyteller's ultimate sanction: "Vom Tode hat [der Erzähler] seine Autorität geliehen. Es ist die Naturgeschichte, auf welche seine Geschichten zurückverweisen."[202] Benjamin then cites the

201 Johann Peter Hebel. "Unverhofftes Wiedersehen." *Werke in drei Bänden.* Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1959. 301-303. 301.
202 Walter Benjamin. "Der Erzähler - Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows." *Gesammelte Schriften - Bd. II.*

same passage from *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* and qualifies it thus: "Tiefer hat nie ein Erzähler seinen Bericht in die Naturgeschichte gebettet als Hebel es in dieser Chronologie vollzieht. Man lese sie nur genau: Der Tod tritt in ihr in so regelmäßigem Turnus auf wie der Sensenmann in den Prozessionen, die um Mittag um die Münsteruhr ihren Umzug halten."[203] Benjamin's assertion is that stories impart useful truths of the human experience, pointing to the fact that any story "führt, offen oder versteckt, ihren Nutzen mit sich. Dieser Nutzen mag einmal in einer moral bestehen, ein andermal in einer praktischen Anweisung, ein drittes in einem Sprichwort oder in einer Lebensregel [...]."[204] Among the lessons a story can impart, none stand so tall as the immutability of death, or in other words the fleeting, fragile nature of human lives and experiences of the world. As Leonard Barkan explains it: "What gave the storyteller authority for the noncausal, elliptical form of narration was the ever-present fact of death, which stood as the tacit explanation for everything,"[205] thus Benjamin's statement that *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* is exemplary storytelling has to do with Hebel showing the passage of time through destruction and death *en masse*, i.e. showing that death is a part of shared conceptions of self and being. Remarkable too in the juxtaposition of the couple's lives and the innumerable lives entailed in the referenced events is that each gives perspective on the other - i.e. death gives perspective on life, the mass on the individual, the passage of geopolitical time on the individual's scale, and vice-versa. Ultimately the story prompts the question of what importance are two people in a small mining town compared to the political leaders and world-changing events referenced during the time they were separated? Conversely, of what importance are those leaders and events compared to a love that can put the larger world on hold?

Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972. 438-464. 450-51.

203 Benjamin. "Der Erzähler...," 450-51.

204 Ibid, 441-2.

205 Leonard Barkan. "The Classical Undead: Renaissance and Antiquity Face to Face." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 34 (Autumn, 1998). 9-19. 9.

On the couple's level, the question is: How long can their love truly put the world on hold? Pursuant to Benjamin's statement that every story offers a message, sometimes openly and sometimes not, Mats' tale poignantly tells of the temporality, fragility, and devotion of human lives but it also illuminates the connection between death and mediation. A longing to arrest time is part of not only the story's plot but is also the effect of its narrative, which prompts a look at how Gotthold Ephraim Lessing described mediation and temporality in *Laokoon: oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (1766). Among the very first writings of media theory in the German context, *Laokoon* is Lessing's response to what he understood as a lack of attention to medium in traditional (specifically Winckelmann's) aesthetics. It compares the characteristics of literature and visual arts to make the point that medium is as crucial to the work as the content. Lessing's principal argument is that narrative is time-bound while plastic art is not, so each must handle its depictions differently. To this end he claims that the task of the artist is to ensure the medium of an artwork suits its content, and he uses the Laocoön statue group to make his point. Lessing notes that when seen one way it corresponds to Winckelmann's aesthetic paradigm - i.e. his oft-cited *edle Einfalt und stille Größe.* For Winckelmann the statue depicted a man's greatness even in the moment of his agonizing death. When seen another way however, Lessing writes that this moment of agony was better depicted by literature because the scream was not aesthetically pleasing as a moment frozen in time. This is not to say that Winckelmann ignored the depicted agony, rather that he understood it in terms of his aesthetic and ethnic conceptions of the ancient Greeks. Laocoön's artist, for Winckelmann, sought to express the greatness of the Greek character by not depicting the dying man's face distorted in a scream. Lessing's reading of Winckelmann and his assertions about mediation were debated in their time on account of their delineation between media that had, as far back as the Classical age, been considered along

similar lines. His argument that Winckelmann was interested in the ontology of art but not so much in mediation is where Lessing, in a comparable way to Winckelmann, makes my topic possible. Specifically, he stresses that because mediation can capture moments in time those moments must be given careful consideration: In Lessing's terms visual art is a medium that presents objects *nebeneinander*, and literature is one that presents them *aufeinander.* Of the mediating gaze behind these categorizations, he explains: "[D]ieser einzige Augenblick [erhält] durch die Kunst eine unveränderliche Dauer: so muß er nichts ausdrücken, was sich nicht anders als transitorisch denken läßt."[206] Moments that are to be captured in eternity should be chosen carefully, he maintains, so as to not depict anything too transitory. Lessing and Winckelmann write that art can capture eternal moments but both show the difficulty this actually poses for perception. They do so unintentionally though as they both sought illusion, where theorists that followed did not. Illusion - especially of wholeness and completeness - was the telos of art for both Winckelmann and Lessing, adhering as they did to the lineage of rationalist aesthetics inherited from Classical Greece, but this is what makes their writings so compelling for my topic in context of their time as they were writing on the cusp of tremendous change. Lessing's distinction between bodies and plots was meant to affirm Aristotelian-influenced aesthetics through an act of deconstruction and recombination, but it ultimately reveals the fundamental illusion of those aesthetics in a way similar to Winckelmann's descriptions of the Belvedere Torso. It must be noted that despite the critical tone *Laokoon* adopts toward Winckelmann's aesthetics, Lessing ultimately agreed with Winckelmann on many points and was tinkering with shared ideas to make the rationalist-imbued mimesis guiding Winckelmann's aesthetics work better. By showing the differences between media Lessing intended to affirm that illusion was

---

206   Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. "Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Mahlerey und Poesie." *Literaturtheoretische und ästhetische Schriften.* Hamburg: Philipp Reclam, 2006. 49-94. 65.

the purpose of art, but in the process he also ended up doing the opposite in the eyes of a then-emergent modern subjectivity.

The illusions underlying the aesthetics of Lessing and Winckelmann instill an interstice within reception where my topic can be staged, since both believed the harmonious whole of an art object represented its highest potential for beauty but their aesthetics had to overlook limitations of perception and mediation to attain this perspective. Lessing claimed for instance that no single detail of an image should stand out and occupy too much of the viewer's attention.[207] In this one must note that he and Winckelmann were both still writing within an aesthetic paradigm which equated harmony and wholeness with beauty. As for how his categories best facilitate harmony, Lessing clarifies thus: "Gegenstände, die nebeneinander oder deren Teile nebeneinander existieren, heißen Körper. Folglich sind Körper mit ihren sichtbaren Eigenschaften die eigentlichen Gegenstände der Malerei. [...] Gegenstände, die aufeinander, oder deren Teile aufeinander folgen, heißen überhaupt Handlungen. Folglich sind Handlungen der eigentliche Gegenstand der Poesie."[208] The relevance of these categories to my project is not how they constitute a critique or specific advancement of Winckelmann's aesthetics, but rather how Lessing's distinction (like Winckelmann's) between fixed and fluid leaves a space in between for which it cannot account. Lessing does something quite similar to Winckelmann by putting a division in place that ultimately shows how both sides of the division are necessary for reception. His ideas in the *Laokoon* text revolve around the observing subject in the act of reception but notable in his distinction between bodies and plots is a discord that the observer experiences when the medium and the content of a work do not match. This indicates that for Lessing the

---

207 Found in Chapter 17 of *Laokoon*, where Lessing presents a critical reading of Albrecht von Haller's poem *Die Alpen.*
208 Lessing. "Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Mahlerey und Poesie," 69.

observer can become aware of mediation in a way that disrupts the aesthetic experience. Looking

closer at his distinction, the implications will become clearer:

> Doch alle Körper existieren nicht allein in dem Raume, sondern auch in der Zeit. Sie dauern fort,
> und können in jedem Augenblicke ihrer Dauer anders erscheinen, und in anderer Verbindung
> stehen. Jede dieser augenblicklichen Erscheinungen und Verbindungen ist die Wirkung einer
> vorhergehenden, und kann die Ursache einer folgenden, und sonach gleichsam das Zentrum einer
> Handlung sein. Folglich kann die Malerei auch Handlungen nachahmen, aber nur
> andeutungsweise durch Körper. [...] Auf der andern Seite können Handlungen nicht für sich
> selbst bestehen, sondern müssen gewissen Wesen anhängen. Insofern nun diese Wesen Körper
> sind, oder als Körper betrachtet werden, schildert die Poesie auch Körper, aber nur
> andeutungsweise durch Handlungen.[209]

He indicates here that bodies and plots both exist in space and move through time. Their

mediation reflects this in different ways though, as static visual arts can show plots only through

bodies while fluid plots can show bodies only through their actions. Lessing's distinction

between mediated moments and bodies clarifies that each action is the effect of actions that

precede it and is the cause in turn of following actions, thus both experience and art function

sequentially but with multiple tenses. So when he writes that any action can become the focus of

an artwork or a plot, it means that a body mediated will illuminate its and the observer's relation

to a world in flux. My investigation of the preserved miner places both of Lessing's categories

within the mediation nexus of ruins, i.e. their temporal simultaneity and ontological layering that

bring the observer to a perspective which can discern these layers without arranging them in a

particular order. Crucial to note in Lessing's model is therefore that mediation affects the

observer just as much as the qualities or the message of the work, an idea which is on the

threshold of new literary perspectives on mediation and self-reflexivity.

---

209 Lessing. "Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Mahlerey und Poesie," 69.

<u>Reading Across the Epistemological Divide</u>

David E. Wellbery writes that art and language became 'expressions of an antecedent

subjectivity' around 1800.[210] With this he summarizes the epistemological shift that accompanied

the emergence of modern subjectivity, and my readings of Winckelmann and Lessing illustrate

how receptive aesthetics were changing within this shift to introduce a hermeneutics of

reception. One can read in any number of sources from this time that the experience of art was

becoming more about subjective interpretations than meeting expectations but Winckelmann and

Lessing provide a sort of prelude to this change, as their aesthetic theories are intended to

function within the older mode but they undoubtedly anticipate the new. My use of the terms

Lehrgebäude and ruin references this change, not only as a metaphor using concepts of the time

but also in distinct literary terms - Herder, for instance, critiquing the *Lehrgebäude* in favour of a

more organic, humanist epistemology. Wellbery's antecedent subjectivity statement refers in fact

to Herder's influence, and emphasizes that Lessing and Winckelmann's models of perception

were based in epistemology that changed irrevocably within the partial span of a generation.

From a twenty-first century vantage point this shift manifests itself as a divide between the

assumptions of the pre- and post-modern eras. At first glance the divide would seem to set the

ideas of Winckelmann and Lessing for example off from those of the modern day, illustrating

that concepts which are given for the modern subject were not at all given for them, as their

discussions of perception and mediation took place as modern understandings thereof were only

just emerging. This makes their similar attribution of an in-between status to the receptive

subject - with one eye in the aesthetic and one in the physical - all the more compelling. In my

reading, Lessing's ideas on mediation anticipate this interstitiality because his two categories are

---

210 David E. Wellbery. *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason.* Cambridge: Cambridge
     University Press, 1984. 238.

ultimately inseparable, and it is also worth noting his ideas stem from his engagement with

Winckelmann's writings on mediation.

The Classical adage *ut pictura poesis* forms Wellbery's foil when he writes that Lessing

attempted to "...take apart inherited equations and to reaffirm the differences between things."[211]

"For instance, if both poems and works of visual art render absent objects present-to-mind," he

continues, "then they must both appeal to the imagination. Artworks are two-tiered. They have a

sensible stratum, in which the work is materially given, and a non-sensible or immaterial

stratum, where the genuine aesthetic object is rendered imaginatively present-to-mind."[212] As this

is essentially the process displayed in Winckelmann's reconstruction of the Belvedere Torso, I

bring the ruin back into view here because it calls absent objects to mind and prompts flights into

the imagination, while also standing as a physical object in itself, constituting an ongoing

creative act with the observer. Brad Prager explains that Lessing's *Laokoon* prescribes practices

of interpretation.[213] He states: "If one takes Lessing's work to be about perception, or the

ascription of concepts to their corresponding objects, then all such assignations are interpretive

actions [...] reading something as *aufeinander* or as *nebeneinander* are two forms of the same

single act of ascription."[214] Wellbery and Prager both point out that the temporality of perception

is crucial to Lessing's model and claim that he falls short of fully grasping this, but for this

admission to be fair to Lessing one must read him along with Winckelmann as liminal writers

contributing initial momentum to a significant paradigm shift. Lessing's intent with *Laokoon* was

to articulate an aesthetics of reception, particularly how mediation strikes the viewer, so what

---

211 Wellbery. *Lessing's Laocoon,* 102.
212 Ibid, 105-6.
213 Brad Prager. "Interior and Exterior: G.E. Lessing's *Laocoon* as a prelude to Romanticism." *Aesthetic Vision and German Romanticism: Writing Images.* Rochester: Camden House, 2007. 1-40. 26.
214 Prager, 30.

needs to be kept in mind is that perception was considered in his time more an automatic

response rather than the subjective process it would become to subsequent generations. Given the

epistemological divide widening in their time, there is a fallacy which results from critiquing

Winckelmann and Lessing from too modern a perspective. Reception in both *Beschriebung des*

Torso... and *Laokoon* was markedly different than it would be even a few decades later.

Something Winckelmann and Lessing ultimately share in this respect is the belief that one can

learn to see a work of art in the right way, i.e. in accordance with established rhetoric from the

Classical tradition, which is why even though subjectivity is important to both *Laokoon* and the

Beschreibung des Torso... they give it less weight than later writers would.

One ultimately cannot ascribe modern ideas of perception and self-reflexivity to

Winckelmann and Lessing because they are forerunners of these ideas, so reading them as part of

a timeline of modern thought one finds that both Winckelmann's reconstruction of the torso and

Lessing's aesthetic categories require subjective agency for which their theoretical models,

understandably, do not account. "In perception we move from parts to the whole, but this

operation is accomplished by the senses and takes place beneath the threshold of awareness,"

explains Wellbery.[215] "Perception *comprehends*: in the present instance of its occurrence, it

makes *present* to consciousness the whole of its object."[216] This comprehension, although it

escapes full consciousness, is processed sequentially, thus even when viewing something static

in Lessing's terms, one interprets it via sequential cognitive movement, something for which

Lessing's model makes no exact concession. One is furthermore able to understand time via

material condition - so the Belvedere Torso, although suspended in one specific moment, shows

---

215 Wellbery. *Lessing's Laocoon*, 209.
216 Ibid.

its movement through time via its ruined condition - something else for which Lessing's model makes no concession. Thus looking at *aufeinander* and *nebeneinander* as aspects of the same receptive process reveals that the imagination is working at the deepest levels of the aesthetic experience, helping observers contextualize the art object in terms of their own situatedness. Such is certainly the case for readers of the preserved miner's story, as the effect of its narrative presents *aufeinander* and *nebeneinander* simultaneously. In Lessing's terms, via Wellbery, "[poetry] can project worlds with various ontological levels"[217] - the implication thereby being that plastic arts cannot in the same way. This is however precisely what the Belvedere Torso, a work of art that was lost to time then unearthed and put back on display as a ruin, shows. Such is the same condition for the preserved miner, as narrative both moves and freezes him. Ultimately arrestation via mediation is an illusion that is only possible via the medium, and when Lessing's categories are applied to the preserved miner his ruin body confounds them.

Winckelmann's *Beschreibung des Torso* showed for my purpose how a self-reflexive mediating gaze can reflect back into itself. What he termed *die Geheimnisse der Kunst* enabled him to infuse the torso ruin with life but in the process guided him to an unintended self-reflection otherwise unseen: His observing, interpreting subjectivity in the process of its creative-receptive action. The story of Mats Isrealsson achieves the same, for it is a story about death and the passage of time which, when read in the manner of Winckelmann's *Beschreibung...,* subverts these through its principal character's compound mediation. In this readers come to see their own similar compound mediation, and Hartmut Böhme helps explain how the ruin facilitates this:

Die Ruinen sprechen eine lautlos enigmatische Sprache, die - weil sie vom Untergang bedroht ist

---

217 Wellbery. *Lessing's Laocoon*, 190.

- einen neuen Diskurstyp hervorbringt, den man den renovativen oder archäologischen nennen kann. Seine Funktion besteht darin, das liber ruinarum vor dem spurenlosen Verschwinden zu erretten und aus den verlöschenden Zeichen der Geschichte die Funken der ewigen Schrift zu schlagen. Darum unterhalten Ruinen, Erinnerung und Schrift von früh an innige Beziehungen.[218]

The ruin, the written word, and memory are bound together closely because they occupy common functions of mind, and what is so fascinating about the preserved miner's story is that it makes readers aware of how mediation works through its main characters. Keeping Lessing's notions of media and Benjamin's reading of *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* in mind, a remarkable feature of the story is that although it is steeped in death, the principal character is kept from death in a way by the very medium of the written word which records his tale. It is therefore worth asking who and what, exactly, the preserved miner is to the reader in the end. The reader's affective relationship to the literary figure of the miner and the man who inspired it makes the preserved miner both like and unlike the reader. He is a ruin body whose simultaneous presence and absence evokes Hamilton's animate/inanimate tension as an aspect of literary experience and confounds Lessing's aesthetic categories. His ruin body thus enacts the reader's own experience of mediation, making him an embodiment of the interstitiality that so captivated poets and literary theorists around 1800.

An Organic Paradigm Emerges Around 1800

The story of Mats Isrealsson draws fascination even in its earliest, tersest forms because it takes only one simple sentence to arrest the imagination: A miner is buried in a collapse and unearthed decades later so well preserved that he looks almost exactly as he did on the day he died. As I contend, the story was an excellent fit for literary adaptation around 1800 given the

---

218 Böhme. "Die Ästhetik der Ruinen," 288.

way it relates to tastes and currents of the period, and I consult Leif Weatherby's study of

organology in the late eighteenth century once more here to explain. My project pairs living

knowledge to the ruin, and to this end I highlight the study of human organs between the early

and late eighteenth century to show that in all of my topics so far - the Jena Romantic poetic

fragments, the reception of the Ossian texts, Herder's interconnected philosophy, the Belvedere

Torso, and the preserved miner - there is a physiological basis for the embodied perspective that

encompasses static and fluid. For German poets and theorists who were defining a new model of

embodied knowledge around 1800, the study of organology was crucial to living expressions of

life. Gunnar Müller-Waldeck writes of the Falun story's reception in German literature:

"Schuberts gefühliger 'Bericht' entsprach den Bedürfnissen deutscher Innerlichkeit, und so

siedelte der Bergknappe aus seiner Vitriolgruft und dem Kuriositätenkabinett in das geistige

Reich der Verse, Reime und der schönen Sprache um."[219] What he refers to here as the needs of

German inwardness can be understood in broader terms as intellectualism and spirituality around

1800, that inner world of the individual which was primarily expressed through the written word.

Müller-Waldeck helps explain the Falun story's popularity in the early-nineteenth century

German context by confirming that Schubert deftly adapted the story of the miner to tastes of the

time,[220] particularly that "die Vorliebe für die sentimentale tragische Liebesgeschichte mit

gruseligem Zubehör [...] bereiteten der Mythenbildung einen fruchtbaren Boden, wie er

unmittelbar nach Auffinden Matts' [sic] nicht gegeben war,"[221] which is to say that sensibilities

had changed enough by the time of Schubert and Hebel that Mats could be appreciated more as a

tragic, poetic figure, rather than simply a morbid curiosity.

---

219 Gunnar Müller-Waldeck. "Der steinerne Knappe und die literarischen Folgen."
     Neue Deutsche Literatur: Zeitschrift für Deutschsprachige Literatur, 51(6 [552]):11. 2003. 19.
220 Müller-Waldeck. "Der steinerne Knappe und die literarischen Folgen," 18.
221 Ibid.

This change of reception becomes even clearer when considered in terms of *Empfindsamkeit*, an influential current in late-eighteenth century German literature that sought to bring the inner world of the human being to light and reconcile it empirically with physical experience.[222] Its occupation with the physiology of emotion comes from the mindset of the scientific revolution but even though *Empfindsamkeit* was based in science, its focus on the inner structures of the human body meant that it approached scientific demands from a humanist, even poetic, viewpoint of *Naturwissenschaft*.[223] Living knowledge in Herder's terms is an example of this, for the demand that perspectives be total was fostered by not only the scientific mindset of the late Enlightenment but also the emergence of industrialisation and technologically-based knowledge - i.e.: The notion of a world that functioned according to mechanistic rules was facilitated by an increasingly mechanistic approach to knowledge.[224] In my project's terms this is the climate that fostered the *Lehrgebäude*,[225] to which the notion of living knowledge - gathered from writings of *Empfindsamkeit* thinkers and other *Naturwissenschaftler,* Herder's proto-phenomenological philosophy, and *Frühromantik* poet-theorists - emerged as an alternative. So while the need for a unified perspective was a strong trait of late eighteenth-century epistemology, a defining characteristic of German intellectual discourse in this respect was its humanist framing that, in time, allowed thinkers such as Herder to explore human experience in terms of the organs that facilitated it.

For Herder humankind comes to its truths via analogy, thus it needs to mediate thoughts

---

222 Among the authors aligned with this current are some I reference in this paper: Klopstock, Lessing, Herder, and Schubert.

223 As exemplified by the writings of Schubert, for instance.

224 See Eberhard Ostermann. *Das Fragment: Geschichte einer ästhetischen Idee.* München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1991.

225 The choice of terms is deliberate not only because of their use in my sources, but also because of the wordplay between *das Gebäude* (structure/building) and *die Ruine*.

and other inner workings so as to make them transmissible. Herder incorporated contemporary

study of nervous structure into his philosophical writings to explain how interconnected

mediation and experience create living knowledge, and to explore this in further detail I cite

Weatherby, who explains that the understanding of organs in the late eighteenth century was in

many ways still the seventeenth century rationalist model which held that organs were essentially

cogs in a great clockwork. Weatherby explains that the functional definition of the word organ

was not clarified until around the 1790s,[226] where it was first adopted by English and French

academics for both medicine and philosophy. Their German counterparts were not as quick to

adopt the term, he continues, owing to the fact that the German Enlightenment was

> [...] more religiously inflected, marked by the development from theism to pantheism (rather than
> to deism). In that context, the question of the instrumentality of the body could be raised in a way
> that left open the question of both the body's telos and whatever relation such might bear to God.
> Organs might well be the instruments of some larger order, but that order was itself a problem,
> not to be rejected (as by the mechanists in France) or to be questioned insofar as our knowledge
> of it is concerned (as the Scottish empiricists had it), but with the sense that an answer might
> indeed emerge from the interstices between scientific investigation and philosophy. And initially,
> that is what happened: a new notion of life emerged.[227]

The term organ and its accompanying adjective are fraught with contradictory definitions

Weatherby continues, but "...that is precisely what the word, as a metaphor, meant: simply use,

simply the bearer of a function, without any known designation of purpose. Instrumentality

without subordination to a totality: this is what the Romantics discovered at the end of a long

conceptual and short semantic history."[228] Embodied epistemology - i.e. knowledge defined not

by (and for) totalizing, instrumentalizing standards but by (and for) life - is where the study of

226 Weatherby. *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ*, 4.
227 Ibid.
228 Ibid, 5-6.

organs around 1800 leads. When subjectivity came to be understood as a process resulting from

various organs and chemicals there arose a need for a new epistemology which took the organs

of perception into account - specifically one that incorporated the interstitial condition of modern

subjectivity, whereby the self cannot fully coincide with itself, as its starting point. Weatherby

goes directly to the crux of this issue when he writes that "[t]he organ is that which unites and

divides, in the body as in the mind as in the universe; its problematic is that of the meaning and

location of function as such. It became, in the works of Friedrich Hölderlin, Friedrich Schelling,

and Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis), the tool for a new metaphysics."[229] If the organ divides

by its function and requires a medium to bridge those divides, then, as Weatherby explains, it

"ties the question of being to the question of knowledge."[230] "The organ unites and divides; its

very semantics determine a duality that the term reconciles as a single condition—being

"organic," or living," Weatherby continues.[231] In this he defines his term Romantic Organology

as an intellectual tool which was at once both speculative and actual,[232] a new method of

mediation that was meant to stay as integrated as possible in the life it depicted. Weatherby uses

Herder as a primary example of how this new mediation worked through analogy as Herder, he

writes,

> [...] extended the metaphorology of the organ to the mind, as Leibniz and Kant had done before
> him, but he did so using analogy as his tool. For him, the "grand analogy of nature" gave way to
> the encompassing perception (and, ultimately, love) of God in a sensorium commune of
> language, time, and space. Reflecting this knowledge through the midpoint of nature as analogy
> were the human organs, on a scale from material to spiritual, and rooted finally in an "organ of
> language," an autonomous ability—the ability to identify one's proper species—reflecting the

229 Weatherby. *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ*, 5-6.
230 Ibid, 49.
231 Ibid, 49.
232 Ibid, 10.

godly analogy but also affording freedom.[233]

Herder maintained that organs were not merely components that functioned mechanically under control of the mind, but rather that they were themselves living features comprising a complex network whose interconnected functions constituted human experience of life. To avoid the trap of disembodiment (i.e. that the mind piloted the body and reason did not truly belong to the physical world) he made analogy the strength of human cognition rather than its shortcoming. In this way, as Weatherby explains, the organic structure of the subject connects to the world in a continuum which analogy allows it to traverse freely.

