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## The Myth of Otherness: Goethe on Presence

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WESTERN CULTURE IS DOMINATED by representation—however, in 1993 in a series of essays, Jean-Luc Nancy counters this paradigm of all signification processes from a culturally critical perspective with a new paradigm, and proclaims “the birth to presence.”<sup>1</sup> In the course of this paradigm shift from representation to presence and as a consequence of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s work, contemporary literary criticism has also taken an interest in “what meaning cannot convey.”<sup>2</sup> Yet, to speak of a “new” paradigm implies a kind of mastery, since presence basically represents an outdated paradigm in two respects. In the hermeneutic tradition, whose roots are deeply grounded in the philosophical aesthetic of the nineteenth century, the concept was, first, used for the direct experience of meaning, most importantly in the realm of art. Second, as understood by poststructuralist thinkers—especially in the field of deconstruction—hermeneutics was then seen to be motivated by a disproportionate or even false desire for presence. Since the 1960s, in the wake of these investigation into representation, the paradigm fell into oblivion or even disrepute. Hermeneutics seemed to be a mode of engaging with texts that sought to secure the full presence of signification, a *pleroma* of meaning. In contrast, the emphasis among poststructuralists was on the dark stain of the signifier, the operation of the trope, the play of textual signs deferring any arrival at a fullness of meaning.

If, in the age of post-hermeneutics,<sup>3</sup> presence is now invoked as a counterforce to hermeneutics, there seems to be a peculiar anti-deconstructive twist at work in much of this new thinking. To the extent that the return to presence employs a concept that deconstruction has deemed obsolete, the new focus on presence entails neither a turn nor a return leading into the past. Instead, this return opens up a future potential without requiring or anticipating any dialectical reconciliation in the synthesis of hermeneutics and deconstruction. The new paradigm is not only outdated in two respects, but the return to presence is in two respects also a defensive gesture. On one hand, this gesture is directed at hermeneutics, which, at the expense of meaning, excludes everything that cannot be converted into meaning. On the other hand, the defense is directed against the poststructuralist interpretative practice of deconstruction, which in itself is not less obsessed with meaning. In order for the unlimited semiosis process to unfold smoothly, deconstruction also has to exclude all other material aspects of such processes that then become the focus of attention with the return to presence: I

would like to call this phenomenon, which has been integrated into the theoretical settings of various disciplines since the turn of the century, “the other of meaning.” With this in mind, and considering the broader context of the material turn, cultural theory puts a fundamentally new orientation related to the history of ideas on its agenda alongside the new paradigm which already integrates considerable research.

In the new discourse of presence, then, the deferral and difference to which poststructuralists have drawn their attention become the very site of an encounter with presence as radical otherness. Presence cannot be thematized or converted into what is familiar—“semblable”—and it is located not so much in the “thickness” of the sign, but rather in a semiotic and sensual surplus that inheres in aesthetic and ethical experience. This new form of attentiveness plays out against the backdrop of twentieth-century theory, established above all by Martin Heidegger, and calls upon the entire retinue of philosophers, psychoanalysts, and cultural theorists from Jacques Lacan to Emmanuel Lévinas. In particular, Dieter Mersch has integrated this semiotic approach and thereby has set an important cornerstone for the revision of the new paradigm in aesthetics and ethics: in the poststructuralist tradition, his considerations are based on the negativity of the sign. Signs are, in short, neither what they stand for, what they clarify, present, or identify, nor are they that with which the *signata* demarcate or differentiate themselves from one another. The reverse side of this negativity is the affirmation of phenomenal individuality that comes into view with the object. It is not the object of reference—of the signified—but rather the reality of the sign itself, whose specific materiality or mediality Mersch interprets as an “occurrence” or a “performative mediality.” It “can console, can hurt or wound and has the force of intervention simply because of the fact ‘that’ it exists.”<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, my interest in “the other of meaning” is less focused on current theories than on historical ones, of which the return to presence is to a certain extent reminiscent when it establishes a new paradigm. My considerations here go back to Martin Seel’s groundbreaking revision of modern aesthetics since 1750. Seel does not start

with concepts of being-so [*Sosein*] or semblance [*Schein*] but with a concept of appearing [*Erscheinen*]. The appearing of which we shall be speaking is a reality that all aesthetic objects share, however different they may otherwise be. It plays its part everywhere in the aesthetic realm, in all aesthetic activity.<sup>5</sup>

In a sense Seel wishes to go back to the future, which means locating the aesthetic paradigm from the time in which it originated around 1800—long before hermeneutics could misuse it and deconstruction could disdain it. Who would have thought that the *Urszene* of presence—which I locate in the staging of the symbol in Goethe’s famous letter to Schiller from the 16th and 17th of August 1797—would figure in the discursive environment of classical aesthetics in the late eighteenth century? And who would have thought, either, that of all things, the concept of the symbol, so highly debated between hermeneutics and deconstruction, would form the origin of the discourse of presence in its basic psychological, metaphysical, and ethical complexity? Over the course of this paper, I would like to reconstruct three

aspects that fundamentally underpin this topic's historical perspective: first, the criticism of the symbol in relation to Goethe's letter; second, the confrontation with "the other of meaning" in perception (the psychology of presence); third, the negotiation of the other in (re-)presentation (the metaphysics of presence); and fourth, the acknowledgment of the other in transmission (the ethics of presence).

## I.

To be sure, we all still remember the death blow Paul de Man delivered in *The Rhetoric of Temporality*, in which the symbol is the main target of his deconstruction of the suspicious figure of self-presence:

Whereas the symbol postulates the possibility of an identity or identification, allegory designates primarily a distance in relation to its own origin, and, renouncing the nostalgia and the desire to coincide, it establishes its language in the void of this temporal difference. In so doing, it prevents the self from an illusory identification with the non-self, which is now fully, though painfully, recognized as a non-self.<sup>6</sup>

In his structuralistic analysis of the symbol of Goethe's time, Michael Titzmann in particular developed similar aporias. In conjunction with de Man, but also Tzvetan Todorov, Titzmann assumes though<sup>7</sup> that the symbol is actually not an art historical concept, but rather an epistemological one, rooted in aesthetics as the science of the sensual as a form of non-conceptual knowledge, in the manner that Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten established in 1750 and 1758 in the *Aesthetica*. It was only in the course of the nineteenth century that it was restricted to art discourse (*Kunstsymbol/ Anschauungssymbol*). Thus, a symbol is always concerned with a specific structure of meaning, about which Titzmann emphasizes two aspects: First, the metaphysical exclusivity of meaning given that the symbol does not represent a universality or an idea, but rather *the* universal and *the* idea. Second, Titzman refers to the logical paradox of representation. A symbol is thus concerned with a semiotic variable that cannot exist in reality.<sup>8</sup> This paradoxical structure returns to the physical presence, which overlaps with the symbol's function as a representation, causing the paradigm of representation to reach the limits of its capabilities in symbol theories. The symbol represents only as long as it is present.

