

PRODUCTS OF THE IMAGINATION: MINING, LUXURY, AND THE  
ROMANTIC ARTIST IN *HEINRICH VON OFTERDINGEN*

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have long been interested in the relationship between capitalism and early romantic aesthetics. The following investigation offers a fresh perspective on this topic through a reconsideration of the figure of the miner and the representation of mining in Friedrich von Hardenberg's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Rather than elucidating this representation on the basis of general concepts like alienation and instrumental rationality, as has often been the case, the essay situates mining within the context of the wide-ranging late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century debates about luxury. When contextualised along these lines, it becomes clear that Hardenberg's representation of mining is best understood as part of an effort to defend the legitimacy of literature, especially the still fragile legitimacy of the novel. Re-framing the representation of mining in the work in this way also necessitates a re-evaluation of other key aspects of the novel, most significantly, its negotiation with processes of economic modernisation and especially its stance toward an incipient consumer culture in which reading and literature play a paradigmatic role.

I

The representation of mining in German romantic literature can be read as an allegory of romantic aesthetics, and nowhere more so than in the work of Friedrich von Hardenberg, himself a graduate of the 'Freiberger Bergakademie'. On this much all commentators agree. Theodore Ziolkowski, whose seminal analysis in *German Romanticism and its Institutions* (1990) focuses heavily on *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, describes the mine as 'the image of the soul' and links it generally to the ideas of descent and inwardness so prevalent in romantic literature.<sup>2</sup> In other interpretations of Hardenberg's novel as well, mining figures as a root metaphor for understanding the romantic project. Scholars have interpreted the mining motif in terms of a psychoanalytically inflected journey of self-discovery, as an example of a non-alienated relationship between humans and nature, and as the anticipation of a social utopia that seeks to recombine science, art, and religion into a harmonious totality of human existence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Helmut Schneider and Ebba Segerberg for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, Princeton, NJ 1990, pp. 18, 28.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to Ziolkowski, see, for example, Irene Bark, 'Steine in Potenzen': *Konstruktive Rezeption der Mineralogie bei Novalis*, Tübingen 1999, esp. pp. 309-22; Kenneth S. Calhoun, *Fatherland: Novalis*,

Indeed, Heinrich's encounter with the miner in chapter five of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* numbers among the most frequently discussed passages in the secondary literature on the novel, and it is difficult to imagine that much more can be said about it. There is, however, one aspect of the passage that has been neglected, the illumination of which can also open up a fresh perspective on the composition of the work as a whole and on its relation to the sociohistorical context out of which it emerged. While scholars have noted the possibility of reading the miner in the novel as a cipher for the romantic artist, such readings generally take as their starting point a positive articulation of the romantic project, that is to say, they view the miner and mining in conjunction with Hardenberg's theoretical statements about what romantic aesthetics intends to achieve. It is also possible, however, to approach the representation of mining from the opposite direction, to interpret it first and foremost as a defensive strategy on the part of the author rather than as the affirmative embodiment of an ideal. From this perspective, mining proves most significant as a model of how intense passion and desire can be productively channelled toward socially useful goals. Mining, when interpreted along these lines, provides a conceptual framework for a defence of the legitimacy of literature, and especially of the fragile legitimacy of the novel, which was by no means beyond reproach in 1800.<sup>4</sup>

## II

In order to comprehend fully the nature of this defence and its wider relevance for the literature and culture of the period, we must first consider another key facet of the novel, namely, its negotiation with processes of economic transformation under way at the end of the eighteenth century. Hardenberg was certainly no stranger to economic questions, and his frequent and often enigmatic comments on money, gold, and commodities have given rise to a wide range of interpretations of his attitude toward economic modernisation. In the case of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, the representation of mining has long been viewed as crucial for understanding this

*Freud, and the Discipline of Romance*, Detroit, Mich. 1992, pp. 97–116; Helmut Gold, *Erkenntnisse unter Tage: Bergbaumotive in der Literatur der Romantik*, Opladen 1990, pp. 56–106; Wolfgang Kloppmann, 'Eine materialistische Lektüre des Bergmann-Kapitels im "Ofterdingen"', *Romantische Utopie – Utopische Romantik*, ed. Gisela Dischner and Richard Faber, Hildesheim 1979, pp. 222–39; Dennis F. Mahoney, *Friedrich von Hardenberg*, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 127–8; Herbert Uerlings, 'Novalis in Freiberg. Die Romantisierung des Bergbaus – Mit einem Blick auf Tiecks *Rumenberg* und E. T. A. Hoffmanns *Bergwerke zu Falun*', *Aurora*, 56 (1996), 64. Gerhard Schulz's dissertation can be seen in many respects as the starting point for the entire discussion: 'Die Berufstätigkeit Friedrich von Hardenbergs (Novalis) und ihre Bedeutung für seine Dichtung und seine Gedankenwelt', Ph.D. thesis, University of Leipzig 1958.

<sup>4</sup> For one of many recent discussions see Claire Baldwin, *The Emergence of the Modern German Novel: Christopher Martin Wieland, Sophie von La Roche, and Maria Anna Sagar*, Rochester, NY 2002, esp. pp. 13–37.

attitude, and few passages have received as much attention in this regard as the miner's reflections on the pursuit of material wealth. Given their significance, these remarks are worth quoting at length:

Er [der Bergmann] begnügt sich zu wissen, wo die metallischen Mächte gefunden werden, und sie zu Tage zu fördern; aber ihr blendender Glanz vermag nichts über sein lautres Herz. Unentzündet von gefährlichem Wahnsinn, freut er sich mehr über ihre wunderlichen Bildungen, und die Seltsamkeiten ihrer Herkunft und ihrer Wohnungen, als über ihren alles verheißenden Besitz. Sie haben für ihn keinen Reiz mehr, wenn sie Waaren geworden sind, und er sucht sie lieber unter tausend Gefahren und Mühseligkeiten in den Vesten der Erde, als daß er ihrem Rufe in die Welt folgen, und auf der Oberfläche des Bodens durch täuschende, hinterlistige Künste nach ihnen trachten sollte. . . . Die Natur will nicht der ausschließliche Besitz eines Einzigen seyn. Als Eigenthum verwandelt sie sich in ein böses Gift, was die Ruhe verscheucht, und die verderbliche Lust, alles in diesen Kreis des Besitzers zu ziehn, mit einem Gefolge von unendlichen Sorgen und wilden Leidenschaften herbeyleckt.<sup>5</sup>

A similar line of thought informs the conclusion of the first song performed by the miner just a few paragraphs later: 'Sie mögen sich erwürgen/ Am Fuß um Gut und Geld;/ Er bleibt auf den Gebirgen/ Der frohe Herr der Welt' (I, 295).