The emergence of this organic paradigm in German intellectualism around 1800 results in an important condition for my study: Organs do not display their functions plainly, thus they cannot be classified simply as tools. Organs, the locations of those innermost workings of the human body, require a medium because they do not communicate their functions so plainly as a mechanical component. Merleau-Ponty took this even further in fact, when he defined the entire body as a medium itself,[234] and so it is that the dynamic of fixed and fluid which defines my project sits at the very heart of human experience and makes mediation such a crucial aspect of knowledge. The emergent organic paradigm in German literature around 1800 leads to an understanding of interstitiality, indeed defining the tension thereof by both clarifying the need for mediation and pointing out its illusions. The search for a mediation that was true to life was therefore crucial to defining a new intellectual paradigm for a new subjectivity. The sticking point however was the mortifying aspect of media: How could something removed from the flux

---

233 Weatherby. *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ*, 73.
234 See my introduction for more on this idea.

of life accurately represent life? What Herder and the Jena Romantics sought with open-ended works was to reconcile the need for mediation with the organs that enabled them to understand. One must take note therefore of the role mediation plays in creating and securing knowledge, and moreover that the images of humanity and nature common in intellectual sources around 1800 were largely of unified and thus comprehensible totalities to which one needed only to apply the right schema to understand. In the German context though the need for totality did not eclipse humanity, thus Herder's assertion that analogy is the basis of knowledge supported his effort to bring philosophy down to earth, the stated goal of his philosophical project which affirmed that the human cognitive apparatus functioned in a continuum with the world. His notion of living knowledge challenged "die Forderung nach Einheit, natürlicher Einfachheit, präziser Sprache und angemessener Ausdrücksweise mit dem Hinweis auf die Zeitlose Mustergültigkeit der antiken Autoren und der Autorität des Aristoteles."[235] The search for living knowledge brought about a new openness that embedded human intellect in the living world, rather than set it above. Eberhard Ostermann notes in this respect that "...das monistische Methodenprinzip der 'Wissenschaftslehre' in einen Selbstbegründungszirkel führt, welcher das absolute Ich als höchstes Prinzip der Philosophie nur isoliert von allen empirischen und historischen Daten zu konstituieren vermag."[236] And so living knowledge is ultimately a mediation that stays in flux, never allowing the *Selbstbegründungszirkel* in Ostermann's terms to establish itself. As Jansson explains, this new epistemology that emerged in the late German Enlightenment prepared not only an empathetic reception of the preserved miner's story[237] but also its beautiful riddle of self-reflexive mediation and storytelling.

---

235 Ostermann. *Das Fragment*, 21.
236 Ibid, 111.
237 Jansson. *Fet-Mats*, 53.

Memory, Mediation, and Ruin

At this point I focus once more on how the preserved miner's story changes from its early appearance in news reports to its adaptation in German literature almost a century later. As mentioned above the story was ripe for adaptation by the turn of the nineteenth century, which had to do with the changing intellectual climate of the German Enlightenment and the increased consumption of literature as popular culture. The preserved miner as popular literary trope illustrates, as Jansson pointed out, how an empathetic reception of Mats' tale had become standard, but crucial to note with this is the distance between Mats Isrealsson as a real person who lived and died and his nameless (or renamed) literary surrogates. Müller-Waldeck explains just how important the span of time between Mats' life and his eventual literary popularity was: "Voraussetzung für die romantische Mythenbildung war, dass der Original-'fall' einschließlich der Köperhülle des Protagonisten inzwischen in der Versenkung der Geschichte verschwunden waren und - dem Gedächtnis entrückt - nur noch als nebelhafte Fama existierte. Das war dann rund einhundert Jahre nach der Auffindung des Toten der Fall."[238] Given that Mats was found in 1719 and then buried in 1749 after his body had decayed too much to be kept on public display, his literary popularity reached its peak nearly a century later in a time and place which had no relation to him as an actual person; a time and place which were significantly different culturally and intellectually than his own. Mats was in my reading thus re-introduced to the world as a literary ruin, with few left to remember who he was.

As Jansson explains, the taste for ruins in the Romantic period is undoubtedly part of the Falun story's popularity in the German context. Furthermore he states that Mats can even be seen

---

238 Böhme. "Die Ästhetik der Ruinen," 292.

today as a ruin of a ruin, as the mine at Falun was closed long ago and its remains too became a tourist attraction, with Mats' story always a part of its allure.[239] My definition of the preserved miner as a ruin hinges on the fact that his preservation disrupts common understandings of time and decay, which John Neubauer's reading of the Falun topos stresses too, emphasizing as he does time as its central theme:

> Indeed, the drama of the story lies in the conflict between arrestments of time and modes of temporality. The corpse remains young because it has been absorbed into inorganic nature at the cost of life and consciousness. The bride is pitifully aged, but preserving his memory and her love for him she too has resisted time. While her memory and love will be extinguished with her death, her anamnesis celebrates a temporary and poignant triumph not only over nature's destructiveness but also over the social amnesia of those "Bergchronicken" and "Volkssagen" which can no longer register the frequent mining tragedies.[240]

This passage sets up the same tension between animate and inanimate as Hamilton did, establishing the miner's preserved body as a ruin where time and memory push back and forth against one another. Because the miner is neither alive nor decomposed he reveals a suspension between states and points in time that should not be possible. The narrative of his tale brings those points of time together, to let the miner and fianceé catch up to each other again in an unexpected reunion. At the same time however it also shows the impossibility of this reunion, for as Neubauer explains the two only reunite in a sentimental sense - the miner is no longer the man he was, having become instead a mediation of himself. The chemicals in which his body lay for decades preserved his form by coating and hardening over it, which is to say that he resists time and decay because chemicals turned his body into something else. The fianceé too resists time in her own way, having never let the miner go after he disappeared. She is no longer the woman she

---

239 Jansson. *Fet-Mats*, 54.
240 John Neubauer. "The Mines of Falun: Temporal Fortunes of a Romantic Myth of Time." *Studies in Romanticism* 19:4 Winter 1980. 475-495. 480.

was, and now at death's door it is only her memory and desire to see her beloved once again that seem to keep her alive. There is a connection to be made here with literary mediation and persistence via removal from life. What makes the story of Mats Isrealsson so fascinating is that he underwent this process of removal twice - once deep underground after his demise and then again in print after his body was finally put to rest. Recall here that Leyel's prediction - the body would decay once the vitriol coating it had evaporated - indeed came to pass, so his preservation was not permanent. Reprieve from time is likely then a better phrasing than resisting time as Mats' physical presence did eventually disappear, leaving only a literary presence behind. As a literary character though his double mediation is still apparent, and shows how literature must suspend life in order to represent it. This paradox is a result of disclosing the blind spot built into human cognition, and is central to the ruin gaze as I conceive of it. The folding of temporalities together in the Falun reunion is the same as one experiences in a ruin encounter, where lapses in normal patterns become new sites of their own.

It is the miner's compound mediation that gives his tale its uniquely interstitial twist. The miner's preserved body, reintroduced to the living world long after his disappearance, causes an incongruity to paraphrase Robert Ginsberg, wherein one encounters what one would never have thought to look for and what one never even considered possible.[241] This is to say that the ruin uniquely enables the subject to question the process by which it combines various *Lehrgebäude* into a *Weltgebäude.* To clarify this I cite a passage from Nietzsche's *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* (1873) in which the concept can be gleaned:

Man darf hier den Menschen wohl bewundern als ein gewaltiges Baugenie, dem auf beweglichen

---

241 Ginsberg, *The Aesthetics of Ruins.* 2.

Fundamenten und gleichsam auf fließendem Wasser das Auftürmen eines unendlich komplizierten Begriffsdomes gelingt - freilich, um auf solchen Fundamenten Halt zu finden, muss es ein Bau wie aus Spinnefäden sein, so zart, um von der Welle mit fortgetragen, so fest, um nicht von jedem Winde auseinandergeblasen zu werden. Als Baugenie hebt sich solchermaßen der Mensch weit über die Biene: diese baut aus Wachs, das sie aus der Natur zusammenholt, er aus dem weit zarteren Stoff der Begriffe, die er erst aus sich fabrizieren muss.[242]

The subject is an architect of incredible skill, Nietzsche writes, able to construct complicated knowledge structures on the most unstable foundations. Nietzsche's metaphor of constructing a fixed structure on flowing water is entirely apt for my purpose, as is his point that the subject fabricates said structures not from material it finds in nature but rather from within itself. The conceptual material from which the subject builds its worldview is the stuff of which its inner world is formed and continually reformed, which is precisely what the ruin in my understanding helps show of mediation and the power it gives humankind. "Im Menschen kommt diese Verstellungskunst auf ihren Gipfel," explains Nietzsche, but then asks "[w]as weiss der Mensch eigentlich von sich selbst! [...] Ja, vermöchte er auch nur sich einmal vollständig, hingelegt wie in einen erleuchteten Glaskasten, zu percipiren?"[243] Observation and comprehension are made possible via mediation, thus it is through mediation that the subject comes to know itself and its world. Insofar as this enables the subject to lay things out as if in a glass case to examine and understand, it also engenders the distinction between *Lehrgebäude* as static structures and ruins as ongoing processes. Nietzsche's image of the self laid out in a glass case to be studied presents an opportunity to revisit Foucault's similar analogy,[244] for what both affirm is that the powers to know and to craft illusions reach a peak in humankind. Moreover both indicate that this power is

---

242 Nietzsche. *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne.* Digitale kritische Ausgabe.
243 Ibid.
244 See my introduction.

a proverbial double-edged sword that can make one of humanity's greatest strengths into one of its biggest weaknesses. The best means to distinguish this in terms of my topic comes from Nietzsche's metaphor of a grand columbarium:

> Wie die Biene zugleich an den Zellen baut und die Zellen mit Honig füllt, so arbeitet die Wissenschaft unaufhaltsam an jenem grossen *Columbarium* der Begriffe, der Begräbnissstätte der Anschauung, baut immer neue und höhere Stockwerke, stützt, reinigt, erneut die alten Zellen, und ist vor allem bemüht, jenes in's Ungeheure aufgethürmte Fachwerk zu füllen und die ganze empirische Welt d.h. die anthropomorphische Welt hineinzuordnen.[245]

Again here the deathly aspect of mediation comes to the fore, as Nietzsche attributes a cold, immutable logic to the columbarium. This structure where finished lives are interred and ordered is the utmost expression of an anthropomorphized world for Nietzsche. In his comparison where the bee fills the niches of its structures with nourishing honey, humankind fills its columbarium with understandings of things taken from life and kept in stasis, compulsively building, as Nietzsche emphasizes, another world within its knowledge structures - a world that is organizable and understandable only by human means. To revisit Herder's earlier articulation of this same concept, it equates to humankind extending beyond its limitations and replacing the actual world with one of its own design. Where Herder characterized the anthropomorphized perspective with the magic lantern of the metaphysician however, Nietzsche characterizes it with death - literally a place where life is interred.

Stefan Kister elaborates on the equation with the grave in his analysis of memorial culture in nineteenth century German literature, stating that "Um 1800 überschneiden sich die Systeme

---

245 Nietzsche. *Über Wahrheit und Lüge...* Digitale kritische Ausgabe.

Kunst und Sepulkralkultur auf eine weise, welche die gleichsam mit sympathetischer Tinte

gezeichneten Züge der metaphorischen Textkonstitution sichtbar werden läßt [...]."[246] With this

he gets to the same point Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, and Nietzsche all shared: That

mediation creates an illusion of life. With echoes of Lessing Kister then explains that "[d]ie

Skulpturenkabinette, in denen das Bürgertum im Zeichen erhöhter Menschlichkeit sein

Humanitätsideal feiert, sind gleichzeitig Medusenparks, in denen jede emanzipatorische

Handaufhebung zur interessanten Geste versteint."[247] In terms of what I've presented so far,

Kister's quote points out that the literature by which contemporary society judged itself and its

predecessors was still largely unexamined in terms of its mediation and self-reflexivity. Its

Medusa's gallery expanded far and wide and Nietzsche's critique intended, as Herder's had a

century before, to point out the folly of substituting a petrified landscape of mediated knowledge

for the flux and contradictions of the natural world. Mediation was for both Herder and

Nietzsche a powerful tool, but one that easily led to conclusions which served human knowledge

just as often as they furthered or inspired it. Connecting Herder's critique of *Lehrgebäude* to

Nietzsche's columbarium comment cited above one sees that both believed mediation offered a

perspective which was simultaneously invaluable and impossible for humanity - an omniscient

viewpoint which humanity created for itself and from which it then viewed the natural world

with the assumption everything would correspond. In this the modern subject presides like a

deity over a dead, illusory realm it created for (and from) itself.[248] Kister adds more context for

this notion by pointing out that attitudes toward death were changing around 1800 through

secularization, advancement of medical science, the influence of moral philosophy, and the

---

246 Stefan Kister. *Text als Grab: Sepulchrales Gedenken in der deutschen Literatur um 1800.* Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2001. 11.

247 Kister. *Text als Grab*, 12.

248 See my introduction for the mythological connection with Odin, a god of the dead who sat on his high seat and looked out over all.

emergence of the *Bürgertum* as a consumer class. He states that the combined 'para-religious' effect these produced in art fosters an aesthetics of death and memorial that accompanies the metaphor of mediation taking things from life and keeping them in a memorial space. More than simply accompanying the metaphor though, it valourizes it because art becomes a new space for experience of the sacred in Kister's understanding. There is thus a connotation and a paradox to address: Namely, as Kister points out, that life is temporary while death is permanent; and that literature, paradoxically, gives life (or brings to eternal light in Kister's terms) but also removes from life. Kister's use of the term sepulchre for his study gives an opportunity to examine this paradox, for my project makes an important distinction between sepulchre and ruin. If the sepulchre - i.e. columbarium, *Lehrgebäude* - is considered as a site of inscription and finality, then the ruin is a site of life still underway. Characteristics of the former revolve around permanence and memory (i.e. naming), which indicate a written-in-stone sort of security to knowledge. The tomb monument and its naming persist where living matter does not.

Literature is the medium in which this dynamic played out around 1800, spanning the inner and outer worlds of humanity and the realms of life and death via narrative and analogy. Though Kister's study does not include the preserved miner's story he touches upon points I've made here when he writes that "[n]ur um den Preis seines Todes gewinnt Beschriebenes Dauer."[249] With this he brings back a question discussed above: How can literature be both fixed and fluid? An answer based in the texts I've included here is that analogy amplifies humanity's interstitial possibility. "Allegorisches Wissen," writes Kister, "so läßt sich folgern, ist auf diese Weise von höchster Bedeutsamkeit gedeckt, ohne sich je in konkrete Bedeutung auflösen zu

---

249 Kister. *Text als Grab*, 18.

lassen."[250] Inasmuch as written meaning is (when followed to the sepulchral extent) a self-referring, self-sustaining, and ultimately self-enclosing process, analogy is a process that refers not to itself in its own primacy and thereby does not enclose itself. For thinkers like Herder, Schlegel, and Nietzsche analogy was open-ended expression. They used it to create works that pointed beyond themselves, and sought in Schlegel's terms to establish a system but step outside that system simultaneously. In Herder's understanding this was a way to mediate life true to the organic characteristics of human cognition and perception. Analogy was for these thinkers the natural inclination of the human mind, and from this my project develops its assertion that the preserved miner's peculiar suspension embodies the reader's experience of mediation. From this, I determine that *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* performs the feat of illuminating the effect of its medium using the medium itself, which is to say that its plot contains the basic action of its medium. The figure of the preserved miner serves to exemplify both the ossifying effect of mediation as well as its fluid counterpart, insofar as permanence and consciousness are incompatible.[251] He disrupts the linearity of time and narrative, interrupting the illusion and showing how the modern subject employs a split perspective to understand its mediations, with one eye here and now and one eye there and then. The reflexivity of this perspective is common to both the ruin and literature, whose intrinsic alignment is illuminated in a remarkable way by the Falun story because it catches self-reflexivity and the mortifying aspect of literature in the ruin gaze. This is an interstice otherwise unseen. Although it operates constantly within consciousness it does so behind the scenes, supporting the illusion of its world-construct. It is not supposed to be visible - it works best unquestioned, as its illusions in Nietzsche's view are better left in place: "wehe der verhängnissvollen Neubegier, die durch eine Spalte einmal aus dem

---

250 Kister. *Text als Grab*, 35.
251 Neubauer, 489.

Bewusstseinszimmer heraus und hinab zu sehen vermöchte...," his ominous warning goes, as one will not like what is to be found on the other side.[252] The illusions of worldview are necessary for Nietzsche but also worth questioning, even if only to recognize them as mediations that may result in a self-serving knowledge. What makes Mats such an interesting topic in this regard is that the disruption he brings about, the glimpse he gives one through the crack of consciousness, is the result of an entirely unintentional suspension. He simply lay buried in conditions which happened to preserve him after his death, catching him in a mediation of sorts and making him into an accidental embodiment of an often unexamined thought process and the mediated perspective associated with it. So as Neubauer claimed above, the drama of the Falun story does indeed consist in the arrestment of time: The world has moved on since the miner's disappearance, as it must, but his preserved body lying before the aged fiancée looking as he did on the day he disappeared confounds this fact and interrupts understandings of life and death. What's more, the drama of their reunion also consists in its revelation of its medium and the incorporation of the reader in its process.

Conclusion

This chapter has expanded my definition and discussion of the human ruin using the story of Mats Isrealsson, whose physical and literary preservation served as a compound mediation. I have shown how his story's memorable adaptation through various sources in German literature around 1800 is fitting for the changing intellectual climate of the time because his condition enacts the same mediation as literature, a process which was under new scrutiny with the emergence of the modern subject in the late eighteenth century. Self-reflexivity, living

---

252 Nietzsche, *Über Wahrheit...* Digitale kritische Ausgabe.

knowledge, interstitiality - three terms I reiterate throughout this project to characterize modern

subjectivity, three terms into which the literary trope of the preserved miner as I have shown

offers unique insight by embodying the ideas. Not only did the miner's tale appeal to these ideas

but it also demonstrated them, and to this end I have included Lessing's media categories because

they contribute insight on the mediation of life and death as understood in the German literary

context around 1800. Beyond complimenting Winckelmann as a writer whose works spanned the

epistemological shift around 1800, Lessing offers a particularly media-focused reception

aesthetics which were forerunners of the discourse. Mediation would become a topic of

considerable interest to subsequent generations, specifically as it concerned the increasing

subjective role of the observer in reception and interpretation of art, but Lessing was among the

very first to address this in the German context. Winckelmann, Lessing, and Herder are all

crucial contributors to German literary discourse around 1800, each attentive in his own way to

new questions of how mediation contributed to experience and establishing questions which

would resonate throughout the next century. These writers, my project asserts, preface the ruin as

an emblem of modernity: Winckelmann creates a reception aesthetics that points to interstitiality

with his description of the Belvedere Torso and its reliance on a split perspective, Lessing

anticipates reception as a topic in media theory with his assertion that the medium of an artwork

affects the observer's interpretations, while Herder anticipates a phenomenology of perception

with his embodied, organic subjectivity that navigates a continuum with the natural world via

analogy. Given their historical position and the ideas they put forth, I consider these three to be

liminal authors, standing at the edge of the new but not fully intending to cross into it.

My reading of the preserved miner's tale in its earliest German literary adaptations (from

the time when the above-mentioned writers were active) emphasizes that he too is a liminal figure. To use the specific terminology of my topic he is an interstitial figure, suspended between states and times but brought into each through the reader's engagement. For all his relevance to my topic - interstitiality as a defining characteristic of German literature around 1800 and the ruin as its prime example - the preserved miner has not widely been discussed in this light. A question raised by Neubauer is therefore worth posing at this point: Why did the preserved miner trope eventually fall out of literary fashion and cease producing new variants in the early-mid twentieth-century? Tracing the trope from its emergence around the turn of the nineteenth century to its final appearances in the early-mid twentieth - one might indeed wonder about the story's appeal for twenty-first century readers. Fair, as its theme and tone are antiquated by current standards and the world it depicts far removed from modernity, but then again the world in which the story found its peak popularity was itself far removed from the time in which the events actually occurred, so its themes and tone have always been somewhat antiquated. Benjamin's assessment was that the story (as Hebel told it) was a timeless tale that spoke to foundational experiences of love and loss to which any reader, no matter where or when, could relate.[253] Understood in that way the story is not the product of, nor does it belong to, merely one era. It can have both a universal and a personal appeal, as Neubauer explains: "While the death of the miner is a microscopic event on the canvas of history, it is more poignant than the passing of emperors, and due to the artless faith of his nameless bride the individual tragedy overshadows the uncontrollable historical change."[254] The miner's story is ultimately about the devotion of one human to another in the face of inevitable oblivion and Neubauer explains in this

---

253 One could argue to the contrary with a feminist reading of the story that takes into account the fiancée's lack of agency or self-determination. The framework for this project however does not provide the right sources nor the right opportunities to properly explore this angle.

254 Neubauer. "The Mines of Falun...," 482.

respect that Hebel took Schubert's account of the preserved miner and turned it from a defeat by uncaring natural processes into a promise of love and remembrance.[255] Rather than the miner being altered by nature into an inanimate object, all but forgotten by his loved ones until his rediscovery, he is in Hebel's telling held by the earth until his beloved is ready to join him.[256]

The promise of their unfulfilled vow is in the end however one which the story cannot bring to fruition - time cannot be stopped and death cannot be reversed. It speaks in this way to Benjamin's idea that death has an ultimate authority over life, an ever-present end point that shapes the experience of existence. The beauty of *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* in Benjamin's assessment is the affirmation of devotion in the face of irreversible time and decay - the hope of turning back time accompanied by the acknowledgement of its impossibility. The world is changed by death on a mass scale while the pair is separated - fifty-plus years pass in Hebel's telling, bookended by the longest night and the longest day of the calendar. From the deepest dark to the brightest light the beloved keeps her faith until her lost love's preserved form is returned to her in the days before her own death. The poetic fulfilment of their reunion is a beautiful end to the narrative, but one whose effect depends on death. This is again how the story reveals the effect of medium via the medium, because in my reading the preservation the miner underwent in the earth already enacts the same process as literary mediation, so he is preserved both in the story and by the story. In this way the reader's encounter with him opens an aperture on mediation of life, of self and other, revealing facets of the reader's own mediation that would otherwise be hidden in their process. So when Neubauer states that the story loses its vitality and

---

255 Neubauer. "The Mines of Falun...," 482.

256 This sentimentality is a large part of why the story eventually fell out of literary vogue. Tastes changed enough between the early- and late-nineteenth century that the story, even though still widely-known, had become outdated.

that it (even by the time of Friedmann's paper in 1887) had become petrified and returned to the realm of curiosity, my reading argues to the contrary because while the topos of the miner in German literature did cease producing new versions of the tale, Mats' story is still a deeply profound one which links mediation, interstitiality, and the human body.

Chapter III: Tollund Man - Interstitial Images

Caught in the *Augenblick des Todes*

My reading of Hebel's *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* culminates with the point that the text analogizes its medium using the medium itself insofar as the condition of the preserved miner mirrors the ossifying effect of literary mediation. I will proceed in this chapter by discussing Tollund Man to a similar effect using photography as the medium instead, for just as with the preserved miner, Tollund Man is inseparable from the medium which documents him. And just like the preserved miner he too reveals otherwise unseen action between medium, object, and observer which this chapter will illuminate via photography's particular appeal to the mortifying aspect of mediation, or what Hartmut Böhme terms the *Augenblick des Todes.*[257] The notion of living knowledge will be the opposite to this mortifying aspect, continuing the dynamic discussed throughout my study of ruin and *Lehrgebäude.* With this chapter I focus on the second example of a human ruin, and even more closely on mediation, for just as the preserved miner lay buried in chemicals which preserved and mediated him, turning him into an accidental analogy for the process of mediation, so too did this chapter's example, Tollund Man. The poetic twist of the Falun story was that the world had moved on since the miner's disappearance, which his preserved body confounds, lying as it does before his aged fianceé unchanged since the day he died. The discovery of Tollund Man plays out similarly but provides it own poetic twists of temporality and mediation, for whereas nobody writing about the preserved miner around 1800 had seen the actual preserved body which inspired the literary topos, Tollund Man is still on display and thus demonstrates how the human ruin body melds with its concurrent mediated representations.