Nevertheless, it was Hans-Georg Gadamer who, in *Wahrheit und Methode*, recognized the relation between the suspicious symbol and the discourse of presence, and, in contrast to all the other symbol critics, assessed it as not only positive, but also as constitutive:

Ob es religiöses Symbol ist oder in profanem Sinne auftritt, als ein Abzeichen oder ein Ausweis oder ein Losungswort—in jedem Falle beruht die Bedeutung des *Symbolon* auf seiner Präsenz und gewinnt durch die Gegenwart seines Gezeigt- oder Gesagtwerdens erst seine repräsentierende Funktion.<sup>9</sup>

The debate about the implications of Gadamer's argument which has primarily taken place in research on the Goethe era at the highest levels for

decades cannot be pursued here; however, one point is clear with regard to this essay's question: thinking outside the deconstructive box, the new paradigm, which posits presence as an occasion of radical de-centering and dis-possession by otherness, actually appears closely related both to the aesthetic paradigm of the period around 1800 in general, and to the concept of the symbol in particular. Hence, the symbol turns out to be a far less ideological entity than had hitherto been assumed. As a matter of fact, no other aesthetic concept has proven as rich, as fertile, and as protean as that of the symbol. At the same time, however, no other concept seems more difficult to define and to contain, both in terms of its practical applications and in terms of its precise meaning. This may actually be a good thing, for the symbol is not so much a concept as a problem—that is, in the best sense of the Greek term *problēma*, something which is presented. As such, the symbol also becomes the site of debates about a truly exciting experience—the experience of otherness. The concept of the symbol cannot, of course, encapsulate the experience of presence, the complexity of which invariably eludes its simple logic. Strictly speaking, we cannot talk about presence at all; instead, we are merely able to point or refer to it.

It is thus not surprising that the first aesthetic theory of presence did not appear in the guise of a scholarly treatise. Rather, Goethe chose the narrative form of myth to put into words his experience of 1797, when he encountered, for the first time in the history of modern aesthetics, “the other of meaning”—an other that breaks through, shatters, overwhelms, and exceeds the hermeneutic enterprise, the always unfinished labor of unfolding the meaning of things against the backdrop of cultural and historical contexts. It is this non-conceptual mode of literary staging that makes Goethe's letter to Schiller the most important evidence for the thesis that the discourse of presence is historically based in the discourse of the symbol and vice versa: that the symbol is the pivot of the paradigm shift from representation to presence.

In her reading of Goethe's letter, Barbara Naumann was the first to point to its central relevance for the theory of the non-conceptual mode of cognition. Naumann developed her interpretation between Gadamer's thesis that Goethe's letter about the symbol was not concerned with aesthetical but rather with empirical experience (*Wirklichkeitserfahrung*) and Ernst Cassirer's thesis that Goethe fosters a scientific concept of the symbol in his letter (*prägnanter Moment*), because he integrates empirical experimentation, sensory perception, and logical sequences against this background, Naumann emphasizes the critically substantiated train of the letter, which, as was the case with Immanuel Kant, was concerned with the possibilities of knowledge. She goes on to say that where the symbolic emerges, it produces both an intellectual as well as aesthetical surplus value that is, however, a surplus value of meaning in the empirical horizon.<sup>10</sup> The materiality of the empirical that stands to be discussed in the paradigm shift from representation to presence in the meantime does not play a role for Naumann; her reading of the letter thus confirms the domination of representation around 1800.

Rüdiger Campe's interpretation of the letter comes to the same findings. On the one hand, he also turns away from art discourse on the symbol. On

the other hand, Campe remains obligated to the paradigm of representation, although he now poses a second concept in addition to meaningful (*bedeutend*)—the concept of *merkwürdig*,<sup>11</sup> which he understands in the sense of “notable.” Campe’s theory of meaning is therefore based on the notational system of sequences that Goethe put to the test in his letter based on statistical and cartographic techniques. Accordingly, it is the transcendental structure of these objects that is symbolic, not the objects or the relationship between the objects and meaning. It forms the formal matrix for the notable data that precede these individual notations and through which they arise. If this notational system is successful, then the symbolic whole appears quasi in an image before one’s eyes.<sup>12</sup>

My own close reading of this letter picks up exactly at this point of the relationship between *bedeutend* and *merkwürdig*. In contrast to Campe, though, I reserve the term *merkwürdig* for something that cannot be easily paraphrased, but rather to some extent tentatively points or refers to “the other of meaning.” In the following I will show how this “other of meaning” becomes more distinct in the tension between sensuality and reason and in doing so combines the meaning as well as its other cautiously with the paradigm of presence and representation. My reading does not capitalize on the terms that Goethe employed but rather on his enactment of the myth—the myth of otherness.

## II.

In his letter to Schiller of 16/17 August 1797, written during the most feverish and fertile phase of Goethe’s theoretical engagement with the symbol in his scientific and poetological works, he related to his friend and fellow thinker Schiller an experience he had during one of his recent travels. His journey had not taken him to Rome or to some other place of cultural interest, but to his own hometown of Frankfurt, where two things attracted his particular attention. One of these was the place Goethe stayed during his visit, a place “der in Absicht seiner Lage und alles dessen was darauf vorgeht in einem jeden Momente symbolisch ist.”<sup>13</sup> This place is, of course, the house on the Rossmarkt, which had been owned by Goethe’s mother since 1795. The other notable location is the site of his grandfather’s house, its courtyard and its garden. This site had developed into a thriving marketplace before it was destroyed in July 1796 during a French bombardment. Yet it would subsequently serve as the stage for Goethe’s enactment of a myth, and one is almost tempted to read this choice of setting as a clever pun on Goethe’s part. Etymologically speaking, the marketplace hints at the concept of allegory. The term “allegory” derives from the Greek *allos agoreuein* and literally translates as “speaking otherwise” or, more precisely, “speaking other than in the public sphere of the marketplace,” that is, in the *agora*.<sup>14</sup> This, of course, means the presence of the very model that had regulated the hermeneutic enterprise until the end of the eighteenth century—the very model against which Goethe now brings in the big gun of the symbol.