A number of scholars have rightly pointed out the relevance of this passage for understanding Hardenberg's economic views and their relationship to his literary aesthetics. Their interpretations, however, have too often relied on specific criticisms of alienated labour and instrumental rationality that are more relevant to the circumstances of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism than those of Hardenberg's own era.<sup>6</sup> While it may in fact be possible to interpret the above passage as a critique of modern commodity circulation, one needs to be precise about what can actually be identified as modern in this context, or, for that matter, as capitalistic. Certainly not the mere desire for wealth or the association of insatiable greed with self-destruction. Rather than beginning with a static concept of capitalism and then using that concept as the basis for a determination of Hardenberg's views on the economy, I would propose that we try to situate the miner's comments explicitly within the political-economic discourse of Hardenberg's own period. And few ideas were as central to that discourse, or as hotly contested, as that of luxury.

<sup>5</sup> Novalis, *Schriften: Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe Friedrich von Hardenbergs*, ed. Richard Samuel, I, Darmstadt 1999, pp. 291–2. Subsequent references to this three volume edition of Hardenberg's works will be cited parenthetically with volume and page number in the body of the text.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Kloppmann, esp. pp. 222–7. Even Helmut Gold, in his generally nuanced and insightful analysis of the novel, none the less treats 'modern capitalism' as a unified phenomenon. The most extensive treatment of instrumental rationality in the work is to be found in Ulrich Stadler, *Die theueren Dinge: Studien zu Bunyan, Jung-Stilling und Novalis*, Bern 1980, pp. 116–224 *passim*.

Reflections on luxury suffuse the entire range of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European thought. Virtually all of the major thinkers of the age weigh in on the topic, from Montesquieu and Voltaire to Mandeville, Hume and Smith. While many commentators simply appropriate ancient or medieval Christian condemnations of luxury as a source of individual and social corruption, others, in a historically unprecedented move, begin to advocate limited and controlled forms of luxury as a spur to industry and a powerful civilising force. Having long been neglected by historians, this long-running and highly polemical luxury controversy is now acknowledged as ‘the keynote debate of the Enlightenment’, a debate that provided the primary forum for organising reflection on an increasingly dynamic commercial society and on new opportunities for consumption in the period.<sup>7</sup>

Eighteenth-century German commentators generally address the topic within a framework of faculty psychology, viewing the threat of luxury in terms of a psychic imbalance caused by an overstimulation of sensuality (‘Sinnlichkeit’), fantasy, or both. Johann August Schlettwein in his *Grundfeste der Staaten oder die politische Ökonomie* (1779) offers a representative definition: ‘Immer ist Luxus ein Aufwand auf Genießungen, welche die Sinne und die Einbildungskraft zu reizen und zu ergötzen bestimmt sind.’<sup>8</sup> As a physiocrat who believed that expenditures on non-agricultural commodities were roughly equivalent to stealing food from the poor, Schlettwein numbered among the most vociferous critics of luxury in Germany.<sup>9</sup> But his basic framework for understanding luxury is shared by many in the period, including its advocates. The problem for Schlettwein is essentially one of allocating scarce mental and emotional resources. His argument proceeds from a crucial distinction between ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’ goods. Whereas appropriation of the former leads to some sort of substantive improvement of the self – a healthier, stronger, or more beautiful body, a wiser and more just soul – the latter are appropriated with only the promise of increased social status in mind. As he explains through the example of an individual who wears an elaborate head-dress: ‘Ich bilde mirs nur ein, daß es Schönheit sey, und wünsche, dadurch die Sinne anderer Menschen zu reizen, und Begierden nach dem Genuß meiner Reize in ihren Seelen zu entzünden’ (396). To the extent that an individual becomes devoted to ‘sinnliche Lust’ in this way, he or she is simply no longer capable of allocating intellectual or emotional energy to more appropriate ends: ‘[die] Organe werden aller, zum Denken, Thun, und Ertragen erforderlichen Elasticität gänzlich beraubt’ (397).

<sup>7</sup> Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, ‘Debates’, *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, New York 2003, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Johann August Schlettwein, *Grundfeste der Staaten oder die politische Ökonomie*, Frankfurt a.M. 1971, p. 405. Subsequent references to Schlettwein will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Der Werth, den eine bloße Sinneslust kostet, und der, welchen die Eitelkeit zu ihrer Befriedigung erfordert, könnten ein Menschenleben von seinem Untergange retten, oder noch für ein Menschenleben Materialien zubereiten’ (p. 398).

One should note in this context that in the eighteenth century luxury has not yet become objectified; it is both a thing and a type of behaviour. The label is thus applied not only to objects in the narrow sense (such as fashions and furniture) but also to a wide range of activities – from using foreign spices or drinking coffee to the hosting of lavish parties or ostentatious funeral processions. As we will see, even the consumption of culture, especially in the form of reading, is a focus of suspicion. Schlettwein is concerned about all of the above. Even for such sceptics, however, the solution entails not the absolute repression of sensuality and fantasy, but rather their integration into a framework of social utility. While he certainly does not follow those advocates who argue for the encouragement of luxury as a stepping stone toward the full realisation of one's humanity, his comments none the less indicate an interest in harnessing the motivating force of potentially harmful human capacities.<sup>10</sup> This focus on channelling rather than repression reveals that Schlettwein, just as much as the more enthusiastic advocates of luxury, participates in the modern rejection of what can be termed an Aristotelian paradigm, according to which the ideal state of existence is one absolutely free of desire.

### III

It is against this backdrop of luxury, with its key components of sensuality, fantasy, and desire, and its revaluation in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, that the socioeconomic (and aesthetic) significance of the miner's comments comes into focus. And these comments suggest that Hardenberg and Schlettwein, the romantic author and the physiocrat, are occupied with the same problem. That problem is how to ensure that luxury, understood in the sense of new opportunities for the stimulation of sensuality and fantasy, remains linked to socially productive activity rather than becoming narcissistically self-referential.