---

257 Böhme. *Aesthetik der Ruine*, 286.

Tollund Man's media afterlife is comparable to that of the preserved miner in the Falun literary topos but the individual circumstance and nature of their mediation differs. This is because Tollund Man was discovered in a time where photography had become a primary mass media experience, so from the moment he was unearthed he was documented in photographs which circulated around the globe. Bog bodies had been discovered throughout northern Europe dating back even to the time of Mats Isrealsson, but it wasn't until the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century when new archaeological and media technologies allowed for the bodies to be handled and displayed without destroying them that they came to worldwide popular attention, specifically via photographs.[258] So, the comparison between Mats Isrealsson and Tollund Man is nearly one-to-one in its basic setup: A man dies in conditions which freeze him in time at the moment of his expiration, whereafter his body lays in the earth preserved until being discovered by accident years later. He is then brought back into the living world as a mysterious ruin of another time, appealing to both scientific curiosity and the poetic imagination. This chapter uses the framework for my reading of the preserved miner and his literary preservation to study Tollund Man, showing the initial similarity between the two ruin bodies but then demonstrating how they diverge. They have a comparable effect as far as revealing mediation at work, but I contrast the two in terms of the chemical processes behind their mediation as well as the preservation of their bodies. The difference, essentially, is that Mats was coated in vitriol that hardened over his flesh while Tollund Man's flesh itself was dried and cured by bog acids. Mats, moreover, was preserved by the written word and became a familiar literary trope but his name and physical form were lost, whereas Tollund Man's body is still present but his name and life story are completely unknowable.

---

258 Well-documented finds are for example: Elling Woman, Grauballe Man, Dätgen Man, Osterby Man.

My study of Tollund Man begins with the account of his discovery and then moves to his first appearance in text and photos. Archaeologist Peter Vilhelm Glob's book *The Bog People* (*Mosefolket*, 1969) serves the same function here as Schubert's *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* did in my examination of the Falun miner - namely, as a primary source from which generations of subsequent writers took inspiration. Like Schubert he was drawn to the poetic aspect of the discovery and his attempts to humanize the unknown man found in the bog would have a similar effect on subsequent writers and artists. Unlike Schubert however, Glob participated in the earliest stages of Tollund Man's discovery and provided first-hand documentation of the event. The attempt to document him as a person however, to tell his story, led Glob to an uncharted gulf between his own time and ancient European history. Despite efforts to establish his past and identity Tollund Man remains a mystery as a person who lived and died. Even though his body has been photographed down to minute detail, this has created, as I will show, a familiarity largely through proximity. Tollund Man can in this sense be seen as both a museum artifact and a human being, a human ruin to which the categories of uncanny and sublime both apply. To uncover this I consult Karin Sanders' writings on Tollund Man as well as Bernd Stiegler's writings on death and the photographic image. In combination, these two help define the compound mediation of Tollund Man and how his effect on the observer is characterized by a push-and-pull dynamic of alienation and identification. As they both note, photography intensifies the *Augenblick des Todes* by allowing, in a way, life and death to overlap within a single image. Commentary on early photography by Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes will assist in discerning this intrinsic relation of death to the photographic medium, and how, ultimately, Tollund Man is an incredible embodiment of its effect.

Tollund Man displayed at Silkeborg Museum.[259]

Detail of Tollund Man's face.[260]

259 Image source: Chocho8 (Creative Commons). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Poloha_Tollundsk
    %C3%A9ho_mu%C5%BEe_p%C5%99i_n%C3%A1lezu_.jpg
260 Image source: Sven Rosborn (Public Domain). commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4330462

<u>Tollund Man - An Unknown Visitor</u>

Though preserved bodies had been found in northern European bogs going back much longer, the appreciation and study of bog bodies took on a new importance in the twentieth century. Ireland, England, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, all documented similar finds of remains occasionally accompanied by various artifacts that gave some small glimpse into their lives. These bodies were unearthed and studied, then displayed as grisly museum pieces that bore impersonal witness to a lost northern European prehistory. In this way they are not dissimilar from mummies or other such preserved human remains one might expect to find in a museum, but what most preserved bodies share is a certainty of death - i.e. one knows one is looking at a long-dead body. Tollund Man confounds this certainty because his face is preserved so remarkably well that it causes one to stop and ponder it in a different manner than one would a mummy or corpse. Like Mats Isrealsson, he too was treated as both an important scientific discovery and a poetic figure, but one crucial distinction is that twentieth-century archaeological procedures and storage methods meant that his body has been kept and displayed essentially as it was found over a half-century ago. Though this is the case for other preserved bodies such as Grauballe Man, who was found in the same region of Denmark as Tollund Man two years later, and Ötzi the Iceman, found in the Alps in 1991, there is an immediately apparent distinction between them and Tollund Man in that the latter appears closer to life, as one look at his near-perfectly preserved face will attest.

The story of Tollund Man, what can be recounted of it anyway, begins on May 8th, 1950, when a call to police in Silkeborg, Denmark reported a body discovered in a nearby area called Bjældskovdal. The Højgaard family had been in the remote boggy region cutting peat when they

found what they believed to be a recent murder victim and informed the police, who too

suspected the family had found a murder or accident victim. The location of the body was

puzzling though, buried two and half metres down in the bog and sixty metres away from dry

land. Bog bodies were a not-unheard-of phenomenon for the time and place, so the police in turn

called the Silkeborg Museum. After an investigation of the site, police and museum researchers

determined that the body, despite its appearance, was no recent murder victim thrown into the

bog, nor an unfortunate hiker who wandered too far from safe pathways. The next phase of the

investigation involved the National Museum in Copenhagen, who sent archaeologist Peter

Vilhelm Glob to excavate the body. His documentation of the find would help bring Tollund

Man (the name Glob attributed to him) to an international audience who were fascinated by the

images of this man frozen in time.[261] Fischer indicates that this event changed the study of bog

bodies, as up to the mid 1950s there had been considerably less glory in, and attention paid to,

the discoveries. But there had never been one quite like Tollund Man, none had been so well-

preserved as to have their facial features so completely intact, nor to have their fingerprints taken

- an anecdote that helps show how much forensic and cultural importance was given to bog

bodies after this discovery.[262] Through the second half of the twentieth century Tollund Man

would become the focus of significant attention, capturing the imagination of researchers,

photographers, and authors in a comparable way to Mats Isrealsson two centuries earlier.

Tollund Man stands apart however on account of how his amazing condition persists, and how it

became, as the Silkeborg Museum writeup states, their greatest attraction: A face-to-face

encounter with prehistory.[263]

---

261 Discovery information summarized from Glob's writings, the Silkeborg Museum's digital exhibit, along with
      Christian Fischer's *Tollund Man: Gift to the Gods*. The History Press: Gloustershire, 2012.
262 Fischer. *Tollund Man*, 11.
263 https://www.museumsilkeborg.dk/welcome-to-the-story-about-tollund-man

Bog bodies - even well-preserved ones such as Grauballe Man - tend to look

unmistakably like corpses, often with distorted facial features and missing limbs. Even Mats

Isrealsson, whose features were supposedly preserved unchanged from the moment of his death,

began to decompose once the vitriol coating his body evaporated. Tollund Man's preserved face

however persists in comparison more like a bronze bust of a sleeping man, making his

suspension between states even more striking. His face and feet are almost perfectly preserved,

though his arms and sections of his trunk have decomposed. His organs remained largely intact

but lost their structure, as did some of his flesh and skeleton, so viewing him one sees both flesh

and bone - the outer and inner aspects of a human body. That both aspects are evident in the

same glance creates an uncanny experience of life and death which made curators at the National

Museum in Copenhagen wonder initially whether or not they should display the body at all for

fear it was too macabre.[264] Tollund Man was studied in meticulous detail upon his discovery -

photographs and samples were taken, x-rays and physical exams done to ascertain whatever

possible about this human ruin. As researchers examined the body and it became clear that this

was the best-preserved prehistoric body ever found,[265] they reached the decision to conserve the

body and display casts of it (except for the original head).[266] With each new generation of

technological development further studies continued to uncover more about the body and the

conditions which led to its preservation. Andrew Chamberlain and Michael Pearson offer a

concise summary of these discoveries when they explain that the sphagnum moss in which

Tollund Man lay is "highly effective in reducing microbial growth and [...] tanning collagen

---

264 Statement attributed to Therkel Mathiasen, senior curator circa 1950:
     https://www.museumsilkeborg.dk/excavation-investigation-and-conservation
265 For more on the examination, including recent efforts, see: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-
     nature/europe-bog-bodies-reveal-secrets-180962770/
266 One could make another connection with Odin here, as the *Poetic Edda* and Snorri Sturluson's *Ynglinga Saga*
     tell how Mímir, the keeper of the well of wisdom, was beheaded in a conflict between gods and how Odin kept
     and preserved his head with spells and herbs. The head did not decompose and continued to council Odin.

fibres, leading to the preservation of tissues such as skin, cartilage, tendon and fingernails."[267] "In addition," they continue, "the generally cold conditions within saturated peat, together with the reduced availability of oxygen within the groundwater and the effective exclusion of carrion-consuming animals enhance the likelihood that bodies buried in peat will avoid decay and destruction."[268] In Adam Leyel's description of Mats he wrote that the body had lain in mineral-rich liquid which, once it was removed, hardened to a horn-like rigidity. Tollund Man was in comparison preserved more like tanned leather, as Chamberlain and Pearson as well as Fischer indicate, with his flesh and hair staying quite well-preserved but his bones and insides degrading and losing their consistency. As Glob soon found out though the specifics of the body's preservation were the easier part to define, for there was no clear answer as to why this man was found deep down in the bog at Bjældskovdal with a noose around his neck.[269]

The biggest mystery of the bog bodies is indeed why so many appear to have been murdered and left in the bogs, but there is no historical record given by the ancient northern cultures themselves to reveal an answer, leaving scholars to try and piece details together millennia after the fact from secondary sources. Glob's 1965 book *The Bog People* became the foremost published work and the foundation for this task,[270] thus in a similar way to Schubert's *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* it serves my project as a starting point which influenced many other thinkers and writers who were fascinated by its descriptions. Karin Sanders writes that the book is "...the indisputable ur-text [...] a site from which fiction writers,

---

267 Chamberlain & Pearson. *Earthly Remains*, 50.
268 Ibid, 50.
269 Certainly another connection to Odin is possible here, for he was known as the god of the hanged - having hanged himself to learn the magic of the runes. See H.R. Ellis Davidson's *Scandinavian Mythology*, which mentions Tollund Man in a section on ritual hanging (33).
270 J. van der Plicht, W.A.B. van der Sanden, A.T. Aerts, H.J. Streurman. "Dating bog bodies by means of ^{14}C-AMS" *Journal of Archaeological Science*. 31 (2004), 471–491. 482-3.

poets, and visual artists would cull material for representing and reconfiguring in words and images the interstices of time and matter in the antiquity of human remains."[271] Sanders' description of Glob's archaeological account as an ur-text which influenced the arts helps strengthen the comparison with Schubert's *Ansichten...* and the case of the Falun miner, for as she writes: "[Glob] had a sharp sense of the power of writing and was willing to provide an archaeological narrative that slipped out of the confines of science and flirted with literary tropes and genres."[272] Amusing to note here, via Sanders, is that the word *bog* in Danish means book - a linguistic confluence that calls attention to the bog as a site of mediation. The literary connotation is apt, as Glob's inclination toward the poetic is seen clearly in the way he introduces his account of unearthing Tollund Man:

> [T]he sun burst in, bright and yet subdued, through a gate in blue thunder-clouds in the west, bringing everything mysteriously to life. [...] The dead man, too, deep down in the umber-brown peat, seemed to have come alive. He lay on his damp bed as though asleep, resting on his side, the head inclined a little forward, arms and legs bent. His face wore a gentle expression - the eyes lightly closed, the lips softly pursed, as if in silent prayer. It was as though the dead man's soul had for a moment returned from another world, through a gate in the western sky."[273]

Glob's description of the bog man seeming as though he had only just fallen asleep is reminiscent of Hebel's *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen*, which described the preserved miner in the same way. Moreover his description is comparable to Winckelmann's vivifying account of the Belvedere Torso, for Tollund Man appeals to the same poetic longing of which Winckelmann and Diderot wrote. As I established in my introduction, Diderot articulates a poetics of ruins characterized by longing in his *Salon of 1767* when he writes that "[e]verything comes to nothing, everything

---

271 Karin Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 17.
272 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 17.
273 P.V. Glob. *The Bog People: Iron-Age Man Preserved*. Translated by Rupert Bruce-Mitford. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969. 18.

perishes, everything passes, only the world remains, only time endures [...] I walk between two eternities."[274] This sense of walking between two eternities is exemplified generally in my project by the concepts of *Lehrgebäude* and ruin, as the tension between the two is what makes the ruin gaze possible.[275] My study of human ruins reveals within this dynamic that there is a specific dissonance associated with the ruin gaze which comes about when mediations of life and death confound common understandings thereof. Tollund Man most certainly does that, for unlike the Belvedere Torso sculpture he is an actual human form turned to ruin, and unlike the Falun miner his body is still on display, suspended between temporalities and states. Glob stated that when they first brought Tollund Man out of the bog he was struck by the notion of the man's soul returning from another world, one could rephrase this to state rather that the appearance of the man's life returned from another world - much as the Falun miner's had when those who knew him laid eyes on his preserved form once more. Both cases emphasize the notion that human ruins are mediations of life and death, Glob pointing out the sentiment that the observer supplies their soul.

Tollund Man's discovery, like Mats', makes for a compelling story but the narrative thread that binds him to the reader is missing, and the detail with which photography documents his incredible preservation relative to his age only compounds the issue. In *The Bog People* for instance Glob relates the story of locals not believing that Grauballe Man was close to two thousand years old, insisting instead (in a way reminiscent of *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen*) that he was someone they must have known from recent years because he was simply too well-preserved to be so old.[276] The same goes for Tollund Man too, as both Glob and Fischer explain, but

---

274 Diderot, "The Salon of 1767." *Diderot on Art II*. 198.
275 See Chapter 1 of my study for more on this.
276 Glob. *The Bog People*, 60-1.

whereas Mats was found after a few decades and still had people who could identify him,

Tollund Man had no one. Any person who had known him died more than two-thousand years

prior, leading Glob to consult ancient texts like Tacitus' *Germania* to help form an identity and a

narrative for him. From Tacitus Glob gathered that bog sinking was a form of punishment,[277]

which he then altered to an interpretation of sacrificial fertility rituals.[278] Tacitus wrote that

human sacrifice was a rite observed among certain tribes of Germania, and that such sacrifices

were made to their principal deity, Mercury.[279] R. B. Townshend directs readers on this point to

Jacob Grimm's explanation that in Latin sources Germanic gods were often replaced with Roman

counterparts, and that Mercury in this case is likely meant to stand in for Odin, the Germanic god

of the dead and of the hanged.[280] Tacitus writes further that the tribes would consecrate areas

(woods and groves in particular he notes) to their deities and invoke them or perform rituals in

their names in those spaces.[281] Following closely after these comments, one finds a passage about

criminality that must have stood out to Glob when he was pondering Tollund Man's demise:

"Traitors and renegades are hung on a tree; cowards and recreants and infamous wretches are

pressed under a hurdle into the slime of a morass and suffocated. This difference in the methods

of execution is not meaningless, the idea being that crimes should be made a public example of,

but that abominations should be buried out of sight."[282] If the bog was a sacred place, as Glob

postulates, then Tollund Man could very likely have been a ritual sacrifice. It could also be

however that he was deemed a criminal by his society and executed as punishment, but as nearly

---

277 Glob. *The Bog People*, 152-3.
278 Ibid, 156-71.
279 Tacitus, *Germania*. Translated by R.B. Townshend. London: Methuen & Co., 1894. 61-2.
280 See my introduction for more on Odin's importance to this project.
281 Tacitus, *Germania*, 61-2.
282 Ibid. More can be read into what Townshend translates as "infamous wretches," though it is not the focus of this present study. Townshend's translation is fairly neutral, where others emphasize connotations of vice and shame.

all sources will attest the manner of his death was not nearly as violent or as intentionally destructive as other bog bodies. Here though one must note that Tacitus was an unreliable source on the matter, for he had, according to Alfred Gudeman, never actually visited Germania himself.[283]

Nevertheless, comparing Tacitus' account here to Herder's reception of the Ossian poems and Winckelmann's texts calling for emulation of the ancient Greeks, one sees that Tollund Man is as fascinatingly 'other' to modern people as the ancient Germanic tribes were to the Romans, or as the ancient Celts and Greeks were to nineteenth-century Europeans. Looking into a sparsely-documented, pre-literate northern European pre-history Glob developed the notion of Tollund Man being a sacrifice to a fertility deity, which was taken up by subsequent scholars such as Sanders[284] and also poet Seamus Heaney, whose poem entitled "Tollund Man" (1972) famously refers to him as a "bridegroom to the Goddess." Heaney's poems about bog bodies constitute their best-known twentieth-century literary source, and his poem about Tollund Man takes its inspiration directly from Glob (as well as a visit to see Tollund Man and the location of his discovery) to present him as an intimate, religious sacrifice:

> Some day I will go to Aarhus
> To see his peat-brown head,
> The mild pods of his eye-lids,
> His pointed skin cap.
>
> In the flat country near by
> Where they dug him out,
> His last gruel of winter seeds
> Caked in his stomach,
>
> Naked except for

283 Alfred Gudeman. "The Sources of the Germania of Tacitus." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 31, 1900. 93–111.
284 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 6.

The cap, noose and girdle,
I will stand a long time.
Bridegroom to the goddess,

She tightened her torc on him
And opened her fen,
Those dark juices working
Him to a saint's kept body,

Trove of the turfcutters'
Honeycombed workings.
Now his stained face
Reposes at Aarhus.[285]

Patrick Wright emphasizes that in this first section of the poem the bog takes on a feminine

quality for Heaney, playing with Glob's notion that Tollund Man was given to a fertility

goddess.[286] To this end he states that Heaney's poems create empathy with the bog bodies,

humanizing them in terms of nature and sexuality.[287] Glob's text sought the same kind of

humanization with his attempts to construct narrative possibilities and provide a context for

Tollund Man, yet it is simply not possible to locate him the same way as Schubert did with Mats.

Instead readers know him simply by the modern name of the place where he was discovered, a

convention applied to all such bog bodies to at least connect them somehow to their new

circumstances. Despite efforts to humanize them however the bog bodies remain suspended

between worlds. Tollund Man, even more so than the Belvedere Torso or the preserved miner,

lies before the observer as human and artifact, flesh and bone, life and death, presence and

absence. This dynamic, as Winckelmann's *Beschreibung des Torso* shows, can only be

approached from a perspective that allows one to see both aspects at once, a ruin gaze which

places the observing subject in a similar, paradoxical suspension as the preserved man.

285 Heaney. "The Tollund Man." *Poetry International Archives.* Online:
     https://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poem/23607/auto/0/0/Seamus-Heaney/THE-TOLLUND-MAN/en/tile
286 Wright, Patrick. "Empathising with Bog Bodies: Seamus Heaney and the Feminine Sublime." *Brief
     Encounters* Vol.1, No. 1 (Feb 2017). 5. Online: h9p://briefencounters-journal.co.uk/BE/arOcle/view/19/
287 Ibid.

With Tollund Man the ruin gaze falls upon an ontological and temporal interstice of life in suspension. The ruin body disrupts the understanding that existence proceeds toward expiration of energy and decay, and the longer the body's suspension and the better the preservation, the greater the disruption and ensuing alienation, as Sanders indicates:

> We may project all sorts of human traits into material artifacts - in fact we habitually do - but in bog bodies, which are already inhabited by a shared sense of humanity, we are confronted more directly with the push and pull of identification and alienation, our closeness with and distance from the past and its history. [...] While we are accustomed to seeing artifacts as metaphorical bodies and mapping human attributes onto them, such designation of human attributes to an archaeological object is particularly (and ironically) tested when the object *is* a human body, and therefore *was* a living being who experienced time and traveled through stages in life - someone who lived and died. Their having-been speaks to our being. The artifact that the bog body has become is therefore strangely rehumanized in our engagement with it; indeed it is anthromorphized, made human (again).[288]

Sanders touches on an important aspect of the encounter here when she notes the push and pull of identification and alienation, for this characterizes the reception of human ruins. As she points out there is a sense of shared humanity one feels with recently-deceased bodies or artifacts of the dead, and the push and pull of identification and alienation intensifies the more the observer attempts to identify with them. Tollund Man has a powerful impact in this regard because he brings the observer close but then alienates sharply - one feels a shared humanity with him but also a void of otherness. Sanders addresses this when she states that bog bodies balance between person and artifact, and that the observer can either re-infuse them with humanity (as did Glob and Heaney) or treat them as artifacts. In the case of Tollund Man what tips the balance toward person is his well-preserved face, for it presents the most identifiably human features to the

---

288 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 223.

observer. The counterweight though is that he has no identity as a person, no life story beyond his death and rediscovery. Readers can feel a connection to the miner in the Falun story (whether he is named or not) because they are told something of his life and his world, but with Tollund Man there is no such connection beyond the fact that he was once a living human who, presumably, had experiences that his observers too have had. The circumstances of his life and society are irretrievable, making it all but impossible to establish continuity between his time and the observer's own. In Mats' case there was less than one hundred years separating his discovery to his adoption into contemporary literature, and less than four hundred separating his lifetime from the writing of this study. This is undoubtedly a huge span of time in human terms but cultural history has remained intact enough to provide records of how people have thought and lived, allowing Mats to be fit into historical narratives. In Tollund Man's case though the duration of time between his death and rediscovery is believed to be over two thousand years, an amazing expanse which offers plenty of space for the ruin effect to spur one's poetic imagination but next to nothing in the way of verifiable historical documentation from the man's own time to inform it. Sanders poses the question relative to this timespan: Is Tollund Man more artifact than person? With no means to identify him and a lack of cultural continuity between his time and now Tollund Man is an unknown visitor in the present day, and as such, Sanders explains, his having-been speaks to the observer's being. Even though one cannot know who he was or what his life was like, his having-been, combined with the preservation of his features, is enough to give the observer a sense of recognition. This is true of ruins in general as one sees what they are in light of what they were, but there is nuance that can be added by rephrasing Sanders: Tollund Man's being speaks to the observer's experience of being. Stated this way, it points to the most important aspect of the encounter for my purposes: Mediation.