And yet at first, even Goethe himself is not so much interested in the experience of presence as in the complex meaning of the kind of symbol

that the Frankfurt marketplace represents. In the same year in which he wrote the letter to Schiller, Goethe commented on this topic in his essay on the visual arts: “Die auf diese Weise dargestellten Gegenstände scheinen bloß für sich zu stehen und sind doch wieder im Tiefsten bedeutend.”<sup>15</sup> Naumann thus rightly states that, in most of these reflections, symbol and meaning (or rather the meaningful) appear directly linked with one another<sup>16</sup>—and linked in a manner that is largely rooted in Goethe’s well-worn opposition between allegory and symbol:

Es ist ein großer Unterschied, ob der Dichter zum Allgemeinen das Besondere sucht, oder im Besondern das Allgemeine schaut. Aus jener Art entsteht Allegorie, wo das Besondere nur als Beyspiel, als Exempel des Allgemeinen gilt; die letztere aber ist eigentlich die Natur der Poesie; sie spricht ein Besonderes aus, ohne ans Allgemeine zu denken, oder darauf hinzuweisen. Wer nun dieses Besondere lebendig faßt, erhält zugleich das Allgemeine mit, ohne es gewahr zu werden, oder erst spät.<sup>17</sup>

As the active apprehension of an object characterized by complex structures of meaning, the symbol, unlike allegory, cannot be reduced to a neatly single concept; it is thus not an example *of* something. The question as to *what* the symbol is, or rather, *how* such active apprehension of an object actually takes place, is a question Goethe’s letter does not just negotiate *in* the marketplace or agora, the site of the ancients’ public debates and candid oratory (*par-rhesia*) on their day’s great questions of philosophy and truth. Moreover, the marketplace, as Goethe evokes it in his letter to Schiller, shows itself or, even, stages the answer to these questions.

As soon as Goethe turns to the subject of such active apprehension proper, however, attention shifts from the meaningful towards the curious quality of the symbol—or, as I shall prefer to put it here, from meaning towards the other. Goethe’s experience of presence gives the symbol, in the marketplace, its first big break on the stage of modern aesthetics. This debut is rooted in a perceptual situation that Goethe describes as the “ruhigen und kalten Weg des Beobachtens, ja des bloßen Sehens.”<sup>18</sup> This path branches out in two directions: in the direction of conceptual cognition on the one hand, and in the direction of perceptual cognition on the other. Initially, Goethe’s notion of perceptual cognition, notwithstanding his awareness of its logical unreliability, aims at the conceptual determination of the object. As he explains to Schiller:

[D]as was ich im allgemeinen sehe und erfahre schließt sich recht gut an alles übrige an, was mir sonst bekannt ist und ist mir nicht unangenehm, weil es in der ganzen Masse meiner Kenntnisse mitzählt, und das Kapital vermehren hilft.<sup>19</sup>

The perceptual condition,<sup>20</sup> that is, the sum total of all sensate, perceivable,<sup>21</sup> and conceptually distinguishable characteristics of an object, feeds into the great archive of what is accepted as true. In other words, the perceptual condition feeds into one’s store of accumulated knowledge. A different perceptual situation occurs for Goethe at the two sites whose very otherness leaves a particularly deep impression on him. These two sites—and

these alone—are, throughout the entire journey, the only objects that evoke any sort of sentiment in Goethe and induce in him a poetic disposition. As Goethe writes to Schiller, they do so precisely because they are, in essence, symbolic.<sup>22</sup>

The careful study of this different perceptual situation leads Goethe, again in his letter to Schiller, to a definition that aims at achieving a conception of the symbol from the point of view of both the subject and the object. This definition, however, does not link its individual arguments either causatively or purposively, but simply strings them together in no particular order:

Ich habe daher die Gegenstände, die einen solchen Effekt hervorbringen, genau betrachtet und zu meiner Verwunderung bemerkt daß sie eigentlich symbolisch sind. Das heißt, wie ich kaum zu sagen brauche, es sind eminente Fälle, die, in einer charakteristischen Mannigfaltigkeit, als Repräsentanten von vielen andern dastehen, eine gewisse Totalität in sich schließen, eine gewisse Reihe fordern, ähnliches und fremdes in meinem Geiste aufregen und so von außen wie von innen an eine gewisse Einheit und Allheit Anspruch machen.<sup>23</sup>

The definition proper begins before the syntactic insertion that follows the relative pronoun: “Symbolische Gegenstände sind eminente Fälle, die. . . .” Even before the very first element is listed in the relative clause, this insertion determines the basis on which the symbol is then to be defined: “. . . , die in einer charakteristischen Mannigfaltigkeit, . . . .” This insertion indicates that along Goethe’s path to the symbol lies the affirmation of the conceptually and practically indeterminability of the phenomenon<sup>24</sup>—the affirmation of the object’s phenomenal individuality in its presence.<sup>25</sup> Unlike mere sensual perception, aesthetic perception does not aim conceptually to discriminate this individuality, but rather allows individuality to appear in the first place. Unlike the three stages of sensual perception, aesthetic perception is characterized by a unique surplus value. Goethe is not content simply to cognize and classify objects, nor does he content himself with an awareness of this process of cognition and classification; instead, he deliberately exposes himself to an attentiveness towards the phenomenal presence of the object.<sup>26</sup> Only once the course has thus been set does Goethe add the four specific elements to his definition: symbols are eminent instances that exhibit, in characteristic diversity, features  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ ,  $x_3$ , and  $x_4$ .