Perhaps the most obvious indication of their shared concern is the semantic overlap between the passage from the novel cited previously and Schlettwein's critique of luxury. In both cases the discussion centres on issues of self-control and on the fear that unrestrained passion, fuelled by the desire for sensual pleasures, will lead to a loss of that control. The miner's dismissive reference to the 'blendender Glanz' of the precious metals mirrors Schlettwein's adducing of 'Schimmer und Glanz' as 'das Hauptwerk des Luxus' (406). And whereas the miner remains '*unentzündet* vom gefährlichem Wahnsinn' – a phrase that evokes an imagination out of control – Schlettwein's luxury consumer has as his or her aim '*Begierden nach dem Genuß meiner Reize in ihren Seelen zu entzündend*' (396) [my italics]. One

<sup>10</sup> An example of a more positive view is F. K. Schulze, 'Bemerkungen über den Begriff, die Natur und die Schädlichkeit des Luxus', *Braunschweigisches Journal*, 5 (1790), 67–107.

can also point to the frequent use of 'Reiz' and 'Reize' in both texts, an indication of the two authors' common concern with sensory stimulation, even if Hardenberg's use of the term has a more particular referent in the stimulus theory of the Scottish physician John Brown.<sup>11</sup> The miner's references to the commodified treasures as a 'böses Gift, was die Ruhe verscheucht' and to 'unendlichen Sorgen und wilden Leidenschaften' also parallel the claims from treatises on luxury. The author of one encyclopedia entry on the topic admonishes those who strive after every new object 'mit unordentlicher Leidenschaft' and warns that they thereby provide entry to a 'Feind ihrer Ruhe' that will lodge itself permanently in their breast.<sup>12</sup> Even the opposition between depth and surface, inner and outer, captured by the miner's distinction between the 'Vesten der Erde' and the 'Oberfläche des Bodens' echoes the claims of countless articles on luxury goods, according to which 'die Gegenstände des Luxus oft wenig innern Werth haben, sondern dieser blos in den äußern Formen gesucht wird . . .'.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to these semantic parallels, however, one also can identify a more explicit engagement with luxury in the novel. In the characterisation of Heinrich's epoch in chapter two, the narrator explains: 'die Pracht und Bequemlichkeit des fürstlichen Lebens dürfte sich schwerlich mit den Annehmlichkeiten messen, die in spätern Zeiten ein bemittelter Privatmann sich und den Seinigen ohne Verschwendung verschaffen konnte' (I, 248). The increase in creature comforts described as characteristic of these later ages, however, appears to have been purchased at the cost of a flattening of the topography of experience and the loss of transcendence. Instead of a material culture that gives rise to 'wunderbare Erwartungen', as was previously the case, one finds that the 'neuere wohlhabendere Zeit' is characterised by 'das einförmige und unbedeutendere Bild eines allgemeinen Tages' (I, 249).

This passage is noteworthy for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the reference to commerce ('bemittelter Privatmann') as a force that elides social distinctions. And this reference is negatively inflected – the material equality between the private individual of the present and the prince of yesterday appears as a regrettable development. While it may be tempting to point to Hardenberg's conservatism here, one can gain a better understanding of what is at stake in these lines if they are viewed as a general reaction to the homogenising impact of commerce and commodification; in other words, the particular estate-based distinctions perceived to have been lost here (prince versus private citizen) are less significant than the loss of meaningful distinction as such, the fact that in the 'monotonous' ['einförmige'] present day specific forms of material culture no longer seem to have any

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion, see Mahoney, pp. 60–1.

<sup>12</sup> *Oekonomisch-Technologische Encyclopädie*, ed. D. Johann Georg Krünitz, XXII, Berlin 1801, pp. 60–1, s.v. 'Luxus'.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. 'Luxus', p. 42.

organic connection to distinct social identities. Hardenberg is by no means the only one making such arguments in the period; on the contrary, the connection between an increased availability of commodities and the loss of those social distinctions that allow individuals to make sense of their world is one of the central concerns of the luxury controversy.<sup>14</sup>

Such fears help explain Hardenberg's digression on the 'Sinn für Gerätschaften und Habseeligkeiten' (*ibid.*), which, as cherished objects, have the capacity to establish meaningful relations of identity and difference, to anchor the individual's sense of self within the context of a large and multi-generational community. Hardenberg's discussion of these cherished objects, however, also helps to illuminate his distance from commentators, like Schlettwein, who adopt a more ascetic position on the question of luxury consumption. If Hardenberg is celebrating an age in which human beings had a different, less homogenous relationship to the artefactual world, it was by no means an age free of luxurious excess. The decisive difference is that the experience of this excess was anchored to meaningful social frameworks in a manner that enabled it to strengthen communal bonds and foster an awareness of higher things. Heinrich's age may have been characterised by a 'liebliche Armut', but this poverty provided the necessary backdrop for a meaningful experience of luxury: 'die sparsam vertheilten Kleinodien glänzten desto bedeutender in dieser Dämmerung, und erfüllten ein sinniges Gemüth mit wunderbaren Erwartungen' (*ibid.*). The use of the word 'bedeutend' is crucial here – it is not the 'Glanz' *per se* that constitutes the primary problem with modern luxury, but the fact that this 'Glanz' has become detached from any deeper meaning. In the present it signifies nothing beyond itself, whereas it had previously been closely connected to the experience of the divine.

Returning to the miner with this earlier passage in mind, one is in a better position to grasp his self-characterisation as a response to the concerns voiced by Schlettwein and other commentators in the luxury debates. The miner is constantly exposed to the temptations of luxury, both to the sensuous appeal of the sparkling metals and to the seductive fantasies triggered by the thought of their possession, and yet he suffers no negative consequences; on the contrary, in keeping with the description of the age in the passage from chapter two, luxury proves crucial to the health of society and, one could argue, of the miner himself. As in this earlier passage, moreover, the positive role of luxury depends on what can be termed its social embedding, the way in which it is integrated into a coherent and allegedly 'organic' social totality. Rather than serving individual vanity, like the superficial 'Gold- und Silberglanz' (394) of the fashionable clothing condemned by Schlettwein in his treatise, the precious metals unearthed by the miner

<sup>14</sup> These fears often take the form of anxieties about the increasing illegibility of social status as a result of new fashions or consumption patterns. A good example is the essay 'Über den Luxus in Berlin', *Journal des Luxus und der Mode*, 2 (1787), 399–414.

find their ultimate resting place ‘an königlichen Kronen und Gefäßen und an heiligen Reliquien . . . und in geachteten und wohlverwahrten Münzen’ (I, 289). Here the metals presumably serve to strengthen both the sense of political unity among members of society and their sense of a dynamic interpenetration of the quotidian and the divine.