Photography as Passage Between Life And Death

The story of the Falun miner spread via a common mass-media experience of the period

around 1800, literature. Likewise, Tollund Man became embedded in one of the most popular

mass media experiences of the twentieth century, photography. I contend here that these two

figures are inextricably bound up with mass media of their times because their ruin bodies enact

the processes of those media. Namely, both illuminate the medium which makes them present

using the medium itself: *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen* is a story about stories and as I will show

Tollund Man can be understood as an image of photography, for that medium best captures his

suspension between states, times, and answers. Photos of Tollund Man provide the observer an

apparent closeness but no substantive connection, for while they intimately document his

physicality the closeness they create only emphasizes the fact that there is no way to know who

he was. What's more, photography adds a new depth to the idea found in Herder and Lessing's

aesthetic theories that art has the ability to remove things from life and freeze them in an eternal

moment. Lessing's categories of *nebeneinander* and *aufeinander* were meant to depict how

literature and plastic arts capture these eternal moments differently, with static plastic arts

representing things that have their parts *nebeneinander* (bodies) and literature representing things

that have their parts *aufeinander* (plots). His categories as I understand them however are aspects

of the same receptive act and apply in equal measure to photography - which Sanders states is

the perfect means of presenting the bog bodies because its representations are so lifelike yet

closely aligned with death.[289]

"Almost immediately after its invention photography was theorized as a kind of open

---

289 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 33.

casket" Sanders writes, "a memorial apparatus in which we can see, chemically preserved, that which is no longer in existence [...]."[290] When she states that photography has the effect of "making the dead alive and the living dead"[291] she articulates the intrinsic connection to death, a formulation which centres on the primary action of photography: To make visible. Bernd Stiegler and Stefanie Diekmann both clarify that upon its invention photography was understood to show aspects of life and death the eye could not see - things that became more apparent through the camera lens. Benjamin termed this the optical unconscious when he explained that cameras made organic processes of the eye visible through technology, likening it to the act of taking a step in that walking is a common thing that many people do continuously but never really understand from a mechanical perspective.[292] Camera technology led to new possibilities for examining visibility in the late nineteenth century. X-ray imaging for instance provided medical practitioners a new means of understanding physiology, while spiritualists claimed that photos could capture ghosts and other paranormal phenomena. Photographic technology allowed glimpses at unseen aspects of the body, both the inner organic workings which constituted its life and the commonly-held metaphysical beliefs which shaped understandings of existence. Photography unlocked a new perspective for humankind by making visible things that had long eluded perception, strengthening in the act a reliance upon objective proof and rendering the inherent interstice between knowledge and mediation more apparent than ever. Stiegler explains the effect: "Das Unsichtbare ist mitunter nur die verborgene Seite des Sichtbaren, das dieses, einmal erhellt und belichtet, in ein anderes Licht rückt. Das Sichtbare ist bereits mit Feldern des Unsichtbaren durchzogen, welche die Photographie erkundet. Die Photographie wird zu einem

---

290 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 33.
291 Ibid.
292 In *Kleine Geschichte der Photografie* (1931).

zweiten Auge, das das erste verändert zurückläßt."[293] He explains that photography became an augmented eye which, in the same manner as Winckelmann's aesthetic schema, offered an extra-sensory perspective that could see more than observers' own eyes and thus bring them closer to the truth of any object. Such is at least the conception that follows from classically-influenced epistemology of the European Enlightenment, which in the late nineteenth century guided understandings of the physical world as well as the metaphysical. In this time, writes Stiegler, photos created "sichtbare Manifestationen der übersinnlichen Welt im Feld der sichtbaren. In ihnen werden die Phänomene in eine andere Ordnung übersetzt; das Übersinnliche ragt nur als sinnlich Wahrnehmbares in den Bereich der Erkenntnis hinein. Dennoch werden die Photographien durchweg als objektive Materialisation verstanden."[294] In this context photos can be seen as proof of life and documentation of its invisible processes, but from Herder's viewpoint of living knowledge photography's reproduction of life changes how human perception and knowledge interact, just as a metaphysical archimedian point does. Stiegler writes of the augmented perspective that photography offers: "Bei der Erkundung der übersinnlichen Welt spielen die medientechnischen Erfindungen eine entscheidende Rolle, da sie Phänomene aufzeichnen können, die der begrenzten menschlichen Wahrnehmung verborgen geblieben sind."[295] As he stated above, photography is a second eye which changes the organic eye by making the observer aware of how much more the lens can see. As with the *ruhiges Auge* of Winckelmann's aesthetic theory, photography offers the possibility to transcend the limitations of perception, but whereas earlier theorists such as Winckelmann relied on a metaphysical perspective to guide them to a suprasensory truth, photography provides a faster track by

---

293 Bernd Stiegler. *Philologie des Auges: die photographische Entdeckung der Welt im 19. Jahrhundert.* München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001. 98.
294 Stiegler. *Philologie des Auges*, 132.
295 Ibid, 125.

capturing and making visible facets of life that no other medium before it could do so directly.

Photography exacerbates the tension between organic perception and mediation because whereas literature and sculpture gain proximity with life through representing it while bearing the marks of their creators - photography in its early days made life processes apparent in a wholly new way that effaced some of the human agency involved in its creation. The camera was believed to see things the human eye could not, which led to concerns of dehumanization through the photographic lens but also a new space for exploring human experience. Consider for instance spirit photography, which as Stefanie Diekmann explains, emerged from new notions of making visible - a project which "selbst besteht in der Entwicklung von Verfahren der Bildgebung, zu denen technische Abläufe ebenso gehören wie spiritistische; chemische und physikalische Prozesse ebenso wie andere, die weniger eindeutig zu klassifizieren sind und der wissenschaftlichen Überprüfung nicht immer standhalten."[296] Aesthetic theory as put forth by Winckelmann centred on the creation and reception of beautiful images that were representations of life, but with the proliferation of cameras a century later the notion of photographic representation meant that anyone with a camera could produce copies of reality. This is not to say that photography was merely an automatic, mechanical process but rather to emphasize that the camera was, at least in its early stages, widely considered a means of capturing reality in a more accurate manner than the human perceptual array could. Here is where spirit photography connects to the very origins of photography in the form of the phantasmagoria, and magic lantern shows.[297] It is a noteworthy change that where Herder had characterized metaphysics as a magic

---

296 Stefanie Diekmann. "Fotografische Wiedergänger: Anmerkungen zur Geisterfotographie." *Suspensionen: Über das Untote.* Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015. 131-141. 131.
297 See: Theodore Barber. "Phantasmagorical Wonders: The Magic Lantern Ghost Show in Nineteenth-Century America." *Film History.* 1989, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1989), pp. 73-86.

lantern show a century prior, nineteenth century visual media would evolve this device into a means to prove, scientifically and objectively, the existence of unseen things. As Diekmann explains,[298] spirit photography intended in this way to document the afterlife via technological means - something only expressible in hypothetical, metaphorical terms for living beings. The key is technological possibility and how it played with magical thinking, as Stiegler writes:

> Die spiritistische Einbildungskraft des 19. Jahrhunderts ist durch die Medientechnik nachhaltig geprägt, was sich am Beispiel der Photographie trefflich illustrieren läßt [... .] Geister erscheinen vorzugsweise dann, wenn die Technik so weit entwickelt ist, sie wahrnehmen und aufzeichnen zu können, und sie verschwinden, sobald die technischen Möglichkeiten der Medien weitgehend ausgeschöpft sind.[299]

From this one can glean how photography was a turning point for nineteenth-century aesthetics and science, as its ability to make visible was indeed supra-sensory. Spirit photography and photos of the recently-deceased were however a spot where humanity and technology overlapped uncertainly in the new mediation. Spirit photos claimed to offer visual proof of disembodied souls interacting with the living, while Stiegler explains that post-mortem photos were used as a representation of a deceased person's life - or even of the person if the body was not present at funeral services.[300] These images share a common trait, Stiegler writes, in that "[...] der Photographie eine besondere Dokumentationsqualität zugesprochen wird. Die Evidenz des "Es-ist-so-gewesen" suchte auch den spiritistischen und spiritismus-kritischen Diskurs heim."[301] As photography became more commonplace in everyday life however, with its increased use in science and medicine as well as the arts, spirit photography became less prominent - relegated

---

298 Diekmann. "Fotografische Wiedergänger...," 132.
299 Stiegler. *Philologie des Auges*, 125.
300 Stiegler uses the example of cremations where the individual's portrait is displayed with the ashes. 226-7.
301 Stiegler. *Philologie des Auges*, 129

along with Spiritualism to the realm of pseudoscience.[302] Post-mortem photos on the other hand

remained popular into the early twentieth century, with images of recently deceased individuals

adorning grave memorials or grieving homes. Whether showing the individual in their casket or

posed as if still alive, corpse photos were a common type of early photograph that used the

medium to preserve traces of life. Where spirit photos claimed to reveal unseen aspects of the

afterlife, corpse photos preserved the dead for the living. The camera allowed the image of the

deceased to be held in place after the body decayed, maintaining the presence of the person to

some extent.

When compared to literature, photography can be understood as a more direct instance of

the mortifying quality of mediation, a truer-to-form Medusa's gaze, as Sanders characterized it

above. This notion is echoed by Stiegler, who calls photography the *Todeskunst par*

excellence,[303] stating that "Die Photographie als Simulakrum des Abgebildeten verwandelt diesen

in einen Leichnam, in ein totes Bild, das bereits zu Lebzeiten von seinem Überleben kündet."[304]

Both Sanders and Stiegler describe photography as a swapping of life and death whereby the

qualities of one become the other, Sanders emphasizing the chemical preservation aspect and

Stiegler characterizing the result as a simulacrum of the depicted. Even if the depicted is not

dead, Stiegler points out, the photographic process transforms it into a still image that blurs

boundaries of states and temporalities which would otherwise be clear. The dead image, he

writes, changes from life to a representation of life that, via its stasis, seems to ensure a

paradoxical sort of survival. Kister's characterization of art as a memorial space that served the

---

302 Not within the scope of this project but still worth noting is that the methods of spirit photography carried on
      through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Most ghost-hunting content of the current day is
      premised on the notion that optical technology can capture supernatural occurrences.
303 Stiegler. *Philologie des Auges*, 226.
304 Ibid, 227.

same function as the religious sepulchre in the nineteenth century[305] clarifies this point for my

purpose, as he emphasizes that stasis is a defining aspect of any memorial. As with a

Lehrgebäude, whose strength comes from its immutability, a memorial is intended to last. When

Sanders writes above that photography is a memorial apparatus she emphasizes this too,

contrasting with the interstitial character of its images - which is what engenders the feeling of

simultaneous closeness and distance in the encounter with Tollund Man. He is clearly dead,

though his preservation makes it difficult to consider him simply a corpse so neither his life nor

his death seem complete. And so while photography and literature can be understood in terms of

a Medusa's gaze that freezes life in place, at the same time they show how mediation facilitates

passage between states and temporalities. "Die Photographie als Todesbild hat einen

janusköpfigen Charakter," Stiegler writes, "[e]inerseits erlaubt sie dem vivifizierenden Blick die

nahezu materiale Präsenz der Abgebildeten, andererseits verwandelt sie die Dargestellten in

Gespenster zu Lebzeiten. Die Photographie ist eine Passage zwischen Leben und Tod, die in

beiden Richtungen funktioniert."[306] Winckelmann's *ruhiges Auge*[307] returns here in what Stiegler

calls a vivifying gaze, and my reading of his *Beschreibung des Torso* finds that it uncovers this

dilemma of simultaneously vivifying and mortifying in an unintended way. The ruin required an

extra step to observe it both as it is and as it could be, but Winckelmann's aesthetic theory did not

let him easily do so because it concerned itself primarily with harmony and wholeness. The ruin

gaze arises from this dissonance between the object as it is and as it could be, and makes the

observer aware of self-mediation in process. But whereas the Belvedere Torso is a destroyed

sculpture, the preserved miner of the Falun topos and Tollund Man are once-living human bodies

whose compound mediation incorporates the observer differently. All three prompt the same ruin

---

305 See Chapter 2 of this study.
306 Stiegler. *Philologie des Auges*, 229.
307 Discussed in Chapter 1 of this study.

gaze though, which catches self-reflexivity in the vivifying/mortifying dynamic of mediation.

Tollund Man is the third stage of my study because he is a human ruin in the realest sense. His

documentation in photography deepens the effect of the ruin gaze for, as Stiegler and Sanders

both explain, a picture of death points to life and vice-versa. So leading from my assertion that

the Falun story is about stories I posit that Tollund Man is likewise an image of images. My

reasoning follows from my earlier assertion that photography and literature both share certain

functions in common with perception that enable the observer to stop the flow of time and focus

on isolated objects and their actions. This helps clarify the interstitial character of human

experience that occupied theorists circa 1800 and how mediation works in conjunction with it,

but it also re-emphasizes the tension thereof as well in that knowledge functions via mediation

but is susceptible to illusions that accomplish what perception cannot.[308] As my study of literary

theory around 1800 has shown, there was a growing desire to account for life unfolding in

constant flux and understanding itself in that state. Mediation was how life could be made

comprehensible but it required an illusion of stasis, so Herder used open-endedness to reconcile

the need for mediation with the organs that enabled understanding. This clarifies how one can

keep mediation as integrated as possible in the life it depicts, a concept which follows from

Herder's belief that organs comprised a complex network whose interconnected functions

constituted the experience of life. Tollund Man's double mediation shows how this works in the

context of photography. He reveals the medium using the medium in that he is an embodiment of

the two-way quality Stiegler and Sanders attribute to photography: His dead image gives a sense

of life still being present within his preserved flesh, as though one could simply reach out and

wake him from sleep. His mediation creates a stark dichotomy however between alienation and

---

308   See my introduction.

identification because he is so close and simultaneously so distant. After all one can see the stubble on his face, but not the when, where, nor why of his circumstance.

Tollund Man's mediation in photographs means that he is seen differently than the preserved miner (insofar as one can see him at all), for there is an exactitude associated with photography that is not expected of literature. This is to say that whereas Mats Isrealsson persists in media as a malleable literary figure whose name and situation changed throughout nineteenth-century German prose, poetry, and drama, Tollund Man persists as a distinct photographic record of an unknown man from a dead civilization. Any connection the observer forms with Tollund Man comes not so much from his story but rather from the proximity photography allows, the vulnerability as Sanders explains of his fragile body lying exposed for all to see.[309] Stiegler hints at this proximity when he writes that: "Nach dem Tode wird die Photographie zu einer physischen Spur des Verstorbenen, zu einem materialen Beleg seiner Existenz, einem Erinnerungsbild, das den Dargestellten physisch anwesend sein läßt[...]."[310] His explanation that photos of a dead person often constitute a physical trace or proof of their having existed depends, in my reading, on the photos being the sole remaining trace of that person, or at least that the person's physical form is no longer present. Photos of Tollund Man are a memorial of his existence but also proof of his continued suspended presence. Contrast this with post-mortem or spirit photos and the difference is clear as what Diekmann describes as "[...] die höchst literale Nähe der Lebenden und der Toten, die in diesen fotografischen Aufzeichnungen in Szene gesetzt wird. Dies ist kein Verfahren, die Toten zurück ins Leben zu holen. Aber immerhin (so die Überzeugung) holt es sie zurück ins Bild, wo sie dann an die Seite der Lebenden treten."[311] The

---

309 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 37.
310 Stiegler. *Philologie des Auges*, 226.
311 Diekmann. "Fotografische Wiedergänger...," 140.

photos of Tollund Man which have circulated far and wide since his discovery are a staged scene, his whole presence is staged in a museum, but he is not a fabricated image. The photos show his interstitial status, as no single experience of him is the proper one - photos, the museum exhibit, and written records all present unique facets. Thus what Diekmann calls the "*indexicalische Moment*" of photos represents Tollund Man well. Her term refers to the overlapping of life and death in corspe/ghost photos,[312] which I modify slightly to my purpose to cover the convergence of life, death, and mediation in photos of Tollund Man. Sanders clarifies the key point about mediation for my study of Mats and Tollund Man when she explains that Tollund Man can be understood as twice-mediated. Of his preservation, she writes that "before the bog man is rescued and embalmed by the photographic lens, he has already been 'shot' and mummified by the bog acids. In this sense he has been 'shot' twice."[313] Right away one can see the comparison to the preserved miner, who was similarly preserved by chemicals deep down in the earth before being mediated again in literature. Distinguishing between the first and second mediation, Sanders continues: "In the first 'shot' the agency involved can only be called nature and time in a rather abstract way. In the second, the agent can be named, someone has literally snapped the shutter, and the photographs in question can be dated and signed."[314] She notes that in the first stage the body has become "a representation of itself without losing its original material corporeality," whereas in the second circumstance it loses this corporeality, leaving only a mediated trace of it.[315] With minor adjustments this two-stage mediation can be recognised in Mats just the same, and it is this condition which makes him and Tollund Man into embodiments of the mediation processes in which they and the observer are brought together. By doubling the

---

312 Diekmann. "Fotografische Wiedergänger...," 136.
313 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 24-5.
314 Ibid.
315 Ibid.

process these ruin bodies represent the process of representation, giving the receptive subject a look behind the lens.

The Uncanny Nearness and Sublime Distance of Human Ruins

Even though their corporeal subjectivity and agency are long gone, Tollund Man and the Falun miner retain a distinct trace of their humanity. Inasmuch as they may retain some sense of life though, one must note that these ruin bodies do not see the observer in return, thus they reflect the mediating eye rather then reciprocate it. In the case of Tollund Man photographic nearness intensifies the dynamic of alienation and identification which Sanders defined above and furthermore instills an uncanny aspect to the encounter. Roland Barthes' assertion that death is the eidos of photography from *Camera Lucida* can help approach this idea, since in a manner comparable to Sanders and Steigler, he wrote that photography transforms subject into object "and even one might say, into a museum object [...]."[316] This statement addresses the fundamental dilemma of my project, for photography opened up a new intensity of self-reflexive disembodiment for the modern subject. By turning life into static images that were near exact replications of reality, photography instills a distinct awareness of temporality in everyday mediation. Barthes explains, echoing the dilemma of self-coincidence and reflection that characterizes my study: "History is constituted only if we consider it, only if we look at it - and in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it. As a living soul, I am the very contrary of History, I am what belies it, destroys it for the sake of my own history [...]."[317] The notion that life can be abstracted from itself through mediation - i.e. that life as it is lived and life as it is comprehended oppose each other - is present in Barthes' theory, as through photography

---

316 Roland Barthes. *Camera Lucida.* Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1980. 13.
317 Barthes. *Camera Lucida*, 65.

humankind gained the ability to manifest for itself the temporal stasis so foundational to its

knowledge process. Barthes notes that the awareness of this fact has fostered a dissonance with

photographic images and the interplay of temporality and memory. He writes that "there is

always a defeat of Time in [historical photos]: that is dead and that is going to die. These two

little girls looking at a primitive airplane above their village [...] how alive they are! They have

their whole lives before them; but also they are dead (today), they are then already dead

(yesterday)."[318] When one considers this in relation to Tollund Man's alienation/identification

dynamic, there is no 'going to' die involved - he has been dead since the time of the ancient

Romans and Germanic tribes. This causes in Barthes' terms a vertigo of time, wherein the

observer cannot stabilize its relation to past and present. The phenomenon arises in my reading

because Tollund Man's age precludes him from any relatable cultural-historical timeline yet at

the same time he is so well-preserved as to seem somehow personally relatable.

Tollund Man has, for his modern observers, always been already dead. A significant part

of Sanders' study is then the question of where one locates the distinction between the grisly

corpse of a murdered man and an incredible archaeological find. To get a sense of the question

one need only try a brief experiment using the definite article in Tollund Man's name: Tollund

Man versus The Tollund Man. The difference may seem minor in semantic terms, but it shows

how easily the identification/alienation dynamic can tip to one side or the other. Ultimately

observers must determine the balance for themselves, for the vertiginous span of time leads to an

indistinct line between humanity and artifact. This balance is an important aspect of the

encounter, for Sanders' notion of Tollund Man being caught in a double-take[319] brings him into

---

318 Barthes. *Camera Lucida*, 96.
319 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 35.

an aesthetic equation where his double mediation can make him doubly alienating. The concept

is relevant (albeit to a somewhat lesser extent) to Mats the miner as well and so one must

consider him and Tollund Man as both media representations and once-living beings. This need

becomes more acute with photography, where authenticity is more of a directly visible concern

than for literature. Walter Benjamin explains in *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen*

Reproduzierbarkeit regarding authenticity of the original object in photos: "Noch bei der

höchstvollendeten Reproduktion fällt eines aus: das Hier und Jetzt des Kunstwerks - sein

einmaliges Dasein an dem Orte, an dem es sich befindet."[320] "Das Hier und Jetzt des Originals

macht den Begriff seiner Echtheit aus," he continues, "und auf deren Grund ihrerseits liegt die

Vorstellung einer Tradition, welche dieses Objekt bis auf den heutigen Tag als ein Selbes und

Identisches weitergeleitet hat."[321] Benjamin's assertion is that the here-and-now of the object

depicted by the photo defies reproduction to some extent, but that reproductions such as

photographic images can capture aspects of the original otherwise unseen by the eye. The

authenticity of the original is always therefore compromised by reproduction yet at the same time

enhanced. Benjamin's follow-up point is that the copy can bring the original into situations which

would otherwise be impossible.[322] Some confusion will likely arise here because Benjamin's text

is about photographic images and I claimed above that Tollund Man cannot be considered

strictly as an image nor an aesthetic object. To explain: I use Benjamin's comments here relative

to Sanders' understanding that Tollund Man is a doubly-mediated figure. He is a mediation of

life, and can therefore be discussed using terms such as reproduction and representation not only

because they fit to his condition but also to the way in which he comes to the observer. Tollund

---

320 Benjamin. "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit." *Gesammelte Schriften - Bd. II.*
         Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972. 431-471. 437.
321 Benjamin. "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter...," 437.
322 Ibid.

Man is more than the mediation which preserves him but it is impossible to discuss him without that mediation. This description applies to the other twice-mediated bodies in question here too, as they are amalgams of authenticity and reproduction which have traveled far and wide after their natural lifespans. In photos of Tollund Man specifically the qualities of both original and copy are present, making him here-and-now for the observer but at the same time there-and-then. Sanders addresses this when she writes that "[w]hether human or thing, real or fake, bog bodies are caught in a paradox. On one hand, their uncanniness rests on our experience of authenticity; they are the *real thing!* On the other hand, their uncanniness rests on the possibility that they are *not real*, that they are ghostly *simulacra*. The irony is that if they are real, they are uncanny and that if they are not real, they are uncanny."[323] As she points out, Tollund Man is at once both authentic and simulacra[324] - he brings the observer face-to-face with a shell of human features whose lack of identity, despite such immediate familiarity, evokes a sense of the uncanny.

Sigmund Freud's definition of the uncanny holds that it is caused by repressed or surpassed fear returning to the surface - i.e one feels an uncanny sensation when something that ought to have stayed buried re-emerges to consciousness.[325] His essay takes as its foil an earlier text on the uncanny by Ernst Jentsch, *Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen*, which attributes the feeling more generally to intellectual uncertainty whether something is alive or not - things such as life-like dolls, for instance. Freud argues instead that repression is the main reason one feels the uncanny because "Das Unheimliche ist wirklich nichts Neues oder Fremdes, sondern etwas

---

323 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 49
324 Returning briefly to the word hyperreality, which appeared in a Hamilton quote in my second chapter: The inability to distinguish between real and simulacra is how Baudrillard defines hyperreality, an ambiguity which Tollund Man as an image of a preserved body can evoke.
325 Sigmund Freud. *Das Unheimliche.* Project Gutenberg Ebook. 2010. Online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34222/34222-h/34222-h.htm

dem Seelenleben von alters her Vertrautes, das ihm nur durch den Prozeß der Verdrängung

entfremdet worden ist."[326] The word *heimlich* he explains, coincides with its opposite *unheimlich*,

because one must become familiar with something first before it can become unfamiliar - i.e. one

must see something familiar in a new, unsettling way.[327] This overlapping of familiar and

unfamiliar is key when considering the term relative to Tollund Man. Both Jentsch and Freud

allow that dead bodies are among the better examples of uncanny objects because death is the

ultimate unknown for the living. The loss of the body, i.e. that it could stop working as usual or

become otherwise unfamiliar if some part of it were to be lost, is a deeply-rooted fear that, for

Freud, evokes uncanny experiences. Tollund Man's distinct uncanniness comes in this way from

an ontological level: He is an ancient body, returned from the dead in a poetic sense - or at least

not passed fully into death because his flesh has not decayed and his face is still so lifelike. Here

Freud's uncanny would place emphasis on infantile fears that are re-awakened by something that

should not be possible, but one can focus too on the notion that preserved bodies are something

familiar that takes on an unfamiliar appearance. What's more, as Freud explains, the uncanny

manifests when the difference between imagination and reality is effaced. Ruin bodies prompt

exactly that sort of flight into a frame of mind where the dividing line between reality and

imagination blurs. Consider for example Glob's response to the first time he saw Tollund Man,

where he mused that the man's soul seemed to have returned as he was dug out of the bog.

Sanders explains further how bog body ontology is infused with uncanniness:

> Whether they have returned from the dead; are fake bodies that trick the eye (doubles); or are
> caught between life and death (buried alive in a quasi-existence we all fear), bog bodies qualify
> on all fronts as the ultimate manifestation of uncanniness, locked in the space between the

---

326 Freud. *Das Unheimliche*, S.II.

327 There is a doubling of the word in this coincidence, as *heimlich* contains within its possible definitions both
     familiar and secret. *Heimlich* is thus semantically close to its apparent opposite *unheimlich*.

familiar and the unfamiliar. Above all, they harbor a particular kind of *temporal* uncanniness that

is not only un-*heimlich* (unhomely) but also un-*zeitlich* (un-timely).[328]

Tollund Man is locked, she writes, in the space between familiar and unfamiliar. From this

interstice he provokes feelings of the uncanny based on uncertainty and familiarity - i.e. he is a

two-thousand year-old body, how can his face still look like that of a living person? Moreover,

his flesh has fallen away in some places to reveal his bones but elsewhere the flesh is perfectly

preserved. A corpse and a living body are both familiar enough on their own, but when the

observer sees the qualities of both in one form it causes a dissonance whereby the most familiar

experiences of one's living body coincide with their opposite. The uncanny spreads from this

dissonance to significantly characterize the encounter with Tollund Man, according to Sanders.