### III.

Goethe’s letter to Schiller treats both meaning and its other, and it is here that Goethe correlates both types of interest in objects—the interest in their meaning and the interest in the laws of cognition. To this end, Goethe, rather than opting for concepts, takes recourse to a narrative to relate to Schiller his experience of presence in the marketplace. The process of defining this presence does not, however, lead him into the typical aporias of the metaphysics of presence. Such metaphysics have, as I noted, been subject to ideology-critical deconstructions by Paul de Man and others.<sup>27</sup> Goethe, meanwhile, is not concerned with self-presence as such, but rather with the complex dialectics

of meaning and its other. Within his narrative, Goethe notably attributes a temporal continuum to the symbol by staging the experience of otherness as a path towards meaning. The story's point of departure is the fond memory of early childhood days spent in the old Frankfurt town house, the pitiful remnants of which he now revisits. This renewed encounter triggers a veritable shock and transforms the pile of rubble into an eminent instance, into a memorial, or, to put it more accurately, into a mnemonic. In this state of attention, the symbol emerges and indeed persists. Yet, symbols do not have a *poetic form*, as Goethe writes to Schiller, but rather an *ideal* and thus ultimately *human form* in the higher sense of the word. Thus, the emergence of a symbol apparently requires more than the workmanlike conceiving of the object on the part of the poet.<sup>28</sup>

Unlike rhetorical figures (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, or allegory), the symbol arises from sentiment, the complex economy of which commands considerable respect from the poet. For just as sentiment holds out the promise of a higher sort of meaning, it also threatens the feeling subject with dangers that Goethe presents in a veritable initiation tableau. On the one hand, the feeling subject runs the risk of being caught in the Sisyphean task of aesthetic perception, and of feeling compelled conceptually to discriminate and rhetorically to format certain features while clearly lacking the capacity to spell out the particular. On the other hand, there is the problem of perpetually having to conjure up phantoms of every description from one's innermost depths. For this reason Goethe imagines the aesthetic perceptual situation as an ambivalent encounter with the monstrous, "millionfache[] Hydra der Empirie," an inescapably Herculean task, "denn wer bei ihr nicht Lust oder Vorteil zu suchen hat der mag sich bei Zeiten zurückziehen."<sup>29</sup>

What Goethe here stages as the empiricist Hydra's menacing threat to the poet can easily be read as a foundation myth. He who seeks pleasure or advantage in the experience of presence does, after all, not only *find* but also *found* a symbol for his community; by contrast, anyone who does not possess the strength of a hero or the necessary humility of an ordinary mortal is apparently in danger of falling prey to madness in narcissistic regression. Whoever manages to decapitate the Hydra completely and bring home the trophy of the symbol is, consequently, not only a founder of culture, but is also allowed to forget the painful path he has traveled to reach this point: the original constitution or formation of the symbol. The fact that Goethe's myth also—and, as it were, almost in passing—supplies the original etymology of the term "symbol" nicely rounds off and indeed completes the picture. The Greek roots *symballein*—to throw together, to unite—as well as *symballesthai*—to bring into accord or agreement materially and intellectually, presuppose one thing above all: the act of uniting the two halves of the *symbolon* into a single whole. At the same time, however, this act also highlights the erstwhile separateness of the two halves or, conversely, a fracture or split of an erstwhile whole.<sup>30</sup> Thus, every symbol makes manifest the structural defect inherent in the experience of presence that gives rise to the symbol in the first place—even if we can arrest its meaning and make ourselves forget the trauma.<sup>31</sup>



Schiller, in his reply to Goethe of 7 September 1797, once again takes up the concept of sentiment to characterize this profound and literally abysmal process of symbolization; here, however, sentiment competes with the concept of seeing or intuition, the latter narrowed to its application to the historical sense. Schiller contrasts Goethe's way of observing with another mode of cognition:

Es ist ein Bedürfniß poetischer Naturen, wenn man nicht überhaupt Menschlicher Gemüther sagen will, so wenig leeres als möglich um sich zu leiden, soviel Welt, als nur immer angeht, sich durch die Empfindung anzueignen, die Tiefe aller Erscheinungen zu suchen, und überall ein Ganzes der Menschheit zu fo[r]dern.<sup>32</sup>

Both Goethe's and Schiller's terminological usage clearly recalls the legacy of eighteenth-century philosophical aesthetics. Conceptual/logical and non-conceptual/aesthetic modes of cognition differ from one another qualitatively rather than merely in terms of their respective degrees of distinction. At the same time, both Goethe and Schiller introduce a medial perspective on the symbol by linking the concept of sentiment to the notion of poetry. Sentiment is supposed to function as an indexical sign and should thus denote something.<sup>33</sup> This coupling of epistemology and media theory within the discourse on the symbol makes it impossible to determine whether Goethe and Schiller are talking about aesthetic perception or about a material medium. Within the definition of the symbol, the medium pushes in front of or covers perception. Particularly in the context of his art-theoretical writings, Goethe repeatedly emphasizes the materiality of the symbol, as evidenced by his use of both the rhetorical concept of presentation and the aesthetic concept of formation. Symbols are thus (re-)presented or formed; as formed entities, and in spite of their materiality, they are notably and per se "von allem Gemeinen und Individuellen entkleidet."<sup>34</sup> Hence the idealistic compromise for the media-theoretical fact that such (re-)presentations can become symbolic.