While the allusions to religion (‘Reliquien’) and the state (‘Kronen und Gefäßen’) in this remark show how Hardenberg uses mining to indicate the potential societal value of embedded luxury, the idea of embeddedness proves equally significant at the level of individual behaviour. The miner himself appears as an ideal example of how to stimulate productively and harness both sensuality and fantasy while avoiding their potentially negative impact. To be sure, one finds much in the miner’s self-description to indicate a modest, even ascetic existence, but it is none the less an existence defined by moments of intense desire and pleasure, all of which are positively connoted. The treasures he uncovers may lose their allure [‘Reiz’] once they become commodities, but this should by no means be taken as an indication that the ‘glänzende und flimmernde Steine’ (286) have no allure at all. He describes his relationship to mining as one characterised by ‘unaussprechlichem Vergnügen’ (I, 286); as a youth he can hardly wait to try on the ‘reizende[n] Tracht’ (I, 287); and of his first descent into the mine he writes: ‘Das. . . ergötzte mich ungemein’ (I, 289). Even the verb ‘entzündet’, which appears in the initial description in conjunction with ‘gefährlichem Wahnsinn’, takes on a positive connotation in the first miners’ song: ‘Er ist mit ihr [die Erde] verbündet,/ Und inniglich vertraut,/ Und wird von ihr entzündet,/ Als wär sie seine Braut’ (I, 294). Indeed, the song as a whole identifies the experience of mining with sexual gratification, as a number of scholars have pointed out.<sup>15</sup>

There is hardly anything surprising about the valorisation of sensuality and fantasy in a romantic novel. The point that I want to make here, however, is rather less obvious, namely, that this valorisation represents only part of the story. It proves inseparable from a simultaneous reflection on strategies of containment. In other words, even as Hardenberg foregrounds the role of sensuality and fantasy in the experience of the miner, he also illustrates the way in which these two capacities are anchored – and rendered productive. First, like the precious metals themselves, the intense pleasure and desire experienced by the miner are socially embedded in the institution of mining, through which they are not only attached to a stable political and religious order, but also to the powerful corporate identity that characterises mining as a profession (note the ‘reizende Tracht’ [I, 286] and ‘Gesang und Zitherspiel’ [I, 293]).<sup>16</sup> Second, they are also embedded at the level of

<sup>15</sup> Ziolkowski, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the role of the uniform in the construction of national identities, see Karin Wurst, ‘Fashioning a Nation: Fashion and National Costume in Bertuch’s *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (1786–1827), *German Studies Review*, 28 (2005), 367–86.

character. Of particular significance for understanding this character-level embedding is the role of curiosity, a concept which, traditionally, has often been seen as closely linked to the idea of luxury.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, curiosity has a long and complex conceptual history. Its rehabilitation in the early modern period has been a popular subject of intellectual-historical inquiry since the publication of Hans Blumenberg's *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (1966).<sup>18</sup> What proves most significant in the case of Hardenberg is the way in which curiosity, far from being condemned, takes shape as a potential counterbalance to the threat posed by luxury, again understood in psycho-physiological terms. The sheer frequency with which the word appears in chapter five indicates its special significance: the miner describes his youthful interest in mountains as a 'heftige Neugierde' (I, 286); a traveller tells him that becoming a miner will lead to 'die Befriedigung seiner Neugier' (*ibid.*); as he stands on a pit hill for the first time he experiences 'unglaubliche Neugierde' (I, 287); the little that he understands initially merely heightens 'die Lebhaftigkeit [seiner] Neugierde' (I, 288). The list could be expanded. For the miner, curiosity guarantees a positive channelling of desire, and its particular effectiveness lies in the way it anchors sensuality and fantasy to the higher faculties of reason and reflection.

If, following Schlettwein and countless others, we characterise the threat posed by luxury as the threat of a sensuality and fantasy that have become autonomous and self-referential, where the pleasurable stimulation of the senses leads only to a craving for more stimulation, then we can view curiosity as a way of relating to the world that attaches pleasure to a desire for comprehension and thus, ultimately, to socially valuable activity. The miner's curiosity motivates him to search for a deeper understanding of what he sees rather than merely to abandon himself to the sensuous shimmer of the treasures he finds or to fantasise about their possession. Curiosity, one could argue, helps ensure that he maintains a complex and multi-faceted relationship to the social and material world, rather than becoming obsessed with a single object.

A comparison with Schlettwein's reflections offers an interesting perspective on the nature of this complexity. Schlettwein describes the pleasures of luxury (here labelled 'Üppigkeit') as creating a kind of eternal here and now, in which the individual loses the ability to think in terms of structural and causal relationships:

Der Zweck, Geist, und Sinn der Ueppigkeit ist nur Reiz der Sinne, und der Einbildungskraft durch Gestalten, Farben, und Schein, durch Eindrücke von Augenblicken, und Abwechselung von Reihenfolgen solcher Eindrücke. Das

<sup>17</sup> Uta Kim-Wawrzinek, 'Bedürfnis', *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, I, Stuttgart 1972, p. 448.

<sup>18</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt a.M. 1996, esp. pp. 440–510.

Bleibende, das Dauerhafte, der Werth des Vergangenen und Gegenwärtigen in der Zukunft, die Schätzung der Eindrücke, und Ursachen aus den Folgen, und den Progressionen derselbigen ist nicht des Ueppigen Ziel . . . (406–7)

Against this backdrop of what can be described as a loss of complexity in both a temporal ('Augenblicke' vs. 'Das Bleibende') and an architectonic ('Abwechslung von Reihenfolgen') sense, the specific emphasis the miner places on understanding the origins and complex structure of the 'metallische Mächte' takes on greater significance. He strives to grasp originary causes – 'die Seltsamkeiten ihrer Herkunft' (I, 291) – and to comprehend formal features – 'ihre wunderlichen Bildungen' (*ibid.*) – 'jener wunderlichen Baukunst' (I, 307). Whereas the pleasures associated with the 'Glanz' of luxury goods are episodic and undifferentiated, those of the miner entail an architectonic element and require attention to the whole, both in the sense that they are integrated into the profession of mining as a 'whole way of life', and in the sense that the stones and metals themselves are grasped as part of a dynamic and evolving natural totality. Again, it is crucial to recognise that sensuality and fantasy are not repressed here or simply replaced by rational reflection; rather, they constitute key aspects of the miner's experience. Both find expression in the miners' songs, and fantasy receives a rather conspicuous endorsement in the imaginary narratives created by the miner to depict his own situation, as when he imagines himself liberating the 'König der Metalle' trapped 'in festen Gefängnissen' (I, 289). In this case, however, such flights of fancy never threaten to become self-sufficient, an end in themselves; instead they inspire the miner to redouble his efforts.