Interestingly enough however, she explains that Freud knew of bog bodies but didn't pay them

much mind in relation to his theory of the uncanny. Even though bog bodies suit it perfectly in

her estimation,[329] Freud was, she points out, more interested in the Pompeii bodies[330] which

produce a similar effect for they too evince absence become presence and vice-versa. The

Pompeii bodies are however not actually bodies, rather plaster casts taken from the spaces left in

fallen ash by bodies. The result may be comparable but Sanders distinguishes that "if the

Pompeian plaster casts are 'negatives' turned 'positives,' showing what is no longer present, bog

bodies are 'positives' turned "negatives": the "things-themselves," but without aesthetic distance

or representational detachment.[331] Though I would classify both as ruin bodies, they display

"different kinds of sensual corporeality" writes Sanders,[332] which indicates that bog bodies are

---

328 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 50.
329 See Sanders' chapter "The Archaeological Uncanny" for her discussion of Freud and Jung's differing
        interpretations of bog bodies.
330 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 48.
331 Ibid, 55.
332 Ibid, 56.

still flesh. This point is crucial for discussing their uncanniness because whereas the Pompeii

bodies are mediated traces of absent flesh, bog bodies are the flesh itself becoming that mediated

trace. To make the comparison once again with Mats Isrealsson, whose flesh was preserved for a

period of time but then decayed to leave only a literary trace behind: He too is an example of

uncanniness displayed by a once-living human body suspended impossibly beyond the

conditions of its natural life. Both he and Tollund Man are mediated selves that continue to exist

long after their lives have ended, which brings back a central point for my project: That the self

only coincides with itself in mediation, where it is transformed into something other. This

alienation is a common idea among many of my cited theorists, and can be understood as an

awareness which defines modern subjectivity. Tollund Man provides an example of an

individual's physicality coinciding directly with its otherness in mediations.

To reiterate a point from Barthes there is always an inescapable element of death in

photos because they are images of life that have been removed from life. A person pictured in a

photo is seized in the image, and be that person dead or alive in reality the mediated image

makes them present (and absent) all the same. In this way photos bring the living closer together

when they are apart and bring the dead close to life again, which goes some length to explain the

popularity of post-mortem photos in the medium's early days. As Stiegler stated above however,

the passage between life and death goes both ways so the qualities of each are never secured one

way or the other in a photographic image. Paraphrasing Barthes, Diekmann writes that

photography

> ...ist nicht nur jenes Bild, in dem wir die Toten sehen: Wiedergänger, Doubles, insistente
> Stellvertreter derjenigen, die nicht mehr sind. Sie ist zugleich als ein Medium zu betrachten, das

uns zu Gespentern macht oder doch dem Tod ein Stück näher bringt. Die Annäherung vollzeiht sich im mimetischen Register: in der Produktion eines arretierten, erstarrten Erscheingungsbildes, das immer wieder als exemplarisches Schauspiel der Mortifikation beschrieben worden ist.[333]

Her summary points back to Stiegler's statement that photography is the *Todeskunst par Excellence*, emphasizing that its mortifying aspect brings anything over which it passes closer to death. The uncanny character that photos of the dead can impart is thus rooted in the uncertainty of their ontological status and their simultaneous nearness to life and death. Tollund Man brings death, that most deeply-repressed fear and biggest mystery of humankind, to the surface in an ambiguous and unsettling manner. The uncanniness he provokes stems not simply from his face looking too well-preserved to be a corpse, but rather because his simultaneous nearness and distance evoke the unfathomable darkness whence he came. To get a sense of this one need only try to imagine writing a paragraph for Tollund Man like Hebel's succinct outline of world events that took place while his miner was missing. Though it would contain much of recorded human history, it may not bring this man any closer to the observer. His uncanniness is therefore also an effect of his mediation, for he is suspended twice beyond life in an interstice where he and the observer meet but cannot truly interact. The dynamic of distance and closeness, and the question of authenticity versus simulacra define the encounter with Tollund Man, but even across a rift of mediation and unknowable history his humanity is still discernible. In the Falun story time strengthens the bond of love between the miner and fiancée, as she waited the rest of her life for him to return. When Tollund Man is placed in the same scenario however, the effect of time provokes a dizzying, lifeless void rather than a return to comforting affection.

---

333 Diekmann. "Fotografische Wiedergänger...," 141.

Through this void, the persistence of Tollund Man's flesh and the loss of his identity across a vast span of time evoke a feeling of uncanniness that can easily tip toward sublime horror. Both Tollund Man and the preserved miner persisted after they should have decayed, but where the Falun miner's humanity was affirmed through his absence over time relative to his fiancée's memory, Tollund Man had nobody waiting for him. In actuality his entire society had disappeared, leaving him as its sole mute emissary. Trying to piece together an identity for him is thus an exercise in balancing his humanity on the precipice of a void of otherness. On this precipice also teeters the distinct horror of human ruins in that they evince mortality from the viewpoint of infinity. In the examples of Mats Isrealsson and Tollund Man this horror stems from their simultaneous nearness and otherness - the observer can feel a connection with them as fellows but there is something unknowable and other about them at the same time. When one puts oneself at a distance from them as fellow humans - when one really tries to take into account Tollund Man's age for instance - the horror grows as the ruin body becomes less like the observer. Mortality from the viewpoint of infinity is not a perspective a living person can truly have, so when it manifests in the encounter with human ruins it begins as an unsettling uncanniness then deepens to a horror of seeing from an alien perspective. To this end one must note that where the ruined structure represents in an analogical sense human life in decay, the human ruin is that decay, and its uncanniness can also be its sublimity.

For Immanuel Kant the horror of temporality was just one facet of the sublime, but an important component of the experience. In his *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1763), he writes that "[e]ine lange Dauer ist erhaben [...] wird sie in einer

unabsehlichen Zukunft voraus gesehen, so hat sie etwas vom Schreckhaften an sich,"[334] which

can be reversed in the case of Tollund Man to show how his distant past evokes a sublime horror.

His timeline actually flows in both directions with no point of entry or exit, but the distant past

has the stronger pull in my reading because it makes Tollund Man an impossible being who

confounds understandings of life and death - i.e. he should not still be here. Kant's notion that the

sublime defies reason and so requires a supra-sensible (*übersinnlich*) viewpoint orients his

concept of the sublime to the ruin/*Lehrgebäude* dynamic and the interstitial perspective which

apprehends it. His sublime experience occurs when the mind sets itself against incomprehensible

objects and situations. It maintains an ambivalence toward the senses which places reason in a

position of superiority, but human ruins show how it can actually do the opposite as well. In

Kant's characterization a sublime object exceeds the subject's sensory capacity to grasp it, thus

the sublime is found in precisely that interstice where reason takes the upper hand over the

senses. He defines the experience as a sense of overwhelming awe or pleasurable dread -

indicating a specific distance from which subjects can be awed or frightened but still remain

comfortable in their own reason. It can however also be understood as a way to slip out of one's

reason. This dual-function positions the sublime at the crux of living knowledge in German

literary theory around 1800, and when set within the larger pattern of changes affecting the

contemporary German intellectual landscape it demonstrates how the reasoning subject can

regard itself as either part of an organic weave, or as a distanced observer, shielded behind its

reason.

The sublime was a prominent topic in European (particularly British) philosophy of the

---

334 Immanuel Kant. *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen - Erster Abschnitt.* Project
    Gutenberg Ebook. Online: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/kant/gefuehl/chap001.html

early eighteenth century, to which Kant offered a later commentary.[335] I leave out its various

definitions and permutations here in favour of focusing solely on its horror aspect, which Kant

intensified by positing the sublime in an interstice between reason and sense experience.[336] The

sublime is, as Kant explained: "eine Lust [...] welche nur indirekt entspringt, nämlich so daß sie

durch das Gefühl einer augenblicklichen Hemmung der Lebenskräfte und darauf sogleich

folgenden desto stärkern Ergießung derselben erzeugt wird, mithin als Rührung kein Spiel,

sondern Ernst in der Beschäftigung der Einbildungskraft zu sein scheint."[337] In this way he

defines sublime experiences as a sort of mental play which affirms a security in metaphysical

dissociation, for while these experiences entertain a degree of uncertainty about the world the

mind is ultimately drawn toward rational resolutions and totalities. Sublime horror is found in the

interstice between understanding and the impossibility thereof, which for Kant is spanned by a

supra-sensible perspective: "Erhaben ist, was auch nur denken zu können ein Vermögen des

Gemüts beweiset, das jeden Maßstab der Sinne übertrifft."[338] The mind's ability to reason beyond

sensory input marks for Kant a desire for reason and knowledge in greater magnitude, thus in the

sublime one finds the mind handling the absence of reason using the best tool it has to do so:

Reason. Kant explains in this regard that the sublime represents "unsere Einbildungskraft in ihrer

ganzen Grenzlosigkeit, und mit ihr die Natur als gegen die Ideen der Vernunft, wenn sie eine

ihnen angemessene Darstellung verschaffen soll...,"[339] which is to say that the limitlessness

---

335 Kant's *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* was published eight years after Edmund
     Burke's influential *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757).
     His *Kritik der Urteilskraft* was published even later still, in 1790.
336 See Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry...* for exploration of the sublime in a manner that resembles Herder's
     organically-focused philosophy. Burke describes the sublime experience in more physiological terms than Kant
     (eye musculature, for instance), giving it more basis in the sense organs themselves instead of the metaphysics
     of perception.
337 Immanuel Kant. *Kritik der Urteilskraft - Analytik des Erhabenen,* § 25. Project Gutenberg Ebook. Online:
     https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/kant/kuk/kukp251.html
338 Ibid.
339 Ibid.

evoked by the sublime experience is mirrored by a limitlessness of imagination that can, by conceiving of the former's vastness, reinforce a sense of mastery over it - or at least a supposition that it can be mastered.

Kant highlights a discrepancy with the sublime that can only be resolved by a supra-sensible viewpoint, namely how humankind grants itself pre-eminence and affords itself a security with which it can project itself over and above an unintelligible world. For Kant this is an important aspect of human development because it enables the confidence to be wise, the task he believed humankind must undertake if it is to attain maturity and self-determination. The result however was an *Überlegenheit über die Natur* in Kant's terms[340] that became foundational to modern western aesthetics, science, and politics - the dissociative aspects of which Herder called into question through a closer alignment of humankind with the natural world via the organs of perception. Kant's notion that "die Erhabenheit [ist] in keinem Dinge der Natur, sondern nur in unserm Gemüte enthalten, sofern wir der Natur in uns, und dadurch auch der Natur (sofern sie auf uns einfließt) außer uns, überlegen zu sein uns bewußt werden können,"[341] exemplifies a perspective that creates distance between the modern subject, itself, and its world. The sublime experience, in this understanding, is as Kant explains a way one can see something as fearful without being afraid of it. It is thus a means of measuring oneself against larger forces - i.e. nature.[342] Ruins subvert this definition however, by demonstrating that the structures of humankind are not superior to nature. In this, I locate the potential for ruins to reverse Kant's sublime formulation as a means of mastery over nature and demonstrate the horror beyond reason - that crack in consciousness through which Nietzsche warned one should not look. As I

340 *Kant. Kritik der Urteilskraft - Analytik des Erhabenen,* § 28.
341 Ibid.
342 Ibid.

noted above there is a difference between ruined structures and ruin bodies because the ruin body directly shows the absence of life and reason via a human form in which one would expect to find them. The resulting figure is infused with the realization that there can be no human mastery over nature, and the horror of illusions to the contrary. Tollund Man is suspended between prehistory and the observer's present - an expanse that evokes a vertiginous horror of the unknown when a living individual tries to fathom it. No reason can lessen the uncanniness or the outright horror of Tollund Man's suspension, thus his sublimity is not one that reinforces a mastery over nature. Hartmut Böhme's reading of Kant's sublime helps clarify my project's connection between ruin and human body in this sense: "Erhaben ist nicht Natur, sondern das ratiozentrierte Selbst des Menschen. Diderot ist ehrlicher, wenn er die Angst im Rücken der Aufklärung nicht verleugnet: daß alle Geschichte von Natur eingeholt wird."[343] His contrast between Kant and Diderot emphasizes perfectly for my purposes how the security of human knowledge is subverted by ruins: "Ruinen als Memento der unüberbietbaren Macht der Natur verlieren jeden heilsgeschichtlichen Sinn und sind auch nicht länger wie in der Renaissance Insignien der Macht des Souveräns."[344] The ruin is a memento mori affected by forces that are largely a mystery to living humans, thus the longing with which Diderot infused them. When one considers Tollund Man in this manner, he too is changed by these unknown forces into something equally mysterious. His particular appeal to both the uncanny and the sublime thus comes from the fact that he is human flesh spanning the known and unknown, knowledge and nature. "Auffällig ist," adds Böhme "daß bei Kant die Ästhetik des Erhabenen zu einem Teil der Ästhetik der Natur wird - in der bemerkenswerten Form jedoch, daß nicht die Natur selbst als erhaben zu gelten habe, sondern jene Effekte im Subjekt, die durch die große oder mächtige

---

343 Böhme. *Aesthetik der Ruinen*, 291.
344 Ibid.

Natur ausgelöst werden und durch welche das Ich seiner unangreifbaren Intelligibilität inne wird.

Dies ist Kants Pointe."[345]

In my reading the horror of the sublime experience is supposed to be alleviated by the distance of subject from object, but in the case of Tollund Man distance from the observer only deepens the sublime temporal vertigo of the encounter and with it the horror. In this way it emphasizes that while the sublime can reinforce the rational, supra-sensible mind, it also functions as a means to slip out of reason and shift from the security of metaphysics to a horror which affirms an embodied perspective. Böhme explains that Kant's definition of the sublime became programmatic for modern industrial society, writing that it was a "...teils begleitende, teils vorauseilende ('protoindustrielle') ästhetische Fassung des neuzeitlichen Programms von Subjektermächtigung und Naturunterwerfung. Das Erhabene also ist die Simulation des Chaos und der Unermeßlichkeit, aus sicherer Distanz, um eine Angst in Szene zu setzen, über die Herr zu werden herrliches Bewußtsein induziert."[346] The aesthetics of the sublime were intended, he explains, to let the imagination gain mastery over the things it could not fathom.[347] The encounter with Tollund Man however brings the subject into a sublime experience where the security of distance is revealed to be a mediated illusion, prompting dreadful awe instead at what one cannot fathom and not reinforcing any sense of security. In the interstice of the human ruin nature and the human body are at once familiar and unfamiliar. Böhme specifies further that it is precisely in the unfamiliar facets of nature where the modern subject can reconcile itself with otherness, using as an example the element of stone. "Das Steinerne," he states, "als das dem Menschen

---

345 Böhme. "Das Steinerne. Anmerkungen zur Theorie des Erhabenen aus dem Blick des 'Menschenfremdesten'." *Das Erhabene. Zwischen Grenzerfahrung und Größenwahn.* Weinheim, 1989. 160-192. 163.
346 Böhme. "Das Steinerne...," 169.
347 Ibid, 166.

Fremdeste, ja als Inbegriff des Anderen der Natur, lehrt auch eine Dimension des Erhabenen, die nicht mehr im Sinne der Kantischen überlegenen Selbsterhaltung, sondern der Selbstbegrenzung und der Anerkennung des Anderen zu verstehen ist."[348] The connection he posits between stone and the human body is an analogue whereby stone, understood as inanimate, is likened to the most inanimate aspect of the body: Its bones. Böhme explains that "Gleichzeitig sind die Knochen das Dauerhafteste an unserem Leib; das Dauerhafteste ist also der Tod. Der Knochenmann ist ein klassisches Todesemblem. Das, was in uns dem Stein analog ist - die Knochen -, scheint also vor allem Todes-Erfahrungen zu entsprechen."[349] "Das Zarte des lebendigen Fleisches kulminiert paradox darin," he continues, "daß der empfindlichste Punkt des Lebens, die Sterblichkeit, als Knochenmann-Allegorie schon in uns ist."[350] Here the coincidence of life with its opposite enables the subject to confront those deepest-repressed fears of death as an aspect of the living body. In this way, Tollund Man elicits both an uncanny closeness and a sublime distance of affirmative horror by serving as a memento mori and an embodiment of mediated stasis, showing that the dread of sublime experiences can direct the subject outwardly to life and not inwardly to more fear and illusions of mastery.

Conclusion

No matter how permanent ruin bodies may seem, they cannot remain indefinitely as physical corporea. Great care goes into keeping Tollund Man in display condition for instance, in order to avoid the situation that befell Mats Isrealsson's body which had no modern museum technology to aid in its preservation. So by studying how ruin bodies confound established notions of past and present, fixed and fluid, presence and absence, my project finds in them a

---

348 Böhme. "Das Steinerne...," 170.
349 Ibid.
350 Ibid.

direct engagement with the impossibility of stasis - the principal riddle of human perception and the reason knowledge requires an interstitial perspective. Tollund Man appeals to this riddle because he persists so clearly in images, but these make him into an unintentional embodiment of the process of mediation by which humankind builds its knowledge structures. This chapter shows how Tollund Man reveals the interstitial aspect of photography using the medium itself, and connects this topic to my discussion in preceding chapters about the aesthetic and philosophical issues of German literature circa 1800. In addition it examines the changing media/ideational conditions of the twentieth century that put these original issues into starker relief, showing how the ruin gaze adapts to new conditions but keeps the same issue in focus. What my study of human ruins offers is a glimpse behind the curtain of cognition and mediation. These bodies bring about the realization that "[t]o be human is to be between," as Robert Ginsberg puts it, that "[w]e cannot reach final things, or rest in partiality."[351] To this end, Tollund Man directs observers toward the expanse of unknowable history and natural processes, unfathomable forces and timespans at play. And even though, as Sanders notes,[352] the human body has not changed drastically in the time since Tollund Man's death, its circumstances have changed in ways that have altered its relationship to and understandings of the world it inhabits. From the ruin body of Tollund Man therefore comes an illuminating flash that reflects the observing subject in midst of the action of knowing: In order that humankind might attain the sort of knowledge the Enlightenment promised, it must fabricate a world from itself that is then easy to hold in higher value than the given world with all its inconsistencies and unknowns. Photography is a powerful tool in the construction of knowledge but one that brought a new degree of dissonance by exacerbating the deathly aspect of mediation more than ever. The

---

351 Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*. New York: Rodopi, 2004. 416-17.
352 Sanders, 223.

exactitude of the photographic image changed aesthetic theory by introducing a true-to-form medusa's gaze - a crucial point to reiterate for my study of Tollund Man because he is known principally through photographs. Thus in the same way the preserved miner can be understood as an analogy for the process of mediation, so too can Tollund Man, for in both cases the effect is the same: A ruin body doubles the process and reflects mediation rather than reciprocates it.

Epilogue

Archaeology of the Ruin Gaze from Diderot to Benjamin

Following my discussion of photography and Tollund Man I proceed now to Walter

Benjamin's idea of the dialectic image, which can be understood as a twentieth-century iteration

of the in-between perspective this project examines. In much the same way as Winckelmann and

Herder, Benjamin is a liminal writer whose works illuminate the media conditions of his time as

well as those that came after him - specifically connecting the media theory of modernity and

post-modernity. To address this connection I will first review the thread I have followed from

Diderot's poetic assessment of ruins, to Winckelmann's receptive aesthetic theory, to Herder's

organic philosophy, bringing together the salient points of my ruin gaze archaeology. Tracing the

ruin gaze from its emergence in late-eighteenth century discussions of self-reflexivity and

mediation to Benjamin's dialectic image will establish a twentieth-century connection to the

living mediations sought by Herder and Schlegel. It will futhermore reiterate why the time

around 1800 is understood as the beginning of modern thought and the importance of the ruin

gaze as a facet thereof. With Benjamin's dialectic image this chapter demonstrates how the ruin

gaze is a means to interpret temporal and ontological layering that is always present in mediation

but is usually ignored in favour of clear interpretations. For Benjamin the dialectic image is an

erratic mode of interpretation, breaking apart continuities and *Gebäude* and leading to what he

calls constellations of meaning, a term comparable to the living knowledge of Herder and

Schlegel, but also one that leaves behind some of their organic connotations, as I will show.

Constellation is a term moreover which demonstrates my study's approach, bringing together as

it does ideas, objects, and tenses that don't sit neatly side-by-side in a linear pattern of

understanding. The logic of the constellation is how the human ruin ultimately makes sense, and

takes it from being simply an ontological conundrum to a means of interpreting mediation from an embodied, interstitial perspective.

Amid the sweeping changes to epistemology and aesthetic theory that characterize the period around 1800 my project focuses on awareness of self-reflexivity - i.e. how in Foucault's terms the modern subject became a new type of knowledge object for itself. Foucault's is the most modern articulation of the idea I include, but the same point is found in Herder - who establishes in late-eighteenth century terms how the subject senses an interstice in itself because its cognition and perception obscure the contiguity between self and world but still allow that connection to be intuited. My thesis is that the ruin attunes the modern subject to this awareness, as the ruin exists in multiple tenses and displays them simultaneously. From this comes my definition of the ruin gaze as a perspective which takes into account temporal and ontological layering in mediation and aligns the interstitial status of the ruin with the subject's own interstitial status. This perspective can be understood as a vital component of the living knowledge that thinkers such as Herder and Schlegel sought around 1800, and to uncover this my project uses a framework informed by ruin aesthetics and literary fragment discourse, narrowing its discussion down to examples of human bodies caught in the ruin gaze. These human ruins illuminate the modern subject's encounter with itself as an object of knowledge because they are both knowledge object and human body, showing conditions of life in suspension that amounts to double mediation, once by natural means - vitriol liquid in a copper mine and acids in a peat bog - and then again by literature and photography. My study presents human ruins as an enigma through which the modern subject comes face to face with the dissociating tendency of its knowledge. They mirror the observer as an uncanny double,

displaying the effect of mediation while still retaining a trace of their former life. The human ruin therefore offers unique insight into theories of literary self-reflexivity and embodied mind that emerged in German thought around 1800 - theories which through Nietzsche and then Benjamin became central to modern and post-modern philosophy and literary theory.

I have developed my topic from a diverse set of writers spanning Diderot to Foucault but its primary influence is Herder, who in his stated effort to bring philosophy back down to earth, rooted thought in the organs of the body rather than metaphysical abstraction. His organic philosophical view seeks to reconcile the parallelism of material and immaterial with an embodied, interconnected perspective. As he explains in this regard it is not possible to fully grasp what material and immaterial are, but he does not believe "daß die Natur zwischen beiden eiserne Bretter befestigt habe, weil ich die eisernen Bretter in der Natur nirgend sehe und gewiß da am wenigsten vermuthen kann, wo die Natur so innig vereinte."[353] By not framing experience with the material/immaterial duality common to his time Herder sought a relation of self and world which could be understood in an embodied way through sense experience and analogy. In his model, every aspect of the world is interconnected - there is no immaterial. Some things may be invisible or incomprehensible, but they all exist within the same continuum. The modern subject finds its way through this interconnected world with a reciprocity of sense experience, meaning there is a communication of self and world by which Herder explains that nature has nowhere separated material and immaterial and that such a division only occurs as an effect of the mind. Herder's embodied philosophy presages phenomenology and existentialism in this way, diagnosing a state of dissociation in which the modern subject easily finds itself amid the

353 Herder. *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...,* 193.

demands for objectivity and comprehensiveness its knowledge systems make of it. Nietzsche too

pursues this idea when he claims that negation of life is at the core of Western thought, that its

knowledge tends to lead away from life as it is lived. Both thinkers note that the modern subject

knows it is part of a living world but cannot inhabit it fully on account of its knowing. They warn

that by losing sight of inherent perceptual limitations, the modern subject places itself into a

space where it is no longer accountable to anything but its own mind. Here the modern subject

reaches the *Lehrgebäude* as Herder critiqued it, in that disembodied knowledge is a contradiction

to life. Herder believed that Descartes' *zweifelndes Ich* leads western philosophy into abstraction

by isolating the mind in itself, where it creates systems of thought that are as Herder writes *eins

unnatürlicher als das Andre.*[354] Even though this may miss nuances in Descartes' method, it

nevertheless points out a condition where living beings come to believe they can exist outside of

the continuum of life which in fact sustains them.[355]

To reiterate the condition of modern subjectivity: The individual is interconnected with

all other things but its thought process contains an interstice which isolates it. Merleau-Ponty

addresses this when he writes that the body must be present in order to exist, it cannot be merely

an object for itself. "I observe external objects with my body," he explains, "but my body itself is

a thing which I do not observe: in order to be able to do so, I should need the use of a second

body which itself would be unobservable."[356] Combining Herder and Merleau-Ponty one reaches

a concept of living knowledge that understands the body as a medium by which experience is

shared. This concept typifies for my project the emergence of modernity around 1800, as until

354 Herder. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden...(1775)," 267.
355 Extrapolated from Bruno Latour's "Inside" lecture: https://www.youtube.com/watch?
      v=gzPROcd1MuE&list=PLb8eIfP2zr1-2Vk_Fmqr8JpqAEJ008dks&index=8
356 Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, 104.

this time European philosophy was largely characterized by dissociative metaphysics and

rhetoric inherited from Classical Greece and Christian theology. The search for living knowledge

is thus the connecting fibre between many of the writers I cite in my study, for it best represents

the interstitial nature of human experience and understanding. It expresses how the modern

subject senses a cognitive-perceptual rift which it cannot cross, a riddle which consists in the

awareness that it is part of its world yet somehow simultaneously removed from it. To

understand how humanity's greatest gift comes at this strange cost one must consider that

mediation is the means to knowledge but that the mediating eye distances at the same time it

joins. Merleau-Ponty describes for example how "I can see my eyes in three mirrors, but they are

the eyes of someone observing..."[357] and not someone living. With this he points to how a

displacement, or a dissociation, arises from mediated experience. Moment to moment embodied

circumstance is difficult to grasp in this regard but mediation makes it sensible by framing and

focusing flux into comprehensible units. In the process however it engenders what Merleau-

Ponty refers to as a quasi-space[358] in which the subject steps to the side of its embodied present

and sees things from an abstraction. Merleau-Ponty maintains however that the body's

permanence constitutes its existence, that it is not merely an object in the world but a medium for

communication with the world.[359] This admission leads in his understanding to "...the world no

longer [being] conceived as a collection of determinate objects, but as the horizon latent in all

our experience and itself ever-present and anterior to every determining thought."[360] This

definition of living knowledge helps clarify how literary discourse around 1800 understood the

modern subject's experience of itself as an embedded participant in its world, and how it could

---

357 Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, 105.
358 Ibid, 105.
359 Ibid, 106.
360 Ibid.

best approach this situation.