The idea that objects are not (only) seen but also felt changes the symbolic scene and sets it astir, for (re-)presentation requires a certain order or "Reihe."<sup>35</sup> Only through the aesthetic receptiveness to the phenomenal simultaneity of the givenness of objects can these objects manifest their processuality. This very processuality, in turn, then bestows on them the status of aesthetic objects.<sup>36</sup> This, at least, is how Seel perspectivizes aesthetic perception, a perception that can only fulfill itself by way of perceptual predicates. Predication by predication, judgment by judgment, Goethe senses the features of an object, one by one. Sentiment, however, encompasses more than these predications, at least insofar as the act of ordering also emphasizes the structure that is medially realized as a *text*, that is, as a complex order of paradigmatic and syntagmatic concatenations.<sup>37</sup> When Goethe replaces the object of aesthetic perception with a story, he thus not only takes minutes on perception, as it were, but also tracks the object of perception through time. As aesthetic perception activates the familiar and the foreign in Goethe's mind, time appears on the symbolic scene, and the letter to Schiller suddenly turns into a narrative, or rather a legend of

progressing capitalism. The space once occupied by his grandfather's house, its courtyard, and its gardens has been transformed:

[Der Raum wurde] aus dem beschränktesten patriarchalischen Zustande, in welchem ein alter Schultheiß von Frankfurth lebte, durch klug unternehmende Menschen zum nützlichsten Waren und Marktplatz verändert [. . .]. Die Anstalt ging durch sonderbare Zufälle bei dem Bombardement zu Grunde und ist jetzt, größtenteils als Schutthaufen, noch immer das doppelte dessen wert was vor 11 Jahren von den gegenwärtigen Besitzern an die Meinigen bezahlt worden. In so fern sich nun denken läßt daß das Ganze wieder von einem neuen Unternehmer gekauft und hergestellt werde, so sehn Sie leicht daß es, in mehr als Einem Sinne, als Symbol vieler tausend andern Fälle, in dieser gewerbereichen Stadt, besonders vor meinem Anschauen, dastehen muß.<sup>38</sup>

Goethe adds synchronic links to the diachronic links that emerge as a result of the fact that the object not only has changed over time but will continue to change in the future. Due to relationships of similarity (the familiar) as well as to relationships of contiguity (the foreign), these concatenations contribute to the diversity of the object. As far as aesthetic perception is concerned, Goethe thus presupposes not only a comprehensive contextual knowledge—a local knowledge, as it were—but also, and most importantly, a hermeneutic operation. This operation lifts the object above its current perceptual situation, beyond the subject's individual perceptual perspective, and impacts a comparison with other perceptual situations: ultimately, to quote Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften*, it thus apprehends the object "mit seiner Lokalität, mit aller Nachbarschaft."<sup>39</sup> Consequently, it would seem that none of these symbolic scenes are repeatable; at the same time, however, every such scene *must* have been repeated in order to have become symbolic in the first place. Indeed, the scene is based on a curious, even paradoxical, interplay of presence and absence. For Goethe, the object is at once present—in the unique perceptual situation—and absent—in the recapitulation of itself, where Goethe consolidates the remembered perceptual situation into a text.<sup>40</sup> A repetition of the kind represented by the encounter with the places of childhood ought thus not to be read, in the Freudian sense, as an unconscious repetition of the repressed; rather, it encompasses both the conscious memory of the past and an expectance or anticipation of the future.

Goethe, however, is not merely interested in the symbol from an epistemological and representational point of view; rather, he also stages the myth with the apparent aim of getting closer to the structure's metaphysical mode of being. But even though Goethe grounds his definition of aesthetic perception in the diversity of sensual perception, he has trouble overcoming the central epistemological problem inherent in the fact that sentiment, as opposed to reason, is regarded as a deficient mode of cognition. However, since Goethe supposes the objects' lack of cognoscibility and, linked to this, the renunciation of our desire to fix objects conceptually, to be the very prerequisite for objects to become symbolic objects, he ultimately aims at a double perspectivization of the aesthetic perceptual situation. On the one hand, aesthetic perception lays claim, both internally and externally, to

a certain “Einheit” and “Allheit”; on the other hand, it encompasses a certain “Totalität.” “Einheit” and “Allheit” at first function as complementary concepts in the regulation of aesthetic perception. Thus, the following rule of thumb would seem to apply: no unity, no perception; no allness, no aesthetics. Ultimately, however, it is precisely the interplay of the conceptual (unity) and the aconceptual (allness) that enables the symbolic object to emerge.

Interior unity, one could thus argue, regulates the interior concatenations of aesthetic perception—that is, all its forms of order, from the spatial and temporal configurations of its individual elements to the disposition that engenders the simultaneously autobiographic and historiographic narrative into which Goethe translates the aesthetic experience. Correspondingly, exterior unity regulates the external concatenations of aesthetic perception. It delimits the symbolic object from other objects of perception, while allness focuses on the state of play that keeps the object’s phenomenological plenitude in abeyance.<sup>41</sup> Given this premise, interior allness points to the fundamentally open and open-ended process of aesthetic perception. Clearly echoing Immanuel Kant, such interior allness corresponds to the aesthetic idea: “diejenige Vorstellung der Einbildungskraft, die viel zu denken veranlaßt, ohne daß ihr doch irgend ein bestimmter Gedanke, d.i. Begriff adäquat sein kann, die folglich keine Sprache völlig erreicht und verständlich machen kann.”<sup>42</sup> Conversely, exterior allness pertains to the diverse concatenations that connect the object with the familiar and the foreign in aesthetic perception.

Both allness and unity, however, express the age-old metaphysical principles that different disciplines define, respectively, in terms of cosmology, ontology, or theology. At this point, if not before, Goethe’s chosen path of observation finally loses its immanence. Here, at last, Goethe lets the metaphysical cat out of the empirical bag. As a result, the symbolic stage acquires a metaphysical backdrop in addition to its epistemological and representational *mise-en-scène*. As Kant writes: “*So ist die Allheit (Totalität) nicht anders als die Vielheit als Einheit betrachtet.*”<sup>43</sup> Goethe, however, not only emphasizes the quantitative aspect of subjective sentiment in relation to the symbol, but, significantly, also stresses the symbol’s objective totality—not an absolute totality, but nevertheless a totality. This totality pertains, on the one hand and in terms of the object, to the completeness, now conceived as perfection, of the symbolic object; on the other hand, and in terms of the subject, it relates to the process of aesthetic perception. As a detractor of mere lists, however, Goethe questions whether the object, or indeed the process of aesthetic perception, can ever attain totality—an attitude that corresponds to the symbol’s inherent structural deficiency. Goethe’s conception of the symbol thus holds out the prospect of replacing the old metaphysical notion of totality with a new, libidinal-economic notion of taking pleasure in playfulness.