A striking number of elements from Hardenberg's representation of mining thus find either a parallel or a foil in anti-luxury treatises like Schlettwein's. As a final example, one can point to the authors' shared belief in the value of physical activity as a way to help maintain psycho-physiological equilibrium. The miner makes the connection between mind and body explicit in the assertion 'sein Beruf lehrt ihn unermüdliche Geduld, und läßt nicht zu, daß sich seine Aufmerksamkeit in unnütze Gedanken zerstreue' (I, 292). As becomes clear in the subsequent reference to the earth as '[einer] wunderlichen harten und unbiegsamen Macht' (*ibid.*), the sheer physical challenge of mining focuses concentration and keeps the mind from wandering. The somatic aspects of mining are stressed at other points in the passage as well, especially in the multiple references to its 'Mühseeligkeiten' (I, 289; twice on I, 291), which keep 'sein Herz frisch und seinen Sinn wacker' (I, 291). Arguments about the value of physical activity also appear in countless treatises on luxury as a solution to the problems of overstimulated nerves and an overactive imagination. For Schlettwein 'eine zweckmäßige Motion' (419) constitutes the primary source of acceptable pleasure for the young. As he puts it in a passage that reads like a prose version of the miner's

more poetic reflections:

‘Genugsame LeibesBewegung in der freyen Luftt . . . kann eine feste dauerhafte Constitution wicken, und giebt zugleich tausendfältige Anlässe, dem Geiste und dem Herzen der Jugend die angenehmste und heilsamste Nahrung durch Ideen und Gefühle von den Werken der Natur, und von deren Verhältnissen gegen das Menschenleben mitzutheilen’. (*ibid.*)

If the miner’s remarks on physical exertion can be situated in the context of the luxury debate, however, they also illustrate what can be viewed as Hardenberg’s most fundamental departure from the approach of writers like Schlettwein. The ‘Mühseeligkeiten’ referred to so frequently by the miner represent a level of physical intensity far beyond the ‘zweckmäßige Motion’ described by Schlettwein. One can view the physical challenges experienced by the miner within the framework of containment mentioned previously as a kind of counterbalance to his intense emotional experiences and the particularly powerful temptations to which he is exposed by unearthing precious stones and metals. The key distinction between the two authors, in other words, is not that the romantic poet glorifies the sensuality and fantasy condemned by the physiocrat. On the contrary, one can convincingly claim that both are operating with a similar conception of psychic equilibrium here. In Hardenberg’s case, however, the level at which this equilibrium is achieved and maintained has been increased dramatically. The entire system has been reconfigured to accommodate a higher level of sensory pleasure and imaginative activity without breaking down.

Scholars have long recognised the intensification of somatic experience that accompanies the shift from Enlightenment to Romantic literature, as captured, for example, in the transition from the stroll [‘Spaziergang’] to the ramble [‘Wanderung’]. When the miner’s remarks are viewed in combination with those of writers like Schlettwein, however, it becomes clear that this intensification should not be understood simply as a celebration of corporeality (or sensuality, or imagination) that reverses the Enlightenment valorisation of abstract reason. At least in the case of Hardenberg one finds a similar model of the psychic economy, one based on equilibrium, compensation, and even a hierarchy of the faculties in which reason serves as the ultimate authority. The key difference lies in the degree of dynamism that characterises the various elements that constitute the whole. This particular combination of intensity and containment provides the primary context for an appreciation of the miner’s relevance to Hardenberg’s understanding of modern political economy, of literary aesthetics, and of the relation between the two discursive fields.

#### IV

Merely recognising the link between luxury and the representation of mining in the novel can shed new light on the work. As discussed in the

introduction, however, the ultimate significance of mining resides in its relation to luxury not as a general social problem, but as a problem that has particular relevance for the artist. Like the miner, who finds himself continuously confronted with the temptations of sensuality and fantasy as embodied in the treasures of the earth, the artist can also be seen as especially vulnerable to the seductions of luxury, and even worse, as the purveyor of a particularly dangerous sort of luxury product. It is no coincidence that Schlettwein, for example, uses a discussion of painting to illustrate the impact of the non-productive worker, who satisfies only 'die Lust der Augen und der Einbildungskraft' (403).

Several authors in the period actually address the entanglement of art – especially literature – in the dangers of luxury, including Hardenberg himself. In his unpublished *Dialog* of 1798, he combines a discussion of mining, literature, and luxury in a manner that sheds crucial light on the pivotal conclusion of chapter five of the novel. The dialogue, which 'B' initiates by presenting 'A' with a copy of 'der neue Meßkatalog', includes a discussion of the pros and cons of the recent and remarkable expansion of the literary market. In response to 'A's' accusation that he is a 'Lobredner dieser Bücherseuche', 'B' responds by describing the explosion of book production in Germany as 'die Entdeckung dieser mächtigen Minen' and goes on to explain, 'wir holen jetzt überall die rohen Erze oder die schönen Formen zusammen – schmelzen jene um und wissen diese nachzuahmen und zu übertreffen' (II, 426). As the debate continues, 'A' reminds him not only of the 'nachtheiligen Folgen des Lesens' but also of 'den ungeheuren Kostenaufwand auf diesen Artickel des modernen Luxus' (II, 427). 'B' responds with a comparison between the intellectual stimulation that results from a lively circulation of books and the economic stimulation caused by the unhindered circulation of money.