The search for living knowledge produces the two terms that frame my thesis. The *Lehrgebäude* is the product of a desire to build up and secure knowledge in that quasi-space Merleau-Ponty, Nietzsche, and Herder all understood as exterior to life. Its dialectical counterpart is the ruin, which shows that even the loftiest of such structures are not permanent. The tension between these terms defines the ruin gaze in that the *Lehrgebäude* reflects what the observer wants, i.e. its intent to resolve and understand through established knowledge made into systems of laws, and the ruin reflects the fallibility of those systems. The poetry of ruins, per my reading of Diderot, comes about because ruins put the observer in a reflective frame of mind which affirms that everything decays. The subject, bound as it is to a limited temporal span, experiences a sense of solitude when confronted with the eventual demise of even the sturdiest, grandest, *Gebäude.* Only time will remain, Diderot writes, thus two eternities characterize the push-and-pull of the ruin encounter, which the subject views from its interstice of the present. Svetlana Boym echoes Diderot from a twenty-first century standpoint when she writes that "[r]uins make us think of the past that could have been and the future that never took place, tantalizing us with utopian dreams of escaping the irreversibility of time."[361] Something she clarifies for my archaeology is that narratives of progress through reason have not yet come to fruition. The utopias of reason and humanity envisioned since the Enlightenment have not flourished, the attempts are ongoing but their ruins have become plentiful. One can read this notion in *Unverhofftes Wiedersehen's* summary of world events while its couple were separated. Upheaval and destruction characterize their time apart, that is how the world moves on in

---

361 Boym. "Ruinophilia." *Atlas of Transformation.* Online publication: http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/r/ruinophilia/ruinophilia-appreciation-of-ruins-svetlana-boym.html

Benjamin's reading of the tale. When considered with Benjamin's concept of history as a succession of catastrophes in mind one might wonder whether a significant part of the ruin experience is reflection upon failures in light of the end - where did this or that go wrong, etc. Boym indicates as much when she points out how ruins tantalize with dreams of different futures, perhaps ones that don't correspond to Benjamin's judgement of history. A recognition of mortality is indeed part of the ruin experience, but from reading Boym and Benjamin there is also a recognition of error or contingency involved - a longing for what could have been in light of what is. Boym in particular characterizes the longing of the ruin gaze with the subjunctive mood, for the ruin points to possibility - that which did not come to pass and that which will never come to pass but could have. It keeps both active for the observer, thus the longing comes from an interstitial experience of temporality. Winckelmann longed for the lost-but-not forgotten beauty he saw in the ancient Greeks, and his writings would influence a far-reaching neo-classical aesthetics that characterized the modern world's impressions of the ancient world. I focus on his descriptions of the Belvedere Torso because in them one finds him altering his theoretical framework to explain how the remains of a destroyed ancient Greek sculpture were as beautiful as any finished work. Compared to his other, better-known writings, his text on the Belvedere Torso stands out on account of how it disrupts his overarching aesthetic schema. The torso can still be beautiful he claims, one just needs to see it correctly. However, this means to an extent not really seeing it for what it is as the text shows Winckelmann making the statue whole again and trying to disregard its ruined state. Winckelmann intends to teach a specific type of aestheticising gaze that enables the observer to see the beauty of the Belvedere Torso, but he actually provides a preliminary example of the ruin gaze by overlaying what he sees in his mind's eye upon the object before him. The effect of this gaze, as he explains, was a powerful,

poetic sense of longing that leads him to the mysteries of art. This text makes a compelling

starting point for my project because Winckelmann not only arrived at the ruin gaze via its

opposite, but also because he was somewhat ahead of the idea as it would develop in the writings

of subsequent generations. He thus demonstrates the effect but does not delve into how nor why

the ruined statue brings him to the limits of his aesthetic schema. Instead he defers to art in order

to explain the encounter, establishing art as an authority outside of his senses. The result is a

brief moment wherein Winckelmann engages an object which forces him to supplement his

aesthetic theory with a new type of creative-receptive gaze. His *Geheimnisse der Kunst* in this

sense are the mysteries of his own perception and cognition from which arise an early example

of the ruin gaze as it would manifest throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

By comparing Winckelmann and Herder I distinguish the *Lehrgebäude* and the ruin as a

dialectical pair that sheds light on differing but related ideas in the late German Enlightenment.

In alternate terms the *Lehrgebäude* and ruin can be deemed certainty and change, or closed

versus open schemas. The former is a knowledge structure, built with the aim of securing

knowledge with a once-and-for-all connotation that appeals to systematic thought. The latter is a

process already (and always) underway which is not constructed so much as it is discovered.

Herder's critique of Winckelmann's *Lehrgebäude* of ancient art concerns itself with the same

deferral one finds in the *Beschreibung des Torso*, where Winckelmann avoided the limitations of

his perception via an extra-sensory perspective. Ultimately the intent of the *Lehrgebäude* is to

overcome limitations via knowledge, but the danger is that it does not take these limitations into

account as the condition of a living world. The dissonance between these demonstrates

Schlegel's statement that the mind can easily have too much system and not enough. The balance

therefore rests with each individual, and what Herder's method intends is to inform the decision

by keeping one grounded in one's living circumstance. He did not mean to say that *Lehrgebäude*

are wrong, as he saw their value, but for Herder and Nietzsche much of human knowledge has an

illusory, even deceptive quality, and the *Lehrgebäude* is the emblem thereof. One can see from

this how the ruin found resonance in nineteenth-century aesthetics, for Herder and Winckelmann

both immersed themselves in the remains of ancient cultures while looking for critical

viewpoints for their own time. While Winckelmann's graecophilia went on to influence western

culture greatly, Herder's interest in the fragments of ancient Germanic worldviews - i.e. its poetic

nature and fluid epistemology - did not find such widespread cultural resonance but is

nonetheless just as informative for my study. Namely because the living world is Herder's ideal -

and in Norse poetry he found a worldview in which representations fit together like the aspects

of the world which give rise to them.

The *Lehrgebäude*, in contrast to the living world, is built *ex nihilo* thus it does not need to

contain the possibility of its ruin. It is built to last, not to become a ruin. A living system on the

other hand includes the possibility of its decay and transformation into something else because

this progression constitutes its life. The ruin brings the observer into contact with this awareness,

and human ruins in particular bring the observer face-to-face with it as a condition of living. My

concept of the human ruin comes from an isomorphism which Svetlana Boym points out

between nature, architecture, and the human body.[362] One sees a similarity between these, be it

limbless tree trunks or Belvedere Torso-like sculpture trunks. Moreover, one intuits a connection

between these because they flow together in an irreducible relation. Each affects the others but

---

362 Boym. "Ruinophilia." *Atlas of Transformation.*

ultimately consists of them, per Herder's principle of interconnectedness. Ruins play into this

relation because, as Boym writes, they "embody anxieties about human aging, commemorating

our cultural endeavors and their failures."[363] She notes in addition that because of this

isomorphism the ruin has played a prominent role in western aesthetics since at least the

Renaissance, its connotations changing to fit the times. Keeping with the period around 1800 and

the ruin as a site of potential, my project uses the human ruin to align self-reflexive experience

and the ruin via a particular sort of suspension between life and death, presence and absence.

Borrowing and re-purposing Boym's term ruin gaze, I use it to detail a means through which the

reprieve, the quasi-space, of self-reflection can be seen. The specific effect of a human ruin

enacts this because where there should be reciprocity of mediating gaze between two subjects

there is simply reflection - a mediation of mediation. The preserved miner of Falun and Tollund

Man were well-documented in the media of their times, and directly relate to mediation of life

via the ruin gaze because, unlike the Belvedere Torso, they were living bodies before they were

ruins. Confronted with their compound mediation therefore, the observing subject recognises its

own life caught in the mediating gaze it uses to construct its worldview. It is an effect of ruins to

break the spell of mediation and bring the functions of mind which enable it out from behind the

curtain of cognition. The human ruin is a direct apprehension of this from an embodied

standpoint - in other words a mediation of the interstitial experience. The ruin is an interstitial

site, the human ruin is a body become interstitial site. The distinction is important because the

body is a living medium, but can utilise an interstice inherent to its cognitive-perceptual array to

envision itself outside of that flux. The human ruin occurs therefore when that medium state is

lost and the body remains in the interstice, prompting a recognition of life through its absence.

---

363 Boym. "Ruinophilia." *Atlas of Transformation*.

The Falun story revealed this mediation of the interstitial experience to the early nineteenth century in a remarkable way. The story of the preserved miner is one of sentimental love characteristic of its time, but it is also a revelation of the literary medium brought out by the ruin gaze as a sort of *Vexierbild*.[364] Seen from this perspective the couple on whom the story centres are dislodged from the flow of time both in and by the text, they are given life yet kept from it by the literary topos they inspired. The story's ability to make present emphasizes absence at the same time, which is the interstice from which the ruin gaze proceeds because absence is as prominent in the story as is presence. The *Vexierbild* of the couple's suspension is ultimately why the story lends itself so well to discussing the mortifying aspect of mediation because the miner is a mediation of mediation. In my reading his preservation enacts the same process as literary mediation, and doubled it means that the man is preserved both in the story and by the story. The encounter with him therefore prompts a reflection of the reader's own suspension in mediation. I look at Lessing and Winckelmann's theories of reception for insight into how mediation was discussed around 1800, and find that self-reflexive reception was not something their proto-media theories fully encompass. Lessing comes close by accounting for the subject in aesthetic experience and by noting differences in reception depending on the medium. In his terms visual art is a medium that presents objects *nebeneinander*, and literature is one that presents them *aufeinander*. By demonstrating the differences between media, Lessing intends to affirm their individual qualities but his unspoken point of departure is that illusion was the entire purpose of art - i.e. that a sense of the whole was crucial to interpretations of beauty. However, his aesthetic categories end up doing the opposite in the eyes of a then-emergent modern subjectivity. The aesthetic theories of Lessing and Winckelmann instill an interstice within the act of reception for

---

364 Literally "image puzzle," a type of aesthetic device popular around 1800 which used images to present a
     second, hidden image. See the Grimm dictionary definition: https://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB

which they cannot account, as both believe the harmonious whole of an art object represents its highest potential for beauty but they must overlook limitations of perception and mediation to attain this perspective. They put a division in place which shows that both sides of the division are necessary. Lessing's ideas in *Laokoon*, just as Winckelmann's in the *Beschreibung des Torso* revolve around the observing subject in the act of reception and indicate (though indirectly) that in mediation it uses both fixed and fluid states to grasp aesthetic experience. My readings of Winckelmann and Lessing illustrate how receptive aesthetics were changing with the shift toward modern subjectivity, as theory was no longer guided by accepted rules of rhetoric but increasingly by a hermeneutics of subjective reception. Perhaps most crucial to note in the theories of Winckelmann and Lessing is that perception was considered at their time to be an automatic response rather than the subjective process commonly attributed to modern thought. As Winckelmann's encounter with the torso shows however, the ruin's mediation nexus - their temporal simultaneity and ontological layering - disrupts an automatic apprehension. Incorporating Winckelmann and Lessing alongside later theorists initially seems to distance their writings from the modern day, but it is my intent to show that while concepts which are given for the modern subject were not at all given for them, the circumstance is the same. Their discussions of perception and mediation took place as modern understandings thereof were only just emerging, which makes their similar attribution of an in-between status to the receptive subject worth exploring. Moreover, their works influenced literary discourse around 1800 significantly thus their ideas were still commonly read as the preserved miner was becoming a literary trope in the early/mid nineteenth century. His ruin body evokes the uncertainty and tension between Lessing's aesthetic categories of *aufeinander* and *nebeneinander* and reveals Winckelmann's aestheticising gaze to itself via an embodiment of those concepts.

My study finds in Lessing and Winckelmann's reception theory an early point of reference for the notion that the body can be understood as a medium. The preserved miner serves that purpose as a sort of negative - a ruin where time and memory push back and forth against one another, a ruin which preserves a human form but not its subjective reciprocity with the world. The narrative of his tale attributes him identity, but it degrades with subsequent versions to leave him as an unnamed trope. The narrative folds points in time together to let the miner and fianceé catch up to each other again, but neither have much bearing in their reunion. As Neubauer explains, this is how the two reunite only in a sentimental sense - the miner is no longer the man he was, having become instead a human ruin which has the same effect as the medium which brings him to the reader, showing how literature must paradoxically suspend life in order to narrate it. The fianceé on the other hand seems to have lived her years since the accident largely in her memories of the missing miner. The ruin gaze reconnects their temporal lapse at the site of their reunion, where one sees that the miner's ruin body exists in a doubly-mediated condition which gives the tale its uniquely interstitial twist. The miner's preserved body, reintroduced to the living world long after his disappearance, causes an incongruity, to paraphrase Robert Ginsberg, wherein one encounters what one would never have thought to look for and what one never even considered possible.[365] This is to say that the ruin uniquely enables the observer to question the process by which it combines various *Lehrgebäude* into a *Weltgebäude*, and that the human ruin gives the process a face.

Returning to the isomorphism of ruin and body with an epistemological lens, I collocate the *Lehrgebäude* with Nietzsche's columbarium - a structure where living knowledge is interred. The

---

365 Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, 2.

ruin is its opposite, a distinction that has to do primarily with an anthropomorphised perspective Herder characterized with the magic lantern of the metaphysician, casting illusions only comprehensible in abstraction. For Nietzsche too it was a space of illusion and ultimately deception which he characterized with death - literally a place where life is interred in the effort to understand it. Connecting Herder's critique of *Lehrgebäude* to Nietzsche's columbarium one sees that both believed mediation offered a perspective which was simultaneously invaluable and impossible for humanity - an omniscient viewpoint which humanity created for itself and from which it then viewed the world with the assumption everything would correspond. In this the modern subject presides like a deity watching over a dead, illusory realm it creates for (and from) itself. Kister points out that literature (and mediation generally, I extrapolate) paradoxically gives life but also removes from life. His use of the term sepulchre corresponds to *Lehrgebäude* or columbarium, in that its written-in-stone surety gives it permanence to persist where living matter does not. Human ruins as I have defined them mediate that mediation, but because their initial mediation is unintentional, they give an accidental glimpse of a process not otherwise apparent.

The Ruin Gaze and the Dialectic Image

The ruin gaze emerges around 1800 in the same moment as modern, self-reflexive subjectivity as a response to how mediations of life can create mortified representations. It opens an aperture on layering of time and tense, and brings about a shock that allows the observer to rearrange usual aspects of its worldview. The ruin gaze renders systems in as fluid a manner as a mediating eye can, capturing their action and the observer's involvement while not holding them in place. My interpretation of this relates to what Mattias Pirholt terms the metamimesis of the

fragment - its representation of representation[366] - in that the ruin gaze accounts for mediation in process. This is how, per my assertions, the preserved miner's tale can be understood as a story about stories and photos of Tollund Man as images of images. The effect calls to mind Benjamin's dialectic image, a modern interstitial figuration that emerges from conditions where knowledge is more reliant upon media images than the late Enlightenment. It is an appellation of the same concept my archaeology finds in Winckelmann, just brought forward into the age of photographic images. The dialectic image is more than simply an image though, just as a photo of Tollund Man is more than merely a photo of a preserved body. Both are locations where objects are brought together in what Benjamin calls constellations - multi-faceted representations that point, through the relation of their components, to some otherwise undisclosed truth of their situation. I glean the legibility of constellations from Merleau-Ponty's description of how sensory understanding comes together: "Now, though perception brings together our sensory experiences into a single world, it does not do so in the way scientific colligation gathers together objects or phenomena, but in the way that binocular vision grasps one sole object."[367] This indicates how elements are brought together and take on a meaning for the observer but also how the ruin gaze discerns layers without assigning them priority, in that it allows multiple tenses presence simultaneously as re-configurable constellations. Moreover it illuminates how mediation functions by the same manner as perception - enabling the observer to layer disparate elements together to create a sensible field. The notion of constellations put forth by Benjamin fits with my paper's interstital theme, as the constellation indicates that receptive interpretation need not bind elements together under one totalising principle or prescriptive systems of laws but instead can allow them to disclose via their proximity their relation to one another and to the observer. It

366 Mattias Pirholt. *Metamimesis: Imitation in Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and Early German Romanticism.* Rochester: Camden House, 2012. 4-5.
367 Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, 268.

is a method that leaves things open to interpretations and rearrangements, and moreover keeps in view the fact that mediations are mediations.

Benjamin's dialectic image fits into my project's theoretical framework as a twentieth-century example of interstitial perspective, though not without a problem I must address. The connection between Herder, the Jena Romantics, and Benjamin is clear enough in terms of their shared interest in open-ended forms of thought and representation, but with Benjamin the organic, embodied nature of these forms is not nearly as prominent. Whereas Herder for instance sought an interwoven continuity of being and an embodied epistemology, Benjamin did not - nor did post-modernist writers like Foucault, who followed his influence. So although my project posits a continuity of ideas from around 1800 to the early twenty-first century, I must note this discrepancy between my sources. Moreover, my use of the term archaeology as a guiding method here will no doubt invite comparisons to Foucault's use of the term. I must also note therefore that where my archaeology establishes connections to argue its points, Foucault's seeks its truths in discontinuity. Benjamin too looks for truths in moments of rupture, so it must be kept in mind that their methodology does not entirely match with my own even though some of their ideas do. Take the ruin for example, which implies for my study an organic progression. In the texts I've cited here from Benjamin the ruin is primarily a disruption, and does not demonstrate organic interconnectedness. Benjamin serves as the link between concepts from around 1800 and the twenty-first century media atmosphere largely because the idea of open-endedness is so important for his works, but one must note that his dialectic image is the product of a more ambivalent, technological, and less organically-embodied worldview. That being said, its similarity to the romantic fragment as mode of thought and expression circa 1800 is evident.

Max Pensky establishes that the definition of a dialectic image is elusive because the concept is presented only in "[h]ints, clues, summations of non existent treatises, elliptical remarks, and a very small number of tightly packed and often hermetic doctrinal statements."[368] The text in which the dialectic image plays its most prominent role is Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk* - a collection of fragments that were unfinished at the time of his death. Its title contains the key to my point: *Passagen* is translated into English as arcades, denoting the Paris arcades which Benjamin took as his inspiration. It can however also be understood to mean passages, both architectural and textual, and the processuality those imply. The second component of the title, *Werk*, relates to the first as Susan Buck-Morss notes because the *Passagen-werk* is not a 'work' in the common understanding of the term, it needs the reader to enact it. As she explains, Benjamin did not leave a commonly-understood work, but rather a huge collection of fragments with "only the most general indications of how [they] were eventually to have been arranged."[369] The work in this sense is a shared task, in that the reader must navigate its multifarious passages sprawling out in different directions. Compared to the *Lehrgebäude* the distinction is clear, as the passage intends movement - both in the architectural sense of going from one area to another, but also in the textual sense of relating passages to one another to form an interpretation.[370] Given the structure of the text, Buck-Morss explains of the *Passagen-werk* that she was uncertain whether her own work was an act of discovering the text or inventing it[371] - a splendid encapsulation of the interstitial receptive/creative mood my project has discussed. The main point I take from scholarship on the *Passagen-werk* is that the meaning one finds in it is not the result of a process

---

368   Max Pensky. "Method and Time: Benjamin's Dialectical Images." *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*. Edited by David S. Ferris. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 177-198. 178.
369   Susan Buck-Morss. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project.* Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991. ix.
370   One could add to this that the arcades of which Benjamin wrote were open structures, often with glass ceilings or open to the air.
371   Buck-Morss. *The Dialectics of Seeing*, ix.

but rather its action - a meaning which is, in turn, true of the dialectic image. This echoes sources from my previous chapters about the ongoing nature of expression and knowledge, and it brings the dialectic image into relation with my framework of living knowledge, for as Łukasz K. Rybiński claims, the power of the dialectic image comes not from its demonstrability as theory but its enactment as a transient event.[372] Pensky furthers the point when he notes that the term dialectic image contains within it a tension that is crucial to understanding it. "The primary locus of the term 'dialectical image' is thus itself the establishment of a (eminently dialectical) tension between two terms which, developed to their extreme, suddenly overcome this opposition."[373] "'Dialectical' normally refers to the relationship of concepts or arguments to one another" Pensky continues, while "'images' are, on the contrary, normally considered in terms of immediacy and singularity. Benjamin's coining of the term was meant, among other things, as a critique of available modes of historical interpretation."[374] For Benjamin's own words on the topic, consider the following from the *Passagen-Werk*:

> Nicht so ist es, daß das Vergangene sein Licht auf das Gegenwärtige oder das Gegenwärtige sein Licht auf das Vergangene wirft, sondern Bild ist dasjenige, worin das Gewesene mit dem Jetztblitzhaft zu einer Konstellation zusammentritt. Mit andern Worten: Bild ist die Dialektik im Stillstand. Denn während die Beziehung der Gegenwart zur Vergangenheit eine rein zeitliche, kontinuierliche ist, ist die des Gewesnen zum Jetzt dialektisch: ist nicht Verlauf sondern Bild, sprunghaft.[375]

This quote demonstrates that Benjamin's dialectic image is an interstitial perspective which enables one to gather presence and absence in a constellation of tenses and states. His choice of

---

372 Łukasz K. Rybiński. "The dialectical image as the critical inner mirror." Aktuel Forskning. Litteratur, Kultur og Medier - Juni 2015. Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2015. 1. Online: https://www.academia.edu/17341331/The_dialectical_image_as_the_critical_inner_mirror
373 Pensky. "Method and Time...," 178.
374 Ibid, 179.
375 Walter Benjamin. *Das Passagen-werk*. Erster Band. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983. 576-77. [N2a, 3]

term is important for my understanding of the dialectic image, as it accords with the embodied

epistemology of Herder and Merleau-Ponty, as well as Nietzsche and Schlegel, for whom

meaning was not given but created - not the result of a process but rather its action. I must stress

here again however the difference between the embodied thought of Herder, Merleau-Ponty, and

Nietzsche, and the less organically-focused thought of Benjamin - who found his way through

the technological developments of the early twentieth century with a more ambivalent eye

toward how mediation and perception interact. Thus when I argue that the concept of

constellation is Benjamin's expression of the same approach nineteenth-century thinkers had to

the riddle of perception and mediated knowledge, my understanding acknowledges that his

method was not necessarily the same as theirs, nor mine for this study. An interpretation I offer

for this is that industrialisation had only just begun in Herder's time but had significantly

changed humanity by Benjamin's time. Herder wrote from an eighteenth-century organic

humanist perspective, whereas Benjamin wrote from a twentieth-century Marxist perspective. I

make this comparison to establish how the organic unity of which Herder wrote was for

Benjamin likely no longer possible during the industrial and ideological mobilization of two

World Wars. Their understanding of non-systematic, open-ended thinking was therefore similar

in some ways but also fundamentally different. Benjamin's constellation anticipates in that sense

the fragmentation of post-modernism. Andrea Krauss notes in this respect that constellations

point toward a theory of reading more than they do any specific meaning.[376] They draw attention

to the instability of their interpretation, she explains, and that in so doing both the instrument and

object of the reading are intertwined.[377] Constellations transmit their own production as

knowledge objects, according to Krauss, which characterizes them in a similar way as Schlegel's

---

376 Andrea Krauss. "Constellations: A Brief Introduction." *MLN*. Vol. 126, no. 3, 2011. 439–445. 439.
377 Krauss. "Constellations...," 440-1.

fragments - i.e. works in progress that display their status as such. It is appropriate then that the source from which I draw the notion of the dialectic image as constellation is itself a collection of fragments which its author never completed. It presents its function to the reader via the praxis of reading and deciphering it, demonstrating the concept of the constellation - though one should note its incompleteness is open to debate, given that Benjamin's death was the reason he never compiled the final work. Indeed one cannot be sure what form the text may have taken had he finished and published it, but its fragmentary structure is nevertheless an effective exhibit of its theory.