#### IV.

As we have seen, Goethe stages the logical, psychological, poetological, rhetorical, and metaphysical aspects of the symbol within a force-field defined

by the poles of meaning and its other. Within this scheme of things, the phenomenological appearance of the other complicates the transmission of meaning to a degree that would carry much less weight were the material-medial surplus value of the symbol not fed into the circulatory system of cultural data streams. According to Naumann's pointed reading of the situation in which the letter is transmitted, the symbolic, where it does occur, produces precisely the kind of intellectual surplus value that may also be an aesthetic one. At the same time, however, it is also, and above all, a surplus value of meaning.<sup>44</sup>

Goethe explores transmission in several directions, namely as medial, iterative, and communicative transmission. The first of these—medial transmission—concerns the transmission or transfer of an idea to an object. In this process, the symbolic object lends form to the idea and thus becomes its material signifier. The catalyst for this transfer is the said general-human, which is regulated by the hermeneutics of the symbol and, as Titzmann emphasizes in a decidedly ideology-critical vein, ties both the symbol's hermeneutics and its pragmatics to the ideologemes of culture.<sup>45</sup> Symbols are supposed to embody culture's highest values; hence, norms and ideological deflections are not permissible in this scheme of things. Interestingly, Goethe calls for just such a *sensus communis* in the symbol when he writes to Schiller:

Symbolische Gegenstände sind also, was ein glückliches Sujet dem *Dichter* ist, glückliche Gegenstände für den Menschen und weil man, indem man sie mit sich selbst rekapituliert, ihnen keine *poetische* Form geben kann, so muß man ihnen doch eine *ideale* geben, eine *menschliche* im höhern Sinn, das [man] auch mit einem so sehr mißbrauchten Ausdruck sentimental nannte.<sup>46</sup>

Schiller, a card-carrying Kantian, promptly seizes upon the scene of transmission as an opportunity to deflect Goethe's interest from the sensual presence of the aesthetic object and to direct him instead towards the symbolic activity of the subject. In his reply to Goethe, Schiller invokes a compelling argument from symbol criticism, which never fails to hit the mark once the symbol is meant to denote a predicated absolute such as God, nature, man, beauty, ethicality, or moral excellence. Any symbol can, after all, only mean one thing; it can only ever denote the *one* absolute:

Was Ihnen die zwey angeführten Plätze gewesen sind, würde Ihnen unter andern Umständen, bei einer mehr aufgeschloßenen poetischen Stimmung jede *Strasse, Brücke, jedes Schiff, ein Pflug* oder irgendein anderes mechanisches Werkzeug vielleicht geleistet haben.<sup>47</sup>

The conceptual cluster of "human-ideal-sentimental" must seem to Schiller like a more than friendly nod in his direction, and the notion of transmission does indeed seem to occasion Goethe to revise the symbol's alignment with phenomenal individuality. Ultimately, however, Goethe sticks with the concept of mediality, and the materiality of the symbol fundamentally underpins his experience of presence. What thus matters to Goethe is not so much the human topics that both the producer and the recipient of the

symbol have at their common disposal, but rather the fact that the symbol, in spite of its denotative function, needs to be distinguished from the ordinary sign; the latter spends itself completely in the transmission of meaning, while the former always leaves, so to speak, a material residue in its otherness:

Wann ist eine sentimentale Erscheinung (die wir nicht verachten dürfen wenn sie auch noch so *lästig* ist) unerträglich? ich antworte wenn das Ideale unmittelbar mit dem gemeinen verbunden wird, es kann dies nur durch eine leere, gehalt- und formlose Manier geschehen, denn beide werden dadurch vernichtet, die Idee und der Gegenstand, jene die nur bedeutend sein und sich nur mit dem bedeutenden beschäftigen kann, und dieser, der recht wacker brav und gut sein kann ohne bedeutend zu sein.<sup>48</sup>

While the first transmission links the idea to the object, the second, iterative transmission is a situational occurrence. This transmission is based on the repetition or habitualization of the *other* mode of perception and represents a polarization or accentuation of the subject's attention. Only because Goethe is able to switch from sensual perception to aesthetic perception at any given moment, and only because he is able to transfer the image of the Frankfurt marketplace to any other situation he may care to choose, does the symbol "marketplace" take shape in the first place:

Ich will es erst noch hier versuchen was ich symbolisches bemerken kann, besonders aber an fremden Orten, die ich zum erstenmal sehe, mich üben. Gelänge das, so müßte man, ohne die Erfahrung in die Breite verfolgen zu wollen, doch, wenn man auf jedem Platz, in jedem Moment, so weit es einem vergönnt wäre, in die Tiefe ginge, noch immer genug Beute aus bekannten Ländern und Gegenden davon tragen.<sup>49</sup>

This, in effect, amounts to a remarkable modification of the experience of presence: its singular immediacy here gives way to the notion of necessary repetition—a repetition by virtue of which otherness can no longer be viewed emphatically as an event, but rather receives a basis in logic and in scientific experiment. In 1798 Goethe sent Schiller the essay, *Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt*, in which he describes such an arrangement:

Wenn wir die Erfahrungen, welche vor uns gemacht worden, die wir selbst oder andere zu gleicher Zeit mit uns machen, vorsätzlich wiederholen und die Phänomene die teils zufällig teils künstlich entstanden sind, wieder darstellen, so nennen wir dieses einen Versuch. . . . Aber eben zwei Versuche die mit einander einige Ähnlichkeit haben zu vereinigen und zu verbinden, gehört mehr Strenge und Aufmerksamkeit, als selbst scharfe Beobachter oft von sich gefordert haben.<sup>50</sup>

Experimental experience needs to be repeatable in a sequence (*Reihe*) of at least two experiments in order to be proven true—a repeatability already emphasized by Goethe in the letter. Only in this sequential process do the isolated phenomena gain coherence: "Ein Phänomen, ein Versuch kann nichts beweisen, es ist das Glied einer großen Kette, das erst im Zusammenhange

gilt.”<sup>51</sup> Thus, repetition transforms experimental experience into symbolical cognition:

Es steht als denn einem jeden frei, sie nach seiner Art zu verbinden und ein Ganzes daraus zu bilden, das der menschlichen Vorstellungsart überhaupt mehr oder weniger bequem und angenehm sei.<sup>52</sup>

Apparently, this very scientific modification disappoints Goethe in his letter, as it is testimony to a discrete aggressiveness inherent in the symbol as Goethe conceives of it. Such discrete aggressiveness, incidentally, also confirms once again the heuristic surplus value that the literary staging of the problem of the symbol generates over and above any philosophical struggle for conceptual clarity. What is more, this aggressiveness breaks fresh ground in the above analyzed initiation topics, which the Herculean myth located in Frankfurt draws on again and again. If Goethe thus imagines penetrating to depths from which to haul up the symbol to the light of day, this spatial imagery points to the chthonic motherliness that describes the space where the founder of culture has to meet his various challenges. If we follow this line of thought, symbolic objects do indeed appear easy quarry—possibly even easy female quarry, as good as colonized by Goethe in a quite remarkable operation of determining the symbolic object’s origins: notably, he loots familiar lands and regions for the trophy of his victory.