This exchange not only reveals, on the basis of the mining metaphor, the general interpenetration of literary and economic discourse in the period. It simultaneously illuminates the potentially vulnerable position of both author and reader, precisely because they can be accused of encouraging or of indulging in a corrupting form of luxury consumption. Indeed, as the heated late eighteenth-century controversy about reading makes clear, there was no shortage of commentators prepared to make precisely this accusation. Though frequently thematised by writers in the period, the link between books and luxury has received little attention in the scholarship on eighteenth-century reading.<sup>19</sup> A review of the myriad treatises on 'Lese-wut' and related illnesses, however, reveals that the late eighteenth-century reading debate is best understood as one variant of the more wide-ranging luxury debate. Not only does one find essays in which the two spheres are equated, such as J. R. G. Beyer's 'Über das Bücherlesen, in so fern es zum

<sup>19</sup> An exception is Daniel Purdy, *The Tyranny of Elegance: Consumer Cosmopolitanism in the Era of Goethe*, Baltimore 1998. See esp. pp. 22–50.

Luxus unsrer Zeiten gehört' (1796); it also becomes clear that the nature of the problem and its potential impact are characterised in virtually identical terms in both cases.<sup>20</sup> Not surprisingly, the key conceptual categories in the attacks on excessive reading are also sensuality and fantasy. So, for example, the author of an anonymous article from the *Neues Hannoverisches Magazin* scolds those who read 'um die Phantasie mit angenehmen Bildern in beständiger Thätigkeit zu erhalten'.<sup>21</sup> These critiques, moreover, point specifically to the serial character of the texts under attack, the way in which their lack of any logical structure hinders reflection on causal relationships. Ernst Brandes, to give just one example, compares the experience of reading periodicals to the 'stete Vorgaukeln der magischen Laterne', which makes it impossible for most readers, 'einen Gedanken zu ergreifen und ihn festzuhalten'.<sup>22</sup> Finally, as is the case with luxury, the ultimate danger of excessive reading lies in the degree to which it indulges vanity, feeds egoism, and thus poses a grave threat to one's sense of community and personal responsibility. As J. L. Ewald puts it in 'Lesewut und Spielwut, zwei Furien des Luxus': 'Man denkt soviel auf eigenen Genuß, dass man alle Anderen und alles Andere darüber vergißt'.<sup>23</sup>

From this perspective, the miner's apparent immunity to the dark side of luxury, his valorisation of certain forms of socially embedded surplus ('an königlichen Kronen . . . und heiligen Reliquien') and his productive channelling and structuring of sensuality and fantasy would seem to have a special relevance for the romantic author. In addition, like the author, the miner, especially in his incarnation as a 'Schatzgräber' (I, 286), is a figure still viewed by many with suspicion at the end of the eighteenth century. A number of scholars have pointed out the relevance of Agricola's treatise *De re metallica* (1556) for understanding this section of the novel. The work includes a long list of alleged prejudices against mining as well as an attempt to refute them.<sup>24</sup> A more contemporary and less sympathetic example

<sup>20</sup> Johann Rudolph Gottlieb Beyer, 'Über das Bücherlesen, in so fern es zum Luxus unsrer Zeiten gehört' (1796), *Quellen zur Geschichte des Buchwesens*, ed. Reinhard Wittmann, X, Munich 1981, pp. 181–216.

<sup>21</sup> 'Wie ist dem unter uns eingerissenen Uebel der Lesesucht abzuhelfen', *Neues Hannoverisches Magazin*, 81 (1795), 1287. For similar arguments, see also Johann Gottfried Hocke, 'Vertraute Briefe über die jetzige abentheuerliche Lesesucht und über den Einfluß derselben auf die Verminderung des häuslichen und öffentlichen Glückes' [1794], *Quellen zur Geschichte des Buchwesens*, ed. Reinhard Wittmann, X, Munich 1981, p. 136, and Beyer, p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> Ernst Brandes, 'Über die Leserei der Modebücher und ihre Folgen in einigen Klassen der höheren Stände', *Neues Hannoverisches Magazin*, 8 (1800), 121. The article runs over seven issues of the journal (6–12) with continuous pagination. While this particular example is taken from a discussion of non-fiction texts, one should note that this opposition between an arbitrary seriality and a complex, causal structure figures equally prominently in eighteenth-century reflections on the novel, as Jochen Schulte-Saße already pointed out in the early 1970s – see his *Die Kritik an der Trivialliteratur seit der Aufklärung*, Munich 1971, esp. pp. 19–21.

<sup>23</sup> Johann Ludwig Ewald, 'Lesewuth und Spielwuth, die Zwei Furien des Luxus, Aus Ewald's Gemeingeist', *Journal des Luxus und der Mode*, 15 (1800), 623–6.

<sup>24</sup> Ziolkowski, pp. 38, 54–5; Uerlings, 70.

can be found in Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1782), where the author claims that it is only as a result of corruption and greed that men hunt after 'imaginary goods' in the bowels of the earth.<sup>25</sup> Rousseau's comments illuminate the vulnerability of mining to the accusation of avarice, an accusation which, as Rousseau's opposition between 'imaginary' and 'real' goods in the text suggests, is inseparable from the luxury controversy in the period. Both the author and the miner, then, can be said to operate in environments where they are exposed in a particularly powerful way to the temptations of luxury, and both are viewed by some as dubious characters, due to their alleged egoism as well as to the fact that their profession promotes the spread of luxury. Thus, if Hardenberg's work can be understood at one level as an effort to rehabilitate the profession of mining, one based on his own experiences and especially his friendship with Abraham Gottlob Werner, it is also more than that. In rehabilitating the profession of mining, Hardenberg is simultaneously defending his own social utility as an author.