For my understanding Benjamin's dialectic image is one form which a mediated interpretation takes from out of a vast number of potential other interpretations. Anthony Auerbach explains this multiplicity when he writes that Benjamin's use of the term *Konstellation* "[...] mobilises the double meaning of the word. Like the English constellation, *Konstellation* can be synonymous with *Sternbild*, or it can denote the total configuration of the heavens at a given moment in which the conjunctions and oppositions of the planets are measured against a sign-system of fixed stars."[378] Benjamin's constellation approach means that, as Rybiński notes, methodology must abandon its "illusory certitude" in order for the dialectical image to make any sense in applicable theoretical term.[379] He notes furthermore that Benjamin's concepts are, generally-speaking, ambiguous by design and often function by their own hermetic logic. So even though the organic, interconnected connotation is not as evident, Benjamin's dialectic image has the same function as the ruin gaze in that both are apertures through which one sees

---

378   Anthony Auerbach. "Imagine no Metaphors: The Dialectical Image of Walter Benjamin." *Image and Narrative.* Issue 18 - Thinking Pictures. September, 2007. Online: http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/thinking_pictures/auerbach.htm
379   Rybiński. "The dialectical image as the critical inner mirror," 2.

new facets of familiar things. The human ruin is a specific experience of this, a layering of time and stages of life which renders not only mediation apparent but also the observer's self-mediation. Rybiński confirms in this sense that there is a commonality with my definition of the ruin gaze because one must use the ruin gaze to glean meaning from it. My project did just that with its discussion of Tollund Man, for it is difficult to classify him as simply an object or concept. One must engage him as a site where there is still a trace of life, for the ruin remains in process, but the exactitude with which photos present Tollund Man to the observer instills a particular alienation which blurs the already-uncertain distinction between his presence and absence. There is no narrative applicable to Tollund Man as a person, thus there is an ever-present question of who and what he is. One must therefore interpret images of Tollund Man as a constellation of life and death, past and present, with a shared humanity serving to connect the points. My study showed how photos of Tollund Man's preserved body bring the observer close to him but also alienate steeply, displaying simultaneous closeness and distance. This discussion of Tollund Man proceeded from my discussion of the Falun miner, adapting the points to photography via their common function of mediating life to understand it. Both appeal to the deathly aspect of media, but Sanders states of photography in particular that it has the effect of making the dead alive and the living dead, a formulation which centres on the primary action of photography: To capture and make visible. Photography unlocked a new perspective for humankind by making visible things that had long eluded perception, but in the process set up a reliance upon objective visual proof. Photography, like Winckelmann's *ruhiges Auge* offers the possibility to transcend the limitations of perception, but takes it further by capturing and making visible facets of life that no other medium before it could do so directly - what Benjamin called the optical unconscious. In this way the encounter with Tollund Man is different than the

encounter with the Falun miner because even though the miner's body decayed long before he became a literary figure, his story makes him feel close to the reader as a person. Tollund Man is visible as a preserved body but has no identity. Photographs capture his preservation in incredible detail but without a story the person who was Tollund Man is long gone. Stiegler explains this condition when he writes that the photographic process transforms living things into a still image that blurs boundaries of states and temporalities, transforming life into a representation of life that via its stasis attains a type of permanence. Tollund Man could be understood in this way if not for the traces of his persistent humanity. The ruin gaze arises in this case from the dissonance between permanence and impermanence, and makes the observer aware of self-mediation in process. Tollund Man provides an example of an individual coinciding with his own mediated self, the result of which is an uncanny form trapped in a circular mediation that feeds back into itself.

The Ruin Gaze and its Twenty-First Century Confluence

The circularity of mediation that the ruin gaze reveals is not a spiral into which it need fall. It can be rather a means of looping out of this spiral and making the observer aware of the mediation at play in its moment-to-moment cognition. My engagement with Tollund Man and Benjamin addresses the fact that photography has steadily become more concentrated in the day-to-day experience of the modern subject. In the early twenty-first century this subject exists in a near-totally mediated world of always online devices, most of its relationships and identities wired to screens and imprinted on servers the moment they are experienced. The literary mass media of the time around 1800 and the photographic mass media of Benjamin's day (and slightly later at the time of Tollund Man's discovery) have developed into the hypertext ecosystem,

where laptops, tablets, and mobile phones which contain integrated cameras allow the capturing and sharing of images and text at an unfathomable rate. What's more, socio-economic shifts of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have made ruins increasingly prominent in this media landscape and the confluence of technology and ruin sites offer new opportunities for the ruin gaze as it falls upon the passing of the twentieth century, a period of industrial development like no other. The ruins of this period are often features of urban landscapes not remarkable in and of themselves at first glance - shopping malls, office buildings, train stations, etc. - but they have the same potential as any ruin to disclose Diderot's poetics. These often banal ruins prompt all the same feelings of temporal blurring, loss, and loneliness in the face of unknowable eternity. But even though humanity's fascination with ruins is unchanged since Diderot's time, the circumstances of this fascination take on a new poignancy with the passing of the twentieth century because during that time the urbanization and industrialisation which were only in their early stages around 1800 expanded to alter human societies and the earth completely. What's more, the media climate of the online age emphasizes the tension I discussed in relation to photography in that the moment something is made visible and present its absence also comes into clearer view.

The ruins of the twentieth century are still close to the collective present memory, thus its afterimages are all the more visible in its decaying *Gebäude*. Returning to Boym and Benjamin's characterisations of ruins as reminders of finitude, the early twenty-first century observer has a unique vantage point on world orders turning to ruin - not simply the structures of the twentieth century passing into ruin but also its ideologies and its circumstances. From this vantage point one sees the Enlightenment dream that reason would uplift humankind abandoned in a landscape

whose ruins point rather to Benjamin's understanding of history as a sequence of dehumanizing catastrophes. A similar thread running through Foucault's *Order of Things* is that modern knowledge tends toward documentation, analytics, and objective proofs, in which humanity disappears. My discussion of Tollund Man addresses this via photographic images, which capture his incredibly preserved features and create an immediate connection but at the same time distance the observer by removing those features from life - a situation encapsulated by Karin Sanders' explanation that photography has the effect of making the living dead and the dead alive.[380] This statement remains of crucial importance to the early twenty-first century subject's experience of ruins, which continue to fascinate via digital photographs and videos but are faced with a risk of disappearing into a mere aesthetic category of ruin. On photo and video sharing sites one can easily find ruin content posted under the moniker urban exploration. A culture of ruin appreciation thrives in this format, its practitioners seeking out and documenting sites across the globe.[381] In this wired ecosystem however the sheer volume of images and the rate at which they travel means that the ruin's status as a living site and the message it imparts may be overlooked. In this context the human ruin shows how tenuous the modern subject's grasp of living knowledge is in a more intensely-mediated atmosphere than my primary sources experienced. It is an atmosphere where the human being is increasingly no longer the locus of knowledge and experience - its devices are. While it has not been this project's intent to offer any sort of timeline for media or technological developments, it does note their intensifying flow from the Enlightenment to the early twenty-first century. The ruin gaze is a constant feature of this flow which shows how self-reflexive reception and interpretation interact with and adapt to changing media and aesthetic conditions. In the pre-1800 perspective of intellectual harmony

---

380 Sanders. *Bodies in the Bog*, 33.

381 See YouTube channels such as *This is Dan Bell* and *Broken Window Theory* for examples of aesthetically- and historically-minded ruin exploration.

represented here by Winckelmann for instance, the ruins of ancient civilisations demonstrated, even in decay, grandeur and prowess to be emulated.[382] To the early German Romantics on the other hand ruins were objects of beauty fitting with the taste for open-endedness in aesthetic discourse of their time. For Benjamin they pointed to the reality of trauma with which modernity has to contend - the price of its development. For the twenty-first century observer ruins indicate the same, and one can compare the period around 1800 with the early twenty-first century as times of significant technical, cultural, and socio-political change. For both, ruins are sites of possibility and disruption to accepted narratives of progress, something Elizabeth Wanning Harries addresses when she explains the fad of fabricated ruins in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Harries explains of these built-to-specification ruins - 'follies' as they were known in their own time - that once one looks past their initial absurdity, they provide some important insight for ruin appreciation. Harries writes that follies show a reciprocal work of human and nature which "reflects the nostalgic denial of the technological that is an important theme both in the nascent industrial age and in our own."[383] Ruins, she explains, can be understood as "the locus of [a] longing to see architecture and nature, not as opposed, but as united."[384] She characterizes this as a sort of collective nostalgic undoing of what the industrial age had started.[385] She understands the follies therefore as ironic monuments that questioned the social bases which supported them.[386] The natural ruin and its fabricated counterpart function in essentially the same way for my purpose if they evoke an interstitial experience in the observer, but following Harries' logic fabricated ruins reveal a specific intent toward ruin - i.e. the desire to imagine one's society in ruin. The follies are however, as Harries notes, the product of a nascent

---

382   A central claim of Winckelmann's.
383   Harries. *The Unfinished Manner*, 69.
384   Ibid, 69.
385   Ibid.
386   Ibid, 84.

industrial society. The twenty-first century observer experiences the intent toward ruin in a more

intensified, pervasive way in mass media as well as in day-to-day life. As I stated above, the taste

for ruins has certainly not abated since the eighteenth century but the experience of one's society

falling to ruin became more affective as industrialization became more all-encompassing.

One gathers from Diderot and Winckelmann's reception of ruins how they are objects

which appeal to beauty and a sense of solitude, as ruins offer a space to ponder the passage of

time and a longing for lost things. Winckelmann stated that the *höherer Geist* of the Belvedere

Torso (and of Greek art generally) was visible in its ruins, while Diderot claimed that ruins made

him ponder himself in view of infinity. For my understanding this effect depends on an object's

procession into ruin and the impression that it was one thing and is now transforming into

another. It is possible however for this procession to be ignored, and for an image of ruin to lack

the living process of ruin. The site of the ruin and its history of personal and socio-political

connections contains a charge which it imparts to the observer, but these connections may not

accompany the ruin as mere image. Harries approaches this when she claims that the follies were

monument to a past nobody can remember clearly,[387] thus even though they might serve to

question the societies that create them they may just as easily play into aestheticising nostalgia.

For my project the ruin is not a reverie but a site of life, and as I have shown this is how it

embodies living knowledge. Its counterpart, characterized with the terms *Lehrgebäude* or

columbarium, had, for Herder and Nietzsche, little basis in life as it is lived. The ruin is more

than a metaphor for the passing of the Classical age or the dreams of the Enlightenment though,

as it demonstrates by its very being the characteristics and process of living knowledge: Flux,

---

387 Harries. *The Unfinished Manner*, 84.

open-endedness, constellation. Central to the encounter is the experience of finitude, which Foucault established as a definitive characteristic of modernity. In *The Order of Things* he notes that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the "profound unity" of the Classical age was shattered, and with it the science of a grand order.[388] Among the central features of this change was a discovery of finitude that manifested in all human endeavour,[389] an awareness that came about, as Foucault explains, because limitless knowledge points back to humanity's limitations.[390] Knowledge becomes infused with finitude around 1800 primarily because experience was given a body that existed and decayed, he writes.[391] The body is thus part of its world, but contains in its array of organs (and media) the ability to view itself as separate - a "fragment of ambiguous space" to use Foucault's term.[392] "Modernity begins when the human being begins to exist within his organism [...]" he explains,[393] characterising the epistemological shift away from metaphysics to an embodied self. It is the awareness of this state which for my purposes defines the modern subject and opens the interstice in which the ruin gaze is found. Humanity recognises itself as finite, Foucault explains, because it knows its organic composition does not match the structures it creates (knowledge or physical). The notion of permanence thus instills the awareness of its opposite in living beings. The ruin is the proof that even those structures intended to be permanent will eventually decay, and so can be understood to embody the awareness of finitude in the modern *episteme*.

     In *Ursprung des Deutschen Trauerspiels* (1928) Benjamin focuses on finitude as the

---

388   Foucault. *The Order of Things*, 246-7.
389   Ibid, 314.
390   Ibid, 246-7.
391   Ibid.
392   Ibid.
393   Ibid.

ruin's message by looking at the Baroque period of German culture. Situated between the early

Enlightenment and the 18th century, and including the devastating Thirty Years' War, he

presents it as a precursor to the time of his writing in that it too was characterized by violent

upheaval, thus making art of the period keenly aware of finitude and ruin because they were

simply part of day-to-day life. As Dominik Finkelde explains:

> "Benjamin wrote his book when the baroque as an epoch torn up by flagrant conflicts was just
> being rediscovered in the Weimar Republic, which was plagued by similar problems. The
> German Baroque was a period of estrangement and alienation. It does not fit into a progressive
> concept of history and cannot therefore be easily categorized in line with the Renaissance and
> the German classical period. [During this] time of the religious wars, enchantment by the world
> is overshadowed by the knowledge of finitude."[394]

Benjamin's attraction to the ruin has to do with allegory, which he sets up in opposition to the

symbol of eighteenth-century aesthetics. For him allegory is a more open form of signification

which, by not providing completeness of perspective or finality of meaning, has a unique power

of transmission. It is comparable to Herder's use of the term analogy for his open-ended method,

for both were free forms of expression but were also considered less reliable or 'believable' in

intellectual discourse because they were so subjective. The difference between allegory and

analogy helps further contrast Benjamin's approach to open-endedness with Herder's - namely

that allegory reveals meaning through differentiation, whereas analogy reveals meaning through

equation. Herder's method equates in order to impart understanding of otherwise

incomprehensible but interrelated things, whereas Benjamin's differentiates to break common

interpretations apart into new understandings. Benjamin's interest in the *Trauerspiel* genre was

---

394 Dominik Finkelde. "The Presence of the Baroque: Benjamin's *Ursprüng des deutschen Trauerspiels* in
       Contemporary Contexts." In *A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin*. Edited by Rolf J. Goebel.
       Rochester: Camden House, 2009. 46-69. 47.

that it favoured allegory over the rules of beauty and totality that were still the basis for much of aesthetic theory in his time. The ruin is a particular feature of the contemporary landscape which caught Benjamin's attention because, as he explains:

> "Auf der Antlitz der Natur steht 'Geschichte' in der Zeichenschrift der Vergängnis. Die allegorische Physiognomie der Natur-Geschichte [...] ist wirklich gegenwärtig als Ruine. [...] Mit ihr hat sinnlich die Geschichte in den Schauplatz sich verzogen. Und zwar prägt, so gestaltet, die Geschichte nicht als prozeß eines ewigen Lebens, vielmehr als Vorgang unaufhaltsamen Verfalls sich aus. Damit bekennt die Allegorie sich jenseits von Schönheit. Allegorien sind im Reiche der Gedanken was Ruinen im Reiche der Dinge."[395]

The physiognomy of history is ever-present as ruin, he writes, demonstrating that life on the individual scale as well as the collective scale must expire. The awareness of finitude is clear in the ruin because it reveals that nothing can be eternal, not even those structures intended for eternity. The notion goes back to my introduction, which depicted my thesis within a story from Norse poetry about Odin, a deity aware of his finitude who tried to gain all the knowledge he could in an attempt to change his situation. I chose this character to introduce my topic because the tale of his missing eye depicts an interstitial perception that corresponds to the modern subject's perspective. In addition, the actions for which he uses this perception reinforce his limitations. Odin's perception was enhanced by his split and meant that he could see and know more than any other figure in Norse cosmogony - even coming to see his own demise well in advance. One interpretation of the story is that he saw more than he was supposed to see, and tried everything he could to change his circumstance but to no avail. The message in this interpretation resembles points found in Benjamin and Foucault, in that life consists in its awareness of finitude, that one may look to eternal things for understandings of the world but

---

395 Walter Benjamin. *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963. 197.

ultimately those things will point out one's mortality. The character of Odin demonstrates this awareness in my reading because through his quest for knowledge he hoped to find something that would change his fate, but he was always brought back to the same point: He knows he and his world will die and give way to a new world. Benjamin was drawn to the ruin because its presence indicated this finitude, and that rather than progress, the cycles of history revolve around destruction and transformation. The ruin for him was not evidence of eternal beauty, as the Belvedere Torso and other Greek ruins were for Winckelmann. The ruin subverts rules of beauty in favour of allegory for Benjamin, and challenges the *Gebäude* of dogmatic knowledge by showing, just as the ruin does in the *Reich der Dinge*, that its structures must fall.

The appreciation of ruins encompasses for Benjamin a *memento mori* that overrides narratives inherited from the Enlightenment about humanity building toward better and better conditions. Such narratives of progress give cause to invoke the *Lehrgebäude* and ruin dialectic once more, and to position Benjamin in relation to it. He aligns the ruin and allegory via open signification, i.e. that both can have multiple, variable meanings. Their open signification enables the shock Benjamin associates with his dialectic image, which in the same way as the ruin, Robert Ginsberg writes, makes "[...] visible what is not meant to be seen. The hidden becomes evident, while what ordinarily is present is absent."[396] The ruin "[...] throws us off, makes us lose our pace, causes us to take a step back," he continues,[397] explaining how the ruin causes the observer to see ordinary, familiar things in a new light. Ginsberg describes here the effect of the dialectic image essentially, for the ruin bumps the observer out of usual reception into a frame of mind which views and interprets in a heightened state of awareness. Ginsberg's

396 Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins,* 51.
397 Ibid, 52.

explanation that banal elements of one's worldview can be made fascinating in ruin helps explain this for my purposes. Moreover those elements are more freely arrangeable, leading to the kind of variability and open signification that appealed to Herder, Nietzsche, and Benjamin. The ruin's proximity to and origin in everyday life allows it a place among common things, but it turns common understandings over on themselves. "The functions in the ruin preserve their humanity," Ginsberg says, hinting at the uncanniness of human traces in ruins[398] and they are not, as might be assumed initially, finished and removed from the field of relations.[399] The ruin exists whether or not anyone is there to remember what it was before and may become part of a new set of needs for human, animal, or plant life. For human visitors however there is a historical thread which points to common origin (or at least analogy of shared existence) at some point - i.e. someone was here to build this structure and then left it for some reason. The ruin is therefore always a location, a distinct imprint on the earth as well as an individual interpretation in the eye of the observer. It remains open to varied interpretations and meanings though, for as Ginsberg writes "[n]o one perfect perspective exists from which the visitor can seize the formal reunification of the ruin."[400] Christopher Woodward articulates the same idea in a different way: "Each spectator is forced to supply the missing pieces from his or her own imagination and a ruin therefore appears different to everyone."[401] They remain open such that each individual may see something different in them, producing a dislocation in Woodward's terms[402] because one is confronted by unexpected access to spaces and perspectives usually inaccessible. As Ginsberg explains this access: "We walk through the walls. We enter into the substance. Much of the joyful experience of ruin comes from this unaccustomed mobility which gives us unprecedented

---

398 Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, 36.
399 Ibid, 38.
400 Ibid, 19.
401 Christopher Woodward. *In Ruins*. New York: Random House, 2002. 15.
402 Woodward. *In Ruins*, 47.

intimacy with the personableness of materials and agreeable participation with the innerness of forms."[403] As with images of Tollund Man, the intimacy of entering into the substance is where one experiences a sort of uncanny negative. Ruins are in that sense a location where familiar experiences are cast in a new, sometimes unsettling light. Echoing Benjamin's open signification Ginsberg states that "[t]he ruin is a field of aesthetic reversibility,"[404] and thus "...teaches us the art of attending to the foundations of Being that lie beneath the accepted world."[405] The connection to the aesthetics of post-modernism is clear, where deconstruction and reversibility became core concepts. When turned on the human body the ruin gaze indeed attends to those unseen aspects of experience which define modern understandings of self. Through reversibility one sees oneself in the human ruin, but as a sort of negative in that the mediating gaze is usually reciprocal. With no intersubjective relation the gaze becomes purely mediation, which the ruin body reflects back at the observer.

Boym noted an isomorphism of nature, architecture, and humanity, alongside which I recognise an isomorphism of perception and mediation. These are my project's common denominators, the keys to its topic and method. The human ruin is the nexus of all these, a site where experience and mediation enfold to create constellations of inter-subjective, inter-reflexive meaning. For the twenty-first century subject specifically the human ruin provides perspective on the remarkable confluence at hand: The proliferation of digital media and the decline of twentieth century ideology and infrastructure. The internet provides possibilities for image projection like never before, and the ubiquity of digital cameras means that anyone can take photos and share them on easily-accessed platforms. This relates to the awareness of finitude

403 Ginsberg. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, 10.
404 Ibid, 60.
405 Ibid, 47.

discussed here because the early twenty-first century subject is so immersed in mediations - culture, relationships, even the self - that they become commonplace. There is little pause given to mediations as interruptions of life because digital mediation is instant. Consider the trend of spirit photography as I discussed it in relation to Tollund Man: The photo is a unique site where the unexplained manifests itself. Consider in the same sense post-mortem photos, which stood in place of the deceased at their funerals or in the homes of their loved ones. These images captured an event and held its charge because they were unique sites. Photos were less common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries however, people did not carry countless images in their pockets as is possible with mobile phones. Pre-digital era photos were not as easily reproducible on the same, nearly infinite, scale for the common person, which leads to the notion that as experience becomes more mediated, humanity becomes more familiar with mediations of itself. Confronted with an infinity of media reproducibility, one wonders whether Foucault's assertion remains the same: Does this infinity indicate finitude back to the observer or does it make the observer more familiar with infinity? What's more, does it create a sort of pleasant disappearance into infinity? The popularity of ruin images could certainly play into this via nostalgic aestheticisation. Ruin images could go the other way too though, in that they address mortality directly via, for example, their appeal to "...das dumpfe Bewußtsein, daß mit den großen Städten die Mittel heranwuchsen, sie dem Erdboden gleichzumachen."[406] This awareness has only intensified with the abatement of post-war western development, as fantasies of ruined cities appear time and time again throughout popular culture. Ruin images fit into a prevalence of post-apocalyptic settings found in modern film, videogames, and literature. When these images are so prevalent however one must ask whether they still convey finitude or simply the aesthetic of

---

406 Walter Benjamin. *Das Passagen*-werk, 152. [C7a, 4]

ruin, as John Patrick Leary explains: "The decontextualized aesthetics of ruin make them pictures of nothing and no place in particular."[407] Twenty-first century ruin images often correspond to a set of recognisable criteria such as abandoned structures, objects of daily life left behind to rot, old technology or advertisements long forgotten but still standing ready. When given a certain aesthetic *Schein* these images evoke ghosts from such objects - incorporeal manifestations that may be more the product of the observer's mind than actual circumstance.

With this, the deathly aspect of mediation comes into view again as a central premise of my study. The discussion of photography as the medium of Tollund Man's preservation showed how it brings the observer close to Tollund Man via the details it captures, just as it brings the observer close to the traces of recent activity in modern day ruins - paperwork or calendars bearing the date of the abandonment for instance. These details are traces of life but mediation can make ghosts from them - it gives and removes from life, that is its paradox.[408] Invoking the isomorphism of nature, architecture, and humanity, and that of perception and mediation, I present the human ruin again as the nexus between. It helps illuminate mediation at work, as well as a parallel awareness that qualities of life can become ossified by the medium which represents them. Herder writes that life flows to life, that living beings are mediums for communicating experience, but indicated that when humanity disappears into mediation it loses itself. The isomorphisms of ruin and body, perception and mediation thus offer this point: Situations, tenses, beings come into contact via mediation but the constellations their interactions produce must

---

407 John Patrick Leary. "Detroitism." *Guernica.* Onine publication: http://www.guernicamag.com/features/leary_1_15_11/

408 This statement points to Jacques Derrida's famous assertion in *Ghost Dance* (1983) that rather than dismissing ghosts to distant history, modern imaging and telecommunications technologies in fact evoke ghosts and strengthen their ability to haunt the living. Derrida was not part of the framework for this study but the connection is worth noting, if only briefly, in relation to the ghosts that appear to the ruin gaze.

direct the observer to life. The human ruin as a concept, as a thought exercise, makes one aware of mediation in that it comes close to being a mediated simultaneity with life but ultimately proves the impossibility of such. It functions therefore as a reminder, that as mediation has increased in the modern subject's worldview, so has its hermetic cycle.