The third, communicative transmission finally projects the paradigmatic axis of the first two transmissions onto a syntagmatic axis, for the two places of childhood only become symbolic objects by virtue of the fact that Goethe communicates their recapitulation to Schiller. While reflection thus constitutes the precondition of otherness, the act of address becomes the precondition of meaning. Without this transmission from one human being to another, there would be no common human being that could keep the transmission from object to idea going. Johann Gottfried Herder succinctly sums up this double relationship of the symbol’s presupposition of an acknowledgment both *of* and *by* the other. In his *Kalligone*, his critique of Kant’s *Kritik der Urteilskraft* published in 1800, he writes: “Im Symbol muß entweder durch natürliche oder durch eingesetzte Bedeutung, Jeder, für den das Symbol ist, den dadurch bedeuteten Begriff anerkennen.”<sup>53</sup> As general communication media, symbols thus constitute, on the one hand, the respective positions (and identities) of ego and alter; on the other hand, they institutionalize the meaning of symbols agreed on by these two.

Thus between Kant, Schiller, and Herder an ethical field opens up that links the relevance and the stakes of a debate about the pre-conceptual around 1800 to the renewed interest in presence today. Up until the present, research has assumed that the “nature” in the theory of meaning from Goethe’s time guaranteed both the universality as well as the ethical motivation of symbols (*Natursymbole*). Whereas allegory is everything “cultural,” the symbol has to be everything “natural.” Symbolic production and reception act according to the imperative: Where there is culture, there should be nature! The ontological substantiation goes hand in hand with this, and as a result, their meaning of the symbols is bound to their physical presence. As a natural element of

a comprehensive unit, the symbol does not *represent* something, rather it *means*, because it is an organic part of a meaningful whole, due to its own being. With this participation, semiotic concepts such as presence and evidence of the symbol shift into the center of theory, where symbols are now negotiated as parasemiotic signs similar to anti-rhetorical images.

In Kant, Schiller, and Herder, “nature” presupposes an order of being and meaning that is natural to cultural convention and representation, so that meaning can be present in the symbol. The same also applies to the ideality and humanity of the symbol, which can only be universal, because here too “nature” as *locus universalis* guarantees the ethical validity of the symbol. In the name of “nature,” symbols are anchored to such extent in general humanity, that *every* subject recognizes the *same* in the symbol as the generally human. Natural symbols (*Natursymbole*) cannot be mere objects of negotiation—and Herder’s critique of Kant is aimed precisely at this; when they are they become a lesser form of symbol.

When in his letter Goethe specifies the symbol as a general communication medium that achieves three things—medial, iterative, and communicative transmission—then he obviously does not anchor the presence of the symbol in “nature.” Physical presence rather becomes an impulse. It triggers a series of activities that are necessary for the ideal, the human, and the aesthetic ideas to appear so that it can be sensually experienced at all. Unlike “nature,” presence does not ensure transmission, rather it only re-stimulates it again and again, because the symbol in its otherness withdraws from these transmissions. In other words it withdraws from both its aesthetic as well as its ethical definition. With that, all of the metaphysics of presence stand at philosophy’s disposal. They have to be replaced with a theory of recognition.

Consequently, all three kinds of transmission—medial, iterative, and communicative transmissions—ultimately transform aesthetic perception into a *cognitio interrupta*. In the disruption of the relationship in which the subject of aesthetic perception conquers the Hydra of empiricism, the myth founds both the meaning and the phenomenal emergence of the symbol. Without transmission, there would be neither meaning nor otherness, but rather—and simply enough—indeterminability. In addition to its temporal dimension, transmission also localizes the symbol. It marks the specific point in both time and space where the subject, either by its own efforts or by outside force, abandons or suspends the confrontation with the object of aesthetic perception. Here, said object can emerge as an aesthetic one and unfold its complex potential for meaning. In this context, it is of more than mere anecdotal value that Goethe stages the myth of the symbol in, precisely, a letter—the medium of transmission par excellence. With the three kinds of transmission Goethe does in fact write a media ethic *avant la lettre* that has considerable consequences for the historical assessment of idealism.

In view of my reconstruction of Goethe’s myth of otherness, it would indeed seem eminently appropriate to apply a catch phrase that has come to increasing prominence in phenomenological aesthetics over the past ten years and to speak, quite literally, of a “return to presence.” In spite of the fact that the rather unfortunate reception history of the symbol in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, caught as it was between art-metaphysical

discourses and ideological criticism, somewhat obscured the view onto the importance of this figure of thought, the symbol does feature as one of the central paradigms of presence in modern aesthetics and ethics. There is virtually no argument put forward in the current debates on presence that does not already appear, however briefly, in Goethe's letter to Schiller—a letter that, last but not least, also illustrates that any talk of “the other of meaning” ultimately eludes philosophical conceptualizing. While we are thus unable to *speak* of the other, we are nevertheless able to *show* it: and we are able to show it, precisely, in the non-conceptual mode of literary staging exemplified by this letter.