This interweaving of literature, mining, and luxury finds a compelling expression in the critical scene that concludes the chapter, in which Heinrich discovers the manuscript that appears to narrate his own life. The scene begins with Heinrich leafing through the 'großen, schöngemahlten Schriften' (I, 311) that belong to the hermit. These books, whose description suggest that they are illuminated manuscripts, can themselves be read in terms of the ideal of embedded luxury. They certainly have little in common with the mass-produced 'elenden Romanen' which, according to Adam Bergk in 1799, were appearing 'in Schaaren'.<sup>26</sup> The fact that the biographical 'Roman' that Heinrich ultimately discovers is not a commodity produced for the anonymous market but a handwritten manuscript from the library of the hermit's deceased friend is also relevant in this context. When read in combination with articles from the 'Lesewut' controversy and the miner's self-characterisation, several other aspects of this passage stand out as well. The first is the immediate emphasis on visual stimulation and its link to the imagination ('die sauberen Bilder . . . um die Einbildungskraft des Lesers zu unterstützen' [I, 311]). As in the case of the miner, however, and in contrast to the superficial sensual pleasures under attack in the reading debate, here the images give rise to a desire to penetrate more deeply and to understand: '[Sie] reizten mächtig seine Neugierde' (*ibid.*). Closely related to this familiar anchoring of desire through curiosity is the role of the hermit as mediator, who not only functions as gatekeeper, controlling access to the books, but who also personally explains the representations to Heinrich. The emphasis placed on this function in the work reads like a direct engagement with the fears expressed in the treatises on reading, where a primary concern is a lack of such mediation, the fact that increased availability means the

<sup>25</sup> J.J. Rousseau, *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, ed. Christopher Kelly, trans. Charles E. Butterworth, Alexandra Cook, and Terence E. Marshall, VIII, Hanover/ London 2000, p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> Adam Bergk, *Die Kunst, Bücher zu lesen*, Munich-Pullach 1971, p. 412.

wrong books are being read by the wrong individuals, or the right books are being read at the wrong time. The solution, even for the most conservative commentators, is rarely direct prohibition. Instead they place their faith in various methods of indirect control exercised through respected individuals.<sup>27</sup> The reader, as Beyer puts it, '[muss] unvermerkt zu dem Ziele geführt werden, ohne selbst zu wissen, dass man sich dieses Ziel vorgesetzt habe' (208).

The above statement reads as if it could have been written specifically to describe Heinrich's introduction to literature. Juxtaposing this statement with the emotional intensity of his reading experience, however, reminds us again of the miner and Hardenberg's departure from the standard condemnation of luxury. Heinrich 'konnte sich nicht satt sehen' (I, 311); he leafs through the books 'mit unendlicher Lust' (I, 312); and finally, the discovery of figures from the dream with which the novel begins fills him 'mit dem innigsten Entzücken' (I, 312). Here as well, it would seem, one is confronted with a mix of powerful sensual and imaginative pleasure and a variety of mechanisms designed to manage that pleasure.

The situation acquires a new level of intensity when Heinrich is left alone with the books. When viewed against the backdrop of the reading debates, this scene can only be read as a provocation. In critical treatises on reading, reading alone, especially among women and male adolescents, is often associated with moral degradation and with masturbation in particular.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the rather peculiar reference to the 'wunderliche Schaam' (I, 312) that befalls Heinrich upon the sudden return of his companions might be seen as an ironic evocation of such fears. It would not be the first allusion to onanism in the novel.<sup>29</sup> But even as Hardenberg seems to poke fun at contemporary anxieties about excessive reading in this scene, Hardenberg's description also engages with a number of the concerns expressed by commentators on the topic. In the first case, the entire experience is temporally and spatially enframed: that is to say, it occurs in a carefully controlled environment. Even if the reader is not supervised at all times, an external authority determines the duration of the experience. Even more interesting in the context of self-regulation, however, is the way in which mechanisms of control are built into the book itself. If one of the primary concerns of the 'Lesewut' discussion pertains to the availability of inappropriate reading materials, here the satisfaction of the appropriateness criterion is taken to the extreme. Heinrich himself is the protagonist; the book tells the story of his life. Yet the composition of the novel – its incomprehensible

<sup>27</sup> In this regard as well one can discern a parallel to the luxury controversy, where all but the most staunch critics point out the outmoded character and the ineffectuality of sumptuary laws and argue instead for the use of indirect mechanisms of control.

<sup>28</sup> Dominik von König, 'Lesesucht und Lesewut', *Buch und Leser: Vorträge des ersten Jahrestreffens des Wolfenbüttler Arbeitskreises für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, ed. Herbert G. Göpfert, Hamburg 1975, pp. 101–2.

<sup>29</sup> Calhoun, p. 113.

language, the unidentifiable and yet familiar figures, and the missing conclusion – also prevents a wholesale identification with this protagonist. Heinrich's encounter with the book is characterised by a dialectic of identification and distance, one that combines an intensity of experience with moments of defamiliarisation. These moments not only have a sobering effect on the otherwise enthralled reader, they also heighten his wish to understand the book in its entirety: 'Heinrich . . . wünschte nichts sehnlicher, als das Buch lesen zu können, und vollständig zu besitzen' (*ibid.*). If one interprets the 'und' in this sentence as implying a degree of causality, then ownership here appears as a function of exhaustive knowledge rather than any contractual or transactional relationship. From this perspective Heinrich's intense desire fully to comprehend the book – the most valuable treasure of all – and his inquiry after its title and language, offers yet another parallel with the miner, who was motivated by a similar interest in origins and structure.

V

Thus the miner appears as a model for the young artist, whose education can be understood as an education in the containment of subjective desire – a containment, however, that operates at a maximum level of intensity. When one recognises the relevance of this notion in this particular instance, a number of other sections of the book appear in a new light. The dream sequence that opens the novel, often viewed as containing the quintessence of the entire romantic project, can be read as a twofold instantiation of such an ideal. Not only the dream experience itself resonates in this context – the narrator describes Heinrich at the moment of his greatest pleasure as 'Berauscht von Entzücken und doch jedes Eindrucks bewußt' (I, 242). The strategy of containment also pertains to the anchoring of the experience within the clearly demarcated boundaries of the dream, which can be viewed as the temporal equivalent to the spatial sequestration of the reading experience in the cave.