Postscript on Methodology and Self-Query

I have aimed to present an archaeology of the ruin gaze and with it the concept of a human ruin. This endeavour has pulled together points from literature, philosophy, aesthetic theory, as well as literary theory because the topic runs through these and likely numerous other disciplines. The task of focusing on specific sources was an important one in this regard, as it was necessary to find writers who best articulated the necessary concepts in relation to one another. Tracing the topic from Norse myths to twentieth century post-modernism and existentialism has no doubt resulted in gaps and oversights, but it was the intent of my archaeology to show the ideas in their original context, not within a framework of modern writings. There are countless other sources, old and new, which discuss the riddle of self-reflexivity that are not incorporated here because my goal was to study these ideas as expressed in German literature around 1800 and the later writers who were influenced by this specific time. This era held my interest because it was tumultuous and influential, the cusp of modernity in the German context. Herder's organic philosophical method and Schlegel's poetic fragments are by no means the first nor only examinations of self-reflexivity in European thought of the Enlightenment, but their poetic humanism in light of early industrialization and mass media makes them of unique interest to my project. This study does not aim for completeness of

perspective, but rather focuses on the distinctly organic, poetic thread which characterizes the search for living knowledge in the German Enlightenment. The concept is, I believe inseparable from this context of poetry and *Naturwissenschaft* which informed and guided my approach.

Now, if that context informs my approach one might ask whether this study ultimately falls into the same categorizing it details. Specifically, if this project presents an archaeology of ideas that became fundamental to modern thought, does it put the ideas it examines in a museum, (or columbarium)? Its subjects - the Belvedere Torso, Mats the miner from Falun, and Tollund Man - are museum pieces after all. One might see the museum as institution and intellectual space in terms of the *Lehrgebäude* perspective so often referred to throughout, and in that sense there is a linkage of themes: The museum and the ruin form a dialectical pairing that encapsulates the project generally. Some of my sources and themes may belong, so to speak, in a museum. Why the recurring interest in Germanic paganism for instance? This is intended as part of my investigation, expressly to show how the ideas so commonly attributed to modern subjectivity were also a concern in ancient texts. I used the story of Odin's eye and the well of knowledge to illustrate the dilemma of self-reflexivity and the interstice it creates for the human mind but also how poetry was the medium of this dilemma. In addition I found it important to note that this ancient poetry gave inspiration to writers around 1800, where the worldview it contained found new expression. Odin's split perspective meant he had one eye in his head and the other sunk deep in a source of ethereal wisdom - a key point of reference for the interstitial nature of the ruin gaze, for it presents an ancient understanding of the idea that perception could at once both enlighten and point out inherent limitations. This myth depicts mediation of experience in my reading as it occurred to ancient peoples whose worldview was not much a part

of the western tradition circa 1800. I present references to this worldview to establish an organic, embodied precedent for the study - the nature of which precludes them from the columbarium.

One may ask all the same what this study's interest is to anyone other than students of German literature around 1800. In looking to later writers who engaged with the ideas of this time, I have endeavoured to show how the human ruin is an adaptable concept, pertinent to discussions of mediation and self-reflexivity still today. One must note that the internet and personal computing have changed the experience of mediation by making it even more evident in daily life, a topic which ultimately is beyond the scope of this project. What attention I gave to this was to demonstrate how the human ruin illuminates mediation in process. Because the human ruin is inseparable from the media which bring it to the observer, there is likely a whole other study to be done with ruin reception online - where images and videos circulate infinitely across various sites and users. Images are repurposed constantly to differing ends, and countless copies of a single image may end up spread across countless posts, deprived of their context and their connection to life. Moreover multiple near-exact copies of the same image by different photographers may be posted, as the ability to capture images and publish them has next to no limit. Indeed, there are numerous angles of the ruin image as mediation of a living site that were not included in this project to maintain focus on the human ruin.

A pursuant question is: How many examples might one find of human ruins? My project only presents three - one of them, the Belvedere Torso, is not even fully a human ruin in the sense of the other two. Without more examples of the phenomenon how does the conversation continue and not become sealed? A fair point. The human ruins discussed here are singular

occurrences, which is important for my discussion of them - they exist as singularities in a reproducible field, thus emphasize the tension of making visible through mediation only to lose some aspect of life. It would certainly be possible to find more examples of the phenomenon, but I limited my study to these three for their conceptual linkage. More examples would help define the parameters of what is and is not a human ruin, but those parameters were not crucial to the trajectory of this study. My inclusion of the Pompeii bodies does something to ameliorate this, but there is more room for other instances - other bog bodies, mummies, death masks or casts of bodies, or corpses preserved for display, all possible angles. Though the question remains of how the human ruin concept could be used in any way beyond the examples offered here, I maintain that this study is not hermetic. It acts rather as a swing-by that sends the reader onward. Much like a number of the sources which inspired it, there is no intended vanishing point but rather an ongoing engagement.

Bibliography

Auerbach, Anthony. "Imagine no Metaphors: The Dialectical Image of Walter Benjamin." *Image and Narrative.* Issue 18 - Thinking Pictures. September, 2007. Online: http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/thinking_pictures/auerbach.htm

Barber, Theodore. "Phantasmagorical Wonders: The Magic Lantern Ghost Show in Nineteenth-Century America." *Film History*. 1989, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1989). 73-86.

Barkan, Leonard. "The Classical Undead: Renaissance and Antiquity Face to Face." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 34 (Autumn, 1998). 9-19.

Barnett, Stuart. "The Age of Romanticism: Schlegel From Antiquity to Modernity." *On the Study of Greek Poetry*. Edited and Translated by Stuart Barnett. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1980.

Baugatz, Christian-Ulrich. *Fühlendes Denken – denkendes Fühlen: Vier Essays über den Geist der Romantik*. Berlin: Trafo Verlag, 2013.

Bauschatz, Paul C. *The Well and the Tree: World and Time in Early Germanic Culture*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982.

Behler, Ernst. *Frühromantik*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992.

—. *German Romantic Literary Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

—. *Studien zur Romantik und zur idealistischen Philosophie, Bd. 1 & 2*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1988.

Beiser, Frederick C. *Diotima's Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Bell, Matthew. "The Idea of Fragmentariness in German Literature and Philosophy, 1760-1800." *The Modern Language Review*. April 1, 1994. 89, 2. 372-392.

Benjamin, Walter. "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit." *Gesammelte Schriften - Bd. II*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972. 431-471.

—. *Das Passagen-werk*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983.

—. "Der Erzähler - Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows." *Gesammelte Schriften - Bd. II*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972. 438-464.

—. *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1963.

Berghahn, Klaus L. "Weimarer Klassik + Jenaer Romantik = Europäische Romantik?" *Monatshefte*. Vol. 88, No. 4 (Winter, 1996). 480-488.

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Roots of Romanticism*. Edited by Henry Hardy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Blanchot, Maurice. "The Athenaeum." *The Infinite Conversation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

Blumenberg, Carolin (et al.) *Suspensionen - Über das Untote*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015.

Boym, Svetlana. "Ruinophilia: Appreciation of Ruins." *Atlas of Transformation*. 2011. Online publication: http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-oftransformation/html/r/ruinophilia/ruinophilia-appreciation-of-ruins-svetlana-boym.html

Böhme, Hartmut. "Das Steinerne. Anmerkungen zur Theorie des Erhabenen aus dem Blick des 'Menschenfremdesten'." *Das Erhabene. Zwischen Grenzerfahrung und Größenwahn*. Weinheim: VCH, Acta Humanoria, 1989. 160-192.

—. "Der Wettstreit der Medien im Andenken der Toten." *Der zweite Blick. Bildgeschichte und Bildreflexion*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1999. 23–43.

—. "Die Ästhetik der Ruinen." *Der Schein des Schönen*. Göttingen: Steidl, 1989. 287-304.

—. *Natur und Subjekt*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996.

Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Chamberlain, Andrew T. & Michael Parker Pearson. *Earthly Remains: The History and Science of Preserved Human Bodies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Daston, Lorraine. *Eine kurze Geschichte der wissenschaftlichen Aufmerksamkeit*. München: Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung, 2000.

Davidson, H.R. Ellis. *Scandinavian Mythology*. London: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1969.

DeSilvey, Caitlin & Tim Edensor. "Reckoning with Ruins." *Progress in Human Geography*. 37, 4 (Aug 2013). 465-485.

Diderot, Denis. "The Salon of 1767." *Diderot on Art II*. Edited and Translated by John Goodman. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Diekmann, Stefanie. "Fotografische Wiedergänger: Anmerkungen zur Geisterfotographie." *Suspensionen: Über das Untote*. Edited by Caroline Blumenberg, Alexandra Heimes, Erica Wietzmann, Sophie Witt. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015. 131-141.

Dillon, Brian. "Fragments From a History of Ruin." *Cabinet.* Issue 20 - Ruins. 2005-6. Online: http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/20/dillon.php

— (Editor). *Ruins*. Whitechapel Gallery: London, 2011.

Doig, Katherine. "The Text as Cadaver." *Death in Literature*. Edited by Outi Hakola, Sari Kivistö. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014. 47-62.

Dupre, Louis. *The Quest of the Absolute*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2013.

Eicher, Thomas (Editor). *Das Bergwerk zu Falun: Varianten eines literarischen Stoffes*. Münster: Die Deutsche Bibliothek, 1996.

Faulkes, Anthony (Translator). *Edda*. London: Everyman, 2004.

Fetscher, Justus. "Fragment." *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe Bd. 2*. Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2001. 551–588.

Finkelde, Dominik. "The Presence of the Baroque: Benjamin's Ursprüng des deutschen Trauerspiels in Contemporary Contexts." *A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin*. Edited by Rolf J. Goebel. Rochester: Camden House, 2009. 46-69.

Fischer, Christian. *Tollund Man: Gift to the Gods*. Gloustershire: The History Press, 2012.

Flavell, M Kay. "Winckelmann and the German Enlightenment: On the Recovery and Uses of the Past." *The Modern Language Review*. 74, 1 (Jan 1, 1979). 79-96.

Forster, Michael N. (Editor). *Johann Gottfried von Herder - Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. Translator uncredited. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Freud, Sigmund. *Das Unheimliche*. Project Gutenberg Ebook. 2010. Online. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34222/34222-h/34222-h.htm

Friedmann, Georg. *Die Bearbeitungen der Geschichte von dem Bergmann von Fahlun*. Berlin: Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, 1887.

Gaier, Ulrich. "Denken als Bildprozeß." *Bildersturm und Bilderflut um 1800*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2001. 19-51.

Gasché, Rodolphe. "Foreword: Ideality in Fragmentation." *Friedrich Schlegel - Philosophical Fragments*. Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

Ginsberg, Robert. *The Aesthetics of Ruins*. New York: Rodopi, 2004.

Glob, P.V. *The Bog People*. Translated by Rupert Bruce-Mitford. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Einleitung in die Propyläen." *Ästhetische Schriften 1771-1805, Sämtliche Werke Bd. 18*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989. 457-475.

—. "Von deutscher Baukunst." *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1973. 95-104.

Gudeman, Alfred. "The Sources of the Germania of Tacitus." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 31, 1900. 93–111.

Guilloton, Doris & Agnes Langdon (Editors). *Variations on Falun: A Comparative Anthology for the Advanced German Reader*. New York: Peter Lang, 1991.

Hamilton, John T. "'Kirschrot funkelnder Almandin': The Petrification of Love, Knowledge, and Memory in the Legend of Falun." *Colloquia Germanica. Themenheft: Material World – Novelistic Matters of the Nineteenth Century*. Gastherausgeber: Arne Höcker, Franziska Schweiger und Lauren Shizuko Stone. (47.3).

Harloe, Katherine. *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity: History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumswissenschaft*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Harries, Elizabeth Wanning. *The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the Later Eighteenth Century*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994.

Hatfield, Henry. *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature: From Winckelmann to the Death of Goethe*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.

—. "Winckelmann: The Romantic Element." *Germanic Review*. 28, 4; Dec 1953. 282-289.

Haugen, Kristine Louise. "Ossian and the Invention of Textual History" *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 59, No. 2 (Apr., 1998). 309-327.

Heaney, Seamus. "The Tollund Man." *Poetry International Archives*. Online: https://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poem/23607/auto/0/0/Seamus-Heaney/THE-

TOLLUND-MAN/en/tile

Hebel, Johann Peter. "Unverhofftes Wiedersehen." *Werke in drei Bänden*. Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1959. 301-303.

Hell, Julia & Andreas Schönle (Editors). *Ruins of Modernity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Herder, Johann Gottfried. "Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker." *Von deutscher Art und Kunst.* Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1973.

—. "Iduna oder der Apfel der Verjüngung." *Die Horen*. 1796, Stück 1. Online text, Friedrich Schiller Archiv: http://www.friedrich-schiller-archiv.de/die-horen/die-horen-1796-stueck-1/i-iduna-oder-apfel-verjuengung/

—. *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Literatur 1767-1781*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993.

—. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden, den zwo Hauptkräften der menschlichen Seele. (1775)" *Herders Sämtliche Werke. Bd. 8.* Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1892.

—. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele. (1778)" *Herders Sämtliche Werke. Bd. 8*. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1892.

—. *Werke in zehn Bänden*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985-2000.

—. *Zutritt der nordischen Mythologie zur neueren Dichtkunst*. Project Gutenberg Ebook. Online: http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/adrastea-6371/63

Hill, David (Editor). *Literature of the Sturm und Drang*. Rochester: Camden House, 2003.

Hoffmann, E.T.A. "Die Bergwerke zu Falun." *Die Serapionsbrüder.* Projekt Gutenberg E-Text. Online: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/etahoff/serapion/serap232.html

Höppner, Stefan. "Romantische Hohlwelten: Das Bergwerk bei Novalis, Schubert, und Hoffmann." *Hohlwelten*. Edited by Hartmut Fischer & Gerd Schubert. Berlin: Lehmanns, 2009.

Jansson, Bo G. *Fet-Mats: Den förstenade Gruvdrängen i Sakprosa och som Inspirationskälla till Dikt och Konst från 1719 till 2010*. Falun: Högskolan Dalarna, 2010.

Ljøgodt, Knut. "Northern Gods in Marble: The Romantic Rediscovery of Norse Mythology." *Romantik* 1 Vol. 1. Tromsø Aarhus University Press, 2012. 141-165.

Jung, Sandro. "The Reception and Reworking of Ossian in Klopstock's Hermanns Schlacht." *The Reception of Ossian in Europe.* Edited by Howard Gaskill. New York: Thoemmes, 2004. 143-155.

Kant, Immanuel. *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen - Erster Abschnitt*. Project Gutenberg Ebook. Online: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/kant/gefuehl/chap001.html

—. *Kritik der Urteilskraft.* Project Gutenberg Ebook. Online: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/kant/kuk/index.html

Kipper, Rainer. *Der Germanenmythos im Deutschen Kaiserreich: Formen und Funktionen historischer Selbsttematisierung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002.

Kister, Stefan. *Text als Grab: Sepulchrales Gedenken in der deutschen Literatur um 1800*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2001.

Koschorke, Albrecht. *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr: Mediologie des 18. Jahrhunderts.* München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999.

König, Dominick Von. "Lesesucht und Lesewut." *Buch und Leser: Vorträge des ersten Jahrestreffens des wolfenbüttler Arbeitskreises für Geschichte des Buchwesens*. Edited by Herbert G. Göpfert. Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1975.

Krauss, Andrea. "Constellations: A Brief Introduction." *MLN*. Vol. 126, no. 3, 2011. 439–445.

Kubiak, Christopher. "Sowing Chaos: Discontinuity and the Form of Autonomy in the Fragment Collections of the Early German Romantics." *Studies in Romanticism.* Vol. 33, No. 3 (Fall, 1994). 411-449.

Kugler, Lena. "Die Tiefenzeit von Dingen und Menschen - (Falsche) Fossilien und die 'Bergwerke zu Falun.'" *Weimarer Beiträge.* 59-3 (2013). 397-415.

Küchler Williams, Christiane. "Was konservierte den Bergmann zu Falun – Kupfer- oder Eisenvitriol? Eine chemische Fußnote zu den Variationen des 'Bergwerks zu Falun.'" *Athenäum.* 10. 191-197.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe & Jean-Luc Nancy. *The Literary Absolute*. Translated by Philip Bernard & Cheryl Lester. Albany: SUNY Press, 1989.

Larrington, Carolyne (Translator). *Poetic Edda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Leersen, Joep. "Ossian and the Rise of Literary Historicism." *The Reception of Ossian in Europe*. Edited by Howard Gaskill. New York: Thoemmes, 2004. 109-125.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. "Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Mahlerey und Poesie." *Literaturtheoretische und ästhetische Schriften*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2006. 49-94.

Lindow, John. *Norse Mythology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Lynnerup, Niels. "Bog Bodies." *The Anatomical Record: Advances in Integrative Anatomy and Evolutionary Biology*. Volume 298, Issue 6. Special Issue: The Anatomy of the Mummy. June 2015. 1007-1012.

McFarland, Thomas. *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. New York: Routledge, 2002. 103.

Mitchell, W.J.T. "Romanticism and the Life of Things: Fossils, Totems, and Images." *Critical Inquiry*. 28.1 (2001): 167–84.

Mülder-Bach, Inka. *Im Zeichen Pygmalions: Das Modell der Statue und die Entdeckung der Darstellung im 18. Jahrhundert*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998.

Müller-Waldeck, Gunnar. "Der steinerne Knappe und die literarischen Folgen." *Neue Deutsche Literatur: Zeitschrift für Deutschsprachige Literatur*. 51 (6 [552]): 11. 2003.

Neubauer, John. "The Mines of Falun: Temporal Fortunes of a Romantic Myth of Time." *Studies in Romanticism*. 19:4 Winter 1980. 475-495.

Neumann, Gerhard. *Kulturwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik*. Freiburg: Rombach, 2014.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*. Edited by Giorgio Colli & Mazzino Montinari. Digitale kritische Ausgabe. Online: http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/WL-1

Novalis. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2008.

O'Donoghue, Heather. *From Asgard to Valhalla: The Remarkable Story of the Norse Myths*. I.B. Tauris: London, 2007. 27-8. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Ostermann, Eberhard. *Das Fragment: Geschichte einer ästhetischen Idee*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1991.

Pensky, Max. "Method and Time: Benjamin's Dialectical Images." *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*. Edited by David S. Ferris. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 177-198.

Pirholt, Mattias. *Metamimesis: Imitation in Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and Early German Romanticism*. Rochester: Camden House, 2012.

Piirainen, Ilpo Tapani & Ulrich Greb. "Die Geschichte des Bergmanns von Falun und ihre literarische Bearbeitung." *Der Anschnitt.* 42:2 (1990). 54–67.

Plumpe, Gerhard. *Der tote Blick: zum Diskurs der Photographie in der Zeit des Realismus*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1990.

Prager, Brad. *Aesthetic Vision and German Romanticism: Writing Images*. Rochester: Camden House, 2007.

—. "Interior and Exterior: G.E. Lessing's Laocoon as a prelude to Romanticism."*Aesthetic Vision and German Romanticism: Writing Images*. Rochester: Camden House, 2007.

Redfield, Marc. "Romanticism, Bildung, and the Literary Absolute." *Lessons of Romanticism*. Edited by Thomas Pfau, Robert F. Gleckner. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. 41-54.

Reed, Eugene E. "Herder, Primitivism and the Age of Poetry." *The Modern Language Review.* Vol. 60, No. 4 (Oct., 1965). 553-567.

Reuschel, Karl. "Über Bearbeitungen der Geschichte des Bergmanns von Falun." *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte 3* (1903), 1-28.

Richter, Simon (Editor). *The Literature of Weimar Classicism*. Rochester: Camden House, 2003.

Rix, Robert W. "Introduction: Romanticism in Scandinavia." *European Romantic Review.* 26:4. 2015. 395-400.

Rybiński, Łukasz K. "The dialectical image as the critical inner mirror." *Aktuel Forskning. Litteratur, Kultur og Medier.* Juni 2015. Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2015.

Safranski, Rüdiger. *Romantik: eine deutsche Affäre*. München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2007.

Sanders, Karin. *Bodies in the Bog*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.

Sauder, Gerhard. *Empfindsamkeit*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1974.

—. *Theorie der Empfindsamkeit und des Sturm und Drang*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2003.

Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

Schlegel, Friedrich. *Athenäums Fragmente und andere Schriften*. Berlin: Holzinger, 2013.
    Online: http://www.zeno.org/Lesesaal/N/9781482712681

—. "Athenäums Fragmente." *Kritische Schriften und Fragmente, Bd. 2*. Paderborn: Ferdinand
    Schöningh, 1988. 105-156.

—. *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie*. Stuttgart: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1985.

Schubert, Gotthilf Heinrich. *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft*. Dresden:
    Arnoldische Buchhandlung, 1808.

Schütze, Martin. "Johann Gottfried Herder August 25, 1744 - December 18, 1803: His
    Significance in the History of Thought." *Monatshefte für Deutschen Unterricht.* Vol. 36,
    No. 6 (Oct., 1944) 257-287.

Selbmann, Rolf. "Unverhofft kommt oft: Eine Leiche und die Folgen für die
    Literaturgeschichte."*Euphorion: Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte.* 94 (2):173. 2000.
    173-204.

Simmel, Georg. *Jenseits der Schönheit - Schriften zur Ästhetik und Kunstphilosophie*. Frankfurt:
    Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008.

Stiegler, Bernd. *Philologie des Auges: die photographische Entdeckung der Welt im 19.
    Jahrhundert*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001.

Tacitus, Publius Cornelius. *Germania*. Translated by R.B. Townshend. London: Methuen & Co,
    1894.

Taylor, Timothy. *The Buried Soul: How Humans Invented Death*. London: Fourth Estate, 2002.

Thomas, Sophie. "The Fragment." *An Oxford Guide to Romanticism*. Edited by Nicholas Roe.
    Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 502-513.

Tombo, Rudolf. "Ossian in Germany: Bibliography, General Survey, Ossian's Influence upon
    Klopstock and the Bards." *Columbia University Germanic Studies.* No. 2, Vol. 1.
    New York: Columbia University Press, 1901.

Turville-Petre, E.O.G. *Myth and Religion of the North: The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia*.
    New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Valdez, Damian. *German Philhellenism: The Pathos of the Historical Imagination From
    Winckelmann to Goethe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Van der Plicht, J. (et al.) "Dating bog bodies by means of 14C-AMS" *Journal of Archaeological
    Science*. 31(2004), 471–491.

Walker, Joyce S. "Romantic Chaos: The Dynamic Paradigm in Novalis's Heinrich von Ofterdingen and Contemporary Science." *The German Quarterly*. Vol. 66, No. 1, From Mid-18th-Century to Romanticism (Winter, 1993). 43-59.

Warner, Marina. *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Weatherby, Leif. *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ: German Romanticism between Leibniz and Marx*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016.

Wellbery, David E. *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

— (Editor). *A New History of German Literature*. Cambridge, Belknap Press, 2004.

Winckelmann, Johann Joachim. "Beschreibung des Torso im Belvedere zu Rom." *Schriften und Nachlaß, Bd. 4.5*. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2008. 16-24.

—. "Abhandlung von der Fähigkeit der Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst." *Kleine Schriften und Briefe I*. Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1925. 173-208.

Woodward, Christopher. *In Ruins*. New York: Vantage Books, 2002.

Wright, Patrick. "Empathising with Bog Bodies: Seamus Heaney and the Feminine Sublime." *Brief Encounters*. Vol.1, No. 1 (Feb 2017). Online: h9p://briefencounters-journal.co.uk/BE/arOcle/view/19/

Zammito, John H. (et al.) "Johann Gottfried Herder Revisited: The Revolution in Scholarship in the Last Quarter Century." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 71, No. 4 (October 2010). 661-684.

Zimmermann, Reinhard. *Künstliche Ruinen: Studien zu ihrer Bedeutung und Form*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1989.

Ziolkowski, Thodore. *German Romanticism and its Institutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.