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## NOTES

1. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993).
2. See Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2004). Parts of my paper, translated by Alexa Alfer (London) and Rett Rossi (Berlin), were discussed at *The Return to Presence. A Workshop*, with presentations by Frauke Berndt (Tübingen), Mladen Dolar (Ljubljana), Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Stanford), Dieter Mersch (Potsdam), and Slavoj Žižek (Ljubljana). The workshop was planned, organized, and presented by Eric L. Santner and Robert Buch at the Department of Germanic Studies, The University of Chicago, 7–9 March 2008. In the introductory paragraphs, I occasionally draw on Santner's proposal.
3. Dieter Mersch, “Posthermeneutik” special issue, *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 26 (2010).
4. Dieter Mersch, “The Chiasmus of Language—Six Thesis on Language and Alterity,” *Amphibolie—Ambiguität—Ambivalenz*, eds., Frauke Berndt and Stephan Kammer (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2009) 107–20; here 117. See: Dieter Mersch, *Was sich zeigt: Materialität, Präsenz, Ereignis* (Munich: Fink, 2002).
5. Martin Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, transl. John Farrell (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2005) xi.
6. Paul de Man, “Rhetoric of Temporality,” *Interpretation Theory and Practice*, ed., Charles Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1969) 191.
7. Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, transl. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982).
8. Michael Titzmann, “Allegorie und Symbol im Denksystem der Goethezeit,” *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie: DFG-Symposium 1978*, ed. Walter Haug (Stuttgart: Metzler 1979) 642–65; here 655. See Michael Titzmann, *Strukturwandel der philosophischen Ästhetik 1800–1880: Der Symbolbegriff als Paradigma* (Munich: Fink, 1978).
9. Hans Georg Gadamer, “Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik,” in *Gesammelte Werke 1. Hermeneutik*, vol. 6 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1990) 78. English Translation: *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2004) 67: “whether it is a religious symbol or appears in a secular context—as a badge or pass or a pass-



word—in every case the meaning of the symbolon depends on its physical presence and acquires a representational function only by being shown or spoken.”

10. Barbara Naumann, *Philosophie und Poetik des Symbols: Cassirer und Goethe* (Munich: Fink, 1998) 140–47; here 146.
11. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” *Sämtliche Werke, Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche, Goethe mit Schiller: Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche vom 24. Juni 1794 bis zum 9. Mai 1805*, ed., Volker C. Dörr and Norbert Oellers (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998) 4.2:388–91; here 390. Henceforward abbreviated as [FA].
12. Rüdiger Campe, “Merkwürdig/Bedeutend: Zu einer Stelle über das Symbolische bei Goethe,” in *Umwege des Lesens: Aus dem Labor philologischer Neugierde*, ed. Christoph Hoffmann and Caroline Welsh (Berlin: Parerga, 2006) 245–58; here 236.
13. Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA, 4.2:390.
14. Gerhard Kurz, *Metapher, Allegorie, Symbol* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993) 31.
15. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, “Über die Gegenstände der bildenden Kunst,” *Ästhetische Schriften 1771–1805*, FA, 18.1:441–44; here 443.
16. Naumann, *Philosophie und Poetik des Symbols*, 143.
17. Goethe, “Maximen und Reflexionen.” *Sprüche in Prosa. Sämtliche Maximen und Reflexionen*, FA, 13.1:368.
18. Goethe. “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA 4.2:388.
19. Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA 4.2:389.
20. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, 45.
21. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, 47.
22. Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA 4.2:390.
23. Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA 4.2:389.
24. Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA 4.2:390. Seel distinguishes between perceptual “*Sosein*” (the perceptual essence or suchness) and aesthetic appearance. Both represent ways of accessing the empiric *phenomenon* of an object. Aesthetic appearance thus describes a mode of an object’s perceptual givenness. Aesthetic objects are perceptually given to us in a perfect manner; we perceive and perceptually grasp them perfectly. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, 22.
25. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, 28.
26. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, 25.
27. Paul de Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality,” 173–209.
28. Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA 4.2:389.
29. Goethe, “Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797,” FA 4.2:391.
30. Walter Müri, “SYMBOLON: Wort- und sachgeschichtliche Studie,” *Griechische Studien: Ausgewählte wort- und sachgeschichtliche Forschungen zur Antike*, ed. Eduard Vischer (Basel: Reinhardt, 1976), 1–44.
31. Campe, “Merkwürdig/Bedeutend,” 254.
32. Friedrich Schiller, “Brief an Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 7./8. September 1797,” *Werke und Briefe, Briefe 1795–1805*, ed. Norbert Oellers (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2002) 12:316–320; here 318.

33. Cf. Charles S. Peirce, "The Icon, Index, and Symbol," *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds., Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1965) 2:156–73.
34. Goethe, "Über die Gegenstände der bildenden Kunst," FA 18.1:441.
35. Naumann, *Philosophie und Poetik des Symbols*, 144.
36. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, 10.
37. Campe, "Merkwürdig/Bedeutend," 256.
38. Goethe, "Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797," FA 4.2:390.
39. Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, "Die Wahlverwandschaften," FA, 1.8:452.
40. The passage in question reads as follows: "indem man [die Gegenstände, F.B.] mit sich selbst rekapituliert." Goethe, "Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797," FA 4.2:389.
41. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, passim.
42. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974) 10:249 (§ 49).
43. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft I*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974) 3:122.
44. Naumann, *Philosophie und Poetik des Symbols*, 145.
45. Titzmann, "Allegorie und Symbol im Denksystem der Goethezeit," 656.
46. Goethe, "Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797," FA 4.2:389.
47. Schiller, "Brief an Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 7./8. September 1797," 319.
48. Goethe, "Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797," FA 4.2:390.
49. Goethe, "Brief an Friedrich Schiller, 16./17. August 1797," FA 4.2:391.
50. Goethe, "Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt," in *Schriften zur allgemeinen Naturlehre, Geologie, Mineralogie und zur Farbenlehre nach 1810*, eds., Wolf von Engelhardt and Manfred Wenzel, FA 25:26–36; here 30.
51. Goethe, "Maximen und Reflexionen," FA, 13.1:17. Cf. "Kein Phänomen erklärt sich an und aus sich selbst; nur viele zusammen überschaut, methodisch geordnet, geben zuletzt etwas was für Theorie gelten könnte." Goethe, "Maximen und Reflexionen," FA, 13.1:227.
52. Goethe, *Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt*, FA 25:36.
53. Johann Gottfried Herder, "Kalligone: Vom Angenehmen und Schönen," in *Werke in zehn Bänden, Schriften zu Literatur und Philosophie 1792–1800*, ed., Hans Dietrich Irmischer (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998) 8:641–964, 952.

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