In a similar fashion, the evening celebration at the home of Heinrich's uncle, which caps the first part of the novel, can be seen as an example of emotional release embedded within a clearly delineated social framework. Here as well one can speak of a doubling of this motif, inasmuch as Klingsohr's fairy tale is itself embedded within the celebration. And with regard to the content of the tale, while there can be no doubt about its transgressive eroticism, one must not forget that it concludes with the domestication of eros (through poetry), and no less importantly, that the fairy tale itself is both clearly identified as such within the narrative and decisively linked to a particular social and temporal context. Hardenberg may have remarked in his letter to Friedrich Schlegel that 'der Roman allmählich in Märchen übergehn [soll]' (I, 740), but here he appears to place his emphasis on the maintenance of clear distinctions. And this is the only plausible strategy

for one seeking to recover the 'geschickte Vertheilung von Licht, Farbe und Schatten' that characterised an earlier age, and so to avoid '[das] einförmige und unbedeutendere Bild' (I, 249) of the present.<sup>30</sup>

The behavioural model that finds its clearest articulation in the representation of the miner, and that might be described as one based on a 'controlled de-control' of emotion, would thus seem to function as an ideal for the artist and as a structuring principle of the novel.<sup>31</sup> Our recognition of this function, however, should by no means lead us to conclude that the representation of mining in the novel is to be understood exclusively as an allegory of literature. On the contrary, the model I have been describing has an equally powerful resonance in the political-economic discourse of the period. At a time when political-economic regulation is still understood largely in terms of the administration of human drives rather than the manipulation of abstract macro-economic phenomena, questions related to the management and harnessing of consumer desire prove crucial to both discursive fields. In fact the same concepts that structure political-economic debate in the period, not merely 'Luxus' but also related notions of 'Eigennutz', 'Glückseeligkeit', and true versus false 'Bedürfnisse' figure just as prominently in fictional texts and in discussions of the impact of those texts.<sup>32</sup> Political-economic discourse around 1800, moreover, finds itself in a period of transition, away from the emphasis on direct government intervention typical of cameralism and toward the emphasis on self-regulation associated with authors like Adam Smith. It is thus engaged with many of the same questions about socially beneficial levels of desire, and how to maintain them, that find expression through Hardenberg's depiction of mining and the romantic artist.<sup>33</sup>

Literature, however, not only serves as a key medium for reflecting on the nature of such desire; it is also considered to be one of the principal, and potentially most dangerous, sources of its stimulation. As the treatises on both luxury and 'Lesewut' make clear, the intense desires generated by an emerging economy of surplus – perhaps best embodied in Germany by the rapid rise in the market for cultural commodities – continue to be viewed

<sup>30</sup> Though he operates with a more traditional interpretive vocabulary, Gerhard Schulz hints at a similar interpretation in an essay of 1968 on Hardenberg's theory of the novel: 'Es ist also nicht eine Entfesselung der Phantasie, mit der Novalis seine Arbeit beginnt, sondern umgekehrt ihre Bindung in Gestalten oder "Figuren", keine Verachtung der Realität, sondern eine wechselseitige Begrenzung von Phantasie und Realität' ('Die Poetik des Romans bei Novalis', *Deutsche Romantheorien: Beiträge zu einer historischen Poetik des Romans in Deutschland*, ed. Reinhold Grimm, Frankfurt a.M. 1968, p. 98).

<sup>31</sup> The numerous other festivals, celebrations, gold chains and gemstones that appear in the novel can also be understood in terms of embedded luxury and surplus. I borrow the phrase 'controlled de-control' from Mike Featherstone, who borrows it in turn from the Elias-inspired sociologist Cas Wouters. See Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, London 1991, pp. 24–5.

<sup>32</sup> See Joseph Vogl, *Kalkül und Leidenschaft: Poetik des ökonomischen Menschen um 1800*, Zürich 2004, pp. 241–4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246–55.

by many as a grave threat to social stability.<sup>34</sup> The confident assertions of artists from the period about the value of their activity should not distract us from the fact that they were very much implicated in the perceived threat of runaway luxury; indeed, such assertions, together with the aesthetic programmes that support them, are perhaps best viewed as an attempt to respond to this criticism.

If eighteenth-century discussions of luxury allow us to place Hardenberg's novel more squarely within its contemporary political-economic context, one can further elucidate the challenge faced by the miner and the artist on the basis of more recent reflections: more specifically, by way of scholarship on the origins of modern consumer culture. Though many have taken issue with the political implications of Daniel Bell's *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1979), the book does offer an important characterisation of the paradoxical nature of modern consumer society: the split that exists between the puritan work ethic that drives the productivity of capitalism and the ethic of hedonistic self-fulfilment that is required to ensure that its products are consumed. As Bell puts it, the modern consumer must be a 'Puritan by day and a playboy by night'.<sup>35</sup> More recently, Colin Campbell, in *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (1987), has challenged this opposition, not in order to deny its relevance but to demonstrate how both 'puritan' and 'romantic' character traits can be integrated into an individual's personality system. Campbell makes a number of important points: not only that emotional restraint and delayed gratification are just as crucial for the 'romantic' (understood as hedonistic) as for the 'puritan' ethic, but also that apparently contradictory attitudes and beliefs can be maintained without tension 'if their expression is successfully separated in time and place'.<sup>36</sup>

While Campbell focuses on the British context, his elaboration of Bell's paradox can also shed light on *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. What proves most fascinating about the work from this perspective, however, is not simply that it provides supporting evidence for Campbell's argument, but that it includes a sustained reflection on precisely these same issues: how to combine intense desire and productive efficiency, how to manage the dialectic between emotional release and rational control.<sup>37</sup> And central to this thematics is the related question of the locus of restraint, to what extent the forces of control operate at the level of the individual psyche and to what extent they require a supporting apparatus of institutional, temporal and/or spatial constraints. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, moreover, in terms of both its plot

<sup>34</sup> For a recent discussion, see Karin Wurst, *Fabricating Pleasure: Fashion, Entertainment, and Cultural Consumption in German, 1780–1830*, Detroit, Mich. 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Featherstone, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup> Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*, Oxford 1987, p. 223.

<sup>37</sup> A lengthier analysis could demonstrate that representation of the merchants in the novel provides additional support for this claim.

and its compositional structure, illuminates the key role played by literature, and the novel in particular, in this interrogation. Not only does the reading episode in the hermit's cave resonate with widespread contemporary concerns about the circulation of literary commodities; the intertwining of Heinrich's aesthetic education with the more explicitly economic issues evoked by the representation of mining suggests that literature offered a unique imaginative space for addressing concerns traditionally associated with political economy. Indeed, what has been recognised as the ironic structure of the novel, its nested narratives and metafictional digressions, and the consequent relativisation of various points of view, points to a link between genre and such concerns. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* thus offers compelling support for the claim that literature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century functioned as a crucial means of training consumer desire, and, one should add, harmonising it with the productivity requirements of an emergent capitalist system. But even more significantly, it indicates that Hardenberg was by no means unaware of this function, and that his self-understanding as an author took shape on the basis of a conscious engagement with the seductions of that system.

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